

GOD'S KINGDOM MUST MAGNIFY GOD'S PRESENCE – LESSONS FROM JUDAH'S KINGS

COMMENTARY ON 1-2 CHRONICLES

GOD'S KINGDOM PEOPLE PRIORITIZE PROPER WORSHIP IN CHALLENGING TIMES BY LEARNING LESSONS FROM THEIR COVENANT HISTORY AND GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PROMISES

Paul Apple (October 2022)

For each section:

- Thesis statement ... to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline ... to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions ... to encourage life application
- Representative quotations ... to stimulate deeper insight

1 Chron. 16:29 *“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the Lord in holy array.”*

2 Chron. 7:14 *“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

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BACKGROUND NOTES

GENERAL COMMENTS:

David Malick: Message Statement:

Yahweh's blessing or cursing of the nation of Israel/Judah for its proper or improper worship of him motivates the chosen remnant who has returned under the decree of Cyrus to properly worship him as they build a temple for Yahweh.

Andrew Hill: Chronicles is a story about a God who chooses one nation to bless all nations. Chronicles is also about a people banished from God's "promised land" because of sin and rebellion but restored to that privileged position by his gracious response to their repentance and renewed faith. According to **C. S. Lewis**, a good story "leaves things where it did not find them." Chronicles is a "good story" because it "finds" the Hebrews in exile in Babylonia but "leaves" the Hebrews regathered in Jerusalem and Judah (according to the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah the prophet and orchestrated by the God of heaven, **2 Chron. 36:22-23**).

In one sense Chronicles repeats the story of Genesis and the story of the entire Bible and offers a "metanarrative" for all of human history: the story of "paradise lost" and the journey toward "paradise regained."

Martin Selman: Though the Chronicler has been my companion for several years, I have not ceased to be filled with admiration for the breadth of his vision and his extraordinary perception. His conviction that God's message is also essentially a **hopeful** one justifies his work being described as "the good news according to the Chronicler." I have been amazed too at the **relevance** of his work for the modern world, especially for Christians who form a minority in their society, perhaps even suffering for their faith and with little hope of seeing positive change in the political context in which they live; those who have lost hope of ever seeing for themselves the glorious times experienced by Christians of former generations; those who are concerned for the spiritual health of their nation and would like to discover what role Christians could have in being an influence for good; those who want to have a broad vision of God's purpose for their lives and for the church; and those who want to understand what the old Testament as a whole is about and why it is included in the Bible. . .

The Old Testament as a whole plays a central role in Chronicles. In fact, it is the conclusion of this commentary that the Chronicler's overall aim was to offer an interpretation of the Bible as he knew it. More precisely, his guiding principle was to demonstrate that God's promises revealed in the Davidic covenant were as trustworthy and effective as when they were first given, even though the first readers lived centuries after almost all the events he recorded.

James Duguid: The books of 1–2 Chronicles are a remix. Their anonymous author (we will call him the Chronicler) seeks to provide a different angle on the history recounted in the books of Genesis through 2 Kings, reworking it with new details and a fresh perspective. Sometimes the accounts in 1–2 Chronicles may seem contradictory to those earlier in Scripture, but in fact they are complementary perspectives, bringing out different aspects of the same events.

The Chronicler's original audience consisted of saints toiling for God's kingdom in days of relative obscurity. He wanted them to know that God had made an abiding promise to dwell with his people. He also wanted to challenge them with a picture of what God's ideal people ought to look like. They were to stand with God's chosen king, who ought to embody the virtues of David and Solomon. They were to support the work of the temple, being careful to worship God exactly as he commanded and to rejoice before him in song. Although he does not deny that sin has generational dimensions, the Chronicler wants us to think about the time we have before us and to realize that now is the time to obey God. Each generation must make this choice; obedience will lead to blessing, whereas disobedience will lead to the consequences of God's discipline.

God is the main character in this story. He is a God who has chosen Israel, Jerusalem, and the line of David. His grace, his initiative, stands behind every willing human inclination and gift. His compassion and forgiveness are endless to those who turn to him in repentance. The Chronicler wants us to look to God for help, and he assures us of God's plan to bless his people by dwelling with them forever.

A. T. Pierson: While much contained in the Books of Kings is repeated or restated in the Chronicles, much is omitted because foreign to the author's purpose. But whatever bears on the temple, its preservation and restoration, the purity of its worship, the regularity and orderliness of its services; whatever makes idolatrous rites or relics hateful, or lifts God to His true throne in the hearts of the people, is here emphasized.

August Konkell: The Chronicler had a double task in accomplishing his goal. His first task was to explain why the kingdom of David had failed; the second task was to explain how the small, struggling state in the mighty Persian Empire could hope to become the kingdom that was promised to David. The explanation for the failure of David's kingdom begins with the demise of Saul. Saul was rejected as king over Israel because he was unfaithful: he did not obey God, and in his violation of covenant, he went so far as to consult a medium (**1 Chron 10:13**).

Unfaithfulness (*ma'al*) will become a key word for the Chronicler; he will use it repeatedly to describe the reason for judgment against kings of Judah. The reason for **hope** is given in the words of God responding to the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple: *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land* (**2 Chron 7:14**). This verse contains the vocabulary characteristic of the Chronicler in demonstrating the conditions necessary for restoration: humility, prayer, repentance, and healing.

Iain Duguid: The books of 1–2 Chronicles (hereafter “Chronicles”) narrate the past for people who, in exile, had experienced the loss of all that seemed permanent or had given their life meaning and identity. Now they have begun to rebuild as a community of God's people under foreign domination. While much in Chronicles parallels 2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings, the emphases here are different; Chronicles exhibits retelling and rearrangement, and a substantial amount of its material has no parallel. History is usually told by victors and rulers, from their perspective. But here history is told among a people who are politically, economically, and militarily weak, ruled by others. The Chronicler encourages faith that “*O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations*” (**2 Chron. 20:6**), and in worship

the people are to sing, “*Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns!’*” (1 Chron. 16:31; cf. Theology of 1–2 Chronicles).

John Schultz: The fact and quality of Israel’s relationship with God was more important than their current political situation, and their status as God’s people was of greater value than their citizenship of the Persian or the Greek empire. Whatever had happened to Israel in the past, nothing could change the fact of their relationship with God, and the Chronicler would certainly have agreed with Paul’s statement that nothing ‘*will be able to separate us from the love of God*’ (Rom. 8:39).

Chuck Swindoll: Why do we need the books of 1–2 Chronicles when we already have the history of 2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings? Just as the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John each offer a different perspective on the life of Jesus, so the books of Chronicles present Israel’s history with a purpose different than the other historical books. The books of 2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings reveal the monarchies of Israel and Judah—in particular the sins of the nations that resulted in the exile. But the books of Chronicles, written after the time of the exile, focus on those elements of history that God wanted the returning Jews to meditate upon:

- obedience that results in God’s blessing,
- the priority of the temple and priesthood, and
- the unconditional promises to the house of David.

David’s prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10–19 summarizes the themes the chronicler wished to communicate:

- glory to God,
- gratitude for gifting David’s family with leadership of the nation, and
- the desire that David’s descendants continue to devote themselves to God. Remaining faithful to God would reap blessing.

