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Daniel

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered

the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. During the night the mystery

was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
 wisdom and power are his.
 He changes times and seasons;
 he deposes kings and raises up others.
 He gives wisdom to the wise
 and knowledge to the discerning.
 He reveals deep and hidden things;
 he knows what lies in darkness,
 and light dwells with him.
 I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
 You have given me wisdom and power,
 you have made known to me what we asked of you,
 you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

“As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

“Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the

silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

“This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

“After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

“The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. Moreover, at Daniel’s request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the

image he had set up. So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”

Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “May the king live forever! Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the

blazing furnace. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

King Nebuchadnezzar,

To the nations and peoples of every language, who live in all the earth:

May you prosper greatly!

It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.

How great are his signs,

how mighty his wonders!

His kingdom is an eternal kingdom;

his dominion endures from generation to generation.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. So I commanded that all

the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

I said, “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me. These are the visions I saw while lying in bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the wild animals found shelter, and the birds lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

“In the visions I saw while lying in bed, I looked, and there before me was a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven. He called in a loud voice: ‘Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.

“Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him.

“The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.’

“This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.”

Belteshazzar answered, “My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the wild animals, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds—Your Majesty, you are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

“Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live with the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.’

“This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”

All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?”

Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, “This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.”

Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion;

his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

All the peoples of the earth

are regarded as nothing.

He does as he pleases

with the powers of heaven

and the peoples of the earth.

No one can hold back his hand
or say to him: "What have you done?"

At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking.

The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners. Then he said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.

The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "May the king live forever!" she said. "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale! There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. He did this because Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."

So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, "Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah? I have heard

that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

Then Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.

“Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. Because of the high position he gave him, all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and sets over them anyone he wishes.

“But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

“This is the inscription that was written:

mene, mene, tekel, parsin

“Here is what these words mean:

Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

Then at Belshazzar’s command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

So these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: "May King Darius live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den. Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." So King Darius put the decree in writing.

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions' den?"

The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

Then the men went as a group to King Darius and said to him, "Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed."

So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."

The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth:

"May you prosper greatly!

"I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

"For he is the living God

and he endures forever;

his kingdom will not be destroyed,

his dominion will never end.

He rescues and he saves;

he performs signs and wonders

in the heavens and on the earth.

He has rescued Daniel

from the power of the lions."

So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

"The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it.

"And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'

"After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.

"After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

"While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

"As I looked,

"thrones were set in place,

and the Ancient of Days took his seat.

His clothing was as white as snow;

the hair of his head was white like wool.

His throne was flaming with fire,

and its wheels were all ablaze.

A river of fire was flowing,

coming out from before him.

Thousands upon thousands attended him;

ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The court was seated,

and the books were opened.

“Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

“I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this.

“So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ‘The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.’

“Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

“He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.

“‘But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’

“This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself.”

In the third year of King Belshazzar’s reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great.

As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. It came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at it in great rage. I saw it attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering its two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it; the goat knocked it to the ground and trampled on it, and none could rescue the ram from its power. The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.

Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the Lord; it took away the daily sacrifice from the Lord, and his sanctuary was thrown down. Because of rebellion, the Lord’s people and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, “How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, the surrender of the sanctuary and the trampling underfoot of the Lord’s people?”

He said to me, “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.”

While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. And I heard a man’s voice from the Ulai calling, “Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision.”

As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. “Son of man,” he said to me, “understand that the vision concerns the time of the end.”

While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet.

He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.

"In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

"The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future."

I, Daniel, was worn out. I lay exhausted for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed:

"Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land.

"Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, Lord, because we have sinned against you. The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his

servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.

“Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

“Now, Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

“Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill—while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision:

“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.

“Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until

the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.

At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe."

Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. "Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed," he said. "Peace! Be strong now; be strong."

When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength."

So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.

And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)

"Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will arise in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece. Then a mighty king will arise, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. After he has arisen, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.

"The king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power. After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power, and he and his power will not last. In those days she will be betrayed, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her.

"One from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the king of the North and enter his fortress; he will fight against them and be victorious. He will also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years he will leave the king of the North alone. Then the king of the North will invade the realm of the king of the South but will retreat to his own country. His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress.

"Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated. When the army is carried off, the king of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands, yet he will not remain triumphant. For the king of the North will muster another army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped.

"In those times many will rise against the king of the South. Those who are violent among your own people will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success. Then the king of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. The invader will do as he

pleases; no one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land and will have the power to destroy it. He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the South. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him. Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them, but a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back on him. After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more.

“His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle.

“He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue. Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power. When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers. He will plot the overthrow of fortresses—but only for a time.

“With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him. Those who eat from the king’s provisions will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in battle. The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country.

“At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.

“His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

“Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. When they fall, they will

receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.

“The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. He will show no regard for the gods of his ancestors or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his ancestors he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.

“At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Cushites in submission. But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.”

Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?”

The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who

lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."

I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

Hosea

The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel:

When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord.” So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.”

Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means “not loved”), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them. Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the Lord their God, will save them.”

After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. Then the Lord said, “Call him Lo-Ammi (which means “not my people”), for you are not my people, and I am not your God.

“Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘children of the living God.’ The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

“Say of your brothers, ‘My people,’ and of your sisters, ‘My loved one.’

“Rebuke your mother, rebuke her,
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband.

Let her remove the adulterous look from her face
and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.

Otherwise I will strip her naked
and make her as bare as on the day she was born;
I will make her like a desert,
turn her into a parched land,
and slay her with thirst.

I will not show my love to her children,
because they are the children of adultery.

Their mother has been unfaithful

and has conceived them in disgrace.
 She said, 'I will go after my lovers,
 who give me my food and my water,
 my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.'
 Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes;
 I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way.
 She will chase after her lovers but not catch them;
 she will look for them but not find them.
 Then she will say,
 'I will go back to my husband as at first,
 for then I was better off than now.'
 She has not acknowledged that I was the one
 who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil,
 who lavished on her the silver and gold—
 which they used for Baal.

"Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens,
 and my new wine when it is ready.
 I will take back my wool and my linen,
 intended to cover her naked body.
 So now I will expose her lewdness
 before the eyes of her lovers;
 no one will take her out of my hands.
 I will stop all her celebrations:
 her yearly festivals, her New Moons,
 her Sabbath days—all her appointed festivals.
 I will ruin her vines and her fig trees,
 which she said were her pay from her lovers;
 I will make them a thicket,
 and wild animals will devour them.
 I will punish her for the days
 she burned incense to the Baals;
 she decked herself with rings and jewelry,
 and went after her lovers,
 but me she forgot,"
 declares the Lord.

"Therefore I am now going to allure her;
 I will lead her into the wilderness
 and speak tenderly to her.

There I will give her back her vineyards,
 and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.
 There she will respond as in the days of her youth,
 as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

“In that day,” declares the Lord,
 “you will call me ‘my husband’;
 you will no longer call me ‘my master.’
 I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips;
 no longer will their names be invoked.
 In that day I will make a covenant for them
 with the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky
 and the creatures that move along the ground.
 Bow and sword and battle
 I will abolish from the land,
 so that all may lie down in safety.
 I will betroth you to me forever;
 I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,
 in love and compassion.
 I will betroth you in faithfulness,
 and you will acknowledge the Lord.

“In that day I will respond,”
 declares the Lord—
 “I will respond to the skies,
 and they will respond to the earth;
 and the earth will respond to the grain,
 the new wine and the olive oil,
 and they will respond to Jezreel.
 I will plant her for myself in the land;
 I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’
 I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’;
 and they will say, ‘You are my God.’”

The Lord said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a

prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you.”

For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.

Hear the word of the Lord, you Israelites,
because the Lord has a charge to bring
against you who live in the land:
“There is no faithfulness, no love,
no acknowledgment of God in the land.
There is only cursing, lying and murder,
stealing and adultery;
they break all bounds,
and bloodshed follows bloodshed.
Because of this the land dries up,
and all who live in it waste away;
the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky
and the fish in the sea are swept away.

“But let no one bring a charge,
let no one accuse another,
for your people are like those
who bring charges against a priest.
You stumble day and night,
and the prophets stumble with you.
So I will destroy your mother—
my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

“Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also reject you as my priests;
because you have ignored the law of your God,
I also will ignore your children.
The more priests there were,
the more they sinned against me;
they exchanged their glorious God for something disgraceful.
They feed on the sins of my people
and relish their wickedness.
And it will be: Like people, like priests.

I will punish both of them for their ways
and repay them for their deeds.

“They will eat but not have enough;
they will engage in prostitution but not flourish,
because they have deserted the Lord
to give themselves to prostitution;
old wine and new wine
take away their understanding.
My people consult a wooden idol,
and a diviner’s rod speaks to them.
A spirit of prostitution leads them astray;
they are unfaithful to their God.
They sacrifice on the mountaintops
and burn offerings on the hills,
under oak, poplar and terebinth,
where the shade is pleasant.
Therefore your daughters turn to prostitution
and your daughters-in-law to adultery.

“I will not punish your daughters
when they turn to prostitution,
nor your daughters-in-law
when they commit adultery,
because the men themselves consort with harlots
and sacrifice with shrine prostitutes—
a people without understanding will come to ruin!

“Though you, Israel, commit adultery,
do not let Judah become guilty.

“Do not go to Gilgal;
do not go up to Beth Aven.
And do not swear, ‘As surely as the Lord lives!’
The Israelites are stubborn,
like a stubborn heifer.
How then can the Lord pasture them
like lambs in a meadow?
Ephraim is joined to idols;
leave him alone!

Even when their drinks are gone,
they continue their prostitution;
their rulers dearly love shameful ways.
A whirlwind will sweep them away,
and their sacrifices will bring them shame.

“Hear this, you priests!
Pay attention, you Israelites!
Listen, royal house!
This judgment is against you:
You have been a snare at Mizpah,
a net spread out on Tabor.
The rebels are knee-deep in slaughter.
I will discipline all of them.
I know all about Ephraim;
Israel is not hidden from me.
Ephraim, you have now turned to prostitution;
Israel is corrupt.

“Their deeds do not permit them
to return to their God.
A spirit of prostitution is in their heart;
they do not acknowledge the Lord.
Israel’s arrogance testifies against them;
the Israelites, even Ephraim, stumble in their sin;
Judah also stumbles with them.
When they go with their flocks and herds
to seek the Lord,
they will not find him;
he has withdrawn himself from them.
They are unfaithful to the Lord;
they give birth to illegitimate children.
When they celebrate their New Moon feasts,
he will devour their fields.

“Sound the trumpet in Gibeah,
the horn in Ramah.
Raise the battle cry in Beth Aven;
lead on, Benjamin.
Ephraim will be laid waste

on the day of reckoning.
Among the tribes of Israel
I proclaim what is certain.
Judah's leaders are like those
who move boundary stones.
I will pour out my wrath on them
like a flood of water.
Ephraim is oppressed,
trampled in judgment,
intent on pursuing idols.
I am like a moth to Ephraim,
like rot to the people of Judah.

“When Ephraim saw his sickness,
and Judah his sores,
then Ephraim turned to Assyria,
and sent to the great king for help.
But he is not able to cure you,
not able to heal your sores.
For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
like a great lion to Judah.
I will tear them to pieces and go away;
I will carry them off, with no one to rescue them.
Then I will return to my lair
until they have borne their guilt
and seek my face—
in their misery
they will earnestly seek me.”

“Come, let us return to the Lord.
He has torn us to pieces
but he will heal us;
he has injured us
but he will bind up our wounds.
After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will restore us,
that we may live in his presence.
Let us acknowledge the Lord;
let us press on to acknowledge him.
As surely as the sun rises,

he will appear;
 he will come to us like the winter rains,
 like the spring rains that water the earth.”

