

We begin with the words of the prophet, Isaiah, to whom we were introduced last week. Isaiah continues to war Judah of the anger of the Lord for their unfaithfulness to God and failure to care for the vulnerable in their midst.

The Book of Isaiah 28:1-29

Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards, to the fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley—to that city, the pride of those laid low by wine! See, the Lord has one who is powerful and strong. Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind, like a driving rain and a flooding downpour, he will throw it forcefully to the ground. That wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards, will be trampled underfoot. That fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley, will be like figs ripe before harvest—as soon as people see them and take them in hand, they swallow them.

In that day the LORD Almighty will be a glorious crown, a beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people. He will be a spirit of justice to the one who sits in judgment, a source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. And these also stagger from wine and reel from beer: Priests and prophets stagger from beer and are befuddled with wine; they reel from beer, they stagger when seeing visions, they stumble when rendering decisions. All the tables are covered with vomit and there is not a spot without filth. “Who is it he is trying to teach? To whom is he explaining his message? To children weaned from their milk, to those just taken from the breast? For it is: Do this, do that, a rule for this, a rule for that, a little here, a little there.”

Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people, to whom he said, “This is the resting place, let the weary rest”; and, “This is the place of repose”—but they would not listen. So then, the word of the LORD to them will become: Do this, do that, a rule for this, a rule for that; a little here, a little there—so that as they go they will fall backward; they will be injured and snared and captured. Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem. You boast, “We have entered into a covenant with death, with the realm of the dead we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.”

So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic. I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place. Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the realm of the dead will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it. As often as it comes it will carry you away; morning after morning, by day and by night, it will sweep through.”

The understanding of this message will bring sheer terror. The bed is too short to stretch out on, the blanket too narrow to wrap around you. The LORD will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim, he will rouse himself as in the Valley of Gibeon—to do his work, his strange work, and perform his task, his alien task. Now stop your mocking, or your chains will become heavier; the Lord, the LORD Almighty, has told me of the destruction decreed against the whole land. Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say. When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and working the soil? When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cumin? Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot, and spelt in its field? His God instructs him and teaches him the right way. Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is the wheel of a cart rolled over cumin; caraway is beaten out with a rod, and cumin with a stick. Grain must be ground to make bread; so one does not go on threshing it forever. The wheels of a threshing cart may be rolled over it, but one does not use horses to grind grain. All this also comes from the LORD Almighty, whose plan is wonderful, whose wisdom is magnificent.

When we left the narrative last week, Hezekiah was the King of Judah and was doing “what is correct in the eyes of the Lord,” though Judah remained under the constant threat of Assyria. In Israel, King Hoshea had tried to play games between Egypt and Assyria as far as paying tribute- and the king of Assyria had put the king of Israel in prison. We continue with the history of Israel and Judah...

The king of Assyria invaded the entire land of Israel, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years.

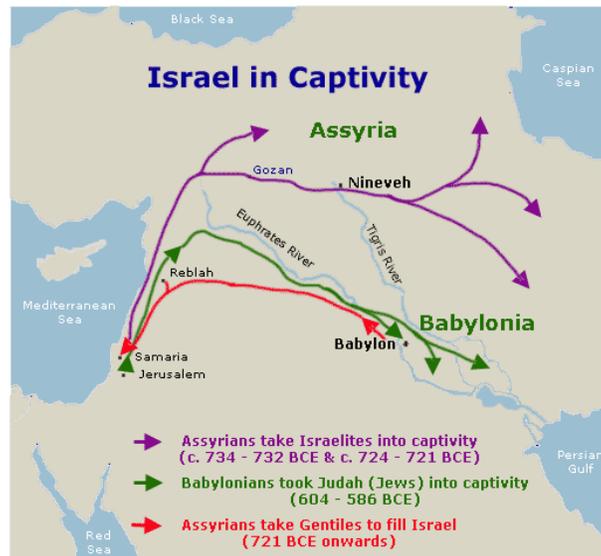
In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. He seized it at the end of three years. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. Then the king of Assyria exiled Israel to Assyria and put them in Halah and in Habor by the River of Gozan and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed His covenant and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not obey or do them.

In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria seized Samaria and exiled Israel to Assyria. He put them in Halah, in Habor by the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

This happened because the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They had feared other gods and walked in the statutes of the nations, whom the LORD dispossessed before the children of Israel, and walked in the statutes which the kings of Israel had made. The children of Israel ascribed things to the LORD their God that were not so, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities from the watchtower to the fortified city. They set up standing stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. There they burned incense on all the high places, as the nations did whom the LORD had carried away before them. And they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger, for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, “You shall not do this thing.” But the LORD warned Israel and Judah by all the prophets and by all the seers, saying, “Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.” But they would not listen. They stiffened their necks, like the neck of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God. They rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers and the decrees He had given them. They followed idols, and became idolaters, and followed the surrounding nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them, that they should not do like them. They forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God, made themselves cast images (two calves), made an Asherah pole, worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. They caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, used divination and omens, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD to anger Him.

Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His presence. None remained except the tribe of Judah. Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. The LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, afflicted them, and gave them into the hand of plunderers until He had cast them out of His presence. For He had torn Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Jeroboam diverted Israel from following the LORD and caused them to sin greatly. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins which Jeroboam committed. They did not turn aside from them until the LORD removed Israel from His presence as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their land to Assyria until this day.

With the people of Israel exiled to Assyria (see the purple lines on the map below), the King of Assyria repopulates the cities of Israel (Samaria) with gentiles from other lands (see red line below).



Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Kuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and put them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel. They possessed Samaria and lived in its cities. Right at the beginning of their settling there, they did not fear the LORD, so the LORD sent lions among them, and they killed some of them. So they said to the king of Assyria, "The nations which you have exiled and settled in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of the land. Therefore He has sent lions among them; they are killing them, because they do not know the requirements of the god of the land." Then the king of Assyria commanded, "Escort back one of the priests whom you exiled from there and let him go and dwell there. Let him teach them the law of the god of the land." Then one of the priests whom they had exiled from Samaria came and lived in Bethel. He taught them how they should fear the LORD. But each nation was making its own gods, and they put them in the houses of the high places that the people of Samaria had made, each nation in the cities where they were living. The men of Babylon made Sukkoth Benoth, the men of Kuthah made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak. The Sepharvites were burning their children in fire to Adrammelek and Anammelek, the gods of Sepharvaim. They feared the LORD and made from amongst themselves priests of the high places, who were working for them in the houses of the high places. They feared the LORD, and they were serving their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they exiled from there. To this day they continue to practice their former customs. They do not fear the LORD, nor are they doing according to the statutes, requirements, the law or commandment that the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel. The LORD had made a covenant and commanded them, saying, "You shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them. You shall not serve them or sacrifice to them. Rather, the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, to Him you shall bow down, and to Him you shall sacrifice. The statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment, which He wrote for you, you shall observe to do forever. And you shall not fear other gods. The covenant that I have made with you, you shall not forget. You shall not fear other gods. Rather the LORD your God you shall fear, and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies." But they did not listen; rather they were practicing their former

customs. So these nations feared the LORD and were serving their carved images, both their children and their grandchildren, as their fathers did, and so they are doing to this day.

Isaiah continued to prophecy to Judah during this time- that the destruction that had come to Israel would soon come to Judah...

Isaiah 1-5

The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." Woe to the sinful nation, a people whose guilt is great, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness— only wounds and welts and open sores not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with olive oil.

Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers. Daughter Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a city under siege. Unless the LORD Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

"The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood! Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow. Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

See how the faithful city has become a prostitute! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her— but now murderers! Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels, partners with thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them. Therefore, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: "Ah! I will vent my wrath on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities. I will restore your leaders as in days of old, your rulers as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City. Zion will be delivered with justice, her penitent ones with righteousness. But rebels and sinners will both be broken, and those who forsake the LORD will perish. You will be ashamed because of the sacred oaks in which you have delighted; you will be disgraced because of the gardens that you have chosen. You will be like an oak with fading leaves, like a garden without water. The mighty man will become tinder and his work a spark; both will burn together, with no one to quench the fire."

The Mountain of the LORD This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: 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 all nations will stream to it. Many peoples 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 the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. 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. Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

The Day of the LORD You, LORD, have abandoned your people, the descendants of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and embrace pagan customs. Their land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to their chariots. Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made. So people will be brought low and everyone humbled—do not forgive them.

Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty! The eyes of the arrogant will be humble and human pride brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled), for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan, for all the towering mountains and all the high hills, for every lofty tower and every fortified wall, for every trading ship and every stately vessel. The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will totally disappear. People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth. In that day people will throw away to the moles and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship. They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty when he rises to shake the earth. Stop trusting in mere humans, who have but a breath in their nostrils. Why hold them in esteem?

Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah See now, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support: all supplies of food and all supplies of water, the hero and the warrior, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counselor, skilled craftsman and clever enchanter. "I will make mere youths their officials; children will rule over them." People will oppress each other—man against man, neighbor against neighbor. The young will rise up against the old, the nobody against the honored. A man will seize one of his brothers in his father's house, and say, "You have a cloak, you be our leader; take charge of this heap of ruins!" But in that day he will cry out, "I have no remedy. I have no food or clothing in my house; do not make me the leader of the people."

