

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

MASADA & DEAD SEA

In addition to building the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem and the man-made port city of Caesarea, Herod the Great also built a huge desert fortress called Masada. Construction began in 37 BC, the same year Herod became king, and took six years to complete.

Herod was known for being paranoid, so he designed Masada to be a luxurious but heavily protected hideout in case of rebellion. Masada was built on the flat top of a mountain in the Judean Desert, overlooking the western shore of the Dead Sea. The fortress included two palaces, barracks, storerooms, baths, swimming pools, water cisterns, and thick defensive walls. Large amounts of food were stored there in case the fortress was ever attacked.

In 66 AD, the Jews in Judea revolted against their Roman rulers. Even though Judea was a small province in the Roman Empire, the Jews resisted Roman rule for seven years, until 73 AD. They refused to give up their faith or submit to pagan worship, idolatry, and harsh treatment. The last Jewish stronghold to fall was Masada. A group of Jewish fighters was determined to resist the Romans until the very end.

Today, groups of Israeli soldiers are sworn into service at Masada, ending the ceremony with the words, "Masada shall not fall again." Masada has become a symbol of courage, survival, and the determination of the Jewish people to live free in their Promised Land.

From the top of Masada, visitors can see breathtaking views of the Dead Sea. In the Bible, the Dead Sea is often called the Salt Sea because it contains an extremely high amount of salt. The water is so salty that it makes people unusually buoyant, allowing them to float without effort. Fish and aquatic plants cannot survive in its extremely salty water, although certain microorganisms can, but many people visit because the mineral-rich water and mud are believed to be good for the skin. The Dead Sea is also the lowest land-based place on Earth.

In 1947, a teenage Bedouin shepherd was searching for a lost goat in the Judean Desert near the Dead Sea. While he was searching, he discovered ancient manuscripts containing portions and whole books of the Hebrew Bible.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were one of the most significant archeological discoveries of the twentieth century. The scrolls, hidden for two thousand years, show that the Bible was faithfully copied and preserved. The manuscripts showed remarkable consistency with biblical texts that had been preserved and passed down for generations. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is a reminder of the truth of the prophet's words in Isaiah 40:8, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

SCROLL SCAVENGER HUNT

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:

Students become "archaeologists" searching for hidden scrolls around the classroom. Each scroll contains a Bible verse about God's Word. When they find it, they will use their Bible to locate and read the verse. This activity should take about 10 minutes and can be completed individually or in groups. The scavenger hunt combines movement, discovery, and learning in one activity.

Resources Needed:

- Bible verse reference cards as "scrolls."
- Optional: envelopes for each "scroll."
- Bibles

Instructions:

- Hide the provided Bible verse scrolls around your classroom (under chairs, behind books, taped to walls, on shelves, etc.).
- **Read this to your class:**

In 1947, a teenage Bedouin shepherd boy was looking for a lost goat and throwing stones. One stone fell into a cave, and he heard something break. Curious, he went inside and found clay jars filled with ancient scrolls. These scrolls turned out to be priceless. They contained parts of almost every book of the Old Testament, except for Esther. One of the most important discoveries was a nearly complete copy of the book of Isaiah. Hidden for over two thousand years, the scrolls show how carefully God's Word was copied and preserved. Now you will be the "archaeologists" looking for ancient scrolls.

- Have students search the room to find the hidden scrolls.
- Once all scrolls are found, bring the class together.
- Have students take turns looking up the Scriptures they found in their scrolls and read them to the class.

1 The Lord had said to Abram,
“Go from your country, your people and your
father’s household to
the land I will show you.

2 “I will make you into a great
nation, and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will
curse; and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”

GENESIS 12:1–3

18 On that day the Lord
made a covenant with
Abram and said, “To your
descendants I give this
land, from the Wadi of
Egypt to the great river, the
Euphrates—

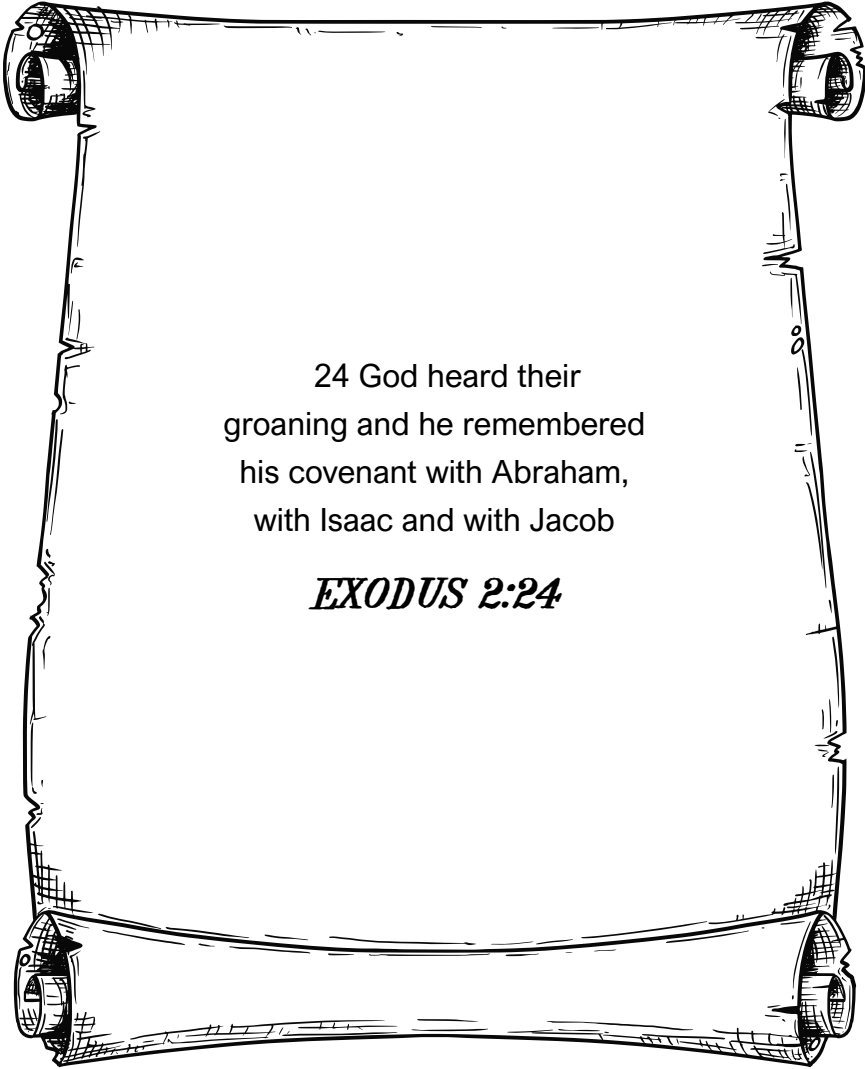
GENESIS 15:18

7 I will establish my covenant as an
everlasting covenant between me and
you and your descendants after you for
the generations to come, to be your
God and the God of your descendants
after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan,
where you now reside as a foreigner, I
will give as an everlasting possession to
you and your descendants after you;
and I will be their God.”