When the book was written, David’s descendants no longer ruled as monarchs over Israel. But the chronicler desired the people to remember the royal Davidic lineage, for God had promised a future ruler would rise from that line. After the seventy-year exile in Babylon, Jewish political and social power resided more with the religious rather than political rulers. Telling Israel’s history through a priestly and kingly lens was intended to prepare the people for a future Messiah.

TITLE:

Roddy Braun: The name given 1 and 2 Chronicles in the Hebrew Bible is “*the words (or events) of the days.*” These two books are counted as one in the Hebrew canon, where they normally stand at the end (although a few manuscripts place them at the head) of the Writings, the third major portion of the canon, preceded somewhat anomalously by Ezra-Nehemiah, commonly considered their sequel. The division into two books in our English Bible, as well as their position with the “historical” books, can be attributed to the influence of LXX, which named the

books “*the things left over,*” and placed them after Kings. Unfortunately this somewhat derogatory and nontheological view of Chronicles has often been shared by later readers, who have tended to see it in large measure as a repetition of Samuel-Kings, supplemented by a collection of priestly trivia, and hence have ignored its unique contents and message.

Iain Duguid: While keeping the Septuagint name in the Latin Vulgate, Jerome (c. AD 400) described the book as a “chronicle of all divine history,” using a Greek term (*chronikon*) for a selective historical account in chronological order. He recognized that, rather than a supplement, Chronicles is a rewriting beginning with Adam. Martin Luther took up Jerome’s word in his lectures and his 1534 German translation, using the title *Die Chronika*. This influenced Miles Coverdale’s 1535 English translation, the first to have “*Chronicles*” as an English title, which was followed by subsequent English versions.

John MacArthur: The original title in the Hebrew Bible read “*The annals (i.e., events or happenings) of the days.*” First and Second Chronicles were comprised of one book until later divided into separate books in the Greek OT translation, the Septuagint (LXX), ca. 200 B.C. The title also changed at that time to the inaccurate title, “*the things omitted,*” i.e., reflecting material not in 1, 2 Samuel and 1, 2 Kings. The English title “*Chronicles*” originated with Jerome’s Latin Vulgate translation (ca. 400 A.D.), which used the fuller title “*The Chronicles of the Entire Sacred History.*”

Bob Utley: The name of the book in Hebrew is “*the words (events) of the days (years).*” This is used in the sense of “*a chronicle of the years.*” These same words occur in the title of several books mentioned as written sources in **1 Kings 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:46.** The phrase itself is used over thirty times in 1 and 2 Kings and is usually translated “*chronicles.*”

The LXX entitled it “*the things omitted (concerning the Kings of Judah).*” This implies that Chronicles is to Samuel and Kings what the Gospel of John is to the Synoptic Gospels. See *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, by **Gordon Fee** and **Douglas Stuart**, pp. 127-148. As the Gospel writers under inspiration (see Special Topic: Inspiration) had the right to select, adapt, and arrange the life of Jesus (not invent actions or words), so too, the inspired authors of OT narratives (see Expository Hermeneutics: An Introduction, by **Elliott E. Johnson**, p. 169). This selection, adaptation, and chronological/thematic arrangement of words/events was to convey theological truth. History is used as a servant of theology. Chronicles has suffered, much as the Gospel of Mark did. They were both seen as “Readers Digest” summaries and not “a full history.” This is unfortunate! Both have an inspired message. We, as readers committed to inspiration, must ask, “Why include this?” “Why choose not to record this?”

AUTHOR, DATING AND CANONICITY:

Iain Duguid: The author of Chronicles remains anonymous and is commonly spoken of today simply as the Chronicler. The extensive content of Chronicles relating to temple worship and its organization suggests he was a Levite.

John MacArthur: Neither 1 nor 2 Chronicles contains direct statements regarding the human author, though Jewish tradition strongly favors Ezra the priest (cf. **Ezra 7:1–6**) as “*the chronicler*.” These records were most likely recorded ca. 450–430 B.C. The genealogical record in **1 Chr. 1–9** supports a date after 450 B.C. for the writing.

Chuck Swindoll: Several indications throughout the book reveal the author’s reliance on a variety of source materials—“annals,” “books,” and “records”—which are cited as dependable historical documentation. “Whoever the author was, he was a meticulous historian who carefully utilized official and unofficial documents.” [**Eugene Merrill**]

David Malick: Court scribes probably produced a number of scrolls which recorded the daily events of each monarch’s rule (**Est. 2:23; 6:1; 10:2**)

J. Sidlow Baxter: we mention three points which impress us in favour of the **Ezra tradition**.

- (1) We have not yet met any weighty reason against it.
- (2) Scholars seem unanimous in tracing a single hand through the three books now called Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and all agree it is Ezra’s in at least much of the book which bears his own name.
- (3) No one was more fitted than Ezra; nor does our claiming him as compiler of the bulk of the work exclude complete additions by some subsequent editor.

James Duguid: Chronicles is anonymous and cannot be dated precisely. The best clue in the book is the genealogy of David in 1 Chronicles 3, which is traced down through Zerubbabel to six subsequent generations. Given that Zerubbabel returned to the land after the edict of Cyrus in 539 BC, this would place the book somewhere in the 400s BC, if one allows about a century for his family tree to grow to this extent. This assumes, of course, that the Chronicler has brought the genealogy down to his own day: if not, the book could have been written quite a bit later.

Bob Utley: 1 and 2 Chronicles are the last books of “the Writings” section of the Hebrew canon, which means 2 Chronicles is the last book of the Hebrew Bible.

Its position in the Hebrew canon implies:

1. its late composition
2. its summary nature
3. its having been seen as an appendix
4. its being accepted in the canon late.

From the genealogies of the book the date of the compiler seems to be between 500-423 B.C. This terminus date is possible because the post-exilic books mention the latest historical allusion in the Old Testament (i.e., Darius II was crowned about 428 B.C.). He is mentioned in **Neh. 12:22**). Also, tradition says that the Old Testament canon was finalized about this time. A good general guess for the date would be before 400 B.C.

Mark Boda: These various pieces of evidence suggest that the earliest date for the writing of Chronicles is 425 BC. Regarding the latest possible date for the book’s composition, there is

strong evidence of the use of Chronicles in several books in the Second temple period. This, together with the fact that Chronicles is part of the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX), “points to a mid-third century date as the latest reasonable time for composition” (Knoppers 2004:111). Thus, the Chronicler was at work somewhere between 425 and 250 BC, writing to a community of Jews who needed to return to Jerusalem to the reconstructed temple and to participate in its worship as they awaited the full realization of the restoration of the kingdom of David.

LITERARY GENRE:

Andrew Hill: As literary history, the books of Chronicles supplement the records of Samuel and Kings. The books of 1-2 Samul and 1-2 Kings are considered part of the “Primary History of the Old Testament” (i.e., Genesis through Kings), a connected narrative tracing the rise and fall of the nation of Israel. Chronicles, however, belongs to the “Secondary History of the Old Testament” (i.e., Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther). These books retell the same story from the vantage point of the postexilic period. In addition, they update the story by reporting the plight of those Hebrews who returned to Judah after the Exile and those who remained in Babylon. . .

