
מלכים ב • 2ND KINGS

INTRODUCTION

The two *Books of Kings*, were originally one book in the Hebrew Bible; for other notes on these works, see the [Introduction to 1st Kings](#).

DATES OF THE KINGS' REIGNS

Problems in the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah permit no easy solution. The following table is based upon two widely accepted systems, one developed by W.F Albright (*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 1945, **100**, pp. 16–22) and the other by E.R. Thiele (*J. Near Eastern Studies*, 1944, **3**, 3:137–186). The dates from Thiele's system, which are enclosed in parentheses, are presented in simplified form, disregarding co-regencies and simultaneous claims to the throne.

The length of Saul's reign is not known; David and Solomon are each said to have ruled for forty years, which is often used as a general and somewhat indefinite number. Their reigns must have fallen between about 1020 and 922 (931) BCE.

Saul: circa 1020 - 1000 BCE

David: circa 1000 - 961 (965) BCE

Solomon: 961 - 922 (965-931) BCE

<u>JUDAH</u>	<u>ISRAEL</u>
Rehoboam - 922 (931)	922 (931) - Jeroboam
Abijam - 915 (913)	
Asa - 913 (911)	901 (910) Nadab
	900 (909) - Baasha
	877 (886) - Elah
	876 (885) - Zimri
Jehoshaphat - 873 (870)	876 (880) - Omri
	869 (874) - Ahab
	850 (853) - Ahaziah
Jehoram - 849 (848)	849 (852) - Jehoram
Ahaziah - 842 (841)	842 (841) - Jehu
Athaliah - 842 (841)	

Jehoash - 837 (835)	815 (814) - Jehoahaz
Amaziah - 800 (796)	801 (798) - Jehoash
Uzziah - 783 (767)	786 (782) - Jeroboam II
	746 (753) - Zechariah
	745 (752) - Shallum
Jotham - 742 (740)	745 (752) - Menahem
	738 (742) - Pekahiah
	737 (740) - Pekah
Ahaz - 735 (732)	732 (732) - Hoshea
Hezekiah - 715 (716)	<u>721 (722) - Fall of Samaria</u>
Manasseh - 687 (687)	
Amon - 642 (643)	
Josiah - 640 (641)	
Jehoahaz - 609 (609)	
Jehoiakim - 609 (609)	
Jehoiachin - 598 (598)	
Zedekiah - 597 (597)	
<u>Fall of Jerusalem - 587 (587)</u>	

Table adapted from that presented in an appendix to the New Jerusalem Bible (Study Edition).

מלכים ב פרק א

א וַיִּפְשַׁע מוֹאָב בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַחָאָב: ב וַיִּפֹּל אַחֲזִיָּה בְּעַד הַשִּׁבְכָה בְּעִלְיָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְרוֹן וַיַּחַל וַיִּשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם לְכוּ דַרְשׁוּ בְּבַעַל זְבוּב אֱלֹהֵי עֶקְרוֹן אִם-אֶחְיֶה מִחֲלֵי זֶה: {ס}

ג וּמַלְאָךְ יְהוָה דָּבַר אֶל-אֵלִיָּה הַתִּשְׁבִּי קוּם עֲלֵה לְקִרְאֵת מַלְאָכֵי מֶלֶךְ-שִׁמְרוֹן וּדְבַר אֲלֵהֶם הַמְבַּלִּי אִין-אֱלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם הַלְכִים לְדַרְשׁ בְּבַעַל זְבוּב אֱלֹהֵי עֶקְרוֹן: ד וְלִכֹּן כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה הַמְטָה אֲשֶׁר-עָלִיתָ שָׁם לֹא-תֵרַד מִמֶּנָּה כִּי מוֹת תָּמוּת וַיֵּלֶךְ אֵלֶיהָ: ה וַיָּשׁוּבוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם מַה-זֶּה שָׁבַתֶּם: ו וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אִישׁ עָלָה לְקִרְאֵתָנוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵינוּ לְכוּ שׁוּבוּ אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר-שָׁלַח אֶתְכֶם וּדְבַרְתֶּם אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַמְבַּלִּי אִין-אֱלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אַתָּה שָׁלַח לְדַרְשׁ

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¹ After Ahab died, Moab rebelled against Israel. ² Ahaziah had fallen through the window lattice of his upper room in Samaria and was lying ill; so, he sent messengers, saying to them, "Go and consult Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron and ask whether I shall recover from my illness."

³ However, the Angel of Yahweh said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Get up! Go and intercept the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you go and consult Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron?" ⁴ Therefore, Yahweh says this: The bed you have got into, you will not get out of; you are certainly going to die."" And then, Elijah departed. ⁵ And the messengers returned to the king, and he said to them, "Why have you come back?" ⁶ And they answered him, "There came a man to meet us, who said to us, "Go back to the king who sent you and say to him: Yahweh says this: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you go and consult Baal-Zebub the god of Ekron?"

2 KINGS 1

¹ The information given in this verse is probably out of place (compare 3:5) and would perhaps fit better in the last paragraph of 1K 22.

² 'Baal-Zebub' means 'Baal of Flies', a mocking pun on the god's real name, which was 'Baal-Zebul', 'Baal the Prince' (see Mt 10:25) later, this name became one synonym for the leader of evil forces in the Gospels (Mt 10:25, 12:24, Mk 3:22, Lk 11:15-19).

³ Note the sarcastic nature of the rhetorical question.

⁴ For 'you are certainly going to die', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'you shall surely die'.

⁵ In place of 'to the king', the MT has 'to him'; the referent of the pronoun is here added for clarity.

⁶ The narrative is elliptical and telescoped here: the account of Elijah encountering the messengers and delivering the message is omitted; we only here of it as the messengers report what happened to the king.

בְּבַעַל זָבוּב אֱלֹהֵי עֶקְרוֹן לִכְּן הַמֶּטֶה אֲשֶׁר-עָלִיתָ
שָׁם לֹא-תֵרָד מִמֶּנָּה כִּי-מוֹת תָּמוּת: ^ז וַיְדַבֵּר אֲלֵהֶם
מִה מִשְׁפַּט הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָלָה לְקִרְאָתְכֶם וַיְדַבֵּר
אֲלֵיכֶם אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: ^ח וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אִישׁ
בְּעַל שֵׁעָר וַאֲזוּר עוֹר אֲזוּר בְּמַתְנֵיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיָה
הַתְּשִׁבִי הוּא: ^ט וַיִּשְׁלַח אֵלָיו שְׂרַחֲמָשִׁים וַחֲמִשִּׁין
וַיַּעַל אֵלָיו וְהִנֵּה יוֹשֵׁב עַל-רֹאשׁ הַהָר וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו
אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים הַמַּלְאָךְ דִּבֶּר רָדָה: ^י וַיַּעֲנֵה אֵלָיָהוּ
וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל-שֵׁר הַחֲמִשִּׁים וְאִם-אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים אָנֹכִי
תֵרָד אֵשׁ מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתֹאכַל אֶתְךָ וְאֶת-חֲמִשְׁיָךְ
וְתֵרָד אֵשׁ מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתֹאכַל אֶתְּוֹ וְאֶת-חֲמִשְׁוֹ:
^{יא} וַיֵּשֶׁב וַיִּשְׁלַח אֵלָיו שְׂרַחֲמָשִׁים אַחֵר וַחֲמִשִּׁין
וַיַּעַן וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים כֹּה-אָמַר הַמַּלְאָךְ
מִהֲרָה רָדָה: ^{יב} וַיַּעַן אֵלָיָה וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלֵיהֶם אִם-אִישׁ
הָאֱלֹהִים אָנֹכִי תֵרָד אֵשׁ מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתֹאכַל אֶתְךָ

Because of this, the bed you have got into, you will not get out of; you are certainly going to die.”” ⁷ And he said to them, “This man who met you and told you all these things, what manner of man was he?” ⁸ And they answered him, “He was a man wearing a hair cloak and a had leather loincloth around his waist.” And the king said, “It was Elijah the Tishbite.” ⁹ Then the king sent a captain of fifty soldiers with his contingent to Elijah, whom they found sitting on the top of the hill; the captain went up to him and said, “Man of God, the king says, “Come down.”” ¹⁰ However, Elijah answered the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy both you and your fifty men.” Then fire came down from heaven and destroyed him and his fifty men. ¹¹ The king sent a second captain of fifty to him, again with fifty men, and he too went up and said, “Man of God, this is the king’s order: “Come down at once.”” ¹² But Elijah answered them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy both you and

⁷ The literal translation of ‘*what was he like*’ is ‘*what was his manner*’.

⁸ Elijah wore a loincloth and a flowing cloak (see 2:8, 13, 1K 18:46). So, too, did certain other prophets (Zc 13:4) and John the Baptist, (the ‘Second Elijah’, Mt 13:4 &c).

⁹ Vv. 9–16 are apparently an addition traceable back to disciples of Elisha (compare 2:23–24), the intention being to inculcate the respect and obedience due to God’s representatives; other moral considerations are ignored.

¹⁰ Wordplay contributes to the irony here: the king tells Elijah to ‘*come down*’ but Elijah calls fire down on the arrogant king’s officer.

¹¹ ‘*Went up*’ follows the LXX (ἀνέβη); the MT has ‘*replied*’.

¹² The NJB has just ‘*fire*’ in place of ‘*the fire of God*’.

וְאֶת־חַמְשֵׁיךָ וַתֵּרֶד אֲשֶׁר־אֱלֹהִים מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם
וַתֹּאכַל אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־חַמְשָׁיו: י' וַיָּשָׁב וַיִּשְׁלַח שָׂר־
חַמְשִׁים שְׁלֹשִׁים וַחַמְשָׁיו וַיַּעַל וַיִּבֹא שָׂר־הַחַמְשִׁים
הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיִּכְרַע עַל־בְּרַכְיוֹ לִנְגַד אֱלֹהָיו וַיִּתְחַנֵּן
אֵלָיו וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים תִּיקַר־נָא נַפְשִׁי
וְנַפְשׁ עַבְדֶּיךָ אֵלֶּה חַמְשִׁים בְּעֵינֶיךָ: י"ד הֲנֵה יֵרְדֶה
אִשׁ מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתֹאכַל אֶת־שְׁנֵי שָׂרֵי הַחַמְשִׁים
הָרֵאשֹׁנִים וְאֶת־חַמְשֵׁיהֶם וְעַתָּה תִיקַר נַפְשִׁי
בְּעֵינֶיךָ: {ס}

ט"ו וַיְדַבֵּר מֵלֶאֱךָ יְהוָה אֶל־אֱלֹהָיו רַד אֹתוֹ אֶל־
תִּירָא מִפָּנָיו וַיִּקַּם וַיֵּרֶד אֹתוֹ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ: ט"ז וַיְדַבֵּר
אֵלָיו כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה יַעַן אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַחְתָּ מַלְאָכִים
לְדַרְשׁ בְּבַעַל זְבוּב אֱלֹהֵי עַקְרוֹן הַמַּבְלִי אִין־
אֱלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְדַרְשׁ בְּדַבְּרוֹ לָכֵן הַמָּטָה אֲשֶׁר־
עָלִיתָ שָׁם לֹא־תֵרֶד מִמֶּנָּה כִּי־מֹת תָּמוּת: י"ז וַיָּמָת
כַּדְבַר יְהוָה | אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהָיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ יְהוֹרָם
תַּחֲתָיו {פ}

your fifty men.” Then, the fire of God came down from heaven and destroyed him and his fifty men. ¹³ Then, again, the king sent a third captain of fifty to him, with another fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up and came and fell on his knees before Elijah and pleaded with him, saying to him “Man of God, please let my life and the lives of these fifty men, servants of yours, have some value in your eyes. ¹⁴ And behold! There came down fire from heaven and it destroyed the two former captains of fifties; but let my life have some value now in your eyes.”

¹⁵ Then the Angel of Yahweh said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” And he arose and accompanied him down to the king.

¹⁶ And he said to him, “Yahweh says this, “Since you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron – is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word? Therefore, you will never leave the bed you have got into you; you are certainly going to die.””

¹⁷ Then, in accordance with the word of Yahweh that Elijah had uttered, he died.

¹³ In place of ‘then the king sent’, the MT opens with ‘and he sent’; the referent has been added for clarity.

¹⁴ This 3rd captain is clearly afraid, as he has heard what happened to the other two.

¹⁵ The moral of the story is clear: those who act as if they have authority over God must pay for their arrogance with their lives; those who, like the 3rd commander, humble themselves and show the proper respect for God’s authority and for his servants will be spared.

¹⁶ The NJB lacks, “is it because ... inquire of his word.”

¹⁷ Before ‘Jehoram’, the NJB & NRSV, following the Peshitta, add ‘his brother’.

בְּשֵׁנַת שְׁתַּיִם לַיהוֹרָם בֶּן־יְהוֹשָׁפָט מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה כִּי
לֹא־הָיָה לוֹ בֵּן: {ס} וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי אַחֲזִיָּהוּ אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה הַלְוֵא־הַמָּה כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים
לְמַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

Since he had no son, Jehoram succeeded him, in the second year of King Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. ¹⁸ The rest of the history of Ahaziah, and his career, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel?

¹⁸ The 'Annals of the Kings of Israel' are mentioned 17 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign. Some believe they weren't official documents but were more likely records kept by the prophets who served during each king's reign; regardless, these books have never been found and are presumed to have been irretrievably lost.

2 KINGS 2

מלכים ב פרק ב

א וַיְהִי בַּהֶעֱלֹת יְהוָה אֶת־אֱלִיָּהוּ בְּסַעֲרָה הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֵּלֶךְ אִלָּיָהוּ וְאֵלִישָׁע מִן־הַגִּלְגָּל: ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלִיָּהוּ אֶל־אֱלִישָׁע שְׁבִנָּא פֹה כִּי יְהוֹה שְׁלַחְנִי עַד־בֵּית־אֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלִישָׁע חַי־יְהוֹה וְחַי־נַפְשְׁךָ אִם־אֶעֱזֹבְךָ וַיֵּרְדוּ בֵּית־אֵל: ג וַיֵּצְאוּ בְנֵי־הַנְּבִיאִים אֲשֶׁר־בֵּית־אֵל אֶל־אֱלִישָׁע וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הֲיָדַעְתָּ כִּי הַיּוֹם יְהוֹה לִקַּח אֶת־אֲדֹנֶיךָ מֵעַל רֹאשְׁךָ וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם־אֲנִי יִדְעָתִי הַחֹשׁוֹ: ד וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֱלִיָּהוּ אֱלִישָׁע | שְׁבִנָּא פֹה כִּי יְהוֹה שְׁלַחְנִי יִרְחוּ וַיֹּאמֶר חַי־יְהוֹה וְחַי־נַפְשְׁךָ אִם־אֶעֱזֹבְךָ וַיָּבֹאוּ יִרְחוּ: ה וַיֵּגֶשׁוּ בְנֵי־הַנְּבִיאִים אֲשֶׁר־בִּירְחוֹ אֶל־אֱלִישָׁע וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הֲיָדַעְתָּ כִּי הַיּוֹם יְהוֹה לִקַּח אֶת־אֲדֹנֶיךָ מֵעַל רֹאשְׁךָ וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם־אֲנִי יִדְעָתִי הַחֹשׁוֹ: ו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֱלִיָּהוּ שְׁבִנָּא פֹה כִּי יְהוֹה שְׁלַחְנִי הִירְדְנָה וַיֹּאמֶר חַי־יְהוֹה וְחַי־נַפְשְׁךָ אִם־אֶעֱזֹבְךָ וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם:

1 When Yahweh took Elijah up to heaven in the whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha set out from Gilgal, ² and Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here, for Yahweh is sending me to Bethel.” But Elisha replied, “As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you!” and they went down to Bethel. ³ The brotherhood of prophets who live at Bethel came out to meet Elisha and said, “Do you know that Yahweh is going to carry your master away today?” “Yes, I know,” he said, “be quiet.” ⁴ Elijah said, “Elisha, stay here, Yahweh is sending me to Jericho.” But he replied, “As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you!” and they went on to Jericho. ⁵ The brotherhood of prophets who live at Jericho went up to Elisha and said, “Do you know that Yahweh is going to carry your master away today?” “Yes, I know,” he said, “be quiet.” ⁶ Elijah said, “Elisha, stay here, Yahweh is sending me to the Jordan.” However, he replied, “As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you!” So, they went on together.

2 KINGS 2

¹ The ‘*Gilgal*’ mentioned, to the north of Bethel, is not that of Jos 4:19.

² Before ‘*sending me*’, the *NJB* adds the clarifying ‘*only*’.

³ The ‘*brotherhood of prophets*’ translates literally as ‘*sons of the prophets*’ (the *NRSV* has ‘*company of prophets*’). These prophets formed compact groups and lived in community. Elisha, unlike the lone prophet Elijah, was closely associated with them.

⁴ As in v. 2, the *NJB* adds the clarifying ‘*only*’ before ‘*sending me*’.

⁵ Here and in v. 3, the *NJB* adds ‘*lord and*’ before ‘*master*’; here, we follow the *MT* & *NRSV*.

⁶ Despite the fact that, three times, Elijah asked Elisha to stay behind, the younger prophet would not leave his master.

ז' וַחֲמִשִּׁים אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים הִלְכוּ וַיַּעֲמְדוּ מִנֶּגֶד
 מֵרְחוֹק וּשְׁנֵיהֶם עָמְדוּ עַל־הַיַּרְדֵּן: ח' וַיִּקַּח אֵלִיהוּ
 אֶת־אֲדָרְתוֹ וַיִּגְלֵם וַיִּכֶּה אֶת־הַמַּיִם וַיַּחְצוּ הַנָּהָר
 וְהַנָּהָר וַיַּעֲבְרוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם בַּחֲרָבָה: ט' וַיְהִי כְעֵבְרָם
 וְאֵלִיהוּ אָמַר אֶל־אֵלִישָׁע שְׂאֵל מָה אֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּךְ
 בְּטָרַם אֶלְקַח מֵעִמָּךְ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלִישָׁע וַיְהִי נָא פִּי־
 שְׁנַיִם בְּרוּחֶךָ אֵלַי: י' וַיֹּאמֶר הַקְּשִׁית לְשֵׂאוֹל אִם־
 תִּרְאֶה אֶתִּי לְקַח מֵאֲתָךְ יְהִי־לָךְ כֵּן וְאִם־אֵין לֹא
 יִהְיֶה: י"א וַיְהִי הֵמָּה הַלִּכְּיִם הַלּוֹךְ וּדְבַר וְהַנָּהָר רָכַב־
 אִשׁ וְסוּסֵי אֵשׁ וַיִּפְרְדוּ בֵּין שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיַּעַל אֵלִיהוּ
 בְּסַעֲרָה הַשָּׁמַיִם: י"ב וְאֵלִישָׁע רָאָה וְהוּא מִצַּעֲקַ
 אָבִי| אָבִי רֶכֶב יִשְׂרָאֵל וּפִרְשָׁיו וְלֹא רָאָהוּ עוֹד
 וַיַּחֲזֵק בְּבִגְדָיו וַיִּקְרַעֵם לְשָׁנַיִם קָרְעִים: י"ג וַיִּרֶם אֶת־
 אֲדָרְתוֹ אֵלִיהוּ אֲשֶׁר נָפְלָה מֵעָלָיו וַיָּשָׁב וַיַּעֲמֵד עַל־
 שֵׁפֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן: י"ד וַיִּקַּח אֶת־אֲדָרְתוֹ אֵלִיהוּ אֲשֶׁר־

7 Fifty of the brotherhood of prophets followed them, halting some distance away as the two of them stood beside the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water; and the water divided to left and right, and the two of them crossed over dry-shod. 9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Make your request. What can I do for you before I am taken from you?” Elisha said, “Let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” 10 He said, “Your request is a difficult one; if you see me while I am being taken from you, it shall be as you ask; if not, it will not be so.” 11 Now as they walked on, talking as they went, a chariot of fire appeared and horses of fire, coming between the two of them; and Elijah went up to heaven in the whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw it, and shouted, “My father, my father! Chariot of Israel and its chargers!” Then he lost sight of him and, taking hold of his clothes, he tore them in half. 13 He picked up the cloak of Elijah, which had fallen, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen

7 In place of ‘the two of them’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘Elijah and Elisha’.

8 This miracle is reminiscent of the Israelites’ crossing of the Sea of Reeds under Moses’ leadership.

9 The elder son inherited a double portion of his father’s goods (Dt 21:17).

10 Elisha wants to be acknowledged as Elijah’s principal spiritual heir: an ambitious request since the prophetic spirit is not inherited but is a gift of God.

11 Although the word translated ‘a chariot’ is singular here, it could be collective – in which case one could translate as ‘chariots’.

12 The use of ‘father’ as the title of a man of religion is a very old custom (Jg 17:10).

13 The NRSV uses ‘mantle’ in place of ‘cloak’, here following the NJB & NETB.

14 The NJB omits ‘that had fallen from him’. After ‘God of Elijah’, the MT adds ‘he too’, a gloss referring back to ‘he struck’ (v. 8).

נִפְלָה מֵעָלָיו וַיִּכֶּה אֶת־הַמַּיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶּה יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי אֱלִיָּהוּ אֶף־הוּא | וַיִּכֶּה אֶת־הַמַּיִם וַיַּחְצוּ הַנָּהָר
וַהֲנָה וַיַּעֲבֵר אֶלְיָשָׁע: ^{טו} וַיִּרְאֶהוּ בְנֵי־הַנְּבִיאִים
אֲשֶׁר־בִּירִיחוֹ מִזָּנָד וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַחַח רֹחַ אֱלִיָּהוּ עָלַי
אֶלְיָשָׁע וַיָּבֹאוּ לִקְרֹאתוֹ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ־לּוֹ אַרְצָה:
^{טז} וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הֲנֵה־נָא יִשְׁאַתְּ־עַבְדֶּיךָ חֲמִשִּׁים
אָנָשִׁים בְּנֵי־חֵיל יֵלְכוּ נָא וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ אֶת־אֲדֹנֶיךָ פֶּן־
נִשְׂאוּ רֹחַ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁלְכֵהוּ בְּאֶחָד הַהָרִים אוֹ בְּאֶחַת
הַגִּיאוֹת הַגִּיאֹת וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא תִשְׁלַחוּ: ^{יז} וַיִּפְצְרוּ־בּוֹ
עַד־בֶּשַׁע וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחוּ וַיִּשְׁלַחוּ חֲמִשִּׁים אִישׁ
וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה־יָמִים וְלֹא מָצְאוּהוּ: ^{יח} וַיָּשִׁבוּ אֵלָיו
וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב בִּירִיחוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם הֲלֹא־אָמַרְתִּי
אֲלֵיכֶם אַל־תֵּלְכוּ: {ס}

^{יט} וַיֹּאמְרוּ אַנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אֶל־אֱלִישָׁע הֲנֵה־נָא מוֹשֵׁב
הָעִיר טוֹב כַּאֲשֶׁר אֲדֹנִי רָאָה וְהַמַּיִם רָעִים וְהָאָרֶץ
מִשְׁכַּלֶּת: ^כ וַיֹּאמֶר קְחוּ־לִי צִלְחִית חֲדָשָׁה וְשִׂימוּ

from him and struck the water. “Where is Yahweh, the God of Elijah?” he cried. He struck the water and it divided to right and left, and Elisha crossed over. ¹⁵ The brotherhood of prophets, who were at Jericho, saw him in the distance, and said, “The spirit of Elijah has come to rest of Elisha;” they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. ¹⁶ “Look,” they said, “your servants have fifty strong men with them; let them go and look for your master; it may be that the spirit of Yahweh has taken him up and thrown him down on some mountain or into some valley.” “No! Do not send them,” he replied. ¹⁷ However, they so shamed him with their insistence that he consented. Therefore, they sent fifty men who searched for three days without finding him. ¹⁸ They then came back to Elisha who had stayed in Jericho; he said, “Did I not tell you not to go?”

¹⁹ The men of the town said to Elisha, “The town is pleasant to live in, as my lord can see, but the water is foul and the country is unfruitful.” ²⁰ “Bring me a new bowl,” he said, “and put some salt in it.” They

¹⁵ The NJB omits ‘who were at Jericho’. The brotherhood of prophets here acknowledges Elisha as leader.

¹⁶ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁷ NETB has ‘embarrassed’ in place of ‘shamed’, here following the NJB.

¹⁸ The fruitless search merely establishes the fact that Elijah is no longer in this world; what has become of him is a mystery on which Elisha is not prepared to elaborate.

¹⁹ Vv. 19–25 present two narratives in the same vein as those of Ch. 4. Elisha possesses a divine power to save or to destroy; those who recognise his mission benefit from it but those who mock the man of God meet with disaster.

²⁰ Salt was a highly prized commodity in the ancient Middle East.

שם מלח ויקחו אליו: כֹּא וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-מוֹצֵא הַמַּיִם וַיִּשְׁלֹךְ-שֵׁם מֶלַח וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה רַפְּאֵתִי לַמַּיִם הָאֵלֶּה לֹא-יְהִיָּה מָשֶׁם עוֹד מוֹת וּמִשְׁכַּלֶּת: כִּב וַיִּרְפוּ הַמַּיִם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כַּדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר אָשַׁע אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר: {פ}

brought it to him. ²¹ Then he went to the place the water came from and threw salt into it. “Thus Yahweh speaks,” he said, “I make this water wholesome: neither death nor barrenness shall come from it any more.” ²² Thus, the water has been wholesome to this day, exactly as Elisha said it would be.

כִּג וַיַּעַל מִשָּׁם בֵּית-אֵל וְהוּא | עֲלֵה בַדְרֹךְ וּנְעָרִים קְטָנִים יֵצְאוּ מִן-הָעִיר וַיִּתְקַלְסוּ-בּוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ עֲלֵה קַרְחַ עֲלֵה קַרְחַ: כִּד וַיִּפֹּן אַחֲרָיו וַיִּרְאֵם וַיִּקְלֹלֵם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וַתֵּצְאָנָה שְׁתֵּי דְבִיּוֹת מִן-הָעֵר וַתִּבְקַעְנָה מֵהֶם אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁנַיִם יְלָדִים: כִּה וַיֵּלֶךְ מִשָּׁם אֶל-הַר הַכַּרְמֶל וּמִשָּׁם שָׁב שָׁמְרוֹן: {פ}

²³ Thence, he went up to Bethel and, while he was on the road up, some young boys came out of the town and jeered at him. “Go up, baldhead!” they shouted, “Go up, baldhead!” ²⁴ He turned round and looked at them; and he cursed them in the name of Yahweh; and two she-bears came out of the wood and savaged forty-two of the boys. ²⁵ From there, he went on to Mount Carmel and then returned to Samaria.

²¹ The NJB & NRSV have ‘miscarriage’ in place of ‘barrenness’, here following NETB.

²² Today, the finest spring in Jericho is sometimes called Elisha’s Fountain.

²³ The word נְעָרִים, here translated ‘boys’, can refer to a broad age range, including infants as well as young men; but the qualifying term ‘young’ suggests these youths were relatively young.

²⁴ On ‘forty-two’ as a number of ill-omen, compare 10:14, Rv 11:2, 13:5.

²⁵ The two brief episodes recorded in vv. 19–25 demonstrate Elisha’s authority and prove that he is the legitimate prophetic heir of Elijah; he has the capacity to bring life and blessing to those who recognise his authority, or death and judgment to those who reject him.

מלכים ב פרק ג

א ויהורם בן-אחאב מלך על-ישראל בשמרון בשנת שמנה עשרה ליהושפט מלך יהודה ומלך שתים-עשרה שנה: ב ויעשה הרע בעיני יהוה רק לא כאביו וכאמו ויסר את-מצבת הבעל אשר עשה אביו: ג רק בחטאות ירבעם בן-נבט אשר-החטיא את-ישראל דבק לא-סר ממנה: {פ}

ד ומישע מלך-מואב היה נקד והשיב למלך-ישראל מאה-אלף כרים ומאה אלף אילים צמר: ה ויהי כמות אחאב וישע מלך-מואב במלך ישראל: ו ויצא המלך יהורם ביום ההוא משמרון ויפקד את-כל-ישראל: ז וילך וישלח אל-יהושפט מלך-יהודה לאמר מלך מואב פשע בי התלך אתי אל-מואב למלחמה ויאמר אעלה כמוני

2 KINGS 3

¹ Jehoram son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah and reigned for twelve years. ² He did what is evil in Yahweh's sight, though not like his father and mother, for he did away with the pillar of Baal that his father had made. ³ Nonetheless, he continued to practise the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel, and did not give them up.

⁴ Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-breeder and used to pay the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs and the wool of a hundred thousand rams in tribute. ⁵ But, when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. ⁶ At once King Jehoram went out of Samaria and mustered all Israel. After ⁷ this, he sent word to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you join with me fighting Moab?" "I will," he replied. "I am as ready as you, my men

2 KINGS 3

¹ Jehoram (of Israel) reigned 852–841 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 849–842 according to W.F. Albright.

² The literal translation of 'sight' is 'eyes'.

³ The MT has 'it' in place of 'them'; some MSS read the plural, which seems preferable since the antecedent ('sins') is plural. Another option is to emend the plural 'sins' to a singular: one LXX MS has the singular, 'sin'.

⁴ The *vav* + perfect translated 'used to pay' indicates customary action contemporary with the situation described in the preceding main clause.

⁵ The Mesha stone, discovered at Dibon in 1868, mentions that Moab was subject to Israel under Omri/Ahab and records the war of liberation.

⁶ In mentioning 'King Jehoram', the author disregards the brief reign of Ahaziah (vv. 5–6, compare 1K 22:40).

⁷ Here, and in vv. 11, 12 and 14, the NJB, omits the name 'Jehoshaphat': the chronological data show that the war did not take place until the reign of his son, Jehoram of Judah.

כַּמֹּזֶדְךָ כַּעַמִּי כַּעַמְךָ כְּסוּסֵי כְּסוּסֵי־יָ: ^ח וַיֹּאמֶר אִיזָה
הַדֶּרֶךְ נִעְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר דָּרֶךְ מִדְּבַר אֲדוֹם: ^ט וַיֵּלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ
יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וּמֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם וַיִּסְבּוּ דֶרֶךְ
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְלֹא־הָיָה מַיִם לְמַחְנֵה וּלְבַהֲמָה אֲשֶׁר
בְּרִגְלֵיהֶם: ^י וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵלֶּה כִּי־קָרָא
יְהוָה לְשַׁלְשֵׁת הַמְּלָכִים הָאֵלֶּה לְתַת אֹתָם בְּיַד־
מוֹאָב: {ס}

^{יא} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשָׁפָט הֲאִין פֹּה נָבִיא לַיהוָה וְנִדְרָשָׁה
אֶת־יְהוָה מֵאוֹתוֹ וַיַּעַן אֶחָד מֵעַבְדֵי מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיֹּאמֶר פֹּה אֵלִישָׁע בֶּן־שַׁפְט אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵק מִיַּם עַל־יְדֵי
אֵלֵיהֶם: ^{יב} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשָׁפָט יֵשׁ אוֹתוֹ דְּבַר־יְהוָה
וַיֵּרְדּוּ אֵלָיו מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהוֹשֶׁפֶט וּמֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם:
^{יג} וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלִישָׁע אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵה־לִּי וְלֶךְ לְךָ
אֶל־נְבִיאֵי אָבִיךָ וְאֶל־נְבִיאֵי אִמְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מֶלֶךְ
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵל כִּי־קָרָא יְהוָה לְשַׁלְשֵׁת הַמְּלָכִים הָאֵלֶּה
לְתַת אֹתָם בְּיַד־מוֹאָב: ^{יד} וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלִישָׁע חִי־יְהוָה

as your men, my horses as your horses,” ⁸ and added, “which way are we to attack?” “Through the Desert of Edom,” the other answered. ⁹ So, the king of Israel, the king of Judah and the king of Edom set out; they followed a devious route for seven days, until there was no water left for the troops or for the beasts in their baggage train. ¹⁰ “Alas!” the king of Israel exclaimed, “Yahweh has summoned us three kings, only to put us into the power of Moab.”

¹¹ However, Jehoshaphat said, “Is there no prophet of Yahweh here for us to consult Yahweh through him?” One of the servants of the king of Israel answered, “Elisha son of Shaphat is here, who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.” ¹² Jehoshaphat said, “The word of Yahweh is with him.” Therefore, they went to him, the king of Israel, the king of Judah and the king of Edom. ¹³ Elisha said to the king of Israel, “What business do you have with me? Go to the prophets of your father and mother.” “No,” the king of Israel answered, “Yahweh has summoned us three kings, only to put us into the power of Moab.” ¹⁴ Elisha replied,

⁸ The NJB & NRSV have ‘wilderness’ in place of ‘Desert’, here following NETB.

⁹ The king of Israel needs the cooperation of Judah and of his vassal, Edom, to attack Moab from the south by passing round the Dead Sea through Edomite territory.

¹⁰ In place of ‘alas’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘oh no’; another option is ‘ah’.

¹¹ The NJB has ‘the king of Judah’ in place of ‘Jehoshaphat’ (see #7).

¹² The NJB has ‘the king of Judah’ in place of ‘Jehoshaphat’ (see #7).

¹³ The mention of his mother’s prophets (prophets of Baal) indicates that Jehoram was a son of Jezebel.

¹⁴ The NJB lacks the name ‘Jehoshaphat’ (see #7).

צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר עִמָּדְתִּי לִפְנֵי כִי לֹוֹלִי פָנִי יְהוֹשֶׁפֶט
מִלֶּךְ־יְהוּדָה אֲנִי נֹשֵׂא אִם־אֲבִיט אֵלֶיךָ וְאִם־
אַרְאֶךָ: ^{טו} וְעַתָּה קְחוּ־לִי מִנְגֵן וְהִיָּה כְנָגֵן הַמִּנְגֵן
וְתָהִי עָלָיו יַד־יְהוָה: ^{טז} וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה
הַנְּחַל הַזֶּה גְבִים | גְבִים: ^{יז} כִּי־כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה לֹא־
תֵרְאוּ רוּחַ וְלֹא־תֵרְאוּ גֶשֶׁם וְהַנְּחַל הַהוּא יִמְלֵא
מִיָּם וְשִׁתִּיתֶם אֹתָם וּמִקְנֵיכֶם וּבְהֵמַתְכֶם: ^{יח} וְנִקְל
זֹאת בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה וְנָתַן אֶת־מוֹאֵב בְּיַדְכֶם:
^{יט} וְהִכִּיתֶם כָּל־עִיר מִבְּצָר וְכָל־עִיר מִבְּחוּר וְכָל־עֵץ
טוֹב תִּפְּלוּ וְכָל־מַעֲיֵנ־מַיִם תִּסְתְּמוּ וְכָל הַחֲלֻקָּה
הַטּוֹבָה תִּכְאָבוּ בְּאַבְנֵים: ^כ וְהִי בְּבֹקֶר כַּעֲלוֹת
הַמִּנְחָה וְהִנֵּה־מַיִם בְּאֵים מִדֶּרֶךְ אֲדוֹם וְתִמְלֵא
הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַמַּיִם:

^{כא} וְכָל־מוֹאֵב שָׁמְעוּ כִּי־עָלוּ הַמְּלָכִים לְהִלָּחֵם בָּם
וַיִּצְעֲקוּ מִכָּל חֹגֵר חֹגְרָה וּמִעֵלָה וַיַּעֲמְדוּ עַל־
הַגְּבוּל: ^{כב} וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בְּבֹקֶר וְהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ זָרְחָה עַל־

“As Yahweh Sabaoth lives, whom I serve, if I did not respect Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I should not take any notice of you, or so much as look at you. ¹⁵ Now bring me someone who can play the lyre.” And as the musician played, the hand of Yahweh was laid on him ¹⁶ and he said, “Yahweh says this, “Dig in this valley many cisterns,” ¹⁷ for Yahweh says, “You shall see neither wind nor rain, but this valley shall become full of water, and you and your cattle and your baggage animals shall drink.” ¹⁸ This is only a little thing in the sight of Yahweh, for he will put Moab itself into your power. ¹⁹ You shall storm every fortified town and every choice town, fell every sound tree, block every water-spring, ruin all the best fields with stones.” ²⁰ The next day, about the time of the morning offering, water suddenly came from the direction of Edom, and the whole terrain was flooded.

²¹ When the Moabites learned that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were of age to bear arms were mobilised and drew up on the frontier. ²² In the morning when they got up, the sun shone on the

¹⁵ The music was to stimulate prophetic ecstasy, out of which the prophet could give his oracle (1S 10:5–6, 19:20–24).

¹⁶ The ‘valley’ (the NRSV uses ‘wadi’) may have been the ‘Brook of Zered’ (Dt 2:13).

¹⁷ The NJB, following the LXX, has ‘troops’ in place of ‘cattle’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

¹⁸ The literal translation of ‘this is only a little thing’ is ‘this is easy’.

¹⁹ The NJB, following the LXX, omits, ‘and every choice town’.

²⁰ The NJB lacks ‘suddenly’, here following the NRSV.

²¹ The literal translation of ‘who were of age to bear arms’ is ‘who tied on a belt and upwards’.

²² There is a play on the words אֲדָם (‘red’), דָּם (‘blood’) and the name ‘Edom’ (אֲדוֹם).

הַמַּיִם וַיֵּרְאוּ מוֹאָב מִנֶּגֶד אֶת־הַמַּיִם אֲדָמִים כַּדָּם:
כַּג וַיֹּאמְרוּ דָם זֶה הֶחָרָב נֶחְרַבוּ הַמְּלָכִים וַיָּבוּ אִישׁ
אֶת־רַעְהוּ וְעַתָּה לְשָׁלַל מוֹאָב:

כַּד וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־מַחֲנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְמוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבוּ
אֶת־מוֹאָב וַיִּגְסוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיָּבוּ וַיִּכּוּ־בָהּ וְהַכּוֹת אֶת־
מוֹאָב: כֵּה וְהָעָרִים יִהְרָסוּ וְכָל־חֲלָקָה טוֹבָה יִשְׁלִיכוּ
אִישׁ־אֲבָנָו וּמִלְאוּהָ וְכָל־מַעְיֵן־מַיִם יִסְתָּמוּ וְכָל־
עֵץ־טוֹב יִפִּילוּ עַד־הַשָּׂאִיר אַבְנֵיהָ בְּקִיר חֲרֻשֶׁת
וַיִּסְבּוּ הַקְּלָעִים וַיָּכּוּהָ: כו וַיֵּרָא מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב כִּי־חָזַק
מִמֶּנּוּ הַמְּלַחְמָה וַיִּקַּח אֹתוֹ שֶׁבַע־מְאוֹת אִישׁ שְׁלִף
חָרָב לְהַבְּקִיעַ אֶל־מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם וְלֹא יָכֹלוּ: כז וַיִּקַּח
אֶת־בְּנוֹ הַבְּכוֹר אֲשֶׁר־יִמְלֹךְ תַּחְתָּיו וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ עָלֶיהָ
עַל־הַחֲמָה וַיְהִי קֶצֶף־גָּדוֹל עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ
מֵעָלָיו וַיָּשׁוּבוּ לְאֶרֶץ: {פ}

water and the Moabites saw the water opposite as red as blood. ²³ They said, "This is blood! The kings must have fought together and killed one another. So now for the booty, Moab!"

²⁴ But when they reached the Israelite camp, the Israelites launched their attack and the Moabites fled before them; and as they went, they cut down the Moabites. ²⁵ They laid the towns in ruins; each man threw a stone into every good field to fill it up; they blocked every water-spring and felled every sound tree. Only Kir-Hareseth was left, which the slingers surrounded and attacked. ²⁶ When the king of Moab saw that the battle had turned against him, he mustered seven hundred swordsmen to break through, opposite the king of Edom, but he failed. ²⁷ Then he took his eldest son who was to succeed him and offered him as a sacrifice on the city wall. There was bitter indignation against the Israelites, who then withdrew, and retired to their own country.

²³ In place of 'must have fought together', here following the NRSV, NETB has 'are totally destroyed'.

²⁴ The NRSV ends the verse with: "... as they entered Moab they continued the attack." The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain: the *Ketiv* has 'and they went [, striking down]' (ויָּבוּ) but the *Qere* has 'and they struck [, striking down]' (וַיִּכּוּ).

²⁵ The 2nd sentence is uncertain; the NRSV reads, "Only at Kir-Hareseth did the stone walls remain, until the slingers surrounded and attacked it." Kir-Hareseth was the capital of Moab (Is 16:7, 11, Jr 48:31, 36), on the site of modern Kerak.

²⁶ In place of 'Edom', the NJB has the conjectural 'Aram'.

²⁷ The king of Moab sacrificed his son in a desperate attempt to placate his god Chemosh. Performed on the ramparts, the sacrifice provoked panic among the besiegers, who seem to have expected Chemosh to intervene. Human sacrifice, common in many ancient religions, was not unknown among the people of Israel and Judah (Ex 22:29-30, Jg 11:30-31, 39, 1K 16:34), though they learned that it was wrong (Gn 22:12, Ex 34:20, Dt 18:10); two later kings of Israel are condemned for participating in this horrible practice.

מלכים ב פרק ד

2 KINGS 4

א וְאִשָּׁה אַחַת מִנְּשֵׂי בְנֵי־הַנְּבִיאִים צָעָקָה אֶל־
אֵלִישָׁע לֵאמֹר עַבְדְּךָ אִישִׁי מָת וְאַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ כִּי
עַבְדְּךָ הָיָה יִרְא אֶת־יְהוָה וְהַנְּשִׂיָה בָּא לְקַחַת אֶת־
שְׁנֵי יַלְדָי לּוֹ לְעַבְדִּים: ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלִיָּה אֵלִישָׁע מַה
אֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּךְ הַגִּידִי לִי מִה־יֵשְׁלָךְ לְכִי בַּבַּיִת וְתֹאמַר
אֵין לְשִׁפְחָתְךָ כֹּל בַּבַּיִת כִּי אִם־אֶסְוֹד שָׁמֹן:
ג וַיֹּאמֶר לְכִי שְׂאֲלִי־לָךְ כְּלִים מִן־הַחוּץ מֵאֵת כָּל־
שְׂכֵנֶיךָ שְׂכֵנֵי כְּלִים רַקִּים אֶל־תִּמְעִיטִי: ד וּבָאת
וְסָגַרְתְּ הַדְּלֵת בְּעַדְךָ וּבְעַד־בָּנֶיךָ וַיִּצְקֵת עַל כָּל־
הַכְּלִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהַמְּלֵא תִּסְעִי: ה וְתִלְדִּי מֵאֵתוֹ
וְתִסְגָּר הַדְּלֵת בְּעַדָּהּ וּבְעַד בְּנֵיהָ הֵם מְגִישִׁים
אֵלֶיהָ וְהִיא מִיִּצְקֵת מוֹצֵקֶת: ו וַיְהִי כִּמְלֵאת הַכְּלִים
וְתֹאמַר אֶל־בְּנָהּ הַגִּישָׁה אֵלַי עוֹד כְּלִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ

1 The wife of a member of the prophetic brotherhood appealed to Elisha. “Your servant my husband is dead,” she said, “and you know how your servant revered Yahweh, but a creditor has now come to take my two children and make them his slaves.” 2 Elisha said to her, “What can I do for you? Tell me, what have you in the house?” “Your servant has nothing in the house,” she replied, “except a pot of oil.” 3 Then he said, “Go outside and borrow containers from all your neighbours, empty jars and not too few. 4 When you come back, shut the door on yourself and your sons, and start pouring the oil into all these containers, putting each aside when it is full.” 5 Then she left him; and she shut the door on herself and her sons; they kept bringing her the containers and she kept pouring. 6 When the jars were full, she said to one of her sons, “Pass me another container,” but he replied, “There are

2 KINGS 4

- 1 The NRSV uses ‘company of prophets’ in place of ‘prophetic brotherhood’ (see #2:3). In ancient times, miracle stories were considered one of the best ways of portraying the importance of a religious leader. Two differences from Elijah should be noted: first, Elisha belonged to and worked with the prophetic brotherhood (members of the prophetic order living in communities); secondly, he was often in the company of the king and the army (compare Ch. 3).
- 2 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- 3 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- 4 The NRSV lacks the words ‘the oil’, here following the *NJB* & *NETB*.
- 5 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- 6 The *MT* has simply ‘her son’ in place of ‘one of her sons’, here following *NETB*.

אֵין עוֹד כְּלִי וַיֵּעַמַּד הַשָּׁמֶן: ^ז וַתָּבֵא וַתִּגְדַּל לְאִישׁ
הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לְכִי מְכִרִי אֶת־הַשָּׁמֶן וְשַׁלְּמִי אֶת־
נְשִׂיָךְ נְשִׁיכִי וְאֶת וּבְנֵיָךְ בְּנֵיכִי תַחֲתֵי בְנוֹתֶיךָ: {פ}

^ח וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיַּעֲבֹר אֵלִישָׁע אֶל־שׁוֹנִם וְשָׁם אִשָּׁה
גְּדוֹלָה וַתַּחֲזֹק־בּוֹ לְאֹכַל־לֶחֶם וַיְהִי מִדֵּי עֲבָרוֹ יָסַר
שָׁמָּה לְאֹכַל־לֶחֶם: ^ט וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל־אִישָׁהּ הֲנֵה־נָא
יִדְעֵתִי כִּי אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים קָדוֹשׁ הוּא עָבַר עָלֵינוּ
תָּמִיד: ^י נַעֲשֶׂה־נָּא עֲלֵית־קִיר קֶטַנָּה וְנָשִׂים לוֹ שָׁם
מִטָּה וְשִׁלְחָן וְכִסֵּא וּמְנוֹרָה וְהָיָה בְּבֹאוֹ אֵלֵינוּ יָסוּר
שָׁמָּה: ^{יא} וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיָּבֵא שָׁמָּה וַיָּסַר אֶל־הַעֲלִיָּה
וַיִּשְׁכַּב־שָׁמָּה: ^{יב} וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־גִּיחֲזִי נַעֲרוֹ קְרָא
לְשׁוֹנַמִּית הַזֹּאת וַיִּקְרָא־לָהּ וַתַּעֲמַד לְפָנָיו:
^{יג} וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֲמַרְנָא אֵלֶיךָ הֲנֵה חֲרַדְתָּ | אֵלֵינוּ
אֶת־כָּל־הַחֲרָדָה הַזֹּאת מֵה לַעֲשׂוֹת לָךְ הֲיֵשׁ
לְדַבֵּר־לָךְ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אוֹ אֶל־שָׂר הַצָּבָא וַתֹּאמֶר

no more.” Then the oil stopped flowing. ⁷ She went and told the man of God, who said, “Go and sell the oil and redeem your pledge; you and your children can live on the remainder.”

⁸ One day, as Elisha was on his way to Shunem, a wealthy woman who lived there urged him to stay and eat there. After this, he always stopped for a meal when he passed that way. ⁹ She said to her husband, “Look, I am sure the man who regularly passes our way must be a holy man of God. ¹⁰ Let us build him a small room on the roof, and put him a bed in it, and a table and chair and lamp; whenever he comes to us, he can rest there.” ¹¹ One day when he came, he retired to the upper room and lay down. ¹² He said to his servant Gehazi, “Call the Shunammite woman.” He called her, and she came and stood before him. ¹³ He said to him, “Tell her this: Since you have gone to all this trouble for us, what can we do for you? Is there anything you would like said for you to the king or to the commander of the army?” She replied, “I live with my

⁷ ‘The man of God’ is the normal title for Elisha in stories emanating from the brotherhood of prophets (see also 7:17). The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁸ The 1st part of this story (vv. 8–17) exhibits the favourite theme of the birth of a child late in life to a hitherto barren woman (compare 1S 1); the 2nd part (vv. 18–37) parallels the account of Elijah’s resuscitation of a child (1K 17:17–24).

⁹ The literal translation of ‘I am sure’ is ‘I know’.

¹⁰ The literal translation of ‘small room on the roof’ is ‘small upper room of a wall’; this was probably a fully walled roof chamber.

¹¹ In place of ‘lay down’, here following the *NJB* & *NRSV*, *NETB* has ‘rested’.