Jerusalem staggers, Judah is falling; their words and deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence. The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves.

Tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds. Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done. Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. My people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path.

The LORD takes his place in court; he rises to judge the people. The LORD enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: "It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?" declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty. The LORD says, "The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, strutting along with swaying hips, with ornaments jingling on their ankles. Therefore, the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion; the LORD will make their scalps bald."

In that day the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, the earrings and bracelets and veils, the headdresses and anklets and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, the

signet rings and nose rings, the fine robes and the capes and cloaks, the purses and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls. Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-dressed hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding. Your men will fall by the sword, your warriors in battle. The gates of Zion will lament and mourn; destitute, she will sit on the ground. In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, "We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!"

The Branch of the LORD In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

The Song of the Vineyard I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briars and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it." The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

Woes and Judgments Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left and you live alone in the land. The LORD Almighty has declared in my hearing: "Surely the great houses will become desolate, the fine mansions left without occupants. A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a bath of wine; a homer of seed will yield only an ephah of grain." Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine. They have harps and lyres at their banquets, pipes and timbrels and wine, but they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD, no respect for the work of his hands. Therefore my people will go into exile for lack of understanding; those of high rank will die of hunger and the common people will be parched with thirst. Therefore Death expands its jaws, opening wide its mouth; into it will descend their nobles and masses with all their brawlers and revelers. So people will be brought low and everyone humbled, the eyes of the arrogant humbled. But the LORD Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the holy God will be proved holy by his righteous acts. Then sheep will graze as in their own pasture; lambs will feed among the ruins of the rich. Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit, and wickedness as with cart ropes, to those who say, "Let God hurry; let him hasten his work so we may see it. The plan of the Holy One of Israel— let it approach, let it come into view, so we may know it."

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent. Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Therefore the LORD's anger burns against his people; his hand is raised and he strikes them down. The mountains shake, and the dead bodies are like refuse in the streets. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised. He lifts up a banner for the distant nations, he whistles for those at the ends of

the earth. Here they come, swiftly and speedily! Not one of them grows tired or stumbles, not one slumbers or sleeps; not a belt is loosened at the waist, not a sandal strap is broken. Their arrows are sharp, all their bows are strung; their horses' hooves seem like flint, their chariot wheels like a whirlwind. Their roar is like that of the lion, they roar like young lions; they growl as they seize their prey and carry it off with no one to rescue. In that day they will roar over it like the roaring of the sea. And if one looks at the land, there is only darkness and distress; even the sun will be darkened by clouds.

We are reminded of the transition of the kingship in Judah at this time...

As for the other events of the reign of Ahaz, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? Ahaz rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. And Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king.

Now the remainder of the acts and all his ways, from first to last, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. So Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of Jerusalem because they did not bring him to the tombs of the kings of Israel. Then Hezekiah his son was king in his place.

It was at this point, as Ahaz died and Hezekiah began to reign that Isaiah was given prophecies against the nations that threatened Judah. These were the nations through whom God would bring judgment on his people. But the fate of these nations would be, in the end, destruction. The fate of Judah would be, in the end, restoration...

A Prophecy Against Babylon A prophecy against Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw:

Raise a banner on a bare hilltop, shout to them; beckon to them to enter the gates of the nobles. I have commanded those I prepared for battle; I have summoned my warriors to carry out my wrath— those who rejoice in my triumph.

Listen, a noise on the mountains, like that of a great multitude! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together! The LORD Almighty is mustering an army for war. They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens— the LORD and the weapons of his wrath— to destroy the whole country.

Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Because of this, all hands will go limp, every heart will melt with fear. Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame. See, the day of the LORD is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make people scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.

Like a hunted gazelle, like sheep without a shepherd, they will all return to their own people, they will flee to their native land. Whoever is captured will be thrust through; all who are caught will fall by the sword. Their infants will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be looted and their wives violated.

See, I will stir up against them the Medes, who do not care for silver and have no delight in gold. Their bows will strike down the young men; they will have no mercy on infants, nor will they look with compassion on children. Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the pride and glory of the Babylonians, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations; there no nomads will pitch their tents, there no shepherds will rest their flocks. But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about. Hyenas will inhabit her strongholds, jackals her luxurious palaces. Her time is at hand, and her days will not be prolonged.