GENESIS 17:7–8

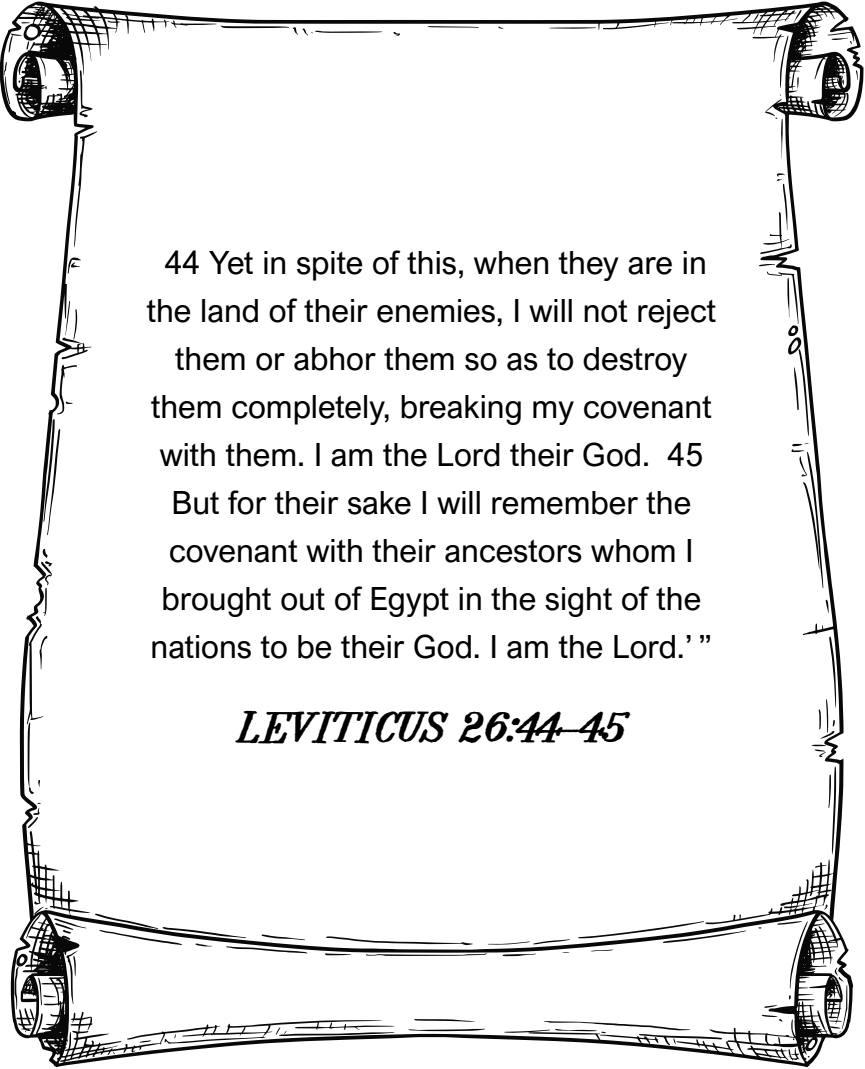
16 and said, “I swear by myself,
declares the Lord, that because
you have done this and have not
withheld your son, your only son,
17 I will surely bless you and make
your descendants as numerous as
the stars in the sky and as the
sand on the seashore. Your
descendants will take possession
of the cities of their enemies, 18
and through your offspring all
nations on earth will be blessed,
because you have obeyed me.”

GENESIS 22:16–18



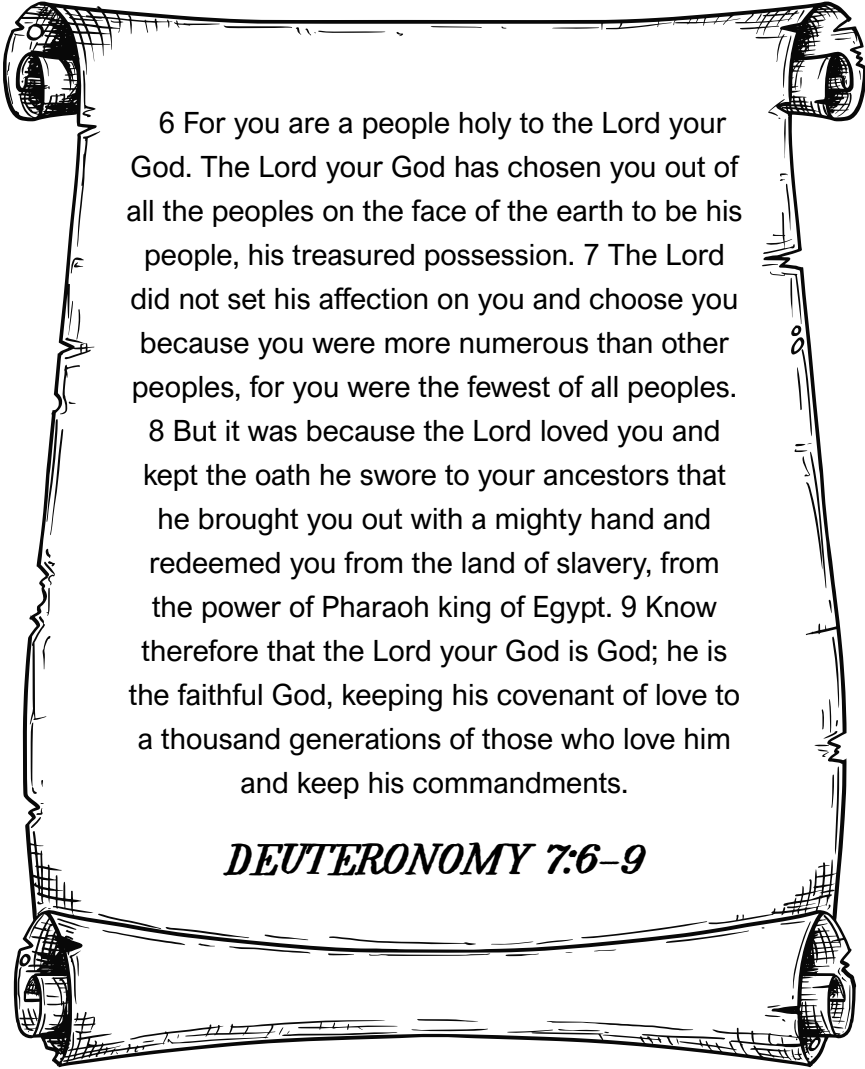
24 God heard their
groaning and he remembered
his covenant with Abraham,
with Isaac and with Jacob