¹² The *NJB* has just ‘our Shunammite’ in place of ‘the Shunammite woman’, here following the *MT* & *NRSV*.

¹³ Elisha offers to reproach the king on her behalf; the woman proudly replies that the protection of her own clan is enough for her.

בְּתוֹךְ עַמִּי אֲנֹכִי יֹשֶׁבֶת: ^ד וַיֹּאמֶר וּמָה לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר גִּיחֲזִי אַבְל בֵּן אִיזְלָהּ וְאִישָׁה זָקֵן: ^{טו} וַיֹּאמֶר קְרָא לָהּ וַיִּקְרָא לָהּ וַתַּעֲמֵד בַּפֶּתַח: ^{טז} וַיֹּאמֶר לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה כָּעֵת חִיָּה אֶתִּי אֶתְּ חֲבֻקָת בֵּן וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל־אֲדֹנָי אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־תִּכְזֹב בְּשִׁפְחָתְךָ: ^{יז} וַתַּהַר הָאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֵד בֵּן לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה כָּעֵת חִיָּה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֵלֶיהָ אֱלִישָׁע:

^{יח} וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־אָבִיו אֶל־הַקְּצָרִים: ^{יט} וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־אָבִיו רֹאשִׁי | רֹאשִׁי וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הַנֶּעֱר שָׂאֵהוּ אֶל־אִמּוֹ: ^כ וַיִּשָּׂאֵהוּ וַיְבִיֵאֵהוּ אֶל־אִמּוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־בְּרֵכֶיהָ עַד־הַצְּהָרִים וַיָּמָת: ^{כא} וַתַּעַל וַתִּשְׁכְּבֵהוּ עַל־מִטַּת אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וַתִּסְגֵּר בַּעֲדוֹ וַתִּצָּא: ^{כב} וַתִּקְרָא אֶל־אִישָׁהּ וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחַה נָא לִי אֶחָד מִן־הַנְּעָרִים וְאַחַת הָאֲתָנוֹת וְאַרְוֶצָה עַד־

own people about me.” ¹⁴ “What can be done for her?” he asked. Gehazi replied, “Well, she has no son and her husband is old.” ¹⁵ Elisha said, “Call her.” When he had called her, she stood at the door. ¹⁶ “This time next year,” he said, “you will hold a son in your arms.” But she said, “No, my lord, O man of God, do not deceive your servant.” ¹⁷ But the woman did conceive, and she gave birth to a son at the time that Elisha had said she would.

¹⁸ The child grew up and, one day, he went out to his father who was among the reapers, ¹⁹ and exclaimed to his father, “Oh, my head! My head!” His father told a servant to carry him to his mother. ²⁰ He lifted him up and brought him to his mother, and the boy sat on her knees until midday, when he died. ²¹ She went upstairs, laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door on him and went out. ²² Then she called her husband and said, “Send me one of the servants with a donkey, so

¹⁴ Note that it is Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, who suggests the miracle, not the prophet himself.

¹⁵ The NJB has ‘the servant’ in place of ‘he’, here following the MT & NRSV.

¹⁶ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation. The NJB, following the LXX, omits ‘O man of God’.

¹⁷ ‘At the time’ (the NRSV has ‘at that season, in due time’) is a conjectural translation; the MT repeats ‘this time next year’, from v. 16.

¹⁸ Other possible translations for ‘reapers’, here following the NJB & NRSV, are ‘harvest workers’ (as NETB) and ‘harvesters’.

¹⁹ In place of ‘his father’, the MT has just ‘he’; the referent of the pronoun is here added for clarity.

²⁰ The NJB & NETB have ‘lap’ in place of ‘knees’ (here following the MT), and the NJB has ‘knee’.

²¹ The woman’s faith in Elisha is absolute: he has obtained a son for her, he can restore him; meanwhile, no one must know of the death, which she conceals.

²² The NJB separates the last clause into a separate sentence: “I must hurry to...”

אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲשׁוּבָה: כג וַיֹּאמֶר מְדוּעַ אֲתִי אָתָּה
הֲלַכְתִּי הַלַּיְתָּ אֵלָיו הַיּוֹם לֹא־חֲדָשׁ וְלֹא שַׁבָּת
וְתֹאמַר שְׁלוֹם: כד וַתַּחְבֵּשׁ הָאֵתוֹן וְתֹאמַר אֶל־
נַעֲרָה נְהַג וּלְךָ אֶל־תַּעֲצֹר־לִי לְרֹכֵב כִּי אִם־אֲמַרְתִּי
לְךָ: כה וְתִלְךָ וְתָבֵא אֶל־אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַר
הַכַּרְמֶל וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים אֹתָהּ מִמְּגֹד
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־גִּיחִזִּי נַעֲרוֹ הִנֵּה הַשּׁוֹנַמִּית הַלְזוּ: כו עָתָה
רוֹצֵנָא לְקַרְאָתָהּ וְאֲמַר־לָהּ הַשְּׁלוֹם לְךָ הַשְּׁלוֹם
לְאִישֶׁךָ הַשְּׁלוֹם לְיֶלֶד וְתֹאמַר שְׁלוֹם: כז וְתָבֵא אֶל־
אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַהָר וַתַּחֲזֹק בְּרַגְלָיו וַיִּגֶשׁ גִּיחִזִּי
לְהִדְפָּהּ וַיֹּאמֶר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים הֲרִפָּה־לָּהּ כִּי־נִפְשָׁהּ
מָרָה־לָּהּ וַיְהוּזָה הָעֵלִים מִמֶּנִּי וְלֹא הִגִּיד לִי:
כח וְתֹאמַר הַשְּׂאֵלְתִי בֶן מֵאֵת אֲדָנִי הֲלֹא אֲמַרְתִּי
לֹא תִשְׁלָה אֹתִי:

כט וַיֹּאמֶר לְגִיחִזִּי חַגֵּר מִתְּנִיךָ וְקַח מִשְׁעִנְתִּי בְיָדְךָ
וּלְךָ כִּי־תִמְצָא אִישׁ לֹא תִבְרַכְנּוּ וְכִי־יִבְרַכְךָ אִישׁ

that I may hurry to the man of God and then come back again.”²³ “Why go to him today?” he asked, “It is neither New Moon nor Sabbath.” She answered, “Never mind.”²⁴ Then she had the donkey saddled, and said to her servant, “Lead on, go! Do not hold back for me until I give the order.”²⁵ She set off and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel; when he saw her in the distance, he said to his servant Gehazi, “Look, here comes the Shunammite woman!”²⁶ Now run and meet her and ask her, “Are you well? Is your husband well? Is your child well?” She answered, “Everything is fine.”²⁷ When she came to the man of God there on the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi stepped forward to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her; there is bitterness in her soul and Yahweh has hidden it from me; he has not told me.”²⁸ She said, “Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say: Do not deceive me?”

²⁹ Then he said to Gehazi, “Tuck up your cloak, take my staff in your hand, and go. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; if anyone greets

²³ The *Kethib/Qere* differences here would benefit from explanations.

²⁴ In place of ‘draw back for me’, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* has ‘draw rein’.

²⁵ The *NJB* has just ‘our Shunammite’ in place of ‘the Shunammite woman’, here following the *MT & NRSV*.

²⁶ The narrator streamlines the story at the end of this verse, omitting any reference to Gehazi running to meet her and asking her the questions.

²⁷ In place of ‘there is bitterness in her soul’, here following the *MT & NJB*, the *NRSV* has ‘she is in bitter distress’.

²⁸ The woman now ‘blames’ her sorrow on Elisha’s original miracle – giving her a son in her old age.

²⁹ The instruction not to greet anyone is a sign that the mission is urgent. The staff of Elisha (like that of Moses, Ex 4:17) was apparently credited with magical powers, but the sequel shows that nothing could be done without the prophet’s prayer and presence.

לֹא תִעֲנֶנּוּ וְשַׁמַּתַּ מִשְׁעַנְתִּי עַל־פְּנֵי הַנֶּעֱר:
 לְוַתֹּאמֶר אִם הַנֶּעֱר חַי־יְהוָה וְחַי־נַפְשִׁי אִם־
 אֶעֱזָבְךָ וַיִּקָּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אַחֲרֶיהָ: ^לא וְגַחֲזִי עָבַר לִפְנֵיהֶם
 וַיִּשֶׁם אֶת־הַמְשַׁעֲנֹת עַל־פְּנֵי הַנֶּעֱר וְאִין קוֹל וְאִין
 קֶשֶׁב וַיָּשָׁב לִקְרֹאתוֹ וַיִּגְדֵּלוּ לֵאמֹר לֹא הִקְיִן
 הַנֶּעֱר: ^{לב} וַיָּבֵא אֶל־יִשְׁעַ הַבַּיִתָּה וְהִנֵּה הַנֶּעֱר מֵת
 מִשְׁכָּב עַל־מִטָּתוֹ: ^{לג} וַיָּבֵא וַיִּסְגֵּר הַדֶּלֶת בְּעַד
 שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה: ^{לד} וַיַּעַל וַיִּשְׁכַּב עַל־הַיֶּלֶד
 וַיִּשֶׁם פִּיּו עַל־פִּיּו וְעֵינָיו עַל־עֵינָיו וְכַפָּיו עַל־כַּפָּיו
 וַיִּגְהַר עָלָיו וַיַּחֵם בְּשַׁר הַיֶּלֶד: ^{לה} וַיָּשָׁב וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּבֵית
 אַחַת הַנָּה וְאַחַת הַנָּה וַיַּעַל וַיִּגְהַר עָלָיו וַיִּזְוֹרֵר
 הַנֶּעֱר עַד־שִׁבְעַ פַּעַמִּים וַיִּפְקַח הַנֶּעֱר אֶת־עֵינָיו:
 לוֹ וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־גִּיחֲזִי וַיֹּאמֶר קְרֵא אֶל־הַשְּׁנַמִּית
 הַזֹּאת וַיִּקְרָאָהּ וַתָּבֵא אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאִי בְנִי:
 לז וַתָּבֵא וַתִּפֹּל עַל־רַגְלָיו וַתִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה וַתִּשָּׂא
 אֶת־בְּנָהּ וַתֵּצֵא: {פ}

you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the child's face." ³⁰ Then the child's mother said, "As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So, he rose and followed her. ³¹ Gehazi went ahead of them and laid the staff on the child's face, but there was no sound or response. He went back to meet Elisha and told him. "The child did not wake up," he said. ³² When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child dead on his bed. ³³ He went in and shut the door on the two of them and prayed to Yahweh. ³⁴ Then he climbed up and stretched himself over the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes to his eyes, and his hands on his hands, and as he bent down over him, the child's flesh grew warm. ³⁵ Then he got up and walked back and forth inside the house, and then climbed up again and bent over the child; then the child sneezed seven times in all and opened his eyes. ³⁶ He then summoned Gehazi. "Call the Shunammite woman," he said; and he called her. When she came to him, he said, "Take your son." ³⁷ She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground; then she took her son and left.

³⁰ In the last sentence, the referent of the pronoun ('he') must be Elisha, since v. 31 makes it clear that Gehazi had gone on ahead of them.

³¹ The MT has 'to meet him' in place of 'to meet Elisha'; the referent of the pronoun is added for clarity.

³² Literally translated, this verse ends, "...look, the child was dead on his bed."

³³ The literal translation of 'on the two' is 'behind the two'.

³⁴ Other translations for 'flesh' (here following the NJB & NRSV) are 'skin' (as NETB) and 'body'.

³⁵ The NJB, following the order of the LXX, has 'seven times in all' after 'lowered himself on to the child'.

³⁶ The NJB has just 'our Shunammite' in place of 'the Shunammite woman', here following the MT & NRSV.

³⁷ For this verse, the NJB reads, "She went in and, falling at his feet, bowed down to the ground; and taking up her son, she went out."

לח וְאֵלִישָׁע שָׁב הַגִּלְגָּל וְהָרֶעֱב בְּאֶרֶץ וּבְנֵי
הַנְּבִיאִים יֹשְׁבִים לְפָנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לְנַעֲרֹ שִׁפְתֵי הַסֵּיר
הַגְּדוֹלָה וּבִשֵּׁל נֶזֶד לְבְנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים: ^לט וַיֵּצֵא אֶחָד
אֶל־הַשָּׂדֶה לְלַקֵּט אֶרֶת וַיִּמְצָא גִפְנֵי שָׂדֶה וַיִּלְקֹט
מִמֶּנּוּ פַקְעֵת שָׂדֶה מְלֵא בְגָדָו וַיָּבֵא וַיַּפְלֵחַ אֶל־סֵיר
הַנֶּזֶד כִּי־לֹא יָדְעוּ: ^מ וַיֵּצְקוּ לְאֲנָשִׁים לְאֹכֹל וַיְהִי
כְּאֹכְלִים מִהַנֶּזֶד וְהֵמָּה צָעֲקוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ מוֹת בְּסֵיר
אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וְלֹא יָכֹלוּ לְאֹכֹל: ^{מא} וַיֹּאמֶר וּקְחוּ־
קֶמַח וַיִּשְׁלַךְ אֶל־הַסֵּיר וַיֹּאמֶר צַק לָעַם וַיֹּאכְלוּ וְלֹא
הָיָה דְבַר רָע בְּסֵיר: {ס}

מב וְאִישׁ בָּא מִבְּעַל שְׁלֹשָׁה וַיָּבֵא לְאִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים
לֶחֶם בְּכוֹרִים עֶשְׂרִים־לֶחֶם שְׁעָרִים וְכֶרֶמֶל בְּצִקְלָנּוּ
וַיֹּאמֶר תֵּן לָעַם וַיֹּאכְלוּ: ^{מג} וַיֹּאמֶר מִשְׁרְתּוֹ מַה אֶתֵּן
זֶה לְפָנָי מֵאָה אִישׁ וַיֹּאמֶר תֵּן לָעַם וַיֹּאכְלוּ כִּי כֹה
אָמַר יְהוָה אֲכָלוּ וְהוֹתֵר: ^{מד} וַיִּתֵּן לְפָנֵיהֶם וַיֹּאכְלוּ
וַיֹּתֵרוּ כַּדְּבַר יְהוָה: {פ}

³⁸ When Elisha went back to Gilgal, there was famine in the land. As the brotherhood of prophets was sitting with him, he said to his servant, “Put the large pot on and cook some soup for the prophets.” ³⁹ One went into the fields to gather herbs and found a wild vine from which he picked enough gourds to fill his lap; he returned and cut them up into the pot of soup; he did not know what they were. ⁴⁰ They poured some out for the men to eat but, when they tasted the soup, they cried, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” They could not eat it. ⁴¹ He said, “Bring some flour!” He threw it into the pot and said, “Pour out for these men and let them eat;” and there was nothing harmful in the pot.

⁴² A man came from Baal-Shalishah, bringing the man of God food from the first fruits, twenty barley loaves and fresh grain in his sack. Elisha said, “Give it to the people to eat.” ⁴³ But his servant said, “How can I serve this to a hundred men?” “Give it to the people to eat,” he insisted, “for, Yahweh says this, “They will eat and have some left over.”” ⁴⁴ He served them; they ate and had some left over, as Yahweh had said.

³⁸ Compare this story (vv. 38–41) with 2:19–22.

³⁹ The ‘wild gourds’ were very bitter and violently purgative.

⁴⁰ In place of ‘man of God’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘prophet’.

⁴¹ The NJB has ‘meal’ in place of ‘flour’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

⁴² The NJB conjecturally translates ‘in his sack’ as ‘still in the husk’.

⁴³ The verbs here translated ‘they will eat’ and ‘have some left over’ are infinitive absolutes that have to be translated in the light of the context.

⁴⁴ The most striking parallels to the miracle of vv. 42–44 are to be found in the New Testament: Mt 14:13–21, 15:32–38.

2 KINGS 5

מלכים ב פרק ה

א וְנַעֲמָן שַׂר־צְבָא מֶלֶךְ־אַרָם הָיָה אִישׁ גָּדוֹל לַפָּנִי
אֲדָנָיו וְנִשְׂא פָנִים כִּי־בֹ נָתַן־יְהוָה תְּשׁוּעָה לְאַרָם
וְהָאִישׁ הָיָה גִבּוֹר חֵיל מְצָרַע: ב וְאַרָם יָצָא גְדוּדִים
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ מֵאַרְץ יִשְׂרָאֵל נַעֲרָה קַטְנָה וַתְּהִי לַפָּנִי
אִשֶּׁת נַעֲמָן: ג וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל־גְּבוּרָתָהּ אַחֲלִי אֲדָנִי לַפָּנִי
הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר בְּשֹׁמְרוֹן אִזּוּ יֵאָסֶף אֶתוֹ מִצְרַעְתּוֹ:
ד וַיָּבֵא וַיִּגַּד לְאֲדָנָיו לְאֹמֶר כְּזֹאת וְכֹזֶאת דִּבְרָה
הַנַּעֲרָה אֲשֶׁר מֵאַרְץ יִשְׂרָאֵל: ה וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ־אַרָם
לְדָבָא וְאֶשְׁלַח סֹפֵר אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּלְדָּ וַיִּקַּח
בְּיָדוֹ עֶשֶׂר כִּכְרֵי־כֶסֶף וְשֵׁשֶׁת אֲלָפִים זָהָב וְעֶשֶׂר
חֲלִיפוֹת בְּגָדִים: ו וַיָּבֵא הַסֹּפֵר אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל
לֵאמֹר וְעַתָּה כְּבוֹא הַסֹּפֵר הַזֶּה אֵלַיךָ הֲנֵה שְׁלַחְתִּי
אֵלַיךָ אֶת־נַעֲמָן עַבְדִּי וְאֶסְפְּתוֹ מִצְרַעְתּוֹ: ז וַיְהִי
כַּקְרָא מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַסֹּפֵר וַיִּקְרַע בְּגָדָיו

1 Naaman, army commander to the king of Aram, was a man who enjoyed his master's respect and favour, since Yahweh through him had granted victory to the Aramaeans. The man, though a great warrior, had leprosy. 2 Now the Aramaeans, on one of their raids, had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet of Samaria: he would cure him of his leprosy." 4 So Naaman went and told his master just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. 5 "Go by all means," said the king of Aram, "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten festal robes. 6 He presented the letter to the king of Israel. It read: "With this letter, I am sending my servant Naaman to you for you to cure him of his leprosy." 7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes. "Am I God, to give death and life," he said,

2 KINGS 5

1 The NJB, following the LXX, omits 'though a mighty warrior'.

2 The NJB has 'little' in place of 'young', here following the NRSV & NETB.

3 In place of 'were with', here following the NRSV, NETB has 'were in the presence of' and the NJB has 'would approach'.

4 For this verse, the NJB reads, "Naaman went and told his master. "This and this," he reported, "is what the girl from the land of Israel said.""

5 The 'ten talents of silver' would have weighed about 330 Kg and the 'six thousand shekels of gold' about 67 K; there is no way to estimate what the equivalent worth today would be but a considerable fortune is intended.

6 Literally translated, the letter opens as follows: "And now, when this letter comes to you, look, I have sent to you Naaman my servant."

7 In place of 'am I God', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'am I a god'.

וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹהִים אֲנִי לְהַמִּית וְלְחַיֹּת כִּי־זֶה שְׁלַח
אֵלַי לְאַסֹּף אִישׁ מִצָּרְעָתוֹ כִּי אֲדַדְעוּנָא וּרְאוּ כִּי־
מִתְאַנֶּה הוּא לִי: ^ח וַיְהִי כְשִׁמְעוּ אֱלִישָׁע אִישׁ־
הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי־קָרַע מְלֶכֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וַיִּשְׁלַח
אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר לָמָּה קָרַעְתָּ בְּגָדֶיךָ יְבֹא־נָא אֵלַי
וַיָּדַע כִּי יֵשׁ נְבִיא בְיִשְׂרָאֵל: ^ט וַיְבֹא נַעֲמָן בְּסוּסוֹ
וּבְרֶכְבוֹ וַיַּעֲמֵד פֶּתַח־הַבַּיִת לְאֱלִישָׁע: ^י וַיִּשְׁלַח
אֵלָיו אֱלִישָׁע מִלְּאָדָּךְ לֵאמֹר הַלֹּדֶךָ וְרַחֲצֵתָ שֶׁבַע־
פְּעָמִים בִּירְדֵן וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּשַׂרְךָ לֶךָ וְטָהַר: ^{יא} וַיִּקְצֹף
נַעֲמָן וַיִּלְךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִה אֲמַרְתִּי אֵלָיו יֵצֵא יֵצֵא
וְעָמַד וְקָרָא בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו וְהִנֵּיף יָדוֹ אֶל־
הַמָּקוֹם וְאַסֹּף הַמִּצְרָע: ^{יב} הֲלֹא טוֹב אַבְנֵה אַמְנֵה
וּפְרַפְרֵי נְהַרֹת דַּמֶּשֶׁק מִכָּל מִימֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲלֹא־
אֶרְחֹץ בָּהֶם וְטָהַרְתִּי וַיִּפֶן וַיִּלְךְ בַּחֲמָה: ^{יג} וַיִּגְשׁוּ
עֲבָדָיו וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ אָבִי דַבֵּר גְּדוֹל הַנְּבִיא
דַּבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ הַלֹּא תַעֲשֶׂה וְאַף כִּי־אָמַר אֵלֶיךָ רַחֵץ

“that he sends a man to me and asks me to cure him of his leprosy? Listen to this and take note of it and see how he intends to pick a quarrel with me.” ⁸ When Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent word to the king, “Why did you tear your clothes? Let him come to me, and he will find there is a prophet in Israel.” ⁹ So, Naaman came with his horses and chariot and halted at the door of Elisha’s house. ¹⁰ Elisha sent him a messenger, saying, “Go! Wash seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be clean.” ¹¹ But Naaman was angry and went off, saying, “I thought he would come out for me, and stand, call on the name of Yahweh his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure the leprosy. ¹² Are not Amana and Parpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any water in Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” He turned and went off in a rage. ¹³ But his servants approached him and said, “Father, if the prophet had asked you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when he says to you, “Wash and be clean.”” ¹⁴ So, he went down and

⁸ The NJB, following the LXX, lacks ‘the man of God’, here and in v. 20.

⁹ The NJB has ‘team’ in place of ‘horses’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁰ Literally translated, Elisha’s instruction ends, “...your flesh will return to you and you will be clean.”

¹¹ The NJB opens Naaman’s speech with, “Here was I thinking;” here, we follow the NRSV.

¹² In place of ‘Amana’, here following the Qere (אַמְנֵה), the Ketiv has ‘Abana’ (אַבְנֵה); most English versions follow the Ketiv.

¹³ In the phrase, “Wash and be clean,” the 2nd imperative (‘be clean’) states the expected result of the 1st (‘wash’).

¹⁴ The NJB, following the LXX, reads ‘Elisha’ instead of ‘the man of God’ here and in the following verse. The New Testament has a number of examples of the healing of this, or a similar disease (Mt 8:2-3, Mk 1:40-42, Lk 5:12-13; compare Mt 11:5, Lk 7:22).

ויטהר: י^ד ויִרְדּוּ וַיִּטְבַּל בַּיַּרְדֵּן שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים כַּדְּבַר
 אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּשָׂרוֹ כְּבֶשֶׂר נֶגֶר קָטָן
 וַיִּטְהַר: טו וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶל־אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים הוּא וְכָל־
 מַחֲנֵהוּ וַיָּבֵא וַיַּעֲמֵד לִפְנֵי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־נָא יִדְעֹתִי
 כִּי אֵין אֱלֹהִים בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ כִּי אִם־בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַתָּה
 קַח־נָא בְּרָכָה מֵאֵת עַבְדְּךָ: טז וַיֹּאמֶר חִי־יְהוָה
 אֲשֶׁר־עַמְדָּתִי לִפְנֵי אִם־אֶקַּח וַיִּפְצַר־בּוֹ לִקְחַת
 וַיִּמָּאֵן: ז' וַיֹּאמֶר נִעְמָן וְלֹא יִתְּנָא לְעַבְדְּךָ מִשָּׂא
 צֶמֶד־פָּרָדִים אֲדָמָה כִּי לֹא־יַעֲשֶׂה עוֹד עַבְדְּךָ עָלָה
 וְזָבַח לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים כִּי אִם־לַיהוָה: י"ח לְדַבֵּר הַזֶּה
 יִסְלַח יְהוָה לְעַבְדְּךָ בְּבוֹא אֲדָנָי בֵּית־רִמּוֹן
 לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת שָׁמָּה וְהוּא | נִשְׁעַן עַל־יָדָי וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי
 בֵּית רִמּוֹן בְּהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי בֵּית רִמּוֹן יִסְלַח־(נָא)־יְהוָה
 לְעַבְדְּךָ בְּדַבֵּר הַזֶּה: יט וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם וַיֵּלֶךְ
 מֵאֵתוֹ כְּבֶרֶת־אָרֶץ: {ס}

dipped seven times in the Jordan, as the man of God had told him to do; and his flesh became clean like the flesh of a small child. ¹⁵ Returning to the man of God with his whole escort, he went in and stood before him. “Now I know,” he said, “that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel. Now, please accept a present from your servant.” ¹⁶ However, Elisha replied, “As Yahweh lives, whom I serve, I will accept nothing.” Naaman pressed him to accept, but he refused. ¹⁷ Then Naaman said, “Since your answer is, “No,” allow your servant to be given as much earth as two mules may carry, because your servant will no longer offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god except Yahweh. ¹⁸ Only – and may Yahweh forgive your servant – when my master goes to the temple of Rimmon to worship there, he leans on my arm, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon; when I do bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may Yahweh forgive your servant this act!” ¹⁹ Elisha said, “Go in peace, and Naaman went a short distance.

¹⁵ Naaman would have preferred to worship Yahweh alone thenceforth, if that would have been possible; if he should bow down to *Rimmon* (another name for Hadad, the chief god of Aram), it would only be because he was forced to do so. Although Yahweh is the only true God, his territorial relationship to Israel is uppermost in Naaman’s mind. Hence, Naaman takes soil from Samaria to raise an altar to Yahweh in Damascus, the idea being that a god could not be worshipped away from his own land. For the same mentality as regards territorial gods, see the panic of the allies at the human sacrifice offered by the king of Moab to Chemosh (3:24–27).

¹⁶ In place of both ‘Elisha’ and ‘Naaman’, the MT has just the pronoun, ‘he’; the referents have here been added for clarity.

¹⁷ In place of, “since your answer is “No,”” here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB, following the MT more literally, have simply ‘if not’.

¹⁸ The NJB has ‘when he does’ in place of the repeated ‘when I do bow down in the temple of Rimmon’. ‘Rimmon’ is another name for Hadad, the storm-god and territorial god of Damascus.

¹⁹ Elisha excuses the outward gesture of idolatry.

כ וַיֹּאמֶר גִּיחֲזִי נָעַר אֱלִישָׁע אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים הַנֶּהוּ | חֲשָׁד אֲדֹנָי אֶת־נַעֲמָן הָאֲרָמִי הַזֶּה מִקַּחַת מִיָּדוֹ | אֶת אֲשֶׁר־הֵבִיא חֵי־יְהוָה כִּי־אִם־רָצִיתִי אַחֲרָיו | וְלִקְחֹתִי מֵאֵתוֹ מֵאוֹמָה: כֹּא וַיִּרְדֹּף גִּיחֲזִי אַחֲרָי נַעֲמָן | וַיִּרְאֶה נַעֲמָן רֶגֶץ אַחֲרָיו וַיִּפֹּל מֵעַל הַמָּרְכָבָה | לְקִרְאָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הַשְּׁלוֹם: כִּב וַיֹּאמְרוּ שְׁלוֹם אֲדֹנָי | שְׁלַחֲנִי לֵאמֹר הֲנֵה עֲתָה זֶה בָּאוּ אֵלַי שְׁנַי־נְעָרִים | מִהָר אֶפְרַיִם מִבְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים תָּנִה־נָא לָהֶם כֶּכֶר־ | כֶּסֶף וְשְׁתֵי חֲלָפוֹת בְּגָדִים: כִּג וַיֹּאמֶר נַעֲמָן הוֹאֵל | קַח כֶּכֶרִים וַיִּפְרֹק־בוֹ וַיֵּצֵר כֶּכֶרִים כֶּסֶף בְּשַׁנֵּי | חֲרָטִים וְשְׁתֵי חֲלָפוֹת בְּגָדִים וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־שְׁנֵי נְעָרָיו | וַיֵּשְׂאוּ לִפְנָיו: כִּד וַיָּבֵא אֶל־הָעֶפְלָל וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּפְקֹד | בְּבַיִת וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ: כִּה וְהוֹאֲבָא | וַיַּעֲמֵד אֶל־אֲדֹנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֱלִישָׁע מֵאֵן מֵאֵן | גִּחֲזִי וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא־הֵלֵךְ עִבְדְּךָ אֲנִה וְאֲנִה: כִּו וַיֹּאמֶר | אֵלָיו לֹא־לִבִּי הֵלֵךְ כְּאֲשֶׁר הִפְדֵּ־אִישׁ מֵעַל

20 Then Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, thought, “My master has let this Aramaean Naaman off lightly, by not accepting what he offered. As Yahweh lives, I will run after him and get something out of him.” 21 So Gehazi went after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he jumped down from his chariot to meet him. “Is all well?” he asked. 22 “All is well,” he said. “My master has sent me to say, “This very moment two young men of the prophetic brotherhood have arrived from the highlands of Ephraim. Be kind enough to give them a talent of silver and two robes.”” 23 Naaman said, “Please accept two talents.” He urged him, tying up two talents of silver in two bags, with two robes, giving them to two of his servants who carried them before him. 24 When he reached Ophel, he took the bags from their hands and put them away in the house; he dismissed the men and they left. 25 He went in and stood before his master. Elisha said, “Gehazi, where have you been?” “Your servant hasn’t been anywhere,” he replied. 26 But he said to him, “Was not my heart present there when a man left his chariot

20 The literal translation of ‘thought’ is ‘said’ (i.e. to himself), as the NJB has it; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

21 The literal translation of ‘is all well’ is ‘is there peace’.

22 The word translated ‘talent’ (כֶּכֶר) literally means ‘circle’; when used of silver, it generally refers to the standard weight (about 34 Kg).

23 Naaman has no reason whatsoever to doubt Gehazi and is ready to be generous.

24 The NRSV uses ‘the citadel’ in place of ‘Ophel’. There was also an Ophel in Jerusalem; in both cases, it was the fortified eminence on which stood the royal palace. The name means ‘excrescence’.

25 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

26 Elisha caught the culprit by extrasensory perception; this trait comes out more strongly in the next chapter.

מִרְכָּבָתוֹ לִקְרֹאתֶךָ הֲעֵת לִקְחַת אֶת-הַכֶּסֶף
וְלִקְחַת בְּגָדִים וְזִיתִים וְכֶרְמִים וְצֹאן וּבָקָר וְעַבְדִּים
וְשִׁפְחֹת: ^כ וְצִרְעַת גַּעֲמָן תִּדְבַּק-בְּךָ וּבְזֶרְעֶךָ
לְעוֹלָם וַיֵּצֵא מִלְּפָנָיו מִצְרַע כַּשָּׁלֵג: to meet you? Is this a time to accept money, clothing, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves? ²⁷ But Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your seed forever." Gehazi left his presence white as snow from leprosy.

²⁷ For another case of *leprosy* as punishment, compare 15:4-5. The end of the verse is uncertain and is here reconstructed from the *LXX*. In place of 'seed', the *NJB* has 'descendants' and the *WEBBE* has 'offspring'.

מלכים ב פרק ו

א וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְנֵי-הַנְּבִיאִים אֶל-אֵלִישָׁע הַנֶּה-נָא
הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכְנוּ יֹשְׁבִים שָׁם לִפְנֵיךָ צָר מִמֶּנּוּ:
ב גַּלְכֶּה-נָּא עַד-הַיַּרְדֵּן וְנִקְחָה מִשָּׁם אִישׁ קוֹרָה
אֶחָת וְנַעֲשֶׂה-לָּנוּ שָׁם מָקוֹם לְשִׁבְתָּ שָׁם וַיֹּאמֶר
לָכֹּ: ג וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֶחָד הוּאֵל נָא וּלְךָ אֶת-עַבְדֶּיךָ
וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי אֵלֶיךָ: ד וַיִּלְךָ אִתָּם וַיִּבְאוּ הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּגְזְרוּ
הָעֵצִים: ה וַיְהִי הָאֶחָד מִפִּיל הַקוֹרָה וְאֶת-הַבְּרִזָּל
נָפַל אֶל-הַמַּיִם וַיִּצְעַק וַיֹּאמֶר אָהָה אֲדָנִי וְהוּא
שָׂאוֹל: ו וַיֹּאמֶר אִישׁ-הָאֱלֹהִים אָנָּה נָפַל וַיֵּרְאֶהוּ
אֶת-הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּקְצַב-עֵץ וַיִּשְׁלַךְ-שָׁמָּה וַיִּצֵּף הַבְּרִזָּל:
ז וַיֹּאמֶר הָרֶם לָךְ וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיִּקְחֶהוּ: {פ}
ח וּמֶלֶךְ אַרָם הָיָה נֹלְחָם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּוָּעַץ אֶל-עַבְדָּיו
לֵאמֹר אֶל-מָקוֹם פְּלָנִי אֶלְמָנִי תַחְנַתִּי: ט וַיִּשְׁלַח

2 KINGS 6

1 The brotherhood of prophets said to Elisha, "Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. 2 Let us go to the Jordan and each of us cut a beam there, and we will make a meeting place there." He replied, "Go." 3 Then one of them said, "Be good enough to come with your servants;" "I will," he answered, 4 and he went with them. On reaching the Jordan, they cut down trees. 5 However, as one of them was felling his beam, his axe-head fell into the water. "Alas, my lord," he exclaimed, "and it was a borrowed one too!" 6 "Where did it fall?" the man of God asked; and he showed him the spot. Then, cutting a stick, Elisha threw it in at that point and made the axe-head float. 7 "Lift it out," he said; and the man stretched out his hand and took it. 8 The king of Aram was at war with Israel. He conferred with his officers, and said, "Invade at such and such a place." 9 But the man of

2 KINGS 6

1 The NRSV uses 'company' in place of 'brotherhood' (see #2:3).

2 The NJB & NRSV have 'living quarters' and 'a place for us to live', respectively, in place of 'a meeting place', here following NETB.

3 The NJB has 'go' in place of 'come', here following the NRSV.

4 The NJB has 'timber' in place of 'trees', here following the NRSV & NETB.

5 The literal translation of 'axe-head' is 'axe-iron'.

6 In place of 'Elisha', the MT has the pronoun 'he'; the referent is here added for clarity.

7 The NRSV has 'pick it up' in place of 'lift it out', here following the NJB & NETB.

8 'Invade' is a conjectural translation of the unintelligible תַּחְנַתִּי: on the basis of the form נִחַתִּים in v. 9, it is probably best to emend the verb to תַּנְחַתוּ (a Qal imperfect form from the same root); the NRSV has 'I shall make my camp'.

9 The NJB, following the LXX (Ελισαιε), uses 'Elisha' in place of 'man of God' (as also in v. 10).

אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל-מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הִשְׁמַר
מֵעַבְרֵי הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי-שָׁם אָרֻם נַחְתִּים: ' וַיִּשְׁלַח
מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר-לוֹ אִישׁ-
הָאֱלֹהִים וְהִזְהִירָה וְנִשְׁמַר שָׁם לֹא אַחַת וְלֹא
שְׁתַּיִם: 'א וַיִּסְעַר לֵב מֶלֶךְ-אָרָם עַל-הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה
וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-עַבְדָּיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם הַלּוֹא תִגִּידוּ לִי
מִי מִשְׁלָנִי אֶל-מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל: 'ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֶחָד
מֵעַבְדָּיו לֹא אֲדַנִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי-אֶלְיִשָׁע הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יִגִּיד לְמֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר
תִּדְבַר בַּחֲדָר מִשְׁכַּבְּךָ: 'ג וַיֹּאמֶר לָכֵן וְרָאוּ אֵיכָה
הוּא וְאֶשְׁלַח וְאֶקְחָהוּ וַיִּגְדְּלוּ לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה בְּדַתָּן:
'ד וַיִּשְׁלַח-שְׁמָה סוּסִים וְרֶכֶב וַחֲיִל כָּבֵד וַיָּבֵאוּ לַיְלָה
וַיִּקְפוּ עַל-הָעִיר: 'ט וַיִּשְׁכֹּם מִשְׁרֵת אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים
לְקוֹם וַיֵּצֵא וְהִנֵּה-חֲיִל סוּבָב אֶת-הָעִיר וְסוּס וְרֶכֶב
וַיֹּאמֶר נִעְרוּ אֵלָיו אָהָה אֲדַנִּי אֵיכָה נַעֲשֶׂה:
'טז וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-תִּירָא כִּי רַבִּים אֲשֶׁר אִתָּנוּ מֵאֲשֶׁר

God sent word to the king of Israel, "Be on your guard at this place, because the Aramaeans are invading there."¹⁰ So, the king of Israel sent men to the place the man of God had named; and he kept warning the king, and the king stayed on the alert; and this happened more than once or twice.¹¹ And the king of Aram was disturbed in his mind at this; so, he summoned his officers, and said, "Tell me which of you sides with to the king of Israel."¹² One of his officers replied, "No one, my lord king, it is Elisha, the prophet in Israel, who tells the king of Israel the words you speak in your bedchamber."¹³ "Go and find out where he is," the king said, "so that I can send people to capture him." Word was brought to him: "He is now in Dothan."¹⁴ So, he sent horses and chariots there, together with a large force; and these, arriving during the night, surrounded the town.¹⁵ When a servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, there was an armed force with horses and chariots surrounding the town. "Oh, my lord," his servant said, "What shall we do?"¹⁶ "Have no fear," he replied, "there are more with us than

¹⁰ The literal translation of 'more than once or twice' is 'not once and not twice'.

¹¹ In place of 'sides with', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'is betraying us to'.

¹² The NJB has simply 'no' in place of 'no one', here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹³ 'Dothan' was about 16 km north of Samaria (v. 19).

¹⁴ The NRSV & NETB have 'army' in place of 'force', here following the MT & NJB.

¹⁵ The NJB has 'Elisha' in place of 'the servant of the man of God' (a conjectural translation, which is possibly more in keeping with the rest of the verse).

¹⁶ The NJB has 'on our side' in place of 'with us', here following the NRSV.

אֹתָם: **ז** וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֵלִישָׁע וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה פָּקַח-נָא
אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיִּרְאֵה וַיִּפְקַח יְהוָה אֶת-עֵינָי הַנְּעֹר וַיִּרְא
וְהִנֵּה הָהָר מָלֵא סוּסִים וּרְכָב אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבַת אֵלִישָׁע:
י וַיִּרְדּוּ אֵלָיו וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֵלִישָׁע אֶל-יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲדָ-
נָא אֶת-הַגּוֹי-הַזֶּה בְּסַנּוּרִים וַיִּכֶם בְּסַנּוּרִים כַּדָּבָר
אֵלִישָׁע: **יט** וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֵלִישָׁע לֹא זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ וְלֹא
זֶה הָעִיר לָכוּ אַחֲרַי וְאוֹלִיכָה אֶתְכֶם אֶל-הָאִישׁ
אֲשֶׁר תִּבְקְשׁוּן וַיִּלְךְ אֹתָם שְׁמֶרוֹנָה: **כ** וַיְהִי כִּבְאֵם
שְׁמֶרוֹן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלִישָׁע יְהוָה פָּקַח אֶת-עֵינֵי-אֵלֶּה
וַיִּרְאוּ וַיִּפְקַח יְהוָה אֶת-עֵינֵיהֶם וַיִּרְאוּ וְהִנֵּה בְּתוֹךְ
שְׁמֶרוֹן:

כא וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-אֵלִישָׁע כִּרְאֵתוֹ אֹתָם
הֲאֵכָה אֵכָה אָבִי: **כב** וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא תִכֶּה הָאִישׁ שְׁבִית
בְּחַרְבְּךָ וּבַקְשֵׁתְךָ אֶתָּה מִכֶּה שִׁים לֶחֶם וּמַיִם

with them.” ¹⁷ Then Elisha prayed, “Yahweh,” he said, “open his eyes and make him see.” Yahweh opened the servant’s eyes, and he saw the mountain covered with horses and chariots of fire surrounding Elisha.

¹⁸ As the Aramaeans came down towards him, Elisha prayed to Yahweh and said, “I beg you, strike this people with blindness.” At the word of Elisha, he struck them sunblind. ¹⁹ Then Elisha said to them, “This is not the road, and this is not the town. Follow me; I will lead you to the man you are looking for.” But he led them to Samaria. ²⁰ As soon as they entered Samaria, Elisha said, “Yahweh, open the eyes of these men, and let them see.” Yahweh opened their eyes and they saw that they were inside Samaria.

²¹ When the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, “Shall I kill them, father?” ²² He said, “Do not kill them! Do you capture them with your sword and your bow that you can kill them? Offer them bread and water

¹⁷ The ‘horses and chariots of fire’ remind one of the stories about Elijah (2:11, 1K 18:38).
¹⁸ Yahweh does not blind the Aramaeans totally but dazes them (compare Gn 19:11), whereas to the servant (v. 17) he has revealed what was invisible to normal sight.
¹⁹ Elisha, not recognised by the Aramaeans, now leads them to the King of Israel.
²⁰ The *NJB* lacks the opening ‘as soon’, here following the *NRSV*.
²¹ ‘Father’ is a term of address showing the king’s respect for the prophet (see 8:9, 13:14). At the end of this verse, the MT ‘repeats’ “I will kill them;” the 1st form has the interrogative *he* prefixed to it, the 2nd does not: it is likely that the 2nd form should be omitted as dittographic or that the 1st should be emended to an infinitive absolute.
²² Unless a curse of destruction has been pronounced by Yahweh, and apart from individual cases, it was not Israelite custom to kill prisoners of war (see 1K 20:31).

לִפְנֵיהֶם וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׂתּוּ וַיִּלְכוּ אֶל־אֲדֹנֵיהֶם:
 כג וַיִּכְרֶה לָהֶם כֶּרֶה גְדוֹלָה וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׂתּוּ וַיִּשְׁלַחֵם
 וַיִּלְכוּ אֶל־אֲדֹנֵיהֶם וְלֹא־יָסְפוּ עוֹד גְּדוּדֵי אָרָם לְבוֹא
 בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

כד וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי־כֵן וַיִּקְבֹּץ בֶּן־הַדָּד מִלֶּדֶף־אָרָם אֶת־
 כָּל־מַחֲנֵהוּ וַיַּעַל וַיַּצֵּר עַל־שַׁמְרוֹן: כה וַיְהִי רָעֵב גְּדוֹל
 בְּשַׁמְרוֹן וְהִנֵּה צָרִים עָלֶיהָ עַד הַיּוֹת רֹאשׁ־חֲמוֹר
 בְּשִׁמְנִים כֶּסֶף וְרִבַּע הַקֶּב חֲרִי דְבֵי־זֹנִים בַּחֲמִשָּׁה־
 כֶּסֶף:

כו וַיְהִי מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹבֵר עַל־הַחֲמָה וְאִשָּׁה צָעֲקָה
 אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר הוֹשִׁיעָה אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ: כז וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל־
 יוֹשֻׁעַד יְהוָה מֵאֵין אוֹשִׁיעַד הַמֶּן־הַגֶּרֶן אוֹ מִן־
 הַיִּקֵּב: כח וַיֹּאמֶר־לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־לָּךְ וַתֹּאמֶר
 הָאִשָּׁה הַזֹּאת אָמְרָה אֵלַי תְּנֵי אֶת־בְּנֶךָ וְנֹאכְלֵנוּ

to eat and drink and let them return to their master.”²³ So, he provided a great feast for them. When they had eaten and drank, he sent them off and they returned to their master. The Aramaeans no longer invaded the territory of Israel.

²⁴ It happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Aram mustered his whole army and came to lay siege to Samaria. ²⁵ In Samaria, there was great famine, and so strict was the siege that the head of a donkey sold for eighty shekels of silver and one-quarter kab of wild onions for five shekels of silver.

²⁶ Now as the king of Israel was passing along the city wall, a woman shouted, “Help, my lord king!” ²⁷ “No! Let Yahweh help you!” he retorted. “Where can I find help for you, from the threshing-floor? From the winepress?” ²⁸ Then the king asked, “What is the matter?” “This woman here,” she answered, “has said to me, “Give up your son: we

²³ The Aramaeans were either so pleased by the hospitality of the king, or so frightened by the power of the prophet, that they momentarily gave up the war.

²⁴ This king was possibly Ben-Hadad III of Damascus (see Ch. 13). The order of all these narratives seems to be artificial.

²⁵ The prices are enormously high: ‘eighty shekels’ would have been about 500 g, and a ‘kab’ was about 1 litre. In place of ‘pigeon dung’, here following the MT (the Ketiv has חרי in place of דב), the NJB has the conjectural ‘wild onions’: it is possible that ‘pigeon dung’ was a popular name for the inedible husks of seeds.

²⁶ The NJB lacks ‘of Israel’, here following the MT, LXX, NRSV & NETB.

²⁷ For the 1st part of the king’s retort, the NJB reads, “May Yahweh leave you helpless!” The subsequent rhetorical questions express the king’s frustration: he has no grain or wine to give to the masses.

²⁸ In place of ‘what is the matter’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘what is your complaint’.

הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־בְּנֵי נֹאכַל מִחֵר: כִּס וְנִבְשַׁל אֶת־בְּנֵי וְנֹאכְלָהוּ וְאָמַר אֵלֶיהָ בַּיּוֹם הָאֶחָד תִּנִּי אֶת־בְּנִיךָ וְנֹאכְלֶנּוּ וְתַחְבֵּא אֶת־בְּנֶהָ: ל וַיְהִי כִשְׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הָאִשָּׁה וַיִּקְרַע אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְהוּא עֹבֵר עַל־הַחֹמֶה וַיֵּרָא הָעָם וְהִנֵּה הַשֵּׁק עַל־בְּשָׂרוֹ מִבַּיִת: לֹא וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה־יַעֲשֶׂה־לִּי אֱלֹהִים וְכֹה יוֹסֵף אִם־יַעֲמֹד רֹאשׁ אֱלִישָׁע בֶּן־שַׁפְט עָלָיו הַיּוֹם:

לִב וְאֱלִישָׁע יָשָׁב בְּבֵיתוֹ וְהַזְקֵנִים יֹשְׁבִים אִתּוֹ וַיִּשְׁלַח אִישׁ מִלְּפָנָיו בְּטָרִם יָבֵא הַמַּלְאָךְ אֵלָיו וְהוּא | אָמַר אֶל־הַזְקֵנִים הֲרֵאִיתֶם כִּי־שָׁלַח בֶּן־הַמֶּרְצָח הַזֶּה לְהַסִּיר אֶת־רֹאשִׁי רָאוּ | כִּבְּא הַמַּלְאָךְ סָגְרוּ הַדֵּלֶת וְלִחְצַתֶם אִתּוֹ בַּדֵּלֶת הַלּוֹא קוֹל רַגְלֵי אֲדֹנָיו אַחֲרָיו: לִב עוֹדְנֵנוּ מִדְּבַר עַמָּם וְהִנֵּה הַמַּלְאָךְ יָרַד אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־זֹאת הָרָעָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה מֵה־אוֹחִיל לִיהוָה עוֹד: {פ}

will eat him today, and eat my son tomorrow.”²⁹ Therefore, we cooked my son and ate him. Next day, I said to her, “Give up your son for us to eat.” But she has hidden her son.”³⁰ On hearing the woman’s words, the king tore his garments; the king was walking on the wall, and the people saw that underneath he was wearing sackcloth next to his body.³¹ “May God do this to me and more,” he said, “if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today!”

³² Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. The king sent a messenger ahead but, before the man arrived, Elisha had said to the elders, “Do you see how this born assassin has given orders to cut off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door; hold the door against him. Is not the sound of his master’s step following behind him?”³³ Even as he spoke, the messenger arrived. “This misery plainly comes from Yahweh,” he said, “why should I still trust in Yahweh?”