The LORD will have compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land. Foreigners will join them and unite with the descendants of Jacob. Nations will take them and bring them to their own place. And Israel will take possession of the nations and make them male and female servants in the LORD's land. They will make captives of their captors and rule over their oppressors. On the day the LORD gives you relief from your suffering and turmoil and from the harsh labor forced on you, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:

How the oppressor has come to an end! How his fury has ended! The LORD has broken the rod of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers, which in anger struck down peoples with unceasing blows, and in fury subdued nations with relentless aggression. All the lands are at rest and at peace; they break into singing. Even the junipers and the cedars of Lebanon gloat over you and say, "Now that you have been laid low, no one comes to cut us down." The realm of the dead below is all astir to meet you at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you—all those who were leaders in the world; it makes them rise from their thrones—all those who were kings over the nations. They will all respond, they will say to you, "You also have become weak, as we are; you have become like us." All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you.

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?" All the kings of the nations lie in state, each in his own tomb. But you are cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch; you are covered with the slain, with those pierced by the sword, those who descend to the stones of the pit. Like a corpse trampled underfoot, you will not join them in burial, for you have destroyed your land and killed your people.

Let the offspring of the wicked never be mentioned again. Prepare a place to slaughter his children for the sins of their ancestors; they are not to rise to inherit the land and cover the earth with their cities. "I will rise up against them," declares the LORD Almighty. "I will wipe out Babylon's name and survivors, her offspring and descendants," declares the LORD. "I will turn her into a place for owls and into swampland; I will sweep her with the broom of destruction," declares the LORD Almighty.

The LORD Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will happen. I will crush the Assyrian in my land; on my mountains I will trample him down. His yoke will be taken from my people, and his burden removed from their shoulders." This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

A Prophecy Against the Philistines This prophecy came in the year King Ahaz died:

Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken; from the root of that snake will spring up a viper, its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent. The poorest of the poor will find pasture, and the needy will lie down in safety. But your root I will destroy by famine; it will slay your survivors. Wail, you gate! Howl, you city! Melt away, all you Philistines! A cloud of smoke comes from the north, and there is not a straggler in its ranks. What answer shall be given to the envoys of that nation? "The LORD has established Zion, and in her his afflicted people will find refuge."

A Prophecy Against Moab A prophecy against Moab:

Ar in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! Kir in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! Dibon goes up to its temple, to its high places to weep; Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba. Every head is shaved and every beard cut off. In the streets they wear sackcloth; on the roofs and in the public squares

they all wail, prostrate with weeping. Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, their voices are heard all the way to Jahaz. Therefore the armed men of Moab cry out, and their hearts are faint. My heart cries out over Moab; her fugitives flee as far as Zoar, as far as Eglath Shelishiyah. They go up the hill to Luhith, weeping as they go; on the road to Horonaim they lament their destruction. The waters of Nimrim are dried up and the grass is withered; the vegetation is gone and nothing green is left. So the wealth they have acquired and stored up they carry away over the Ravine of the Poplars. Their outcry echoes along the border of Moab; their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim, their lamentation as far as Beer Elim. The waters of Dimon are full of blood, but I will bring still more upon Dimon—a lion upon the fugitives of Moab and upon those who remain in the land. Send lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land, from Sela, across the desert, to the mount of Daughter Zion. Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest, so are the women of Moab at the fords of the Arnon.

“Make up your mind,” Moab says. “Render a decision. Make your shadow like night— at high noon. Hide the fugitives, do not betray the refugees. Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you; be their shelter from the destroyer.” The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land. In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it— one from the house of David— one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness.

We have heard of Moab’s pride— how great is her arrogance!—of her conceit, her pride and her insolence; but her boasts are empty. Therefore the Moabites wail, they wail together for Moab. Lament and grieve for the raisin cakes of Kir Hareseth. The fields of Heshbon wither, the vines of Sibmah also. The rulers of the nations have trampled down the choicest vines, which once reached Jazer and spread toward the desert. Their shoots spread out and went as far as the sea.

So I weep, as Jazer weeps, for the vines of Sibmah. Heshbon and Elealeh, I drench you with tears! The shouts of joy over your ripened fruit and over your harvests have been stilled. Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards; no one sings or shouts in the vineyards; no one treads out wine at the presses, for I have put an end to the shouting. My heart laments for Moab like a harp, my inmost being for Kir Hareseth. When Moab appears at her high place, she only wears herself out; when she goes to her shrine to pray, it is to no avail.

This is the word the LORD has already spoken concerning Moab. But now the LORD says: “Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them, Moab’s splendor and all her many people will be despised, and her survivors will be very few and feeble.”

As Hezekiah becomes king over Judah, he has heard the prophecies and warnings from Isaiah, the call to return to the Lord or face the wrath of his judgment. And so...