As a literary work, the Chronicles may be broadly classified as history. According to Burke Long, “history” is an extensive and continuous written composition, based on source materials and devoted to a particular subject or time period. Above all, history is concerned with chronology and cause-effect relationships. More specifically, the books are truly “chronicles” in terms of literary style. The “chronicle” as a literary form is a prose composition consisting of a series of reports or selected events in third-person style, arranged and dated in chronological order. The Chronicles are not “annals” in the strict sense of the literary form, since they are not a concise year-by-year reporting of events pertaining to a particular institution (e.g., monarchy or temple).

The Chronicles represent a rich collection of literary types, including:

- genealogy (**1 Chron. 3:1-9**)
- list or catalog (**1 Chron. 9:3-23; 2 Chron. 4:19-22**)
- report (**2 Chron. 9:1-12**)
- letter (**2 Chron. 30:6-9**)
- prayer (**1 Chron. 17:16-27**)
- speech and sermon (1 Chron. 22:5-16; 2 Chron. 32:9-15)
- prophetic revelation (**1 Chron. 17:4-14**)
- song (**1 Chron. 16:7-36**)

This combination of literary forms and the well-developed plot structure of the two books confirm Chronicles as a work of considerable artistic merit.

Frederick Mabie: One consideration in analyzing the genre of Chronicles is the fact that Chronicles has more in common with the genre of “annal” than it does with the genre of

“chronicle.” While both of these literary genres include individuals, records, and deeds, a chronicle is typically an abbreviated listing of historical events, while an annal features more sustained summaries of historical events with narrative shaping (including a variety of genres and subgenres) and an overall ideological purpose. The narrative shaping of annals typically summarizes the deeds of rulers and people against the backdrop of divine blessing (or judgment). In short, the genre of annal, like the text and content of Chronicles, features **documentary details** (what took place), **ideological aspects** (the significance of what took place), and **literary elements** (the shaping and stylistics of the account of what took place). . .

In the case of Chronicles, a **theology of covenantal hope** (much more than the oft-cited notion of “immediate retribution”) guides the selection, shaping, and structure of the text, with the goal of imparting this perspective to the Chronicler’s readers and hearers. This perspective makes the tone of the Chronicler’s presentation of historical events **didactic**, almost sermonic, in its literary style and presentation.

J. A. Thompson: Chronicles contains a wide variety of literary forms, but four deserve special mention:

- (1) genealogies, such as **chaps. 1–8**;
- (2) lists, such as **1 Chr 9:3–23; 11:10–17; 12**;
- (3) speeches, sermons, and prayers, such as **1 Chronicles 22; 28–29**;
- (4) a miscellaneous group of literary forms comprising extracts from Samuel-Kings. These forms were often related verbatim but sometimes with alterations, additions, and deletions that reflected the mind of the Chronicler himself as he sought in yet other ways to use his sources to give expression to his special theological concerns.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler rehearses the history of Israel from the patriarchs (by way of genealogy) through the fall of the southern kingdom of Judah to Babylonia. As theological history, the Chronicles provide commentary on the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his covenant promises (esp. the Abrahamic covenant [**Gen. 12:1-3**] and the Davidic covenant [**2 Sam. 7:14-17**]). In addition, the Chronicles emphasize the centrality of the temple and legitimize the authoritative roles of the priestly and Levitical orders within the community. Finally the books give considerable attention to the contributions of the Hebrew united and Judahite monarchies to the religious life of Israel.

Mark Boda: The first line of the work now known as 1 and 2 Chronicles begins with the words “*The descendants of Adam*” (**1 Chr 1:1**), while the final pericope of the work begins with the words “*In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia*” (**2 Chr 36:22**). These two citations reveal the scale of the accomplishment of this work. It is nothing short of a history of the world from the creation of humanity to the restoration of the Jews from Babylonian exile; it is, as **Jerome** once called it, “the chronicle of the whole of sacred history”. . .

The readers of Chronicles, therefore, were a community dealing with the realities of life after the demise of their nation and independence. The failed reinstatement of the royal line, together with

the successful reconstruction of the Temple, meant that at least for the time being the Temple and its sacred orders were the only hope for nurturing Jewish community and faith. Notwithstanding, this was a community that would have been dealing with considerable loss and in need of hope as they lived under the hegemony of foreign lords whose tenure appeared unending.

Roddy Braun: We are led to conclude that the Chronicler has dealt in a very similar fashion with David and Solomon, and has in fact pictured their reigns in an essentially parallel and complementary way. Both kings occupy the throne by divine choice, and in both cases this rule receives the immediate and unanimous support of its subjects. Both kings immediately express their concern for temple and cult, and through their combined activities the temple is erected and dedicated. Both kings end lengthy reigns of forty years as they had begun them, in complete loyalty and devotion to Yahweh.

J. A. Thompson: By the time the Chronicler wrote, much had happened in Israel's history. From the tribal days of the Judges, through the period of the establishment of the United Kingdom under David and Solomon (ca. 1000–931 B.C.), through the schism after Solomon's death and the period of the Divided Kingdom (931–722 B.C.), and on through the period of the kingdom of Judah (722–587 B.C.), the people of Israel had experienced many vicissitudes including two major political tragedies. The destruction of the Northern Kingdom as a separate political entity and the exile of many of its people at the hands of the Assyrian ruler Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) or perhaps Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.) took place in the late summer or autumn of the year 722/721 B.C. After that, the Southern Kingdom, Judah, survived as the sole representative of the people of Israel until it too, after surviving 134 years, came to an end in July 587 and more of the people of old Israel went into exile.

Politically the old Israel had ceased to exist. But in God's mind there was more to its story yet to unfold. The great empires of Assyria and Babylonia passed from the stage of history. During their period of ascendancy, numbers of God's people languished in a foreign land. Some, of course, never left their homeland. But in 539 B.C. Cyrus, ruler of Persia, overthrew Babylon. In the first year of his reign in Babylon, in 538 B.C., he issued a decree ordering the restoration of the Jewish community and its cult in Palestine (**Ezra 1:2–4; 6:3–5**). The exiles were free to return, and many did, although some stayed in Babylonia.

When they returned, there were years of hardship and frustration ahead of them.

John MacArthur: The Jews had returned from their 70 years of captivity (ca. 538 B.C.) to a land that was markedly different from the one once ruled by King David (ca. 1011–971 B.C.) and King Solomon (971–931 B.C.):

- 1) there was no Hebrew king, but rather a Persian governor (**Ezra 5:3; 6:6**);
- 2) there was no security for Jerusalem, so Nehemiah had to rebuild the wall (**Neh. 1–7**);
- 3) there was no temple, so Zerubbabel had to reconstruct a pitiful semblance of the Solomonic temple's former glory (**Ezra 3**);
- 4) the Jews no longer dominated the region, but rather were on the defensive (**Ezra 4; Neh. 4**);
- 5) they enjoyed few divine blessings beyond the fact of their return;

- 6) they possessed little of the kingdom's former wealth; and
- 7) God's divine presence no longer resided in Jerusalem, having departed ca. 597–591 B.C. (**Ezek. 8–11**).