EXODUS 2:24



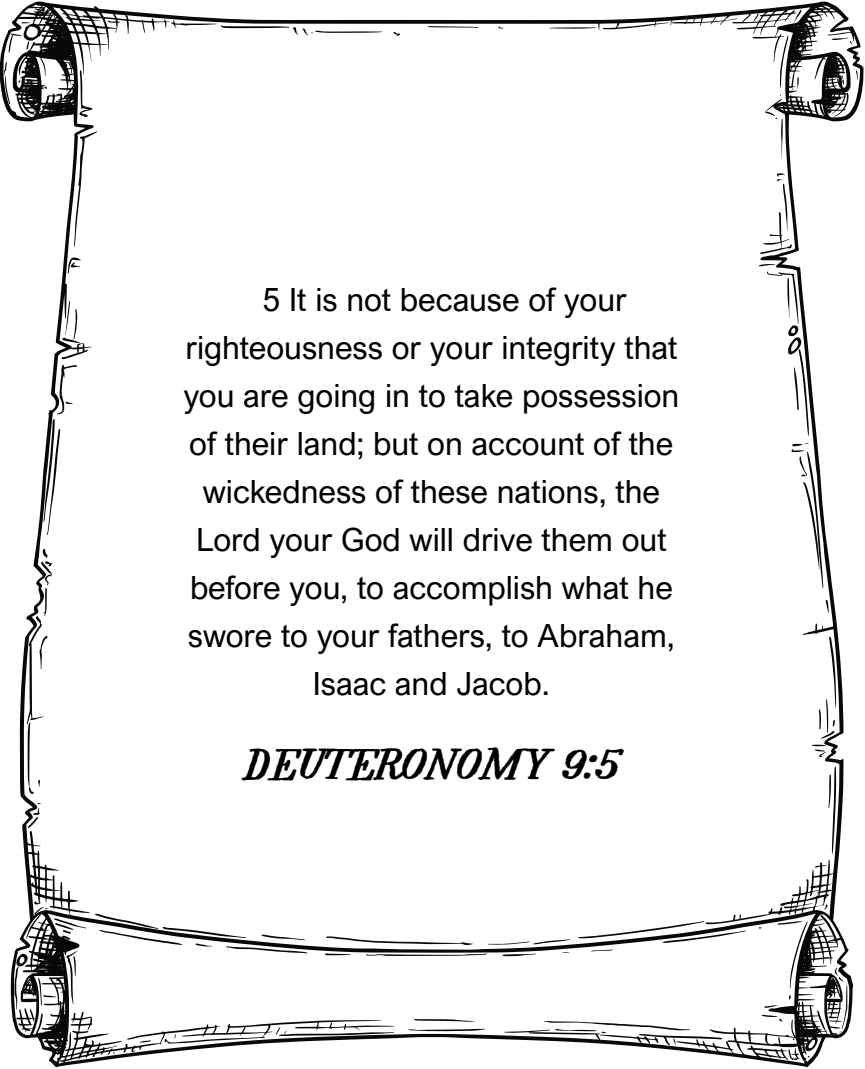
44 Yet in spite of this, when they are in
the land of their enemies, I will not reject
them or abhor them so as to destroy
them completely, breaking my covenant
with them. I am the Lord their God. 45
But for their sake I will remember the
covenant with their ancestors whom I
brought out of Egypt in the sight of the
nations to be their God. I am the Lord.' ”

LEVITICUS 26:44-45



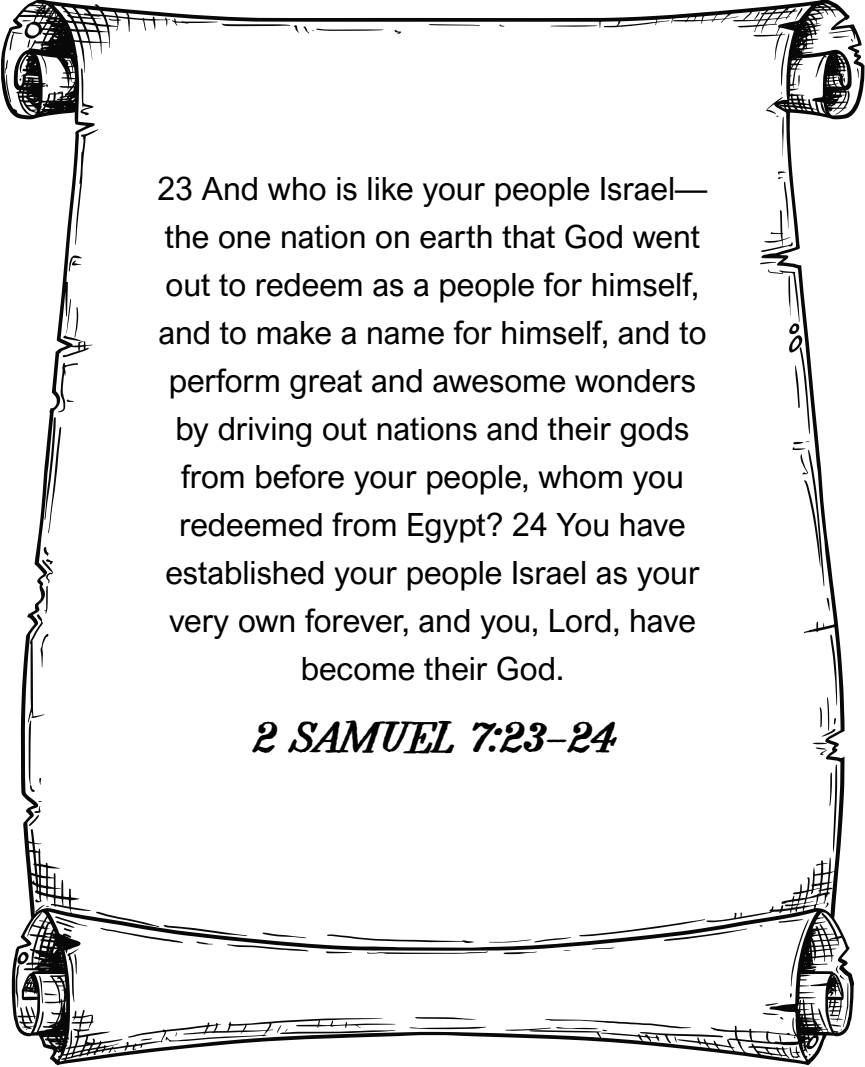
6 For you are a people holy to the Lord your
God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of
all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his
people, his treasured possession. 7 The Lord
did not set his affection on you and choose you
because you were more numerous than other
peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.
8 But it was because the Lord loved you and
kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that
he brought you out with a mighty hand and
redeemed you from the land of slavery, from
the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know
therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is
the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to
a thousand generations of those who love him
and keep his commandments.