²⁹ The famine must have severe, indeed, for the Israelites to resort not only to cannibalism but to eat their own children!

³⁰ Wearing sackcloth in public could possibly be a sign of guilt.

³¹ Elisha seems to have encouraged resistance by pretending that Yahweh would send help; the king, having originally believed him, now thinks that Elisha has deceived him.

³² The literal translation of ‘born assassin’ is ‘son of an assassin’. Note the unusual/unexpected dagesh on the *resh* in הֲרֵאִיתֶם.

³³ In place of ‘messenger’, here following the MT (מַלְאָךְ) & NETB, the NJB & NRSV have the conjectural translation, ‘king’ (מֶלֶךְ), see 7:2.

מלכים ב פרק ז

א וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלִישָׁע שְׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה
בָּעֵת | מִחַר סֵאֵה-סֶלֶת בְּשֶׁקֶל וְסֵאתִים שְׁעָרִים
בְּשֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁעַר שַׁמְרוֹן: ב וַיַּעַן הַשְּׁלִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-לַמֶּלֶךְ
נִשְׁעַן עַל־יָדוֹ אֶת־אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנָה יְהוָה
עֹשֶׂה אַרְבּוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם הִיְהִיָּה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר
הַנְּכֵה רְאֵה בְּעֵינַיִךְ וּמִשֵּׁם לֹא תֹאכַל: {פ}

ג וְאַרְבַּעָה אַנְשִׁים הָיוּ מִצְרָעִים פָּתַח הַשְּׁעַר
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ מָה אַנְחֲנוּ יֹשְׁבִים פֹּה עַד־
מָתָּנוּ: ד אִם־אֲמַרְנוּ נָבֹוא הָעִיר וְהָרַעַב בְּעִיר
וּמָתָנוּ שָׁם וְאִם־יִשְׁבְּנוּ פֹה וּמָתָנוּ וְעַתָּה לָכוּ וּנְפֹלָה
אֶל־מַחֲנֵה אָרַם אִם־יַחֲיֵנוּ נַחֲיָה וְאִם־יִמִּיתָנוּ
וּמָתָנוּ: ה וַיִּקְמוּ בַּנֶּשֶׁף לָבֹוא אֶל־מַחֲנֵה אָרַם וַיָּבֹאוּ
עַד־קֶצֶה מַחֲנֵה אָרַם וְהִנֵּה אֵין־שָׁם אִישׁ: ו וְאֲדָנִי
הַשְּׁמִיעַ | אֶת־מַחֲנֵה אָרַם קוֹל רֶכֶב קוֹל סוּס קוֹל
חֵיל גְּדוֹל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו הֲנָה שֹׁכְרֵ־עֲלֵינוּ

2 KINGS 7

1 "Listen to the word of Yahweh," Elisha said. "Yahweh says this, "By this time tomorrow, a seah of finest flour will sell for one shekel and two seah of barley for one shekel, at the gate of Samaria.'" 2 The equerry on whose arm the king was leaning retorted to the man of God, "Even if Yahweh made windows in the sky, could this come true?" "You will see it with your own eyes," he answered, "though you will eat none of it."

3 Now, at the entrance to the gate, there were four lepers and they debated among themselves, "Why sit here waiting for death? 4 If we decide to go into the town, what with the famine in it, we shall die there; if we stay here, we shall die just the same. Come on, let us go over to the Aramaean camp; if they spare our lives, we live; if they kill us, we shall die anyway." 5 So, at dusk, they set out and made for the Aramaean camp, but when they reached the confines of the camp, there was not a soul there. 6 For, the Lord had caused the Aramaeans in their camp to hear a noise of chariots and horses, the noise of a great army; and they

2 KINGS 7

1 A 'seah' was a dry measure equal to about 7 litres.

2 The NJB, following the LXX (*Ελισσαιε*), has 'Elisha' in place of 'man of God', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.

3 These 'lepers' do not seem to be overly ill from their disease.

4 The MT lacks the word 'anyway'; the periphrastic translation attempts to bring out the logical force of their reasoning.

5 It is Yahweh alone who routs the enemy; no fighting is recorded.

6 The 'Egyptian' kings were the petty kings of northern Syria. There is no need to correct 'Mizraim' (Egypt) into 'Muzri' (an unidentified region of Asia Minor), a suggestion made by some commentators. The NJB has 'Yahweh' in place of 'the Lord', here following the MT.

מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מַלְכֵי הַחִתִּים וְאֶת־מַלְכֵי מִצְרַיִם
לְבֹא עָלֵינוּ: ^ז וַיִּקְוּמוּ וַיִּנּוּסוּ בַנֶּשֶׁף וַיַּעֲזְבוּ אֶת־
אֹהֲלֵיהֶם וְאֶת־סוּסֵיהֶם וְאֶת־חֲמֹרֵיהֶם הַמַּחֲנֶה
כַּאֲשֶׁר־הָיָא וַיִּנּוּסוּ אֶל־נַפְשָׁם: ^ח וַיָּבֹאוּ הַמְּצַרְעִים
הָאֵלֶּה עַד־קֶצֶה הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־אֹהֶל אֶחָד
וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ וַיִּשְׂאוּ מִשָּׁם כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וּבְגָדִים
וַיִּלְכוּ וַיִּטְמְנוּ וַיִּשְׁבוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־אֹהֶל אַחֵר וַיִּשְׂאוּ
מִשָּׁם וַיִּלְכוּ וַיִּטְמְנוּ:

^ט וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ לֹא־כֹן אֲנַחְנוּ עֹשִׂים
הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יוֹם־בְּשִׁרָה הוּא וְאֲנַחְנוּ מַחֲשִׁים וְחַכְיִנו
עַד־אֹר הַבֶּקֶר וּמִצָּאֵנוּ עֹזֹן וְעַתָּה לָכֵן וְנִבְאָה
וְנִגִּידָה בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ: ^י וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־שַׁעַר הָעִיר
וַיִּגִּידוּ לָהֶם לֵאמֹר בָּאנוּ אֶל־מַחֲנֶה אֲרָם וְהִנֵּה אֵין־
שָׁם אִישׁ וְקוֹל אָדָם כִּי אִם־הִסּוּס אָסוּר וְהַחֲמֹר
אָסוּר וְאֹהֲלִים כַּאֲשֶׁר־הָמָה: ^{יא} וַיִּקְרָא הַשַּׁעֲרִים
וַיִּגִּידוּ בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ פְּנִימָה:

had said to one another, “Hark! The king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings against us, to attack us.” ⁷ So, they fled away in the dusk, abandoning their tents, their horses, and their donkeys; they left the camp as it was and ran for their lives. ⁸ The lepers, then, reached the confines of the camp. They went into one of the tents, ate and drank, and from it carried off silver, gold, and clothing; these they went and hid. Then they came back and, entering another tent, looted it too, and went and hid their booty.

⁹ They said to one another, “We are doing wrong. This is a day of good news, yet we are holding our tongues! If we wait until morning, we shall surely be punished. Come on, let us go and take the news to the palace.”

¹⁰ Off they went, called the gatekeepers, and said, “We have been to the Aramaean camp. There was not a soul there, no sound of anyone, only tethered horses and tethered donkeys, and their tents just as they were.”

¹¹ Then the gatekeepers shouted the news and proclaimed it to the king’s household.

⁷ The NJB ends this verse, here following NETB, with, “leaving the camp just as it was, they had fled for their lives.”

⁸ For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Then they came back, entered another tent, carried off things from it, and went and hid them.”

⁹ The literal translation of ‘we shall surely be punished’ is ‘punishment will find us’.

¹⁰ For ‘gatekeepers’, the MT has a singular form but the context suggests a plural; the pronoun that follows is plural and a plural noun appears in v. 11. The Peshitta and the Tg have the plural here.

¹¹ Literally translated, this verse reads, “and the gatekeepers called out and they told (it) to the house of the king.”

יב וַיִּקַּם הַמֶּלֶךְ לַיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-עֲבָדָיו אֲגִידֶה-נָּא
לָכֶם אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשׂוּ לָנוּ אַרְם יָדְעוּ כִּי-רַעֲבִים
אַנְחָנוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ מִן-הַמַּחֲנֶה לְהַחֲבֶה בַּשָּׂדֶה
לֵאמֹר כִּי-יֵצְאוּ מִן-הָעִיר וְנִתְפָּשׂם חַיִּים וְאֶל-הָעִיר
נָבֵא: יג וַיַּעַן אֶחָד מֵעֲבָדָיו וַיֹּאמֶר וַיִּקְחוּ-נָא חֲמִשָּׁה
מִן-הַסּוֹסִים הַנִּשְׁאָרִים אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאָרוּ-בָּהּ הַנֶּחֱמָה
כְּכֹל-הַמֶּזֶן הַהַמּוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאָרוּ-בָּהּ הַנֶּחֱמָה
כְּכֹל-הַמֶּזֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-תָּמוּ וְנִשְׁלַחַה וְנִרְאָה:
יד וַיִּקְחוּ שְׁנֵי רֶכֶב סוֹסִים וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲרֵי
מַחֲנֵה-אַרְם לֵאמֹר לְכוּ וּרְאוּ: טו וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם
עַד-הַיַּרְדֵּן וְהָנָה כָּל-הַיַּרְדֵּן מְלֵאָה בְּגָדִים וּבְכֵלִים
אֲשֶׁר-הִשְׁלִיכוּ אַרְם בַּחֲפֹזִים בַּחֲפֹזִים וַיָּשֻׁבוּ
הַמְּלָאכִים וַיִּגְדּוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ:

טז וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם וַיִּבְזּוּ אֵת מַחֲנֵה אַרְם וַיְהִי סֵאֵה-סֹלֶת
בְּשֶׁקֶל וְסֵאֵתִים שְׁעָרִים בְּשֶׁקֶל כַּדָּבָר יְהוָה:
יז וְהַמֶּלֶךְ הִפְקִיד אֶת-הַשְּׁלִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁעַן עַל-יָדוֹ
עַל-הַשַּׁעַר וַיִּרְמְסֶהוּ הָעָם בַּשַּׁעַר וַיָּמַת כְּאֲשֶׁר

12 The king got up while it was still dark and said to his officers, “I can tell you what the Aramaeans have prepared against us. They know that we are starving, so they have left the camp to hide themselves in the open country. “They will come out of the town,” they think, “we will catch them alive and get into the town.”” 13 One of his officers replied, “Five of the surviving horses still left us had better be taken, since those left here will suffer the fate of the whole assembly of Israel that have perished already. Let us send them and find out.” 14 So, they took two mounted men and the king sent them after the Aramaean army, saying, “Go and find out.” 15 So, they went after them as far as the Jordan, finding the whole way strewn with clothes and gear than the Aramaeans had thrown away in their panic. The scouts returned and informed the king.

16 Then the people went out and plundered the Aramaean camp: a seah of finest flour sold for one shekel and two seah of barley for one shekel, just as Yahweh had said. 17 The king had appointed the equerry on whose arm he leaned to have charge of the gate; the people trampled

12 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

13 The text of this verse is confused; the *NJB*, in place of, “since those left ... perished already,” has, “they would die in any case like the rest.” The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

14 The *NJB* has ‘chariot teams’ in place of ‘mounted men’, here following the *NRSV*.

15 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

16 A ‘seah’ was a dry measure equal to about 7 litres.

17 In place of ‘to have charge of’, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* has ‘as commander of the guard on’.

דָּבַר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּרַדְתַּת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלָיו:
 י"ח וַיְהִי כַדְבַר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר
 סָאֲתִים שְׁעָרִים בְּשֶׁקֶל וְסֵאֵה־סֵלֶת בְּשֶׁקֶל יִהְיֶה
 כְּעַתְּ מֹחֵר בְּשַׁעַר שַׁמְרוֹן: י"ט וַיַּעַן הַשְּׁלִישׁ אֶת־אִישׁ
 הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר וְהִנֵּה יִהְיֶה עֲשֵׂה אַרְבּוֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם
 הֲיִהְיֶה כַדְבַר הַזֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּךְ רֵאֵה בְּעֵינֶיךָ וּמִשָּׁם
 לֹא תֹאכַל: כ' וַיְהִי־לּוֹ כֵן וַיִּרְמְסוּ אֹתוֹ הָעַם בְּשַׁעַר
 וַיָּמָת: {ס}

him to death in the gate, as the man of God had said when the king had come down to him. ¹⁸ The man of God had said to the king, “Two seah of barley will sell for one shekel and a seah of finest flour for one shekel, by this time tomorrow at the gate of Samaria,” ¹⁹ but the equerry had answered the man of God, “Even if Yahweh made windows in the sky, could this happen?” “You shall see it with your own eyes,” he had answered, “but you shall eat none of it.” ²⁰ This is, indeed, what happened to him; the people trampled him to death in the gate.

¹⁸ In the *NJB*, vv. 18–20 are parenthesised; a footnote adds that they are probably an addition, as they repeat vv. 1, 2 and 17.

¹⁹ The *NJB*, following the *LXX*, has ‘Elisha’ in place of ‘the man of God’, here following the *MT* & *NRSV*.

²⁰ The *NJB* ends this verse, “the people trampled on him in the gateway and he died;” here, we follow the *NRSV* & *NETB*.

מלכים ב פרק ח

2 KINGS 8

א וַיֹּאֲלִישָׁע דְּבַר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־הָחִיָּה אֶת־בְּנָהּ לֵאמֹר קוּמִי וּלְכִי אִתִּי אֶתְּ וּבֵיתְךָ וּגְוֹרֵי בְּאֶשֶׁר תִּגְוֹרֵי כִּי־קָרָא יְהוָה לָרָעַב וְגַם־בָּא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ שִׁבַּע שָׁנִים: ב וּתְקַם הָאִשָּׁה וַתַּעַשׂ כַּדְּבַר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וַתֵּלֶךְ הִיא וּבֵיתָהּ וַתֵּגֶר בְּאֶרֶץ־פְּלִשְׁתִּים שִׁבַּע שָׁנִים: ג וַיְהִי מִקְצֵה שִׁבַּע שָׁנִים וַתָּשָׁב הָאִשָּׁה מֵאֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַתֵּצֵא לְצַעֲק אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־בֵּיתָהּ וְאֶל־שָׂדֶה: ד וְהַמֶּלֶךְ מְדַבֵּר אֶל־גְּחִזִּי נָעַר אִישֶׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר סִפְרָה־נָּא לִּי אֵת כָּל־הַגְּדֹלוֹת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה אֱלִישָׁע: {ס}

ה וַיְהִי הוּא מְסַפֵּר לַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת אֲשֶׁר־הָחִיָּה אֶת־הַמֵּת וְהִנֵּה הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־הָחִיָּה אֶת־בְּנָהּ צִעֲקַת אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל־בֵּיתָהּ וְעַל־שָׂדֶה וַיֹּאמֶר גְּחִזִּי אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ זֹאת הָאִשָּׁה וְזֶה־בְּנָהּ אֲשֶׁר־הָחִיָּה אֱלִישָׁע: ו וַיִּשְׂאֵל הַמֶּלֶךְ לָאִשָּׁה וַתַּסְפֵּר־לּוֹ וַיִּתֶּן־לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ

¹ Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had raised to life, “Move away with your family, and live where you can in some foreign country, for Yahweh has called up a famine – it is coming on the country already – for seven years.” ² The woman hurried to do what the man of God had told her: she set out, she and her family and, for seven years, she lived in the land of the Philistines. ³ When the seven years were over, the woman came back from the land of the Philistines and went to lodge a claim with the king for her house and lands. ⁴ Now the king was talking to Gehazi, the servant of the man of God. “Tell me,” he was saying, “all the great things Elisha has done.”

⁵ He was just telling the king how Elisha had raised the dead child to life, when the woman whose son Elisha had raised lodged her claim with the king for her house and lands. “My lord king,” Gehazi said, “this is the very woman, and that is her son whom Elisha raised to life.” ⁶ The king questioned the woman, who told him the story. The king then

2 KINGS 8

¹ The opening of this chapter is a sequel to 4:37. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

² Isaac also went to the ‘land of the Philistine’ to avoid a famine (Gn 26:1), compare Gn 12:10, where the place of refuge is Egypt.

³ Her possessions were taken over in her absence by neighbours or farmers.

⁴ Gehazi’s leprosy (5:27) is ignored here; perhaps it was a mild case (7:3, 8), or the tradition from which this story comes knew nothing of it.

⁵ In place of the opening ‘he’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB & NETB have ‘Gehazi’.

⁶ In place of ‘officials’, here following the NRSV, the NJB & NETB have ‘eunuchs’.

סָרִיס אֶחָד לֵאמֹר הָשִׁיב אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לָהּ וְאֵת
כָּל־תְּבוּאֹת הַשָּׂדֶה מִיּוֹם עָזְבָהּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְעַד־
עַתָּה: {פ}

וַיָּבֹא אֵלִישָׁע דַּמְשֶׁק וּבֶן־הַדָּד מֶלֶךְ־אָרָם חָלָה
וַיִּגְדְּלוּ לֹאמֹר בָּא אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים עַד־הֵנָּה:
כ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־חֲזֵהאֵל קַח בְּיָדְךָ מִנְחָה וּלְךָ
לְקִרְאֵת אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וּדְרֹשׁתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה מֵאוֹתוֹ
לֵאמֹר הָאֲחִיָּה מַחְלִי זֶה: ט וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲזָאֵל לְקִרְאֵתוֹ
וַיִּקַּח מִנְחָה בִּידוֹ וְכָל־טוֹב דַּמְשֶׁק מִשָּׂא אַרְבָּעִים
גִּמְלָ וַיָּבֹא וַיַּעֲמֵד לִפְנֵי וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנֵךְ בֶּן־הַדָּד מֶלֶךְ־
אָרָם שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר הָאֲחִיָּה מַחְלִי זֶה:
י וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֵלִישָׁע לֵךְ אֲמַרְלֹו לֹא חָיָה תְּחִיָּה
וְהִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה בְּיַמּוֹת יָמוֹת: יא וַיַּעֲמֵד אֶת־פְּנָיו
וַיִּשֶׁם עַד־בֶּשׂ וַיִּבֹדֶךְ אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים: יב וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזָאֵל

referred her to one of his officials, giving him this order: “See that all her property is restored to her, and all the revenue from her land, from the day she left the country until now.”

⁷ Elisha came to Damascus. Ben-Hadad the king of Aram was ill, and when it was told him, “The man of God has come all the way to us.”

⁸ Then the king said to Hazael, “Take a present with you and go to meet the man of God; consult Yahweh through him and find out if I shall recover from my illness.” ⁹ So, Hazael went to meet Elisha, taking with him as a present the best Damascus could offer, that is forty camel loads. He came before him and said, “Your son Ben-Hadad has sent me to ask you, “Shall I recover from my illness?”” ¹⁰ Elisha said, “Go and tell him, “You will recover,” though Yahweh has shown me that he will surely die.” ¹¹ He fixed his gaze and stared at him until he was ashamed; then the man of God wept. ¹² “Why,” Hazael asked, “does my lord weep?”

⁷ The king was Ben-Hadad II, as in 1K 20:1.

⁸ ‘Hazael’ was evidently an official of Ben-Hadad; he was to seize the throne later (v. 15).

⁹ The conjunction here translated as ‘that is’ could also be interpreted as ‘as well as’ (as NETB).

¹⁰ The phrase, ‘you might recover,’ is an idiomatic use of the infinitive absolute (the NRSV has ‘you shall certainly recover’), see Gn 2:16. To absolve Elisha from deceit, the *Ketiv* has ‘not’ (לֹא) in place of ‘him’ (לֹו), here following the *Qere*: “Go and say, “You will not recover,”” thus hiding the deliberate ambiguity of Elisha’s words. Whether or not the prophet implanted the thought of murder in Hazael’s head (see v. 13), the revelation concerns Hazael rather than Ben-Hadad and Elisha sees the coming event as inevitably pre-ordained.

¹¹ The NJB reads: “Then the face of the man of God went rigid, and his look grew strangely fixed, and he wept.” These are the physical signs of prophetic ecstasy.

¹² The NJB has ‘picked warriors’ in place of ‘young men’, here following the NRSV.

מְדוּעַ אֲדַנִּי בָכָה וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־יָדַעְתִּי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־
 תַּעֲשֶׂה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רָעָה מִבְּצָרֵיהֶם תִּשְׁלַח בְּאֵשׁ
 וּבַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּחֲרֹב תַּהַרְגֵם וְעַלְלֵיהֶם תִּרְטָשׁ
 וְהִרְתִּיהֶם תִּבְקַע: ^ג וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזָה־אֵל כִּי מָה עֲבַדְךָ
 הַכֶּלֶב כִּי יַעֲשֶׂה הַדָּבָר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי־שָׁמַיִם
 הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה אַתָּה מֶלֶךְ עַל־אַרְם: ^ד וַיִּלְדָּה מֵאֵת
 אֱלֹהֵי־שָׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֶל־אֲדָנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מַה־אָמַר לְךָ
 אֱלֹהֵי־שָׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אָמַר לִי חַיָּה תַחֲיֶה: ^{טו} וַיְהִי מִמַּחֲרָת
 וַיִּקַּח הַמַּכְבֵּר וַיִּטְבֵּל בַּמַּיִם וַיִּפְרֹשׂ עַל־פָּנָיו וַיָּמָת
 וַיִּמְלֹךְ חֲזָה־אֵל תַּחֲתָיו: {פ}

^{טז} וּבְשָׁנַת חָמֵשׁ לְיֹזָרָם בֶּן־אֲחָאָב מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל
 וַיְהוֹשֶׁפֶט מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּרָם בֶּן־יְהוֹשָׁפָט
 מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה: ^{יז} בֶּן־שְׁלֹשִׁים וּשְׁתַּיִם שָׁנָה הָיָה
 בְּמִלְכוֹ וּשְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנָה שָׁנִים מֶלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם: ^{יח} וַיִּלְדָּה
 בְּדַרְדָּר מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ בֵּית אֲחָאָב כִּי

“Because I know,” Elisha replied, “all the harm you will do the Israelites: you will burn down their fortresses, put their young men to the sword, dash their little children to pieces, rip open their pregnant women.” ¹³ “But what is your servant?” Hazael said. “How could this dog achieve anything so great?” “In a vision from Yahweh,” Elisha replied, “I have seen you king of Aram.” ¹⁴ Leaving Elisha, Hazael went back to his master Ben-Hadad, who asked, “What did Elisha say to you?” He answered, “He told me you would certainly recover.” ¹⁵ Next day he took a blanket, soaked it in water, and spread it over his face until he died; and Hazael succeeded him.

¹⁶ In the fifth year of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat became king on Judah. ¹⁷ He was thirty-two years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem. ¹⁸ He followed the example of the kings of Israel as the family of Ahab had done, having taken a wife from the family of Ahab; he did

¹³ The word ‘dog’ here is merely an expression of humility (see 1S 24:15, 2S 9:8). Hazael is surprised by this prophecy of future greatness.

¹⁴ The NJB lacks ‘Ben-Hadad’.

¹⁵ This verse refers, presumably, to murder by Hazael, not suicide by Ben-Hadad.

¹⁶ The text here follows the LXX; the MT adds, after ‘Israel’, ‘Jehoshaphat being king in Judah’. The synchronism with ‘Jehoram (Joram) of Israel’ agrees with that in 3:1, not with that in 1:17 (see the footnotes thereto).

¹⁷ Jehoram reigned 848–841 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 849–842 BCE according to W.F. Albright. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁸ Jehoram married Athaliah (see Ch. 11), daughter of Omri and sister (see v. 26 and 2Ch 22:2) or daughter (see 2Ch 21:6) of Ahab. Chronology favours the first alternative. The adverse evaluation of the Deuteronomist is probably due to this marriage.

בַּת־אֲחָאָב הִיְתָה לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינַי
 יְהוָה: ^{יט} וְלֹא־אָבָה יְהוָה לְהִשְׁחִית אֶת־יְהוּדָה
 לְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדּוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לוֹ לֵאמֹר לֹא גִיר לְבָנָיו
 כָּל־הַיָּמִים: ^כ בְּיָמָיו פָּשַׁע אֲדֹמ מִתַּחַת יַד־יְהוּדָה
 וַיִּמְלְכוּ עָלֵיהֶם מֶלֶךְ: ^{כא} וַיַּעֲבֹר יֹרָם צָעִירָה וְכָל־
 הָרֶכֶב עִמּוֹ וַיְהִי־הוּא קָם לַיְלָה וַיִּכָּה אֶת־אֲדֹמ
 הַסְּבִיב אֵלָיו וְאֵת שָׂרֵי הָרֶכֶב וַיִּנָּס הָעָם לְאֹהֲלָיו:
^{כב} וַיִּפְשַׁע אֲדֹמ מִתַּחַת יַד־יְהוּדָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲזַי
 תִּפְשַׁע לְבַנָּה בַּעַת הַהִיא: ^{כג} וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי יֹרָם וְכָל־
 אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הֵלֵאֵהֶם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי
 הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה: ^{כד} וַיִּשְׁכַּב יֹרָם עִם־אֲבֹתָיו
 וַיִּקְבֹּר עִם־אֲבֹתָיו בְּעִיר דָּוִד וַיִּמְלֹךְ אַחֲזִיָּהוּ בְּנוֹ
 תַּחֲתָיו: {פ}

^{כה} בַּשָּׁנָה שְׁתַּיִם־עֶשְׂרִה שָׁנָה לְיֹרָם בֶּן־אֲחָאָב
 מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֶלֶךְ אַחֲזִיָּהוּ בֶן־יְהוֹרָם מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה:

what is displeasing to Yahweh. ¹⁹ Yahweh, however, did not intend to destroy Judah, because of his servant David, and was faithful to the promise he had made to leave him a lamp forever in his presence. ²⁰ In his time, Edom threw off the domination of Judah and set up a king for itself. ²¹ Jehoram crossed to Zair with all his chariots. He set out during the night and, with his chariot commanders, broke through the Edomites encircling him; the people fled to their tents. ²² Thus, Edom threw off the domination of Judah, remaining free to the present day. Libnah also revolted at that time. ²³ The rest of the history of Jehoram, his entire career, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ²⁴ Then Jehoram fell asleep with his fathers and he was buried with them in the City of David; and his son Ahaziah succeeded him.

²⁵ In the twelfth year of Jehoram, son of Ahab king of Israel, Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king in Judah. ²⁶ Ahaziah was twenty-two years old

¹⁹ On the 'lamp' as a symbol of the permanence of the Davidic dynasty, see 2S 21:17, 1K 11:36, and 15:4.

²⁰ Edom (see Nb 20:23) was a vassal and protectorate of Judah under Jehoshaphat (3:8–10ff, 1K 22:48).

²¹ 'Zair' is an identified site in Transjordan. The remainder of the sentence has been mutilated in an attempt to expunge the record of a defeat.

²² Libnah passed to the Philistines.

²³ The 'Annals of the Kings of Judah' are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings.

²⁴ The 'City of David' here refers to the Citadel of Jerusalem, not to Bethlehem.

²⁵ This 'Ahaziah' must not be confused with his uncle, Ahaziah of Israel (1:2–18, 1K 22:40, 51–53); his relationship to the House of Ahab was enough to condemn him in the eyes of the editor.

²⁶ Ahaziah reigned during 841 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 842 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

כו בן־עשרים ושתים שנה אחזיהו במלכו ושנה
 אחת מלך בירושלם ושם אמו עתליהו בת־עמרי
 מלך ישראל: כז וילך בדרך בית אחאב ויעש הרע
 בעיני יהוה כבית אחאב כי חתן בית־אחאב הוא:
 כח וילך את־יורם בן־אחאב למלחמה עם־חזאל
 מלך־ארם ברמת גלעד ויכו ארמים את־יורם:
 כט וישב יורם המלך להתרפא ביזרעאל מן
 המכים אשר יבהו ארמים ברמה בהלחמו את־
 חזהאל מלך ארם ואחזיהו בן־יהורם מלך יהודה
 ירד לראות את־יורם בן־אחאב ביזרעאל כי־חלה
 הוא: {פ}

when he came to the throne, and he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, granddaughter of Omri king of Israel. ²⁷ He followed the example of the family of Ahab and did what is displeasing in Yahweh's sight, as the family of Ahab had done, for he was son-in-law to the House of Ahab. ²⁸ He went with Jehoram son of Ahab to wage war against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth-Gilead, where the Aramaeans wounded Jehoram. ²⁹ King Jehoram returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds that he had received at Ramah, fighting against Hazael king of Aram. Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to Jezreel to visit Jehoram son of Ahab because he was ill.

²⁷ The term 'son-in-law' would apply more accurately to Ahaziah's father. Ahaziah himself was actually related by blood to the House of Ahab.
²⁸ The NJB has 'but' in place of 'where', here following the NRSV.
²⁹ Like Ahab, Jehoram sought help from the king of Judah. The visit of Ahaziah to Jehoram set the stage for the catastrophic events of the next chapter. 'Ramah' is the same as 'Ramoth-Gilead' (v. 28, see 1K 22:29-36).

מלכים ב פרק ט

וַאֲלִישָׁעַ הַנְּבִיאַ קָרָא לְאֶחָד מִבְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים
וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ חַגֹּר מִתְּנִיךָ וְקַח פֶּךָ הַשֶּׁמֶן הַזֶּה בְּיָדְךָ
וְלֵךְ רָמֹת גִּלְעָד: ^ב וּבֹאתָ שָׁמָּה וּרְאֵה־שָׁם יְהוּא
בֶן־יְהוֹשָׁפָט בֶּן־נִמְשִׁי וּבֹאתָ וְהִקְמַתוּ מִתּוֹךְ אַחֲיוֹ
וְהִבִּיאתָ אֹתוֹ חֹדֶר בְּחֹדֶר: ^ג וְלָקַחְתָּ פֶךְ־הַשֶּׁמֶן
וַיִּצְקֶתָ עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וְאָמַרְתָּ כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה מְשַׁחְתִּיךָ
לְמֶלֶךְ אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּפְתַחְתָּ הַדֶּלֶת וּנְסַתָּה וְלֹא
תִּחְכְּהָ: ^ד וַיֵּלֶךְ הַנְּעָר הַנָּעַר הַנְּבִיאַ רָמֹת גִּלְעָד:
^ה וַיָּבֹא וְהָיָה שָׂרֵי הַחֵיל יֹשְׁבִים וַיֹּאמֶר דָּבַר לִי
אֵלֶיךָ הַשָּׂר וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּא אֶל־מִי מִכָּלֵנוּ וַיֹּאמֶר
אֵלֶיךָ הַשָּׂר: ^ו וַיִּקָּם וַיָּבֹא הַבַּיִתָּה וַיִּצֶק הַשֶּׁמֶן אֶל־
רֹאשׁוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
מְשַׁחְתִּיךָ לְמֶלֶךְ אֶל־עַם יְהוָה אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:
^ז וְהִכִּיתָה אֶת־בַּיִת אַחֲזָב אֲדֹנֶיךָ וְנִקְמַתִּי דָמַי

2 KINGS 9

¹ And Elisha the prophet summoned a member of the prophetic brotherhood to him, "Tuck up your cloak, take this flask of oil, and go to Ramoth-Gilead. ² When you arrive there, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi. Then, when you find him, tell him to get up and leave his companions, and take him into an inner room. ³ Take the flask of oil then pour it over his head, and say, "This is Yahweh's word: I have anointed you king of Israel." Then throw open the door and flee; do not linger." ⁴ The young prophet left for Ramoth-Gilead; ⁵ he arrived while the senior officers of the army were in council. "I have a message for you, commander," he said. "For which of us?" asked Jehu. "For you, commander," he said. ⁶ So, he got up and went inside; and he poured the oil on his head, saying, "Yahweh the God of Israel says this, "I have anointed you king over the people of Yahweh, king of Israel. ⁷ You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, so I may avenge on Jezebel

2 KINGS 9

- ¹ The NRSV uses 'company of prophets' in place of 'prophetic brotherhood' (see #2:3).
- ² Literally translated, this verse ends, "bring him to an inner room in an inner room."
- ³ The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "escape as fast as you can."
- ⁴ The literal translation of 'the young prophet' is 'the young man, the young man the prophet' but the MT is probably dittographic; the phrases 'the young man' and 'the prophet' are appositional, with the latter qualifying more specifically the former.
- ⁵ The literal translation of 'for which of us' is 'to whom from all of us'.
- ⁶ In place of the 2nd instance of the pronoun 'he', the NJB & NETB have 'the young man'; here, we follow the MT.
- ⁷ The MT repeats 'the shed blood' before 'of all the servants'.

עֲבָדֵי הַנְּבִיאִים וְדַמֵּי כָּל־עַבְדֵי יְהוָה מִיַּד אִיזָבֵל:
 ח וְאֶבֶד כָּל־בַּיִת אַחָאָב וְהִכְרַתִּי לְאַחָאָב מִשְׁתָּיִן
 בְּקִיר וְעַצוֹר וְעִזּוֹב בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: ט וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־בַּיִת
 אַחָאָב כְּבַיִת יִרְבֵּעַם בֶּן־נֶבֶט וְכַבִּית בַּעֲשָׂא בֶן־
 אַחִיָּה: י וְאֶת־אִיזָבֵל יֹאכְלוּ הַכְּלָבִים בְּחֶלֶק
 יִזְרְעֵאל וְאִין קָבֵר וַיִּפְתַּח הַדֶּלֶת וַיָּנָס:

יא וַיְהִי וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־עַבְדֵי אֲדֹנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַשְּׁלוֹם
 מִדּוֹעַ בְּאֶ־הַמְּשַׁנֵּעַ הַזֶּה אֵלַיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם אַתֶּם
 יִדְעֶתֶם אֶת־הָאִישׁ וְאֶת־שִׁיחוֹ: יב וַיֹּאמְרוּ שְׂקֵר
 הִגְדַּנָּא לָנוּ וַיֹּאמֶר כִּזְזַת וְכִזְזַת אָמַר אֵלַי לֵאמֹר
 כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה מִשְׁחַתִּיךָ לְמַלְךְ אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 יג וַיִּמְהָרוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ בְּגָדוֹ וַיִּשְׂימוּ תַחְתָּיו אֶל־גְּרָם
 הַמַּעֲלוֹת וַיִּתְקְעוּ בַשּׁוֹפָר וַיֹּאמְרוּ מַלְךְ יְהוּא:

the shed blood of my servants the prophets and of all the servants of Yahweh; ⁸ and the whole house of Ahab shall perish. I will cut off all who piss on a wall from Ahab, bond or free, in Israel. ⁹ I will make the house of Ahab like those of Jeroboam son of Nebat and Baasha son of Ahijah. ¹⁰ The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel; no one will bury her.”” Then he opened the door and fled.

¹¹ Jehu came out to the officers of his master. “Is all well?” they asked him. “Why did this madman come to you?” “You know the fellow and how he talks,” he answered. ¹² “Evasion!” they cried. “Come on, tell us.” He replied, “His drift was this – he said, “Yahweh says this: I have anointed you king of Israel.”” ¹³ Whereupon they all took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps; they sounded the trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is king!”

⁸ In place of ‘I will cut off’, here following the MT, the LXX has ‘you will destroy’ (ἐξολοθρεύσεις).

⁹ In place of ‘those of’, here following NETB, the MT repeats ‘the house of’ before ‘Jeroboam’ and before ‘Baasha’.

¹⁰ Vv. 7-10^a have been added by the author of Kings: in the original story, the young man must have fled immediately after anointing Jehu, as ordered by Elisha (v. 3).

¹¹ The MT has the singular ‘he asked’ in place of ‘they asked’ but many reliable witnesses correct to the plural. The word ‘madman’ reflects the attitude of the people at large to the prophets (Jr 29:26, Ho 9:7); the term is not a direct insult, though containing an element of mockery, and Jehu adopts the same tone.

¹² In place of ‘his drift was this – he said’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘this is just what he said to me’; the literal translation is ‘like this and like this he said to me, saying’, which is probably the narrator’s way of avoiding repetition and indicating that Jehu repeated, or at least summarised, what the prophet had said to him.

¹³ The exact meaning of the word here translated as ‘bare’ (גָּרָם) is uncertain, translating literally as ‘the bone of the steps’.

י^ד וַיִּתְקַשֵּׁר יְהוּא בֶן־יְהוֹשָׁפָט בֶּן־נִמְשִׁי אֶל־יִזְרָם וַיִּזְרַם הָיָה שֹׁמֵר בְּרַמְתַּת גִּלְעָד הוּא וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּנֵי חֲזָאֵל מֶלֶךְ־אַרָּם: ^{טו} וַיָּשֶׁב יְהוֹרָם הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַתְרַפָּא בִּיזְרְעֵאל מִן־הַמַּכִּים אֲשֶׁר יָבְהוּ אַרְמִים בְּהַלְחָמוֹ אֶת־חֲזָאֵל מֶלֶךְ אַרָּם וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּא אִם־יֵשׁ נַפְשְׁכֶם אֶל־יָצֵא פְּלִיט מִן־הָעִיר לְלַכֵּת לַגִּיד לְהַגִּיד בִּיזְרְעֵאל: ^{טז} וַיִּרְכַּב יְהוּא וַיֵּלֶךְ יִזְרְעֵאלָה כִּי יִזְרַם שָׁכַב שָׁמָּה וְאַחֲזִיָּה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה יָרַד לִרְאוֹת אֶת־יִזְרָם:

י^ז וְהַצִּפֹּה עָמַד עַל־הַמִּגְדָּל בִּיזְרְעֵאל וַיֵּרָא אֶת־שַׁפְעֵת יְהוּא בְּבָאוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר שַׁפְעֵת אֲנִי רֹאֶה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹרָם קַח רֶכֶב וְשַׁלַּח לְקִרְאֲתָם וַיֹּאמֶר הַשְּׁלוֹם: ^{יח} וַיֵּלֶךְ רֶכֶב הַסּוּס לְקִרְאֲתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה־אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ הַשְּׁלוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּא מִה־לֶּךְ וּלְשָׁלוֹם סָב אֶל־אֲחֵרָי וַיִּגַּד הַצִּפֹּה לֵאמֹר בְּאֶ־הַמְּלֶאךָ עַד־הֵם וְלֹא־שָׁב: ^{יט} וַיִּשְׁלַח רֶכֶב סוּס שֵׁנִי וַיָּבֵא אֲלֵהֶם

¹⁴ Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi plotted against Jehoram. (Jehoram, with all Israel, was at that time guarding Ramoth-Gilead against King Hazael of Aram, ¹⁵ although Jehoram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds that he had received from the Aramaeans while he was fighting against Hazael king of Aram.) Jehu said, “If this is your wish, let no one escape from the town to go and take the news to Jezreel.” ¹⁶ Jehu then mounted his chariot and left for Jezreel, where Jehoram had taken to his bed. King Ahaziah of Judah had gone down to visit him.

¹⁷ The sentinel posted on the tower of Jezreel saw Jehu’s troop arriving; “I can see a body of men,” he shouted. Jehoram gave the order: “Have a horseman sent to meet them and ask, “Is all well?”” ¹⁸ The horseman went to meet Jehu and said, “The king says, “Is all well?”” Jehu replied, “What has it to do with you if all is well? Fall in behind me.” The sentinel reported, “The messenger has reached them and is not coming back.” ¹⁹ The king sent a second horseman who reached them and said, “Thus

¹⁴ Ramoth-Gilead had evidently been recaptured by the Israelites, despite the disaster related in 1K 22; the Aramaeans were trying to retake it.

¹⁵ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁶ Compare 8:28–29.

¹⁷ The king does not at first suspect treason but is uneasy about the news from Ramoth-Gilead.

¹⁸ The literal translation of ‘is all well’ is ‘is there peace’.

¹⁹ In place of ‘is all well’, the MT here has simply ‘peace’ (see #18), omitting the prefixed interrogative particle; it is likely that the particle has been accidentally omitted: several ancient witnesses include it or assume its presence.

וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה־אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה מֵה־לֶּךְ
 וּלְשְׁלוֹם סָב אַל־אַחֲרַי: ^כ וַיִּגַּד הַצִּפּוֹה לֵאמֹר בָּא
 עַד־אֵלֵיהֶם וְלֹא־שָׁב וְהַמְנַהֵג כַּמְנַהֵג יְהוָה בֶּן־
 נַמְשִׁי כִּי בִשְׂגָעוֹן יִנְהַג: ^{כא} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹרָם אֲסֹר
 וַיֹּאסֶר רֶכֶבוֹ וַיֵּצֵא יְהוֹרָם מִלֶּךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַאֲחִזְיָהוּ
 מִלֶּךְ־יְהוּדָה אִישׁ בְּרֶכֶבוֹ וַיֵּצְאוּ לִקְרֹאת יְהוָה
 וַיִּמְצְאוּהוּ בְּחַלְקַת נָבוֹת הַיְזְרְעֵאֵלִי: ^{כב} וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת
 יְהוֹרָם אֶת־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר הַשְׁלוֹם יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר מֶה
 הַשְׁלוֹם עַד־זִנְוֹנַי אִיזָבֵל אִמִּי וְכַשְׂפֵּיהַ הָרַבִּים:
^{כג} וַיַּהֲפֹךְ יְהוֹרָם יָדָיו וַיִּנָּס וַיֹּאמֶר אַל־אֲחִזְיָהוּ
 מִרְמָה אֲחִזְיָה: ^{כד} וַיְהִי מִלֵּא יָדוֹ בַקֶּשֶׁת וַיִּדֹ אֶת־
 יְהוֹרָם בֵּין זָרְעָיו וַיֵּצֵא הַחֲצִי מִלְּבוֹ וַיִּכְרַע בְּרֶכָבוֹ:
^{כה} וַיֹּאמֶר אַל־בְּדַקֵּר שְׁלֵשָׁה שָׂא הַשְּׁלֹכָהוּ בְּחַלְקַת
 שִׁדָּה נָבוֹת הַיְזְרְעֵאֵלִי כִּי־זָכַר אָנֹכִי וְאַתָּה אַתָּה
 לְכַבֵּים צְמָדִים אַחֲרַי אַחָאָב אָבִיו וַיְהוֹה נִשְׂא עָלָיו
 אֶת־הַמִּשְׂא הַזֶּה: ^{כו} אִם־לֹא אֶת־דַּמִּי נָבוֹת וְאֶת־

says the king: "Is all well?" Jehu replied, "What has it to do with you if all is well? Fall in behind me." ²⁰ The sentinel reported, "He has reached them and is not coming back. The manner of driving is like that of Jehu son of Nimshi: he drives like a maniac." ²¹ "Harness!" Jehoram cried; and they harnessed his chariot. Then Jehoram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah, each in his chariot, set out to meet Jehu. They reached him in the field of Naboth of Jezreel. ²² When Jehoram saw Jehu he asked, "Is all well?" He replied, "How can all be well, while the prostitutions and many sorceries of your mother Jezebel go on." ²³ Then Jehoram wheeled and fled, saying to Ahaziah, "Treason, Ahaziah!" ²⁴ Jehu drew his bow and struck Jehoram between the shoulders; the arrow pierced the king's heart and he sank in his chariot. ²⁵ Jehu said to Bidkar, his aide, "Pick him up and throw him into the field of Naboth of Jezreel. Remember, when you and I both rode behind Ahab his father, how Yahweh pronounced this sentence on him: ²⁶ "For the blood of Naboth and for the blood of his children that I saw yesterday, says

²⁰ NETB has 'he drives recklessly' in place of 'he drives like a maniac', here following the NRSV.

²¹ In place of 'harness', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'get ready'.

²² The primary meaning of 'prostitutions' is metaphorical, as in the books of the Prophets: spiritual unfaithfulness in worshipping other gods.

²³ The literal translation of 'wheeled' is 'turned his hands', referring to the way he would have pulled on the reins to make his horse turn around.

²⁴ The literal translation of 'pierced' is 'went out from'.

²⁵ In place of 'aide', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'equerry' and NETB has 'officer'.

²⁶ Compare 1K 21:17-19, 28-29.

דָּמִי בְנִי רְאִיתִי אֲמַשׁ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשַׁלַּמְתִּי לָךְ
בַּחֲלָקָה הַזֹּאת נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְעַתָּה שָׂא הַשְּׁלֶכְהוּ
בַּחֲלָקָה כְּדַבַּר יְהוָה: כִּי וְאַחֲזִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה רָאָה
וַיִּנָּס דֶּרֶךְ בֵּית הַגֶּן וַיִּרְדֹּף אַחֲרָיו יְהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם־
אֲתוּ הִכְהוּ אֶל־הַמְּרַכְבָּה בְּמַעְלֵה־גוּר אֲשֶׁר אֶת־
יְבִלְעֵם וַיִּנָּס מִגְּדוֹ וַיִּמַּת שָׁם: כִּי וַיִּרְכְּבוּ אֹתוֹ עַבְדָּיו
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ בַּקְּבֻרָתוֹ עִם־אֲבֹתָיו בְּעִיר
דָּוִד: {פ}

כֹּט וּבְשֵׁנֶת אַחַת עָשָׂה שָׁנָה לְיֹזֶרֶם בֶּן־אַחֲזָב מֶלֶךְ
אַחֲזִיָּה עַל־יְהוּדָה: ל וַיָּבֹא יְהוּא יֹרְעָאֵלָה וְאִיזָבֵל
שָׁמְעָה וְתָשֵׁם בַּפּוֹד עֵינֶיהָ וַתִּיטֵב אֶת־רֹאשָׁהּ
וַתִּשְׁקֶף בְּעַד הַחֲלוֹן: לא וַיְהוּא בָּא בַשַּׁעַר וַתֹּאמֶר
הַשְּׁלוֹם זְמַרִי הֲרַג אֲדֹנָיו: לב וַיֵּשֶׂא פָנָיו אֶל־הַחֲלוֹן
וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אֲתִי מִי וַיִּשְׁקִיפוּ אֵלָיו שְׁנַיִם שְׁלֹשָׁה
סְרִיסִים: לג וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַטְהוּ שְׁמַטְהוּ וַיִּשְׁמְטוּהָ וַיִּזְ

Yahweh, I swear I will repay you in this very field.” So now, pick him up, and throw him into the field, as Yahweh declared should happen.”

²⁷ When Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, he fled along the Beth-ha-Gan road; but Jehu went in pursuit of him. “Strike him down too,” he said; and they struck him in his chariot at the slope of Gur, near Ibleam, and he took refuge in Megiddo, where he died. ²⁸ His servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem and buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the City of David.

²⁹ Ahaziah had become king of Judah in the eleventh year of Jehoram son of Ahab. ³⁰ Jehu went back to Jezreel and Jezebel heard of it. She made up her eyes with kohl and adorned her head, and appeared at the window. ³¹ As Jehu came through the gateway she said, “Is all well, Zimri, you murderer of your master?” ³² Jehu looked up to the window and said, “Who is on my side? Who?” Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. ³³ “Throw her down,” he said. They threw her down, and

²⁷ The MT lacks ‘and they struck him’, here following the LXX (καὶ ἐπάταξεν αὐτόν).

²⁸ The NJB, following the LXX, omits ‘with his fathers’.

²⁹ This verse may be a correction of 8:25.

³⁰ ‘Kohl’ is an ancient eye cosmetic, made by grinding galena (lead sulphide) and other ingredients, including antimony; it is widely used in the Middle East, Northern Africa, and South Asia. Its ancient importance survives through its etymological root of the English word, *alcohol*.

³¹ Zimri was infamous for his brutal assassinations, 1K 16:8–12, 19; the sting in this taunt is that he reigned for only eight days.

³² The literal translation of ‘two or three’ is ‘two, three’; the narrator may be intentionally vague or uncertain here, or the two numbers may represent alternate traditions.