To put it mildly, their future looked bleak compared to their majestic past, especially the time of David and Solomon. The return could best be described as **bittersweet**, i.e., bitter because their present poverty brought hurtful memories about what was forfeited by God's judgment on their ancestors' sin, but sweet because at least they were back in the Land God had given Abraham 17 centuries earlier (Gen. 12:1–3). The chronicler's selective genealogy and history of Israel, stretching from Adam (**1 Chr. 1:1**) to the return from Babylon (**2 Chr. 26:23**), was intended to remind the Jews of God's promises and intentions about:

- 1) the Land;
- 2) the nation;
- 3) the Davidic king;
- 4) the Levitical priests;
- 5) the temple; and
- 6) true worship,

none of which had been abrogated because of the Babylonian captivity. All of this was to remind them of their spiritual heritage during the difficult times they faced, and to encourage them to be faithful to God.

STRUCTURE:

Roddy Braun: The following outline reflects the conclusion that the reigns of David and Solomon are presented as complementary, representing a single unit with its focus upon the temple:

- I. Genealogical Prologue, chaps. 1–9
- II. The United Monarchy, chaps. 10–29
 - A. The David history, chaps. 10–21
 1. The death of Saul, chap. 10
 2. The rise of David, chaps. 11–12
 3. David, the Ark, and the cult, chaps. 13–17
 4. David's wars, chaps. 18–21
 - B. Transitional Unit, chaps. 22–29
 1. David's first speech, chap. 22
 2. Secondary arrangements, chaps. 23–27
 3. David's speeches, blessing, and death, chaps. 28–29
 - C. The Solomon history, 2 Chr 1–9
- III. The Divided Monarchy, 2 Chr 10–36

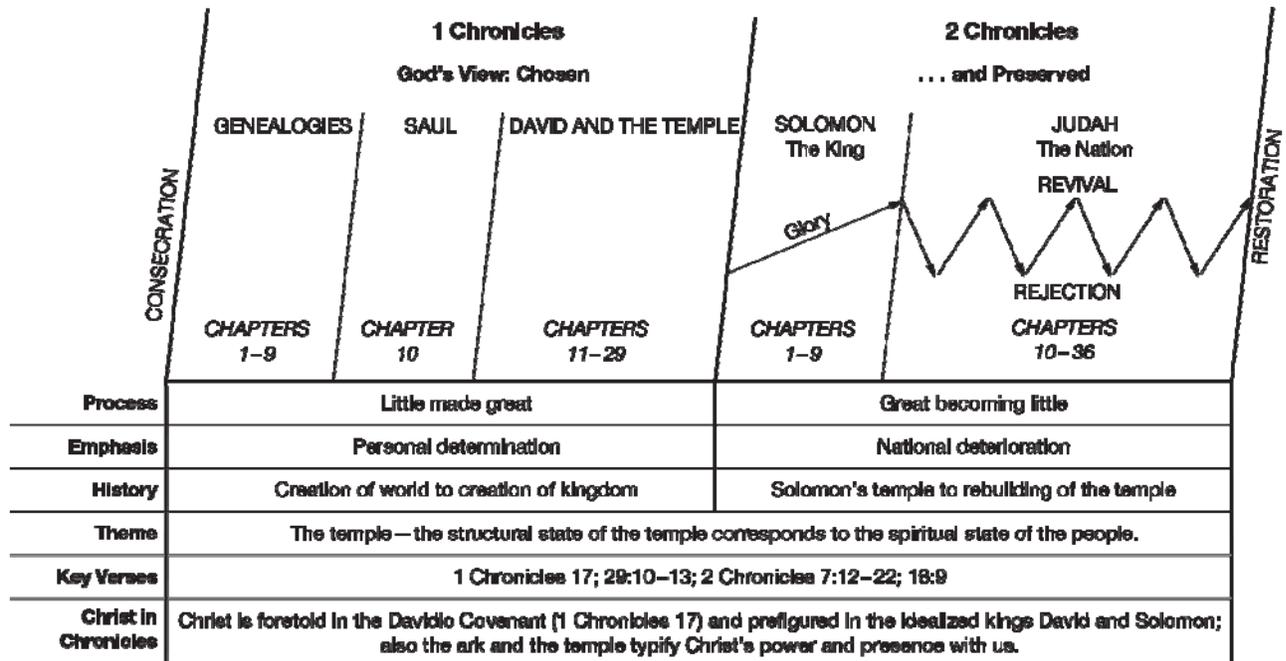
J. A. Thompson: If Chronicles is treated as a whole, there is a major break after the genealogies at **1 Chronicles 9**. Another major break comes after **2 Chronicles 9**, which records the death of

Solomon. The stories of David and Solomon should not be split. Solomon's work was complementary to that of David.

Iain Duguid: In terms of overall structure, the **opening genealogies** of Chronicles (**1 Chronicles 1–9**) place the people in the context of all humanity and describe an Israel that has continued as twelve tribes since the time of the patriarch Israel and his sons. Judah’s genealogy, which includes David’s line, is listed first, with the central genealogy being that of Levi, from whom come the priests and other temple functionaries. This arrangement underscores the importance of both **David** and the **temple** for the rest of the book.

Chuck Swindoll:

FIRST AND SECOND CHRONICLES



Bruce Hurt: https://www.preceptaustin.org/1_chronicles_commentaries

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1Samuel	2Samuel				1Kings	1Kings	2Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1Chr 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2Chronicles 1-9	2Chronicles 10-20	2Chronicles 21-36		
<p>Legend: B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that after the division of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "Judah" and the Northern Kingdom as "Israel." Finally, note that 1Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.</p>									

THEOLOGY AND APPLICATION:

J. Sidlow Baxter: Everywhere in the Chronicles the temple is emphasised as the vital centre of the nation's true life; and even where the temple itself is not mentioned, it is obvious that the emphasis is always upon that religion which the temple represented. We pick out just one instance of this. **Dr. J. H. Moulton** says: "No single incident brings out the contrast of the two versions better than the reign of Abijah (called in the Kings Abijam). The prophetic account (i.e. that in the Kings) of the reign is a brief notice of the wickedness of the king, so great that only for David's sake was the succession continued in the family. Also mention is made of wars between Israel and Judah. The Chronicler relates these wars at length, and in particular gives a fine address of Abijah to the enemy, in which **the whole spirit of the Chronicles** is concentrated"

"Ought ye not to know that the Lord, the God of Israel, gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up, and rebelled against his lord. And there were gathered unto him vain men, sons of Belial, which strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted, and could not withstand them. And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and

there are with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made you for gods. . . O Children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord, the God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper”
(2 Chron.13:5-12, R.V.)

Why this unifying new emphasis? What is the purpose behind it? [Not just a religious and temple focus because the writer may have been a priest or Levite.] If we would really appreciate the central purpose of the Chronicles, we must bear thoughtfully in mind the time and circumstances in which they were issued. [The remnant had returned from captivity to rebuild first of all the temple.]

There were three transcendent factors which remained –

- the teaching of their national past,
- the prophetic promise for the future,
- the presence of Jehovah in the present.

What was now necessary? It was above all things needful that the nation should read its past and its present and its future in the true way, that is, **from the Divine standpoint**; and it was with this very think in mind – to meet this need and attain this end – that the “Chronicles” were compiled.

Three things were naturally very important in this connection –

(1) In view of the nation’s unique calling and the Davidic covenant, it was most important to retain unimpaired the nation’s principal genealogies; and these are therefore carefully presented in the first nine chapters.

(2) In view of the catastrophes which had occurred, it was important to recast the nation’s history exclusively from a religious standpoint, at least from the beginning of the Davidic kingdom; and this we find from the tenth chapter of 1 Chronicles onwards.