“What can I do with you, Ephraim?
 What can I do with you, Judah?
 Your love is like the morning mist,
 like the early dew that disappears.
 Therefore I cut you in pieces with my prophets,
 I killed you with the words of my mouth—
 then my judgments go forth like the sun.
 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
 and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.
 As at Adam, they have broken the covenant;
 they were unfaithful to me there.
 Gilead is a city of evildoers,
 stained with footprints of blood.
 As marauders lie in ambush for a victim,
 so do bands of priests;
 they murder on the road to Shechem,
 carrying out their wicked schemes.
 I have seen a horrible thing in Israel:
 There Ephraim is given to prostitution,
 Israel is defiled.

“Also for you, Judah,
 a harvest is appointed.

“Whenever I would restore the fortunes of my people,
 whenever I would heal Israel,
 the sins of Ephraim are exposed
 and the crimes of Samaria revealed.
 They practice deceit,
 thieves break into houses,
 bandits rob in the streets;
 but they do not realize
 that I remember all their evil deeds.
 Their sins engulf them;
 they are always before me.

“They delight the king with their wickedness,
the princes with their lies.
They are all adulterers,
burning like an oven
whose fire the baker need not stir
from the kneading of the dough till it rises.
On the day of the festival of our king
the princes become inflamed with wine,
and he joins hands with the mockers.
Their hearts are like an oven;
they approach him with intrigue.
Their passion smolders all night;
in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire.
All of them are hot as an oven;
they devour their rulers.
All their kings fall,
and none of them calls on me.

“Ephraim mixes with the nations;
Ephraim is a flat loaf not turned over.
Foreigners sap his strength,
but he does not realize it.
His hair is sprinkled with gray,
but he does not notice.
Israel’s arrogance testifies against him,
but despite all this
he does not return to the Lord his God
or search for him.

“Ephraim is like a dove,
easily deceived and senseless—
now calling to Egypt,
now turning to Assyria.
When they go, I will throw my net over them;
I will pull them down like the birds in the sky.
When I hear them flocking together,
I will catch them.
Woe to them,
because they have strayed from me!
Destruction to them,

because they have rebelled against me!
I long to redeem them
but they speak about me falsely.
They do not cry out to me from their hearts
but wail on their beds.
They slash themselves, appealing to their gods
for grain and new wine,
but they turn away from me.
I trained them and strengthened their arms,
but they plot evil against me.
They do not turn to the Most High;
they are like a faulty bow.
Their leaders will fall by the sword
because of their insolent words.
For this they will be ridiculed
in the land of Egypt.

“Put the trumpet to your lips!
An eagle is over the house of the Lord
because the people have broken my covenant
and rebelled against my law.
Israel cries out to me,
‘Our God, we acknowledge you!’
But Israel has rejected what is good;
an enemy will pursue him.
They set up kings without my consent;
they choose princes without my approval.
With their silver and gold
they make idols for themselves
to their own destruction.
Samaria, throw out your calf-idol!
My anger burns against them.
How long will they be incapable of purity?
They are from Israel!
This calf—a metalworker has made it;
it is not God.
It will be broken in pieces,
that calf of Samaria.

“They sow the wind

and reap the whirlwind.
The stalk has no head;
it will produce no flour.
Were it to yield grain,
foreigners would swallow it up.
Israel is swallowed up;
now she is among the nations
like something no one wants.
For they have gone up to Assyria
like a wild donkey wandering alone.
Ephraim has sold herself to lovers.
Although they have sold themselves among the nations,
I will now gather them together.
They will begin to waste away
under the oppression of the mighty king.

“Though Ephraim built many altars for sin offerings,
these have become altars for sinning.
I wrote for them the many things of my law,
but they regarded them as something foreign.
Though they offer sacrifices as gifts to me,
and though they eat the meat,
the Lord is not pleased with them.
Now he will remember their wickedness
and punish their sins:
They will return to Egypt.
Israel has forgotten their Maker
and built palaces;
Judah has fortified many towns.
But I will send fire on their cities
that will consume their fortresses.”

Do not rejoice, Israel;
do not be jubilant like the other nations.
For you have been unfaithful to your God;
you love the wages of a prostitute
at every threshing floor.
Threshing floors and winepresses will not feed the people;
the new wine will fail them.
They will not remain in the Lord’s land;

Ephraim will return to Egypt
and eat unclean food in Assyria.
They will not pour out wine offerings to the Lord,
nor will their sacrifices please him.
Such sacrifices will be to them like the bread of mourners;
all who eat them will be unclean.
This food will be for themselves;
it will not come into the temple of the Lord.

What will you do on the day of your appointed festivals,
on the feast days of the Lord?
Even if they escape from destruction,
Egypt will gather them,
and Memphis will bury them.
Their treasures of silver will be taken over by briars,
and thorns will overrun their tents.
The days of punishment are coming,
the days of reckoning are at hand.
Let Israel know this.
Because your sins are so many
and your hostility so great,
the prophet is considered a fool,
the inspired person a maniac.
The prophet, along with my God,
is the watchman over Ephraim,
yet snares await him on all his paths,
and hostility in the house of his God.
They have sunk deep into corruption,
as in the days of Gibeah.
God will remember their wickedness
and punish them for their sins.

“When I found Israel,
it was like finding grapes in the desert;
when I saw your ancestors,
it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree.
But when they came to Baal Peor,
they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol
and became as vile as the thing they loved.
Ephraim’s glory will fly away like a bird—

no birth, no pregnancy, no conception.
Even if they rear children,
I will bereave them of every one.
Woe to them
when I turn away from them!
I have seen Ephraim, like Tyre,
planted in a pleasant place.
But Ephraim will bring out
their children to the slayer.”

Give them, Lord—
what will you give them?
Give them wombs that miscarry
and breasts that are dry.

“Because of all their wickedness in Gilgal,
I hated them there.
Because of their sinful deeds,
I will drive them out of my house.
I will no longer love them;
all their leaders are rebellious.
Ephraim is blighted,
their root is withered,
they yield no fruit.
Even if they bear children,
I will slay their cherished offspring.”

My God will reject them
because they have not obeyed him;
they will be wanderers among the nations.

Israel was a spreading vine;
he brought forth fruit for himself.
As his fruit increased,
he built more altars;
as his land prospered,
he adorned his sacred stones.
Their heart is deceitful,
and now they must bear their guilt.
The Lord will demolish their altars

and destroy their sacred stones.

Then they will say, "We have no king
 because we did not revere the Lord.
 But even if we had a king,
 what could he do for us?"
 They make many promises,
 take false oaths
 and make agreements;
 therefore lawsuits spring up
 like poisonous weeds in a plowed field.
 The people who live in Samaria fear
 for the calf-idol of Beth Aven.
 Its people will mourn over it,
 and so will its idolatrous priests,
 those who had rejoiced over its splendor,
 because it is taken from them into exile.
 It will be carried to Assyria
 as tribute for the great king.
 Ephraim will be disgraced;
 Israel will be ashamed of its foreign alliances.
 Samaria's king will be destroyed,
 swept away like a twig on the surface of the waters.
 The high places of wickedness will be destroyed—
 it is the sin of Israel.
 Thorns and thistles will grow up
 and cover their altars.
 Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!"
 and to the hills, "Fall on us!"

"Since the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, Israel,
 and there you have remained.
 Will not war again overtake
 the evildoers in Gibeah?
 When I please, I will punish them;
 nations will be gathered against them
 to put them in bonds for their double sin.
 Ephraim is a trained heifer
 that loves to thresh;
 so I will put a yoke

on her fair neck.
I will drive Ephraim,
Judah must plow,
and Jacob must break up the ground.
Sow righteousness for yourselves,
reap the fruit of unfailing love,
and break up your unplowed ground;
for it is time to seek the Lord,
until he comes
and showers his righteousness on you.
But you have planted wickedness,
you have reaped evil,
you have eaten the fruit of deception.
Because you have depended on your own strength
and on your many warriors,
the roar of battle will rise against your people,
so that all your fortresses will be devastated—
as Shalman devastated Beth Arbel on the day of battle,
when mothers were dashed to the ground with their children.
So will it happen to you, Bethel,
because your wickedness is great.
When that day dawns,
the king of Israel will be completely destroyed.

“When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
But the more they were called,
the more they went away from me.
They sacrificed to the Baals
and they burned incense to images.
It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
taking them by the arms;
but they did not realize
it was I who healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness,
with ties of love.
To them I was like one who lifts
a little child to the cheek,
and I bent down to feed them.

“Will they not return to Egypt
 and will not Assyria rule over them
 because they refuse to repent?
 A sword will flash in their cities;
 it will devour their false prophets
 and put an end to their plans.
 My people are determined to turn from me.
 Even though they call me God Most High,
 I will by no means exalt them.

“How can I give you up, Ephraim?
 How can I hand you over, Israel?
 How can I treat you like Admah?
 How can I make you like Zeboyim?
 My heart is changed within me;
 all my compassion is aroused.
 I will not carry out my fierce anger,
 nor will I devastate Ephraim again.
 For I am God, and not a man—
 the Holy One among you.
 I will not come against their cities.
 They will follow the Lord;
 he will roar like a lion.
 When he roars,
 his children will come trembling from the west.
 They will come from Egypt,
 trembling like sparrows,
 from Assyria, fluttering like doves.
 I will settle them in their homes,”
 declares the Lord.

Ephraim has surrounded me with lies,
 Israel with deceit.
 And Judah is unruly against God,
 even against the faithful Holy One.
 Ephraim feeds on the wind;
 he pursues the east wind all day
 and multiplies lies and violence.
 He makes a treaty with Assyria
 and sends olive oil to Egypt.

The Lord has a charge to bring against Judah;
 he will punish Jacob according to his ways
 and repay him according to his deeds.
 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel;
 as a man he struggled with God.
 He struggled with the angel and overcame him;
 he wept and begged for his favor.
 He found him at Bethel
 and talked with him there—
 the Lord God Almighty,
 the Lord is his name!
 But you must return to your God;
 maintain love and justice,
 and wait for your God always.

The merchant uses dishonest scales
 and loves to defraud.
 Ephraim boasts,
 "I am very rich; I have become wealthy.
 With all my wealth they will not find in me
 any iniquity or sin."

"I have been the Lord your God
 ever since you came out of Egypt;
 I will make you live in tents again,
 as in the days of your appointed festivals.
 I spoke to the prophets,
 gave them many visions
 and told parables through them."

Is Gilead wicked?
 Its people are worthless!
 Do they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal?
 Their altars will be like piles of stones
 on a plowed field.
 Jacob fled to the country of Aram;
 Israel served to get a wife,
 and to pay for her he tended sheep.
 The Lord used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt,
 by a prophet he cared for him.

But Ephraim has aroused his bitter anger;
his Lord will leave on him the guilt of his bloodshed
and will repay him for his contempt.

When Ephraim spoke, people trembled;
he was exalted in Israel.
But he became guilty of Baal worship and died.
Now they sin more and more;
they make idols for themselves from their silver,
cleverly fashioned images,
all of them the work of craftsmen.

It is said of these people,
“They offer human sacrifices!
They kiss calf-idols!”
Therefore they will be like the morning mist,
like the early dew that disappears,
like chaff swirling from a threshing floor,
like smoke escaping through a window.

“But I have been the Lord your God
ever since you came out of Egypt.
You shall acknowledge no God but me,
no Savior except me.
I cared for you in the wilderness,
in the land of burning heat.
When I fed them, they were satisfied;
when they were satisfied, they became proud;
then they forgot me.
So I will be like a lion to them,
like a leopard I will lurk by the path.
Like a bear robbed of her cubs,
I will attack them and rip them open;
like a lion I will devour them—
a wild animal will tear them apart.