³³ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

מִדְּמָה אֶל־הַקִּיר וְאֶל־הַסּוּסִים וַיִּרְמֹסְנָה: ^{לד} וַיָּבֵא
וַיֹּאכַל וַיִּשֶׁת וַיֹּאמֶר פִּקְדוֹ־נָא אֶת־הָאֲרוּרָה הַזֹּאת
וְקַבְרוּהָ כִּי בַת־מֶלֶךְ הִיא: ^{לה} וַיֵּלְכוּ לְקַבְרָהּ וְלֹא־
מָצְאוּ בָּהּ כִּי אִם־הַגְּלִגְלֹת וְהַרְגָלִים וְכַפּוֹת הַיָּדַיִם:
^{לו} וַיָּשׁוּבוּ וַיִּגִּידוּ לוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר דְּבַר־יְהוָה הוּא אֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר בְּיַד־עַבְדּוֹ אֵלֵיהֶוּ הַתְּשִׁבִי לֵאמֹר בְּחֶלֶק
יִזְרְעָאֵל יֹאכְלוּ הַכְּלָבִים אֶת־בֶּשֶׂר אִיזָבֵל: ^{ליז} וְהִי־תֵה
וְהִי־תֵה נִבְלַת אִיזָבֵל כְּדָמָן עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה בְּחֶלֶק
יִזְרְעָאֵל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֹאמְרוּ זֹאת אִיזָבֵל: {ס}

her blood spattered the walls and the horses; and Jehu rode over her.

³⁴ He went in and ate and drank, then said, “See to this accursed woman, and bury her; after all, she was a king’s daughter.” ³⁵ But, when they went to bury her, they found nothing but her skull, feet, and hands.

³⁶ They came back and told Jehu, who said, “This is the word of Yahweh, which he spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite, “The dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel. ³⁷ The corpse of Jezebel will be like dung spread in the fields in the territory of Jezreel, so that no one will be able to say: This was Jezebel.””

³⁴ Despite Jehu’s brutal treatment of Jezebel, he does at least respect her heritage.

³⁵ The NRSV & NETB have ‘the palms of her hands’ in place of ‘hands’, here following the NJB.

³⁶ For Elijah’s prophecy, see 1K 21:23.

³⁷ The NJB, following the LXX, omits ‘in the territory of Jezreel’. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

מלכים ב פרק י

2 KINGS 10

א וּלְאַחָאָב שִׁבְעִים בָּנִים בְּשֶׁמְרוֹן וַיִּכְתֹּב יְהוּא סְפָרִים וַיִּשְׁלַח שֶׁמְרוֹן אֶל־שָׂרֵי יִזְרְעֵאל הַזְּקֵנִים וְאֶל־הָאֲמָנִים אַחָאָב לֵאמֹר: ב וְעַתָּה כָּבֹא הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה אֵלֵיכֶם וְאֶתְכֶם בְּנֵי אֲדֹנֵיכֶם וְאֶתְכֶם הֶרְכַּב וְהַסּוּסִים וְעִיר מִבָּצָר וְהַנֶּשֶׁק: ג וְרֵאִיתֶם הַטּוֹב וְהַיָּשָׁר מִבְּנֵי אֲדֹנֵיכֶם וְשִׁמַּתֶּם עַל־כִּסֵּא אָבִיו וְהִלַּחְמוּ עַל־בֵּית אֲדֹנֵיכֶם: ד וַיִּרְאוּ מְאֹד מְאֹד וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִנֵּה שְׁנֵי הַמְּלָכִים לֹא עָמְדוּ לְפָנָיו וְאִיךָ נִעְמַד אֲנַחְנוּ: ה וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲשֶׁר־עַל־הַבַּיִת וְאֲשֶׁר עַל־הָעִיר וְהַזְּקֵנִים וְהָאֲמָנִים אֶל־יְהוּא לֵאמֹר עֲבָדֶיךָ אֲנַחְנוּ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמַר אֵלֵינוּ נַעֲשֶׂה לֹא־נִמְלֹךְ אִישׁ הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ עֲשֵׂה: ו וַיִּכְתֹּב אֵלֵיהֶם סֵפֶר שְׁנִית לֵאמֹר אִם־לִי אַתֶּם וְלִקְלִי אַתֶּם שְׁמַעִים

¹ There were seventy sons of Ahab in Samaria. Jehu sent to Samaria, to the authorities of Jezreel, to the elders and the guardians of the children of Ahab. He said, ² “At this time, when this letter reaches you, you have your master’s sons with you; you also have chariots and horses, fortified towns, and weapons. ³ See which of your master’s sons is the most capable, put him on his father’s throne and fight for the dynasty of you master.” ⁴ They were utterly terrified. “We have seen how the two kings could not stand up to him,” they said, “so how could we do so?” ⁵ Consequently, the master of the palace, the governor of the city, the elders and the guardians sent word to Jehu, “We are your servants. We will do whatever you order us. We will not proclaim a king; act as you think best.” ⁶ Jehu then wrote them a second letter. He said, “If you are for me and if you are prepared to accept orders from me, take the heads

2 KINGS 10

- ¹ The 1st sentence refers to sons *and* grandsons of Ahab, but more particularly to the sons of Jehoram; ‘seventy’ is the conventional number used to indicate the entire offspring (Gen 46:27, Jg 8:30, 9:2, 12:14). The NJB, following the Vg (*ad optimates civitatis*), has ‘to the rulers of the city’ in place of ‘to the authorities of Jezreel’, here following the MT & NRSV.
- ² Literally translated, this verse reads, “And now when this letter comes to you – with you are the sons of your master and with you are chariots and horses and a fortified city and weapons.”
- ³ The word translated ‘most capable’ (וְהַיָּשָׁר) does not here have its usual moral/ethical nuance (‘most upright’) but a more neutral sense of ‘proper’.
- ⁴ Literally translated, ‘utterly terrified’ is ‘very, very afraid’; the word מְאֹד (‘very’) is repeated for emphasis.
- ⁵ The terms, ‘master of the palace’ and ‘governor of the city’, translate the phrases, ‘the one who was over the house’ and ‘the one who was over the city’.
- ⁶ The word רָאשֵׁי means both ‘leaders’ and ‘heads’: Jehu’s correspondents take grim advantage of the ambiguity (v. 7); perhaps they were intended to, though Jehu subsequently throws the responsibility on them (v. 9); cf. Elisha’s ambiguous prophecy to Hazael for Ben-Hadad (8:7–15).

קחו את־ראשי אנשי בני־אדניכם ובאו אלי כעת
 מחר יזרעאלה ובני המלך שבעים איש את־גדלי
 העיר מגדלים אותם: ויהי כבא הספר אליהם
 ויקחו את־בני המלך וישחטו שבעים איש וישמו
 את־ראשיהם בדודים וישלחו אליו יזרעאלה:
 ויבא המלאך ויגדלו לאמר הביאו ראשי בני־
 המלך ויאמר שימו אתם שני צברים פתח השער
 עד־הבקר: ויהי בבקר ויצא ויעמד ויאמר אל־
 כלהעם צדקים אתם הנה אני קשרתי על־אדני
 ואהרגהו ומי הכה את־כל־אלה: דעו אפוא כי
 לא יפל מדבר יהוה ארצה אשר־דבר יהוה על־
 בית אחאב ויהוה עשה את אשר דבר ביד עבדו
 אליהו: ויך יהוא את כל־הנשאים לבית־
 אחאב ביזרעאל וכל־גדליו ומידעיו וכהניו עד־
 בלתי השאיר־לו שריד: ויקם ויבא וילך שמרון
 הוא בית־עקד הרעים בדרך: ויהוא מצא את־
 אחי אחזיהו מלך־יהודה ויאמר מי אתם ויאמרו

of the men of your master's house and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow." Now there were seventy sons of the king being educated there by the leading men of the city.⁷ When this letter reached them, they took the king's sons and butchered all seventy of them, put their heads in baskets and sent them to him at Jezreel.⁸ The messenger came and told Jehu, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons." He replied, "Leave them in two heaps at the entrance to the gate until morning."⁹ When morning came, he went out and, standing, said to all the people, "You are innocent! I plotted against my master and killed him; but who killed all these?"¹⁰ Know, then, nothing will fail to be fulfilled of the oracle uttered by Yahweh against the family of Ahab: Yahweh has done what he said through his servant Elijah."¹¹ Jehu then killed everyone of the House of Ahab surviving in Jezreel, all his leading men, his close friends, his priests, until he left him no survivor.¹² Jehu then set out and went to Samaria. As he was on his way he met, at Beth-Eked of the Shepherds,¹³ the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah. "Who are you?" he asked. "We are brothers of Ahaziah," they answered, "and

⁷ The city leaders clearly interpret Jehu's letter in a literal sense.

⁸ The MT has 'told him' in place of 'told Jehu'; the referent of the pronoun is here added for clarity.

⁹ In place of 'you are innocent', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'be guiltless'.

¹⁰ Literally, this verse opens, "Know that there has not fallen from the word of Yahweh to the ground that which Yahweh spoke against the house of Ahab."

¹¹ Although Jehu claimed innocence of the killing of the 'seventy', he does not hesitate to finish the task of wiping out Ahab's legacy.

¹² The NJB includes the words 'he met ... Shepherds' as part of v. 13.

¹³ The word 'brothers' is used in the extended sense of 'relations'.

אָחִי אַחֲזִיָּהוּ וְאֲנָחְנוּ וְנִרְדּוּ לְשָׁלוֹם בְּנֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבְנֵי
הַגְּבִירָה: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר תַּפְשׂוּם חַיִּים וַיִּתְּפְשׂוּם חַיִּים
וַיִּשְׁחָטוּם אֶל-בְּוֹר בֵּית-עֶקֶד אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁנָיִם אִישׁ
וְלֹא-הִשְׁאִיר אִישׁ מֵהֶם: {ס}

^{טו} וַיֵּלֶךְ מִשָּׁם וַיִּמְצָא אֶת-יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן-רֵכָב לְקִרְאָתוֹ
וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הֲיֵשׁ אֶת-לִבְבְּךָ יֵשׁר כַּאֲשֶׁר
לְבַבִּי עִם-לִבְבְּךָ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָדָב יֵשׁ וַיֵּשׁ תְּנֵה אֶת-
יָדְךָ וַיִּתֵּן יָדוֹ וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ אֵלָיו אֶל-הַמֶּרְכָבָה: ^{טז} וַיֹּאמֶר
לְכֵה אִתִּי וְרֹאֵה בְּקִנְאָתִי לִיהוָה וַיִּרְכְּבוּ אֹתוֹ
בְּרֵכָבוֹ: ^{יז} וַיָּבֵא שְׁמֵרוֹן וַיִּךְ אֶת-כָּל-הַנְּשֹׂאָרִים
לְאַחָאָב בְּשְׁמֵרוֹן עַד-הַשְּׂמֹדוֹ כַּדָּבָר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר אֶל-אֱלֹהֵיוֹ: {פ}

^{יח} וַיִּקְבֹּץ יְהוָה אֶת-כָּל-הָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אַחָאָב
עֲבַד אֶת-הַבַּעַל מֵעַט יְהוָה יַעֲבֹדְנוּ הַרְבֵּה:
^{יט} וְעַתָּה כָּל-נְבִיאֵי הַבַּעַל כָּל-עֲבָדָיו וְכָל-כַּהֲנָיו
קְרִאוּ אֵלַי אִישׁ אֶל-יִפְקֹד בִּי זָבַח גְּדוּל לִי לְבַעַל

we are going down to pay our respects to the sons of the king and the sons of the queen.” ¹⁴ “Take them alive,” he said. They took them alive, and he slaughtered them at the cistern of Beth-Eked, forty-two of them; he did not spare even one.

¹⁵ Leaving there, he came upon Jehonadab son of Rechab who was on us way to meet him. He greeted him and said, “Is your heart true to mine, as my heart is to yours?” Jehonadab replied, “Yes.” “If so,” Jehu said, “give me your hand.” Jehonadab gave him his hand, and Jehu took him up beside him in his chariot. ¹⁶ “Come with me,” he said, “and witness my zeal for Yahweh,” and drove him on in his chariot. ¹⁷ When he entered Samaria, he killed all the survivors of Ahab’s family in Samaria; he wiped it out, as Yahweh had told Elijah it would happen.

¹⁸ Then Jehu assembled all the people and said, “Ahab offered Baal small service but Jehu will offer much more. ¹⁹ Now call me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants and all his priests; let none be missing: I have a great sacrifice to offer Baal. If anyone is missing, he shall not live.” But

¹⁴ In place of ‘cistern’, here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has ‘pit’.

¹⁵ ‘Is your heart true to mine’ follows the LXX (*Ei ἔστιν καρδιά σου μετὰ καρδιάς μου εὐθεῖα*); the MT is uncertain.

¹⁶ Jehonadab son of Rechab was an ardent Yahwist and had imposed the simple dessert regime on his clan (Jr 35:1-11, 1Ch 2:55); it was natural for him the support Jehu, but this episode, like the preceding, is certainly misplaced.

¹⁷ Literally translated, this verse ends, “according to the word of Yahweh, which he spoke to Elijah.”

¹⁸ An alternative translation for ‘offered ... service’ is ‘worshipped’.

¹⁹ The NJB omits ‘all his servants’. The NJB opens the last sentence (here following the NRSV) with, “This was a trick on Jehu’s part.”

כָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִפְקֹד לֹא יַחִיה וַיְהוּא עֹשֶׂה בְּעֵקֶבָה
לְמַעַן הָאֲבִיד אֶת-עַבְדֵי הַבַּעַל: ^כ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּא
קִדְּשׁוּ עֲצָרָה לַבַּעַל וַיִּקְרְאוּ: ^{כא} וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוּא בְּכָל-
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל-עַבְדֵי הַבַּעַל וְלֹא-נִשְׂאָר אִישׁ
אֲשֶׁר לֹא-בָא וַיָּבֹאוּ בֵּית הַבַּעַל וַיְמַלֵּא בֵּית-הַבַּעַל
פֶּה לְפִה: ^{כב} וַיֹּאמֶר לְאִשָּׁר עַל-הַמִּלְתָּחָה הוֹצֵא
לְבוּשׁ לְכָל עַבְדֵי הַבַּעַל וַיֵּצֵא לָהֶם הַמְּלָבוּשׁ:
^{כג} וַיָּבֹא יְהוּא וַיהוֹנָדָב בֶּן-רֵכָב בֵּית הַבַּעַל וַיֹּאמֶר
לְעַבְדֵי הַבַּעַל חֲפְּשׁוּ וּרְאוּ פְּנֵי-יֵשׁ-פֶה עִמָּכֶם
מִעַבְדֵי יְהוָה כִּי אִם-עַבְדֵי הַבַּעַל לְבַדָּם: ^{כד} וַיָּבֹאוּ
לַעֲשׂוֹת זְבָחִים וְעֹלוֹת וַיְהוּא שָׁם-לוֹ בַּחוּץ שְׂמֹנִים
אִישׁ וַיֹּאמֶר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-יִמְלֹט מִן-הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר
אֲנִי מֵבִיא עַל-יְדֵיכֶם נִפְשׁוֹ תַּחַת נַפְשׁוֹ:
^{כה} וַיְהִי כְּכַלְתּוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת הָעֹלָה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּא לְרָצִים
וּלְשָׁלְשִׁים בָּאוּ הַכּוּם אִישׁ אֶל-יָצֵא וַיָּכּוּם לְפִי-

Jehu was acting with cunning to destroy the servants of Baal. ²⁰ “Sanctify a solemn assembly for Baal,” he decreed; so, they proclaimed it. ²¹ Jehu sent messengers throughout Israel, and all the devotees of Baal arrived, so that there was no one left who did not attend. They packed into the temple of Baal until it was full from wall to wall. ²² Jehu then said to the keeper of the wardrobe, “Bring out robes for all the devotees of Baal;” he brought out the robes for them. ²³ Jehu then went into the temple of Baal with Jehonadab son of Rechab and said to the devotees of Baal, “Make quite sure there are no servants of Yahweh in here with you, only servants of Baal.” ²⁴ They then proceeded to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had stationed eighty of his men outside, saying, “If any of you lets anyone of those I am handing over to you escape, his life will pay for the life of the other.”

²⁵ When he had finished offering the holocaust, he gave the order to the guards and squires: “Go in, strike them down! Let no one out!” The

²⁰ In place of ‘sanctify a solemn assembly’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘summon a sacred family’.

²¹ The literal translation of ‘wall to wall’ is ‘mouth to mouth’.

²² The change of clothing was a purification observance before participating in public worship, attested among the Phoenicians and pre-Islamic Arabs (see Gn 35:2).

²³ The literal translation of ‘make quite sure’ is ‘search carefully and observe’.

²⁴ The NJB, following the LXX (εἰσῆλθε), opens with ‘he proceeded’ for ‘they proceeded’; the MT text spares Jehu’s reputation for orthodox Yahwism.

²⁵ The text of the latter part of the verse is obscure; the NJB reads, “The guards and equerries went in, putting everyone to the sword all the way to the sanctuary of Baal’s temple.” In slaughtering the prophets of Baal, with his worshippers and priests, Jehu was following in the footsteps of Elijah (compare 1K 18:40); a later prophet condemns this butchery (Ho 1:4–5).

חָרַב וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ הַרְצִים וְהַשְּׁלֵשִׁים וַיִּלְכוּ עַד-עִיר
 בֵּית-הַבַּעַל: כִּי וַיֵּצְאוּ אֶת-מַצֵּבֹת בֵּית-הַבַּעַל
 וַיִּשְׂרְפוּהָ: כִּי וַיִּתְּצוּ אֶת מַצֵּבַת הַבַּעַל וַיִּתְּצוּ אֶת-
 בֵּית הַבַּעַל וַיִּשְׁמְהוּ לַמַּחְרָאוֹת לְמוֹצָאוֹת עַד-
 הַיּוֹם: כִּי וַיִּשְׁמַד יְהוָה אֶת-הַבַּעַל מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: כִּסְרָק
 חֲטָאֵי יִרְבְּעַם בֶּן-נִבְט אֲשֶׁר הַחֲטִיא אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל
 לֹא-סָר יְהוָה מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם עַגְלֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בֵּית-אֵל
 וְאֲשֶׁר בְּדָן: {פ}

ל וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-יְהוָה יֵעַן אֲשֶׁר-הֵטִיבְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת
 הַיֵּשֶׁר בְּעֵינַי כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר בִּלְבָבִי עָשִׂיתָ לְבֵית אַחָב
 בְּנֵי רַבְעִים יֵשְׁבוּ לָךְ עַל-כִּסֵּא יִשְׂרָאֵל: לֹא וַיְהוָה
 לֹא שָׁמַר לְלֶכֶת בְּתוֹרַת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל-
 לְבָבוֹ לֹא סָר מֵעַל חֲטָאוֹת יִרְבְּעַם אֲשֶׁר הַחֲטִיא
 אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל: לֵב בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם הִחֵל יְהוָה לְקַצּוֹת
 בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּכֶם חֲזָאֵל בְּכָל-גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל: לֵב מֶן-

guards and equerries went in, putting everyone to the sword and throwing them out, and went all the way to the city of Baal's temple.

²⁶ They took the sacred pole out of the temple of Baal and burned it.

²⁷ They demolished the altar of Baal, and demolished the temple of Baal too, making it into latrines, which it still is today. ²⁸ Thus, Jehu wiped out Baal from Israel. ²⁹ Even so, Jehu did not give up the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel, the golden calves of Bethel and Dan.

³⁰ Yahweh said to Jehu, "Since you have done properly what was pleasing in my sight, and have achieved all I set my heart on against Ahab's family, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel down to the fourth generation." ³¹ However, Jehu did not follow the law of Yahweh, the God of Israel, faithfully and wholeheartedly: he did not give up the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel. ³² At that time, Yahweh began to whittle Israel down, and Hazael defeated the Israelites

²⁶ 'Sacred pole' is a conjectural translation (see 1K 16:33) for 'pillar' (the cultic stele – but this was stone and would be difficult to burn).

²⁷ In place of 'latrines', here following the *Qere*, (לְמוֹצָאוֹת), the *Ketiv* has 'places to defecate' (לַמַּחְרָאוֹת); the gloss is probably euphemistic.

²⁸ For this verse, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* reads, "Thus, Jehu rid Israel of Baal."

²⁹ This verse gives the author's own verdict; the source he was following in the preceding narratives gave praise (v. 30) to Jehu's sincere, if brutal, zeal for Yahweh. By wiping out Baal's devotees, Jehu probably also intended to eliminate any remaining support for the dynasty of Ahab.

³⁰ Jehu ruled over Israel approximately 841(2)–814(5) BCE; four of his descendants (Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Zechariah) ruled from approximately 814(5)–746(53) BCE. The dynasty came to an end when Shallum assassinated Zechariah in (15:8–12).

³¹ The literal translation of 'give up' is 'turn aside from'.

³² On the successes of Hazael against Israel, see the prediction in 8:12.

הִירְדָן מִזְרַח הַשָּׁמֶשׁ אֶת כָּל־אֶרֶץ הַגִּלְעָד הַגְּדִי
וְהָרְאוּבֵנִי וְהַמָּנַשִּׁי מֵעַרְעַר אֲשֶׁר־עַל־נְחַל אַרְנֹן
וְהַגִּלְעָד וְהַבָּשָׁן: ^{לד} וְיֵתֵר דְּבָרֵי יְהוּא וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה וְכָל־גְּבוּרָתוֹ הַלְּוֹאֵהֶם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר
דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{לה} וַיִּשְׁכַּב יְהוּא עִם־
אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ בְּשֹׁמְרוֹן וַיִּמְלֹךְ יְהוֹאָחָז בְּנוֹ
תַּחְתָּיו: ^{לו} וְהַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר מָלַךְ יְהוּא עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
עֶשְׂרִים־וּשְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנָה בְּשֹׁמְרוֹן: {פ}

throughout the territory ³³ from the Jordan eastwards: all the land of Gilead, of the Gadites, of the Reubenites and of the Manassehites, from Aroer, which is by the Wadi Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan. ³⁴ The rest of the history of Jehu, his entire career, his prowess, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? ³⁵ Then he slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria; his son Jehoahaz succeeded him. ³⁶ Jehu's reign over Israel in Samaria lasted twenty-eight years.

³³ Thus, the Israelites lost all their Transjordanian territory. It was probably during this time that Moab, south of the Arnon, also attacked Israel again and won final freedom from vassalage, as related on the Moabite Stone (see #3:4).

³⁴ The 'Annals of the Kings of Israel' are mentioned 17 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

³⁵ A more literal translation of 'slept' is 'lay down'.

³⁶ Jehu reigned 841–814 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 842–815 BCE according to W.F Albright.

מלכים ב פרק יא

א ועתֹלִיָּה אִם אַחֲזִיָּהּ וּרְאֵתָהּ רָאֵתָהּ כִּי מֵת בְּנָהּ וַתִּקָּם וַתֵּאבֵד אֶת כָּל־זֶרַע הַמַּמְלָכָה: ב וַתִּקַּח יְהוֹשָׁבֵעַ בַּת־הַמֶּלֶךְ־יֹרָם אַחֹת אַחֲזִיָּהּ אֶת־יֹאֵשׁ בֶּן־אַחֲזִיָּהּ וַתִּגְנֹב אֹתוֹ מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּמוֹתָתִים הַמוֹמְתִים אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־מִינְקָתוֹ בַּחֲדָר הַמְּטוֹת וַיִּסְתְּרוּ אֹתוֹ מִפְּנֵי עֲתֻלְיָהּ וְלֹא הוּמָת: ג וַיְהִי אֵתָהּ בַּיַּת יְהוָה מִתְּחִבָּא שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים וַעֲתֻלְיָה מְלָכָה עַל־הָאָרֶץ: {פ}

ד וּבִשְׁנַת הַשְּׁבִיעִית שָׁלַח יְהוֹיָדָע וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמַּאֲיוֹת הַמְּאֹזֹת לַכְּרִי וְלַרְצִים וַיָּבֵא אֹתָם אֵלָיו בַּיַּת יְהוָה וַיִּכְרַת לָהֶם בְּרִית וַיִּשְׁבַּע אֹתָם בְּבַיַּת יְהוָה וַיֵּרָא אֹתָם אֶת־בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ: ה וַיֹּצִיֵם לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן הַשְּׁלִישִׁית מִכֶּם בְּאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת

2 KINGS 11

¹ Now, when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah learned that her son was dead, she got up and did away with all the royal family. ² But Jehosheba, King Joram's daughter, Ahaziah's sister, took Jehoash, her brother's son, from among the sons of the king who were being murdered, and put him with his nurse in the sleeping quarters; in this way, she hid him from Athaliah, and he was not put to death. ³ He stayed with her for six years, hidden in the Temple of Yahweh, while Athaliah governed the country.

⁴ In the seventh year, Jehoiada sent for the captains of hundreds of the Carians and of the guards, and had them come to him in the Temple of Yahweh. He made a pact, put them on oath in the Temple of Yahweh, and showed them the king's son. ⁵ He commanded them, "This is what you must do: one third of you, those who are off duty on the Sabbath,

2 KINGS 11

¹ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

² The *NJB* has 'Jehoram' in place of 'Joram', here following the *MT*, *NRSV* & *NETB*. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

³ Athaliah reigned 841–835 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 842–837 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

⁴ 'Jehoiada' was chief priest in Jerusalem. The 'Carians' (the *NRSV* has 'Carites') were mercenaries from Asia Minor; they were different from the Cherethites, who were not mentioned after the reign of Solomon (1K 1:38). The *NJB*, following the *LXX*, lacks 'in the Temple of Yahweh'. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁵ On weekdays, it seems, one-third of the guard was posted at the Temple, two-thirds at the palace; on the Sabbath, the proportion was reversed. Jehoiada takes advantage of a Sabbath: the two-thirds go on duty at the Temple as usual but he keeps the other third there too.

וְשָׁמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ: ^ו וְהַשְּׁלֵשִׁית בְּשַׁעַר
 סוּר וְהַשְּׁלֵשִׁית בְּשַׁעַר אַחֲרֵי הָרָצִים וְשָׁמְרָתָם אֶת־
 מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַבַּיִת מִסָּח: ^ז וְשֵׁנֵי הַיְדוּת בְּכֶם כָּל יִצְאֵי
 הַשְּׁבֵת וְשָׁמְרוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת בַּיִת־יְהוָה אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ:
^ח וְהַקִּפְתֶּם עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ סָבִיב אִישׁ וְכַלְיוּ בְיָדוֹ וְהִבֵּא
 אֶל־הַשְּׂדֵרוֹת יוֹמָת וְהָיוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּצֵאתוֹ
 וּבְבֹאוֹ: ^ט וַיַּעֲשׂוּ שָׂרֵי הַמַּאֲוֹת הַמְּאֹזֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־
 צִוָּה יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ אֶת־אֲנָשָׁיו בְּאֵי
 הַשְּׁבֵת עִם יִצְאֵי הַשְּׁבֵת וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן:
^י וַיִּתֵּן הַכֹּהֵן לְשָׂרֵי הַמַּאֲוֹת הַמְּאֹזֹת אֶת־הַחֲנִית
 וְאֶת־הַשְּׁלֵטִים אֲשֶׁר לַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד אֲשֶׁר בְּבַיִת יְהוָה:
^{יא} וַיַּעֲמְדוּ הָרָצִים אִישׁ וְכַלְיוּ בְיָדוֹ מִכְּתָף הַבַּיִת
 הַיְמָנִית עַד־כְּתָף הַבַּיִת הַשְּׂמָאלִית לַמְּזֻבָּח וּלְבַיִת
 עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ סָבִיב: ^{יב} וַיּוֹצֵא אֶת־בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו
 אֶת־הַנֶּזֶר וְאֶת־הָעֵדוּת וַיִּמְלְכוּ אֹתוֹ וַיִּמְשַׁחֻהוּ
 וַיִּכְוֹכְף וַיֹּאמְרוּ יְחִי הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס}

will guard the royal palace, ⁶ (another third being at the gate Sur and a
 third at the gate behind the guards) ⁷ while the other two-thirds of you,
 who guard the Temple of Yahweh at the king's side, ⁸ are to surround
 the king, each with weapons in hand; and whoever approaches your
 ranks is to be killed. Stay with the king wherever he comes or goes."
⁹ The captains of hundreds did all Jehoiada the priest had ordered; they
 brought their men, those coming off duty on the Sabbath together with
 those mounting guard on the Sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.
¹⁰ The priest equipped the captains of hundreds with King David's
 spears and shields, which were in the Temple of Yahweh. ¹¹ The guards
 formed up, each with weapon in hand, from the south corner to the
 north corner of the Temple, around the altar and the Temple, to guard
 the king on every side. ¹² Jehoiada brought out the king's son, crowned
 him and gave him a copy of the Covenant; they proclaimed him king
 and anointed him. They clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live
 the king!"

⁶ The NJB lacks this verse.

⁷ The NJB and NRSV omit 'at the king's side'.

⁸ Literally translated, this verse ends, "and be with the king in his going out and in his coming in."

⁹ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁰ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹¹ The NJB lacks 'to guard the king on every side'.

¹² The NRSV lacks 'a copy of'. At the moment of their anointing, the kings of Judah were handed a copy of the Covenant made between Yahweh and the Davidic dynasty. The word 'covenant' may refer to a book or document, or it may be an error for 'armlet', a royal symbol in 2S 1:10.

^ג וַתִּשְׁמַע עֲתָלְיָה אֶת־קוֹל הַרְצִין הָעָם וַתָּבֵא אֶל־
הָעָם בַּיִת יְהוָה: ^ד וַתֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה הַמֶּלֶךְ עֹמֵד עַל־
הָעַמּוּד בְּמִשְׁפַּט וְהַשָּׂרִים וְהַחֲצָצְרוֹת אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְכָל־עַם הָאָרֶץ שָׂמַח וַתִּקַּע בַּחֲצָצְרוֹת וַתִּקְרַע
עֲתָלְיָה אֶת־בְּגָדֶיהָ וַתִּקְרָא קָשָׁר קָשָׁר: ^{טו} וַיֵּצֵאוּ
יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמַּאֲוֹת וְהַמִּבְּרָה
הַחִיל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם הוֹצִיאוּ אֹתָהּ אֶל־מִבֵּית
לְשֹׁדֶרֶת וְהִבֵּא אַחֲרֶיהָ הַמֶּת בַּחֲרָב כִּי אָמַר הַכֹּהֵן
אֶל־תּוֹמַת בַּיִת יְהוָה: ^{טז} וַיִּשְׁמוּ לָהּ יָדַיִם וַתָּבוֹא
דְּרֹךְ־מְבוֹא הַסּוּסִים בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתּוֹמַת שָׁם: {ס}
^{יז} וַיִּכְרַת יְהוֹיָדָע אֶת־הַבְּרִית בֵּין יְהוָה וּבֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ
וּבֵין הָעָם לְהִיְוֹת לְעָם לַיהוָה וּבֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבֵין הָעָם:
^{יח} וַיָּבֵאוּ כָל־עַם הָאָרֶץ בֵּית־הַבַּעַל וַיִּתְּצוּהוּ אֶת־
מִזְבְּחֹתָיו וְאֶת־צִלְמֹתָיו שִׁבְרוּ הַיֵּטֵב וְאֵת מִתָּן כָּהֵן

¹³ Athaliah, on hearing the shouts of the guards and people, made for the Temple of Yahweh where the people were. ¹⁴ When she saw the king standing there beside the pillar, as the custom was, with the captains and the trumpeters at the king's side, and all the country people rejoicing and shouting trumpets, Athaliah tore her garments and shouted, "Treason, treason!" ¹⁵ Then Jehoiada the priest gave the order to the army officers: "Take her outside the precincts and put to death anyone who follows her." "For," the priest had reasoned, "she must not be put to death in the Temple of Yahweh." ¹⁶ So, they seized her; she reached the horses' entry to the palace, and she was killed there.

¹⁷ Jehoiada made a covenant between Yahweh and the king and people, that they should be Yahweh's people; also between the king and the people. ¹⁸ All the people of the country then went to the temple of Baal and demolished it; they smashed his altars and his images and killed

¹³ The NJB omits 'guards and'; the MT reads 'the guards, the people', with some arguing that 'people' (הָעָם) is a scribal error anticipating the reference to 'the people' later in the verse, and in v. 14.

¹⁴ The 'pillar' was in front of the Temple (see 1K 7:15-22). Much debated is the social and political significance of 'all the country people' (see also 23:35, 25:19); perhaps they were free persons who had remained loyal to the old Yahwistic traditions.

¹⁵ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁶ The literal translation of 'seized' is 'laid hands on'.

¹⁷ The last clause is probably an addition; it is absent in 2Ch 23:16. Even so, the existence of a pact between king and people is attested by 1S 10:25 (Saul), 2S 5:3 (David) and 1K 12:1ff (Rehoboam).

¹⁸ This revolution is parallel to that of Jehu in the Northern Kingdom (10:18-28). However, here it has the support of the 'people of the country', the Judaeen populace at large who were loyal to the Yahwist tradition, as opposed to the capital, which had been infected by foreign influence.

הַבַּעַל הַרְגוּ לִפְנֵי הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת וַיִּשֶׁם הַפֶּהוּן פְּקֻדַת
עַל־בֵּית יְהוָה: ^{יט} וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמְּאֹזֹת וְאֶת־
הַכָּרִי וְאֶת־הַרְצִים וְאֶת־כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ וַיְרִידוּ אֶת־
הַמֶּלֶךְ מִבֵּית יְהוָה וַיָּבֹאוּ דֶרֶךְ־שַׁעַר הַרְצִים בֵּית
הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא הַמְּלָכִים: ^כ וַיִּשְׂמַח כָּל־עַם־
הָאָרֶץ וְהָעִיר שִׁקְטָה וְאֶת־עַתְלִיהוּ הַמִּיתוּ בַּחֲרָב
בֵּית מֶלֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ: {ס}

Mattan, priest of Baal, in front of the altars. The priest posted sentries to guard the Temple of Yahweh. ¹⁹ He then took the captains of hundreds, the Carians, the guards and all the country people and made them escort the king down from the Temple of Yahweh and through the Gate of the Guards into the palace. Jehoash took his seat on the throne of the kings. ²⁰ All the country people were delighted, and the city made no move. They put Athaliah to death in the royal palace.

¹⁹ A more literal translation of “Gate of the Guards” is “Gate of the Runners of the House of the King.”

²⁰ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

מלכים ב פרק יב

2 KINGS 12

א בן־שבע שנים יהואש במלכו: {פ} 1 Jehoash was seven years old when he came to the throne.

ב בשנת־שבע ליהוא מלך יהואש וארבעים שנה 2 Jehoash became king in the seventh year of Jehu; he reigned for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah, of Beersheba. 3 All his life, Jehoash did what Yahweh regards as right, because Jehoiada the priest instructed him. 4 The high places, however, were not abolished, and the people still offered sacrifices and incense on the high places. 5 Jehoash said to the priests, "All the money from the sacred dues brought to the Temple of Yahweh, the money from the census tax, and the money from voluntary offerings to the Temple 6 is to be accepted by the priests, from the treasurers, and the priests are to carry out all the repairs to the Temple as required."

ג ויעש יהואש הישר בעיני יהוה כל־ימיו אשר הורהו יהוידע הכהן: ד רק הבמות לא־סרו עוד העם מזבחים ומקטרים בבמות: ה ויאמר יהואש אל־הכהנים כל כסף הזה עובר איש כסף נפשות ערכו כל־כסף אשר יעלה על לב־איש להביא בית יהוה: ו יקחו להם הכהנים איש מאת מכרו והם יחזקו את־בדק הבית לכל אשר־ימצא שם בדק: {פ}

ז ויהי בשנת עשרים ושלש שנה למלך יהואש 7 Now, in the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, the priests had done no repairs to the Temple; 8 so, King Jehoash summoned Jehoiada the

2 KINGS 12

- 1 This verse is numbered 11:21 in the *NRSV* and most other English Bibles; other verses of this chapter are therein accordingly decremented.
- 2 Jehoash reigned 835–796 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 837–800 BCE according to W.F. Albright.
- 3 During the childhood of the king, the priest Jehoiada instructed him, being no doubt the real power behind the throne.
- 4 Yet again, an otherwise good king fails to eradicate the sacrificial offerings on the 'high places'.
- 5 The literal translation of 'the census tax' (as *NETB*) is 'the silver of passing over a man'; עובר ('passing over') probably refers to counting, suggesting a tax-related census. The meaning of 'voluntary offerings' (as *NRSV*) is uncertain but parallels in Lv 27 suggest personal vows.
- 6 The first of the new king's dispositions: payment for the repair of the Temple is to be made out of the revenues of the priesthood. The word here translated 'treasurers' (מכרו) occurs only in this passage; the *NRSV* has 'donors' and the *NJB* has 'people of their acquaintance'.
- 7 The literal translation of 'Temple' is 'house'.
- 8 On the word translated 'treasurers', see #6.

יְהוֹאָשׁ לִיהוֹיָדָע הִכְהֵן וּלְכֹהֲנִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם
מִדּוּעַ אֵינְכֶם מְחַזְקִים אֶת־בֵּדֶק הַבַּיִת וְעַתָּה אֵל־
תִּקְחוּ־כֶסֶף מֵאֵת מְכַרְיֶכֶם כִּי־לְבַדֶּק הַבַּיִת
תִּתְּנֶהוּ: ⁹ וַיֹּאֲתוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים לְבִלְתִּי קַחַת־כֶּסֶף מֵאֵת
הָעָם וּלְבִלְתִּי חַזֵּק אֶת־בֵּדֶק הַבַּיִת:

וַיִּקַּח יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן אֲרוֹן אֶחָד וַיִּקַּב חֵר בְּדַלְתּוֹ
וַיִּתֵּן אֹתוֹ אֶצְל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בִּימִין מִיְמִין בְּבוֹא־אִישׁ
בַּיִת יְהוָה וַנִּתְּנוּ־שָׁמָּה הַכֹּהֲנִים שְׁמַרְי הַסֹּף אֶת־
כָּל־הַכֶּסֶף הַמּוּבָא בַּיִת־יְהוָה: ¹⁰ וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹתָם כִּי־
רַב הַכֶּסֶף בְּאֲרוֹן וַיַּעַל סֹפֵר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל
וַיִּצְרוּ וַיִּמְנוּ אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף הַנִּמְצָא בַּיִת־יְהוָה: ¹¹ וַנִּתְּנוּ
אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף הַמֵּתָכֵן עַל־יְדֵי יָד עֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה
הַפְּקָדִים הַמִּפְקָדִים בַּיִת יְהוָה וַיּוֹצִיאוּהוּ לְחַרְשֵׁי
הָעֵץ וְלַבְּנִים הָעֹשִׂים בַּיִת יְהוָה: ¹² וְלַגְּדָרִים וְלַחֲצָבֵי
הָאֶבֶן וְלַקְּנוֹת עֵצִים וְאֲבָנֵי מַחְצָב לְחַזֵּק אֶת־בֵּדֶק
בַּיִת־יְהוָה וּלְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵא עַל־הַבַּיִת לְחֻזְקָה:
¹³ אֲדָּ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה בַּיִת יְהוָה סִפּוֹת כֶּסֶף מְזֻמְרוֹת

priest and the other priests. “Why are you not repairing the Temple?” he asked. “You are no longer to accept money from the treasurers but are to hand it over for the Temple repairs.” ⁹ The priests agreed to accept no money from the people and no longer to be responsible for repairs to the Temple.

¹⁰ And Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid and placed it beside the altar, to the right as you enter the Temple of Yahweh; in it, the priests who guarded the threshold put all the money that was given for the Temple of Yahweh. ¹¹ And, when they saw that there was a lot of money in the chest, the king’s secretary and High Priest would come and count the money that was found in the house of Yahweh and tie it up in bags. ¹² They would then pay this money over to the foremen attached to the Temple of Yahweh, and they paid it to carpenters and builders working on the Temple of Yahweh, ¹³ to masons and stonemasons, and on buying wood and dressed stone for making repairs to the Temple of Yahweh, and for all the costs of the Temple repairs. ¹⁴ But, for the Temple of Yahweh, no silver basins, or snuffers, or bowls,

⁹ Outside of this passage the verb יֵאָתוּ (*‘agreed’*) appears only in Gn 34:15–22.

¹⁰ The NJB, following the LXX (*ισμιβν*), has ‘pillar’ in place of ‘altar’. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹¹ The NJB ends this verse, “and they would melt down and reckon the money then in the Temple of Yahweh”.

¹² The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from explanations.

¹³ Literally translated, this verse ends, “and for all that which was going out concerning the house for repair.”

¹⁴ The NJB has ‘knives’ in place of ‘snuffers’, here following the NRSV, and NETB has ‘trimming shears’.

מִזְרְקוֹת חֲצָצְרוֹת כָּל-כְּלֵי כֶסֶף מִן-
הַכֶּסֶף הַמּוּבָא בֵּית-יְהוָה: ^{טו} כִּי-לַעֲשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה
יִתְּנֻהוּ וְחִזְקוּ-בּוֹ אֶת-בַּיִת יְהוָה: ^{טז} וְלֹא יִחְשְׁבוּ
אֶת-הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר יִתְּנוּ אֶת-הַכֶּסֶף עַל-יָדָם לַתָּת
לַעֲשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה כִּי בְּאִמְנָה הֵם עֹשִׂים: ^{יז} כֶּסֶף
אֲשֶׁם וְכֶסֶף חֲטָאוֹת לֹא יוּבָא בֵּית יְהוָה לְכַהֲנִים
יְהִיו: {פ}

^{יח} אִזְ יַעֲלֶה חֲזָאֵל מֶלֶךְ אַרָם וַיִּלָּחֶם עַל-גַּת וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ
וַיֵּשֶׁם חֲזָאֵל פָּנָיו לַעֲלֹת עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם: ^{יט} וַיִּקַּח
יְהוֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה אֶת כָּל-הַקְּדָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-
הִקְדִּישׁוּ יְהוֹשָׁפָט וַיהוֹרָם וְאַחֲזִיָּהוּ אֲבֹתָיו מִלְכֵי
יְהוּדָה וְאֶת-קְדָשָׁיו וְאֶת כָּל-הַזָּהָב הַנִּמְצָא
בְּאֲצֵרוֹת בַּיִת-יְהוָה וּבַיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלַח לְחֲזָאֵל
מֶלֶךְ אַרָם וַיַּעַל מֵעַל יְרוּשָׁלַם: ^כ וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי יוֹאָשׁ
וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַלּוֹאֲהֵם כְּתוּבִים עַל-סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי-
הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה: ^{כא} וַיִּקְמוּ עֲבָדָיו וַיִּקְשְׁרוּ-

or trumpets, or any gold or silver vessels were made from the money brought to the Temple of Yahweh; ¹⁵ for, it was given to the workmen who were repairing the Temple of Yahweh. ¹⁶ They did not ask an accounting from those into whose hands they delivered the money to pay out to the workmen, since they dealt honestly. ¹⁷ Money offered in expiation of an offence or of a sin was not given to the Temple of Yahweh; that was for the priests.

¹⁸ At that time, King Hazael of Aram went to war against Gath, and took it; he then prepared to attack Jerusalem. ¹⁹ King Jehoash of Judah took all the sacred items dedicated by his fathers, the kings of Judah, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, as well as his own sacred items, and all the gold to be found in the treasuries of the Temple of Yahweh and the royal palace; he sent it all to Hazael king of Aram. Then Hazael retired from Jerusalem. ²⁰ The rest of the history of Jehoash, his entire career, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ²¹ His officers rebelled and hatched a plot; they struck Jehoash

¹⁵ Throughout this section, the literal translation of 'Temple' is 'house'.

¹⁶ Literally translated, this verse reads, "And they did not conduct a reckoning of the men who gave the silver into their hand to give to the doers of the work, for in honesty they were working."

¹⁷ NETB places this entire verse in parentheses.

¹⁸ The literal translation of 'prepared to attack' is 'set his face to go up to'.

¹⁹ The MT does not include an object in the last sentence; 'it all' is supplied for clarity.

²⁰ The 'Annals of the Kings of Judah' are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings.

²¹ The NJB lacks 'on the way that goes down to Silla', having an ellipsis in its place.

קָשֶׁר וַיִּכּוּ אֶת־יֹאָשׁ בֵּית מֶלֶךְ הַיָּרְד סֵלָא:
כִּבֵּי וַיִּזְכֹּר בֶּן־שֹׁמֶר וַיְהוּזָבָד בֶּן־שֹׁמֶר | עַבְדָּיו
הִכְהוּ וַיָּמָת וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ עִם־אֲבֹתָיו בְּעִיר דָּוִד
וַיִּמְלֹךְ אַמְצִיָּה בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו: {פ}

down at Beth-Millo, on the way that goes down to Silla.²² It was Jozacar son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer who struck him down and killed him. They buried him with his fathers in the City of David; his son Amaziah succeeded him.

²² The literal translation of 'struck him down and killed him' is 'struck him down and he died'.

מלכים ב פרק יג

א בְּשַׁנַּת עֶשְׂרִים וּשְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנָה לְיוֹאָשׁ בֶּן־אֲחִזְיָהוּ
מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה מָלַךְ יְהוֹאָחָז בֶּן־יְהוּא עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּשִׁמְרוֹן שִׁבַע עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה: ב וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי
יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אַחַר חֲטָאת יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן־נִבַט אֲשֶׁר־
הֶחְטִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־סָר מִמֶּנָּה: ג וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף
יְהוָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְּנֵם בְּיַד חֲזָאֵל מֶלֶךְ־אַרָם וּבְיַד
בֶּן־הַדָּד בֶּן־חֲזָאֵל כָּל־הַיָּמִים: ד וַיַּחַל יְהוֹאָחָז אֶת־
פָּנָיו יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה כִּי רָאָה אֶת־לַחַץ
יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־לָחַץ אֹתָם מֶלֶךְ אַרָם: ה וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹשִׁיעַ וַיִּצְאֻהוּ מִתַּחַת יַד־אַרָם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בְּנֵי־
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֹהֲלֵיהֶם כַּתְּמוּל שְׁלֹשׁוֹם: ו אֲדָן לֹא־סָרוּ
מִחֲטָאת בֵּית־יִרְבְּעָם אֲשֶׁר־הֶחְטִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּהּ
הַלֵּךְ וְגַם הָאֲשֵׁרָה עִמָּדָה בְּשִׁמְרוֹן: ז כִּי לֹא הִשְׁאִיר
לְיְהוֹאָחָז עִם כִּי אִם־חֲמִשִּׁים פָּרָשִׁים וְעֶשְׂרֵה רֶכֶב
וְעֶשְׂרֵת אַלְפִים רַגְלֵי כִּי אֲבָדָם מֶלֶךְ אַרָם וַיִּשְׁמַם

2 KINGS 13

1 In the twenty-third year of Joash son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king of Israel in Samaria. He reigned for seventeen years. 2 He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and walked in the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel; he did not give them up. 3 And the anger of Yahweh blazed out against the Israelites and he delivered them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Aram and of Ben-Hadad son of Hazael. 4 But Jehoahaz tried to placate Yahweh, and Yahweh heard him, for he had seen the oppression of Israel; how the king of Aram oppressed them. 5 Therefore, Yahweh gave Israel a saviour who freed them from the grip of the Aramaeans, and the Israelites lived in their tents as in the past. 6 Nevertheless, they did not give up the sin into which the House of Jeroboam had led Israel; they persisted in it, and even the sacred pole remained in Samaria. 7 Yahweh left of the army of Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand foot soldiers. The king of Aram had destroyed them,

2 KINGS 13

- 1 Jehoahaz reigned 814–798 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 815–801 BCE according to W.F. Albright. ‘Joash’ is an alternative form of ‘Jehoash’.
- 2 The NJB lacks ‘son of Nebat’, here following the MT & NRSV.
- 3 The ‘Ben-Hadad’ mentioned herein is Ben-Hadad III, enemy of Jehoash of Israel (v. 25).
- 4 The literal translation of ‘tried to placate’ (here following the NJB) is ‘appeased the face of’.
- 5 The liberator was not Jehoahaz nor, despite v. 25, his son Jehoash, but Jeroboam II (see 14:27, on which the editor who added vv. 4–5 drew).
- 6 The NJB, following the Tg and Peshitta, omits ‘the House of’. Another reading for ‘sacred pole’ is ‘Asherah’, here a symbol of the goddess.
- 7 This verse follows on from v. 3; vv. 4–6 are later additions.