(3) In view of the act that the temple represented the holy religion which had come to Israel by special Divine revelation, and the disregard of which had brought such evils on the nation, and in view of the fact that the temple was the supreme surviving link between the nation’s great past and its still greater prophesied future, it was greatly important to emphasise the temple and its observances in the regard of the people; and this emphasizing of the temple we find all through the Chronicles, as already noted.

The temple was now, above all things,

- the symbol of the unity of the nation, the more so now that the earthly throne had disappeared;
- the reminder of the nation’s high calling and function;
- the sign that Jehovah was still with His hosen people;
- the focus of the true emphasis in the national life.

It was in the light of that temple that all the past was to be read, and the present reconstructed, and the future anticipated. Hence the compiling of the Chronicles, with their sustained emphasis on the temple and the religious aspects of things. And hence the central purpose of the

Chronicles, namely, to bring home afresh to the covenant people where the true emphasis in Israel's national life lay, to convince them as to where their first duty and their only true safety lay, and thereby to challenge the elect race to a renewed consecration as the Divinely-appointed Priest of the nations.

Richards: The purpose of genealogies:

- to demonstrate the legitimacy of a person or family's claim to a particular role or rank
- to preserve the purity of the chosen people and /or its priesthood
- to affirm the continuity of the people of God despite expulsion from the Promised Land.

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler's survey of events in the history of Judah (often, but not always, from a positive perspective) is articulated through a theological framework centered on covenant. In short, the book of Chronicles recounts the faithful acts of God as a means of provoking the seeking of God, hope in God, and covenantal faithfulness (obedience) within the Judean community. Establishing continuity between the past and present is one of the ways in which the Chronicler weaves together this theological message of (covenantal) hope—as well as call to covenantal obedience—for his postexilic audience.

Martin Selman: According to Chronicles, the Davidic covenant is that element which most clearly expresses the meaning of Israel's continuing life as the people of God. . . . The primary feature of Chronicles' presentation of the Davidic covenant is that its very existence depends on God's promise. Everything hangs on what God purposes, says and does. David's good intentions about building a temple, for instance, must be put aside because God's way and God's time have to take priority. . . .

The idea of God as the inspirer and maintainer of the covenant is strengthened by an interest in divine election which is unparalleled outside Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. . . . God's guaranteed commitment to Israel is also expressed through a strengthened emphasis on the permanence and inviolability of the covenant. . . . As with the interest in election, the new emphasis on the permanence of the Davidic covenant and the reality of God's kingdom demonstrated that the covenant and the kingdom were still very much alive, despite the devastation of the exile. . . .

The post-exilic generations do not just continue the past but are caught up in the current of an ever-flowing stream. Despite Israel's current reduced circumstances and loss of the Davidic monarchy, the rebuilt temple is a visible sign that God is still at work. The community that worshipped in the temple therefore has a vital role to play in passing on their faith to future generations. They must take seriously the occupation of the land, and worship the God who promises eternal kingship to David's line. God's purposes remain incomplete, and the future lies open to all who believe that God will not abandon what he has started (cf. Phil. 1:6). He will yet keep his promise to set one of David's descendants "*over his house and his kingdom for ever*" (**1 Chr. 17:14**).

Andrew Hill: Its primary purpose is to tell the story of the God of history, more specifically, the biography of the God of Israel's history. The Chronicler's biography of God includes "chapters" addressing the themes of his:

- sovereign rule as Creator (cf. **2 Chron. 20:6**)
- providential intervention as Sustainer (cf. **2 Chron. 20:12**)
- election of Israel (**1 Chron. 16:13, 17**)
- faithfulness to his covenant promises (**1 Chron. 17:18-24**)
- responsiveness to prayer (**2 Chron. 6:40; 7:12**)
- justice (**2 Chron. 19:7**)
- goodness (**2 Chron. 30:18-20**)
- mercy (**2 Chron. 30:9**)

David Malick: Purposes of the books of Chronicles:

- A. To bear witness to the “unity of God’s will for his people.” [Brevard Childs]
- B. To bear witness to “the continuity of the obedient response within the history of Israel.” [Brevard Childs]
- C. To bear witness to “the fundamental correspondence between an action and its outcome.” [Brevard Childs]
- D. To “give the Jews of the Second Commonwealth the true spiritual foundations of their theocracy as the covenant people of Jehovah” [Gleason Archer]
- E. To bear witness to the “role of sacred scripture as providing the rule of faith by which the community lives.” [Brevard Childs]
- F. To “interpret to the restored community in Jerusalem the history of Israel as an eternal covenant between God and David which demanded an obedient response to the divine law.” [Brevard Childs]
- G. To reveal God’s desire to bless those who wholeheartedly worship Him and to curse those who resist Him in rebellion according to the Mosaic system of Temple worship

J. A. Thompson: The Chronicler attempted to interpret to the restored community in Jerusalem the history of Israel as the working out of the eternal covenant between God and the people that demanded an obedient response to the divine law. Using David as a model he could show that Israel prospered when it was obedient but came under divine judgment when it abandoned God's law (2 Chr 36:15–19). After the judgment God once again restored his people, who continued to stand under the divine imperatives.

Major Themes:

(1) “all Israel”

Some of the Chronicler's readers might have thought that when the schism came after Solomon's death the unity of Israel was lost forever. The Chronicler, however, was at pains to show that the division did not mean that either north or south was irretrievably divided from the other, certainly not from a religious point of view. The northern tribes did not forfeit their position as children of Israel even if they were people who had “forsaken” Yahweh. They could be restored and could return by way of repentance (**2 Chr 13:4–12**). Actually, the southern tribes also fell away at times and were restored after repentance.

But evidence that the division was not irretrievable came from the fact that in the days of Hezekiah the whole population was reunited in worship at Jerusalem when a Davidic king was on the throne. Hezekiah was something like a second Solomon. Even in preexilic times there had

been a reunification of the people of Israel, a foretaste of that of which the prophets spoke (**Ezek 37:15–23**). The repeated thrust of the Chronicler's work was that north and south, "*all Israel*," ought to be and finally would be one in a unity based on their common worship of Yahweh centered in the Jerusalem temple.

(2) the temple and worship

(3) the concept of kingship

God's kingship was exercised in Israel through human representatives chosen by God himself. As a consequence Israel's kingdom was secure and everlasting because it was in God's hands. In the Chronicler's thinking there was a **continuity of kingship** in Israel since it was grounded in God himself. If there were a change in the earthly kingship, God had the matter in hand. . .

It is a theological assertion that the house of David is for all time the only legitimate ruling house over Israel. . . The Chronicler wrote at a time when Israel had a temple but no king. His lessons from history were to demonstrate that God had not abandoned his people—he was present among them and the future was open before them. Because of the biblical covenants they could have a legitimate hope in God's work on their behalf. A glorious future lay ahead, although the Chronicler was content to point only to its foundations.

(4) retribution and repentance

INTERPRETATIVE CHALLENGES:

John MacArthur: First and Second Chronicles present a combination of selective genealogical and historical records and no insurmountable challenges within the two books are encountered. A few issues arise, such as:

- 1) Who wrote 1 and 2 Chronicles? Does the overlap of **2 Chr. 36:22–23** with **Ezra 1:1–3** point to Ezra as author?
- 2) Does the use of multiple sources taint the inerrancy doctrine of Scripture?
- 3) How does one explain the variations in the genealogies of **1 Chr. 1–9** from other OT genealogies?
- 4) Are the curses of **Deut. 28** still in force, even though the 70 year captivity has concluded?
- 5) How does one explain the few variations in numbers when comparing Chronicles with parallel passages in Samuel and Kings?