Hezekiah Cleanses the Temple In the first year and first month of Hezekiah’s reign he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and restored them. He then brought in the priests and Levites and gathered them in the square on the eastern side and said to them, “Listen to me, Levites. Consecrate yourselves and consecrate the house of the LORD God of your fathers. And bring out the detestable things from the holy sanctuary. For our fathers have acted unfaithfully and have done what is evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and they have abandoned Him. They have turned their face from the sanctuary of the LORD and have turned their back. They also shut the doors of the vestibule and have extinguished the lamps, nor have they burned incense or burnt offerings in the Holy Place to the God of Israel. Therefore, the wrath of the LORD has come on Judah and Jerusalem for a terror, horror, and scorn as you all can see with your own eyes. Observe, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and now our sons, daughters, and wives are in captivity for all this. Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel so that His burning anger might turn away from us. My people, do not now be negligent for the LORD has chosen you all to stand in His presence, to serve Him, and to be ministers and make sacrifices for Him.”

Then the Levites arose: from the Kohathites, Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah; from the Merarites, Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel; from the Gershonites, Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah; from the descendants of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel; from the descendants of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; from the descendants of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei; from the descendants of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.

So they gathered their brothers together and consecrated themselves and entered in as the king commanded by the words of the LORD in order to cleanse the house of the LORD. Then the priests came into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse it, and they removed everything that they found that was unclean in the main hall of the temple of the LORD to the court. And the Levites took those things and brought them out to the Kidron Valley. They began to consecrate themselves on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they entered the vestibule of the LORD. They consecrated the house of the LORD for eight days. Then on the sixteenth day of the first month they completed *the task*. Then they came toward Hezekiah the king and said, "We have cleaned the entire house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offerings and all its utensils, and the table for showbread and all its utensils. All the vessels that King Ahaz discarded from use during his reign in his treachery we have prepared and consecrated. They are before the altar of the LORD."

Hezekiah Restores Temple Worship So King Hezekiah got up early and gathered the officials of the city and went up to the house of the LORD. And he brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, sanctuary, and Judah. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them up on the altar of the LORD. So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests took their blood and sprinkled it on the altar and then slaughtered the rams and sprinkled their blood on the altar. They did the same for the lambs. And they brought the male goats for a sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they placed their hands on *the goats*. And the priests slaughtered them and purified the altar with their blood to provide atoning reconciliation for all Israel because the king said that the burnt offering and sin offering would be for all Israel.

And he set the Levites at the house of the LORD with cymbals, harps, and lyres according to the commandment of David, and Gad the seer of the king, and Nathan the prophet. For the commandment came from the LORD through His prophets. So the Levites stood with the instruments of David and the priests with the trumpets. Then Hezekiah gave the command to offer the burnt offering on the altar. When they started the burnt offering, the song of the LORD began also, with the trumpets and the instruments of David, king of Israel. The entire assembly worshipped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded. All of this took place until the burnt offering was finished.

When the burnt offering was finished, the king and all those with him bowed down and worshipped. Then Hezekiah the king and the officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the words of David and Asaph the seer. So they praised with gladness and bowed down to worship. Then Hezekiah responded, "Now you have dedicated yourselves to the LORD. Come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the LORD." So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all who had a willing heart brought burnt offerings.

The number of the burnt offerings that the assembly brought was seventy bulls, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. The consecrated animals were six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep. However there were too few priests, and they were not able to skin the burnt offerings. But their brothers the Levites helped them until the work was finished and more priests consecrated themselves, for the Levites were more upright in heart to consecrate themselves than the priests. Also burnt offerings were in abundance with the fat of the peace offerings

and the drink offerings for the burnt offerings. So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people, since the events happened suddenly.

Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover And Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah. He even wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they come to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. The king counseled with his officials and all the assembly in Jerusalem to have the Passover in the second month. For they were not able to have it at the appropriate time *of the first month* because a sufficient amount of priests had not consecrated themselves, nor had the people assembled yet in Jerusalem. And this matter was pleasing in the eyes of the king and all the assembly. So they decreed to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel in Jerusalem, for the *multitude of people* did not do as it was written. So couriers ran throughout all Israel and Judah with a letter from the hand of the king and his officials as a command from the king:

“Sons of Israel, return to the LORD of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel that He might turn to the remnant who has escaped from the king of Assyria. Do not act like your fathers and brothers who were faithless before the LORD God of their fathers, and He appointed them for horror, as you observe. So now do not harden your necks as your fathers, but give yourselves to the LORD and come to the sanctuary that He has consecrated permanently. Serve the LORD your God so that His burning anger might turn away from you all. Because if you return to the LORD, your brothers and children will find compassion before those who have taken them captive, in order to return you to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn His face from you if you all return to Him.”

So the couriers ran from city to city in the land of Ephraim and Manasseh and up to Zebulun, but *the people* laughed at them and mocked them. However some men from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and journeyed to Jerusalem. And even in Judah the hand of God was on them to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and officials by the word of the LORD.

And many people assembled in Jerusalem to have the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. There was a very large assembly. They went out and removed the altars that were in Jerusalem, and they took away all the incense altars and threw *them* into the Kidron Valley. They slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and Levites were ashamed, and they consecrated themselves and brought in burnt offerings to the house of the LORD. They stood at their places according to the Law of Moses, the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood they received from the hands of the Levites. For there were many in the assembly who had consecrated themselves, so the Levites slaughtered the Passover lamb for those who were not clean in order to consecrate *the people* to the LORD. For a multitude of the people—many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun—had not purified themselves. For they ate of the Passover contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed over them saying, “The LORD is good, and may He pardon everyone who sets his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, but is not pure according the *rules of the holy sanctuary*.” So the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

Then the sons of Israel present in Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy, and the Levites and priests praised the LORD every day, *singing* with loud instruments to the LORD. Then Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of the LORD. So they ate for the appointed seven days, sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD God of their fathers.

Then the whole assembly counseled to have the *feast* for another seven days, so they had seven more days of gladness. For Hezekiah king of Judah lifted up for the assembly one thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep. And the officials offered up for the assembly one thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep. And a multitude of priests consecrated themselves. So all the assembly of Judah and the priests and Levites and all the assembly who came from Israel rejoiced, even the sojourners who came from the land of Israel and those who resided in Judah. And there was a great rejoicing in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had not been anything like this. Then the priests and Levites went out and blessed the people, and their voices were heard. And their prayers came up to His holy habitation in the heavens.

And when this *celebration* was finished, all of Israel that was present went out to the cities of Judah and smashed the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah poles and tore down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, and in Ephraim and Manasseh, until everything was destroyed. Then all Israel returned to their cities, each man to his own possession.

Temple Contributions And Hezekiah set up the divisions of the priests and Levites according to their divisions, each man as he worked among the priests and Levites for burnt and fellowship offerings, to serve, give thanks, and offer praise at the gates of the camp of the LORD. And the portion of the king that came from his own possessions was for burnt offerings, those given in the morning and evening, and those given for Sabbaths, New Moons, and appointed feasts, as written in the Law of the LORD. And he ordered those people living in Jerusalem to give a portion for the priests and Levites, in order for them to devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. And when the command spread, the sons of Israel gave generously the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and all the produce of the field. And they brought in abundance a tenth portion of everything. And the sons of Israel and Judah and all who dwelled in the cities of Judah also brought in a tenth portion of cattle and sheep, and a tenth portion of the consecrated items that were to the LORD their God, and brought them in and set them in great piles. In the third month they began to assign the piles of contribution, and they finished in the seventh month. When Hezekiah and the officials saw the contribution piles, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel.

Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and Levites regarding the contribution piles. Azariah the head priest from the house of Zadok said, "Since they began to bring the contributions into the house of the LORD, there has been plenty of food and a large amount left over. For the LORD has blessed His people, and this great abundance is left over." Then Hezekiah ordered them to prepare chambers in the house of the LORD, and they did this. They reliably brought in the contributions, tenth portions, and consecrated items. The leader over them was Konaniah the Levite, and Shimei his brother was second to him. And Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were supervisors under Konaniah and Shimei his brother by the appointment of Hezekiah the king and Azariah the leader of the house of God. And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite was gatekeeper for the East Gate and over the voluntary offerings to God, to designate the contributions of the LORD and most holy offerings. Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shekariah reliably assisted him in the cities of the priests to distribute the portions to their brothers by division, both great and small.

Besides those males registered from three years old and above, they distributed to all who entered into the house of the LORD his daily portion, for their services according to their duties and their divisions. The registration of the priests was according to the house of their fathers and the Levites from twenty years and above, according to their duties and their divisions. They were registered with all their little children, wives, sons, and daughters for the entire assembly for they consecrated themselves in faithfulness. Also for the sons of Aaron, the priests, who were in the fields of common land of their

cities, there were men in each city who were designated by name to allocate portions to every male among the priests and to everyone who was registered by genealogy among the Levites.

Hezekiah did this throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and just and faithful before the LORD his God. And in every deed that he undertook in the service of the house of God and with the law and commandment to seek out his God, he did this with all his heart, and he found success.

Interestingly, we return at this point in the chronology of Scripture to the book of Proverbs. While the first 24 chapters of Proverbs are attributed to King Solomon and so we read them while we were reading the accounts of Solomon; the remaining chapters in Proverbs have a different editorial attribution. Proverbs 25-31 are considered to be writings from various sources that were compiled and edited by “the men of Hezekiah” (probably some sort of literary guild). It seems that as Hezekiah was seeking to rule Judah according to God’s instructions, these scholars found and compiled these writings for guidance.

Proverbs 25-31

These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied.

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.

As the heaven for height, and the earth for depth, so the heart of kings is unsearchable.

Take away the dross from the silver, and there will come forth a vessel for the refiner.

Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness.

Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of great men; for it is better that it be said to you, “Come up here,” than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, whom your eyes have seen.

Do not go forth hastily to strive;

lest you do not know what to do in the end, when your neighbor has put you to shame.

Debate your cause with your neighbor himself, and do not disclose a secret to another;

lest he who hears it put you to shame, and your reputation be ruined.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

As an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover to an obedient ear.

As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to those who send him, for he refreshes the soul of his masters.

Whoever boasts himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaks the bone.

Have you found honey? Eat only as much as is sufficient for you, lest you be filled with it and vomit it.

Withdraw your foot from your neighbor's house, lest he be weary of you and so hate you.

A man who bears false witness against his neighbor is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow.

Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint.

As he who takes away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar on soda,
so is he who sings songs to a heavy heart.

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;
for you will heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD will reward you.

The north wind brings rain, and a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.

It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house.

As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring.

It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

He who has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls.

As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honor is not seemly for a fool.

As the bird by flitting, as the swallow by flying, so the curse without cause will not alight.

A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the fool's back.

Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like unto him.

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

He who sends a message by the hand of a fool cuts off the feet and drinks violence.

The legs of the lame are not equal; so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

As he who binds a stone in a sling, so is he who gives honor to a fool.

As a thorn goes into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

The great God who formed all things rewards the fool and rewards the transgressor.

As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool returns to his folly.

Do you see a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

The slothful man says, "There is a lion in the way! A lion is in the streets!"

As the door turns upon his hinges, so does the slothful upon his bed.

The slothful buries his hand in his bowl; it grieves him to bring it again to his mouth.

The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men who can answer reasonably.

He who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him
is like one who takes a dog by the ears.

As a madman who casts firebrands, arrows, and death,
so is the man who deceives his neighbor, and says, "[I] was only joking."

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceases.

As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and go down into the innermost parts of the body.

Burning lips and a wicked heart are like earthenware covered with silver dross.

He who hates dissembles with his lips, and lays up deceit within him; when he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart; though his hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness will be shown before the whole congregation.

Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will return upon him.

A lying tongue hates those who are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.

Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.

A stone is heavy and the sand weighty, but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy?

Open rebuke is better than secret love.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

The full soul loathes a honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

As a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man who wanders from his place.

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so does the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, nor go into your brother's house in the day of your calamity; for better is a neighbor who is near than a brother far off.

My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him who reproaches me.

A prudent man foresees the evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.

Take his garment that is security for a stranger,
and take a pledge of him for an adulterous woman.

He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it will be counted a curse to him.

A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike;
whoever restrains her restrains the wind, and grasps oil in his right hand.

Iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit; so he who waits on his master will be honored.

As in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man.

Death and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

As the refining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise.

Though you should grind a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle,
yet his foolishness will not depart from him.

Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and look well to your herds; for riches are not forever,
nor does the crown endure to every generation. The hay appears, and the tender grass shows
itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered. The lambs are for your clothing, and the goats are
the price of the field. You will have goats' milk enough for your food, for the food of your household,
and for the maintenance of your maidens.

The wicked flee when no man pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Because of the transgression of a land, many are its princes;
but by a man of understanding and knowledge, it shall be prolonged.

A poor man who oppresses the poor is like a sweeping rain that leaves no food.

Those who forsake instruction praise the wicked, but such as keep instruction contend with them.

Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand all things.

Better is the poor who walks in his uprightness than he who is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

Whoever keeps the law is a wise son, but he who is a companion of riotous men shames his father.

He who by usury and unjust gain increases his substance will gather it for him who will pity the poor.

He who turns away his ear from hearing instruction, even his prayer will be an abomination.

Whoever causes the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he himself will fall into his own pit;
but the upright will have good things in possession.

The rich man is wise in his own conceit, but the poor who has understanding searches him out.

When righteous men rejoice, there is great glory; but when the wicked rise, a man hides himself.

He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

Happy is the man who always fears, but he who hardens his heart will fall into mischief.

As a roaring lion and a charging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

The prince who lacks understanding is also a great oppressor,
but he who hates covetousness will prolong his days.

A man burdened with bloodshed of any person will flee until death; let no man help him.

Whoever walks uprightly will be saved, but he who is perverse in his ways will fall at once.

He who tills his land will have plenty of bread,
but he who follows after vain things will have poverty enough.

A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who makes haste to be rich will not be innocent.

To show partiality is not good, because for a morsel of bread that man will transgress.

He who hastens to be rich has an evil eye, and does not consider that poverty will come upon him.

He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward than he who flatters with the tongue.

Whoever robs his father or his mother and says, "It is no transgression,"
the same is the companion of a destroyer.

He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, but he who puts his trust in the LORD will prosper.

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many a curse.

When the wicked rise, men hide themselves; but when they perish, the righteous increase.

He who is often reprov'd, yet hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people mourn.

Whoever loves wisdom rejoices his father,
but he who keeps company with harlots spends his substance.

The king establishes the land by judgment, but he who receives bribes overthrows it.

A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet.

In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare, but the righteous sing and rejoice.

The righteous considers the cause of the poor, but the wicked regards not to know it.

Scornful men bring a city into a snare, but wise men turn away wrath.

If a wise man contends with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.

The bloodthirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul.

A fool utters all his mind, but a wise man keeps it in until afterwards.

If a ruler listens to lies, all his servants are wicked.

The poor and the deceitful man have this in common: The LORD gives light to the eyes of both.

The king who faithfully judges the poor, his throne will be established forever.

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame.

When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases; but the righteous will see their fall.

Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.

Where there is no vision, the people perish; but happy is he who keeps the teaching.

A servant will not be corrected by words, for though he understands he will not answer.

Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

He who delicately brings up his servant from a child will have him as a son in the end.

An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression.

A man's pride will bring him low, but honor will uphold the humble in spirit.

Whoever is partner with a thief hates his own soul; he hears the oath but tells nothing.

The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever puts his trust in the LORD will be safe.

Many seek the ruler's favor, but every man's judgment comes from the LORD.

An unjust man is an abomination to the just,
and he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.

The Sayings of the Oracle Agur, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied.

The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, the oracle.

The man declares to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ukal:

Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who has ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is the name of His son, if you know?

Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar.

Two things I have required of you; do not deny me them before I die: Remove vanity and lies far from me— give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny You, and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Do not accuse a servant to his master, lest he curse you, and you be found guilty.

There is a generation that curses their father and does not bless its mother. There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, and yet is not washed from its filthiness. There is a generation—oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

The leech has two daughters, crying, "Give, give."

There are three things that are never satisfied, indeed, four things never say, "[It is enough": the grave, the barren womb, the earth that is not filled with water, and the fire that never says, "[It is enough."

The eye that mocks at his father, and despises to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it.

There are three things which are too wonderful for me, indeed, four which I do not know: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a maid.

Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, "[I have done no wickedness."

For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear: for a servant when he reigns, and a fool when he is filled with food, for a hateful woman when she is married, and a handmaid who is heir to her mistress.

There are four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer; the badgers are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands; the spider takes hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

There are three things which go well, indeed, four are comely in going: a lion which is strongest among beasts, and does not turn away for any; a strutting rooster, a male goat also, and a king, against whom there is no rising up.

If you have been foolish in lifting up yourself, or if you have thought evil, put your hand on your mouth. Surely the churning of milk brings forth butter, and the wringing of the nose brings forth blood, so the forcing of wrath brings forth strife.

The Sayings of King Lemuel's Mother which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied.

The words of King Lemuel, an oracle that his mother taught him:

What, my son? And what, the son of my womb? And what, the son of my vows? Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to that which destroys kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of any of the afflicted.

Give strong drink to him who is ready to perish, and wine to those who are of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

Open your mouth for the speechless in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

Epilogue: The Virtuous Wife

Who can find a virtuous woman? For her worth is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband safely trusts in her, so that he will have no lack of gain.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeks wool and flax, and works willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar.

She also rises while it is yet night, and gives food to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.

She clothes herself with strength, and strengthens her arms.

She perceives that her merchandise is good; her candle does not go out by night.

She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretches out her hand to the poor; yes, she reaches forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.

She makes fine linen and sells it, and delivers sashes to the merchant.

Strength and honor are her clothing, and she will rejoice in time to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the teaching of kindness.

She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:

“Many daughters have done virtuously, but you excel them all.”

Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.