כַּעֲפַר לָדָשׁ: ^ח וְיִתֵּר דְּבָרֵי יְהוֹאָחָז וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וּגְבוּרָתוֹ הַלּוֹאֲהֵם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים
לְמַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^ט וַיִּשְׁכַּב יְהוֹאָחָז עִם־אֲבֹתָיו
וַיִּקְבְּרוּהוּ בְּשֹׁמְרוֹן וַיִּמְלֹךְ יוֹאָשׁ בְּנֹו תַחְתָּיו: {פ}

בְּשָׁנַת שְׁלֹשִׁים וְשֶׁבַע שָׁנָה לְיוֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה
מֶלֶךְ יְהוֹאָשׁ בֶּן־יְהוֹאָחָז עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשֹׁמְרוֹן שָׁשׁ
עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה: ^{יא} וַיַּעַשׂה הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לֹא סָר
מִכָּל־חַטָּאוֹת יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן־נֶבֶט אֲשֶׁר־הִחֲטִיא אֶת־
יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּהּ הַלֵּךְ: ^{יב} וְיִתֵּר דְּבָרֵי יוֹאָשׁ וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה וּגְבוּרָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר נִלְחַם עִם אֲמַצְיָה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה
הַלּוֹאֲהֵם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{יג} וַיִּשְׁכַּב יוֹאָשׁ עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּרְבְּעָם יֹשֵׁב
עַל־כִּסְאוֹ וַיִּקְבֹּר יוֹאָשׁ בְּשֹׁמְרוֹן עִם מַלְכֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

וַאֲלִישָׁע חָלָה אֶת־חֲלִיוֹ אֲשֶׁר יָמוּת בּוֹ וַיֵּרֶד אֵלָיו
יֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבֶדַע עַל־פָּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי | אָבִי

making them like the dust at threshing. ⁸ The rest of the history of Jehoahaz, his entire career, his prowess, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? ⁹ Then Jehoahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria; his son Joash succeeded him.

¹⁰ In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, began to reign over Israel in Samaria. He reigned for sixteen years. ¹¹ He also did what is evil in the sight of Yahweh, he did not turn away from all the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel, but he walked in them. ¹² Now, the rest of the history of Joash, all his accomplishments, and the prowess with which he waged war against Amaziah king of Judah, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? ¹³ Then Joash slept with his fathers, and Jeroboam ascended his throne. Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

¹⁴ Now, when Elisha had fallen ill of the illness he was to die of, Joash king of Israel went down to him and, shedding tears over him, said, “My

⁸ The ‘Annals of the Kings of Israel’ are mentioned 17 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King’s reign.

⁹ ‘Joash’ is an alternative form of the name, ‘Jehoash’.

¹⁰ Jehoash reigned 798–783 BCE (according to notes in the NJB).

¹¹ The NJB has ‘sin’ in place of ‘sins’, here following the NRSV.

¹² See #8 (and elsewhere) on the ‘Annals of the Kings of Israel’.

¹³ This is Jeroboam II, to be distinguished from Jeroboam I, mentioned in v. 11.

¹⁴ Note the friendly relations between the prophet and the grandson of Jehu; on the words of Joash, see #2:12.

רֶכֶב יִשְׂרָאֵל וּפָרָשָׁיו: ^{טו} וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֵלִישָׁע קַח
 קֶשֶׁת וְחֲצָיִם וַיִּקַּח אֵלָיו קֶשֶׁת וְחֲצָיִם: ^{טז} וַיֹּאמְרוּ
 לְמֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲרֵבב יָדָךְ עַל־הַקֶּשֶׁת וַיִּרְכַּב יָדוֹ
 וַיִּשֶׂם אֵלִישָׁע יָדָיו עַל־יְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: ^{יז} וַיֹּאמֶר פָּתַח
 הַחֲלוֹן קִדְמָה וַיִּפְתַּח וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלִישָׁע יְרֵה וַיִּזֹּר
 וַיֹּאמֶר חֲץ־תְּשׁוּעָה לִיהוֹה וְחֲץ תְּשׁוּעָה בְּאַרְם
 וְהִבִּיתָ אֶת־אַרְם בְּאַפְּךָ עַד־כְּלָה: ^{יח} וַיֹּאמֶר קַח
 הַחֲצָיִם וַיִּקַּח וַיֹּאמֶר לְמֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל הִד־אַרְצָה וַיִּדֹ
 שְׁלֹשׁ־פְּעָמִים וַיַּעֲמֵד: ^{יט} וַיִּקְצַף עָלָיו אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים
 וַיֹּאמֶר לְהַכּוֹת חֲמֵשׁ אוֹ־שֵׁשׁ פְּעָמִים אֲזִי הִבִּיתָ
 אֶת־אַרְם עַד־כְּלָה וְעַתָּה שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים תַּכֶּה אֶת־
 אַרְם: {פ}

^כ וַיָּמָת אֵלִישָׁע וַיִּקְבְּרוּהוּ וּגְדוּדֵי מוֹאָב יָבִאוּ בְּאַרְץ
 בְּאֵ שָׁנָה: ^{כא} וַיְהִי הֵם | קְבָרִים אִישׁ וְהִנֵּה רָאוּ אֶת־
 הַגְּדוּד וַיִּשְׁלִיכוּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ בְּקִבְרֵי אֵלִישָׁע וַיִּלְדֹּ

father, my father! Chariot of Israel and its chargers!" ¹⁵ Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and arrows;" and he sent for a bow and some arrows. ¹⁶ Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Draw the bow;" and he drew it. Elisha put his hands over the hands of the king, ¹⁷ then he said, "Open the window towards the east," and he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Arrow of victory over Aram! You will defeat Aram at Aphek completely." ¹⁸ Elisha said, "Take the arrows;" and he took them. Then he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground;" and he struck it three times, and then stopped. ¹⁹ At this, the man of God grew angry with him. "You should have struck five or six times," he said, "and you would have beaten Aram completely; now you will only beat Aram three times."

²⁰ Elisha died and they buried him. Now, bands of Moabites used to invade the land every year. ²¹ As a man was being buried, a marauding band was seen and the man was thrown into the grave of Elisha; as soon

¹⁵ The NJB has 'bring' in place of 'take', here following the NRSV.

¹⁶ The NJB, following the LXX, lacks 'of Israel' (as also in v. 18).

¹⁷ By laying his hands on the king, Elisha bestows divine strength on him. The flight of the arrow is eastward, against the Aramaeans; the prophet's gesture prefigures the event and thus brings it about (see #Jr 18:1).

¹⁸ Striking the ground 'three times' refers to the three victories of v. 25.

¹⁹ The NJB has 'half a dozen' in place of 'five or six', here following the MT & NRSV.

²⁰ For 'every year', the NRSV has 'in the spring of the year'; the MT is corrupt (בָּא שָׁנָה) – literally, 'it came, year').

²¹ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Some people happened to be carrying a man out for burial; at the sight of one of these bands, they flung the man into the tomb of Elisha and made off. The man had no sooner touched the bones of Elisha than he came to life and stood up on his feet."

וַיִּגַע הָאִישׁ בְּעַצְמוֹת אֵלִישָׁע וַיְחִי וַיִּקָּם עַל-
רַגְלָיו: {פ}

as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he came to life and stood on his feet.

כַּבֵּן חֲזַאֵל מֶלֶךְ אֲרָם לָחַץ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל יְמֵי
יְהוֹאָחָז: כִּי וַיִּחַן יְהוָה אֹתָם וַיִּרְחַמֵם וַיִּפֶן אֲלֵיהֶם
לְמַעַן בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וַיַּעֲקֹב וְלֹא אָבָה
הַשְׁחִיתָם וְלֹא־הִשְׁלִיכֶם מֵעַל־פָּנָיו עַד־עַתָּה:
כִּד וַיָּמָת חֲזַאֵל מֶלֶךְ־אֲרָם וַיִּמְלֹךְ בֶּן־הַדָּד בְּנוֹ
תַּחְתָּיו: כִּה וַיָּשָׁב יְהוֹאָשׁ בֶּן־יְהוֹאָחָז וַיִּקַּח אֶת־
הָעָרִים מִיַּד בֶּן־הַדָּד בֶּן־חֲזַאֵל אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִיַּד
יְהוֹאָחָז אָבִיו בַּמְלָחְמָה שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים הִכְהוּ יוֹאָשׁ
וַיָּשָׁב אֶת־עָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

²² Hazael king of Aram had oppressed the Israelites through all the days of Jehoahaz, ²³ but Yahweh was kind and took pity on them. Because of the covenant he had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he relented towards them; he had no wish to destroy them, he did not cast them out of his presence until now. ²⁴ Hazael king of Aram died, and his son Ben-Hadad succeeded him. ²⁵ Jehoash son of Jehoahaz recaptured from Ben-Hadad son of Hazael the towns that Hazael had seized from his father Jehoahaz by force of arms. Joash defeated him three times and recovered the Israelite towns.

²² In place of 'through all the days', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'throughout the lifetime'.

²³ The NJB, following the LXX, omits 'until now', here following the MT & NRSV. This verse is a theological anticipation of vv. 24–25, added by an editor who, though friendly to Israel, yet knew that in the end the kingdom had fallen.

²⁴ This 'Ben-Hadad', as in v. 3, is the 3rd of that name (or possibly the 4th) mentioned in this section (compare 1K 15:18–21, 20:1, 2K 6:24, 8:7).

²⁵ The literal translation of 'recaptured from' is 'took back from the hand of'.

מלכים ב פרק יד

א *בשנת שתים ליואש בן-יואחז מלך ישראל מלך
אמציֹהוּ בן-יואש מלך יהודה: ב בן-עשרים וחמש
שנה היה במלכו ועשרים ותשע שנה מלך
בירושלם ושם אמו יהועדין יהועדין מן-ירושלם:
ג ויעש הישר בעיני יהוה רק לא כדוד אביו ככל
אשר-עשה יואש אביו עשה: ד רק הבמות לא-
סרו עוד העם מזבחים ומקטרים בבמות: ה ויהי
כאשר חזקה הממלכה בידו ויך את-עבדיו
המכים את-המלך אביו: ו ואת-בני המכים לא
המית ככתוב בספר-תורת משה אשר-צוה יהוה
לאמר לא-יומתו אבות על-בנים ובנים לא-יומתו
על-אבות כי אם-איש בחטאו ימות יומת: ז הוא-
הכה את-אדום בגימלח המלח עשרת אלפים

2 KINGS 14

¹ In the second year of Joash son of Joahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah son of Joash became king of Judah. ² He was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddin, of Jerusalem. ³ He did what was pleasing to Yahweh, yet not like his ancestor David; in all things, he did as his father Joash had done. ⁴ But the high places were not abolished, and the people still sacrificed and offered on the high places. ⁵ Once the kingdom was firmly under his control, he killed his officers who had murdered the king his father. ⁶ But he did not put the murderers' sons to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, where Yahweh has ordered: "Fathers must not be put to death for sons, nor sons for fathers; everyone must be put to death for his own sin." ⁷ He killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt and took

2 KINGS 14

¹ 'Joahaz' is an alternative form of 'Jehoahaz'. The reigns of Joash of Israel and Joash of Judah overlapped by about two years.

² Amaziah reigned 796–767 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 800–783 B.B. according to W.F. Albright. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

³ The literal translation of 'what was pleasing to' is 'what was good in the eyes of'.

⁴ Still, the 'good' kings fail to stop the practice of worship at the high places.

⁵ The NJB includes 'those of' before 'his officers'; here, we follow the NRSV.

⁶ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁷ The NRSV uses the name 'Sela' in place of 'the Rock'. The 'Valley of Salt' was probably the depression south of the Dead Sea. On the relations between Judah and the Edomites, compare 8:20–22. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

וּתְפֹשׂ אֶת־הַסֶּלַע בַּמַּלְחָמָה וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמָהּ
יִקְתָּאֵל עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: {פ}

ח אָז שָׁלַח אֲמַצְיָה מַלְאָכִים אֶל־יְהוֹאָשׁ בֶּן־יְהוֹאָחָז
בֶּן־יְהוּא מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר לְכֵה נִתְרָאָה פָּנִים:
ט וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוֹאָשׁ מַלְאָכֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־אֲמַצְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ־
יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר הַחוּחַ אֲשֶׁר בַּלְבָּנוֹן שָׁלַח אֶל־הָאֲרוֹז
אֲשֶׁר בַּלְבָּנוֹן לֵאמֹר תִּנְהֵא־אֶת־בֵּיתְךָ לְבָנִי לְאִשָּׁה
וּתְעַבֵּר חֵית הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר בַּלְבָּנוֹן וּתְרַמֵּס אֶת־
הַחוּחַ: י הִכָּה הַכִּיַּת אֶת־אֲדוֹם וַנִּשְׂאָךְ לִבְךָ הַכְּבֹד
וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּבֵיתְךָ וְלָמָּה תִתְגַּרְרֶה בְּרַעַה וְנִפְלַתָּה אֶתְּהָ
וַיְהוּדָה עִמָּךְ: יא וְלֹא־שָׁמַע אֲמַצְיָהוּ וַיַּעַל יְהוֹאָשׁ
מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְרָאוּ פָּנִים הוּא וְאֲמַצְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ־
יְהוּדָה בְּבֵית שֶׁמֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לְיְהוּדָה: יב וַיִּנְגַף יְהוּדָה
לְפָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּנָּסוּ אִישׁ לְאֹהֲלוֹ: יג וְאֵת אֲמַצְיָהוּ
מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בֶּן־יְהוֹאָשׁ בֶּן־אֲחִיזָהוּ תִפֹּשׂ יְהוֹאָשׁ
מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּבֵית שֶׁמֶשׁ וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיָּבֹא יְרוּשָׁלַם
וַיִּפְרֹץ בַּחוּמַת יְרוּשָׁלַם בְּשַׁעַר אֶפְרַיִם עַד־שַׁעַר

the Rock by assault; he gave it the name Joktheel, which it bears to this present day.

⁸ Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, the king of Israel, saying, “Come, let us look one another in the face!”

⁹ And Jehoash, the king of Israel, sent word to Amaziah, the king of Judah, saying, “The thistle that was in Lebanon sent a message to the cedar that was in Lebanon, “Give my son your daughter in marriage;” but the wild animals of Lebanon trampled down the thistle as they passed. ¹⁰ You have conquered Edom, and now hold your head in the air; boast on but stay at home. Why challenge disaster, to your own ruin and the ruin of Judah?” ¹¹ However, Amaziah would not listen, and Jehoash king of Israel marched to the attack; and at Beth-Shemesh, which belongs to Judah, they looked each other in the face, Jehoash and Amaziah king of Judah. ¹² Judah was defeated by Israel, and everyone fled to his tent. ¹³ The king of Judah, Amaziah son of Jehoash, son of Ahaziah, was taken prisoner at Beth-Shemesh by Joash king of Israel who came to Jerusalem, where he demolished the city wall from the

⁸ For Amaziah’s challenge, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* reads, “Come and make a trial of strength.” The expression refers to meeting in battle.

⁹ Here, the idea is that a miserable thistle tried to make itself equal to a cedar and was badly trampled for its trouble.

¹⁰ Literally translated, this verse ends, “Why get involved in calamity and fall, you and Judah with you?”

¹¹ The *NJB* has ‘made their trial of strength’ in place of ‘looked each other in the face’ (cf. #8).

¹² Literally translated, this verse ends, “and they fled, each to his tent.”

¹³ The *NJB*, following 2Ch 25:23, has ‘led him off’ in place of ‘came’. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

הַפְּנֵה אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת אַמָּה: ^ט וְלָקַח אֶת-כָּל-הַזֶּהָב-
וְהַכֶּסֶף וְאֵת כָּל-הַכֵּלִים הַנִּמְצָאִים בֵּית-יְהוָה
וּבְאֲצֻרוֹת בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֵת בְּנֵי הַתַּעֲרָבוֹת וַיֵּשֶׁב
שְׁמֶרֹנָה: ^{טו} וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי יְהוֹאָשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וּגְבוּרָתוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר נִלְחַם עִם אֲמֻצִּיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה
הֲלֵאֵהֶם כְּתוּבִים עַל-סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{טז} וַיִּשְׁכַּב יְהוֹאָשׁ עִם-אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבֹּר
בְּשֶׁמֶרוֹן עִם מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּמְלֹךְ יָרָבֵעַם בְּנוֹ
תַּחֲתָיו: {פ}

^{יז} וַיְחִי אֲמֻצִּיָּהוּ בְּנֵי-יֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת
יְהוֹאָשׁ בֶּן-יְהוֹאָחָז מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲמֵשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה
שָׁנָה: ^{יח} וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי אֲמֻצִּיָּהוּ הֲלֵאֵהֶם כְּתוּבִים עַל-
סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה: ^{יט} וַיִּקְשְׁרוּ עָלָיו
קֶשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַם וַיִּנְס לְכִישָׁה וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אַחֲרָיו
לְכִישָׁה וַיִּמָּתְהוּ שָׁם: ^כ וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֹתוֹ עַל-הַסּוּסִים

Gate of Ephraim to the Gate of the Corner for a distance of four hundred cubits. ¹⁴ He took all the gold and silver, and all the furnishings to be found in the Temple of Yahweh and in the treasury of the royal palace, as well as hostages; then he returned to Samaria. ¹⁵ The rest of the history of Jehoash, his entire career, his prowess, how he waged war on Amaziah king of Judah, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? ¹⁶ Then Jehoash slept with his fathers, and he was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; his son Jeroboam succeeded him.

¹⁷ And Amaziah, the son of Joash, the king of Judah, lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, the king of Israel.

¹⁸ Now the rest of the history of Amaziah, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ¹⁹ And they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem and he fled to Lachish; but they followed him to Lachish, and they killed him there. ²⁰ They brought him back by

¹⁴ Apparently, the captured king (v. 13) was released and hostages were taken instead.

¹⁵ The 'Annals of the Kings of Israel' are mentioned 17 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

¹⁶ Vv. 15-16 duplicate 13:12-13.

¹⁷ Amaziah died in 800 or 796 BCE.

¹⁸ The 'Annals of the Kings of Judah' are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

¹⁹ Perhaps Amaziah was assassinated by those resentful of the punishment he had meted out to his father's assassins (v. 5).

²⁰ The 'Citadel of David' refers to the fortified, central part of the city of Jerusalem.

וַיִּקְבֹּר בִּירוּשָׁלַם עִם־אֲבֹתָיו בְּעִיר דָּוִד: כֹּא וַיִּקְחֻ
כָּל־עַם יְהוּדָה אֶת־עֲזַרְיָה וְהוּא בֶן־שֵׁשׁ עָשָׂרָה
שָׁנָה וַיִּמְלְכוּ אֹתוֹ תַּחַת אָבִיו אַמְצִיָּהוּ: כִּב הוּא בָּנָה
אֶת־אֵילַת וַיִּשְׁבֶּה לְיְהוּדָה אַחֲרֵי שֶׁכַּבַּה־מֶלֶךְ עִם־
אֲבֹתָיו: {פ}

כג בַּשָּׁנָה חֲמֵשׁ־עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה לְאַמְצִיָּהוּ בֶן־יֹאָשׁ
מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה מֶלֶךְ יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן־יֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּשִׁמְרוֹן אַרְבַּעִים וְאַחַת שָׁנָה: כד וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי
יְהוָה לֹא סָר מִכָּל־חַטָּאוֹת יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן־נִבְט אֲשֶׁר
הִחְטִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: כה הוּא הֵשִׁיב אֶת־גְּבוּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלְּבוֹא חֲמַת עַד־יַם הָעַרְבָּה כַּדְּבַר יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד־עֲבָדָיו יוֹנָה בֶן־אַמִּטַּי
הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר מָגַת הַחֶפֶר: כו כִּי־רָאָה יְהוָה אֶת־עֲנִי
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִרָּה מְאֹד וְאַפֶּס עֲצוֹר וְאַפֶּס עֲזוּב וְאִין
עֹזֵר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל: כז וְלֹא־דִבֶּר יְהוָה לְמַחֹת אֶת־שֵׁם

horse; and they buried him in Jerusalem with his fathers, in the Citadel of David. ²¹ All the people of Judah chose Azariah, then sixteen years old, and made him king in succession to his father Amaziah. ²² He rebuilt Elath and recovered it for Judah, after the king had slept with his fathers.

²³ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Joash became king of Israel in Samaria. He reigned for forty-one years. ²⁴ He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and did not give up any of the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel. ²⁵ He recovered the territory of Israel from the Pass of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word that Yahweh, the God of Israel, had spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath-Hepher. ²⁶ For Yahweh saw that the distress of Israel was very bitter; there was no one left, neither fettered nor free, to come to the help of Israel. ²⁷ However, Yahweh had resolved not to blot out

²¹ The NJB uses 'Uzziah' in place of 'Azariah'. Apart from in 2 Kings, the usual form is Uzziah – the one may have been his personal name and the other his regal name.

²² 'Elath' was an Edomite town very near Ezion-Geber and later confused with it; it had been lost under Jehoram (8:20–21). Its restoration as a Judaeian seaport was possible because Edom had again been subdued (v. 7, see 8:20–22, 1K 9:26–28, 22:47–50). The 'king' here must be Amaziah.

²³ Jeroboam II reigned 782–753 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 786–746 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

²⁴ The NJB has 'what is displeasing to' in place of 'what was evil in the sight of', here following the MT & NRSV.

²⁵ The prophet mentioned here is the central figure of the Book of Jonah.

²⁶ The translation, 'bitter', assumes an emendation of מְרָה (which is meaningless here) to הָמַר – an emendation supported by the LXX & Peshitta.

²⁷ Jeroboam II is represented as restoring the empire of David and Solomon, Damascus and Hamath having the status of vassals.

יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיּוֹשִׁיעֵם בְּיַד יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן־
יֹאָשׁ: כַּח וַיִּתֶּר דְּבָרַי יִרְבְּעָם וְכֹל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וּגְבוּרָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־נִלְחָם וְאֲשֶׁר הֵשִׁיב אֶת־דַּמְשֶׁק
וְאֶת־חֲמַת לַיהוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל הֲלֹא־הֵם כְּתוּבִים
עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרַי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כֹּט וַיִּשְׁכַּב
יִרְבְּעָם עִם־אֲבֹתָיו עִם מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּמְלֹךְ זְכַרְיָה
בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו: {פ}

the name of Israel from under heaven; he rescued them by means of Jeroboam son of Joash. ²⁸ The rest of the history of Jeroboam, his entire career, his prowess, what wars he waged, and how he recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? ²⁹ Then Jeroboam slept with his fathers, with the kings of Israel; his son Zechariah succeeded him.

²⁸ This verse has been badly damaged in transmission; some scholars propose to read something like, “*how he fought with Damascus and how he averted the wrath of Yahweh from Israel ...*”

²⁹ The NJB, following the LXX recension of *Lucian of Antioch*, adds ‘*they buried him in Samaria*’ before ‘*with the kings of Israel*’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

מלכים ב פרק טו

א בְּשָׁנַת עֶשְׂרִים וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנָה לִירְבֵּעַם מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל
ב מֶלֶךְ עֲזַרְיָה בֶן־אֲמִצְיָה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה: בֶּן־שֵׁשׁ
עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה הָיָה בְּמָלְכוֹ וַחֲמִשִּׁים וּשְׁתַּיִם שָׁנָה
ג מֶלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ יְכֹלִיָּהוּ מִירוּשָׁלַם: וַיַּעַשׂ
ד הַיִּשָּׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה אֲמִצְיָהוּ אָבִיו:
ה רַק הַבָּמֹת לֹא־סָרוּ עוֹד הָעַם מִזְבָּחִים וּמִקְטָרִים
וּבַבָּמֹת: וַיִּגַּע יְהוָה אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיְהִי מִצָּרַע עַד־
ז יוֹם מָתוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּבַיִת הַחֲפְזִית וַיּוֹתֵם בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ
ח עַל־הַבַּיִת שֹׁפֵט אֶת־עַם הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי
ט עֲזַרְיָהוּ וְכֹל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הֵלֵא־הֵם כְּתוּבִים עַל־
י סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה: וַיִּשְׁכַּב עֲזַרְיָה
יא עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ עִם־אֲבֹתָיו בְּעִיר דָּוִד
יב וַיִּמְלֹךְ יוֹתָם בֶּן־וֹתָם בְּיָמָיו: {פ}

2 KINGS 15

¹ In the seventeenth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah son of Amaziah became king of Judah. ² He was sixteen years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah, of Jerusalem. ³ He did what was pleasing to Yahweh, just as his father Amaziah had done. ⁴ The high places, however, were not abolished, and the people still offered sacrifices and incense on the high places. ⁵ Yahweh struck the king, and he became a leper until his dying day. He lived confined to his room; his son Jotham was master of the palace and ruled the country. ⁶ The rest of the history of Azariah, his entire career, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ⁷ Then Azariah fell asleep with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David; his son Jotham succeeded him.

2 KINGS 15

¹ On the use of the name 'Azariah' in place of 'Uzziah', see #14:21.

² Azariah (Uzziah) reigned 767-740 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 783-742 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

³ The literal translation of 'pleasing to' is 'proper in the eyes of'.

⁴ Without the total destruction of these 'high places', there could be no radical reform, and a seed of the idolatrous practice would remain.

⁵ The translation 'confined to his room' (following the NJB) is uncertain; the NRSV has 'in a separate house'; the expression (בַּיִת הַחֲפְזִית) occurs nowhere else in the Bible. Because of the king's illness, his son Jotham acted as regent during the latter years of the reign.

⁶ The 'Annals of the Kings of Judah' are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

⁷ The NJB omits the 2nd instance of 'with his fathers'. On the death of Azariah, see Is 6:1; a limestone inscription found at Jerusalem, and dated to the 1st Century CE, bears the words, "Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah, King of Judah: not to be opened."

^ח בַּשְּׁנַת שְׁלֹשִׁים וּשְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנָה לַעֲזַרְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ
 יְהוּדָה מָלַךְ זְכַרְיָהוּ בֶן־יִרְבְּעָם עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בְּשִׁמְרוֹן שָׁשָׁה חֳדָשִׁים: ^ט וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה
 כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֲבֹתָיו לֹא סָר מִחַטָּאוֹת יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן־
 נְבַט אֲשֶׁר הִחֲטִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^י וַיִּקְשֶׁר עָלָיו שָׁלֹם
 בֶּן־יִבְשׁ וַיַּכֶּהוּ קִבְלָעַם וַיִּמְיֹתָהוּ וַיִּמְלֹךְ תַּחֲתָיו:
^{יא} וַיֹּתֵר דְּבָרֵי זְכַרְיָה הַנֶּגַם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי
 הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{יב} הוּא דְבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר
 דִּבֶּר אֶל־יְהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּנֵי רְבִיעִים יֵשְׁבוּ לָךְ עַל־
 כִּסֵּא יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי־כֵן: {פ}

^{יג} שָׁלֹם בֶּן־יִבְשׁ מֶלֶךְ בַּשְּׁנַת שְׁלֹשִׁים וַתִּשַׁע שָׁנָה
 לַעֲזַרְיָה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וַיִּמְלֹךְ יֵרַח־יָמִים בְּשִׁמְרוֹן:
^{יד} וַיַּעַל מְנַחֵם בֶּן־גָּדִי מִתִּרְזָה וַיָּבֵא שִׁמְרוֹן וַיִּךְ
 אֶת־שָׁלֹם בֶּן־יִבְשׁ בְּשִׁמְרוֹן וַיִּמְיֹתָהוּ וַיִּמְלֹךְ

⁸ In the thirty-eighth year of King Azariah of Judah, Zechariah son of Jeroboam became king over Israel; he reigned in Samaria for six months.

⁹ He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, as his fathers had done; he did not give up the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel. ¹⁰ Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against him, struck him down at Ibleam and killed him, and reigned in place of him. ¹¹ Now the rest of the history of Zechariah is recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel. ¹² This was the promise that Yahweh had made to Jehu, “Your sons will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation;” and so it turned out.

¹³ Shallum son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king of Judah, and he reigned for one month in Samaria. ¹⁴ Then Menahem son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, entered Samaria and struck down Shallum son of Jabesh there. He killed him and reigned in place

⁸ Zechariah reigned during 753 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 746 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

⁹ The literal translation of ‘give up’ is ‘turn away from’.

¹⁰ ‘At Ibleam’ follows the LXX recension of *Lucian of Antioch*; the NRSV (‘in public’) follows the MT, which has the problematical Aramaic term קִבְלָעַם (‘before the people’).

¹¹ The ‘Annals of the Kings of Israel’ are mentioned 17 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King’s reign.

¹² Zechariah was the last of the dynasty of Jehu (compare 10:30). His assassination began a series of revolts and counter-revolts like those preceding the reign of Omri (1K 16).

¹³ Shallum reigned during 752 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 745 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

¹⁴ Literally translated, the 1st sentence ends, “...went up from Tirzah and arrived in Samaria and attacked Shallum son of Jabesh in Samaria.”

תַּחֲתָיו: ^{טו} וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם וּקְשָׁרוֹ אֲשֶׁר קָשָׁר
הֵנָּם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{טז} אַז יָבֵה־מִנְחָם אֶת־תַּפְּסַח וְאֶת־כָּל־
אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ וְאֶת־גְּבוּלֶיהָ מִתִּרְצָה כִּי לֹא פָתַח וַיִּדֹּ
אֶת כָּל־הַהָרוֹתֶיהָ בַקַּעַ: {פ}

^{יז} בְּשָׁנַת שְׁלֹשִׁים וְתֵשַׁע שָׁנָה לַעֲזַרְיָה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה
מֶלֶךְ מִנְחָם בֶּן־גַּדִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשָׂר שָׁנִים
בְּשִׁמְרוֹן: ^{יח} וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לֹא סָר מֵעַל
חַטָּאוֹת יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן־נֶבֶט אֲשֶׁר־הִחֲטִיֵּא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל
כָּל־יָמָיו: ^{יט} בָּא פּוּל מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּתֵּן
מִנְחָם לְפּוּל אֶלֶף כֶּכֶר־כֶּסֶף לְהִזּוֹת יָדָיו אֹתוֹ
לְהַחֲזִיק הַמַּמְלָכָה בְּיָדוֹ: ^כ וַיֵּצֵא מִנְחָם אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף
עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל כָּל־גְּבוּרֵי הַחֵיל לָתֵת לְמֶלֶךְ אֲשּׁוּר
חֲמִשִּׁים שֶׁקֶלִים כֶּסֶף לְאִישׁ אֶחָד וַיֵּשֶׁב מֶלֶךְ אֲשּׁוּר

of him. ¹⁵ Now the rest of the history of Shallum, including the conspiracy he made, is recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel. ¹⁶ At that time that Menahem sacked Tiphseh, killing all who were in it and its territory from Tirzah on, because they did not open its gates to him; he sacked it and ripped open all the pregnant women.

¹⁷ In the thirty-ninth year of King Azariah's reign over Judah, Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel. He reigned for ten years in Samaria.

¹⁸ He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh; he did not give up the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel. In his days, ¹⁹ Pul king of Assyria came against the country; Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, so that he might help him in strengthening his hold on the royal power. ²⁰ Menahem levied this sum from Israel, that is, from all the men of rank, at the rate of fifty shekels from each one, to give to the king of Assyria. So, the king of Assyria then

¹⁵ The NJB has 'the plot he hatched' in place of 'the conspiracy he made', here following the NRSV.

¹⁶ In place of 'Tiphseh', here following the MT and NRSV, the NJB, following the LXX recension of *Lucian of Antioch*, has 'Tappuah' (modern Sheikh Abu Zared, 53 km north of Jerusalem). 'Tiphseh' is Thapsacus, on the Euphrates, and it seems unlikely that Menahem led an expedition that far. On the custom of disembowelling pregnant women, see 8:12, Ho 13:16, Am 1:13.

¹⁷ Menahem reigned 752–742 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 745–738 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

¹⁸ The MT ends this verse with 'all his days'; literally translated, this phrase should be taken with what precedes it, but it may be preferable to emend the text to בְּיָמָיו ('in his days') and join the phrase to what follows it: the translation assumes this change.

¹⁹ Tiglath-Pileser III (king of Assyria, 745–727 BCE) took the name, 'Pul' when he assumed power in Babylon in 729 BCE.

²⁰ This tribute is mentioned in the Assyrian texts in connexion with the Syrian campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III in 738 BCE. Henceforth, Israel became a vassal state.

ולא-עמד שם בארץ: כא ויתר דברי מנחם וכל-
 אשר עשה הלוואהם כתובים על-ספר דברי
 הימים למלכי ישראל: כב וישכב מנחם עם-אבתיו
 וימלך פקחיה בנו תחתיו: {פ}

כג בשנת חמשים שנה לעזריה מלך יהודה מלך
 פקחיה בן-מנחם על-ישראל בשמרון שנתים:
 כד ויעש הרע בעיני יהוה לא סר מחטאות ירבעם
 בן-נבט אשר החטיא את-ישראל: כה ויקשר עליו
 פקח בן-רמליהו שלישו ויכהו בשמרון בארמון
 בית-המלך מלך את-ארגב ואת-הארליה ועמו
 חמשים איש מבני גלעדים וימתהו וימלך תחתיו:
 כו ויתר דברי פקחיה וכל-אשר עשה הנם כתובים
 על-ספר דברי הימים למלכי ישראל: {פ}

כז בשנת חמשים ושתים שנה לעזריה מלך יהודה
 מלך פקח בן-רמליהו על-ישראל בשמרון עשרים

withdrew, and did not stay in the country. ²¹ The rest of the history of Menahem, his entire career, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? ²² Then Menahem slept with his fathers; his son Pekahiah succeeded him.

²³ In the fiftieth year of King Azariah of Judah, Pekahiah son of Menahem became king of Israel in Samaria. He reigned for two years.

²⁴ He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh; he did not give up the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel. ²⁵ Pekah son of Remaliah, his equerry, plotted against him with fifty of the Gileadites, and struck him down in Samaria, in the keep of the royal palace, along with Argob and Arieah. He killed the king and succeeded him. ²⁶ The rest of the history of Pekahiah, his entire career, is recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

²⁷ In the fifty-second year of Uzziah king of Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria. He reigned for twenty

²¹ The 'Annals of the Kings of Israel' are mentioned 17 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

²² The literal translation of 'slept with his fathers' is 'lay down with his fathers'.

²³ Pekahiah reigned 742-740 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 738-737 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

²⁴ The NJB has 'what is displeasing to' in place of 'what was evil in the sight of', here following the NRSV.

²⁵ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. The NJB lacks 'along with Argob and Arieah', having an ellipsis instead.

²⁶ The 'Annals of the Kings of Israel' are mentioned 17 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

²⁷ Pekah reigned 740-732 BCE (E.R. Thiele) or 737-732 BCE (W.F. Albright); the 20 years given here for his reign is far too long.

שָׁנָה: כֹּחַ וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לֹא סָר מִן־חַטָּאוֹת
 יְרֵבֵעַם בְּזִנְבֹט אֲשֶׁר הֶחְטִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: כֹּחַ בְּיָמֵי
 פִּקַּח מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֵת הַגָּלִית פְּלֹאֶסֶר מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר
 וַיִּקַּח אֶת־עִיּוֹן וְאֶת־אַבְל בֵּית־מַעֲכָה וְאֶת־יָנוּחַ
 וְאֶת־קֶדֶשׁ וְאֶת־חֲצוֹר וְאֶת־הַגְּלֵעָד וְאֶת־הַגְּלִילָה
 כָּל אֶרֶץ נַפְתָּלִי וַיִּגְלַם אֶשּׁוּרָה: ל וַיִּקְשֶׁר־קֶשֶׁר
 הוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־אֵלָה עַל־פִּקַּח בֶּן־רַמְלִיָּהוּ וַיִּכְהוּ
 וַיְמִיתֵהוּ וַיִּמְלֹךְ תַּחֲתָיו בְּשָׁנַת עֶשְׂרִים לְיוֹתָם בֶּן־
 עֲזִיָּה: לֹא וַיִּתֵּר דְּבַר־פִּקַּח וְכֹל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַנֶּגֶם
 כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבַר־י הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

לִב בְּשָׁנַת שְׁתַּיִם לְפִקַּח בֶּן־רַמְלִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל
 מֶלֶךְ יוֹתָם בֶּן־עֲזִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה: לִג בֶּן־עֶשְׂרִים

years. ²⁸ He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh; he did not turn away from the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel.

²⁹ In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and captured Ijon, and Abel-Beth-Maacah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali; and carried the population captive to Assyria. ³⁰ Then Hoshea son of Elah hatched a conspiracy against Pekah son of Remaliah; he attacked him and killed him; he reigned in place of him, in the twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah. ³¹ The rest of the history of Pekah, and his entire career, this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel?

³² In the second year of Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham son of Uzziah became king of Judah. ³³ He was twenty-five years old

²⁸ The NJB has 'what is displeasing to' in place of 'what was evil in the sight of', here following the NRSV.

²⁹ This verse, a somewhat garbled list, tells of the first Israelite deportation (compare 17:6). 'All Naphtali' was subdued in the Assyrian campaign against Philistia in 734 BCE; Gilead and Galilee were conquered in the campaign against Damascus, 733 -732 BCE. Two or three lists may have here been combined; in any case, all the names belong to the northern part of the country, which was ravaged by the campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser, when he punished Pekah for anti-Assyrian plotting (v. 37, 16:5-8) and also put an end to the kingdom of Aram (Syria) by capturing Damascus (16:9).

³⁰ The NJB, following the LXX, omits 'in the twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah'; the phrase contradicts v. 33. Tiglath-Pileser, in his own 'Annals', claims to have had a hand in the overthrow of Pekah by Hoshea; thus, Hoshea began with a pro-Assyrian policy.

³¹ The 'Annals of the Kings of Israel' are mentioned 17 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

³² Jotham reigned 740-732 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 742-735 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

³³ The figure of 'sixteen years' must include the years of Jotham's regency (v. 5).

וְחָמֵשׁ שָׁנָה הָיָה בְּמַלְכוֹ וְשֵׁשׁ-עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה מָלַךְ
בְּיְרוּשָׁלַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ יְרוּשָׁא בַת-צָדוֹק: לֵד וַיַּעַשׂ
הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה עֻזִּיָּהוּ אָבִיו
עָשָׂה: לֵה רַק הַבָּמֹת לֹא סָרוּ עוֹד הָעָם מִזְבָּחִים
וּמִקְטָרִים בַּבָּמֹת הוּא בָּנָה אֶת-שַׁעַר בֵּית-יְהוָה
הָעֶלְיוֹן: לו וַיֵּתֶר דְּבָרֵי יוֹתָם אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַלֵּא-הֵם
כְּתוּבִים עַל-סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה:
לו בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם הִחֵל יְהוָה לְהַשְׁלִיחַ בִּיהוּדָה רָצִין
מִלְּךְ אַרֶם וְאֵת פֶּקַח בֶּן-רְמַלְיָהוּ: לח וַיִּשְׁכַּב יוֹתָם
עִם-אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבֹּר עִם-אֲבֹתָיו בְּעִיר דָּוִד אָבִיו
וַיִּמְלֹךְ אַחָז בְּנֵו תַחְתָּיו: {פ}

when he came to the throne, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerusha, daughter of Zadok. ³⁴ He did what was right in the sight of Yahweh, just as his father Uzziah had done. ³⁵ The high places, however, were not abolished, and the people still offered sacrifices and incense on the high places. He built the Upper Gate of the Temple of Yahweh. ³⁶ The rest of the history of Jotham, his entire career, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ³⁷ At that time, Yahweh began sending Razon king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah. ³⁸ Then Jotham slept with his fathers, and he was buried with his fathers in the City of David, his father; his son Ahaz succeeded him.

³⁴ The NJB has 'what is pleasing to' in place of 'what was right in the sight of', here following the NRSV.

³⁵ The 'Upper Gate' (or 'Higher Gate') of the Temple is thought to have been that toward the north.

³⁶ The 'Annals of the Kings of Judah' are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

³⁷ 'Razon' was the last king of Damascus before the city fell into Assyrian hands (16:9). The war now being prepared breaks out in the reign of Ahaz (16:5-9). The idea of this attack was to force Judah to join a coalition against Assyria (see v. 29 and 16:5-9).

³⁸ The NJB omits the 2nd instance of 'with his fathers'.

מלכים ב פרק טז

א *בשנת שבע־עשרה שנה לפקח בן־רמליהו מלך־
אחז בן־יותם מלך־יהודה: ב בן־עשרים שנה אחז
במלכו ושש־עשרה שנה מלך בירושלם ולא־
עשה הישר בעיני יהוה אלהיו כדוד אביו: ג וילך
בדרך מלכי ישראל וגם את־בנו העביר באש
כתעבות הגוים אשר הוריש יהוה אתם מפני בני
ישראל: ד ויזבח ויקטר בבמות ועלה־גבעות
ותחת כל־עץ רענן: ה אז יעלה רצין מלך־ארם
ופקח בן־רמליהו מלך־ישראל ירושלם למלחמה
ויצרו על־אחז ולא יכלו להלחם: ו בעת ההיא
השיב רצין מלך־ארם את־אילת לארם וינשל
את־היהודים מאילות וארמים ואדמים באו אילת
וישבו שם עד היום הזה: {פ}

2 KINGS 16

¹ In the seventeenth year of Pekah son of Remaliah, Ahaz son of Jotham became king of Judah. ² Ahaz was twenty years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what pleased Yahweh his God, as his father David had done, ³ but walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He passed his son through the fire, copying the shameful practices of the nations that Yahweh drove out before the sons of Israel. ⁴ He offered sacrifices and incense on the high places, on the hills and under every green tree. ⁵ It was then that Razon king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, launched their campaign against Jerusalem. They besieged Ahaz but could not conquer him. ⁶ At that time, the king of Edom recovered Elath for Edom; he drove out the men of Judah from Elath, and the Edomites occupied it and live there to this present day.

2 KINGS 16

¹ Ahaz reigned 732–711 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 735–713 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

² The literal translation of 'what pleased' is 'what was right in the eyes of'.

³ Passing 'through the fire' was an idolatrous practice forbidden in Israel (Lv 18:21) but common among other nations (17:17, 31, 21:6, 23:10).

⁴ The Deuteronomist condemns Ahaz as unusually bad in comparison with other kings of Judah; worst of all, he revived the barbarous custom of human sacrifice (see #3 and #3:27).

⁵ For the 2nd sentence, the *NJB*, following the *Peshitta* (and see Is 7:1), has, "They besieged it but could not reduce it." The purpose of this war, occasioning the prophecies of Is 7–8, was to bring Judah into an anti-Assyrian coalition.

⁶ This verse is parenthesised in the *NJB*. The *Kethib* reads 'Aramaeans' (וארמים) for 'Edomites' (ואדמים), here following the *Qere*. The Edomites avail themselves of this opportunity to retake Elath (see 14:22).

וַיִּשְׁלַח אַחָז מַלְאָכִים אֶל־תִּגְלַת־פִּלְסֵר מֶלֶךְ־
 אַשּׁוּר לֵאמֹר עֲבֹדֶךָ וּבְנֶךָ אָנִי עָלַי וְהוֹשַׁעְנִי מִכַּף
 מֶלֶךְ־אַרָּם וּמִכַּף מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַקּוֹמִים עָלַי: ^ח וַיִּקַּח
 אַחָז אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף וְאֶת־הַזָּהָב הַנִּמְצָא בְּבֵית יְהוָה
 וּבְאֲצֻרוֹת בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלַח לְמֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר שְׁחָד:
^ט וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהֵי מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר וַיַּעַל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר אֶל־
 דְּמֶשֶׁק וַיִּתְּפֹשֶׁה וַיִּגְלֶה קִירָה וְאֶת־רָצִין הַמֵּית:
 וַיֵּלֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחָז לִקְרֹאת תִּגְלַת פִּלְאֶסֶר מֶלֶךְ־
 אַשּׁוּר דּוֹמֶשֶׁק וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר בְּדִמְשֶׁק
 וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחָז אֶל־אוּרִיָּה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־דְּמוֹת
 הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת־תְּבִנִיתוֹ לְכָל־מַעֲשָׂהּ: ^{יא} וַיִּבֶן אוּרִיָּה
 הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחָז
 מִדְּמֶשֶׁק בֶּן עֲשָׂה אוּרִיָּה הַכֹּהֵן עַד־בּוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ־
 אַחָז מִדְּמֶשֶׁק: ^{יב} וַיָּבֵא הַמֶּלֶךְ מִדְּמֶשֶׁק וַיֵּרָא הַמֶּלֶךְ
 אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרַב הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעַל עָלָיו:

⁷ Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria to say, "I am your servant and your son. Come and rescue me from the king of Aram and the king of Israel who are attacking me." ⁸ Ahaz also took the silver and gold found in the Temple of Yahweh and in the treasury of the royal palace, and sent this as a present to the king of Assyria. ⁹ The king of Assyria granted his request and, going up against Damascus, captured it; he deported its population to Kir, and killed Razon.

¹⁰ When King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, he saw the altar that was in Damascus. King Ahaz then sent the measurements and a model of the altar with the detail of its workmanship to Uriah the priest. ¹¹ Uriah the priest constructed the altar; he carried out all the instructions sent by King Ahaz from Damascus before King Ahaz returned from Damascus. ¹² When the king arrived from Damascus, he inspected the altar; then the king approached the altar and ascended it. ¹³ He offered his burnt offering

⁷ Ahaz acknowledges himself vassal of Tiglath-Pileser III (734 BCE) but the purchase of protection leads to the downfall of his kingdom (Is 8:5ff).

⁸ Ahaz disregarded the advice of Isaiah (Is 7:4, 16–17, 8:4–8) by calling on Tiglath-Pileser for help. The king of Assyria, glad to be paid for what he had intended to do anyway, took Damascus and devastated Israel (see #15:29).

⁹ Tiglath-Pileser's campaign against Damascus was 733–732 BCE. 'Kir' was the place in Mesopotamia from which some of the Aramaeans (Syrians) had come originally (Am 1:5, 9:7).

¹⁰ The 'altar' was the high altar of the temple of Rimmon at Damascus (5:18), not an altar raised by the army of occupation.

¹¹ Literally translated, this verse ends, "... so Uriah the priest did, until the arrival of King Ahaz from Damascus."

¹² In place of 'ascended it', here following the MT (literally, 'went up on it'), NETB has 'offered a sacrifice on it'.

¹³ The king himself consecrates the altar by exercising priestly functions, as on other special occasions.

^ג וַיִּקְטֹר אֶת־עֹלֹתוֹ וְאֶת־מִנְחָתוֹ וַיִּסַּף אֶת־נִסְכּוֹ
וַיִּזְרַק אֶת־דַּם־הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ׃
^ד וְאֵת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּקְרַב
מֵאֵת פְּנֵי הַבַּיִת מִבֵּין הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּמִבֵּין בַּיִת יְהוָה וַיִּתֵּן
אֹתוֹ עַל־יָרֵךְ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ צְפוֹנָה׃ ^{טו} וַיִּצְוֵהוּ וַיִּצְוֶה
הַמֶּלֶךְ־אֲחִיז אֶת־אוּרִיָּה הַכֹּהֵן לֵאמֹר עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
הַגָּדוֹל הַקָּטָן אֶת־עֹלֹת־הַבֶּקָר וְאֶת־מִנְחַת הָעֶרֶב
וְאֶת־עֹלֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת־מִנְחָתוֹ וְאֵת עֹלֹת כָּל־עַם
הָאָרֶץ וּמִנְחָתָם וְנִסְפֵיהֶם וְכָל־דָּם עֲלֶיהָ וְכָל־דָּם־
זֶבַח עָלֶיךָ תִּזְרַק וּמִזְבֵּחַ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת יִהְיֶה־לִּי לְבִקָּר׃
^{טז} וַיַּעַשׂ אוּרִיָּה הַכֹּהֵן כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲחִיז׃
^{יז} וַיִּקְצֹץ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲחִיז אֶת־הַמִּסְגְּרוֹת הַמְּכֻוֹנֹת וַיִּסֶר
מֵעֲלֵיהֶם וְאֵת אֶת־הַכִּיָּר וְאֶת־הַיָּם הַזֶּה הוֹרֵד מֵעַל
הַבֶּקָר הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר תַּחְתֶּיהָ וַיִּתֵּן אֹתוֹ עַל
מַרְצֶפֶת אֲבָנִים׃ ^{יח} וְאֶת־מוֹסַף מִיֶּסֶד הַשַּׁבָּת אֲשֶׁר־
בָּנוּ בַּבַּיִת וְאֶת־מְבוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ הַחִיצוֹנָה הִסֵּב בַּיִת

and his oblation; he poured out his libation and sprinkled the blood of his communion sacrifice. ¹⁴ The bronze altar that used to stand before Yahweh he removed from the front of the Temple, where it had stood between the new altar and the Temple of Yahweh, and placed it at the north side of the new altar. ¹⁵ King Ahaz gave this order to Uriah the priest: "In future you will burn the morning holocaust, the evening oblation, the king's holocaust and his oblation, the holocaust, the oblation and the libations of all people on the great altar; on it you will pour out all the blood of the holocausts and sacrifices. As regards the bronze altar, I shall see to that." ¹⁶ Uriah the priest did everything that King Ahaz had ordered.