DEUTERONOMY 7:6-9



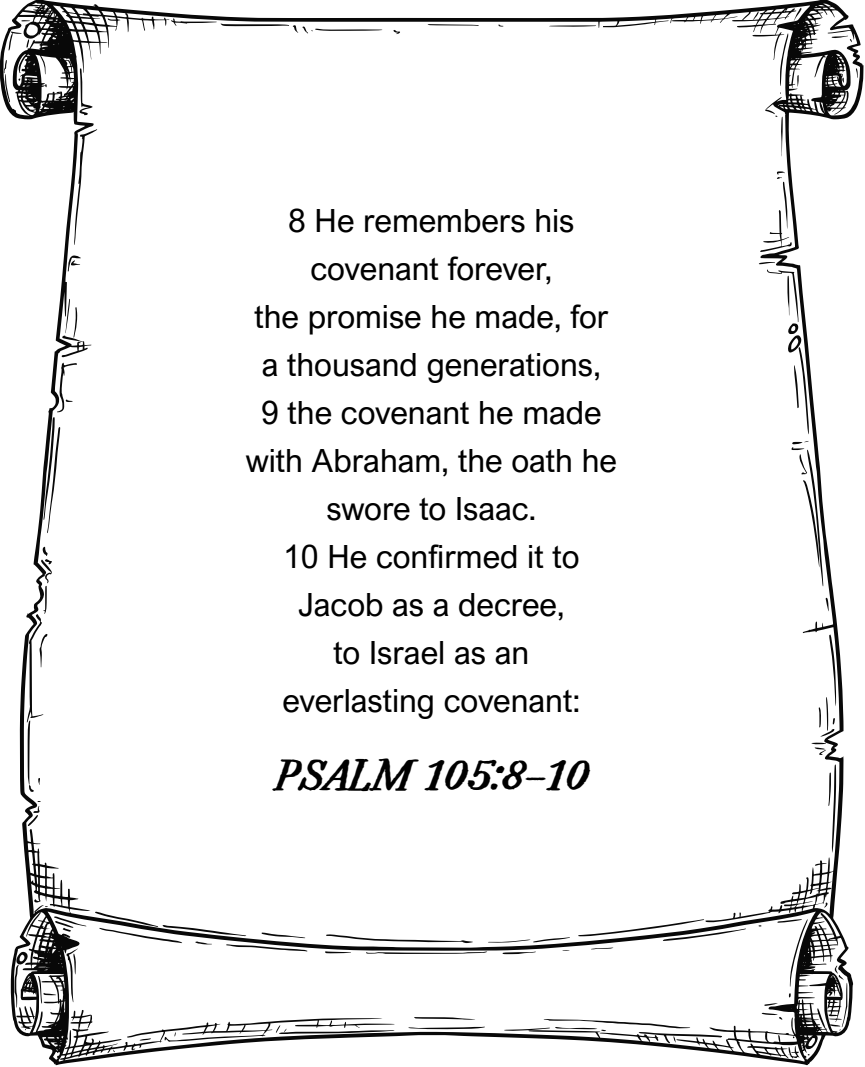
5 It is not because of your
righteousness or your integrity that
you are going in to take possession
of their land; but on account of the
wickedness of these nations, the
Lord your God will drive them out
before you, to accomplish what he
swore to your fathers, to Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob.

DEUTERONOMY 9:5



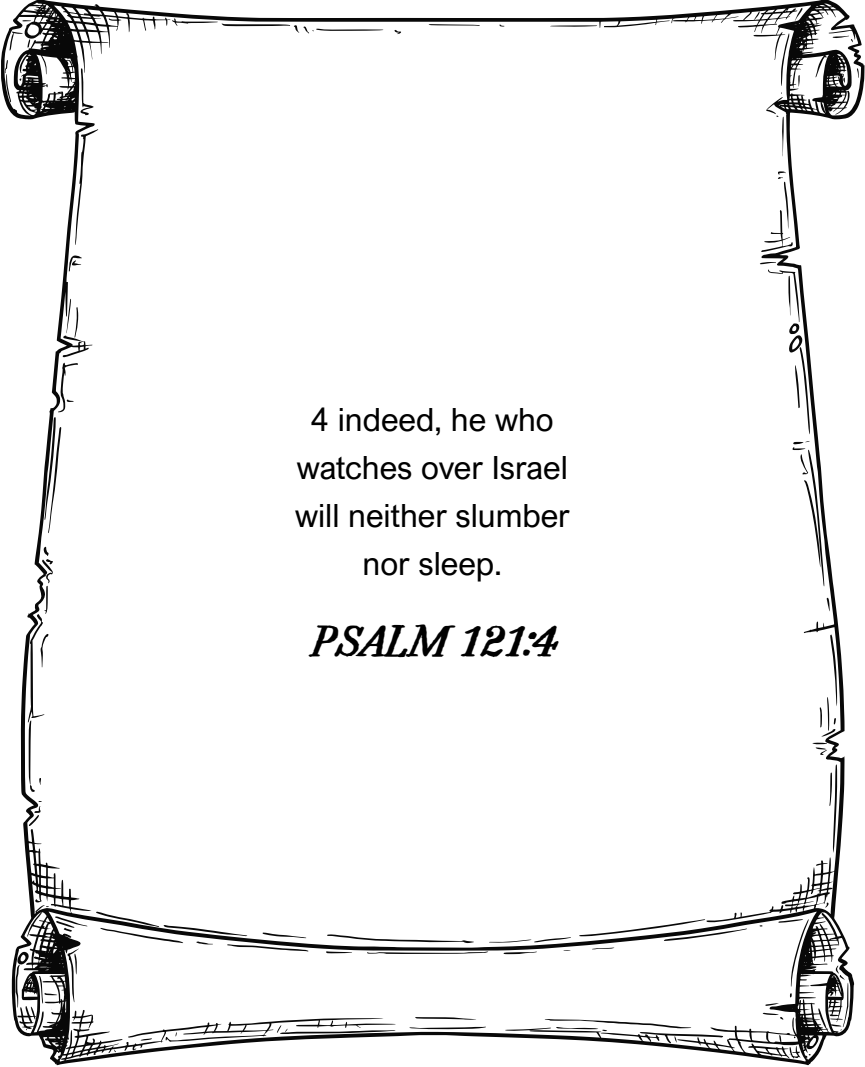
23 And who is like your people Israel—
the one nation on earth that God went
out to redeem as a people for himself,
and to make a name for himself, and to
perform great and awesome wonders
by driving out nations and their gods
from before your people, whom you
redeemed from Egypt? 24 You have
established your people Israel as your
very own forever, and you, Lord, have
become their God.