David Malick: NUMBERS IN CHRONICLES THAT DISAGREE WITH THEIR OT PARALLELS:

#	Higher	Lower	Description	Parallel Passage	Evaluation of Chronicles
a		1Chr 11:11	300 slain by Jashobeam, not 800	2Sa 23:8	Scribal error
b	1Chr 18:4		Hadadezer's 1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen, not 1,000 and 700 horsemen	2Sa 8:4	Correct
c	1Chr 19:18a		7,000 Syrian charioteers slain, not 700	2Sa 10:18a	Correct
d		1Chr 19:18b	and 40,000 foot soldiers, not horsemen	2Sa 10:18b	Correct
e	1Chr 21:5a		Israel's 1,100,000 troops, not 800,000	2Sa 24:9a	Different objects
f		1Chr 21:5b	Judah's 470,000 troops, not 500,000	2Sa 24:9b	More precise
g		1Chr 21:12	Three years of famine, not seven	2Sa 24:13	Correct

h	1Chr 21:25	Ornan paid 600 gold shekels, not 50 silver	2Sa 24:24	Different objects
i,j	2Chr 2:2,18	3,600 to supervise the temple construction, not 3,300	1Kg 5:16	Different method of reckoning
k	2Chr 2:10	20,000 baths of oil to Hiram's woodman, not 20 kors (=200 baths)	1Kg 5:11	Different objects
l	2Chr 3:15	Temple pillars 35 cubits, not 18	1Kg 7:15	Scribal error
m	2Chr 4:5	Sea holding 3,000 baths, not 2,000	1Kg 7:26	Scribal error
n	2Chr 8:10	250 chief officers for building the temple, not 550	1Kg 9:23	Different method of reckoning
o	2Chr 8:18	450 gold talents from Ophir, not 420	1Kg 9:28	Correct or scribal error
p	2Chr 9:16	300 gold bekas per shield, not 3 minas	1Kg 10:17	Different method of reckoning

q	2Chr 9:25	4,000 stalls for horses, not 40,000	1Kg 4:26	Correct
r	2Chr 22:2	Ahaziah king at 42 years, not 22	2Kg 8:26	Scribal error
s	2Chr 36:9	Jehoiachin king at 8, not 18	2Kg 24:8	Scribal error
Compared with its parallels, Chronicles is the same once, higher 10 times, and lower 7 times.				
Total disagreements; 19 (j repeats i) out of 213 parallel numbers				

Bruce Hurt: https://www.preceptaustin.org/1_chronicles_commentaries

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KINGS & CHRONICLES	
SAMUEL & KINGS	FIRST & SECOND CHRONICLES
Prophetic Perspective: Message of Judgment	Priestly Perspective: Message of hope
Prophetic authorship: Emphasizes the prophetic ministry and moral concerns	Priestly authorship: Emphasizes the priestly ministry and spiritual concerns
The Fortunes of the Thrones	Continuity of the Davidic line
More Negative: Rebellion & Tragedy	More Positive: Apostasy, but hope in face of tragedy
Record of both Israel and Judah	Record primarily of Judah
Man's Failings	God's Faithfulness
Morality	Redemption
Emphasizes the throne of earthly kings	Earthly throne (temple) of the heavenly King
Emphasizes Kings and Prophets	Emphasizes the Temple and the Priests
Political and kingly	Religious and priestly
Compiled by authors soon after the events	Compiled by by a priest: Ezra many years after the events
Written shortly after the beginning of the captivity in Babylon	Written shortly after the return from the captivity
Adapted Wilkinson's Talk thru the Bible & Jensen's Survey of the OT	

OUTLINE OF 1-2 CHRONICLES

GOD'S KINGDOM MUST MAGNIFY GOD'S PRESENCE – LESSONS FROM JUDAH'S KINGS

BIG IDEA:

GOD'S KINGDOM PEOPLE PRIORITIZE PROPER WORSHIP IN CHALLENGING TIMES BY LEARNING LESSONS FROM THEIR COVENANT HISTORY AND GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PROMISES

1 CHRONICLES

(1 Chron. 1-9) GENEALOGICAL PROLOGUE – TRACING ALL ISRAEL

A. (1:1 – 2:2) Patriarchs – From Adam to Israel –

The Continuity of the Universal Mission of God's Covenant People Reflected in Tracing Israel's Origins Back to Adam

1. (:1-27) Adam to Abraham
 - a. (:1-4) Adam to Noah
 - b. (:5-7) Descendants of Japheth
 - c. (:8-16) Descendants of Ham
 - d. (:17-27) Descendants of Shem
 2. (:28-33) Sons of Abraham
 3. (:34-42) Sons of Isaac
 - a. (:35-37) Descendants of Esau
 - b. (:38-42) Descendants of Seir
 4. (:43-54) Rulers in Edom
 - a. (:43-51a) Early Kings in Edom
 - b. (51b-54) Chiefs of Edom
- (2:1-2) Transition – Sons of Israel

B. (2:3 – 4:23) Royal Family of Tribe of Judah –

The Prominent Role of the Tribe of Judah (as Focused in King David) in God's Kingdom Agenda Emphasized

1. (2:3-9) Introduction – Sons of Judah up to Hezron and His Sons
 - a. (:3-4) Sons of Judah Introduced
 - b. (:5-8) Sons of Perez
 - c. (:9) Sons of Hezron: Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb
2. (2:10 – 3:24) Main Genealogy
 - a. (2:10-17) Sons of Ram
 - b. (2:18-24) Sons of Caleb
 - c. (2:25-33) Sons of Jerahmeel, Firstborn Son of Hezron
 - c1. (2:34-41) Supplementary Material On Jerahmeel
 - b1. (2:42-55) Supplementary Material On Caleb, Brother of Jerahmeel
 - a1. (3:1-24) Davidic Family
 - 1) (:1-9) Listing of Actual Sons of David
 - 2) (:10-24) Listing of Davidic Kings of Judah

3. (4:1-23) Conclusion – More Records of Judah
 - a. (:1-20) Sons of Judah
 - b. (:21-23) Sons of Shelah

C. (4:24–43) Tribe of Simeon – Invisible But Not Forgotten by God – Historical Circumstances Cannot Compromise God’s Kingdom Agenda – Which Includes the Forgotten Tribe of Simeon

1. (:24-27) Genealogical Survey of Simeon
 - a. (:24-26) Sons of Simeon
 - b. (:27) Comparison between Simeon and Judah
2. (:28-33) Geographical Settlements of Simeon (Cities and Villages)
3. (:34-43) Growing Expansion
 - a. (:34-38) Clan Leaders and the Numeric Expansion of Their Households
 - b. (:39-43) Tribal Geographic Expansion to Secure Adequate Pastureland
 - 1) (39-41) Expansion to the West
 - 2) (:42-43) Expansion to East/Southeast

D. (5:1-26) Transjordanian Tribes -- Reuben, Gad, Manasseh – The Faithfulness of God to His Covenant Stipulations Enables Initial Military Success for the Transjordanian Tribes But Eventually Relegates Them to Exile Due to Idolatry