¹⁷ And King Ahaz dismantled the wheeled stands, removed the crosspieces and the basins from them; and he removed the bronze Sea from the oxen supporting it and rested it on the stone pavement.

¹⁸ And, in deference to the king of Assyria, he removed from the Temple of Yahweh the dais for the throne, which had been set up there, and

¹⁴ The NJB omits 'bronze'.

¹⁵ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. The translation of the last sentence is uncertain; the NRSV reads: "But the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by."

¹⁶ Uriah (probably the same person as the Uriah mentioned in Is 8:2 and, hence, hardly disloyal to Yahweh) figures only as a royal official.

¹⁷ It is not known whether the changes introduced by Ahaz had a ceremonial purpose, or whether they were made to provide him with the bronze that he needed to pay his tribute to the Assyrian king. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁸ 'He removed from the Temple' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'he modified the Temple'. Probably, the 'dais' and the 'royal entry' are symbols of sovereignty, which Tiglath-Pileser makes his vassal remove. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

יְהוֹה מִפְּנֵי מַלְךְ אַשּׁוּר: יט וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי אַחַז אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה הֵלֵאֲהֶם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים
לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה: כ וַיִּשְׁכַּב אַחַז עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבֹּר
עִם־אֲבֹתָיו בְּעִיר דָּוִד וַיִּמְלֹךְ חִזְקִיָּהוּ בְּנוֹ
תַּחְתָּיו: {פ}

the royal entry on the outside. ¹⁹ Now, the rest of the history of Ahaz, his entire career, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ²⁰ Then Ahaz fell asleep with his fathers and he was buried in the City of David; and his son Hezekiah succeeded him.

¹⁹ The 'Annals of the Kings of Judah' are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

²⁰ The 'City of David' here refers to the fortified citadel in Jerusalem, not to Bethlehem.

מלכים ב פרק יז

א *בשנת שתים עשרה לאחז מלך יהודה מלך
הושע בן-אלה בשמרון על-ישראל תשע שנים:
ב ויעש הרע בעיני יהוה רק לא כמלכי ישראל
אשר היו לפניו: ג עליו עלה שלמנאסר מלך
אשור ויהי-לו הושע עבד וישב לו מנחה: ד וימצא
מלך-אשור בהושע קשר אשר שלח מלאכים
אל-סוא מלך-מצרים ולא-העלה מנחה למלך
אשור כשנה בשנה ויעצרוהו מלך אשור ויאסרוהו
בית בלא: ה ויעל מלך-אשור בכל-הארץ ויעל
שמרון ויצר עליה שלש שנים: ו בשנת התשעית
להושע לכד מלך-אשור את-שמרון ויגל את-

2 KINGS 17

¹ In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria and reigned for nine years. ² He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, though not like the preceding kings of Israel. ³ Shalmaneser king of Assyria made war on Hoshea who submitted to him and paid him tribute. ⁴ However, the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was playing a double game with him: he had sent messengers to Sais, to the king of Egypt, and had not, as in previous years, handed over the tribute to the king of Assyria. For this the king of Assyria imprisoned him, in chains. ⁵ The king of Assyria invaded the whole country and, coming to Samaria, laid siege to it for three years. ⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and

2 KINGS 17

- ¹ Hoshea reigned 732–722 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 732–721 BCE according to W.F. Albright. The opening phrase is probably an erroneous synchronism (compare 15:30).
- ² Perhaps the writer treated Hoshea more gently because of his tragic position as the last king of Israel.
- ³ Shalmaneser V (726–722 BCE) was the successor of Tiglath-Pileser III.
- ⁴ The NRSV, following the MT, has 'to So, king of Egypt'; but, instead of 'So', unknown in the Egyptian king-lists, it is preferable to read a place name, 'Sais', in the Delta, residence of Tefnakht, Hoshea's contemporary. The imprisonment of Hoshea, who had marched against Shalmaneser or had fled from Samaria, took place at the beginning of the siege of Samaria and marked the end of his reign (9th year). The siege of Samaria continued for three years.
- ⁵ The literal translation of 'invaded' is 'went up against'.
- ⁶ Shalmaneser had laid siege to the city in 724 BCE but it held out until the beginning of the reign of Sargon II, his successor, early in 722 (according to E.R. Thiele) or 723 (according to W.F. Albright). Sargon, according to his own records, deported 27,290 Israelites to faraway places, thus ending for all time the kingdom of Israel.

יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשׁוּרָה וַיֵּשֶׁב אוֹתָם בְּחָלַח וּבְחָבוּר נְהַר
גּוּזָן וְעָרֵי מְדַי: {פ}

וַיְהִי כִּי־חָטְאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
הַמַּעֲלֶה אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִתַּחַת יַד פַּרְעֹה
מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם וַיִּירָאוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: ^ח וַיֵּלְכוּ
בַּחֲקוֹת הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִישׁ יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּמִלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ: ^ט וַיַּחֲפְאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
דְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־כֵן עַל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיִּבְנוּ לָהֶם
בָּמוֹת בְּכָל־עָרֵיהֶם מִמִּגְדָּל נוֹצְרִים עַד־עִיר מְבַצֵּר:
וַיִּצְבּוּ לָהֶם מַצֵּבוֹת וְאֲשֵׁרִים עַל כָּל־גְּבֻעָה גְבֻהָה
וְתַחַת כָּל־עֵץ רַעֲנָן: ^{יא} וַיִּקְטְרוּ־שָׁם בְּכָל־בָּמוֹת
כְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־הִגְלָה יְהוָה מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲשׂוּ דְבָרִים
רָעִים לְהַכְעִים אֶת־יְהוָה: ^{יב} וַיַּעֲבְדוּ הַגְּלָלִים אֲשֶׁר
אָמַר יְהוָה לָהֶם לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה: ^{יג} וַיַּעַד
יְהוָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבִיהוּדָה בְּיַד כָּל־נְבִיאֵי נְבִיאֵי כָל־

deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah on the Habor, a river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

⁷ This happened because the Israelites had sinned against Yahweh their God who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the grip of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshipped other gods; ⁸ they followed the ways of the nations that Yahweh had driven out for them, and the ways that the kings of Israel had introduced. ⁹ The Israelite plotted against Yahweh their God. They built high places for themselves wherever they lived, from watchtower to fortified town. ¹⁰ They set for themselves up pillars and sacred poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. ¹¹ They sacrificed there after the manner of the nations that Yahweh had expelled before them, and did wicked things there, provoking the anger of Yahweh. ¹² They served disgusting idols, although Yahweh had told them, "This you must not do." ¹³ And yet, through all the prophets and all the seers, Yahweh had given Israel and

⁷ The observations of vv. 7–23 do not come from one source. For the principal author of the book, the grievous fault of Israel is the religious schism (1K 12:26–33). A development rich in reminiscences of Deuteronomy and the Prophets (especially Jeremiah) has been added: it denounces religious compromises and the local shrines (vv. 7b–18); a second addition extends the condemnation to Judah (vv. 19–20).

⁸ The NJB lacks the last clause, a gloss intended for the beginning of v. 9.

⁹ For the 1st sentence, the NJB reads, "The Israelites spoke slightly of Yahweh their God."

¹⁰ 'Scared poles' is a translation of the Hebrew name, 'Asherim' (אֲשֵׁרִים).

¹¹ In place of 'provoking the anger of Yahweh', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'provoking the LORD to anger'.

¹² The word used here for 'idols' (הַגְּלָלִים) is always disdainful; it is generally thought to have originally referred to dung pellets.

¹³ The NJB has 'laws' in place of 'statutes', here following the NRSV, and NETB has 'rules'.

חִזָּה לֵאמֹר שִׁבוּ מִדַּרְכֵיכֶם הָרָעִים וּשְׁמְרוּ מִצְוֹתַי
 חֻקֹּתַי כְּכֹל־הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֶת־אֲבֹתֵיכֶם
 וְאֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּי אֵלֵיכֶם בְּיַד עֲבָדֵי הַנְּבִיאִים: י' וְלֹא
 שָׁמְעוּ וַיִּקְשׂוּ אֶת־עַרְפָּם כְּעַרְףְּ אֲבוֹתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא
 הֶאֱמִינוּ בַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם: ט' וַיִּמָּאֲסוּ אֶת־חֻקֵּי
 וְאֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אֶת־אֲבוֹתָם וְאֶת עֲדוּתוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר הֵעִיד בָּם וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי הַהֶבֶל וַיִּהְבְּלוּ וְאַחֲרֵי
 הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סָבִיבֵתָם אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתָם לִבְלֹתֵי
 עֲשׂוֹת כֹּהֵם: ט"ו וַיַּעֲזְבוּ אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מִסַּכָּה שְׁנַיִם שְׁנֵי עַגְלָיִם
 וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֲשִׁירָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְכָל־צַבָּא הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיַּעֲבְדוּ
 אֶת־הַבַּעַל: י"ז וַיַּעֲבִירוּ אֶת־בָּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיהֶם
 בָּאֵשׁ וַיִּקְסְמוּ קְסָמִים וַיִּנְחָשׂוּ וַיִּתְמַכְּרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת
 הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְהַכְעִיסוֹ: י"ח וַיִּתְאַנֶּף יְהוָה מְאֹד
 בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְרַם מֵעַל פָּנָיו לֹא נִשְׂאָר רַק שִׁבְט
 יְהוּדָה לְבַדּוֹ: י"ט גַּם־יְהוּדָה לֹא שָׁמַר אֶת־מִצְוֹת
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיֵּלְכוּ בְּחֻקֹּת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ:

Judah this warning, "Turn away from your wicked ways and keep my commandments and my statutes in accordance with the entire Law I laid down for your fathers and delivered to them through my servants the prophets." ¹⁴ They would not listen but were as stubborn as their fathers, who had no faith in Yahweh their God. ¹⁵ They despised his laws and the Covenant he had made with their fathers, and the warnings he had given them. They went after false idols and became false, through copying the nations round them although Yahweh had ordered them not to act as they did. ¹⁶ They rejected all the commandments of Yahweh their God and made idols of cast metal for themselves, two calves; they made a sacred pole, the worshipped the whole array of heaven, and they served Baal. ¹⁷ They made their sons and daughters pass through fire, they practiced divination and sorcery, they sold themselves to evil doing in the sight of Yahweh, provoking his anger. ¹⁸ For this, Yahweh was enraged with Israel and thrust them away from him. There was none left but the tribe of Judah only. ¹⁹ Judah did not keep the commandments of Yahweh their God either but copied the practices

¹⁴ The literal translation of 'they were stubborn' is 'they stiffened their necks'.

¹⁵ The NJB opens the 2nd sentence with: "Pursuing futility, they themselves became futile ..."

¹⁶ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁷ 'Passing through fire' may refer to child sacrifice, though some interpret it as a less drastic cultic practice.

¹⁸ The literal translation of 'thrust them away from him' is 'turned them away from his face'.

¹⁹ Literally translated, this verse ends, "...they walked in the practices of Israel, which they did."

כ וַיִּמָּאֵס יְהוָה בְּכָל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲנֵם וַיִּתְּנֵם בְּיַד־
 שָׂסִים עַד אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁלִיכֶם מִפְּנֵיו: כא כִּי־קָרַע
 יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל בֵּית דָּוִד וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֶת־יִרְבֵּעַם בֶּן־נִבְטַן
 וַיִּדְא וַיִּדַּח יִרְבֵּעַם אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאַחֲרַי יְהוָה
 וַהֲחִטִּיאֵם חֲטָאָה גְדוֹלָה: כב וַיִּלְכוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בְּכָל־חֲטָאוֹת יִרְבֵּעַם אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לֹא־סָרוּ מִמֶּנָּה:
 כג עַד אֲשֶׁר־הִסִּיר יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל פְּנֵיו
 כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד כָּל־עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים וַיִּגַּל יִשְׂרָאֵל
 מֵעַל אֲדָמְתוֹ אֲשׁוּרָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: {פ}

כד וַיָּבֵא מֶלֶךְ־אֲשׁוּר מִבָּבֶל וּמִכּוּתָה וּמֵעֹנָא
 וּמִחַמַת וּסְפָרַיִם וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּעָרֵי שְׁמֶרוֹן תַּחַת בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּרְשׁוּ אֶת־שְׁמֶרוֹן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בְּעָרֶיהָ: כה וַיְהִי
 בַּתְּחִלָּתָם לֹא יָרְאוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁלַח
 יְהוָה בָּהֶם אֶת־הָאֲרִיֹּת וַיְהִיו הַרְגִים בָּהֶם:

that Israel had introduced. ²⁰ Yahweh rejected the whole race of Israel; he brought them low, delivering them into the hands of marauders, until at length he thrust them away from him. ²¹ When he had torn Israel away from the House of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat king. Jeroboam drove Israel away from Yahweh and led them into a great sin. ²² The Israelites copied the sin Jeroboam had committed; they did not give it up, ²³ until at length Yahweh thrust Israel away from him, as he had foretold through all his servants the prophets; he deported the Israelites from their own land to Assyria, where they still are today.

²⁴ The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites; they took possession of Samaria and lived in its towns. ²⁵ When they first came to live there, they did not worship Yahweh, so Yahweh sent lions against them, which killed a number of

²⁰ In place of 'he brought them low', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'he punished them' and NETB has 'he humiliated them'.

²¹ The *Ketiv* has 'pushed away' (וַיִּדְא) in place of 'drove away', here following the *Qere* (וַיִּזְחַח).

²² The literal translation of 'give it up' is 'turn away from it'.

²³ This verse suggests that the Book of Kings was written during the Exile.

²⁴ Vv. 24–28 (and 41) offer a simplified view of the resettlement of the Northern Kingdom; they presuppose a wholesale deportation of the Israelite population and fuse several successive colonisations; by the story of vv. 25–28, they explain the persistence of Yahwistic worship in these non-Jewish surroundings. Sargon's own records confirm v. 24 thus: "[The cities] I set up again and made more populous than before. People from lands that I had taken I settled there." Later Assyrian kings continued this policy. The land was no longer called 'Israel', but 'Samaria'; the people were Samaritans (v. 29), not Israelites.

²⁵ The literal translation of 'worship' is 'fear'.

כּו וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְמֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר לֵאמֹר הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִגַּלְתָּ
וּתּוֹשָׁבֵי בְעָרֵי שַׁמְרֹון לֹא יָדְעוּ אֶת־מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵי
הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁלַח־בָּם אֶת־הָאֲרִיזוֹת וְהִנֵּם מִמֵּיתִים
אוֹתָם כַּאֲשֶׁר אֵינָם יֹדְעִים אֶת־מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵי
הָאָרֶץ: כׇּז וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר לֵאמֹר הֲלִיכּוּ שָׁמָּה
אֶחָד מֵהַכֹּהֲנִים אֲשֶׁר הִגַּלְתֶּם מִשָּׁם וַיִּלְכוּ וַיֵּשְׁבוּ
שָׁם וַיְרִם אֶת־מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ: כׇּח וַיָּבֵא אֶחָד
מֵהַכֹּהֲנִים אֲשֶׁר הִגְלוּ מִשַּׁמְרֹון וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּבֵית־אֵל
וַיְהִי מוֹרֶה אֹתָם אֵיךְ יִירָאוּ אֶת־יְהוָה:

כׇּט וַיְהִיו עֹשִׂים גּוֹי גּוֹי אֱלֹהֵיו וַיִּנְיְחוּ בְּבֵית הַבָּמוֹת
אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ הַשַּׁמְרֹנִים גּוֹי גּוֹי בְּעָרֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הֵם
יֹשְׁבֵי שָׁם: ל וְאֲנָשֵׁי בָבֶל עָשׂוּ אֶת־סִכּוֹת בְּנוֹת
וְאֲנָשֵׁי־כּוּת עָשׂוּ אֶת־נֶרְגַל וְאֲנָשֵׁי חֲמַת עָשׂוּ אֶת־
אַשִּׁימָא: ׀ א וְהָעַוִּים עָשׂוּ נִבְחָז וְאֶת־תַּרְתַּק

them.²⁶ They said to the king of Assyria, “The nations you deported and settled in the towns of Samaria do not know how to worship the God of the country, and he has sent lions against them; and now these are killing them because they do not know how to worship the God of the country.”²⁷ So, the king of Assyria gave this order: “Send back one of the priests whom you deported from there; let him go and live there and teach them how to worship the God of the country.”²⁸ Accordingly, one of the priests they had deported from Samaria came to live in Bethel; he taught them how to worship Yahweh.

²⁹ Each nation made gods of their own and put them in the temples of the high places made by the Samaritans; each nation did this in the towns allocated to it.³⁰ The men of Babylon had made a Succoth-Benoth, the men of Cuthah a Nergal, the men of Hamath an Ashima,³¹ the Avvites a Nibhaz and a Tartak; while the Sepharvites burnt their

²⁶ The plural subject of the opening verb is indefinite.

²⁷ The NJB, following the Tg, has ‘I deported from there’; ‘let him go and live there’ follows the Peshitta; the MT has ‘let them go and live there’.

²⁸ ‘Bethel’ was an important cult centre for the Northern Kingdom.

²⁹ The details of vv. 29–34^a were added during the Exile. These verses explain how it came about that the worship of Yahweh became contaminated by various foreign cults.

³⁰ No deity is known by the name ‘Succoth-Benoth’ (the Hebrew means ‘Booths of Daughters’) in extant Mesopotamian literature; ‘Nergal’ was a Mesopotamian god of the underworld but ‘Ashima’ is unknown in extra-biblical literature. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

³¹ ‘Nibhaz’ and ‘Tartak’ were two Elamite deities, the former related to the Egyptian Anubis. Note that the ׀ in נִבְחָז is presented as an enlarged letter, just as it appears in almost all Hebrew MSS.

והספרוים שרפים את־בניהם באש לאדרמלך וענמלך אלה אלהי ספרים ספרוים: ^{לב} ויהיו יראים את־יהוה ויעשו להם מקצותם פהני במות ויהיו עשים להם בבית הבמות: ^{לג} את־יהוה היו יראים ואת־אלהיהם היו עבדים כמשפט הגוים אשר־הגלו אתם משם:

^{לד} עד היום הזה הם עשים כמשפטים הראשנים אינם יראים את־יהוה ואינם עשים כחקתם וכמשפטים וכתורה וכמצוה אשר צוה יהוה את־בני יעקב אשר־שם שמו ישראל: ^{לה} ויכרת יהוה אתם ברית ויצום לאמר לא תיראו אלהים אחרים ולא־תשתחוו להם ולא תעבדום ולא תזבחו להם: ^{לו} כי אם־את־יהוה אשר העלה אתכם מארץ מצרים בכח גדול ובזרוע נטויה אתו תיראו ולו תשתחוו ולו תזבחו: ^{לז} ואת־החקים ואת־המשפטים והתורה והמצוה אשר

children in the fire in honour of Adrammelech and of Anammelech, gods of Sepharvaim. ³² They worshipped Yahweh as well, and they appointed priests out of their own number for the high places who officiated for them in the temples of the high places. ³³ They worshipped Yahweh and also served their own gods, with the rites of the countries from which they had been taken.

³⁴ To this day, they still continue to observe their former rites. They did not worship Yahweh and did not conform to the statutes or the ordinances, or the law or the commandments, which Yahweh had laid down for the sons of Jacob to whom he gave the name Israel. ³⁵ Yahweh had made a covenant with them and had given them this command: "You are not to worship alien gods, you are not to bow down to them or serve them or offer them sacrifices, ³⁶ but you shall worship the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm; you shall bow yourselves to him, and to him you shall sacrifice. ³⁷ You are to observe the statutes and ordinances, the law and

³² The literal translation of 'worshipped' is 'feared'.

³³ The NJB adds 'at the same time' after 'served their own gods'.

³⁴ The development in vv. 34^b-40 reverts to the sins responsible for the ruin of Israel and would be more appropriately placed in the first part of the chapter; the verses are additional, piling up general formulae unrelated to the historical situation.

³⁵ 'With them' here refers to the descendants of Jacob.

³⁶ The NJB rearranges and abbreviates this verse: "You are to bow down and offer sacrifice to Yahweh who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power and outstretched arm."

³⁷ The NJB has 'ritual' in place of 'ordinances', here following the NRSV.

כָּתַב לָכֶם תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּל־הַיְמִים וְלֹא תִירָאוּ
 אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: ^{לח} וְהִבְרִית אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַתִּי אִתְּכֶם לֹא
 תִשְׁכַּחוּ וְלֹא תִירָאוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: ^{לט} כִּי אִם־
 אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם תִּירָאוּ וְהוּא יַצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד
 כָּל־אִיְבֵיכֶם: ^מ וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ כִּי אִם־כַּמְשַׁפְּטִים
 הָרֵאשׁוֹן הֵם עֹשִׂים: ^{מא} וַיְהִיו | הַגּוֹזִים הָאֵלֶּה יִרְאִים
 אֶת־יְהוָה וְאֶת־פְּסִילֵיהֶם הָיוּ עֲבָדִים גַּם־בְּנֵיהֶם |
 וּבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֲבֹתָם הֵם עֹשִׂים עַד הַיּוֹם
 הַזֶּה: {פ}

the commandments, which he has given you in writing and to which you are always to conform; you are not to worship alien gods. ³⁸ Do not forget the Covenant I have made with you, and do not worship alien gods, ³⁹ but you shall worship Yahweh alone, your God, and he will deliver you out of the power of all your enemies.” ⁴⁰ They would not listen, however, but still followed their old rites. ⁴¹ These nations, then, worshipped Yahweh and served their carved images as well, their children, too, and their children’s children still behave today as their fathers behaved in the past.

³⁸ In place of ‘worship’, the NJB has ‘venerate’ (as also in v. 39).

³⁹ The NJB lacks the conjunctive ‘but you shall’ at the beginning of this verse.

⁴⁰ The NRSV has ‘former custom’ in place of ‘old rites’, here following the NJB.

⁴¹ This verse summarises vv. 29–34^a.

מלכים ב פרק יח

א ויהי בשנת שלש להושע בן-אלה מלך ישראל
מלך חזקיה בן-אחז מלך יהודה: ב בן-עשרים
וחמש שנה היה במלכו ועשרים ותשע שנה מלך
בירושלם ושם אמו אבי בת-זכריה: ג ויעש הישר
בעיני יהוה ככל אשר-עשה דוד אביו: ד הוא
הסיר את-הבמות ושבר את-המצבת וכרת את-
האשרה וכתת נחש הנחשת אשר-עשה משה כי
עדהימים ההמה היו בני-ישראל מקטרים לו
ויקראלו נחשתן: ה ביהוה אלהי-ישראל בטח
ואחריז לא-היה כמהו בכל מלכי יהודה ואשר
היו לפניו: ו וידבק ביהוה לא-סר מאחריז וישמר

2 KINGS 18

¹ In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz became king in Judah. ² He was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi daughter of Zechariah. ³ He did what was pleasing to Yahweh, just as his ancestor David had done. ⁴ He abolished the high places, broke the pillars, and cut down the sacred pole; he smashed the bronze serpent that Moses had made for, up to that time the Israelites had offered sacrifice to it; it was called Nehushtan. ⁵ He trusted Yahweh, the God of Israel; there was no one like him among all the kings of Judah after him, or any of those before him. ⁶ He held fast to Yahweh, not turning from him, but kept the commandments that

2 KINGS 18

- ¹ Chs. 18–20 present many exegetical problems but the main outlines of the story seem to be clear: Hezekiah revolted against Assyria (18:7) and Judah was severely punished (701 BCE). Sennacherib himself reported that forty-six of the fortified cities and “countless small villages” were taken, while Hezekiah was shut up in Jerusalem “like a bird in a cage” (compare Is 1:7–8). Jerusalem escaped capture only by payment of a huge sum for indemnity (18:13–16); Judah was forced to remain a subservient vassal of Assyria.
- ² Hezekiah reigned 711–687 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 715–687 BCE according to W.F. Albright. The *NJB*, following 2Ch 29:1, has ‘Abijah’ in place of ‘Abi’.
- ³ The literal translation of ‘pleasing to Yahweh’ is ‘right in the sight of Yahweh’.
- ⁴ ‘Scared pole’ is a translation of the Hebrew name, ‘Asherah’; the *NJB*, following the *LXX*, uses the plural – here, we follow the *MT* & *NRSV*. The name ‘Nehushtan’ alludes both to the material of which it was made and to its shape; it was said to be the image made by Moses in the desert (Nb 21:8–9) and was the object of idolatrous worship (Ws 16:6–7).
- ⁵ Literally translated, this verse ends, “and after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, and those who were before him.”
- ⁶ In place of ‘held fast’, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* has ‘was devoted’.

מִצֹּתָיו אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: וְהָיָה יְהוָה
עִמּוֹ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵא יִשְׁכִּיל וַיִּמְרֹד בְּמֶלֶךְ־אֲשׁוּר
וְלֹא עֲבָדוֹ: הִוא־הִכָּה אֶת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים עַד־עֲזָה
וְאֶת־גְּבוּלֶיהָ מִמְּגִדֹל נּוֹצְרִים עַד־עִיר מִבְּצָר: {פ}

וַיְהִי בִשְׁנַת הָרְבִיעִית לְמֶלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּהוּ הָיָה הַשָּׁנָה
הַשְּׁבִיעִית לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־אֵלָה מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָה
שְׁלֹמֶנְאֶסֶר מֶלֶךְ־אֲשׁוּר עַל־שֹׁמְרוֹן וַיִּצַר עָלֶיהָ:
וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ מִקְצֵה שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים בְּשַׁנְת־שֵׁשׁ לְחִזְקִיָּה
הָיָה שְׁנַת־תִּשְׁעַ לְהוֹשֵׁעַ מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל נִלְכְּדָה
שֹׁמְרוֹן: וַיִּגַּל מֶלֶךְ־אֲשׁוּר אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשׁוּרָה
וַיִּנְחָם בַּחֲלָח וּבַחֲבוּר נְהַר גּוֹזָן וְעָרֵי מְדִי: יב עַל
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲבְרוּ אֶת־
בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מֹשֶׁה עֲבָד יְהוָה וְלֹא
שָׁמְעוּ וְלֹא עָשׂוּ: {פ}

יג וּבְאַרְבַּע עָשָׂר שָׁנָה לְמֶלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּה עָלָה
סִנְחַרִּיב מֶלֶךְ־אֲשׁוּר עַל כָּל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה הַבְּצֻרוֹת

Yahweh gave Moses. ⁷ Yahweh was with him, and he was successful in all that he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and refused to serve him. ⁸ It was he who harassed the Philistines as far as Gaza, laying their territory waste from watchtower to fortified town.

⁹ In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria made war on Samaria, laid siege to it, ¹⁰ and after three years, captured it. Samaria fell in the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel. ¹¹ The king of Assyria deported the Israelites to Assyria and settled them in Halah on the Habor, a river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. ¹² This happened because they had not obeyed the voice of Yahweh their God and had broken his Covenant, violating all that Moses the servant of Yahweh had commanded; they neither listened to it nor put it into practice.

¹³ Now, in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked the fortified towns of Judah and captured them. ¹⁴ Then

⁷ Hezekiah's rebellion was either in 711 BCE or, more probably, after Sargon's death in 705 BCE.

⁸ NETB has 'city fortress' in place of 'fortified town'.

⁹ This paragraph recapitulates the events of 17:5-6, adding a reflection in the spirit of 17:7.

¹⁰ On the date of the fall of Samaria, see #1.

¹¹ 'Gozan' is probably modern Tell Halaf, in north-eastern Syria, near the Turkish border.

¹² The literal translation of 'obeyed' is 'listened to'.

¹³ The whole of 18:13-19:37 is repeated with minor variations in Is 36-37.

¹⁴ Since the accepted weight for a talent of metal is about 34 Kg, this would have amounted to over 10 tonnes of silver and 1 tonne of gold.

וַיִּתְּפָשׂוּם: יד וַיִּשְׁלַח חֲזַקְיָה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה אֶל־מֶלֶךְ־
 אַשּׁוּר׃ לְכִישָׁה׃ לֵאמֹר׃ חָטָאתִי שׁוּב מֵעָלַי אַתָּה
 אֲשֶׁר־תִּתֵּן עָלַי אֲשָׂא וַיִּשֶׂם מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר עַל־חֲזַקְיָה
 מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת כֶּכֶר־כֶּסֶף וּשְׁלֹשִׁים כֶּכֶר
 זָהָב: טו וַיִּתֵּן חֲזַקְיָה אֶת־כָּל־הַכֶּסֶף הַנִּמְצָא בֵּית־
 יְהוָה וּבְאֲצֻרוֹת בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ: טז בָּעֵת הַהִיא קָצַץ
 חֲזַקְיָה אֶת־דַּלְתוֹת הַיָּבֵל יְהוָה וְאֶת־הָאֲמֹנוֹת
 אֲשֶׁר צָפָה חֲזַקְיָה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וַיִּתְּנֵם לְמֶלֶךְ־
 אַשּׁוּר: {פ}

יז וַיִּשְׁלַח מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר אֶת־תַּרְתָּן וְאֶת־רַב־סָרִיס׃
 וְאֶת־רַב־שָׂקָה מִן־לְכִישׁ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲזַקְיָהוּ בְּחִיל
 כָּבֵד יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ
 וַיַּעֲמְדוּ בְּתַעֲלַת הַבְּרֵכָה הַעֲלִיּוֹנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּמִסְלַת
 שְׂדֵה כַבֵּס: יח וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּצֵא אֱלֵהֶם
 אֱלִיָּקִים בֶּן־חֲלֻקִּיָּהוּ אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַבַּיִת וְשִׁבְנָה הַסֹּפֵר
 וַיֹּאחַ בֶּן־אַסָּף הַמִּזְכִּיר: יט וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם רַב־שָׂקָה
 אָמְרוּ־נָא אֶל־חֲזַקְיָהוּ כֹה־אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל מֶלֶךְ־

Hezekiah, the king of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying “I have done wrong. Withdraw from me: I will bear whatever you impose on me.” The king of Assyria exacted three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold from Hezekiah king of Judah,¹⁵ and Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the Temple of Yahweh and in the treasury of the royal palace.¹⁶ It was then that Hezekiah stripped the facing from the leaves and jambs of the doors of the Temple of Yahweh, which an earlier king of Judah had plated, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

¹⁷ From Lachish, the king of Assyria sent the commander-in-chief, the chief eunuchs, and the cupbearer-in-chief with a large force to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. They went up and came to Jerusalem and, when they arrived, they took a position near the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway to the Fuller’s Field.¹⁸ When they summoned the king, Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was master of the palace, Shebna, who was the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the recorder, went out to them.¹⁹ The cupbearer-in-chief said to them, “Say to Hezekiah, “Thus

¹⁵ Before ‘in the Temple’, the MT includes the words ‘that was found’.

¹⁶ The words ‘an earlier’ are supplied by the NJB as a correction; by an oversight, the MT repeats ‘Hezekiah’.

¹⁷ The NRSV uses the Hebrew names, ‘Tartan’ for ‘commander-in-chief’, ‘Rabsarim’ for ‘chief eunuchs’ and ‘Rabshakeh’ for ‘cupbearer-in-chief’ (as in vv. 19, 27, 28 and 37). The NJB omits ‘the commander-in-chief and the chief eunuchs’.

¹⁸ The NJB has the singular pronouns in place of the 3P plural in this verse, as also in v. 18.

¹⁹ Literally translated, the cupbearer’s question reads, “What is the object of trust in which you are trusting?”

אֲשׁוּר מֶה הַבְּטָחוֹן הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בְּטַחַת: כִּי אָמַרְתָּ
אֲדֹדְדִבְרֵי-שְׁפָתַי עֵצָה וּגְבוּרָה לְמַלְחָמָה עִתָּה
עַל-מִי בְטַחַת כִּי מֵרַדְתָּ בִּי: כִּי עִתָּה הִנֵּה בְטַחַת
לְךָ עַל-מִשְׁעָנֶת הַקִּנָּה הַרְצוּן הַזֶּה עַל-מִצְרַיִם
אֲשֶׁר יִסְמְךָ אִישׁ עָלָיו וּבֹא בְכַפּוֹ וּנְקָבָה בֶּן פְּרִעָה
מִלֶּךְ-מִצְרַיִם לְכָל-הַבְּטָחִים עָלָיו: כִּבִּי וְכִי-תֹאמְרוּן
אֵלֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְטַחְנוּ הֲלוֹא-הוּא אֲשֶׁר
הִסִּיר חֲזִקָהּ וְאֶת-בְּמֹתָיו וְאֶת-מִזְבְּחֹתָיו וַיֹּאמֶר
לְיְהוּדָה וּלְיִירוּשָׁלַם לִפְנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הַזֶּה תִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ
בִירוּשָׁלַם: כִּבִּי וְעִתָּה הֲתִעָרֵב נָא אֶת-אֲדֹנָי אֶת-
מֶלֶךְ אֲשׁוּר וְאֶתְנָה לְךָ אֲלָפִים סוּסִים אִם-תּוֹכֵל
לָתֵת לְךָ רֶכֶבִים עֲלֵיהֶם: כִּד וְאִיךָ תִשִּׁיב אֶת פְּנֵי
פַחַת אֶחָד עַבְדֵי אֲדֹנָי הַקְּטַנִּים וְתִבְטַח לְךָ עַל-
מִצְרַיִם לָרֶכֶב וּלְפָרָשִׁים: כִּהֵ עִתָּה הַמִּבְלַעַדִי יְהוֹה

speaks the great king, the king of Assyria: What makes you so confident? ²⁰ Do you think empty words are as good as strategy as military strength? On whom are you relying, to dare to rebel against me? ²¹ We know you are relying on that broken reed Egypt, which pricks and pierces the hand of the man who leans on it. – That is what Pharaoh king of Egypt is like to all who rely on him. – ²² You may say to me: We rely on Yahweh our God, but are they not his high places and altars that Hezekiah has suppressed, saying to the people of Judah and Jerusalem: This, in Jerusalem, is the altar, before which you must worship? ²³ Come! Make a wager with my lord the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses if you can find horsemen to ride them. ²⁴ How could you repulse a single captain among the least of my master’s servants, when you rely on Egypt for chariots and horsemen? ²⁵ Moreover, have I come up against this place to lay it waste without warrant from

²⁰ Sennacherib’s message appears to be in broken Hebrew at this point.

²¹ Attempts to form an alliance with Egypt were condemned by Isaiah.

²² The cupbearer seems to misunderstand the nature of the ‘high places’ that Hezekiah abolished.

²³ The literal translation of ‘make a wager’ is ‘exchange pledges’.

²⁴ In vv. 23–24, the cupbearer develops further the argument begun in v. 21; his reasoning seems to be as follows: “In your weakened condition, you obviously need military strength; agree to the king’s terms and I will personally give you more horses than you are capable of outfitting. If I, a mere minor official, am capable of giving you such military might, just think what power the king has: there is no way the Egyptians can match our strength, so it makes much better sense to deal with us.”

²⁵ Here, the cupbearer claims that Hezekiah has offended Yahweh and that Yahweh has commissioned Assyria as his instrument of discipline and judgment.

עָלִיתִי עַל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַשְׁחִתּוֹ יְהוָה אָמַר אֵלַי
עֲלֵה עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְהַשְׁחִיתָהּ:

כ^ו וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְיָקִים בֶּן־חֶלְקִיָּהוּ וְשִׁבְנָה וַיּוֹאֲח אֶל־
רַב־שָׂקָה דְבַר־נָא אֶל־עַבְדֶּיךָ אַרְמִית כִּי שְׁמַעִים
אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֶל־תִּדְבֹר עִמָּנוּ יְהוּדִית בְּאֲזְנֵי הָעָם אֲשֶׁר
עַל־הַחֲמָה: כ^ז וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם רַב־שָׂקָה הֲעַל אֲדַנְיָךְ
וְאֵלֶיךָ שְׁלַחְנִי אֲדַנִּי לְדַבֵּר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
הֲלֹא עַל־הָאֲנָשִׁים הַיֹּשְׁבִים עַל־הַחֲמָה לֵאכֹל אֶת־
צוֹאֲתָם חֲרִיהֶם וּלְשִׁתּוֹת אֶת־[מִימֵי רַגְלֵיהֶם]
שְׁנִיהֶם עִמָּכֶם: כ^ח וַיַּעֲמֵד רַב־שָׂקָה וַיִּקְרָא בְּקוֹל־
גְּדוֹל יְהוּדִית וַיְדַבֵּר וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַעוּ דְבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ
הַגָּדוֹל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר: כ^ט כֹּה אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יִשָּׂא
לְכֶם חֲזַקְיָהוּ כִּי־לֹא יוּכַל לְהַצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיָּדוֹ:
ל וְאֶל־יִבְטַח אֶתְכֶם חֲזַקְיָהוּ אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר הֲצִל
יִצְיָלְנוּ יְהוָה וְלֹא תִנָּתֵן אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ
אַשּׁוּר: לא אֶל־תִּשְׁמַעוּ אֶל־חֲזַקְיָהוּ כִּי כֹה אָמַר
מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר עֲשׂוּ־אֵתִי בְרָכָה וּצְאוּ אֵלַי וְאֲכַלְוּ

Yahweh? Yahweh himself said to me: March against this country and lay it waste.””

²⁶ Then Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, Shebna and Joah spoke to the cupbearer-in-chief, saying, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic; for, we understand it; do not speak to us in the Judaeen language within earshot of the people on the ramparts.” ²⁷ However, the cupbearer-in-chief said, “Do you think my lord sent me here to say these things to your master or to you? On the contrary, it was to the people sitting on the ramparts who, like you, are doomed to eat their own dung and rink their own urine.” ²⁸ Then the cupbearer-in-chief stood and, shouting in the Judaeen language, called out, “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria. ²⁹ Thus says the king: “Do not let Hezekiah delude you. He will be powerless to save you from my hand. ³⁰ Do not let Hezekiah make you rely on Yahweh by saying: Yahweh is sure to save us; this city will not be handed over to the king of Assyria. ³¹ Do not listen to Hezekiah, for the king of Assyria says this: Make peace with me, surrender to me, and every one of you will eat the fruit of his own vine

²⁶ Aramaic was coming into use in the Middle East as the *lingua franca* and was later to be the language commonly spoken in Palestine.

²⁷ The *Kethib/Qere* differences here would benefit from explanations.

²⁸ For ‘called out’, the MT has ‘he spoke and said’.

²⁹ ‘My hand’ here follows the LXX (*χειρός μου*), Tg, Peshitta, Vg and many medieval Hebrew MSS; the MT has ‘his hand’ (*vav/yod* confusion).

³⁰ In place of ‘handed over to’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘fall into the power of’.

³¹ The literal translation of ‘make peace with me’ is ‘make with me a blessing’.

אִישׁ־גִּפְנוֹ וְאִישׁ תְּאֲנֹתוֹ וּשְׂתוֹ אִישׁ מִי־בְרוֹ: לִב־עַד־
בָּאֵי וְלִקְחֹתַי אֶתְכֶם אֶל־אֶרֶץ כְּאֶרְצְכֶם אֶרֶץ דָּגָן
וְתִירוֹשׁ אֶרֶץ לֶחֶם וּכְרָמִים אֶרֶץ זֵית יִצְהָר וּדְבַשׁ
וּחַיּוֹ וְלֹא תָמַתוּ וְאֶל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־חֲזַקְיָהוּ כִּי־יִסִּית
אֶתְכֶם לֵאמֹר יְהוָה יִצִּילֵנוּ: לֵג הֵהָעֵל הֵצִילוֹ אֱלֹהֵי
הַגּוֹיִם אִישׁ אֶת־אֶרְצוֹ מִיַּד מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר: לִד אֵיֶה
אֱלֹהֵי חַמַּת וְאַרְפָּד אֵיֶה אֱלֹהֵי סַפְרוּיִם הִנֵּעַ וְעוֹהָ
כִּי־הֵצִילוֹ אֶת־שֶׁמְרוֹן מִיָּדִי: לִה מִי בְּכָל־אֱלֹהֵי
הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר־הֵצִילוֹ אֶת־אֶרְצָם מִיָּדִי כִּי־יִצִּיל
יְהוָה אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם מִיָּדִי:

לֹא וְהַחֲרִישׁוּ הָעָם וְלֹא־עָנּוּ אֹתוֹ דְּבַר כִּי־מִצּוֹת
הַמֶּלֶךְ הָיָא לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעֲנֶהוּ: לִז וַיָּבֹא אֱלִיאֲקִים בֶּן־
חִלְקִיָה אֲשֶׁר־עַל־הַבַּיִת וְשִׁבְנָא הַסֹּפֵר וַיֹּאחַ בֶּן־
אֶסָף הַמְזָבִיר אֶל־חֲזַקְיָהוּ קְרוּעֵי בְּגָדִים וַיַּגִּדוּ לוֹ
דְּבָרֵי רַב־שָׂקָה:

and of his own fig tree and drink the water of his own cistern ³² until I come and take you to a land like your own, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil and honey, so that you may not die but live. Do not listen to Hezekiah who is deluding you when he says: Yahweh will save us. ³³ Have any of the gods of the nations saved his country from the power of the king of Assyria? ³⁴ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivvah? Did they save Samaria from me? ³⁵ Who among all the gods of any country have saved their countries from my hands, for Yahweh to be able to save Jerusalem?"

³⁶ The people kept silence and said nothing in reply, for the king's order was: "Do not answer him." ³⁷ The master of the palace, Eliakim son of Hilkiyah, Shebna the secretary and the herald Joah son of Asaph, with their garments torn, went to Hezekiah and reported what the cupbearer-in-chief had said.

³² Here, the 'threat' of deportation is dressed up as a promise of future well-being.

³³ In place of 'any of the gods', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'any god'.

³⁴ 'Ivvah' is an alternative form of 'Avva' (17:24). Sennacherib's immediate predecessors had conquered these Syrian cities. The NJB adds, 'Where are the local gods of Samaria?' before 'did they save'.

³⁵ The logic runs as follows: Since no god has ever been able to withstand the Assyrian onslaught, how can the people of Jerusalem possibly think Yahweh will rescue them?

³⁶ The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "since such was the king's order: "Do not answer him," he had said."

³⁷ The torn clothes were a sign of grief and mourning.

מלכים ב פרק יט

א ויהי כשמע המלך חזקיהו ויקרע את בגדיו ויתכס בשק ויבא בית יהוה: ב וישלח את אליקים אשר-עלה-בית ושבנא הספר ואת זקני הכהנים מתכסים בשקים אל-ישעיהו הנביא בן-אמוץ: ג ויאמרו אליו כה אמר חזקיהו יום-צרה ותוכחה ונאצה היום הזה כי באו בנים עד-משבר וכח אין ללדה: ד אולי ישמע יהוה אלהיך את כל-דברי רבשקה אשר שלחו מלך-אשור | אדניו לחרף אלהים חי והולית בדברים אשר שמע יהוה אלהיך ונשאת תפלה בעד השארית הנמצאה: ה ויבאו עבדי המלך חזקיהו אל-ישעיהו: ו ויאמר להם ישעיהו כה תאמרו אל-אדניכם כה | אמר יהוה אל-תירא מפני הדברים אשר שמעת אשר גדפו נערי מלך-אשור אתי: ז הנני נתן בו רוח

2 KINGS 19

1 When he heard this, King Hezekiah tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and went into Yahweh's Temple. 2 He sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the secretary, and the elders of the priests, wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 3 They said to him, "This is what Hezekiah says, "Today is a day of suffering, of punishment, of disgrace. Children have come to birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. 4 It may be that Yahweh your God has heard the words of the cupbearer-in-chief whose master the king of Assyria has sent to insult the living God, and maybe Yahweh your God will punish the words he has heard. Offer your prayer for the remnant that is left."" 5 When the ministers of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, 6 he said, "Say to your master, "Yahweh says this: Do not be afraid of the words you have heard, with which the minions of the king of Assyria have reviled me. 7 I am going to put a spirit in him and, when he hears

2 KINGS 19

¹ Hezekiah's actions express grief and mourning.

² Hezekiah consults Isaiah in the way in which earlier kings of Israel and Judah consulted the prophets Elijah and Elisha as their councillors in war (see 1:9ff, 3:11ff, 6:8ff, 1K 22:8ff).

³ The last sentence is probably a proverbial expression for a desperate situation.

⁴ The NRSV uses the Hebrew name, 'Rabshakeh' in place of 'cupbearer-in-chief', here following the NJB, and NETB has 'chief advisor'. The saving of a 'remnant' of the chosen people is one of the themes of Isaiah's preaching (see vv. 30-31 and #Is 4:3).

⁵ The NJB has 'had come' in place of 'came', here following the NRSV.

⁶ The NRSV & NETB, following the MT, repeat 'Isaiah' in place of the opening pronoun, 'he'; here, we follow the NJB.

⁷ 'Spirit' is here not a celestial personal spirit but an imperative inspiration from God.

וּשְׁמַע שְׁמוּעָה וְשָׁב לְאַרְצוֹ וְהִפְלִיתוּ בַּחֲרָב
בְּאַרְצוֹ:

ח וַיָּשָׁב רַב־שָׂרָא וַיִּמְצָא אֶת־מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר נֹלְחָם עַל־
לִבְנָה כִּי שָׁמַע כִּי נָסַע מֶלֶכִּישׁ: ט וַיִּשְׁמַע אֶל־
תִּרְחָקָה מֶלֶךְ־כּוּשׁ לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה יֵצֵא לְהִלָּחֵם אֶתְּךָ
וַיִּשְׁלַח מְלָאכִים אֶל־חִזְקִיָּהוּ לֵאמֹר: 'כֹּה
תֹּאמְרוּן אֶל־חִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר אֵל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בֹטָח בּוֹ לֵאמֹר לֹא תִנָּתֵן
יְרוּשָׁלַם בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר: יא הִנֵּה! אַתָּה שְׁמַעְתָּ
אֵת אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ מַלְכֵי אַשּׁוּר לְכָל־הָאָרְצוֹת
לְהַחְרִימָם וְאַתָּה תִּנְצֹל: יב הֲהִצִּילוּ אֲתָם אֱלֹהֵי
הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר שָׁחְתוּ אֲבוֹתַי אֶת־גּוֹזָן וְאֶת־חֶרֶן וְרֶצֶף
וּבְנֵי־עֵדֶן אֲשֶׁר בַּת־לַאשּׁוּר: יג אִיזוֹ מֶלֶךְ־חֲמַת וּמֶלֶךְ
אַרְפָּד וּמֶלֶךְ לַעִיר סַפְרַיִם הִנֵּעַ וְעוּהָ: יד וַיִּקַּח
חִזְקִיָּהוּ אֶת־הַסְּפָרִים מִיַּד הַמְּלָאכִים וַיִּקְרָאֵם וַיַּעֲלֵם
בֵּית יְהוָה וַיִּפְרְשֵׂהוּ חִזְקִיָּהוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: {פ}

a rumour, he will return to his own country; and, in that country, I will bring him down with the sword.””