2 SAMUEL 7:23–24



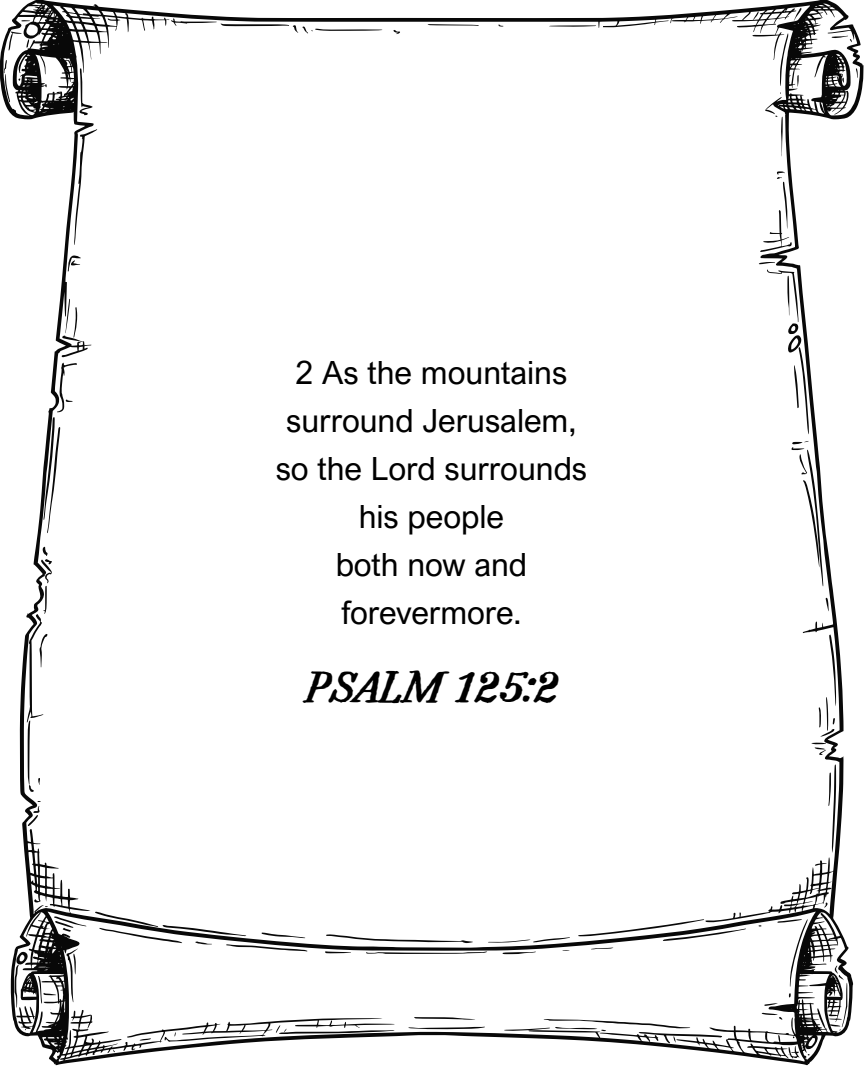
8 He remembers his
covenant forever,
the promise he made, for
a thousand generations,
9 the covenant he made
with Abraham, the oath he
swore to Isaac.
10 He confirmed it to
Jacob as a decree,
to Israel as an
everlasting covenant:

PSALM 105:8–10



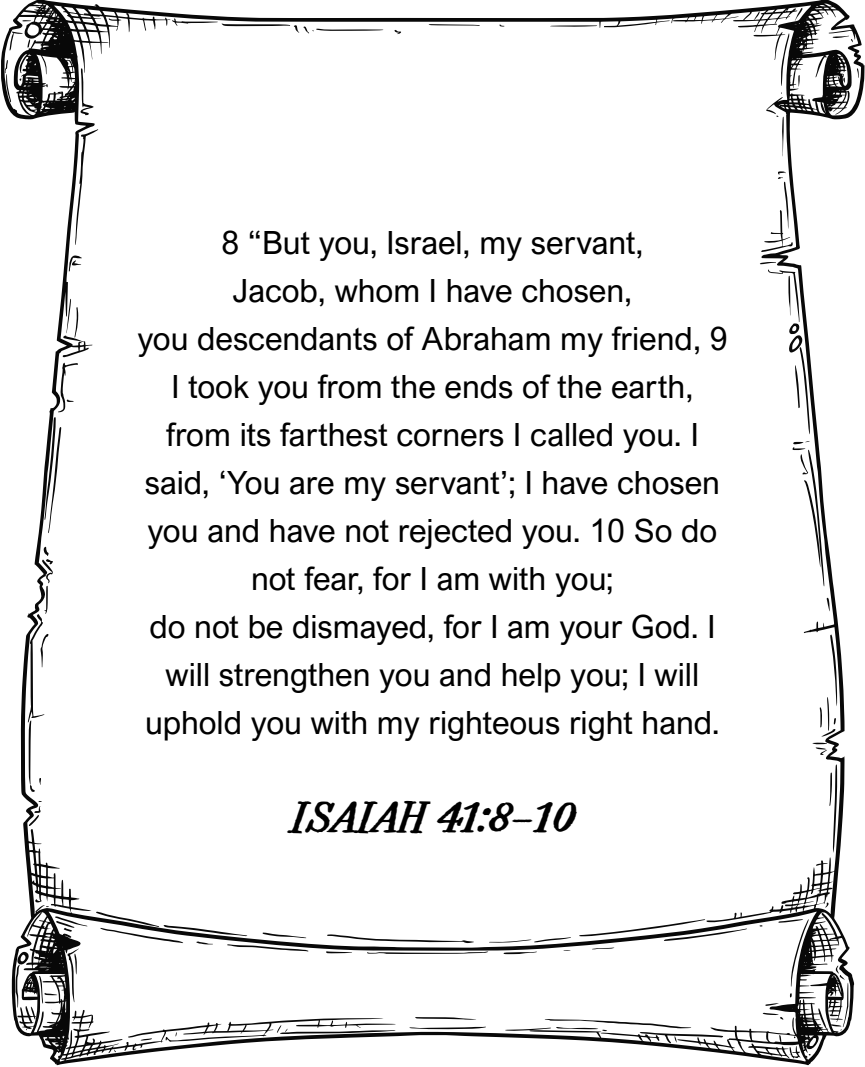
4 indeed, he who
watches over Israel
will neither slumber
nor sleep.

PSALM 121:4



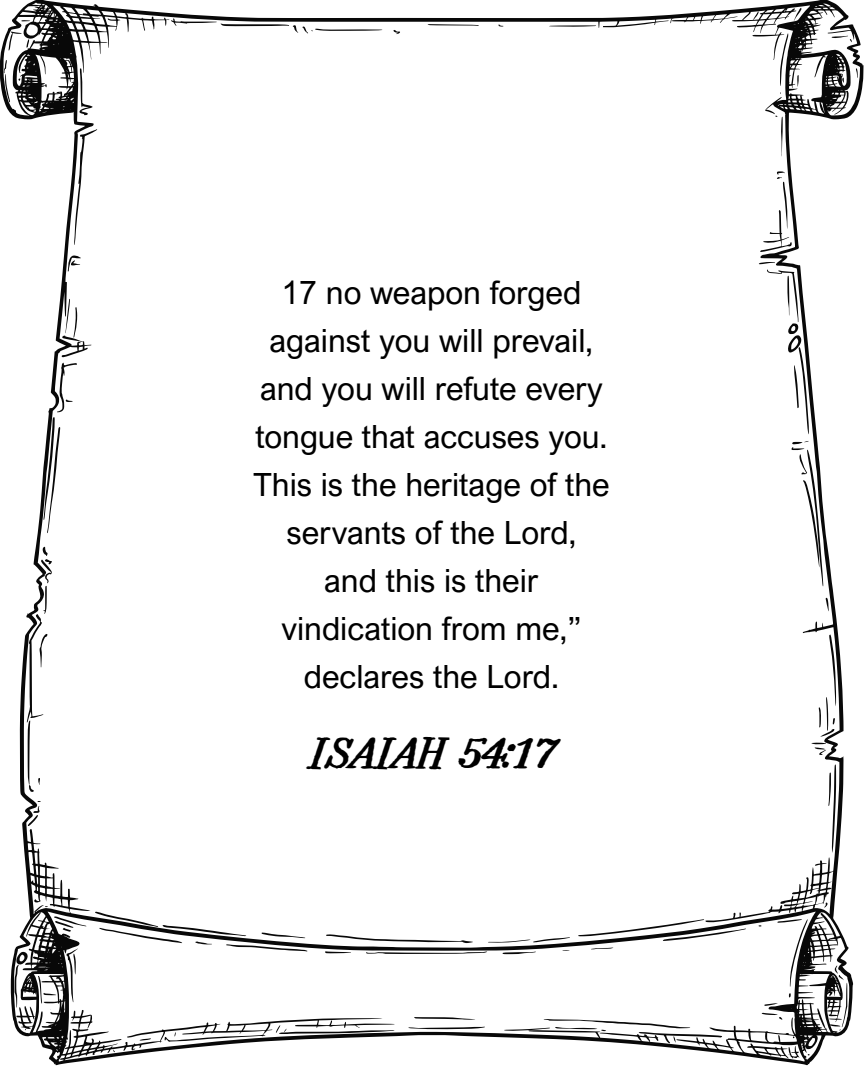
2 As the mountains
surround Jerusalem,
so the Lord surrounds
his people
both now and
forevermore.