1. (:1-10) Tribe of Reuben
 - a. (:1-2) Explanation of the Demotion of Reuben from First-Born Privileges
 - b. (:3-10) History of the Tribe of Reuben
 - 1) (:3-6) Genealogical Survey Up to the Exile
 - 2) (:7-9) Geographical Expansion
 - 3) (:10) Military Conquest of the Hagrites
2. (:11-17) Tribe of Gad
3. (:18-22) Military Accomplishments
4. (:23-26) Transjordanian Manasseh
 - a. (:23-24) Summary of Manasseh’s Significance
 - 1) (:23) Multiplied within Specific Geographic Areas
 - 2) (:24) Major Leaders
 - b. (:25-26) Spiritual Failure Resulting in Exile

E. (6:1-81) Tribe of Levi – Both Priestly and Non-Priestly – The Administration of Worship under the Direction of the Levites Elevates This Tribe to a Position of Prominence

1. (:1-53) Levitical Genealogies and Key Roles
 - a. (:1-30) Priestly and Non-Priestly Lines
 - 1) (:1-15) Priestly Line
 - 2) (:16-30) Non-Priestly Line
 - b. (:31-47) Musical Branch of the Levites
 - c. (:48-53) Key Levitical Roles
 - 1) (:48-49) Summary
 - 2) (:50-53) Aaronic High Priests
2. (:54-81) Levitical Settlements
 - a. (:54-60) Settlements for Priestly Levites
 - b. (:61-81) Settlements for Non-Priestly Levites

F. (7:1-40) Northern Tribes -- Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Ephraim, Asher – Remember the Former Mighty Men of Valor in the Northern Tribes as You Celebrate God’s Faithfulness

1. (:1-5) Issachar – Mighty Men of Valor
2. (:6-12) Benjamin – Mighty Men of Valor
3. (:13) Naphtali
4. (:14-29) Joseph
 - a. (:14-19) Cisjordan Manasseh – Highlighting the Role of the Mothers
 - b. (:20-27) Ephraim – Overcoming Temporary Loss
 - c. (:28-29) Settlement of Ephraim and Cisjordanian Manasseh
5. (:30-40) Asher – Mighty Men of Valor

G. (8:1-40) Continuation of Genealogy of Tribe of Benjamin – The Partnership of Benjamin with Judah in Supporting the Davidic Line Derives from its Close Association

- **With the Source of the Kingdom in the Genealogy of Saul and**
 - **With the Promised Land of Jerusalem**
1. (:1-28) Settlement of Benjaminite Families by Geography
 - a. (:1-7) Descendants of Benjamin in Geba – Especially Sons of Bela and Ehud
 - b. (:8-13) Descendants of Shiharaim in Moab, Ono, and Lod
 - c. (:14-28) Descendants of Ahio and others in Aijalon and Jerusalem
 2. (:29-40) Genealogy of Saul’s Family
 - a. (:29-32) Militia at Gibeon
 - b. (:33-40) Family of Saul

H. (9:1-34) Returning Exiles – The Resettling of the Exiles Focused on Establishing Temple Worship in Jerusalem under the Direction of the Priests, Levites and Other Temple Servants

- (:1) Transition
 - a. Focus on the Unity of All Israel as Reflected in the Historical Genealogies
 - b. Focus on the Culpability of Judah in Deserving Exile in Babylon
- (:2) Overview
 1. (:3-9) Centrality of Jerusalem
 2. (:10-13) Priestly Families of Israel
 3. (:14-16) Levites and Their Duties
 4. (:17-33) Gatekeepers – Defined by Roles
 - a. (:17-23) Sentries Securing the Gates
 - b. (:24-27) Stewards Providing Oversight
 - c. (:28-32) Servants Responsible for Tasks Related to Temple Worship
 - d. (:33) Singers
- (:34) Summary and Transition

I. (9:35-44) Saul’s Genealogy – Remembering the History of Israel’s Kings Beginning with Saul

I. (1 Chron. 10-20) DAVIDIC KINGDOM ESTABLISHED -- WITH FOCUS ON GOD'S COVENANT

A. (10-12) David Contrasted with Saul

1. (10:1-14) Death of Saul – Transferring the Kingdom to David –
The Deserved Divine Execution of Saul Paves the Way for the Transfer of the Kingdom to David

- a. (:1-7) Demise of the House of Saul – Report of Saul's Death in Battle with Philistines
 - 1) (:1-3) Losing Pivotal Battle
 - 2) (:4-6) Losing Saul's Life
 - 3) (:7) Losing Israelite Cities
- b. (:8-12) Desecration of the Body of Saul by the Philistines Contrasted with Heroic Actions of Men of Jabesh-Gilead
 - 1) (:8-10) Reveling in the Demise of the Royal Family -- Desecration of the Body of Saul by the Philistines
 - a) (:8-9) Declaring the Good News of Saul's Humiliation
 - b) (:10) Dedicating Trophies to the Philistine Gods
 - 2) (:11-12) Rescuing the Royal Bones -- Heroic Actions of Men of Jabesh-Gilead
- c. (:13-14) Divine Judgment Executed against Saul for His Unfaithfulness – Transitioning the Kingdom to David
 - 1) (:13-14a) Failures of Saul
 - a) (:13a) Unfaithfulness to the Covenant Relationship
 - b) (:13b) Disobedience to the Word of God
 - c) (:13c) Seeking Guidance from Satanic Sources
 - d) (:14a) Failing to Depend on the Lord
 - 2) (:14b) Fatal Execution of Saul and Transition to David's Dynasty
 - a) Fatal Execution of Saul
 - b) Transition to David's Dynasty

2. (11:1 -12:40) Unified Support for David as King –
Mighty Warriors from Diverse Backgrounds Rallied Their Unified Support for David as King in Harmony with His Divine Calling

- (11:1-3) Prologue – David's Coronation at Hebron
 - 1) (:1) Confession of Israelite Unity
 - 2) (:2a) Confidence in David's Leadership
 - 3) (:2b) Call of God to be Shepherd-King of Israel
 - 4) (:3) Coronation of David via Covenant Commitment
 - a) Initiative of All Israelite Elders
 - b) Ratification of Covenant Commitment
 - c) Anointing of David as King
 - d) Fulfillment of Divine Prophecy
- a. (11:4-9) Capture of Zion – the Capital City of David
 - 1) (:4-5a) Confrontation with Jebusites at Jerusalem
 - 2) (:5b) Capture of Stronghold of Zion
 - 3) (:6) Commander of the Military = the Role Earned by Joab
 - 4) (:7-8) City of David Established and Strengthened
 - 5) (:9) Critical Factor in David's Ascending Greatness =
God's Favor

- b. (11:10-47) Support for David at Hebron by the Mighty Men
 - 1) (:10-14) Mighty Men Supporting David's Kingship
 - 2) (:15-19) Heroic Loyalty of the Three Mighty Men
 - 3) (:20-25) Specific Exploits of Abshai and Benaiah
 - a) (:20-21) Abshai
 - b) (:22-25) Benaiah
 - 4) (:26-47) List of Additional Mighty Men from Various Tribes Supporting David
- c. (12:1-22) Support for David When a Fugitive in the Early Years
 - 1) (12:1-7) Support for David at Ziklag
 - 2) (12:8-18) Support for David at the Fortress
 - a) (:8-15) Gadite Skilled Soldiers Supporting David
 - b) (:16-18) Defectors from Benjamin and Judah Supporting David
 - 3) (12:19-22) Support for David at Ziklag from Manasseh Defectors
- d. (12:23-37) Support for David at Hebron
 - (12:38-40) Epilogue – David's Coronation Celebration at Hebron

B. (13-16) David Centralizes the Ark of the Covenant at Jerusalem

- 1. (13:1-14) Initial Attempt to Transfer the Ark to Jerusalem – David's Initial Attempt to Transfer the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem Violated God's Holiness and Ends in Tragedy
 - a. (:1-4) Good Intentions – The Decision to Transfer the Ark to Jerusalem
 - 1) (:1) Soliciting Buy In for the Mission
 - 2) (:2-3) Stressing the Priority of This Unified Mission
 - 3) (:4) Securing Solidarity of Purpose
 - b. (:5-8) Misguided Methodology – Carrying the Ark on a Cart
 - 1) (:5-6) Far-reaching Momentum for the Mission
 - 2) (:7) Fatal Mistake
 - 3) (:8) Full-blown Musical Celebration
 - c. (:9-13) Tragic Outcome = Uzza Struck Dead
 - 1) (:9) Seemingly Innocent Triggering Event
 - 2) (:10) Angry Reaction of the Lord
 - 3) (:11-13) Angry Response of David
 - a) (:11) Perplexity – What's the Big Deal?
 - b) (:12) Fear – Inability of Completing the Mission
 - c) (:13) Paralysis – Aborting the Mission
 - (:14) Epilogue – Ark Parked at Home of Obed-Edom
 - 1) Temporary Resting Spot for the Ark
 - 2) Targeted Blessing
- 2. (14:1-17) David's Dynasty – Prospered and Protected in Jerusalem – David Consolidates His Rule in Jerusalem as the Lord Prospers and Protects Him
 - a. (:1-2) Prospered Via International Support
 - 1) (:1) Gift of Materials and Craftsmen to Build Royal Palace
 - 2) (:2) Grace of God Establishing and Exalting David's Kingdom
 - b. (:3-7) Prospered Via Family Expansion
 - 1) (:3) Increased Wives
 - 2) (:4-7) Increased Children
 - c. (:8-16) Protected in Two Separate Attacks by the Philistines

- 1) (:8-12) Attack #1
 - a) (:8) Initiating Aggressive Attack against David
 - b) (:9-10) Inquiring of God for Battle Strategy
 - c) (:11-12) Implementing God's Tactics for Victory
- 2) (:13-16) Attack #2
 - a) (:13) Initiating Aggressive Attack against David
 - b) (:14-15) Inquiring of God for Battle Strategy
 - c) (:16) Implementing God's Tactics for Victory
- (:17) Epilogue – Increased Fame and Respect
3. (15:1 – 16:43) Successful Transfer of the Ark Accompanied by Musical Celebration
 - a. (15:1 – 16:3) Successful Transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem – Following the Lord's Directives, David Used the Levites to Successfully Transfer the Ark to Jerusalem in Celebratory Fashion
 - 1) (:1-3) Preparations for Transferring the Ark to Jerusalem
 - a) (:1) Overview of David's Main Priorities
 - 1)) Building Royal Compound
 - 2)) Preparing a Place for the Ark
 - 3)) Pitching a Tent for the Ark
 - b) (:2) Ordinance Regarding the Role of the Levites in Carrying the Ark
 - c) (:3) Organization of Israel to Transfer the Ark to Jerusalem
 - 2) (:4-15) Purification of the Levites with the Goal of Transferring the Ark
 - a) (:4-10) Summons of the Different Levitical Groups
 - b) (:11-15) Instructions Regarding Consecration and Purification
 - 1)) (:11-12) Charge to Carry Out Their Responsibility to Transfer the Ark
 - 2)) (:13) History Lesson Regarding Past Failure and Judgment
 - 3)) (:14-15) Faithful Obedience to David's Instructions
 - 3) (:16-24) Performance Roles for Musical Celebration
 4. (15:25 – 16:3) Placement of the Ark in Jerusalem
 - a) (15:25-28) Transfer of the Ark Accompanied by Joyful Sacrifices
 - 1)) (:25) Joyful Participation of Israel's Key Leaders
 - 2)) (:26) Offering of Sacrifices
 - 3)) (:27) Identification of David with the Levites Carrying the Ark and Singing
 - 4)) (:28) Summary of Musical Celebration
 - b) (15:29) Treachery of Michal
 - c) (16:1-3) Transfer of the Ark Completed
 - 1)) (:1a) Positioning Inside the Tent
 - 2)) (:1b) Offering of Sacrifices
 - 3)) (:2) Blessing the People
 - 4)) (:3) Feasting Celebration
 - b. (16:4-43) Celebrating the Presence of God with Praise and Thanksgiving – Praise and Thanksgiving Commemorate the Installation of the Ark and Anticipate the Covenant Promise of Future Possession of the Land
 - (:4-6) Prologue – Musical Appointments for Worship

- a) (:4) General Function for the Levites Ministering Before the Ark
- b) (:5-6) Specific Appointments of Levites to Musical Roles
- 1) (:7-36) Psalm of Praise and Thanksgiving
 - (:7) Introduction
 - a) (:8-22) Express Praise and Thanksgiving by Remembering God's Deeds and Covenant
 - 1)) (:8-13) Remember God's Wonderful Deeds
 - 2)) (:14-22) Remember God's Everlasting Covenant of the Land of Canaan
 - b) (:23-33) Express Praise and Thanksgiving by Boasting in God as Creator and King
 - 1)) (:23-29) Boast in God's Glory as Creator and Savior
 - 2)) (:30-33) Boast in God's Sovereignty as King and Judge over All the Earth
 - c) (:34-36) Express Praise and Thanksgiving by Extolling God's Attributes as Good, Loving, Holy and Faithful
 - 1)) (:34) Extolling God's Goodness and Love
 - 2)) (:35-36) Extolling God's Holiness and Faithfulness
- 2) (:37-42) Ministry before the Ark
 - a) (:37-38) Levites Ministering in Jerusalem
 - b) (:39-42) Levites Ministering in Gibeon
- (:43) Epilogue

**C. (17:1-27) Davidic Covenant –
The Promises of the Davidic Covenant Take Precedence
over the Construction of God's House**

- 1. (:1-6) Lowering the Priority on Building God's House
 - a. (:1-2) David's Good Intentions to Build God a Temple
 - b. (:3-6) Divine Correction that the Building of God's House is Not Top Priority
- 2. (:7-15) Raising the Priority on Building the Dynasty of David
 - a. (:7-8) Divine Elevation of David and His Dynasty
 - b. (:9-10a) Divine Establishment of Israel in Their Secure Land
 - c. (:10a-14) Divine Encouragement Regarding David's Lasting Legacy
 - d. (:15) Divine Enlightenment from Nathan the Prophet to King David
- 3. (:16-27) Prayer of Response Reflecting Awe and Humility of David in Praise of God's Gracious Covenant Promises
 - a. (:16-22) Focus of David's Prayer Analyzed
 - 1) (:16-18) