

# The Prophets & Kings

## From Rehoboam To Zedekiah

### Book 1

#### A Daily Devotional Study Guide

Week 70

## “Into Harm’s Way”

**Study:** Jeremiah 43:1-13

**Reading:** 2 Kings 6:8-23

**Memory:** Pslam 119:1-6

**O**ver the years, I have set many mouse traps. I normally use peanut butter as bait to draw the mice to the trap. Though the mice believe they are going to have an easy meal, their natural desires are leading them directly to their fate.

Today, we are going to read how the Israelite leaders failed to follow God. Instead of leading the people to safety, they led the people directly into harm’s way.

### What Does the Bible Say?

The remnant of those left in Israel had sought wisdom from God and declared that they would do whatever God revealed to Jeremiah. Jeremiah had revealed that God’s desire was for them to remain in the land of Israel where He would grow and prosper them. Though the people said they would obey whatever God revealed to Jeremiah, when they heard this, they went back on their word. Johanan, along with Azariah, didn’t like what Jeremiah had to say. They declared that Jeremiah was lying and stated that they did not think what Jeremiah was saying was from God. They accused Baruch of convincing Jeremiah to lie so they would be slaughtered by the Babylonians. Why they brought up Baruch is unclear. We do know from Jeremiah 36 that Baruch worked with Jeremiah to help deliver a message to the people, but we aren’t given any further information as to why he was accused of this (vs 1-3).

Johanan led the people to disobey the word of God and chose not to remain in Judah. They led the people out of Judah to the land of Egypt. We are not told how many people were with them, but we are told that this included many who had been scattered and then came back to the land. God wanted to use these people to start rebuilding, but in the first test of obedience, they chose to disobey. They made their way to Egypt where they arrived at the city of Tahpanhes which was in the eastern delta of Egypt (vs 4-7).

While in Egypt, God spoke to Jeremiah and told him to bury large

stones under the bricks used for pavement at the entrance of the Pharaoh's palace that was located in Tahpanhes. He was to make sure the people of Judah were watching. God then gave Jeremiah a message to declare to the Israelites. God stated how He was going to call for Nebuchadnezzar to come down to Egypt and would set up his throne above the stones which Jeremiah buried. The people of the land of Egypt were doomed and would be conquered by the Babylonians (vs 8-10).

Just as the Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, they would destroy the temples of the Egyptians. Nebuchadnezzar would come with so much power that his conquering was compared to a shepherd picking fleas off of his coat. The magnificent structures of Egypt would be toppled and their officials would be replaced by Babylonian governors (vs 11-13).

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Do you ask God's blessing on what you want to do, or do you seek God's will for what He wants you to do? It is very easy to want to ask God to bless all of your endeavors and feel good about what you are doing, even though you may not be doing what God wants. God calls you to submit to His plan and seek His wisdom. Everything that had happened to the people was prophesied by Jeremiah. They knew he had told the truth, yet they chose not to listen to him. They expected that God would tell them to go to Egypt and when He did not, they became angry and accused Jeremiah of lying. This reveals to you how easy it is to say you want to follow the Word of God, but how difficult it is to follow when it is contrary to what you think or what culture dictates. Naturally, the thought was to get as far away as possible from danger, but by disobeying God, the Israelite leaders were leading them directly into danger.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

\* *Thank God for warning you of harmful paths.*

\* *Ask God to help you to trust His plan above your own.*

## **Thought for the day**

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What did Jeremiah declare to the people (vs 1)?

Who didn't like what Jeremiah told them (vs 2)?

What did they accuse Jeremiah of (vs 2)?

What did they think would happen to them if they listened to Jeremiah (vs 3)?

Why do you think they said they would follow whatever Jeremiah said until he told them to stay in the land?

How can you be tempted to respond in the same way?

How did the leaders respond to the answer from God that Jeremiah had revealed to them (vs 4)?

Who was in this group that Johanan was leading (vs 5-6)?

Where did they travel to (vs 7)?

Why do you think they chose not to listen to Jeremiah?

Where did they travel to (vs 8)?

Where did God tell Jeremiah to hide large stones (vs 9)?