PSALM 125:2



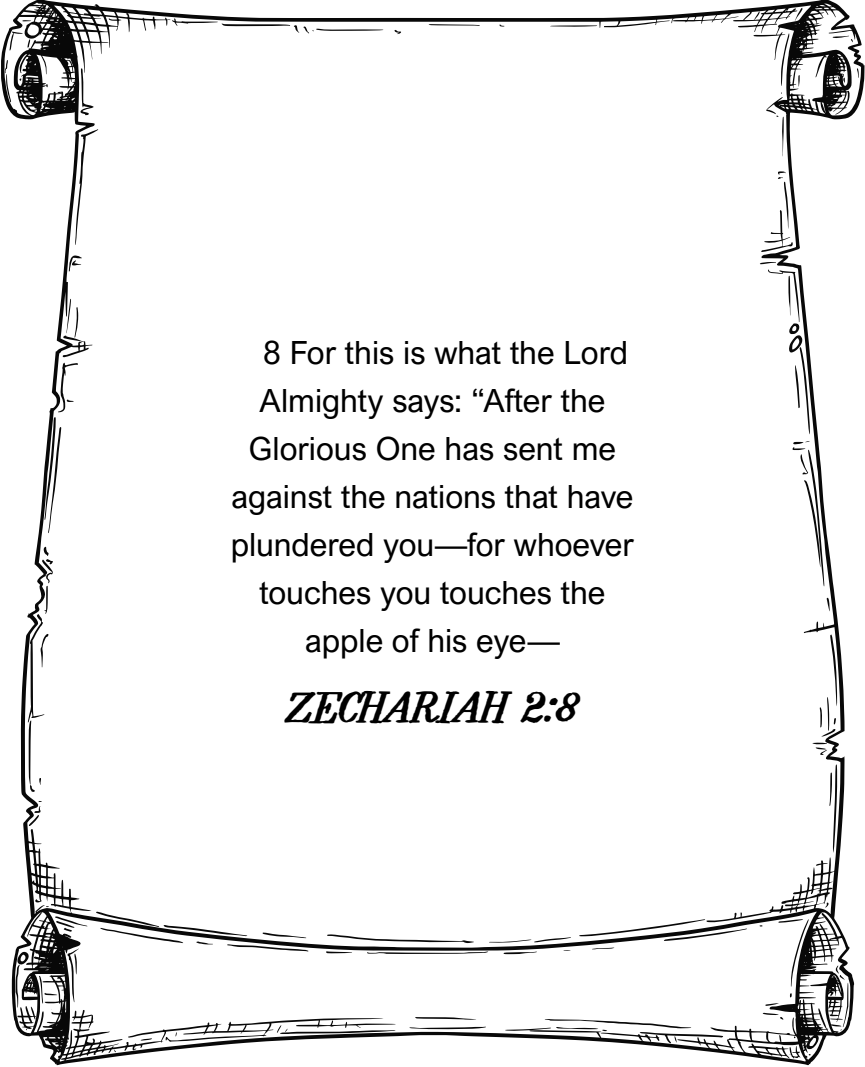
8 “But you, Israel, my servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
you descendants of Abraham my friend, 9
I took you from the ends of the earth,
from its farthest corners I called you. I
said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen
you and have not rejected you. 10 So do
not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I
will strengthen you and help you; I will
uphold you with my righteous right hand.

ISAIAH 41:8–10



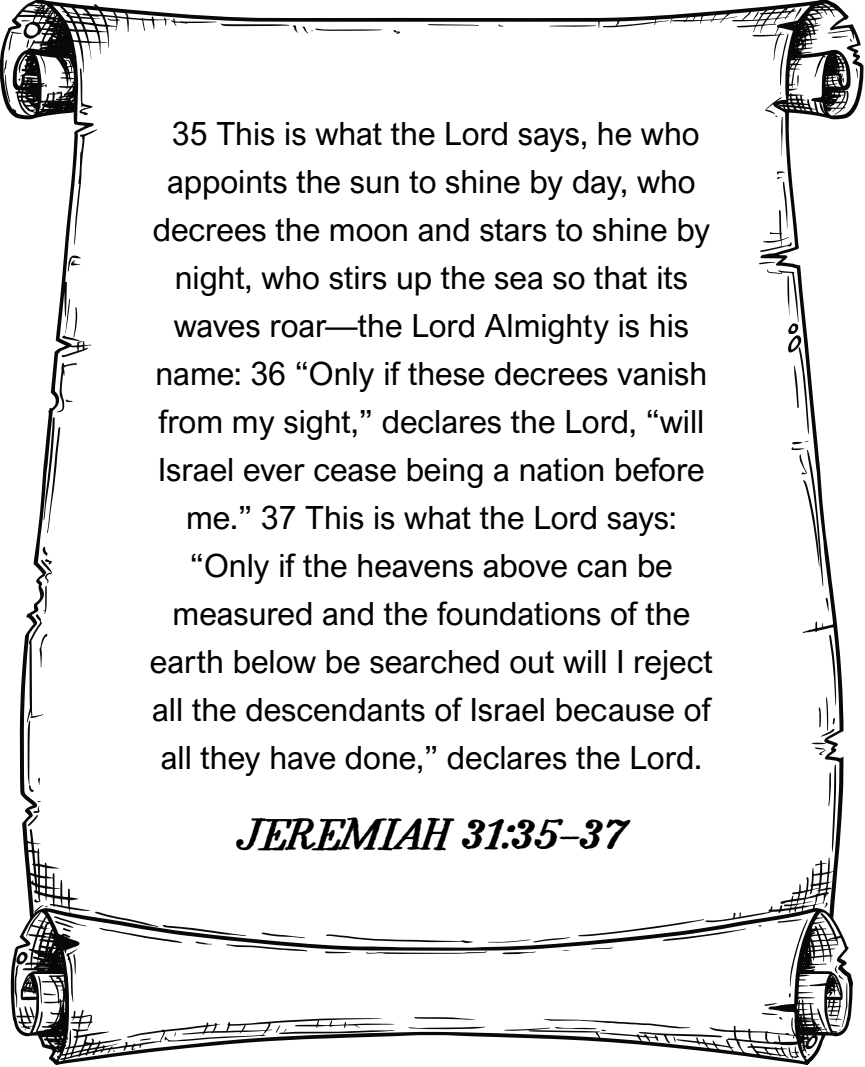
17 no weapon forged
against you will prevail,
and you will refute every
tongue that accuses you.
This is the heritage of the
servants of the Lord,
and this is their
vindication from me,”
declares the Lord.