“You are destroyed, Israel,
because you are against me, against your helper.
Where is your king, that he may save you?
Where are your rulers in all your towns,
of whom you said,

'Give me a king and princes'?
 So in my anger I gave you a king,
 and in my wrath I took him away.
 The guilt of Ephraim is stored up,
 his sins are kept on record.
 Pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him,
 but he is a child without wisdom;
 when the time arrives,
 he doesn't have the sense to come out of the womb.

"I will deliver this people from the power of the grave;
 I will redeem them from death.
 Where, O death, are your plagues?
 Where, O grave, is your destruction?

"I will have no compassion,
 even though he thrives among his brothers.
 An east wind from the Lord will come,
 blowing in from the desert;
 his spring will fail
 and his well dry up.
 His storehouse will be plundered
 of all its treasures.
 The people of Samaria must bear their guilt,
 because they have rebelled against their God.
 They will fall by the sword;
 their little ones will be dashed to the ground,
 their pregnant women ripped open."

Return, Israel, to the Lord your God.
 Your sins have been your downfall!
 Take words with you
 and return to the Lord.
 Say to him:
 "Forgive all our sins
 and receive us graciously,
 that we may offer the fruit of our lips.
 Assyria cannot save us;
 we will not mount warhorses.
 We will never again say 'Our gods'

to what our own hands have made,
for in you the fatherless find compassion.”

“I will heal their waywardness
and love them freely,
for my anger has turned away from them.
I will be like the dew to Israel;
he will blossom like a lily.
Like a cedar of Lebanon
he will send down his roots;
his young shoots will grow.
His splendor will be like an olive tree,
his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon.
People will dwell again in his shade;
they will flourish like the grain,
they will blossom like the vine—
Israel’s fame will be like the wine of Lebanon.
Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols?
I will answer him and care for him.
I am like a flourishing juniper;
your fruitfulness comes from me.”

Who is wise? Let them realize these things.
Who is discerning? Let them understand.
The ways of the Lord are right;
the righteous walk in them,
but the rebellious stumble in them.

Joel

The word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

Hear this, you elders;
listen, all who live in the land.
Has anything like this ever happened in your days
or in the days of your ancestors?
Tell it to your children,
and let your children tell it to their children,
and their children to the next generation.
What the locust swarm has left
the great locusts have eaten;
what the great locusts have left
the young locusts have eaten;
what the young locusts have left
other locusts have eaten.

Wake up, you drunkards, and weep!
Wail, all you drinkers of wine;
wail because of the new wine,
for it has been snatched from your lips.
A nation has invaded my land,
a mighty army without number;
it has the teeth of a lion,
the fangs of a lioness.
It has laid waste my vines
and ruined my fig trees.
It has stripped off their bark
and thrown it away,
leaving their branches white.

Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth
grieving for the betrothed of her youth.
Grain offerings and drink offerings
are cut off from the house of the Lord.
The priests are in mourning,
those who minister before the Lord.
The fields are ruined,
the ground is dried up;

the grain is destroyed,
the new wine is dried up,
the olive oil fails.

Despair, you farmers,
wail, you vine growers;
grieve for the wheat and the barley,
because the harvest of the field is destroyed.
The vine is dried up
and the fig tree is withered;
the pomegranate, the palm and the apple tree—
all the trees of the field—are dried up.
Surely the people's joy
is withered away.

Put on sackcloth, you priests, and mourn;
wail, you who minister before the altar.
Come, spend the night in sackcloth,
you who minister before my God;
for the grain offerings and drink offerings
are withheld from the house of your God.
Declare a holy fast;
call a sacred assembly.
Summon the elders
and all who live in the land
to the house of the Lord your God,
and cry out to the Lord.

Alas for that day!
For the day of the Lord is near;
it will come like destruction from the Almighty.

Has not the food been cut off
before our very eyes—
joy and gladness
from the house of our God?
The seeds are shriveled
beneath the clods.
The storehouses are in ruins,
the granaries have been broken down,

for the grain has dried up.
How the cattle moan!
The herds mill about
because they have no pasture;
even the flocks of sheep are suffering.

To you, Lord, I call,
for fire has devoured the pastures in the wilderness
and flames have burned up all the trees of the field.
Even the wild animals pant for you;
the streams of water have dried up
and fire has devoured the pastures in the wilderness.

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy hill.
Let all who live in the land tremble,
for the day of the Lord is coming.
It is close at hand—
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness.
Like dawn spreading across the mountains
a large and mighty army comes,
such as never was in ancient times
nor ever will be in ages to come.

Before them fire devours,
behind them a flame blazes.
Before them the land is like the garden of Eden,
behind them, a desert waste—
nothing escapes them.
They have the appearance of horses;
they gallop along like cavalry.
With a noise like that of chariots
they leap over the mountaintops,
like a crackling fire consuming stubble,
like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

At the sight of them, nations are in anguish;
every face turns pale.
They charge like warriors;

they scale walls like soldiers.
They all march in line,
not swerving from their course.
They do not jostle each other;
each marches straight ahead.
They plunge through defenses
without breaking ranks.
They rush upon the city;
they run along the wall.
They climb into the houses;
like thieves they enter through the windows.

Before them the earth shakes,
the heavens tremble,
the sun and moon are darkened,
and the stars no longer shine.
The Lord thunders
at the head of his army;
his forces are beyond number,
and mighty is the army that obeys his command.
The day of the Lord is great;
it is dreadful.
Who can endure it?

“Even now,” declares the Lord,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Rend your heart
and not your garments.
Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.
Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave behind a blessing—
grain offerings and drink offerings
for the Lord your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion,

declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly.
Gather the people,
consecrate the assembly;
bring together the elders,
gather the children,
those nursing at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.
Let the priests, who minister before the Lord,
weep between the portico and the altar.
Let them say, "Spare your people, Lord.
Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn,
a byword among the nations.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

Then the Lord was jealous for his land
and took pity on his people.

The Lord replied to them:

"I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil,
enough to satisfy you fully;
never again will I make you
an object of scorn to the nations.

"I will drive the northern horde far from you,
pushing it into a parched and barren land;
its eastern ranks will drown in the Dead Sea
and its western ranks in the Mediterranean Sea.
And its stench will go up;
its smell will rise."

Surely he has done great things!
Do not be afraid, land of Judah;
be glad and rejoice.
Surely the Lord has done great things!
Do not be afraid, you wild animals,
for the pastures in the wilderness are becoming green.

The trees are bearing their fruit;
the fig tree and the vine yield their riches.
Be glad, people of Zion,
rejoice in the Lord your God,
for he has given you the autumn rains
because he is faithful.
He sends you abundant showers,
both autumn and spring rains, as before.
The threshing floors will be filled with grain;
the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.

“I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—
the great locust and the young locust,
the other locusts and the locust swarm—
my great army that I sent among you.
You will have plenty to eat, until you are full,
and you will praise the name of the Lord your God,
who has worked wonders for you;
never again will my people be shamed.
Then you will know that I am in Israel,
that I am the Lord your God,
and that there is no other;
never again will my people be shamed.

“And afterward,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.
I will show wonders in the heavens
and on the earth,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.
The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved;
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem

there will be deliverance,
 as the Lord has said,
 even among the survivors
 whom the Lord calls.

“In those days and at that time,
 when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,
 I will gather all nations
 and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
 There I will put them on trial
 for what they did to my inheritance, my people Israel,
 because they scattered my people among the nations
 and divided up my land.
 They cast lots for my people
 and traded boys for prostitutes;
 they sold girls for wine to drink.

“Now what have you against me, Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples. You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland.

“See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away.” The Lord has spoken.

Proclaim this among the nations:
 Prepare for war!
 Rouse the warriors!
 Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.
 Beat your plowshares into swords
 and your pruning hooks into spears.
 Let the weakling say,
 “I am strong!”
 Come quickly, all you nations from every side,
 and assemble there.

Bring down your warriors, Lord!

“Let the nations be roused;
let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat,
for there I will sit
to judge all the nations on every side.
Swing the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Come, trample the grapes,
for the winepress is full
and the vats overflow—
so great is their wickedness!”

Multitudes, multitudes
in the valley of decision!
For the day of the Lord is near
in the valley of decision.
The sun and moon will be darkened,
and the stars no longer shine.
The Lord will roar from Zion
and thunder from Jerusalem;
the earth and the heavens will tremble.
But the Lord will be a refuge for his people,
a stronghold for the people of Israel.

“Then you will know that I, the Lord your God,
dwell in Zion, my holy hill.
Jerusalem will be holy;
never again will foreigners invade her.

“In that day the mountains will drip new wine,
and the hills will flow with milk;
all the ravines of Judah will run with water.
A fountain will flow out of the Lord’s house
and will water the valley of acacias.
But Egypt will be desolate,
Edom a desert waste,
because of violence done to the people of Judah,
in whose land they shed innocent blood.
Judah will be inhabited forever
and Jerusalem through all generations.

Shall I leave their innocent blood unavenged?
No, I will not.”

The Lord dwells in Zion!

Amos

The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa—the vision he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel.

He said:

“The Lord roars from Zion
and thunders from Jerusalem;
the pastures of the shepherds dry up,
and the top of Carmel withers.”

This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Damascus,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because she threshed Gilead
with sledges having iron teeth,
I will send fire on the house of Hazael
that will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad.
I will break down the gate of Damascus;
I will destroy the king who is in the Valley of Aven
and the one who holds the scepter in Beth Eden.
The people of Aram will go into exile to Kir,”
says the Lord.

This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Gaza,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because she took captive whole communities
and sold them to Edom,
I will send fire on the walls of Gaza
that will consume her fortresses.
I will destroy the king of Ashdod
and the one who holds the scepter in Ashkelon.
I will turn my hand against Ekron,
till the last of the Philistines are dead,”
says the Sovereign Lord.

This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Tyre,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because she sold whole communities of captives to Edom,
disregarding a treaty of brotherhood,
I will send fire on the walls of Tyre
that will consume her fortresses.”

This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Edom,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because he pursued his brother with a sword
and slaughtered the women of the land,
because his anger raged continually
and his fury flamed unchecked,
I will send fire on Teman
that will consume the fortresses of Bozrah.”

This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Ammon,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead
in order to extend his borders,
I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah
that will consume her fortresses
amid war cries on the day of battle,
amid violent winds on a stormy day.
Her king will go into exile,
he and his officials together,”
says the Lord.

This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Moab,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because he burned to ashes
the bones of Edom’s king,

I will send fire on Moab
that will consume the fortresses of Kerioth.
Moab will go down in great tumult
amid war cries and the blast of the trumpet.
I will destroy her ruler
and kill all her officials with him,”
says the Lord.

This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Judah,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because they have rejected the law of the Lord
and have not kept his decrees,
because they have been led astray by false gods,
the gods their ancestors followed,
I will send fire on Judah
that will consume the fortresses of Jerusalem.”

This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Israel,
even for four, I will not relent.
They sell the innocent for silver,
and the needy for a pair of sandals.
They trample on the heads of the poor
as on the dust of the ground
and deny justice to the oppressed.
Father and son use the same girl
and so profane my holy name.
They lie down beside every altar
on garments taken in pledge.
In the house of their god
they drink wine taken as fines.

“Yet I destroyed the Amorites before them,
though they were tall as the cedars
and strong as the oaks.
I destroyed their fruit above
and their roots below.

I brought you up out of Egypt
and led you forty years in the wilderness
to give you the land of the Amorites.

“I also raised up prophets from among your children
and Nazirites from among your youths.

Is this not true, people of Israel?”

declares the Lord.

“But you made the Nazirites drink wine
and commanded the prophets not to prophesy.

“Now then, I will crush you
as a cart crushes when loaded with grain.

The swift will not escape,
the strong will not muster their strength,
and the warrior will not save his life.