⁸ The cupbearer returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah; he had learnt that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, ⁹ since he had received this news about Tirhakah king of Cush: “He has set out to fight you,” he sent messengers to Hezekiah again, saying, ¹⁰ “Tell this to Hezekiah king of Judah, “Do not let your God on whom you are relying deceive you, when he says: Jerusalem shall not fall into the power of the king of Assyria. ¹¹ You have learnt by now what the kings of Assyria have done to every country, putting them all under the ban. Are you likely to be saved? ¹² Did the gods of those nations my fathers destroyed help them – Gozan, Haran, Rezeph and the Edenites who were in Telassar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of Lair, of Sepharvaim, of Hena, of Ivvah?”” ¹⁴ Hezekiah took the letter from the hands of the messenger and read it; he then went up to the Temple of Yahweh and spread it out before Yahweh.

⁸ The NJB rearranges this verse somewhat, reading: “The cupbearer turned about and re-joined the king of Assyria, who was then attacking Libnah, as the cupbearer has learnt that the king has already left Lachish.”

⁹ ‘Tirhakah’ was Pharaoh of the 25th Dynasty, 690–664 BCE; He was of Ethiopian descent, hence his title, ‘king of Cush’.

¹⁰ The literal translation of ‘fall into the power of’ is ‘be given to’.

¹¹ The closing, rhetorical question, expects a negative answer.

¹² The NJB uses the conjectural ‘Tel Basar’ in place of ‘Telassar’.

¹³ ‘Lair’ was a city located in north-eastern Babylon.

¹⁴ In place of ‘letter’, the MT has ‘letters’ (הַסְּפָרִים) but the final *mem* is probably dittographic. Some Greek and Aramaic MSS have the singular.

^{טו} וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל חֲזַקִּיָּהוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים אֶת־הָהוּא הָאֱלֹהִים לְבַדָּךָ
 לְכֹל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ: ^{טז} הֲטָה יְהוָה | אֲזַנְדָּךָ וְשָׁמַע פֶּקַח יְהוָה
 עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאָה וְשָׁמַע אֶת דְּבַרֵי סַנְחֵרִיב אֲשֶׁר שְׁלָחוּ
 לְחַרְף אֱלֹהִים חַי: ^{יז} אֲמַנְם יְהוָה הַחֲרִיבוּ מַלְכֵי
 אַשּׁוּר אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם וְאֶת־אֲרָצָם: ^{יח} וְנָתַנּוּ אֶת־
 אֱלֹהֵיהֶם בָּאֵשׁ כִּי לֹא אֱלֹהִים הֵמָּה כִּי אִם־מַעֲשֵׂה
 יְדֵי־אָדָם עֵץ וְאֶבֶן וַיֵּאבְדוּם: ^{יט} וְעַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 הוֹשִׁיעֵנו נָא מִיָּדוֹ וַיִּדְעוּ כָּל־מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ כִּי
 אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְבַדָּךָ: {ס}

^כ וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן־אֲמוּץ אֶל־חֲזַקִּיָּהוּ לֵאמֹר כֹּה־
 אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הִתְפַּלַּלְתָּ אֵלַי אֶל־
 סַנְחֵרִיב מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר שָׁמַעְתִּי: ^{כא} זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־
 דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עָלַי

בָּזָה לְךָ לְעֵגָה לְךָ בְּתוֹלַת בֵּת־צִיּוֹן
 אֲחֲרִיךָ רֹאשׁ הַנִּיעָה בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם:

¹⁵ Hezekiah said this prayer in the presence of Yahweh, “Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel, enthroned on the cherubs, you alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. ¹⁶ Give ear, Yahweh, and listen. Open your eyes, Yahweh, and see! Hear the words of Sennacherib who has sent to insult the living God. ¹⁷ “It is true, Yahweh, that the kings of Assyria have exterminated all the nations and their lands, ¹⁸ they have thrown their gods on the fire, for these were not gods but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, and hence they have destroyed them. ¹⁹ But now, Yahweh our God, save us from his hand, I pray you, and let all the kingdoms of the earth know that you alone are God, Yahweh.”

²⁰ Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah. “Yahweh, the God of Israel,” he said, “says this, “I have heard the prayer you have addressed to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria.” ²¹ Here is the oracle that Yahweh has pronounced against him:

“She despises you and scorns you, the virgin, daughter of Zion;
 she tosses her head at you, the daughter of Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The reference to ‘cherubs’ is to the images that were above the Ark of the Covenant.

¹⁶ A more literal translation of ‘insult’ is, perhaps, ‘taunt’.

¹⁷ The NJB omits ‘and their lands’.

¹⁸ Hezekiah renounces the false gods of the nations conquered by Assyria.

¹⁹ Another translation for ‘you alone are God’ is ‘you are the only God’.

²⁰ The verb ‘I have heard’ does not appear in the parallel passage in Is 37:21, where אָשַׁר probably has a causal sense, ‘because’.

²¹ Of the three prophecies assembled here, only the 3rd (vv. 32–34) has any direct bearing on the deliverance of 701 BCE.

כב אֶת־מִי חִרַפְתָּ וְגִדַפְתָּ
וְעַל־מִי הִרִימוֹתָ קוֹל וַתִּשָּׂא מְרוֹם עֵינֶיךָ
עַל־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

כג בְּיַד מַלְאָכֶיךָ חִרַפְתָּ |
אֲדַנִּי וַתֹּאמֶר בִּרְכַב בָּרֶב רֶכְבִּי
אֲנִי עָלִיתִי מְרוֹם
הָרִים יִרְפַּתִּי לְבָנוֹן
וְאֶכְרַת קוֹמַת אֲרָזָיו מִבְּחֹר
בְּרִשְׁיוֹ וְאֶבֹּאֶה מְלוֹן קֶצֶה יַעַר בְּרַמְלוֹן:

כד אֲנִי קָרַתִּי וְשָׂתִיתִי מִיַּם זָרִים
וְאֶחָרַב בְּכַף־פְּעָמַי כָּל יַאֲרֵי מִצְרָיִם:
כה הֲלֹא־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְמַרְחֹק אֶתְּהָ עֲשִׂיתִי
לְמִימֵי קֶדֶם וַיִּצְרַתִּיהָ עֲתָה הִבִּיאֲתִיהָ
וַתְּהִי לְהַשׁוֹת גְּלִים נֹצִים עָרִים בְּצִרוֹת:

כו וַיִּשְׁבִּיהֶן קִצְרֵי־יָד
חֲתוּ וַיִּבְשׁוּ

22 Whom have you insulted, whom have you blasphemed?
Against whom raised your voice and lifted your haughty eyes:
Against the Holy One of Israel!

23 Through your envoys you have insulted the Lord,
thinking: With my many chariots
I have climbed the mountain tops,
the utmost peaks of Lebanon.
I have felled its mighty cedars, its finest cypresses;
have reached its furthest recesses, its forest garden.

24 Yes, I have dug wells and drunk of alien waters;
under the soles of my feet I have dried up all Egypt's rivers.

25 Do you hear? Long ago, I prepared this;
from days of old, I actually planned it, now I carry it out.
You were to lay walled cities in heaps of ruins.

26 Their inhabitants, feeble of hands,
were terrified and ashamed,

22 The divine title of the last line pictures Yahweh as the sovereign who rules over his covenant people and exercises moral authority over them.

23 In the MT, the verbs of vv. 23–24 are in the future tense; here, following the LXX, they are in the past tense. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

24 The first Assyrian king to invade Egypt was actually Esarhaddon, Sennacherib's successor.

25 Having quoted the Assyrian king's arrogant words in vv. 23–24, Yahweh now speaks to the king.

26 'Under the east wind' is a conjectural translation, supported by the *Qumran MSS* version of Is 37:27; the MT has 'before the standing grain' and the NRSV has 'before it is grown'.

הִיוּ עֲשָׂב שָׂדֵה וַיִּרְק דָּשָׁא חֲצִיר
גִּגּוֹת וּשְׂדֵפָה לִפְנֵי קָמָה:

כו וּשְׁבַתְךָ וּצְאֹתְךָ וּבֹאְךָ

יִדְעֹתִי וְאֵת

הַתְּרַגְּזָךָ אֵלַי:

כח יַעַן הַתְּרַגְּזָךָ אֵלַי

וּשְׂאֲנַנְךָ עָלָה בְּאָזְנִי

וּשְׁמֹתִי חָחִי בְּאַפֶּךָ

וּמִתְגִּי בְּשִׁפְתֶיךָ

וְהִשְׁבַּתְיָךָ בְּדַרְךָ

אֲשֶׁר-בָּאתָ בָּהּ:

כט וְזֶה-לְךָ הָאוֹת אֲכֹל

הַשָּׁנָה סְפִיחַ וּבַשָּׁנָה

הַשְּׁנִית סְחִישׁ וּבַשָּׁנָה

הַשְּׁלִישִׁית זֶרְעוּ וְקָצְרוּ

וּנְטְעוּ כִרְמִים וְאָכְלוּ פְּרִים:

weak as grass, frail as plants, like grass of housetop
and meadow under the east wind.

27 But whether you stand up or sit down, I know it
whether you go out or you come in,
and your raving against me.

28 Because you have raved against me
and your arrogance has reached my ears,
I shall put a hook in your nose,
and a muzzle on your lips,
and make you return by the road
by which you came.

29 This shall be the sign for you:
this year will be eaten the self-sown grain,
next year what sprouts in the fallow,
but in the third year sow and reap,
plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

²⁷ The *NJB* omits the last line, a doublet of the 1st line of v. 28.

²⁸ It is possible to improve the parallelism of this verse by replacing 'arrogance' (שְׂאֲנַנְךָ) with 'uproar' (שִׁאוֹןְךָ). The picture of the hook in the nose parallels Assyrian sculpture of the period.

²⁹ Isaiah now addresses Hezekiah. The 'sign' is hard to interpret; for two years it is impossible to sow and, at first, they eat whatever springs from the grain dropped during the previous harvest, and after that, whatever the neglected land has to offer; but Sennacherib did not stay even one year in Palestine, and deliverance came immediately (v. 35). Alternative explanations: the prophecy was pronounced on some different occasion, or else its importance is a very general one, namely that, after lean days, prosperity follows.

וְיִסְפָּה פְּלִיטַת בֵּית־יְהוּדָה הַנִּשְׁאָרָה ל
 שָׂרֵשׁ לְמַטָּה וְעֵשָׂה פְּרִי לְמַעְלָה:
 כִּי מִירוּשָׁלַם תֵּצֵא שְׂאִרִית וּפְלִיטָה ל
 מִהַר צִיּוֹן קִנְיָת
 יְהוָה [צְבָאוֹת] תַּעֲשֶׂה־זֹאת:
 {ס}

30 The surviving remnant of the House of Judah shall take root below and bear fruit above.

31 For a remnant shall issue from Jerusalem, and survivors from Mount Zion. Yahweh Sabaoth's jealous love shall accomplish this."

לִב לְכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֶל־מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר
 לֹא יבֹא אֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת
 וְלֹא־יִזְרֶה שָׁם חֶץ
 וְלֹא־יִקְדַּמְנָה מִגֶּן
 וְלֹא־יִשְׁפֹּךְ עָלֶיהָ סִלְלָה:
 ל
 בַּדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־יָבֹא בָּהּ יָשׁוּב
 וְאֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לֹא יבֹא נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
 ל
 וְגִנֹּתִי אֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ
 לְמַעַנִּי וּלְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי:

32 "This, then, is what Yahweh says about the king of Assyria:

"He will not enter this city, will shoot no arrow at it, confront it with no shield, throw up no earthwork against it.

33 By the way he came, by the same he shall return; he shall not enter this city, declares Yahweh.

34 I will protect this city and save it for my own sake and my servant David's sake."

30 The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

31 Vv. 29–31, though not very clear, seem to be more modestly realistic than the rest of the chapter, in expecting only a remnant to carry forward the work of Yahweh. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here (addition of *צְבָאוֹת*) would benefit from an explanation.

32 Contrast vv. 32–34 with the preceding: it has been claimed, on the basis of this passage and the parallel in Is 37:33–35, that Isaiah taught the doctrine of the 'inviolability of Zion', i.e. that Jerusalem could never be taken (compare 20:6). Many interpreters doubt this claim, with very good reason.

33 For the 1st line, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* reads, "By the road by which he came, by that he will return."

34 The *NJB* lacks the word 'own', here following the *NRSV*.

לַיהוָה בַּלַּיְלָהָ הַהוּא וַיֵּצֵא מִלֶּאֶד יְהוָה וַיִּדֹּל
 בַּמַּחֲנֶה אֲשׁוּר מֵאָה שְׁמוֹנִים וַחֲמִשָּׁה אֲלֶף
 וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַבֹּקֶר וְהָנָה כָּל־סַרְסָרִים מְתִים: לֹא וַיִּסַּע
 וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּשָׁב סְנַחֲרִיב מֶלֶךְ־אֲשׁוּר וַיָּשָׁב בְּנִינֹה:
 לֹא וַיְהִי הוּא מְשַׁתְּחָה בַּיֵּת | נִסְרוֹךְ אֱלֹהָיו וְאֶדְרַמְלֵךְ
 וְשַׂרְאֲצַר [בְּנָיו] הִכּוּ בַחֶרֶב וְהָמָה נִמְלְטוּ אֶרֶץ
 אַרְרָט וַיִּמְלֹךְ אֶסְרַחְדֹּן בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו: {פ}

³⁵ That same night the Angel of Yahweh went out and killed a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. In the morning when it was time to get up, there they lay, so many corpses. ³⁶ Then King Sennacherib of Assyria left; he returned home and stayed in Nineveh. ³⁷ One day, as he was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword and fled to the land of Ararat. His son Esarhaddon succeeded him.

³⁵ Apparently, the Assyrian army was decimated by plague (see 2S 24:15ff and Ps 91). This defeat has been discussed without much justification in relation to a tradition by Herodotus (*History*, II 141) that the Assyrians suffered a defeat on the borders of Egypt because their bowstrings and other leather equipment were chewed by a sudden onslaught of field mice (which may be carriers of the plague).

³⁶ Literally translated, this verse reads, “and Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went and returned and lived in Nineveh.”

³⁷ ‘Nisroch’ is unknown, probably a distorted form of ‘Ninurta’ or ‘Nusku’, Assyrian deities. The MT omits ‘his sons’, here following Is 37:38. In fact, Sennacherib was assassinated in 681 BCE, twenty years after the (first) campaign against Jerusalem. ‘Ararat’ is in Armenia (compare Gn 8:4). The *Kethib* lacks בְּנָיו, here following the *Qere*.

מלכים ב פרק ב

א *בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם חָלָה חֶזְקִיָּהוּ לְמוֹת וַיָּבֵא אֵלָיו
יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן־אֲמוֹץ הַנְּבִיא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו כֹּה־אָמַר
יְהוָה צוֹ לְבֵיתְךָ כִּי מֵת אַתָּה וְלֹא תַחִיָּה: ב וַיִּסַּב
אֶת־פָּנָיו אֶל־הַקִּיר וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ג אָנֹכָה
יְהוָה זָכֹר־נָא אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאֵמֶת
וּבְלִבָּב שְׁלֵם וְהַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי וַיִּבֶךְ חֶזְקִיָּהוּ
בְּכִי גָדוֹל: {ס}

ד וַיְהִי יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ לֹא יָצָא הָעִיר חֲצַר הַתִּיכְנָה וְדַבֵּר־
יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר: ה שׁוּב וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל־חֶזְקִיָּהוּ
נְגִיד־עַמִּי כֹה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אֲבִיךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי
אֶת־תְּפִלָּתְךָ רָאִיתִי אֶת־דַּמְעֹתֶיךָ הַנְּגִי רָפָא לְךָ
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי תַעֲלֶה בֵּית יְהוָה: ו וְהִסַּפְתִּי עַל־
יָמֶיךָ חֲמֵשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה וּמִכַּף מַלְאָךְ־אֲשׁוּר אֲצִילְךָ

2 KINGS 20

1 In those days, Hezekiah became sick to the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, “Yahweh says this, “Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not live.”” 2 Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and addressed this prayer to Yahweh, 3 “Yahweh, remember I beg you, how I have behaved faithfully and with sincerity of heart in your presence and done what is right in your eyes.” Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle courtyard, the word of Yahweh came to him, 5 “Go back and say to Hezekiah, prince of my people, “Yahweh, the God of David your ancestor, says this: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will cure you: in three days’ time, you shall go up to the Temple of Yahweh. 6 I will add fifteen years to your life. I will save you and this city from the hands of the king of

2 KINGS 20

This chapter is repeated in Is 38–39 with an abbreviated text, a somewhat different ordering of verses, and the addition of the song of Hezekiah.

- 1 ‘In those days’ is a vague time indication; if Hezekiah died in 687 BCE, the 15 years of v. 6 would point to a time immediately preceding Sennacherib’s invasion, to which the end of the same verse refers. This date seems to be confirmed by that ascribable to Merodach-Baladan’s embassy, related to the king’s cure in v. 12.
- 2 By turning his face ‘to the wall’, Hezekiah was probably seeking an element of privacy.
- 3 The literal translation of ‘wept bitterly’ is ‘wept with great weeping’.
- 4 ‘Courtyard’ follows the *Qere* (חֲצַר); the *Ketiv* has ‘city’ (הָעִיר).
- 5 The literal translation of ‘in three days’ time’ is ‘on the third day’.
- 6 This verse reinforces the prophecy of 19:34.

וְאֵת הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְגִנּוֹתֶיהָ עַל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְמַעַנִּי
וּלְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי:

וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ קְחוּ דְבַלַת תְּאֲנִים וַיִּקְחוּ וַיִּשִׂימוּ
עַל־הַשְּׁחִין וַיַּחֲי: ^ח וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזִקִּיהוּ אֶל־יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ מִה
אֹת כִּי־יִרְפָּא יְהוָה לִי וְעַל־יְתִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בֵּית
יְהוָה: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ זֶה־לָּךְ הָאֹת מֵאֵת יְהוָה כִּי
יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אֵת־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר הַלֵּךְ הֵצֵל עֶשֶׂר
מַעְלֹת אִם־יָשׁוּב עֶשֶׂר מַעְלֹת: ^י וַיֹּאמֶר יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ
נִקְל לַצֵּל לִנְטוֹת עֶשֶׂר מַעְלֹת לֹא כִי יָשׁוּב הֵצֵל
אַחֲרָנִית עֶשֶׂר מַעְלֹת: ^{יא} וַיִּקְרָא יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ הַנְּבִיא
אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶת־הַצֵּל בְּמַעְלֹת אֲשֶׁר יִרְדָּה
בְּמַעְלֹת אַחַז אַחֲרָנִית עֶשֶׂר מַעְלֹת: {פ}

יב בָּעֵת הַהִיא שָׁלַח בְּרֹאדָךְ בְּלֹאדָן בֶּן־בְּלֹאדָן
מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל סְפָרִים וּמִנְחָה אֶל־חֲזִקִּיָּהוּ כִּי שָׁמַע כִּי

Assyria. I will protect this city for my own sake and the sake of my servant David.””

⁷ Then Isaiah said, “Bring a fig cake.” They brought a fig cake, applied it to the ulcerated sore, and the king recovered. ⁸ Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What is the sign to tell me that Yahweh will cure me and that I shall be going up to the Temple of Yahweh in three days?” ⁹ “Here,” Isaiah replied, “is the sign from Yahweh that he will do what he has said; the shadow has now advanced ten steps, shall it retreat ten steps?” ¹⁰ “It is normal for the shadow to lengthen ten steps,” Hezekiah answered, “no, I would rather the shadow went back ten steps.” ¹¹ The prophet Isaiah then called on Yahweh who made the shadow cast by the declining sun on the steps – the steps to Ahaz’s roof-room – go back ten steps.

¹² At that time, the king of Babylon, Merodach-Baladan son of Baladan, sent envoys with letters and a gift to Hezekiah, for he had heard that

⁷ In place of ‘ulcerated sore’, here following NETB, the NJB has simply ‘ulcer’ and the NRSV has ‘boil’.

⁸ Vv. 8–11 are additional; Hezekiah has already been cured in v. 7.

⁹ The text here follows the MT (and NRSV); the NJB has the conjectural: “would you like the shadow to go forward ten steps, or to go back ten steps?”

¹⁰ The NJB and NETB have ‘easy’ in place of ‘normal’, here following the NRSV.

¹¹ ‘The declining sun’ follows the Tg and Is 38:8; the MT has ‘it’. ‘Roof-room’ follows the Qumran MSS and Is 38:8 – thus, the shadow was not cast on a sundial but on the stairs leading up to the roof-room built by Ahaz (see #23:12). Compare Jos 10:12–13; though it is really the earth that moves, we still say, “the sun rises.”

¹² In Assyrian, ‘Merodach-Baladan’ is ‘Marduch-Apal-Iddina’ (‘Marduch has given me a son’); he was the champion (against Assyria) of Babylonian independence. He reigned in Babylon first from 721 to 710 BCE and again for nine months in 703 BCE. It was probably in 703 that he tried to make Hezekiah his ally against Assyria. In place of ‘that Hezekiah had been sick’, the NJB, following Is 39:1, has ‘of his illness and recovery’.

חלה חזקיהו: ^ג וישמע עליהם חזקיהו ויראם את-
 כל-בית נכתה את-הכסף ואת-הזהב ואת-
 הבשמים ואת שמן הטוב ואת בית כליו ואת כל-
 אשר נמצא באוצרתיו לא-היה דבר אשר לא-
 הראם חזקיהו בביתו ובכל-ממשלתו: ^ד ויבא
 ישעיהו הנביא אל-המלך חזקיהו ויאמר אליו מה
 אמרו האנשים האלה ומאין יבאו אליך ויאמר
 חזקיהו מארץ רחוקה באו מבבל: ^{טו} ויאמר מה
 ראו בביתך ויאמר חזקיהו את כל-אשר בבית
 ראו לא-היה דבר אשר לא-הראיתם באצרתיו:
^{טז} ויאמר ישעיהו אל-חזקיהו שמע דבר-יהוה:
^ז הנה ימים באים ונשא כל-אשר בביתך ואשר
 אצרו אבתך עד-היום הזה בבלה לא-יוותר דבר
 אמר יהוה: ^ח ומבניך אשר יצאו ממך אשר תוליד

Hezekiah had been sick. ¹³ Hezekiah welcomed them, and he showed them his treasure house, the silver, gold, spices, precious oil, his armoury too, and everything there was in his storehouses. There was nothing in his palace or in his entire realm that Hezekiah did not show them. ¹⁴ Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah and asked him, “What have these men said, and where have they come from?” Hezekiah answered, “They have come from a faraway country, from Babylon.” ¹⁵ Isaiah said, “What have they seen in your palace?” “They have seen everything in my palace,” Hezekiah answered. “There is nothing in my storehouses that I have not shown them.”

¹⁶ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Listen to the word of Yahweh, ¹⁷ “Days are coming when everything in your palace, everything that your fathers have amassed until now, will be carried off to Babylon. Not a thing will be left,” says Yahweh. ¹⁸ “Sons sprung from you, sons

¹³ The literal translation of ‘welcomed’ is ‘listened to’; Some Hebrew MSS, as well as the LXX, Peshitta and Vg, agree with the parallel passage in Is 39:2 and read ‘was happy with’.

¹⁴ NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB & NRSV, with, “They come from the distant land of Babylon.”

¹⁵ As can be seen from his prophecy of v. 17, Isaiah is concerned that Hezekiah has shown the Babylonians the extent of his wealth and armoury.

¹⁶ Babylon and Egypt were both plotting; Isaiah was a neutralist, opposed to both; he was equally opposed to an alliance with Assyria (see #16:8). However, after Judah became an Assyrian vassal, he advocated loyalty to the obligation. The point of vv. 16–19, that Isaiah rebuked Hezekiah and warned against the danger of invasion, would seem to be correct; the anachronistic reference to the Babylonian captivity, which took place more than a century later, brings this story into the Deuteronomist’s aim to explain the catastrophe of the Exile.

¹⁷ The NJB has ‘the days’ in place of ‘days’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁸ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

יִקַּח יְקַחוּ וְהָיוּ סְרִיסִים בְּהֵיכַל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר
 חֲזַקִּיהוּ אֶל־יִשְׁעֵיהוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ
 וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלוֹא אִם־שָׁלוֹם וְאַמֶּת יִהְיֶה בִּימֵי: ^כ וְיִתֵּר
 דְּבָרֵי חֲזַקִּיהוּ וְכָל־גְּבוּרָתוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת־
 הַבְּרֵכָה וְאֶת־הַתְּעָלָה וַיָּבֵא אֶת־הַמַּיִם הָעִירָה
 הַלְאֵהֶם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי
 יְהוּדָה: ^{כא} וַיִּשְׁכַּב חֲזַקִּיהוּ עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ מְנַשֶּׁה
 בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו: {פ}

begotten by you, will be chosen to be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.””¹⁹ Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “This word of Yahweh that you announce is reassuring,” for he was thinking, “And why not? So long as there is peace and security during my own lifetime.”²⁰ The rest of the history of Hezekiah, all his prowess, how he constructed the pool and the conduit to bring water to the city, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah?²¹ Then Hezekiah fell asleep with his fathers; his son Manasseh succeeded him.

¹⁹ Isaiah foretells the sack of Jerusalem and the deportation of the nobility (see 24:13ff). Hezekiah selfishly infers that his own reign at least will be peaceful, but the second half of the verse, missing from the *LXX*, may be a gloss. In this case, Hezekiah’s answer would merely have expressed his resignation.

²⁰ This ‘conduit’, with an identifying inscription, has been found and is now popularly called ‘Hezekiah’s Tunnel’, or the ‘Siloam Tunnel’ (compare 2Ch 32:30). It runs from Gihon, which was outside the city wall, to the Pool of Siloam, which was inside the wall. Extending over 500 metres through solid rock, this tunnel was a remarkable engineering feat in its time.

²¹ The ‘*Annals of the Kings of Judah*’ (v. 20) are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King’s reign. Some believe they weren’t official documents but were more likely records kept by the prophets who served during each king’s reign; regardless, these books have never been found and are presumed to have been irretrievably lost.

מלכים ב פרק כא

א בן־שְׁתַּיִם עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה מָנַשֶׁה בְּמָלְכוֹ וַחֲמִשִּׁים
וַחֲמֵשׁ שָׁנָה מָלַךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ חֶפְצִי־בָה:
ב וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּתוֹעֵבַת הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר
הוֹרִישׁ יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ג וַיָּשֶׁב וַיִּבֶן אֶת־
הַבָּמוֹת אֲשֶׁר אָבַד חִזְקִיָּהוּ אָבִיו וַיִּקַּם מִזְבַּחַת
לְבַעַל וַיַּעַשׂ אֲשֶׁרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אַחָאָב מֶלֶךְ
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְכָל־צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיַּעֲבֹד אֹתָם:
ד וַבְּנֵה מִזְבַּחַת בַּיִת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה
בִּירוּשָׁלַם אֲשֵׁים אֶת־שְׁמִי: ה וַיִּבֶן מִזְבַּחֹת לְכָל־
צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּשִׁתֵּי חֲצֹרוֹת בֵּית־יְהוָה: ו וְהַעֲבִיר
אֶת־בְּנוֹ בָאֵשׁ וְעוֹנֵן וְנַחֲשׁ וְעָשָׂה אוֹב וַיִּדְעָנִים
הַרְבֵּה לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְהַכְעִים: ז וַיִּשֶׂם
אֶת־פֶּסֶל הָאֲשֶׁרָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה בַּבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אָמַר

2 KINGS 21

¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. ² He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, copying the shameful practices of the nations whom Yahweh had dispossessed for the sons of Israel. ³ He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he set up altars to Baal and made a sacred pole as Ahab king of Israel had done; he worshipped the whole array of heaven and served it. ⁴ He built altars in the Temple of Yahweh of which Yahweh had said, "In Jerusalem I will place my name." ⁵ He built altars to all the host of heaven in the two courts of the Temple of Yahweh. ⁶ He passed his son through the fire and practised soothsaying and magic, and introduced necromancers and wizards. He did much evil in the sight of Yahweh, provoking his anger. ⁷ He placed the carved image of Asherah

2 KINGS 21

- ¹ Manasseh reigned 687–643 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 687–642 BCE according to W.F. Albright.
- ² Any good done by Hezekiah was quickly undone by Manasseh, who probably reigned longer than any other king of Israel or Judah, though the figure of 'fifty-five years' appears to be exaggerated.
- ³ 'Sacred pole' is a translation of the Hebrew name, 'Asherah' (אֲשֶׁרָה).
- ⁴ The NJB ends this verse, here following the MT & NRSV, with, "Jerusalem is where I will give my name a home."
- ⁵ In place of 'all the host of heaven' (here following the NRSV), NETB has 'all the stars in the sky'.
- ⁶ In place of 'his son', here following the MT, the LXX has 'his sons' (υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ). 'Passing through the fire' probably refers to child sacrifice, though some interpret it as a less dramatic cultic practice.
- ⁷ 'Asherah' here refers to an image of the Canaanite goddess, not one of the sacred poles bearing her name (see #Ex 34:13).

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד וְאֵל־שְׁלֹמֹה בָּנוּ בַּבַּיִת הַזֶּה
וּבִירוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר בְּחָרְתִּי מִכָּל־שְׁבֵטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֵׁים
אֶת־שְׁמִי לְעוֹלָם: ^ח וְלֹא אֲסִיף לְהַנִּיד רַגְלִי יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִן־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֶם רַק אִם־יִשְׁמְרוּ
לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִים וּלְכָל־הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־
צִוִּיתִי אֶתְּכֶם עִבְדֵי מֹשֶׁה: ^ט וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ וַיִּתְּעוּ מִנִּשְׁחָה
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַרְעָה מִן־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁמִיד יְהוָה
מִפְּנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

י' וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה בְּיַד־עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים לֵאמֹר: ^{יא} יַעֲזֹב
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מִנִּשְׁחָה מִלְּדֵי־הַיְהוּדָה הַתְּעֹבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה
הַרְעָה מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵינוּ וַיִּחַטְּאוּ
גַם־אֶת־יְהוּדָה בְּגִלּוּלָיו: {ס}

יב לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּנִי מִבֵּיא
רָעָה עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְיְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר כָּל־שָׁמְעָה שָׁמְעוּ
תִּצְלַנָּה שְׁתִּי אֲזַנְּיוּ: ^{יג} וְנָטִיתִי עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶת־קוֹ
שִׁמְרוֹן וְאֶת־מִשְׁקַלֶּת בַּיִת אַחָאָב וּמַחִיתִי אֶת־
יְרוּשָׁלַם כַּאֲשֶׁר־יִמַּחַה אֶת־הַצֶּלַחַת מִחָה וְהִפְךָ

that he had made in the House of which Yahweh had said to David and his son Solomon, “In this House and in Jerusalem, which I chose out of all the tribes of Israel, I will place my name forever. ⁸ I will no longer make Israel’s footsteps wander from the land I gave their fathers, if only they observe all I have ordered them according to the whole Law that my servant Moses prescribed for them.” ⁹ But they did not listen; Manasseh misled them to do more evil than the nations Yahweh had destroyed before the sons of Israel.

¹⁰ Then Yahweh spoke through his servants the prophets, ¹¹ “Since Manasseh king of Judah has done these shameful deeds, acting more wickedly than all the Amorites did before him, and has led Judah itself into sin with his idols.

¹² Therefore, Yahweh the God of Israel, says this, “Look, I will bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah as to make the ears of all who hear it tingle. ¹³ I will stretch over Jerusalem the same measuring line as over Samaria, the same plumb-rule as for the House of Ahab; I will scour Jerusalem as a man scours a dish and, having scoured it, turns it upside

⁸ The ‘Law’ is a reference to Deuteronomy, to which the whole passage alludes (see Dt. 17:3, 12:5 and 29ff, 18:9–14).

⁹ In place of ‘misled’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘led them astray’.

¹⁰ This paragraph was written after the fall of Jerusalem (587–586 BCE) and during the Babylonian captivity.

¹¹ The word here translated as ‘idols’ (בְּגִלּוּלָיו) is always disdainful; it is generally thought to have originally referred to dung pellets.

¹² The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹³ On the ‘measuring line’ and the ‘plumb-rule’, see Is 34:11, Lm 2:8, Am 7:7–9.

על-פְּנֵיהֶּ: יָד וְנִטְשֵׁתִי אֶת שְׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתִי וְנָתַתִּים
בְּיַד אֹיְבֵיהֶם וְהָיוּ לְבָז וּלְמִשְׁפָּה לְכָל־אֹיְבֵיהֶם:
^{טו} יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶת־הָרַע בְּעֵינַי וַיְהִיו מְכַעְסִים
אֹתִי מִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ אֲבוֹתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְעַד
הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: ^{טז} וְגַם דָּם נָקִי שָׁפַךְ מִנְּשֵׂה הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד
עַד אֲשֶׁר־מָלָא אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם פֶּה לְפֶה לְבַד
מִחֻטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִחֲטִיא אֶת־יְהוּדָה לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע
בְּעֵינַי יְהוָה: ^{יז} וְלִתֵּר דְּבָרַי מִנְּשֵׂה וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וְחֻטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא הֲלֵאֵהֶם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר
דְּבָרַי הַיְמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה: ^{יח} וַיִּשְׁכַּב מִנְּשֵׂה עִם־
אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּגֹן־בַּיִתוֹ בְּגֹן־עֲזָא וַיִּמְלֹךְ אָמוֹן בְּנוֹ
תַּחֲתָיו: {פ}

^{יט} בֶּן־עֶשְׂרִים וּשְׁתַּיִם שָׁנָה אָמוֹן בְּמַלְכוֹ וּשְׁתַּיִם
שָׁנִים מָלַךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ מְשֻׁלֶּמֶת בַּת־חֲרוּץ
מִן־יִטְבָּה: ^כ וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינַי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה

down. ¹⁴ I will cast away the remnant of my inheritance, delivering them into the power of their enemies, and making them serve as prey and booty to all their enemies, ¹⁵ because they have done evil in my sight and have provoked my anger from the day their fathers came out of Egypt until now." ¹⁶ Moreover, Manasseh shed a great deal of innocent blood, until he flooded Jerusalem from one end to the other, besides the sin into which he led Judah by doing what is evil in the sight of Yahweh. ¹⁷ The rest of the history of Manasseh, his entire career, the sins he committed, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ¹⁸ Then Manasseh fell asleep with his fathers, and he was buried in the garden of his palace, the Garden of Uzza; his son Amon succeeded him.

¹⁹ Amon was twenty-two years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth, daughter of Haruz, of Jotbah. ²⁰ He did evil in the sight of Yahweh, as

¹⁴ After the fall of the Northern Kingdom, the inhabitants of Judah are the 'remnant' of the chosen people, Yahweh's heritage (see #Is 4:3).

¹⁵ The literal translation of 'in my sight' is 'in my eyes'.

¹⁶ According to Jewish tradition, Isaiah was one of the victims of this persecution.

¹⁷ The 'Annals of the Kings of Judah' are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

¹⁸ The 'Garden of Uzza' is commonly regarded as a pleasure garden in or near Jerusalem which came to be used as a royal burial ground once the tombs in the City of David had become full.

¹⁹ Amon reigned 643-641 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 642-640 BCE according to W.F. Albright.

²⁰ The literal translation of 'sight' is 'eyes'.

מְנַשֶּׁה אָבִיו: כֹּא וַיִּלְךָ בְּכָל־הַדְּרֹךְ אֲשֶׁר־הָלַךְ אָבִיו
וַיַּעֲבֹד אֶת־הַגְּלִילִים אֲשֶׁר עָבַד אָבִיו וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לָהֶם:
כִּב וַיַּעֲזֹב אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתָיו וְלֹא הָלַךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ
יְהוָה: כִּג וַיִּקְשְׁרוּ עַבְדֵי־אָמֹן עָלָיו וַיִּמְיתוּ אֶת־
הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּבֵיתוֹ: כִּד וַיִּדְּ עַם־הָאָרֶץ אֶת כָּל־הַקְּשָׁרִים
עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אָמֹן וַיִּמְלִיכוּ עַם־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ
בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו: כִּה וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי אָמֹן אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַלֵּא־
הֵם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה:
כִּו וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּקִבְרָתוֹ בְּגֶן־עֻזָּא וַיִּמְלֹךְ יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ
בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו: {פ}

Manasseh his father had done. ²¹ He followed all the footsteps of his father, serving the idols his father had served, and worshipping them. ²² He abandoned Yahweh, the God of his fathers; he did not follow the way of Yahweh. ²³ Amon's retinue plotted against the king and killed him in his palace. ²⁴ But the country people struck down all those who had plotted against King Amon and proclaimed his son Josiah as his successor. ²⁵ The rest of the history of Amon, his entire career, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ²⁶ He was buried in his father's tomb in the Garden of Uzza; his son Josiah succeeded him.

²¹ On the term here translated 'idols' (הַגְּלִילִים), see #11.

²² The literal translation of 'follow the way' is 'walk in the way'.

²³ A popular revolt set in, ending in the assassination of Amon early in his reign and the accession of Josiah.

²⁴ On the loyalty of the country people to the Davidic dynasty, see 11:20, 14:21, and to pure Yahwism, see 11:18. Before 'proclaimed', the MT repeats 'the country people'.

²⁵ The 'Annals of the Kings of Judah' are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.

²⁶ The NRSV, following the MT, lacks 'father's'; here, we follow the NJB.

מלכים ב פרק כב

א בן־שְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנָה יָאֲשִׁיחֵהוּ בְּמַלְכוֹ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וְאַחַת שָׁנָה מָלַךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ יְדִידָה בַת־עֲדִיָּה מִבְּצֻקַת: ב וַיַּעַשׂ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּכָל־דְּרֹךְ דָּוִד אָבִיו וְלֹא־סָר יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאלוֹ: {פ}

ג וַיְהִי בְשָׁמְנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה לְמָלְךְ יָאֲשִׁיחֵהוּ שֶׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־שָׁפָן בֶּן־אַצְלִיָּהוּ בֶן־מִשְׁלֵם הַסֹּפֵר בֵּית יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ד עֲלֵה אֶל־חִלְקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וַיִּתֶּם אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף הַמּוּבָא בֵּית יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר אָסְפוּ שְׂמָרֵי הַסֶּף מֵאֵת הָעָם: ה וַיִּתְּנָה וַיִּתְּנוּהוּ עַל־יַד עֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה הַמִּפְקָדִים בְּבֵית בֵּית יְהוָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֹתוֹ לַעֲשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית יְהוָה לְחֹזֵק בְּדָק הַבָּיִת: ו לְחַרְשֵׁים וּלְבָנִים וּלְגֹדְרִים וּלְקִנּוֹת עֲצִים וְאֲבָנֵי מַחְצֵב לְחֹזֵק אֶת־הַבָּיִת: ז אַךְ לֹא־יִחָשְׁבּוּ אֹתָם הַכֶּסֶף הַנִּתָּן עַל־יָדָם כִּי בְּאַמוּנָה הֵם עֹשִׂים:

2 KINGS 22

¹ Josiah was eight years old when he became king; he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah, daughter of Adaiyah of Bozkath. ² He did what is good in Yahweh's sight, and followed the example of his father David, not deviating from it to right or left.

³ In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent the secretary Shaphan son of Azaliah son of Meshullam to the Temple of Yahweh, saying, ⁴ "Go to Hilkiyah the High Priest and have him count the silver that has been brought to the Temple of Yahweh, which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people. ⁵ Let him hand it over to the foremen attached to the Temple of Yahweh, to spend on the workers repairing to the Temple of Yahweh, ⁶ on the carpenters, builders, and masons, and on buying wood and dressed stone for the Temple repairs.

⁷ The latter are not required to render account of the money handed over to them, since they are conscientious in their work."

2 KINGS 22

¹ Josiah reigned 641–609 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 640–609 BCE according to W.F. Albright. Besides David, Josiah is the favourite king of the Deuteronomist editors because of his reforms (see Ch. 23).

² The literal translation of 'sight' is 'eyes'.

³ This would have been 621 BCE. On the collection of money to repair the Temple, compare 12:4–16.

⁴ The NJB, following the LXX (σφράγισον, and cf. v. 9), has 'melt down' in place of 'count', here following the MT (וַיִּתֶּם).

⁵ The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from explanations.

⁶ The NRSV has 'quarried stone' in place of 'dressed stone', here following the NJB.

⁷ The literal translation of 'conscientious in their work' is 'acting in faithfulness'.

ח וַיֹּאמֶר חִלְקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל עַל־שֹׁפָן הַסֹּפֵר
 סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה מֵצֵאתִי בְּבַיִת יְהוָה וַיִּתֵּן חִלְקִיָּהוּ אֶת־
 הַסֵּפֶר אֶל־שֹׁפָן וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ: ט וַיָּבֵא שֹׁפָן הַסֹּפֵר אֶל־
 הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּבָר וַיֹּאמֶר הַתִּיכּוּ עַבְדֵיךָ
 אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף הַנִּמְצָא בְּבַיִת וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ עַל־יַד עֲשֵׂי
 הַמְּלֹאכָה הַמִּפְקָדִים בֵּית יְהוָה: י וַיִּגַּד שֹׁפָן הַסֹּפֵר
 לַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר סֵפֶר נָתַן לִי חִלְקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ
 שֹׁפָן לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: יא וַיְהִי כִשְׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי
 סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה וַיִּקְרַע אֶת־בְּגָדָיו: יב וַיִּצַּו הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־
 חִלְקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת־אַחִיקָם בֶּן־שֹׁפָן וְאֶת־עַכְבֹּר
 בֶּן־מִיכָיָה וְאֶת־שֹׁפָן הַסֹּפֵר וְאֶת־עֲשֵׂיָה עַבְד־
 הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר: יג לְכוּ דַרְשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה בְּעַדֵי וּבְעַד־
 הָעָם וּבְעַד כָּל־יְהוּדָה עַל־דְּבָרֵי הַסֵּפֶר הַנִּמְצָא
 הַזֶּה כִּי־גְדוֹלָה חֲמַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־הִיא נֹצֵתָה בָּנוּ
 עַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ עַל־דְּבָרֵי הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה
 לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכָל־הַכְּתוּב עָלֵינוּ:

8 The High Priest Hilkiyah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the Temple of Yahweh." When Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, he read it. 9 Then Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported to him, "Your servants have melted down the silver that was found in the Temple and have handed it over to the foremen attached to the Temple of Yahweh." 10 Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book;" and Shaphan read it aloud in the king's presence. 11 When the king heard the contents of the Book of the Law, he tore his garments. 12 Then the king gave the following order to Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's minister, saying: 13 "Go and consult Yahweh, on behalf of me and the people, and for all Judah, concerning the contents of this book that has been found. For, great indeed must be the anger of Yahweh blazing out against us, because our fathers did not obey the words of this book, by practising everything that is written in it."

8 This 'Book of the Law' was probably Deuteronomy, or at least its legislative section, the prescriptions of which determined the ensuing reform. It was the document of the Covenant with Yahweh, possibly edited in connexion with Hezekiah's reform (18:4) and hidden, or lost, or forgotten during the wicked reign of Manasseh. The discovery was not a fraud on the part of the priests in Jerusalem (see 23:9).

9 The NJB lacks the word 'found', here following the MT & NRSV.

10 It must have taken some considerable time for Shaphan to read the book.

11 The king tears his clothes as a sign of his consternation.

12 Throughout this section, NETB has 'scribe' in place of 'secretary' (here following the NJB & NRSV).

13 The NJB omits 'and for all Judah'.

¹⁴ וַיֵּלֶךְ חִלְקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְאַחִיקָם וְאַחְבֹּר וְשַׁפְּחָן
 וְעַשְׂיָה אֶל-חִלְדָּה הַנְּבִיאָה אֵשֶׁת שָׁלֹם בִּן-תְּקוּהָ
 בֶּן-חֲרָחַס שֹׁמֵר הַבְּגָדִים וְהִיא יֹשֶׁבֶת בִּירוּשָׁלַם
 בַּמְּשָׁנָה וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלֶיהָ: ¹⁵ וַתֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה-אָמַר
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמְרוּ לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-שָׁלַח
 אֲתֶכֶם אֵלַי: ¹⁶ כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנְּנִי מֵבִיא רָעָה אֶל-
 הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַל-יֹשְׁבָיו אֵת כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַסֵּפֶר אֲשֶׁר
 קָרָא מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה: ¹⁷ תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר עֲזָבוּנִי וַיִּקְטְרוּ
 לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְמַעַן הַכְּעִיסֵנִי בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה
 יְדֵיהֶם וְנִצַּתָּה חֲמָתִי בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְלֹא תִכְבְּהוּ:
¹⁸ וְאֶל-מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה הַשְּׁלַח אֲתֶכֶם לְדַרְשׁ אֶת-יְהוָה
 כֹּה תֹאמְרוּ אֵלָיו כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ: ¹⁹ יִטְעַן רֹדֵף-לִבְבִי וַתִּכְנַעַן
 מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה בְּשִׁמְעֶךָ אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי עַל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
 וְעַל-יֹשְׁבָיו לְהִיּוֹת לְשִׁמָּה וּלְקַלְלָהּ וַתִּקְרַע אֶת-
 בְּגָדֶיךָ וַתִּבְכֶּה לְפָנַי וְגַם אֲנֹכִי שָׁמַעְתִּי נֹאם-יְהוָה:
²⁰ כִּי לָכֵן הַנְּנִי אֶסְפְּךָ עַל-אַבְתֵּיךָ וְנֹאסַפְתָּ אֶל-

¹⁴ Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, the keeper of the wardrobe; she lived in Jerusalem in the new town. They put the matter to her, ¹⁵ and she replied, “Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this, “To the man who sent you to me say this: ¹⁶ Yahweh says this: I am bringing disaster on this place and those who live in it, carrying out everything said in the book the king of Judah has read, ¹⁷ because they have deserted me and sacrificed to other gods, to provoke my anger by everything they did. My anger blazes out against this place and nothing can stop it. ¹⁸ You are to say to the king of Judah who sent you to consult Yahweh: Yahweh the God of Israel, says this: As regards the words you have heard ... ¹⁹ But since your heart has been touched and you have humbled yourself before Yahweh on hearing what I have decreed against this place and those who live in it, how they will become an object of horror and cursing; and since you have torn your garments and wept before me, I for my part have heard – it is Yahweh who speaks. ²⁰ For this reason, I will gather you to your fathers,

¹⁴ ‘Huldah’ is not mentioned elsewhere.

¹⁵ The prophetess relays Yahweh’s message to the king *via* his messengers.

¹⁶ Vv. 16–17 seem to reflect the Deuteronomist’s view of the fall of Jerusalem.

¹⁷ NETB assumes the ‘work of their hands’ refers to the manufacture of idols, but it is more likely a general reference to their sinful practices.

¹⁸ The end of the verse breaks off; perhaps one should supply ‘will be fulfilled’.

¹⁹ The phrase, ‘an object of horror and cursing’, refers to Judah becoming a prime example of an accursed people.

²⁰ Josiah was fatally wounded at Megiddo (2K 23:29) but the Chronicler reports that he was brought back to die in Jerusalem (2Ch 35:20–27).

קְבֻרָתְיָךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם וְלֹא-תִרְאֶינָה עֵינֶיךָ בְּכָל הָרָעָה
אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי מְבִיא עַל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֶת-
הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּבָר: you shall be gathered into your grave in peace; your eyes will not see all
the disasters that I mean to bring on this place.”” They took this answer
to the king.

מלכים ב פרק כג

א וישלח המלך ויאספו אליו כל־זקני יהודה וירושלם: ב ויעל המלך בית־יהוה וכל־איש יהודה וכל־ישבי ירושלם אתו והכהנים והנביאים וכל־העם למקטן ועד־גדול ויקרא באזניהם את־כל־דברי ספר הברית הנמצא בבית יהוה: ג ויעמד המלך על־העמוד ויכרת את־הברית לפני יהוה ללכת אחר יהוה ולשמר מצותיו ואת־עדותיו ואת־חקתיו בכל־לב ובכל־נפש להקים את־דברי הברית הזאת הכתבים על־הספר הזה ויעמד כל־העם בברית: ד ויצו המלך את־חלקיהו הכהן הגדול ואת־כהני המשנה ואת־שמרי הסף להוציא מהיכל יהוה את כל־הכלים העשויים לבעל ולאשרה ולכל צבא השמים וישרפם מחוץ לירושלם בשדמות קדרון ונשא את־עפרם בית־אל: ה והשבית את־הכמרים אשר נתנו מלכי יהודה ויקטר בבמות בערי יהודה ומסבי ירושלם

2 KINGS 23

¹ Then the king sent out messages that all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem should be gathered to him. ² And the king went up to the Temple of Yahweh with all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, the prophets and all the people, small and great. In their hearing, he read out all the words of the Book of the Covenant found in the Temple of Yahweh. ³ The king stood beside the pillar and, in the presence of Yahweh, made a covenant to follow Yahweh and keep his commandments and decrees and laws with all his heart and soul, in order to enforce the terms of the Covenant as written in that book. All the people joined in the covenant. ⁴ The king ordered the High Priest Hilkiyah with the priests next in rank and the guardians of the threshold to remove all the vessels made for Baal, Asherah and the whole host of heaven; he burnt them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron and carried the ashes to Bethel. ⁵ He deposed the pagan priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to offer sacrifice on the high places, in the towns of Judah and around Jerusalem; also those who

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¹ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "The king then had all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem summoned to him."

² See #22:8. Deuteronomy is presented as the code of the Covenant with Yahweh (Dt 5:2-3, 28:69).

³ The adoption of this program not only meant a religious reform but also a declaration of independence from Assyria, which was now in its last days as a great power (Nineveh fell in 612 BCE).

⁴ The NJB lacks 'the High Priest', a post-Exilic title. The 'guardians of the threshold' (see 12:10) were also priests of high rank. (See also 25:18.)

⁵ An alternative translation for 'offer sacrifices' is 'burned incense'.

וְאֶת־הַמִּקְטָרִים לְבַעַל לְשֶׁמֶשׁ וְלִירַח וְלַמְזֹלוֹת
וְלִכְלֹל צְבֹא הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיֵּצֵא אֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרָה מִבַּיִת
יְהוָה מִחוּץ לִירוּשָׁלַם אֶל־גַּחַל קִדְרוֹן וַיִּשְׂרֹף אֶתָּהּ
בְּגַחַל קִדְרוֹן וַיִּדְק לְעָפָר וַיִּשְׂלֹךְ אֶת־עַפְרָהּ עַל־
קֶבֶר בְּנֵי הָעַם: וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־בֵּיתִי הַקִּדְּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר
בְּבַיִת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הַנְּשִׂים אָרְגוּת שָׁם בָּתַיִם
לְאֲשֵׁרָה:

ח וַיָּבֵא אֶת־כָּל־הַכֹּהֲנִים מֵעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וַיִּטְמֵא אֶת־
הַבָּמֹת אֲשֶׁר קִטְרוּ־שָׁמָּה הַכֹּהֲנִים מִגִּבְעַ עַד־בְּאֵר
שָׁבַע וְנָתַן אֶת־בָּמֹת הַשְּׁעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־פָּתַח שַׁעַר
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ שַׂר־הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר־עַל־שִׁמְאוּל אִישׁ בְּשַׁעַר
הָעִיר: ט אַךְ לֹא יָעִלוּ כַּהֲנֵי הַבָּמֹת אֶל־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה
בִּירוּשָׁלַם כִּי אִם־אָכְלוּ מִצֹּת בְּתוֹךְ אֲחֵיהֶם:
י וַיִּטְמֵא אֶת־הַתֶּפֶת אֲשֶׁר בְּגִי בְנֵי בֶן־הַנֶּם לְבִלְתִּי

offered sacrifice to Baal, to the sun, the moon, the constellations and the whole host of heaven. ⁶ From the Temple of Yahweh, he removed the Asherah right out of Jerusalem to the Wadi Kidron and, in the Wadi Kidron, he burnt it to ashes and threw its ashes on the common burying-ground. ⁷ He pulled down the house of the sacred male prostitutes, which was in the Temple of Yahweh and where the women wove for Asherah.

⁸ He brought all the priests in from the towns of Judah, and from Geba to Beersheba he defiled the high places where the priests had offered sacrifice. He pulled down the High Place of the Gates, which stood at the gate of Joshua, the governor of the city, to the left of the city gate. ⁹ The priests of the high places did not go up to the altar of Yahweh in Jerusalem but they ate unleavened bread among their brothers. ¹⁰ And he desecrated Topheth, which is in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, so that

⁶ The NJB uses 'sacred pole' in place of 'Asherah'.

⁷ After 'wove', the NJB adds 'clothes'; the MT reads 'wove houses', perhaps referring to tent-shrines, but the translators of the NJB (and others) understand this as referring to clothes made for images of the goddess.

⁸ Josiah imposed the law of the unique sanctuary by force; all worship in Judah was to be centralised in Jerusalem (Dt 12). The 'high places' (1K 3:2) were Yahwistic shrines, condemned only because they contravened this law.

Nothing is known about the 'High Place of the Gates': NETB assumes the conjectural emendation of בָּמֹת הַשְּׁעָרִים to בָּמֹת הַשְּׁעָרִים ('The High Place of the Goats') – referring to goat-idols.

⁹ The Law (Dt 18:6–8) provided that provincial priest who came to Jerusalem enjoyed the same privileges as the priests of the city. However, when all the 'priests of the high places' settled in Jerusalem, it is probable that the city priests saw to it that their status was reduced.

¹⁰ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

לְהַעֲבִיר אִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ וְאֶת־בִּתּוֹ בְּאֵשׁ לְמִלְךָ׃
 י^א וַיִּשְׁבֹּת אֶת־הַסּוּסִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַנוּ מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה
 לְשִׁמְשׁ מִבְּאֵר בֵּית־יְהוָה אֶל־לְשַׁכַּת נְתַן־מֶלֶךְ
 הַסּוּסִים אֲשֶׁר בַּפְּרוּרִים וְאֶת־מַרְכָּבוֹת הַשִּׁמְשׁ
 שָׂרָף בְּאֵשׁ׃ י^ב וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַגֵּג עָלִית
 אַחֲזוּ אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת
 אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה מְנַשֶּׁה בְּשֵׁתֵי חֲצוֹת בֵּית־יְהוָה נָתַן
 הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּרֶץ מִשָּׁם וְהִשְׁלִיךְ אֶת־עַפְרָם אֶל־נַחַל
 קִדְרוֹן׃ י^ג וְאֶת־הַבָּמֹזוֹת אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם
 אֲשֶׁר מִיַּמִּין לְהַר־הַמְּשָׁחִית אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה שְׁלֹמֹה
 מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַשְׂתָּרְתַּן שֶׁקֶץ צִידֹנִים וְלְכִמוֹשׁ
 שֶׁקֶץ מוֹאָב וְלְמִלְכָם תוֹעֵבַת בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן טַמְא
 הַמֶּלֶךְ׃ י^ד וְשִׁבַּר אֶת־הַמַּצְבֹּת וַיִּכְרֹת אֶת־
 הָאֲשֵׁרִים וַיִּמְלֵא אֶת־מְקוֹמָם עֲצָמוֹת אָדָם׃ טו^ו וְגַם

no one could make his son or daughter pass through fire in honour of Molech. ¹¹ He did away with the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun at the entrance to the Temple of Yahweh, near the apartment of Nathan-Melech the eunuch, in the precincts, and he burned the chariot of the sun. ¹² The altars on the roof of Ahaz's roof-room that the kings of Judah had built, with those that Manasseh had built in the two courts of the Temple of Yahweh, the king pulled down, and broke them to pieces, then carried them away and threw their rubble into the Wadi Kidron. ¹³ The king desecrated the high places facing Jerusalem, to the south of the Mount of Olives, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Astarte the Sidonian abomination, for Chemosh the Moabite abomination, and for Milcom the Ammonite abomination. ¹⁴ He also smashed the sacred pillars, cut down the sacred poles, and covered the places where they had stood with human bones.

¹¹ The meaning of the Hebrew, here conjecturally translated as 'precincts', is uncertain (literally, 'chariots'). A shrine dateable to the reign of Jehoshaphat, complete with sacred pillar and models of solar horses, has recently been excavated against the cliff-face of the City of David.

¹² The 'roof' altars were small ones dedicated to astral deities (Jr 19:13, Zp 1:5). 'Broke them to pieces' is a conjectural translation of the Hebrew (וַיִּרֶץ מִשָּׁם = 'ran from there'), emending the verb to a Piel of רָצַץ, with a 3P suffix.

¹³ 'Mount of Olives' (literally, 'of Oil') follows the Tg (and NJB); the NRSV, following the MT, has 'Mount of Destruction' (a derogatory name for the same place).

¹⁴ The 'human bones' were to desecrate the sacred pillars once and for all; cf. vv. 16 and 20. Josiah takes steps, first to destroy the local shrines where a more or less contaminated worship of Yahweh was performed, and secondly to wipe out practices that were completely non-Yahwist, with gods and ritual borrowed from the Canaanites or, in the case of the astral cults, imported from Assyria. All this gives a sad picture of the religious situation in Judah; the impression is confirmed by Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Ezekiel.

אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית־אֵל הַבְּמָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
יִרְבֵּעַם בֶּן־נֶבֶט אֲשֶׁר הֶחְטִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל גַּם אֶת־
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הַהוּא וְאֶת־הַבְּמָה נָתַן וַיִּשְׂרֹף אֶת־הַבְּמָה
הַדָּק לְעֹפָר וְשָׂרָף אֶשְׂרָה:

^{טו} וַיִּפֶן וַיֵּאשִׁיחֵהוּ וַיֵּרֶא אֶת־הַקְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם בְּהַר
וַיִּשְׁלַח וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָעֲצָמוֹת מִן־הַקְּבָרִים וַיִּשְׂרֹף עַל־
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּטְמָאֵהוּ כַּדָּבָר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר קָרָא אִישׁ
הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר קָרָא אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: ^{יז} וַיֹּאמֶר
מָה הַצִּיּוֹן הַלְּזוֹ אֲשֶׁר אָנִי רֹאֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אֲנִישֵׁי
הָעִיר הַקְּבֹר אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־בָּא מִיְהוּדָה
וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ עַל
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בֵּית־אֵל: ^{יח} וַיֹּאמֶר הַנִּיחוּ לוֹ אִישׁ אֶל־יָנֵעַ
עֲצָמוֹתָיו וַיִּמְלֹטוּ עֲצָמוֹתָיו אֶת עֲצָמוֹת הַנְּבִיא
אֲשֶׁר־בָּא מִשְׁמְרוֹן: ^{יט} וְגַם אֶת־כָּל־בְּתֵי הַבָּמֹת
אֲשֶׁר בְּעָרֵי שְׁמְרוֹן אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְהַכְעִים הִסִּיר יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם כְּכָל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים

¹⁵ Similarly, as regards the altar that was at Bethel, the high place built by Jeroboam son of Nebat who had led Israel into sin, this altar and this high place he also demolished, burning the high place and crushed it to dust. The sacred pole he burnt.

¹⁶ As he looked around, Josiah saw the tombs there on the hillside; and he had the bones fetched from the tombs and he burned them on the altar. Thus, he desecrated it, in accordance with the word of Yahweh that the man of God had proclaimed, who had foretold these things.

¹⁷ "What is that monument that I see?" he asked. The people of the town replied, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and foretold these things you have done against the altar at Bethel." ¹⁸ "Let him rest," the king said, "and let no one disturb his bones." Therefore, they left his bones untouched, with the bones of the prophet who was from Samaria. ¹⁹ Josiah also removed all the shrines of the high places that the kings of Israel had built in the towns of Samaria, provoking the anger of Yahweh; he did to these places as he had done to the one at

¹⁵ Josiah took advantage of the decline of Assyria to restore the independence of Judah and even to extend his control over the former territory of Israel. The NJB, following the LXX, has 'breaking up its stones' (*καὶ συνέτριψεν τοὺς λίθους αὐτοῦ*) in place of 'burning the high place'.

¹⁶ The text here follows the MT; the LXX is much longer, adding, "... when Jeroboam was standing by the altar at the time of the feast. As he looked around, Josiah caught sight of the tomb of the man of God," before 'who had foretold these things'. The extra material attested in the LXX was probably accidentally omitted in the MT tradition when a scribe's eye jumped from the 1st occurrence of the phrase 'man of God' to the 2nd.

¹⁷ The NJB omits 'at Bethel'.

¹⁸ Here, 'Samaria' means not the city but the territory of the Northern Kingdom, of which Bethel formed a part. For the same usage, see 17:24, 28.

¹⁹ The words 'of Yahweh' are accidentally omitted from the MT; here, we follow the LXX, Peshitta and Vg.

אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה בְּבֵית-אֵל: כִּי־זִבַּח אֶת-כָּל-כֹּהֲנֵי
הַבָּמֹת אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם עַל-הַמִּזְבְּחֹת וַיִּשְׂרֹף אֶת-
עַצְמוֹת אָדָם עֲלֵיהֶם וַיָּשָׁב יְרוּשָׁלַם:

כֹּא וַיִּצַו הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-כָּל-הָעָם לֵאמֹר עֲשׂוּ פֶסַח
לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כַּכְּתוּב עַל סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית הַזֶּה:
כִּי לֹא נַעֲשָׂה כַּפֶּסַח הַזֶּה מִימֵי הַשְּׁפֹטִים אֲשֶׁר
שָׁפְטוּ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל יְמֵי מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמַלְכֵי
יְהוּדָה: כִּג כִּי אָסַבְשָׁמָנָה עָשְׂרָה שָׁנָה לַמֶּלֶךְ
יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ נַעֲשָׂה הַפֶּסַח הַזֶּה לַיהוָה בִּירוּשָׁלַם:

כִּד וְגַם אֶת-הָאֲבוֹת וְאֶת-הַיִּדְעֹנִים וְאֶת-הַתְּרָפִים
וְאֶת-הַגְּלִלִים וְאֶת כָּל-הַשִּׁקְצִים אֲשֶׁר נִרְאוּ בָאָרֶץ
יְהוּדָה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם בָּעָר יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת-
דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַכְּתוּבִים עַל-הַסֵּפֶר אֲשֶׁר מָצָא
חִלְקִיָּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן בַּיַּת יְהוָה: כִּה וְכִמְהוּ לֹא-הָיָה לְפָנָיו
מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר-שָׁב אֶל-יְהוָה בְּכָל-לִבָּבוֹ וּבְכָל-נַפְשׁוֹ

Bethel. ²⁰ All the priests of the high places who were there he slaughtered on the altars, and on those altars, he burned human bones. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

²¹ The king commanded all the people: "Observe the Passover of Yahweh your God, as prescribed in this Book of the Covenant." ²² No such Passover had been celebrated since the days when the judges ruled Israel or during all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah; ²³ but, in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, this Passover was kept to Yahweh in Jerusalem.

²⁴ What is more, Josiah swept away the necromancers and wizards, the household gods and the idols, and all the abominations that were to be seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, so that he established the words of the Law that were written in the book found by Hilkiyah the priest in the Temple of Yahweh. ²⁵ No king before him had turned to Yahweh as he did, with all his heart, all his soul and all his strength, in

²⁰ Josiah's actions here seem rather brutal.

²¹ This great Passover Feast was the climax of Josiah's reforms.

²² Literally translated, this verse reads, "because there had not been observed (one) like this Passover from the days of the judges who judged Israel and all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah."

²³ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "The eighteenth year of King Josiah was the only time when such a Passover was celebrated in honour of Yahweh at Jerusalem."

²⁴ The NRSV uses the Hebrew name, 'teraphim', in place of 'household gods'.

²⁵ This verse marks the end of the account of the reform and perhaps of the first edition of the Book of Kings. Opinion differs as to whether the author ended his account just before or just after the death of Josiah in 609 BCE.

וּבְכָל־מְאֹדוֹ כָּכָל תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה וְאַחֲרָיו לֹא־קָם
כָּמֹהוּ:

כִּי אֲדָן לֹא־שָׁב יְהוָה מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־חָרָה
אִפּוֹ בְיַהוּדָה עַל כָּל־הַכְּעָסִים אֲשֶׁר הִכְעִיסוּ
מְנַשֶּׁה: כִּי וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה גַּם אֶת־יְהוּדָה אֲסִיר מֵעַל
פְּנֵי כַּאֲשֶׁר הִסְרֹתִי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמֵאַסְתִּי אֶת־הָעִיר
הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־בְּחָרְתִּי אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־הַבַּיִת
אֲשֶׁר אִמְרֹתִי יִהְיֶה שְׁמִי שָׁם: כִּי וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי
יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הֲלֹא־הֵם כְּתוּבִים עַל־
סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה:

כִּט בַּיָּמָיו עָלָה פֶּרְעֹה נֶכֶח מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם עַל־מֶלֶךְ
אֲשׁוּר עַל־נְהַר־פָּרַת וַיִּלְךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ לְקִרְאָתוֹ
וַיִּמִּיתֵהוּ בְּמַגְדוֹ כְּרֹאֲתוֹ אֹתוֹ: ל וַיִּרְכַּבְהוּ עַבְדָּיו מֵת
מִמַּגְדוֹ וַיִּבְאֵהוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיִּקְבְּרֵהוּ בְּקִבְרָתוֹ וַיִּקַּח
עַם־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־יְהוֹאָחָז בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ וַיִּמְשְׁחוּ אֹתוֹ
וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֹתוֹ תַּחַת אָבִיו: {פ}

perfect loyalty to the Law of Moses; nor did any king like him arise after him.

²⁶ Still, Yahweh did not turn from the fierceness of his great anger, which blazed out against Judah because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him. ²⁷ Yahweh decreed, “I will thrust Judah away from me too, as I have already thrust Israel; I will cast away Jerusalem, this city I had chosen, and the Temple of which I had said: There my name shall be.” ²⁸ The rest of the history of Josiah, his entire career, is this not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah?

²⁹ During his reign Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria at the river Euphrates. King Josiah went to meet him but Necho killed him at Megiddo when he met him. ³⁰ His servants carried him dead from Megiddo by chariot, brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. The country people took Jehoahaz son of Josiah, anointed him and proclaimed him king in place of his father.

²⁶ Vv. 26–27 have been ascribed to an author writing during the Exile.

²⁷ The literal translation of ‘I will thrust Judah away from me’ is ‘I will turn Judah away from my face’.

²⁸ The ‘Annals of the Kings of Judah’ are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King’s reign.

²⁹ Nechao (609–595 BCE), called ‘Necho’ in the Bible, marched in 609 to the assistance of the last king of Assyria, driven from Babylonia and then from Haran by the Medes and Babylonians. Josiah wanted to prevent the joining of the Assyrians with the Egyptians, since he calculated that the kingdom of Judah would profit from the final ruin of Assyria.

³⁰ Some scholars believe an author writing before the destruction of the Temple ended the story of the monarchy here. Cf. 2Ch 35:20–24.

לא בן־עשרים ושלש שנה יהואחז במלכו ושלשה
 חדשים מלך בירושלם ושם אמו חמוטל בת־
 ירמיהו מלבנה: לב ויעש הרע בעיני יהוה ככל
 אשר־עשו אבתיו: לג ויאסרהו פרעה נכה ברבלה
 בארץ חמת במלך ממלך בירושלם ויתן־ענש על־
 הארץ מאה ככר־כסף וככר זהב: לד וימלך פרעה
 נכה את־אליקים בן־יאשיהו תחת יאשיהו אביו
 ויסב את־שמו יהויקים ואת־יהואחז לקח ויבא
 מצרים וימת שם: לה והכסף והזהב נתן יהויקים
 לפרעה אך העריף את־הארץ לתת את־הכסף
 על־פי פרעה איש כפרפו נגש את־הכסף ואת־
 הזהב את־עם הארץ לתת לפרעה נכה: {ס}
 לו בן־עשרים וחמש שנה יהויקים במלכו ואחת
 עשרה שנה מלך בירושלם ושם אמו זבידה
 זבידה בת־פדיה מן־רומה: לו ויעש הרע בעיני
 יהוה ככל אשר־עשו אבתיו:

31 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32 He did evil in the sight of Yahweh, just as his fathers had done. 33 Pharaoh Necho confined him at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, preventing him from ruling in Jerusalem, and imposed a levy of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold on the country. 34 Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim son of Josiah king in succession to Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. He took Jehoahaz to Egypt, where he died. 35 Jehoiakim paid over the silver and gold to Pharaoh, but first had to tax the country before he could raise the sum that Pharaoh demanded: he levied the silver and gold to give to Pharaoh Necho from each according to his means.

36 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebidah, daughter of Pedaiah, from Rumah. 37 He did evil in Yahweh's sight, just as his fathers had done.

31 Jehoahaz reigned during 609 BCE according to E.R. Thiele and W.F. Albright. The 'Jeremiah' mentioned is not the prophet of the same name.

32 The literal translation of 'sight' is 'eyes'.

33 In place of 'preventing him from ruling', here following the *Qere* (ממלך), the *Ketiv* has 'while he was ruling' (במלך).

34 'Jehoiakim' ('whom Yahweh sets firm') is almost the same name as 'Eliakim' ('whom God sets firm').

35 Literally translated, this verse reads, "And the silver and the gold Jehoiakim gave to Pharaoh, but he taxed the land to give the silver at the command of Pharaoh, (from) each according to his tax he collected the silver and the gold, from the people of the land, to give to Pharaoh Necho."

36 Jehoiakim reigned 609–598 BCE according to E.R. Thiele & W.F. Albright. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from explanation.

37 The literal translation of 'sight' is 'eyes'.

מלכים ב פרק כד

א בִּימֵיו עָלָה נְבֻכַדְנֶאֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וַיְהִי־לוֹ
יְהוֹיָקִים עֶבֶד שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים וַיֵּשֶׁב וַיִּמְרֹד־בּוֹ:
ב וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה בּוֹ אֶת־גְּדוּדֵי כַּשְׂדִּים וְאֶת־גְּדוּדֵי
אֲרָם וְאֶת־גְּדוּדֵי מוֹאָב וְאֶת־גְּדוּדֵי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן
וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּיְהוּדָה לְהֶאֱבִידוֹ כַּדְּבַר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר
בְּיַד עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים: ג אָדָּן עַל־פִּי יְהוָה הִיִּתְּהָ
בְּיְהוּדָה לְהִסִּיר מֵעַל פָּנָיו בַּחֲטָאת מַנְשֵׂה כָּכֵל
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: ד וְגַם דַּם־הַנְּקִי אֲשֶׁר שָׁפַךְ וַיִּמְלֵא
אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם דָּם נָקִי וְלֹא־אָבָה יְהוָה לְסַלַּח:
ה וַיִּתֵּר דְּבַרֵי יְהוֹיָקִים וְכֹל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַלֵּא־הֵם
כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבַרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה:
ו וַיִּשְׁכַּב יְהוֹיָקִים עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ יְהוֹיָכִין בְּנוֹ
תַּחֲתָיו: ז וְלֹא־הִסִּיף עוֹד מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְצֵאת

2 KINGS 24

¹ In his time, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years, but then he turned and rebelled against him. ² Yahweh sent armed bands of Chaldeans, Aramaeans, Moabites, and Ammonites against him; he sent these against Judah to destroy it, according to the word that Yahweh had spoken through his servants the prophets. ³ That this happened in Judah was surely at the command of Yahweh, to thrust them away from him, for the sins of Manasseh and all that he had done, ⁴ and also for the innocent blood that he had shed, flooding Jerusalem from end to end with innocent blood. Yahweh would not forgive. ⁵ The rest of the deeds of Jehoiakim, all he did, are these not recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ⁶ So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers; his son Jehoiachin succeeded him. ⁷ The king of Egypt did not leave his land again, because

2 KINGS 24

- ¹ *'Nabu-Kudur-Usur'*, founder of the Neo-Babylonian, or Chaldean, empire, which succeeded that of Assyria, ruled from 609 to 602 BCE. His first expedition to Palestine and Jehoiakim's surrender took place in 604, the revolt of Judah in 601.
- ² The NJB, following the LXX, uses the pronoun 'he' (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar) in place of 'Yahweh'.
- ³ The NJB, following v. 20, has 'due entirely to the anger of Yahweh' in place of 'surely at the command of Yahweh'.
- ⁴ The NRSV has 'not willing to pardon' in place of 'would not forgive', here following the NJB.
- ⁵ The 'Annals of the Kings of Judah' are mentioned 15 times in 1-2 Kings; they are apparently diaries or records of some sort that documented what were felt to be important events of each King's reign.
- ⁶ The literal translation of 'slept with his fathers' is 'lay down with his fathers'.
- ⁷ The defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish in 605 BCE had made Nebuchadnezzar master of Syria and Palestine.

מֵאַרְצוֹ כִּי־לָקַח מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל מִנְּחָל מִצְרַיִם עַד־נְהַר־
פָּרָת כָּל אֲשֶׁר הִיְתָה לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם: {פ}

ח בֶּן־שְׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה יְהוֹיָכִין בְּמָלְכוֹ וּשְׁלֹשָׁה
חֳדָשִׁים מֶלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ נְחֻשְׁתָּא בַת־
אֶלְנָתָן מִירוּשָׁלַם: ט וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכָל
אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה אָבִיו: י בָּעַת הַהִיא עָלָה עָלָיו עַבְדֵי
נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל יְרוּשָׁלַם וַתָּבֵא הָעִיר
בְּמָצוֹר: יא וַיָּבֵא נְבֻכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל עַל־הָעִיר
וְעַבְדָּיו צָרִים עָלֶיהָ: יב וַיֹּצֵא יְהוֹיָכִין מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה
עַל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל הוּא וְאִמּוֹ וְעַבְדָּיו וְשָׂרָיו וְסָרִיסָיו
וַיִּקַּח אֹתוֹ מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בְּשָׁנַת שְׁמֹנֶה לְמָלְכוֹ: יג וַיּוֹצֵא
מִשָּׁם אֶת־כָּל־אֹצְרוֹת בַּיִת יְהוָה וְאֹצְרוֹת בַּיִת
הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּקְצָץ אֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
שְׁלֹמֹה מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהִיכַל יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דָּבַר
יְהוָה: יד וְהִגְלָה אֶת־כָּל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים

the king of Babylon had conquered everywhere belonging to the king of Egypt, from the Wadi of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

⁸ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign; he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Nehushta, daughter of Elnathan, of Jerusalem. ⁹ He did evil in Yahweh's sight, just as his father had done. ¹⁰ At that time, the troops of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched on Jerusalem and the city was besieged. ¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his troops were besieging it. ¹² Then Jehoiachin king of Judah surrendered to the king of Babylon, he, his mother, his officers, his nobles and his eunuchs. The king of Babylon took them prisoner, in the eighth year of his reign. ¹³ He carried off all the treasures of the Temple of Yahweh and the treasures of the royal palace, and broke up all the golden furnishings that Solomon king of Israel had made for the sanctuary of Yahweh, as Yahweh had foretold. ¹⁴ He carried off all Jerusalem into exile, all the nobles and all

⁸ Jehoiakim died before he could be punished and his young son, Jehoiachin (also called 'Jeconiah' in 1Ch 3:16 and 'Coniah' in Jr 22:24) took the tottering throne, reigning 598–597 BCE according to both E.R. Thiele and W.F. Albright.

⁹ The literal translation of 'sight' is 'eyes'.

¹⁰ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹¹ Before 'to the city', the *NJB* adds 'attack'; here, we follow the *MT* & *NRSV*.

¹² The exact date of Jehoiachin's surrender was 16th March 597 BCE, according to a Babylonian chronicle. This chronicle, and Jr 52:28, date the conquest to the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar, not reckoning the part year of his accession (see also 25:28).

¹³ In place of the opening pronoun, *NETB* has 'Nebuchadnezzar' and the *NJB* has 'the latter'; here, we follow the *MT* & *NRSV*.

¹⁴ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

וְאֵת | כָּל־גְּבוּרֵי הַחַיִּל עֲשָׂרָה עֲשָׂרָת אֲלָפִים גּוֹלָהּ
 וְכָל־הַחֲרָשׁ וְהַמְּסַגֵּר לֹא נִשְׁאַר זֹלָת דָּלָת עִם־
 הָאָרֶץ: ^{טו} וַיִּגַּל אֶת־יְהוֹיָכִין בַּבֶּלֶה וְאֶת־אִם הַמֶּלֶךְ
 וְאֶת־נָשֵׁי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת־סֵרִיסָיו וְאֵת אוֹלֵי אֵילֵי
 הָאָרֶץ הוֹלִיךְ גּוֹלָהּ מִירוּשָׁלַם בַּבֶּלֶה: ^{טז} וְאֵת כָּל־
 אַנְשֵׁי הַחַיִּל שְׁבַעַת אֲלָפִים וְהַחֲרָשׁ וְהַמְּסַגֵּר אֲלֵף
 הַכֹּל גְּבוּרִים עֹשֵׂי מְלָחָמָה וַיְבִיֵאֵם מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל גּוֹלָהּ
 בַּבֶּלֶה: ^{יז} וַיִּמְלֹךְ מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶת־מַתַּנְיָה דָּדוֹ תַחַתָּיו
 וַיִּסַּב אֶת־שְׁמוֹ צְדַקְיָהוּ: {פ}

^{יח} בֶּן־עֶשְׂרִים וְאַחַת שָׁנָה צְדַקְיָהוּ בָמָלְכוֹ וְאַחַת
 עֲשָׂרָה שָׁנָה מֶלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ חַמִּיטָל
 חַמוּטָל בַּת־יִרְמְיָהוּ מְלִבְנָה: ^{יט} וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי
 יְהוָה כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יְהוֹיָקִים: ^כ כִּי | עַל־אֵף יְהוָה
 הִיטָה בִירוּשָׁלַם וּבִיהוּדָה עַד־הִשְׁלָכוֹ אֶתְּם מֵעַל
 פְּנֵיו וַיִּמְרֹד צְדַקְיָהוּ בַמֶּלֶךְ בָּבֶל: {ס}

the notables; ten thousand of these were exiled, and all the artisans and smiths; only the poorest people of the land were left. ¹⁵ He deported Jehoiachin to Babylon, as also the king's mother, his eunuchs and the nobility of the country; he made them all leave Jerusalem for exile in Babylon. ¹⁶ All the men of valour, seven thousand of them, the artisans and smiths, one thousand of them, all capable of bearing arms, were led into exile on Babylon by the king of Babylon. ¹⁷ The king of Babylon deposed Jehoiachin in favour of his uncle Mattaniah, whose name he changed to Zedekiah.

¹⁸ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he came to the throne; he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamital, daughter of Jeremiah, of Libnah. ¹⁹ He did evil in Yahweh's sight, just as Jehoiakim had done. ²⁰ That this happened in Jerusalem and Judah was due to the anger of Yahweh, with the result that in the end he cast them away from him. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

¹⁵ The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁶ Vv. 13-14 and 15-16 are doublets slightly differing in their way of estimating the extent of the first deportation (10,000 and 8,000 captives respectively); Jr 52:28 says 3,023, which perhaps does not count women and children, or perhaps it is a more accurate figure.

¹⁷ 'Mattaniah' means 'Gift of Yahweh'; 'Zedekiah' means 'Yahweh is my justice' (see #23:34). Tablets found in Babylon refer to Jehoiachin and five sons (compare 1Ch 3:17-18).

¹⁸ Zedekiah reigned 597-587 BCE according to E.R. Thiele, or 597-586 BCE according to W.F. Albright. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁹ The literal translation of 'sight' is 'eyes'.

²⁰ The narrative of 24:18-25:30 is used again as a conclusion to Jeremiah (Ch. 52). 25:1-12 is also made use of in Jr 39:1-10.

מלכים ב פרק כה

א ויהי בשנת התשיעית למלכו בחדש העשירי
בעשור לחדש בא נבכדנאצר מלך־בבל הוא
וכל־חילו על־ירושלם ויחן עליה ויבנו עליה דיק
סביב: ב ותבא העיר במצור עד עשתי עשרה
שנה למלך צדקיהו: ג בתשעה לחדש ויחזק
הרעב בעיר ולא־היה לחם לעם הארץ: ד ותבקע
העיר וכל־אנשי המלחמה | הלילה דרך שער | בין
החמתים אשר על־גן המלך וכשדים על־העיר
סביב וילך דרך הערבה: ה וירדפו חיל־כשדים
אחר המלך וישגו אתו בערבות ירחו וכל־חילו
נפצו מעליו: ו ויתפשו את־המלך ויעלו אתו אל־
מלך בבל רבלתה וידברו אתו משפט: ז ואת־בני
צדקיהו שחטו לעיניו ואת־עיני צדקיהו עור
ויאסרוהו בנחשתים ויבאהו בבל: {ס}

2 KINGS 25

¹ In the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with his whole army to attack Jerusalem; he pitched camp outside it and built earthworks round it. ² The city lay under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. ³ On the ninth day of the fourth month, when famine was raging in the city and there was no food for the populace, ⁴ the city was breached. All the soldiers escaped by way of the gate between the two walls, by the king's garden (the Chaldeans had surrounded the city) and headed for the Arabah. ⁵ The Chaldaean troops pursued the king and caught up with him in the plains of Jericho, where all his troops deserted. ⁶ The Chaldeans captured the king and took him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, who passed sentence on him. ⁷ He had the sons of Zedekiah slaughtered before his eyes; he then put out Zedekiah's eyes, bound him with chains, and carried him off to Babylon.

2 KINGS 25

- ¹ This attack was at the end of December 589 BCE (according to notes to the *NJB*) or January 588 (according to *NETB*).
- ² The siege had lasted for over 18 months.
- ³ The *MT* omits 'fourth', here following Jr 52:6 (June–July 587 BCE).
- ⁴ The *NJB*, following the *LXX*, reads, 'the king made his escape ... with all the fighting men'; here we follow the *MT* (which actually reads just, 'all the men of war by night').
- ⁵ Note that the 'king' is mentioned here but not (with his soldiers) in v. 4.
- ⁶ 'Riblah' was a strategic town on the Orontes River in Syria; it was at a crossing of the major roads between Egypt and Mesopotamia.
- ⁷ In place of 'chains', here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has 'fettters' and *NETB* has 'bronze chains'.

^ח וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי בְּשִׁבְעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ הָיָא שְׁנַת
 תְּשַׁע־עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה לַמֶּלֶךְ נְבֻכַדְנֶאֱצַר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל
 בָּא נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־טַבָּחִים עֶבֶד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל
 יְרוּשָׁלַם: ^ט וַיִּשְׂרֹף אֶת־בֵּית־יְהוָה וְאֶת־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ
 וְאֵת כָּל־בְּתֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־כָּל־בֵּית גָּדוֹל שָׂרָף
 בְּאֵשׁ: ^י וְאֶת־חוֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַם סָבִיב נִתְּצוּ כָל־חֵיל
 כְּשָׂדִים אֲשֶׁר רַב־טַבָּחִים: ^{יא} וְאֵת יְתֵר הָעָם
 הַנִּשְׂאָרִים בְּעִיר וְאֶת־הַנְּפִלִים אֲשֶׁר נָפְלוּ עַל־
 הַמֶּלֶךְ בָּבֶל וְאֵת יְתֵר הַהֶמּוֹן הַגָּלָה נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־
 טַבָּחִים: ^{יב} וּמִדִּלַּת הָאָרֶץ הִשְׂאִיר רַב־טַבָּחִים
 לְכַרְמִים וּלְיַגְבִּים:

^{יג} וְאֶת־עַמּוּדֵי הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר בֵּית־יְהוָה וְאֶת־
 הַמְּכֻנּוֹת וְאֶת־יָם הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית־יְהוָה שָׁבְרוּ
 כְּשָׂדִים וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־נְחֹשֶׁתָם בְּבִלָּה: ^{יד} וְאֶת־הַסִּירֹת
 וְאֶת־הַיָּעִים וְאֶת־הַמְּזֻמְרוֹת וְאֶת־הַכַּפּוֹת וְאֶת־כָּל־
 כְּלֵי הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר יִשְׂרְתוּבָם לְקָחוּ: ^{טו} וְאֶת־

⁸ In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, an officer of the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. ⁹ He burned down the Temple of Yahweh, the royal palace and all the houses in Jerusalem; he burned every great house. ¹⁰ The Chaldaean army with the captain of the guard tore down the walls around Jerusalem. ¹¹ Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, deported the remainder of the population left behind in the city, the deserters who had gone over to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the common people. ¹² The captain of the guard left some of the humbler country people as vineyard workers and ploughmen.

¹³ The Chaldeans broke up the pillars from the Temple of Yahweh, the wheeled stands and the bronze Sea that were in the Temple of Yahweh, and took the bronze away to Babylon. ¹⁴ They also took the ash containers, the scoops, the snuffers, the incense boats, and all the bronze furnishings used in worship. ¹⁵ The captain of the guard took the censers

⁸ This was still in the 11th year of Zedekiah (v.2), in 587 BCE. Instead of ‘nineteenth’, Jr 52:59 has ‘eighteenth’ – see #24:12.

⁹ The NJB omits ‘he burned every great house’.

¹⁰ Throughout this section, NETB has ‘Babylonian(s)’ in place of ‘Chaldaean(s)’.

¹¹ According to Jr 52:29, the number taken in this second deportation was only 832.

¹² Presumably, Nebuchadnezzar wished to resettle the area, and wanted the land to be kept in good shape.

¹³ The ‘Sea’ was large basin mounted on 12 bronze bulls containing water for the priests to bathe themselves (1K 7:23, 2Ch 4:6, cf. Ex 30:17–21).

¹⁴ The NJB has ‘knives’ in place of ‘snuffers’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁵ The NRSV reads, “... what was made of gold the captain of the guard took away for the gold, and what was made of silver, for the silver”).

הַמַּחֲתוֹת וְאֶת־הַמְזֻרְקוֹת אֲשֶׁר זָהָב זָהָב וְאֲשֶׁר־
בְּכֶסֶף בְּכֶסֶף לָקַח רַב־טַבָּחִים: ^{טז} הָעַמּוּדִים | שְׁנַיִם
הַיָּם הָאֶחָד וְהַמְכֻנּוֹת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה שְׁלֹמֹה לְבַיִת
יְהוָה לֹא־הָיָה מִשְׁקָל לְנַחֲשֶׁת כָּל־הַכֵּלִים הָאֵלֶּה:
^{יז} שְׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂרָה אַמָּה קוֹמַת | הָעַמּוּד הָאֶחָד
וְכִתְרַת עָלָיו | נְחֹשֶׁת וְקוֹמַת הַכִּתְרַת שְׁלֹשׁ אַמָּה
אַמוֹת וְשִׁבְכָה וְרַמְנִים עַל־הַכִּתְרַת סָבִיב הַכֵּל
נְחֹשֶׁת וְכֹאֵלֶּה לְעַמּוּד הַשֵּׁנִי עַל־הַשִּׁבְכָה:

^{יח} וַיִּקַּח רַב־טַבָּחִים אֶת־שֶׁרִיָּה כֹהֵן הָרֹאשׁ וְאֶת־
צְפַנְיָהוּ כֹהֵן מִשְׁנֵה וְאֶת־שְׁלֹשֶׁת שְׁמַרְי הַסֹּף:
^{יט} וּמִן־הָעֵיר לָקַח סָרִיס אֶחָד אֲשֶׁר־הוּא פְּקִיד |
עַל־אַנְשֵׁי הַמְּלַחְמָה וְחַמְשָׁה אַנְשִׁים מֵרֵאֵי פְּנֵי־
הַמְּלָךְ אֲשֶׁר נִמְצְאוּ בְּעִיר וְאֵת הַסֹּפֵר שֶׁר הַצָּבָא
הַמְּצָבָא אֶת־עַם הָאָרֶץ וְשֵׁשִׁים אִישׁ מֵעַם הָאָרֶץ
הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּעִיר: ^כ וַיִּקַּח אֹתָם נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב־

and the sprinkling bowls, everything that was made of gold and everything made of silver. ¹⁶ As regards the two pillars, the one Sea and the wheeled stands, which Solomon had made for the Temple of Yahweh, there was no reckoning of the weight of bronze in all these objects. ¹⁷ The height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and on it stood a capital of bronze, the height of the capital being three cubits; round the capital were filigree and pomegranates, all in bronze. The second pillar had the same, with the latticework.

¹⁸ The captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank, and the three guardians of the threshold. ¹⁹ From the city, he took prisoner a eunuch who was in command of the fighting men, five men of the king's council who were discovered in the city, the secretary to the army commander, responsible for military conscription, and sixty men of distinction discovered in the city. ²⁰ Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, took these men and brought them to the king

¹⁶ In the parallel passage of Jr 52:20, the words 'and the twelve bronze bulls under the Sea' follow 'the Sea'; here, they have probably been accidentally omitted by homoioarcton: a scribe's eye may have jumped from the וְהַבָּקָר on וְהָ (and the bulls') to the וְהָ on וְהַמְכֻנּוֹת ('and the wheeled stands'), causing him to leave out the intervening words.

¹⁷ The NJB, following Jr 52:22, has 'five' instead of 'three' (see 1K 7:16). The last words are either intended as a gloss on 'pomegranates', or the remains of a more detailed description (see Jr 52:23). The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁸ In place of 'guardians of the threshold', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'doorkeepers'.

¹⁹ The NJB opens with 'in' rather than 'from', here following the NRSV & NETB. 'Men of distinction' follows the NJB; the NRSV has 'people of the land' and NETB has 'citizens'.

²⁰ On the significance of 'Riblah', see #6.

טַבָּחִים וַיִּלְךְ אַתֶּם עַל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל רַבְלָתָהּ: כֹּא וַיִּךְ אַתֶּם מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וַיְמִיתֶם בְּרַבְלָה בְּאַרְץ חֲמַת וַיִּגְלֵ יהוּדָה מֵעַל אֲדַמְתּוֹ: כִּב וְהָעַם הַנִּשְׁאָר בְּאַרְץ יהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁאִיר נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וַיִּפְקֹד עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲחִיקָם בֶּן־שַׁפָּן: כִּג וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ כָל־שָׂרֵי הַחֲיָלִים הַמָּה וְהָאֲנָשִׁים כִּי־הִפְקִיד מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־גְּדַלְיָהוּ הַמְצַפֶּה וַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה וַיֹּחָנָן בֶּן־קָרַח וּשְׂרָיָה בֶן־תַּנְחֻמֶת הַנֶּטְפָתִי וַיֹּאזְנִיָהוּ בֶן־הַמַּעַכְתִּי הַמָּה וְאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם: כִּד וַיִּשָּׁבַע לָהֶם גְּדַלְיָהוּ וּלְאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אַל־תִּירְאוּ מֵעַבְדֵי הַכַּשְׂדִּים שָׁבוּ בְּאַרְץ וְעַבְדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וַיְטֹב לָכֶם: {פ}

כֵּה וַיְהִי בַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בָּא יִשְׁמַעְאֵל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָה בֶן־אֵלִישָׁמָע מִזֶּרַע הַמְּלוּכָה וְעֶשְׂרֵה אַנְשִׁים אִתּוֹ

of Babylon at Riblah,²¹ and at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death. Thus, Judah went into exile out of its land.²² The people who remained in the land of Judah whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left behind, he appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan as their governor.²³ When the commander of the troops and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor, they went to him at Mizpah: Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the Netophathite, Jaazaniah the Maacathite, they and their men.²⁴ To them and to their men Gedaliah swore an oath. “Do not be afraid because of the Chaldaean officials,” he said, “live in the country, obey the king of Babylon, and all will go well with you.”

²⁵ However, in the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama, who was of royal descent, and ten men with him, came and

²¹ The NJB lacks ‘struck them down’.

²² The two passages, vv. 22–26 and 27–30, are appendices added during the Exile. The first does not appear in Jr 52 (but there is an expanded account in J2 40:7–41:18). In Jr 40:6 and Chs 42–43, the prophet is brought into the story. It is a cause for amazement that Jeremiah is not mentioned even once in 2 Kings, whereas the Book of Jeremiah contains a wealth of additional information about the last days of Judah.

²³ The ‘troops’ here mentioned are those of Judah (not the Chaldeans).

²⁴ The NJB, following the LXX and Peshitta, omits ‘because’ and ‘officials’. The abolition of the monarchy and the appointment of Gedaliah as a native governor under Chaldaean control should have meant peace and stability for Judah. Gedaliah’s father, Ahikam, had been a trusted adviser of Josiah (22:12) and a friend of Jeremiah (Jr 26:24). Gedaliah himself was well disposed toward the prophet (Jr 39:14, 40:6) and enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens (Jr 40:11–12).

²⁵ The assassination of this good man by Ishmael, a member of the deposed royal family, brought about utter chaos and ruin (Jr 40:13–41:18).

וַיָּכּוּ אֶת־גְּדַלְיָהוּ וַיָּמַת וְאֶת־הַיְהוּדִים וְאֶת־
הַכַּשְׂדִּים אֲשֶׁר־הָיוּ אִתּוֹ בַּמִּצְפָּה: כו וַיִּקְמוּ כָּל־
הָעָם מִקָּטָן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל וְשָׂרֵי הַחֲיָלִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִצְרַיִם
כִּי יֵרְאוּ מִפְּנֵי כַשְׂדִּים: {ס}

כז וַיְהִי בִשְׁלֹשִׁים וְשֶׁבַע שָׁנָה לְגָלוּת יְהוֹיָכִן מֶלֶךְ־
יְהוּדָה בְּשָׁנִים עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ בְּעֶשְׂרִים וְשֶׁבַע לַחֹדֶשׁ
נָשָׂא אֲוִיל מֶרְדַּךְ מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל בְּשָׁנַת מָלְכוֹ אֶת־רֹאשׁ
יְהוֹיָכִין מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה מִבַּיִת כְּלֹא: כח וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ
טָבוֹת וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־כִּסְאוֹ מֵעַל כִּסֵּי הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר
אִתּוֹ בְּבָבֶל: כט וְשָׂנֵא אֶת בְּגָדֵי כְלָאוֹ וְאָכַל לֶחֶם
תָּמִיד לְפָנָיו כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּו: ל וְאַרְחָתוֹ אֲרָחַת תָּמִיד
נִתְּנָה־לּוֹ מֵאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ כָּל יְמֵי
חַיָּו: {ש}

murdered Gedaliah, as well as the Judaeans and Chaldaeans who were with him at Mizpah. ²⁶ Then the people, of high and low degree, with the commanders of the troops, all set out and made for Egypt, in fear of the Chaldaeans.

²⁷ In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year he came to the throne, pardoned Jehoiachin king of Judah and released him from prison. ²⁸ He treated him kindly and allotted him a seat above those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. ²⁹ Therefore, Jehoiachin laid aside his prisoner's garb, and for the rest of his life always ate at the king's table. ³⁰ The king permanently ensured his upkeep day after day, for the rest of his life.

²⁶ An alternative translation for 'of high and low degree' is 'young and old'.

²⁷ 'Evil-Merodach', son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, came to the throne in 562 BCE, which was the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity.

²⁸ The passage of vv. 27-30 is also found in Jr 52:31-34.

²⁹ From Exile, the Deuteronomist reports that Jehoiachin was still safe, and was enjoying favoured treatment by King Evil-Merodach. The report has been partially confirmed by archaeological researchers. The writer may have used this information to end the book with a note of modest hope, as though to say (in spite of 24:9): the Davidic dynasty has not been snuffed out.

³⁰ The parallel passage in J2 52:34 includes the words 'until the day he died' at the end of the sentence; here, they have probably been accidentally omitted by homoioarcton: a scribe's eye jumped from the final *vav* (ו) on בְּיוֹמוֹ ('in his day') to the final *vav* (ו) on מוֹתוֹ ('his death'), leaving out the intervening words.