ISAIAH 54:17



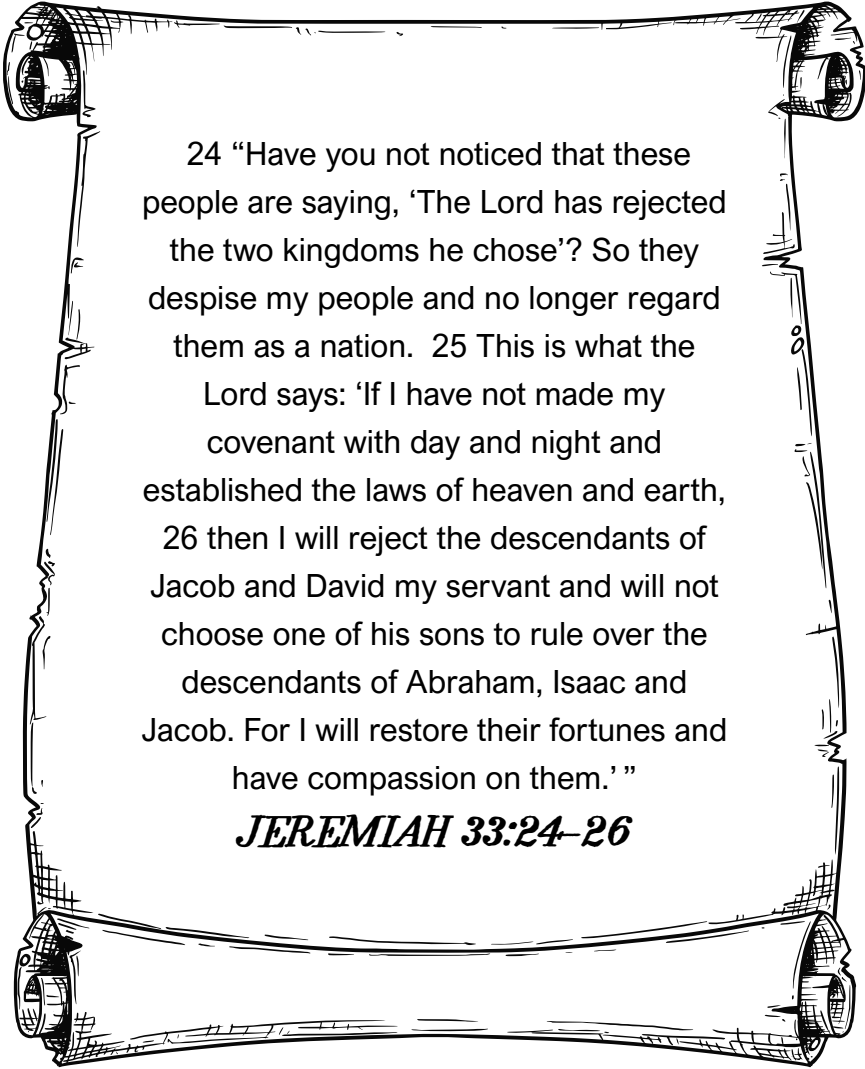
8 For this is what the Lord
Almighty says: “After the
Glorious One has sent me
against the nations that have
plundered you—for whoever
touches you touches the
apple of his eye—

ZECHARIAH 2:8



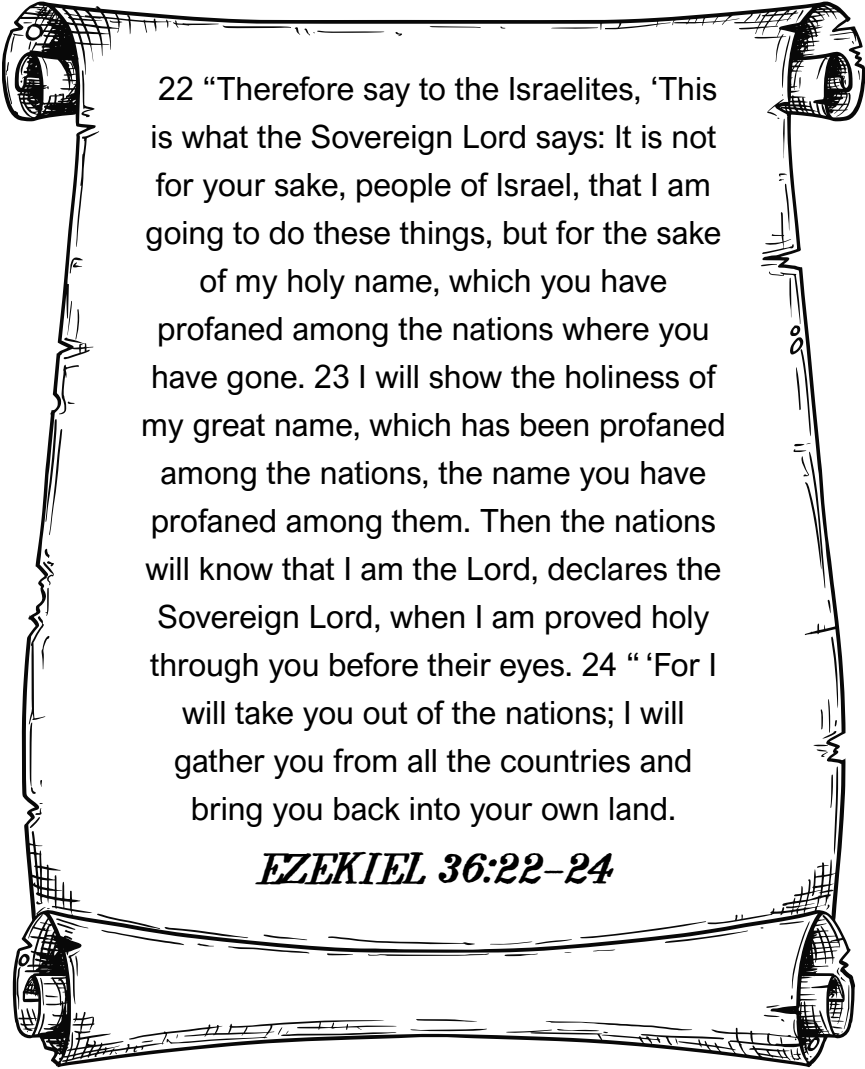
35 This is what the Lord says, he who
appoints the sun to shine by day, who
decrees the moon and stars to shine by
night, who stirs up the sea so that its
waves roar—the Lord Almighty is his
name: 36 “Only if these decrees vanish
from my sight,” declares the Lord, “will
Israel ever cease being a nation before
me.” 37 This is what the Lord says:
“Only if the heavens above can be
measured and the foundations of the
earth below be searched out will I reject
all the descendants of Israel because of
all they have done,” declares the Lord.