What did God say He was going to do (vs 10)?

What was Nebuchadnezzar and his army going to do (vs 11)?

What was going to happen to their temples (vs 12)?

What did God compare the power of the Babylonians to (vs 12)?

What was going to happen to their great monuments (vs 13)?

Why is it so important to trust God rather than your own feelings or personal desires?

# “Failing to Listen”

**Study:** Jeremiah 44:1-14

**Reading:** 2 Chronicles 10:1-19, Acts 19:30-41

**Memory:** Psalm 119:1-6

**M**y children have told me that I repeat myself when I give instructions. I have always tried to be cautious when I give illustrations in my sermons or devotional books to try to have a great deal of time pass before I repeat illustrations, but I had never realized that I repeat myself when giving instructions. After being made aware of this, I have tried to repeat myself less, but the negative side effect is that it seems that sometimes people don't actively listen the first time. I don't want to repeat myself, but I found that if I don't, what I said isn't always listened to.

Today, we are going to read how God repeats Himself many times. One of the reasons He did this was because the people failed to listen and by repeating Himself, they would be left without an excuse.

## What Does the Bible Say?

Many of the remaining Israelites had left Israel against the wishes of God and moved to Egypt. Verse 1 reveals that they spread out and lived in four different regions of the land. God sent another message to Jeremiah that was directed at those who were living in Egypt. He reminded them of the great disaster that He sent on the land of Judah and how the whole region was abandoned. God did this because the people had provoked Him to anger by serving other gods and failing to listen to the warnings of the prophets. They left God with no choice but to bring great desolation to the land. This group of people who were not in Egypt were the remnant that He allowed to stay alive, but now they were provoking Him to anger once again through their disobedience (vs 1-7).

God asked them why they were provoking Him by not only living in Egypt, but offering sacrifices to the Egyptian gods. They had already forgotten why Israel was destroyed in the first place and were acting just like they did before destruction came. God declared that there were three main things they failed to do. They chose not to humble themselves to follow His leading. They chose not to fear God and believe that He

would do what He said. They chose not to follow His laws and statutes and instead lived like the people of Egypt (vs 8-10).

Because they chose to continue to live this way, God was going to set his face against them and was going to cause them to be cut off. Those who chose to act against God's plan and move to Egypt would die in the land. They would be killed by enemy soldiers and would also die of starvation. No one would be exempt from this destruction and only horror was awaiting them. They would not be able to survive and God was going to kill almost all the remnant of Israel who chose to escape to Egypt. There would only be a few of them left alive who would become fugitives and find their way back to Israel (vs 11-14).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

Why do you think that Israel did not learn from their previous mistakes and found themselves facing destruction once again? The simple answer to this is that they were human and have a selfish, sinful nature just like we do today. It seems obvious to us that they were making a mistake, but for them, they chose to believe that Jeremiah was not speaking for God. They made the move that made the most earthly sense and didn't see how it could be God's plan for them to stay in Israel. Though it appears obvious to us looking back on the situation, it wasn't as obvious to them. When you are in the middle of a problem or difficulty, it is often much harder to have the right perspective than when you are watching someone else go through a trial. This is why it is vital to listen to your spiritual leaders and surround yourself with godly friends who can see things which you don't see. You also must choose to listen to others who are speaking the truth, even if you don't see how that could be humanly possible. Proverbs 11:14 says, "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety."

## Suggestions for Prayer

\* Thank God for repeating Himself so you clearly know His will.

\* Ask God to help you be an active listener.

## Thought for the day

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Who was this message for (vs 1)?

What did God remind them of (vs 2)?

Why had God brought desolation to Israel (vs 3)?

What had God done for Israel to help spare them from destruction (vs 4)?

How can you see the incredible grace of God through this?

What did the people fail to do (vs 5)?

Why do you think they failed?

What are ways that you can act like the Israelites in this way?

What did God do as a result (vs 6)?

What question did God ask (vs 7)?

What were their works doing (vs 8)?

What had the people forgotten (vs 9)? Why do you think they did this?

What three things did the people fail to do (vs 10)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How can you act like the Israelites acted?

What was God going to do in response (vs 11)?

Who was going to face this (vs 12)?

What were they going to face (vs 13)?

What would happen to the remnant in Egypt (vs 14)?

## “Giving Credit”

**Study:** Jeremiah 44:15-30

**Reading:** 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1, Colossians 3:12-17

**Memory:** Pslam 119:1-6

**W**hen the University of Michigan won the 2024 national championship, I watched many of the post game interviews. One thing that stood out to me was the emphasis that every player placed on the team when the reporters asked them about their own performance. Most of them said very little about what they did, but gave credit to their coaches and teammates. Several of them also gave credit to God. Though I loved watching the team win, I loved watching these types of interviews even more.

Today, we will read how the nation of Israel gave the credit for their past success to the wrong place which was going to lead to greater judgement.

### What Does the Bible Say?

Through Jeremiah, God had declared His condemnation on the remnant of Judah who had moved to Egypt. They had gone against what God had said by moving to Egypt and they had started to worship the idols of Egypt while continuing to worship the false gods they brought with them from Judah. They were rebuked for this, and instead of repenting, they gathered together and declared that they were not going to listen to Jeremiah. This was not a subtle rejection of God, but a bold declaration. They stated that not only would they refuse to listen to God, but that they were going to give themselves wholeheartedly to worshipping the “queen of heaven” and make their offerings to her. It is unclear exactly which god this was referring to, but most likely it was a reference to the Assyrian and Babylonian God Ishtar, a goddess of fertility. The reasoning behind their choice was quite foolish, but was a display of natural human thinking. They looked back to the times in Judah where they had an abundant amount of food and when there was prosperity in the land. They attributed those times to the false gods they worshiped. They believed they made a mistake when they chose to stop worshipping a particular false god. They believed that this god was responsible for

their demise and completely rejected the fact that it was the God of Israel who made all of this happen. Apparently it was the women who were leaders in this false worship, but the husbands clearly knew what their wives were doing (vs 15-19).

Jeremiah attempted to get the people to see that the reason they faced destruction was because they openly worshiped false gods in Judah. God could no longer bear to watch what they were doing, and after repeated warnings, He was forced to act. It was their idol worship that brought destruction to them, not their choice to stop worshiping a specific false god. Their disobedience to the one true God was their mistake (vs 21-23).

Since the Israelites living in Egypt swore to keep the vows to the queen of heaven, God was making a vow to them. Tet name of God would no longer be used by the Israelites in Egypt. All the Israelites in Egypt would die by the sword or by famine. They were going to be punished by God and most of them would be killed. They thought they would find safety under Pharaoh Hophra in Egypt, but this Pharaoh would face the same fate that Zedekiah experienced. He would not be able to stand against the great power of Nebuchadnezzar (vs 24-30).

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

One of the great mistakes made by men is that they often attribute their success to the wrong thing. The Israelites had a jaded view of their past and were convinced that the times of prosperity in Israel were the result of worshiping the queen of heaven. They assumed that their destruction was because they stopped worshiping that goddess, but they couldn't have been farther from the truth. They were destroyed because they worshiped this goddess and many other false gods. It is very easy to blame God when things go wrong and forget to give Him credit when things go well. In our society today, it is common for individuals to take credit for their own success, and fail to realize that the only reason they are who they are is because that is how God made them. Take time today to give credit where credit is due and remind yourself that God is the source of all that you have and who you are today.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

\* *Thank God for everything you have today.*

\* *Ask God to help you give Him the glory in all that you do.*

Who gathered together in response to Jeremiah's prophecy (vs 15)?

What did they declare (vs 16)?

What did they say they would do (vs 17)? Why?

What did they say had happened (vs 18)?

Why do you think the women stated they had their husbands approval (vs 19)?

What questions did Jeremiah ask in verse 21?

What point was he making?

What could God no longer bear (vs 22)?

What did He do (vs 22)?

What was the real reason destruction came to Judah (vs 23)?

Why do you think verse 24 emphasized that the women were there?

What did Jeremiah tell them to do with their vows (vs 25)?

Why do you think he said this?

What was no longer going to be said in the land (vs 26)?

What was God planning to do to the Israelites in Egypt (vs 27)?

What did God say about those who survived and made it back to Judah (vs 28)?

How was this going to be a sign to them (vs 29)?

What was God going to do to Egypt (vs 30)?

How can you see yourself acting like the Israelites?

# “From Beauty to Ashes”

**Study:** Ezekiel 27:1-36

**Reading:** Matthew 24:1-2

**Memory:** Pslam 119:1-6

I have taken many trips over to the land of Israel and I love exploring around archeological sights. One of the hardest things for me to picture though is how the building actually looked. At most places, all that is left are the stones that acted as the foundations or the support structures, but there are a few places still standing where you can get a glimpse of how something looked during Bible days. There are also some historical sights where they use video technology to help you understand the magnificence of some of the structures when they were being used.

Today, we are going to read about the grandeur of Tyre, but also read how the city would be left in ruins because of its pride.

## What Does the Bible Say?

Ezekiel 27 is a lament for the nation of Tyre. It is placed here in our chronological order because Nebuchadnezzar was about to conquer the city. Tyre was located on the Mediterranean Sea and was a very powerful and wealthy sea port. The city controlled much of the shipping trade that came from Africa and Europe heading towards Babylon. Many sea merchants called Tyre their home and would travel the coastlands collecting goods to be sold for a profit. Because the city made massive amounts of money, the people were full of pride and described the city as, “Perfect in Beauty.” (vs 1-3)

Their wealth allowed them to build an amazing city. They had easy access to the finest building materials known at that time because of their expansive trade. Their boats were also exquisite and made of the strongest materials. The captains of the ships and the oarsmen used to row the ship were some of the best sailors in the seas. These ships traveled all over to buy and sell goods (vs 4-9).

Though the city was not part of a massive kingdom, they were able to hire strong warriors from the regions surrounding the Mediterranean who were employed to defend the city. These men came from all over

and were the best soldiers that money could buy. This caused the people of Tyre to think that their city was great and that it was indestructible (vs 10-11).

Verses 12-25 gave a list of the many cities that performed trade with Tyre and listed many of the items that made their way through the port. This was probably done to make it obvious that Tyre was a major player in the wealth of the world. They were known by everyone for their beauty and wealth that came through trade.

Though that city had great riches, they would not be able to withstand the conquering attack of Nebuchadnezzar. The city would become like shipwrecks on the seas with its riches being taken by the invading army. The people would move from a position of pride to a position of despair. Those who were out on their ships during the destruction would come back to find their city in ruins. This would lead them to a time of great mourning of the loss of life and the loss of their wealth. They would come to the realization that their greatness was now all gone (vs 26-36).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

One of the themes that we see over and over again in the time of the prophets and kings is the destruction that comes as a result of pride. It was mentioned a few times in the reading today that the city of Tyre exalted itself because of its beauty. This exaltation had led them to think that they were above everyone else and were beyond destruction. They thought that they were such an important city when it came to wealth and trade that no one would dare do anything to harm them. Yet this pride would lead to great devastation. The city that once prided itself on its beauty would become an eyesore and cause great mourning for those who once knew its majesty.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* *Thank God for being the One who is in control of your successes.*
- \* *Ask God to help you continually give thanks to Him for all that you have.*
- \* *Praise God because He is the One who owns all things.*

## Thought for the day

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What was Ezekiel told to do (vs 1-2)?

What did the people of Tyre declare about the city (vs 3)?

What had the builders done for the city (vs 4)?

List some of the things their ships were made out of (vs 5-7)?

What do verses 8-9 reveal about the men who manned their ships?

How did the soldiers who made up their army add to the beauty of the city (vs 8-11)?

Why do you think Tarshish was mentioned (vs 12)?

*\*\*\*It is assumed that the area of Tarshish was probably in southern Spain. It was one of the furthest ports away from Tyre.*

Read through verses 13-24 and list a few of the items that were traded by the people of Tyre?

How does verse 25 sum up their trade?

*\*\*\*There ships were continually weighted down with all the goods and treasures they transported.*

What was the destruction of Tyre compared to (vs 26)?

What would happen to their riches and their crews (vs 27)?

How loud was the cry that would go out from the merchants and mariners (vs 28-30)?

What would the people do in response to the destruction (vs 31-32)?

What “before and after” are pictured in verses 33-34?

What was going to be the fate of Tyre (vs 35-36)?

## “Cast Down From Heaven”

**Study:** Ezekiel 28:1-19

**Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22, 1 Chronicles 21:1-17

**Memory:** Pslam 119:1-6

### What Does the Bible Say?

The message at the beginning of chapter 28 is directed towards the ruler of Tyre. It is often translated as “prince” though the Hebrew term is a reference to a leader. In verse 12, a different word is used that is often translated as “king.” It appears that these references are speaking about the same person. Though this message was to the king, it appears to be a message to more than just the king, but the attitude of the whole city.

The reason for the destruction that was about to take place, was the same reason given for the destruction of many of the powerful cities and rulers over time. The heart of the ruler was lifted up to the point where he thought he was a god. Many rulers elevated themselves to this position in life because of their earthly success, but God wanted to make it clear that the ruler was simply a man. It appears that the king of Tyre claimed to be wiser than Daniel. This indicates that the fame of Daniel had spread throughout the region. The king thought this because he had made great wealth for the city and for himself. The success that he experienced made him believe that he was unstoppable, but God was not going to allow this to go on for much longer. Because of the king’s pride, God was going to send foreigners to him who were ruthless. These men would tear apart everything that the king had built and achieved. The king, who was Ethbaal III, would be removed by Nebuchadnezzar and his army. The death he would experience would not be a pleasant one and it would be revealed to all that he was not a god. He was simply a man who foolishly thought of himself better than others (vs 1-10).

Many commentators believe the next portion of Ezekiel 28, which is a lament over the death of the king of Tyre, is also a picture of what happened to Satan when he fell from heaven. The picture that we are given is one of a man who thought he was “full of wisdom” and “perfect in beauty.” The beauty that the king had created was compared to that of the garden of Eden. This city was filled with all types of valuable

treasures and was magnificent to behold (vs 12-13),

We can see why it is believed that this was more a message about Satan than the king of Tyre in verse 14 as he was described as being the “guardian cherub” who was on the “mountain of God.” This could also be a vibrant word picture that described the great wealth that the king had obtained. The king had done well for a while, but then his heart started to turn. As a result of his wealth and position, he started to act with violence towards others. Though he had a lofty position, he would not remain there but would be cast down and destroyed. Though he thought he was great, God would reveal that this greatness had only been given by God. The king’s great splendor would be gone and all that once admired him would see the destruction of the city and be appalled at what the once great city had become (vs 14-19).

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Over and over again you see what happens to those who exalt themselves because of their earthly success. This does not mean that God is against earthly success. He has called some people to be wealthy and popular and he has called others to be poor and unknown. For those who are called to wealth and success, He expects them to realize that all they have is from Him. He desires that they use what they have been given to be a help to others. No matter what state God has called you to be in throughout your life, you must remember that it is God who is in control. Every blessing you have is from Him and not a result of your own strength. This is why living a life of continual thanksgiving to God is so important. When you constantly deflect praise and honor to Him for what He has allowed you to do, it will help keep your heart humble.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Thank God for being responsible for all your success.*
- \* *Ask God to help you humble yourself and exalt Him.*
- \* *Praise God because He is in charge of this world.*

## **Thought for the day**

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What did the king think about himself (vs 2)?

What did God declare about the king (vs 2)?

What did the king think about His wisdom (vs 3)?

What had the king been able to do (vs 4)?

What had caused the pride of the king (vs 5)?

How can you see this same problem today?

What is made clear in verse 6?

What was God going to cause to happen (vs 7)?

What were these foreigners going to do (vs 8)?

What question did God ask (vs 9)? Why?

What do you think verse 10 meant?

How was the king described in verse 12?

What does verse 13 reveal about the beauty of Tyre?

What does verse 14 say about the king? Why do you think that many people believe this is a parallel to Satan?

What do you think verse 15 means?

What did the king’s wealth and pride turn into (vs 16)?

What was God going to do (vs 16)?

Why was this king so proud (vs 17)?

What was going to be the end result (vs 18-19)?

# “No More Enemies”

**Study:** Ezekiel 28:21-26

**Reading:** Psalm 91

**Memory:** Psalm 119:1-6

**W**hen I bought my property in northern Michigan, the only thing that was on the property was a small trail and lots of trees. Before I began building, the first thing I had to do was to remove the trees and clear a spot for us to build our home. I began by cutting down trees in that area and I dropped one right after the other. When I was finished, the area looked like a large game of “pick-up sticks.” The next step involved me cutting up all the trees which were scattered on the ground, and pulling the branches out of the opening. I then hired a crew to come in to pull the stumps so I could have a clear area to start building on.

Today, we are going to read some of the final judgements given by God on the nations surrounding Israel. He was completing the process of clearing the land of all the nations who had been problematic for the people of Israel over the centuries.

## What Does the Bible Say?

The cities of Tyre and Sidon are often mentioned together because they were both Phoenician cities which were located about 25 miles from each other. Both were port cities and were very wealthy from years of trade prosperity. God declared that He was against Sidon and that He was going to show His power in the midst of the city. God was going to make it absolutely clear that He was God when He chose to execute His judgement on the city. He would do this by sending great pestilence on the city which would cause many in the city to die. These are very similar terms to those used when Jerusalem was under siege. Normally, when a city was under siege, it was over run with great diseases because of the lack of nutrition and the amount of people who were crowded in the city together. This would lead to physical and emotional weakness which would allow the attacking army a great advantage. The city of Sidon would struggle with this and those who did not succumb to this would be killed by the conquering army (vs 20-23).

The cities of Tyre and Sidon had been a thorn in the side of Israel for many years. They took advantage of them in every way they could, but this was going to come to an end. They were going to be judged for their pride and the way they treated God’s people (vs 24).

The judgement of the nations surrounding the land of Israel would be complete. The people that had hurt Israel for so long would be removed and most of the children of Israel would be removed from the land. All of this would be cleared off in order that God could bring His people back to His land to sell in safety and security. They would not have threats from their neighbors and they would be able to eat the crops which they planted. Everyone in and out of Israel would recognize the God of Israel as supreme. This appears to be another one of these prophecies that had a short term fulfillment when Israel returned back to the land, but would have a great future fulfillment when Christ returns back to the earth to establish His kingdom (vs 25-26).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

You have read many times over the last few months how different nations would be destroyed. Every nation that surrounded Israel and had attacked them over the years would face great judgement. All of this was done to fulfill God’s promise of cursing to those who did harm to His people. It was also part of God’s plan as great empires rose to power beginning with the Babylonian empire and culminating with the Roman empire. God was setting up His plan to bring the Messiah into the world which would begin the process of the complete fulfillment of all the prophecies we are given. One of the great takeaways from this is the evidence that Scripture and history reveal to us that God keeps His Word.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* *Thank God for having the power to keep His Word.*
- \* *Ask God to help you trust in His promises*
- \* *Praise God because He always does what He says He will do.*

## Thought for the day

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Who was this prophecy against (vs 21)?

What do you know about this nation?

What was God's attitude towards Sidon (vs 22)?

What was God going to manifest (vs 22)?

What did God want them to know (vs 22)?

How were they going to know this (vs 22)?

What was God going to send to the city (vs 23)?

How were many of the people going to die (vs 23)?

What would they know about God from this (vs 23)?

What would the nations around Israel no longer do (vs 23)?

Why were these nations such a problem for Israel?

What did God want to make absolutely clear about Himself (vs 24)?

What was God planning to do (vs 25)?

How has this been partially fulfilled over the years?

What does God want all nations to see (vs 25)?

Where was Israel going to dwell (vs 25)?

How will the people of Israel live (vs 26)?

Why was God going to judge the neighbors of Israel (vs 26)?

What phrase was repeated again at the end of verse 26?

Why do you think God says this so many times?

Memory Verse:

*Psalms 119:1 Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! 2 Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, 3 who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! 4 You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. 5 Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! 6 Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.*