The archer will not stand his ground,
the fleet-footed soldier will not get away,
and the horseman will not save his life.

Even the bravest warriors
will flee naked on that day,”

declares the Lord.

Hear this word, people of Israel, the word the Lord has spoken against you
—against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt:

“You only have I chosen
of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you
for all your sins.”

Do two walk together
unless they have agreed to do so?

Does a lion roar in the thicket
when it has no prey?

Does it growl in its den
when it has caught nothing?

Does a bird swoop down to a trap on the ground
when no bait is there?

Does a trap spring up from the ground

if it has not caught anything?
When a trumpet sounds in a city,
do not the people tremble?
When disaster comes to a city,
has not the Lord caused it?

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing
without revealing his plan
to his servants the prophets.

The lion has roared—
who will not fear?
The Sovereign Lord has spoken—
who can but prophesy?

Proclaim to the fortresses of Ashdod
and to the fortresses of Egypt:
“Assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria;
see the great unrest within her
and the oppression among her people.”

“They do not know how to do right,” declares the Lord,
“who store up in their fortresses
what they have plundered and looted.”

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says:

“An enemy will overrun your land,
pull down your strongholds
and plunder your fortresses.”

This is what the Lord says:

“As a shepherd rescues from the lion’s mouth
only two leg bones or a piece of an ear,
so will the Israelites living in Samaria be rescued,
with only the head of a bed
and a piece of fabric from a couch.”

“Hear this and testify against the descendants of Jacob,” declares the Lord, the Lord God Almighty.

“On the day I punish Israel for her sins,
I will destroy the altars of Bethel;
the horns of the altar will be cut off
and fall to the ground.
I will tear down the winter house
along with the summer house;
the houses adorned with ivory will be destroyed
and the mansions will be demolished,”
declares the Lord.

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria,
you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy
and say to your husbands, “Bring us some drinks!”
The Sovereign Lord has sworn by his holiness:
“The time will surely come
when you will be taken away with hooks,
the last of you with fishhooks.
You will each go straight out
through breaches in the wall,
and you will be cast out toward Harmon,”
declares the Lord.

“Go to Bethel and sin;
go to Gilgal and sin yet more.
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
your tithes every three years.
Burn leavened bread as a thank offering
and brag about your freewill offerings—
boast about them, you Israelites,
for this is what you love to do,”
declares the Sovereign Lord.

“I gave you empty stomachs in every city
and lack of bread in every town,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“I also withheld rain from you

when the harvest was still three months away.
I sent rain on one town,
but withheld it from another.
One field had rain;
another had none and dried up.
People staggered from town to town for water
but did not get enough to drink,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards,
destroying them with blight and mildew.
Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“I sent plagues among you
as I did to Egypt.
I killed your young men with the sword,
along with your captured horses.
I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“I overthrew some of you
as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel,
and because I will do this to you, Israel,
prepare to meet your God.”

He who forms the mountains,
who creates the wind,
and who reveals his thoughts to mankind,
who turns dawn to darkness,
and treads on the heights of the earth—
the Lord God Almighty is his name.

Hear this word, Israel, this lament I take up concerning you:

“Fallen is Virgin Israel,
never to rise again,
deserted in her own land,
with no one to lift her up.”

This is what the Sovereign Lord says to Israel:

“Your city that marches out a thousand strong
will have only a hundred left;
your town that marches out a hundred strong
will have only ten left.”

This is what the Lord says to Israel:

“Seek me and live;
do not seek Bethel,
do not go to Gilgal,
do not journey to Beersheba.
For Gilgal will surely go into exile,
and Bethel will be reduced to nothing.”
Seek the Lord and live,
or he will sweep through the tribes of Joseph like a fire;
it will devour them,
and Bethel will have no one to quench it.

There are those who turn justice into bitterness
and cast righteousness to the ground.

He who made the Pleiades and Orion,
who turns midnight into dawn
and darkens day into night,
who calls for the waters of the sea
and pours them out over the face of the land—
the Lord is his name.

With a blinding flash he destroys the stronghold
and brings the fortified city to ruin.

There are those who hate the one who upholds justice in court
and detest the one who tells the truth.

You levy a straw tax on the poor
and impose a tax on their grain.
Therefore, though you have built stone mansions,
you will not live in them;
though you have planted lush vineyards,
you will not drink their wine.
For I know how many are your offenses
and how great your sins.

There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes
and deprive the poor of justice in the courts.
Therefore the prudent keep quiet in such times,
for the times are evil.

Seek good, not evil,
that you may live.
Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you,
just as you say he is.
Hate evil, love good;
maintain justice in the courts.
Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy
on the remnant of Joseph.

Therefore this is what the Lord, the Lord God Almighty, says:

“There will be wailing in all the streets
and cries of anguish in every public square.
The farmers will be summoned to weep
and the mourners to wail.
There will be wailing in all the vineyards,
for I will pass through your midst,”
says the Lord.

Woe to you who long
for the day of the Lord!
Why do you long for the day of the Lord?
That day will be darkness, not light.

It will be as though a man fled from a lion
 only to meet a bear,
 as though he entered his house
 and rested his hand on the wall
 only to have a snake bite him.
 Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light—
 pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?

“I hate, I despise your religious festivals;
 your assemblies are a stench to me.
 Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings,
 I will not accept them.
 Though you bring choice fellowship offerings,
 I will have no regard for them.
 Away with the noise of your songs!
 I will not listen to the music of your harps.
 But let justice roll on like a river,
 righteousness like a never-failing stream!

“Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings
 forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel?
 You have lifted up the shrine of your king,
 the pedestal of your idols,
 the star of your god—
 which you made for yourselves.
 Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Damascus,”
 says the Lord, whose name is God Almighty.

Woe to you who are complacent in Zion,
 and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria,
 you notable men of the foremost nation,
 to whom the people of Israel come!
 Go to Kalneh and look at it;
 go from there to great Hamath,
 and then go down to Gath in Philistia.
 Are they better off than your two kingdoms?
 Is their land larger than yours?
 You put off the day of disaster
 and bring near a reign of terror.
 You lie on beds adorned with ivory

and lounge on your couches.
 You dine on choice lambs
 and fattened calves.
 You strum away on your harps like David
 and improvise on musical instruments.
 You drink wine by the bowlful
 and use the finest lotions,
 but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.
 Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile;
 your feasting and lounging will end.

The Sovereign Lord has sworn by himself—the Lord God Almighty declares:

“I abhor the pride of Jacob
 and detest his fortresses;
 I will deliver up the city
 and everything in it.”

If ten people are left in one house, they too will die. And if the relative who comes to carry the bodies out of the house to burn them asks anyone who might be hiding there, “Is anyone else with you?” and he says, “No,” then he will go on to say, “Hush! We must not mention the name of the Lord.”

For the Lord has given the command,
 and he will smash the great house into pieces
 and the small house into bits.

Do horses run on the rocky crags?
 Does one plow the sea with oxen?
 But you have turned justice into poison
 and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness—
 you who rejoice in the conquest of Lo Debar
 and say, “Did we not take Karnaim by our own strength?”

For the Lord God Almighty declares,
 “I will stir up a nation against you, Israel,
 that will oppress you all the way
 from Lebo Hamath to the valley of the Arabah.”

This is what the Sovereign Lord showed me: He was preparing swarms of locusts after the king's share had been harvested and just as the late crops were coming up. When they had stripped the land clean, I cried out, "Sovereign Lord, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!"

So the Lord relented.

"This will not happen," the Lord said.

This is what the Sovereign Lord showed me: The Sovereign Lord was calling for judgment by fire; it dried up the great deep and devoured the land. Then I cried out, "Sovereign Lord, I beg you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!"

So the Lord relented.

"This will not happen either," the Sovereign Lord said.

This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. And the Lord asked me, "What do you see, Amos?"

"A plumb line," I replied.

Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

"The high places of Isaac will be destroyed
and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined;
with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam."

Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. For this is what Amos is saying:

"Jeroboam will die by the sword,
and Israel will surely go into exile,
away from their native land."

Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."

Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' Now then, hear the word of the Lord. You say,

“Do not prophesy against Israel,
and stop preaching against the descendants of Isaac.’

“Therefore this is what the Lord says:

“Your wife will become a prostitute in the city,
and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword.
Your land will be measured and divided up,
and you yourself will die in a pagan country.
And Israel will surely go into exile,
away from their native land.”

This is what the Sovereign Lord showed me: a basket of ripe fruit. “What do you see, Amos?” he asked.

“A basket of ripe fruit,” I answered.

Then the Lord said to me, “The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

“In that day,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “the songs in the temple will turn to wailing. Many, many bodies—flung everywhere! Silence!”

Hear this, you who trample the needy
and do away with the poor of the land,

saying,

“When will the New Moon be over
that we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath be ended
that we may market wheat?”—
skimping on the measure,
boosting the price
and cheating with dishonest scales,
buying the poor with silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals,
selling even the sweepings with the wheat.

The Lord has sworn by himself, the Pride of Jacob: “I will never forget anything they have done.

“Will not the land tremble for this,

and all who live in it mourn?
The whole land will rise like the Nile;
it will be stirred up and then sink
like the river of Egypt.

“In that day,” declares the Sovereign Lord,

“I will make the sun go down at noon
and darken the earth in broad daylight.
I will turn your religious festivals into mourning
and all your singing into weeping.
I will make all of you wear sackcloth
and shave your heads.
I will make that time like mourning for an only son
and the end of it like a bitter day.

“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord,
“when I will send a famine through the land—
not a famine of food or a thirst for water,
but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

People will stagger from sea to sea
and wander from north to east,
searching for the word of the Lord,
but they will not find it.

“In that day

“the lovely young women and strong young men
will faint because of thirst.
Those who swear by the sin of Samaria—
who say, ‘As surely as your god lives, Dan,’
or, ‘As surely as the god of Beersheba lives’—
they will fall, never to rise again.”

I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said:

“Strike the tops of the pillars
so that the thresholds shake.
Bring them down on the heads of all the people;

those who are left I will kill with the sword.
Not one will get away,
none will escape.
Though they dig down to the depths below,
from there my hand will take them.
Though they climb up to the heavens above,
from there I will bring them down.
Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel,
there I will hunt them down and seize them.
Though they hide from my eyes at the bottom of the sea,
there I will command the serpent to bite them.
Though they are driven into exile by their enemies,
there I will command the sword to slay them.

“I will keep my eye on them
for harm and not for good.”

The Lord, the Lord Almighty—
he touches the earth and it melts,
and all who live in it mourn;
the whole land rises like the Nile,
then sinks like the river of Egypt;
he builds his lofty palace in the heavens
and sets its foundation on the earth;
he calls for the waters of the sea
and pours them out over the face of the land—
the Lord is his name.

“Are not you Israelites
the same to me as the Cushites?”
declares the Lord.

“Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt,
the Philistines from Caphtor
and the Arameans from Kir?

“Surely the eyes of the Sovereign Lord
are on the sinful kingdom.
I will destroy it
from the face of the earth.
Yet I will not totally destroy

the descendants of Jacob,”
declares the Lord.
“For I will give the command,
and I will shake the people of Israel
among all the nations
as grain is shaken in a sieve,
and not a pebble will reach the ground.
All the sinners among my people
will die by the sword,
all those who say,
‘Disaster will not overtake or meet us.’

“In that day

“I will restore David’s fallen shelter—
I will repair its broken walls
and restore its ruins—
and will rebuild it as it used to be,
so that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations that bear my name,”
declares the Lord, who will do these things.

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord,

“when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman
and the planter by the one treading grapes.
New wine will drip from the mountains
and flow from all the hills,
and I will bring my people Israel back from exile.

“They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them.
They will plant vineyards and drink their wine;
they will make gardens and eat their fruit.
I will plant Israel in their own land,
never again to be uprooted
from the land I have given them,”

says the Lord your God.

Obadiah

The vision of Obadiah.

This is what the Sovereign Lord says about Edom—

We have heard a message from the Lord:

An envoy was sent to the nations to say,
“Rise, let us go against her for battle” —

“See, I will make you small among the nations;
you will be utterly despised.

The pride of your heart has deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rocks
and make your home on the heights,
you who say to yourself,

‘Who can bring me down to the ground?’

Though you soar like the eagle
and make your nest among the stars,
from there I will bring you down,”

declares the Lord.

“If thieves came to you,
if robbers in the night—

oh, what a disaster awaits you!—

would they not steal only as much as they wanted?

If grape pickers came to you,
would they not leave a few grapes?

But how Esau will be ransacked,
his hidden treasures pillaged!

All your allies will force you to the border;
your friends will deceive and overpower you;
those who eat your bread will set a trap for you,
but you will not detect it.

“In that day,” declares the Lord,

“will I not destroy the wise men of Edom,
those of understanding in the mountains of Esau?

Your warriors, Teman, will be terrified,
and everyone in Esau’s mountains
will be cut down in the slaughter.

Because of the violence against your brother Jacob,
you will be covered with shame;
you will be destroyed forever.

On the day you stood aloof
while strangers carried off his wealth
and foreigners entered his gates
and cast lots for Jerusalem,
you were like one of them.

You should not gloat over your brother
in the day of his misfortune,
nor rejoice over the people of Judah
in the day of their destruction,
nor boast so much
in the day of their trouble.

You should not march through the gates of my people
in the day of their disaster,
nor gloat over them in their calamity
in the day of their disaster,
nor seize their wealth
in the day of their disaster.

You should not wait at the crossroads
to cut down their fugitives,
nor hand over their survivors
in the day of their trouble.

“The day of the Lord is near
for all nations.

As you have done, it will be done to you;
your deeds will return upon your own head.

Just as you drank on my holy hill,
so all the nations will drink continually;
they will drink and drink
and be as if they had never been.

But on Mount Zion will be deliverance;
it will be holy,
and Jacob will possess his inheritance.

Jacob will be a fire
and Joseph a flame;

Esau will be stubble,
and they will set him on fire and destroy him.

There will be no survivors
from Esau.”

The Lord has spoken.

People from the Negev will occupy
the mountains of Esau,
and people from the foothills will possess
the land of the Philistines.

They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria,
and Benjamin will possess Gilead.

This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan
will possess the land as far as Zarephath;
the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
will possess the towns of the Negev.

Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion
to govern the mountains of Esau.
And the kingdom will be the Lord's.

Jonah

The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”

“Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. Then they cried out to the Lord, “Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.” Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. He said:

“In my distress I called to the Lord,
and he answered me.

From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help,
and you listened to my cry.
You hurled me into the depths,
into the very heart of the seas,
and the currents swirled about me;
all your waves and breakers
swept over me.
I said, 'I have been banished
from your sight;
yet I will look again
toward your holy temple.'
The engulfing waters threatened me,
the deep surrounded me;
seaweed was wrapped around my head.
To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth beneath barred me in forever.
But you, Lord my God,
brought my life up from the pit.

"When my life was ebbing away,
I remembered you, Lord,
and my prayer rose to you,
to your holy temple.

"Those who cling to worthless idols
turn away from God's love for them.
But I, with shouts of grateful praise,
will sacrifice to you.
What I have vowed I will make good.
I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'"

And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.
Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."
Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord, "Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

But the Lord replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

Micah

The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah—the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Hear, you peoples, all of you,
listen, earth and all who live in it,
that the Sovereign Lord may bear witness against you,
the Lord from his holy temple.

Look! The Lord is coming from his dwelling place;
he comes down and treads on the heights of the earth.
The mountains melt beneath him
and the valleys split apart,
like wax before the fire,
like water rushing down a slope.
All this is because of Jacob's transgression,
because of the sins of the people of Israel.
What is Jacob's transgression?
Is it not Samaria?
What is Judah's high place?
Is it not Jerusalem?

"Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of rubble,
a place for planting vineyards.
I will pour her stones into the valley
and lay bare her foundations.
All her idols will be broken to pieces;
all her temple gifts will be burned with fire;
I will destroy all her images.
Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of prostitutes,
as the wages of prostitutes they will again be used."

Because of this I will weep and wail;
I will go about barefoot and naked.
I will howl like a jackal
and moan like an owl.
For Samaria's plague is incurable;
it has spread to Judah.

It has reached the very gate of my people,
even to Jerusalem itself.
Tell it not in Gath;
weep not at all.
In Beth Ophrah
roll in the dust.
Pass by naked and in shame,
you who live in Shaphir.
Those who live in Zaanan
will not come out.
Beth Ezel is in mourning;
it no longer protects you.
Those who live in Maroth writhe in pain,
waiting for relief,
because disaster has come from the Lord,
even to the gate of Jerusalem.
You who live in Lachish,
harness fast horses to the chariot.
You are where the sin of Daughter Zion began,
for the transgressions of Israel were found in you.
Therefore you will give parting gifts
to Moresheth Gath.
The town of Akzib will prove deceptive
to the kings of Israel.
I will bring a conqueror against you
who live in Mareshah.
The nobles of Israel
will flee to Adullam.
Shave your head in mourning
for the children in whom you delight;
make yourself as bald as the vulture,
for they will go from you into exile.

Woe to those who plan iniquity,
to those who plot evil on their beds!
At morning's light they carry it out
because it is in their power to do it.
They covet fields and seize them,
and houses, and take them.
They defraud people of their homes,

they rob them of their inheritance.

Therefore, the Lord says:

“I am planning disaster against this people,
from which you cannot save yourselves.
You will no longer walk proudly,
for it will be a time of calamity.
In that day people will ridicule you;
they will taunt you with this mournful song:
‘We are utterly ruined;
my people’s possession is divided up.
He takes it from me!
He assigns our fields to traitors.’”

Therefore you will have no one in the assembly of the Lord
to divide the land by lot.

“Do not prophesy,” their prophets say.
“Do not prophesy about these things;
disgrace will not overtake us.”
You descendants of Jacob, should it be said,
“Does the Lord become impatient?
Does he do such things?”

“Do not my words do good
to the one whose ways are upright?
Lately my people have risen up
like an enemy.
You strip off the rich robe
from those who pass by without a care,
like men returning from battle.
You drive the women of my people
from their pleasant homes.
You take away my blessing
from their children forever.
Get up, go away!
For this is not your resting place,
because it is defiled,
it is ruined, beyond all remedy.

If a liar and deceiver comes and says,
‘I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,’
that would be just the prophet for this people!

“I will surely gather all of you, Jacob;
I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel.
I will bring them together like sheep in a pen,
like a flock in its pasture;
the place will throng with people.
The One who breaks open the way will go up before them;
they will break through the gate and go out.
Their King will pass through before them,
the Lord at their head.”

Then I said,

“Listen, you leaders of Jacob,
you rulers of Israel.
Should you not embrace justice,
you who hate good and love evil;
who tear the skin from my people
and the flesh from their bones;
who eat my people’s flesh,
strip off their skin
and break their bones in pieces;
who chop them up like meat for the pan,
like flesh for the pot?”

Then they will cry out to the Lord,
but he will not answer them.
At that time he will hide his face from them
because of the evil they have done.

This is what the Lord says:

“As for the prophets
who lead my people astray,
they proclaim ‘peace’
if they have something to eat,
but prepare to wage war against anyone

who refuses to feed them.
Therefore night will come over you, without visions,
and darkness, without divination.
The sun will set for the prophets,
and the day will go dark for them.
The seers will be ashamed
and the diviners disgraced.
They will all cover their faces
because there is no answer from God.”
But as for me, I am filled with power,
with the Spirit of the Lord,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression,
to Israel his sin.

Hear this, you leaders of Jacob,
you rulers of Israel,
who despise justice
and distort all that is right;
who build Zion with bloodshed,
and Jerusalem with wickedness.
Her leaders judge for a bribe,
her priests teach for a price,
and her prophets tell fortunes for money.
Yet they look for the Lord’s support and say,
“Is not the Lord among us?
No disaster will come upon us.”
Therefore because of you,
Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.

In the last days

the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established
as the highest of the mountains;
it will be exalted above the hills,
and peoples will stream to it.

Many nations will come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths.”
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He will judge between many peoples
and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.
Everyone will sit under their own vine
and under their own fig tree,
and no one will make them afraid,
for the Lord Almighty has spoken.
All the nations may walk
in the name of their gods,
but we will walk in the name of the Lord
our God for ever and ever.

“In that day,” declares the Lord,

“I will gather the lame;
I will assemble the exiles
and those I have brought to grief.
I will make the lame my remnant,
those driven away a strong nation.
The Lord will rule over them in Mount Zion
from that day and forever.
As for you, watchtower of the flock,
stronghold of Daughter Zion,
the former dominion will be restored to you;
kingship will come to Daughter Jerusalem.”

Why do you now cry aloud—
have you no king?
Has your ruler perished,
that pain seizes you like that of a woman in labor?

Writhe in agony, Daughter Zion,
like a woman in labor,
for now you must leave the city
to camp in the open field.
You will go to Babylon;
there you will be rescued.
There the Lord will redeem you
out of the hand of your enemies.

But now many nations
are gathered against you.
They say, "Let her be defiled,
let our eyes gloat over Zion!"
But they do not know
the thoughts of the Lord;
they do not understand his plan,
that he has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.
"Rise and thresh, Daughter Zion,
for I will give you horns of iron;
I will give you hooves of bronze,
and you will break to pieces many nations."
You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the Lord,
their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

Marshal your troops now, city of troops,
for a siege is laid against us.
They will strike Israel's ruler
on the cheek with a rod.

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."

Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

And he will be our peace
when the Assyrians invade our land
and march through our fortresses.
We will raise against them seven shepherds,
even eight commanders,
who will rule the land of Assyria with the sword,
the land of Nimrod with drawn sword.
He will deliver us from the Assyrians
when they invade our land
and march across our borders.

The remnant of Jacob will be
in the midst of many peoples
like dew from the Lord,
like showers on the grass,
which do not wait for anyone
or depend on man.

The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations,
in the midst of many peoples,
like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
like a young lion among flocks of sheep,
which mauls and mangles as it goes,
and no one can rescue.
Your hand will be lifted up in triumph over your enemies,
and all your foes will be destroyed.

“In that day,” declares the Lord,

“I will destroy your horses from among you
and demolish your chariots.
I will destroy the cities of your land
and tear down all your strongholds.
I will destroy your witchcraft

and you will no longer cast spells.
 I will destroy your idols
 and your sacred stones from among you;
 you will no longer bow down
 to the work of your hands.
 I will uproot from among you your Asherah poles
 when I demolish your cities.
 I will take vengeance in anger and wrath
 on the nations that have not obeyed me.”

Listen to what the Lord says:

“Stand up, plead my case before the mountains;
 let the hills hear what you have to say.

“Hear, you mountains, the Lord’s accusation;
 listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth.
 For the Lord has a case against his people;
 he is lodging a charge against Israel.

“My people, what have I done to you?
 How have I burdened you? Answer me.
 I brought you up out of Egypt
 and redeemed you from the land of slavery.
 I sent Moses to lead you,
 also Aaron and Miriam.
 My people, remember
 what Balak king of Moab plotted
 and what Balaam son of Beor answered.
 Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal,
 that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord.”

With what shall I come before the Lord
 and bow down before the exalted God?
 Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
 with calves a year old?
 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
 with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
 Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
 the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Listen! The Lord is calling to the city—
and to fear your name is wisdom—
“Heed the rod and the One who appointed it.
Am I still to forget your ill-gotten treasures, you wicked house,
and the short ephah, which is accursed?
Shall I acquit someone with dishonest scales,
with a bag of false weights?
Your rich people are violent;
your inhabitants are liars
and their tongues speak deceitfully.
Therefore, I have begun to destroy you,
to ruin you because of your sins.
You will eat but not be satisfied;
your stomach will still be empty.
You will store up but save nothing,
because what you save I will give to the sword.
You will plant but not harvest;
you will press olives but not use the oil,
you will crush grapes but not drink the wine.
You have observed the statutes of Omri
and all the practices of Ahab’s house;
you have followed their traditions.
Therefore I will give you over to ruin
and your people to derision;
you will bear the scorn of the nations.”

What misery is mine!
I am like one who gathers summer fruit
at the gleaning of the vineyard;
there is no cluster of grapes to eat,
none of the early figs that I crave.
The faithful have been swept from the land;
not one upright person remains.
Everyone lies in wait to shed blood;
they hunt each other with nets.

Both hands are skilled in doing evil;
the ruler demands gifts,
the judge accepts bribes,
the powerful dictate what they desire—
they all conspire together.
The best of them is like a brier,
the most upright worse than a thorn hedge.
The day God visits you has come,
the day your watchmen sound the alarm.
Now is the time of your confusion.
Do not trust a neighbor;
put no confidence in a friend.
Even with the woman who lies in your embrace
guard the words of your lips.
For a son dishonors his father,
a daughter rises up against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—
a man's enemies are the members of his own household.

But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord,
I wait for God my Savior;
my God will hear me.

Do not gloat over me, my enemy!
Though I have fallen, I will rise.
Though I sit in darkness,
the Lord will be my light.
Because I have sinned against him,
I will bear the Lord's wrath,
until he pleads my case
and upholds my cause.
He will bring me out into the light;
I will see his righteousness.
Then my enemy will see it
and will be covered with shame,
she who said to me,
"Where is the Lord your God?"
My eyes will see her downfall;
even now she will be trampled underfoot
like mire in the streets.

The day for building your walls will come,
the day for extending your boundaries.
In that day people will come to you
from Assyria and the cities of Egypt,
even from Egypt to the Euphrates
and from sea to sea
and from mountain to mountain.
The earth will become desolate because of its inhabitants,
as the result of their deeds.

Shepherd your people with your staff,
the flock of your inheritance,
which lives by itself in a forest,
in fertile pasturelands.
Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead
as in days long ago.

“As in the days when you came out of Egypt,
I will show them my wonders.”

Nations will see and be ashamed,
deprived of all their power.
They will put their hands over their mouths
and their ears will become deaf.
They will lick dust like a snake,
like creatures that crawl on the ground.
They will come trembling out of their dens;
they will turn in fear to the Lord our God
and will be afraid of you.
Who is a God like you,
who pardons sin and forgives the transgression
of the remnant of his inheritance?
You do not stay angry forever
but delight to show mercy.
You will again have compassion on us;
you will tread our sins underfoot
and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.
You will be faithful to Jacob,
and show love to Abraham,

as you pledged on oath to our ancestors
in days long ago.

Nahum

A prophecy concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

The Lord is a jealous and avenging God;
the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath.

The Lord takes vengeance on his foes
and vents his wrath against his enemies.

The Lord is slow to anger but great in power;
the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished.

His way is in the whirlwind and the storm,
and clouds are the dust of his feet.

He rebukes the sea and dries it up;
he makes all the rivers run dry.

Bashan and Carmel wither
and the blossoms of Lebanon fade.

The mountains quake before him
and the hills melt away.

The earth trembles at his presence,
the world and all who live in it.

Who can withstand his indignation?
Who can endure his fierce anger?

His wrath is poured out like fire;
the rocks are shattered before him.

The Lord is good,
a refuge in times of trouble.

He cares for those who trust in him,
but with an overwhelming flood
he will make an end of Nineveh;
he will pursue his foes into the realm of darkness.

Whatever they plot against the Lord
he will bring to an end;
trouble will not come a second time.

They will be entangled among thorns
and drunk from their wine;
they will be consumed like dry stubble.

From you, Nineveh, has one come forth
who plots evil against the Lord

and devises wicked plans.

This is what the Lord says:

“Although they have allies and are numerous,
they will be destroyed and pass away.
Although I have afflicted you, Judah,
I will afflict you no more.
Now I will break their yoke from your neck
and tear your shackles away.”

The Lord has given a command concerning you, Nineveh:

“You will have no descendants to bear your name.
I will destroy the images and idols
that are in the temple of your gods.
I will prepare your grave,
for you are vile.”

Look, there on the mountains,
the feet of one who brings good news,
who proclaims peace!
Celebrate your festivals, Judah,
and fulfill your vows.
No more will the wicked invade you;
they will be completely destroyed.

An attacker advances against you, Nineveh.
Guard the fortress,
watch the road,
brace yourselves,
marshal all your strength!

The Lord will restore the splendor of Jacob
like the splendor of Israel,
though destroyers have laid them waste
and have ruined their vines.

The shields of the soldiers are red;
the warriors are clad in scarlet.
The metal on the chariots flashes

on the day they are made ready;
the spears of juniper are brandished.
The chariots storm through the streets,
rushing back and forth through the squares.
They look like flaming torches;
they dart about like lightning.

Nineveh summons her picked troops,
yet they stumble on their way.
They dash to the city wall;
the protective shield is put in place.
The river gates are thrown open
and the palace collapses.
It is decreed that Nineveh
be exiled and carried away.
Her female slaves moan like doves
and beat on their breasts.
Nineveh is like a pool
whose water is draining away.
“Stop! Stop!” they cry,
but no one turns back.
Plunder the silver!
Plunder the gold!
The supply is endless,
the wealth from all its treasures!
She is pillaged, plundered, stripped!
Hearts melt, knees give way,
bodies tremble, every face grows pale.

Where now is the lions’ den,
the place where they fed their young,
where the lion and lioness went,
and the cubs, with nothing to fear?
The lion killed enough for his cubs
and strangled the prey for his mate,
filling his lairs with the kill
and his dens with the prey.

“I am against you,”
declares the Lord Almighty.

“I will burn up your chariots in smoke,
 and the sword will devour your young lions.
 I will leave you no prey on the earth.
 The voices of your messengers
 will no longer be heard.”

Woe to the city of blood,
 full of lies,
 full of plunder,
 never without victims!
 The crack of whips,
 the clatter of wheels,
 galloping horses
 and jolting chariots!
 Charging cavalry,
 flashing swords
 and glittering spears!
 Many casualties,
 piles of dead,
 bodies without number,
 people stumbling over the corpses—
 all because of the wanton lust of a prostitute,
 alluring, the mistress of sorceries,
 who enslaved nations by her prostitution
 and peoples by her witchcraft.

“I am against you,” declares the Lord Almighty.
 “I will lift your skirts over your face.
 I will show the nations your nakedness
 and the kingdoms your shame.
 I will pelt you with filth,
 I will treat you with contempt
 and make you a spectacle.
 All who see you will flee from you and say,
 ‘Nineveh is in ruins—who will mourn for her?’
 Where can I find anyone to comfort you?”

Are you better than Thebes,
 situated on the Nile,
 with water around her?

The river was her defense,
the waters her wall.
Cush and Egypt were her boundless strength;
Put and Libya were among her allies.
Yet she was taken captive
and went into exile.
Her infants were dashed to pieces
at every street corner.
Lots were cast for her nobles,
and all her great men were put in chains.
You too will become drunk;
you will go into hiding
and seek refuge from the enemy.

All your fortresses are like fig trees
with their first ripe fruit;
when they are shaken,
the figs fall into the mouth of the eater.
Look at your troops—
they are all weaklings.
The gates of your land
are wide open to your enemies;
fire has consumed the bars of your gates.

Draw water for the siege,
strengthen your defenses!
Work the clay,
tread the mortar,
repair the brickwork!
There the fire will consume you;
the sword will cut you down—
they will devour you like a swarm of locusts.
Multiply like grasshoppers,
multiply like locusts!
You have increased the number of your merchants
till they are more numerous than the stars in the sky,
but like locusts they strip the land
and then fly away.
Your guards are like locusts,
your officials like swarms of locusts

that settle in the walls on a cold day—
but when the sun appears they fly away,
and no one knows where.

King of Assyria, your shepherds slumber;
your nobles lie down to rest.
Your people are scattered on the mountains
with no one to gather them.
Nothing can heal you;
your wound is fatal.
All who hear the news about you
clap their hands at your fall,
for who has not felt
your endless cruelty?

Habakuk

The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet received.

How long, Lord, must I call for help,
but you do not listen?

Or cry out to you, "Violence!"
but you do not save?

Why do you make me look at injustice?
Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?

Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and conflict abounds.

Therefore the law is paralyzed,
and justice never prevails.

The wicked hem in the righteous,
so that justice is perverted.

"Look at the nations and watch—
and be utterly amazed.

For I am going to do something in your days
that you would not believe,
even if you were told.

I am raising up the Babylonians,
that ruthless and impetuous people,
who sweep across the whole earth
to seize dwellings not their own.

They are a feared and dreaded people;
they are a law to themselves
and promote their own honor.

Their horses are swifter than leopards,
fiercer than wolves at dusk.

Their cavalry gallops headlong;
their horsemen come from afar.

They fly like an eagle swooping to devour;
they all come intent on violence.

Their hordes advance like a desert wind
and gather prisoners like sand.

They mock kings
and scoff at rulers.

They laugh at all fortified cities;

by building earthen ramps they capture them.
Then they sweep past like the wind and go on—
guilty people, whose own strength is their god.”

Lord, are you not from everlasting?

My God, my Holy One, you will never die.

You, Lord, have appointed them to execute judgment;
you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish.

Your eyes are too pure to look on evil;
you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.

Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?

Why are you silent while the wicked
swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

You have made people like the fish in the sea,
like the sea creatures that have no ruler.

The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks,
he catches them in his net,

he gathers them up in his dragnet;
and so he rejoices and is glad.

Therefore he sacrifices to his net
and burns incense to his dragnet,

for by his net he lives in luxury
and enjoys the choicest food.

Is he to keep on emptying his net,
destroying nations without mercy?

I will stand at my watch

and station myself on the ramparts;

I will look to see what he will say to me,

and what answer I am to give to this complaint.

Then the Lord replied:

“Write down the revelation

and make it plain on tablets

so that a herald may run with it.

For the revelation awaits an appointed time;

it speaks of the end

and will not prove false.

Though it linger, wait for it;

it will certainly come
and will not delay.

“See, the enemy is puffed up;
his desires are not upright—
but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness—
indeed, wine betrays him;
he is arrogant and never at rest.
Because he is as greedy as the grave
and like death is never satisfied,
he gathers to himself all the nations
and takes captive all the peoples.

“Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying,

“Woe to him who piles up stolen goods
and makes himself wealthy by extortion!
How long must this go on?’
Will not your creditors suddenly arise?
Will they not wake up and make you tremble?
Then you will become their prey.
Because you have plundered many nations,
the peoples who are left will plunder you.
For you have shed human blood;
you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

“Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain,
setting his nest on high
to escape the clutches of ruin!
You have plotted the ruin of many peoples,
shaming your own house and forfeiting your life.
The stones of the wall will cry out,
and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.

“Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed
and establishes a town by injustice!
Has not the Lord Almighty determined
that the people’s labor is only fuel for the fire,
that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?
For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord

as the waters cover the sea.

“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors,
pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk,
so that he can gaze on their naked bodies!

You will be filled with shame instead of glory.

Now it is your turn! Drink and let your nakedness be exposed!

The cup from the Lord’s right hand is coming around to you,
and disgrace will cover your glory.

The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you,
and your destruction of animals will terrify you.

For you have shed human blood;

you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

“Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman?

Or an image that teaches lies?

For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation;
he makes idols that cannot speak.

Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Come to life!’

Or to lifeless stone, ‘Wake up!’

Can it give guidance?

It is covered with gold and silver;
there is no breath in it.”

The Lord is in his holy temple;

let all the earth be silent before him.

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. On *shigionoth*.

Lord, I have heard of your fame;

I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord.

Repeat them in our day,

in our time make them known;
in wrath remember mercy.

God came from Teman,

the Holy One from Mount Paran.

His glory covered the heavens

and his praise filled the earth.

His splendor was like the sunrise;

rays flashed from his hand,
where his power was hidden.
Plague went before him;
pestilence followed his steps.
He stood, and shook the earth;
he looked, and made the nations tremble.
The ancient mountains crumbled
and the age-old hills collapsed—
but he marches on forever.
I saw the tents of Cushan in distress,
the dwellings of Midian in anguish.

Were you angry with the rivers, Lord?
Was your wrath against the streams?
Did you rage against the sea
when you rode your horses
and your chariots to victory?
You uncovered your bow,
you called for many arrows.
You split the earth with rivers;
the mountains saw you and writhed.
Torrents of water swept by;
the deep roared
and lifted its waves on high.

Sun and moon stood still in the heavens
at the glint of your flying arrows,
at the lightning of your flashing spear.
In wrath you strode through the earth
and in anger you threshed the nations.
You came out to deliver your people,
to save your anointed one.
You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness,
you stripped him from head to foot.
With his own spear you pierced his head
when his warriors stormed out to scatter us,
gloating as though about to devour
the wretched who were in hiding.
You trampled the sea with your horses,
churning the great waters.

I heard and my heart pounded,
my lips quivered at the sound;
decay crept into my bones,
and my legs trembled.
Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity
to come on the nation invading us.
Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.
The Sovereign Lord is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
he enables me to tread on the heights.

For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.

Zephaniah

The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, during the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah:

“I will sweep away everything
from the face of the earth,”
declares the Lord.

“I will sweep away both man and beast;
I will sweep away the birds in the sky
and the fish in the sea—
and the idols that cause the wicked to stumble.”

“When I destroy all mankind
on the face of the earth,”
declares the Lord,

“I will stretch out my hand against Judah
and against all who live in Jerusalem.
I will destroy every remnant of Baal worship in this place,
the very names of the idolatrous priests—
those who bow down on the roofs
to worship the starry host,
those who bow down and swear by the Lord
and who also swear by Molek,
those who turn back from following the Lord
and neither seek the Lord nor inquire of him.”

Be silent before the Sovereign Lord,
for the day of the Lord is near.
The Lord has prepared a sacrifice;
he has consecrated those he has invited.

“On the day of the Lord’s sacrifice
I will punish the officials
and the king’s sons
and all those clad
in foreign clothes.
On that day I will punish
all who avoid stepping on the threshold,

who fill the temple of their gods
with violence and deceit.

“On that day,”
declares the Lord,
“a cry will go up from the Fish Gate,
wailing from the New Quarter,
and a loud crash from the hills.
Wail, you who live in the market district;
all your merchants will be wiped out,
all who trade with silver will be destroyed.
At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps
and punish those who are complacent,
who are like wine left on its dregs,
who think, ‘The Lord will do nothing,
either good or bad.’
Their wealth will be plundered,
their houses demolished.
Though they build houses,
they will not live in them;
though they plant vineyards,
they will not drink the wine.”

The great day of the Lord is near—
near and coming quickly.
The cry on the day of the Lord is bitter;
the Mighty Warrior shouts his battle cry.
That day will be a day of wrath—
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of trouble and ruin,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness—
a day of trumpet and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the corner towers.

“I will bring such distress on all people
that they will grope about like those who are blind,
because they have sinned against the Lord.
Their blood will be poured out like dust

and their entrails like dung.
Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the Lord's wrath."

In the fire of his jealousy
the whole earth will be consumed,
for he will make a sudden end
of all who live on the earth.

Gather together, gather yourselves together,
you shameful nation,
before the decree takes effect
and that day passes like windblown chaff,
before the Lord's fierce anger
comes upon you,
before the day of the Lord's wrath
comes upon you.
Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land,
you who do what he commands.
Seek righteousness, seek humility;
perhaps you will be sheltered
on the day of the Lord's anger.

Gaza will be abandoned
and Ashkelon left in ruins.
At midday Ashdod will be emptied
and Ekron uprooted.
Woe to you who live by the sea,
you Kerethite people;
the word of the Lord is against you,
Canaan, land of the Philistines.
He says, "I will destroy you,
and none will be left."
The land by the sea will become pastures
having wells for shepherds
and pens for flocks.
That land will belong
to the remnant of the people of Judah;
there they will find pasture.

In the evening they will lie down
in the houses of Ashkelon.
The Lord their God will care for them;
he will restore their fortunes.

“I have heard the insults of Moab
and the taunts of the Ammonites,
who insulted my people
and made threats against their land.
Therefore, as surely as I live,”
declares the Lord Almighty,
the God of Israel,
“surely Moab will become like Sodom,
the Ammonites like Gomorrah—
a place of weeds and salt pits,
a wasteland forever.
The remnant of my people will plunder them;
the survivors of my nation will inherit their land.”

This is what they will get in return for their pride,
for insulting and mocking
the people of the Lord Almighty.
The Lord will be awesome to them
when he destroys all the gods of the earth.
Distant nations will bow down to him,
all of them in their own lands.

“You Cushites, too,
will be slain by my sword.”

He will stretch out his hand against the north
and destroy Assyria,
leaving Nineveh utterly desolate
and dry as the desert.
Flocks and herds will lie down there,
creatures of every kind.
The desert owl and the screech owl
will roost on her columns.
Their hooting will echo through the windows,
rubble will fill the doorways,

the beams of cedar will be exposed.
This is the city of revelry
that lived in safety.
She said to herself,
“I am the one! And there is none besides me.”
What a ruin she has become,
a lair for wild beasts!
All who pass by her scoff
and shake their fists.

Woe to the city of oppressors,
rebellious and defiled!
She obeys no one,
she accepts no correction.
She does not trust in the Lord,
she does not draw near to her God.
Her officials within her
are roaring lions;
her rulers are evening wolves,
who leave nothing for the morning.
Her prophets are unprincipled;
they are treacherous people.
Her priests profane the sanctuary
and do violence to the law.
The Lord within her is righteous;
he does no wrong.
Morning by morning he dispenses his justice,
and every new day he does not fail,
yet the unrighteous know no shame.

“I have destroyed nations;
their strongholds are demolished.
I have left their streets deserted,
with no one passing through.
Their cities are laid waste;
they are deserted and empty.
Of Jerusalem I thought,
‘Surely you will fear me
and accept correction!’
Then her place of refuge would not be destroyed,

nor all my punishments come upon her.
But they were still eager
to act corruptly in all they did.
Therefore wait for me,”
declares the Lord,
“for the day I will stand up to testify.
I have decided to assemble the nations,
to gather the kingdoms
and to pour out my wrath on them—
all my fierce anger.
The whole world will be consumed
by the fire of my jealous anger.

“Then I will purify the lips of the peoples,
that all of them may call on the name of the Lord
and serve him shoulder to shoulder.
From beyond the rivers of Cush
my worshipers, my scattered people,
will bring me offerings.
On that day you, Jerusalem, will not be put to shame
for all the wrongs you have done to me,
because I will remove from you
your arrogant boasters.
Never again will you be haughty
on my holy hill.
But I will leave within you
the meek and humble.
The remnant of Israel
will trust in the name of the Lord.
They will do no wrong;
they will tell no lies.
A deceitful tongue
will not be found in their mouths.
They will eat and lie down
and no one will make them afraid.”

Sing, Daughter Zion;
shout aloud, Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
Daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away your punishment,
he has turned back your enemy.

The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you;
never again will you fear any harm.

On that day

they will say to Jerusalem,

“Do not fear, Zion;

do not let your hands hang limp.

The Lord your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.

He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.”

“I will remove from you

all who mourn over the loss of your appointed festivals,
which is a burden and reproach for you.

At that time I will deal

with all who oppressed you.

I will rescue the lame;

I will gather the exiles.

I will give them praise and honor

in every land where they have suffered shame.

At that time I will gather you;

at that time I will bring you home.

I will give you honor and praise

among all the peoples of the earth

when I restore your fortunes

before your very eyes,”

says the Lord.

Haggai

In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest:

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord’s house.’”

Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”

Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the Lord. “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the Lord Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.”

Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord.

Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: “I am with you,” declares the Lord. So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

In the second year of King Darius, on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: “Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, ‘Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? But now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ declares the Lord. ‘Be

strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the Lord, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the Lord Almighty. 'This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.'

"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord Almighty. 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the Lord Almighty. 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the Lord Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord Almighty."

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai: "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Ask the priests what the law says: If someone carries consecrated meat in the fold of their garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, olive oil or other food, does it become consecrated?'"

The priests answered, "No."

Then Haggai said, "If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?"

"Yes," the priests replied, "it becomes defiled."

Then Haggai said, "'So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,' declares the Lord. 'Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled.

"Now give careful thought to this from this day on—consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the Lord's temple. When anyone came to a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten. When anyone went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty. I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not return to me,' declares the Lord. 'From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid. Give careful thought: Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit.

"From this day on I will bless you."

The word of the Lord came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: "Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother.

"On that day,' declares the Lord Almighty, 'I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,' declares the Lord, 'and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,' declares the Lord Almighty."

Zechariah

In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo:

“The Lord was very angry with your ancestors. Therefore tell the people: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Return to me,’ declares the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the Lord Almighty. Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.’ But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the Lord. Where are your ancestors now? And the prophets, do they live forever? But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your ancestors?”

“Then they repented and said, ‘The Lord Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do.’”

On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo.

During the night I had a vision, and there before me was a man mounted on a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown and white horses.

I asked, “What are these, my lord?”

The angel who was talking with me answered, “I will show you what they are.”

Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, “They are the ones the Lord has sent to go throughout the earth.”

And they reported to the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, “We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace.”

Then the angel of the Lord said, “Lord Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?” So the Lord spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me.

Then the angel who was speaking to me said, “Proclaim this word: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, and I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they went too far with the punishment.’

“Therefore this is what the Lord says: ‘I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem,’ declares the Lord Almighty.

“Proclaim further: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.’”

Then I looked up, and there before me were four horns. I asked the angel who was speaking to me, “What are these?”

He answered me, “These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.”

Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen. I asked, “What are these coming to do?”

He answered, “These are the horns that scattered Judah so that no one could raise their head, but the craftsmen have come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter its people.”

Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. I asked, “Where are you going?”

He answered me, “To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is.”

While the angel who was speaking to me was leaving, another angel came to meet him and said to him: “Run, tell that young man, ‘Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will be its glory within.’”

“Come! Come! Flee from the land of the north,” declares the Lord, “for I have scattered you to the four winds of heaven,” declares the Lord.

“Come, Zion! Escape, you who live in Daughter Babylon!” For this is what the Lord Almighty says: “After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye—I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me.

“Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the Lord. “Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.”

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”

Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes."

Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you."

Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by.

The angel of the Lord gave this charge to Joshua: "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'If you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.

"Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.

"In that day each of you will invite your neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree,' declares the Lord Almighty."

Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."

I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"

He answered, "Do you not know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I replied.

So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.

"What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'"

Then the word of the Lord came to me: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.

"Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the Lord that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the hand of Zerubbabel?"

Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?"

Again I asked him, "What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil?"

He replied, "Do you not know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I said.

So he said, "These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth."

I looked again, and there before me was a flying scroll.

He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a flying scroll, twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide."

And he said to me, "This is the curse that is going out over the whole land; for according to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished, and according to what it says on the other, everyone who swears falsely will be banished. The Lord Almighty declares, 'I will send it out, and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of anyone who swears falsely by my name. It will remain in that house and destroy it completely, both its timbers and its stones.'"

Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, "Look up and see what is appearing."

I asked, "What is it?"

He replied, "It is a basket." And he added, "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land."

Then the cover of lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman! He said, "This is wickedness," and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed its lead cover down on it.

Then I looked up—and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth.

"Where are they taking the basket?" I asked the angel who was speaking to me.

He replied, "To the country of Babylonia to build a house for it. When the house is ready, the basket will be set there in its place."

I looked up again, and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze. The first chariot had red horses, the second black, the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful. I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?"

The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south."

When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth.

Then he called to me, "Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north."

The word of the Lord came to me: "Take silver and gold from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon. Go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jozadak. Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' The crown will be given to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the Lord. Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the Lord, and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the Lord your God."

In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev. The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-Melek, together with their men, to entreat the Lord by asking the priests of the house of the Lord Almighty and the prophets, "Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?"

Then the word of the Lord Almighty came to me: "Ask all the people of the land and the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted? And when you were eating and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves? Are these not the words the Lord proclaimed through the earlier prophets when Jerusalem and its surrounding towns were at rest and prosperous, and the Negev and the western foothills were settled?'"

And the word of the Lord came again to Zechariah: "This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.'

"But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry.

"When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,' says the Lord Almighty. 'I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations,

where they were strangers. The land they left behind them was so desolate that no one traveled through it. This is how they made the pleasant land desolate.”

The word of the Lord Almighty came to me.

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her.”

This is what the Lord says: “I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain.”

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with cane in hand because of their age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.”

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “It may seem marvelous to the remnant of this people at that time, but will it seem marvelous to me?” declares the Lord Almighty.

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God.”

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Now hear these words, ‘Let your hands be strong so that the temple may be built.’ This is also what the prophets said who were present when the foundation was laid for the house of the Lord Almighty. Before that time there were no wages for people or hire for animals. No one could go about their business safely because of their enemies, since I had turned everyone against their neighbor. But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as I did in the past,” declares the Lord Almighty.

“The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people. Just as you, Judah and Israel, have been a curse among the nations, so I will save you, and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong.”

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Just as I had determined to bring disaster on you and showed no pity when your ancestors angered me,” says the Lord Almighty, “so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid. These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against each other, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the Lord.

The word of the Lord Almighty came to me.

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.”

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty. I myself am going.’ And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat him.”

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “In those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’”

A prophecy:

The word of the Lord is against the land of Hadrak
 and will come to rest on Damascus—
 for the eyes of all people and all the tribes of Israel
 are on the Lord—
 and on Hamath too, which borders on it,
 and on Tyre and Sidon, though they are very skillful.
 Tyre has built herself a stronghold;
 she has heaped up silver like dust,
 and gold like the dirt of the streets.
 But the Lord will take away her possessions
 and destroy her power on the sea,
 and she will be consumed by fire.
 Ashkelon will see it and fear;
 Gaza will writhe in agony,
 and Ekron too, for her hope will wither.
 Gaza will lose her king
 and Ashkelon will be deserted.
 A mongrel people will occupy Ashdod,
 and I will put an end to the pride of the Philistines.
 I will take the blood from their mouths,
 the forbidden food from between their teeth.
 Those who are left will belong to our God
 and become a clan in Judah,
 and Ekron will be like the Jebusites.
 But I will encamp at my temple
 to guard it against marauding forces.
 Never again will an oppressor overrun my people,

for now I am keeping watch.

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!

Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you,

righteous and victorious,

lowly and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

I will take away the chariots from Ephraim

and the warhorses from Jerusalem,

and the battle bow will be broken.

He will proclaim peace to the nations.

His rule will extend from sea to sea

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you,

I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.

Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope;

even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

I will bend Judah as I bend my bow

and fill it with Ephraim.

I will rouse your sons, Zion,

against your sons, Greece,

and make you like a warrior's sword.

Then the Lord will appear over them;

his arrow will flash like lightning.

The Sovereign Lord will sound the trumpet;

he will march in the storms of the south,

and the Lord Almighty will shield them.

They will destroy

and overcome with slingstones.

They will drink and roar as with wine;

they will be full like a bowl

used for sprinkling the corners of the altar.

The Lord their God will save his people on that day

as a shepherd saves his flock.

They will sparkle in his land

like jewels in a crown.

How attractive and beautiful they will be!

Grain will make the young men thrive,

and new wine the young women.

Ask the Lord for rain in the springtime;
 it is the Lord who sends the thunderstorms.
 He gives showers of rain to all people,
 and plants of the field to everyone.
 The idols speak deceitfully,
 diviners see visions that lie;
 they tell dreams that are false,
 they give comfort in vain.
 Therefore the people wander like sheep
 oppressed for lack of a shepherd.

“My anger burns against the shepherds,
 and I will punish the leaders;
 for the Lord Almighty will care
 for his flock, the people of Judah,
 and make them like a proud horse in battle.
 From Judah will come the cornerstone,
 from him the tent peg,
 from him the battle bow,
 from him every ruler.
 Together they will be like warriors in battle
 trampling their enemy into the mud of the streets.
 They will fight because the Lord is with them,
 and they will put the enemy horsemen to shame.

“I will strengthen Judah
 and save the tribes of Joseph.
 I will restore them
 because I have compassion on them.
 They will be as though
 I had not rejected them,
 for I am the Lord their God
 and I will answer them.
 The Ephraimites will become like warriors,
 and their hearts will be glad as with wine.
 Their children will see it and be joyful;
 their hearts will rejoice in the Lord.
 I will signal for them

and gather them in.
 Surely I will redeem them;
 they will be as numerous as before.
 Though I scatter them among the peoples,
 yet in distant lands they will remember me.
 They and their children will survive,
 and they will return.
 I will bring them back from Egypt
 and gather them from Assyria.
 I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon,
 and there will not be room enough for them.
 They will pass through the sea of trouble;
 the surging sea will be subdued
 and all the depths of the Nile will dry up.
 Assyria's pride will be brought down
 and Egypt's scepter will pass away.
 I will strengthen them in the Lord
 and in his name they will live securely,"
 declares the Lord.

Open your doors, Lebanon,
 so that fire may devour your cedars!
 Wail, you juniper, for the cedar has fallen;
 the stately trees are ruined!
 Wail, oaks of Bashan;
 the dense forest has been cut down!
 Listen to the wail of the shepherds;
 their rich pastures are destroyed!
 Listen to the roar of the lions;
 the lush thicket of the Jordan is ruined!

This is what the Lord my God says: "Shepherd the flock marked for slaughter. Their buyers slaughter them and go unpunished. Those who sell them say, 'Praise the Lord, I am rich!' Their own shepherds do not spare them. For I will no longer have pity on the people of the land," declares the Lord. "I will give everyone into the hands of their neighbors and their king. They will devastate the land, and I will not rescue anyone from their hands."

So I shepherded the flock marked for slaughter, particularly the oppressed of the flock. Then I took two staves and called one Favor and the other Union, and I shepherded the flock. In one month I got rid of the three shepherds.

The flock detested me, and I grew weary of them and said, “I will not be your shepherd. Let the dying die, and the perishing perish. Let those who are left eat one another’s flesh.”

Then I took my staff called Favor and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations. It was revoked on that day, and so the oppressed of the flock who were watching me knew it was the word of the Lord.

I told them, “If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.” So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.

And the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord.

Then I broke my second staff called Union, breaking the family bond between Judah and Israel.

Then the Lord said to me, “Take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd. For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hooves.

“Woe to the worthless shepherd,
 who deserts the flock!
 May the sword strike his arm and his right eye!
 May his arm be completely withered,
 his right eye totally blinded!”

A prophecy: The word of the Lord concerning Israel.

The Lord, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the human spirit within a person, declares: “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness,” declares the Lord. “I will keep a watchful eye over Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the Lord Almighty is their God.’

“On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples right and left, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.

“The Lord will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem’s inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. On that day the Lord will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord going before them. On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be as great as the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, and all the rest of the clans and their wives.

“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

“On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more,” declares the Lord Almighty. “I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land. And if anyone still prophesies, their father and mother, to whom they were born, will say to them, ‘You must die, because you have told lies in the Lord’s name.’ Then their own parents will stab the one who prophesies.

“On that day every prophet will be ashamed of their prophetic vision. They will not put on a prophet’s garment of hair in order to deceive. Each will say, ‘I am not a prophet. I am a farmer; the land has been my livelihood since my youth.’ If someone asks, ‘What are these wounds on your body?’ they will answer, ‘The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.’

“Awake, sword, against my shepherd,
against the man who is close to me!”
declares the Lord Almighty.

“Strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered,
and I will turn my hand against the little ones.
In the whole land,” declares the Lord,
“two-thirds will be struck down and perish;
yet one-third will be left in it.
This third I will put into the fire;
I will refine them like silver

and test them like gold.
They will call on my name
and I will answer them;
I will say, 'They are my people,'
and they will say, 'The Lord is our God.'"

A day of the Lord is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls.

I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, frosty darkness. It will be a unique day—a day known only to the Lord—with no distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light.

On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it east to the Dead Sea and half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea, in summer and in winter.

The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.

The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up high from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses, and will remain in its place. It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.

This is the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day people will be stricken by the Lord with great panic. They will seize each other by the hand and attack one another. Judah too will fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected—great quantities of gold and silver and clothing. A similar plague will strike the horses and mules, the camels and donkeys, and all the animals in those camps.

Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the

Festival of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The Lord will bring on them the plague he inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles.

On that day holy to the Lord will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord Almighty.

Malachi

A prophecy: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi.

“I have loved you,” says the Lord.

“But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’

“Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.”

Edom may say, “Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins.”

But this is what the Lord Almighty says: “They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the Lord. You will see it with your own eyes and say, ‘Great is the Lord—even beyond the borders of Israel!’

“A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the Lord Almighty.

“It is you priests who show contempt for my name.

“But you ask, ‘How have we shown contempt for your name?’

“By offering defiled food on my altar.

“But you ask, ‘How have we defiled you?’

“By saying that the Lord’s table is contemptible. When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the Lord Almighty.

“Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?”—says the Lord Almighty.

“Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you,” says the Lord Almighty, “and I will accept no offering from your hands. My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the Lord Almighty.

“But you profane it by saying, ‘The Lord’s table is defiled,’ and, ‘Its food is contemptible.’ And you say, ‘What a burden!’ and you sniff at it contemptuously,” says the Lord Almighty.

“When you bring injured, lame or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?” says the Lord. “Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then

sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,” says the Lord Almighty, “and my name is to be feared among the nations.

“And now, you priests, this warning is for you. If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name,” says the Lord Almighty, “I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honor me.

“Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will smear on your faces the dung from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it. And you will know that I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue,” says the Lord Almighty. “My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.

“For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,” says the Lord Almighty. “So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.”

Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?

Judah has been unfaithful. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves by marrying women who worship a foreign god. As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord remove him from the tents of Jacob—even though he brings an offering to the Lord Almighty.

Another thing you do: You flood the Lord’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, “Why?” It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

“The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the Lord, the God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect,” says the Lord Almighty.

So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

You have wearied the Lord with your words.

“How have we wearied him?” you ask.

By saying, “All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord, and he is pleased with them” or “Where is the God of justice?”

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty.

But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years.

“So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the Lord Almighty.

“I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’

“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’

“In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the Lord Almighty. “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty.

“You have spoken arrogantly against me,” says the Lord.

“Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’

“You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.’”

Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name.

“On the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty.

“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

“See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”