JEREMIAH 31:35–37



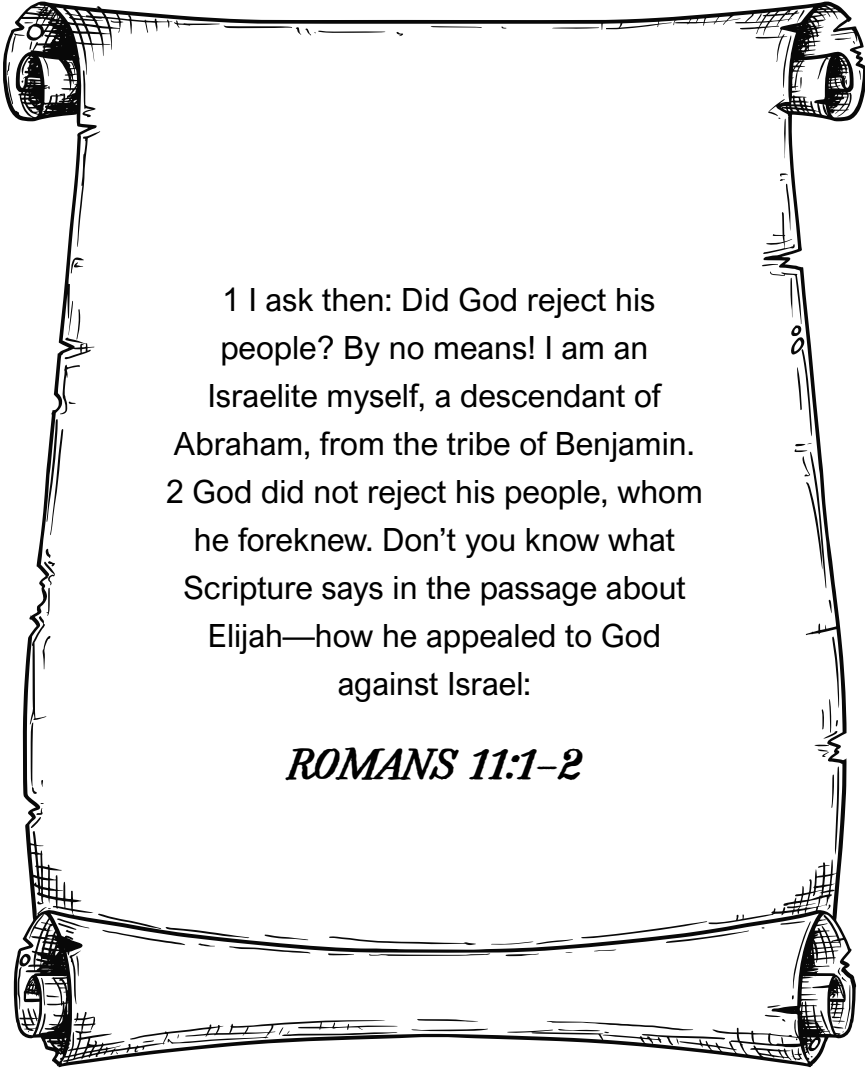
24 “Have you not noticed that these people are saying, ‘The Lord has rejected the two kingdoms he chose’? So they despise my people and no longer regard them as a nation. 25 This is what the Lord says: ‘If I have not made my covenant with day and night and established the laws of heaven and earth, 26 then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.’”

JEREMIAH 33:24-26



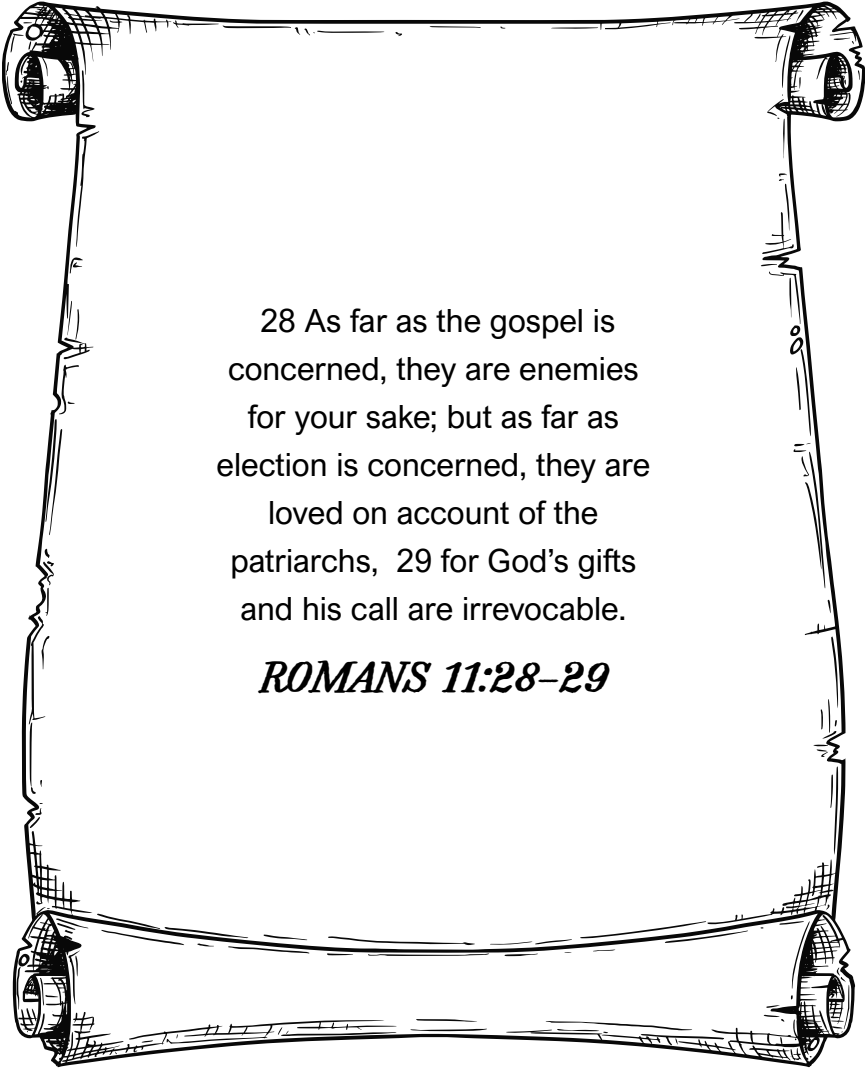
22 “Therefore say to the Israelites, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. 23 I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes. 24 “ ‘For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

EZEKIEL 36:22-24



1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don’t you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel:

ROMANS 11:1-2



28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.

ROMANS 11:28-29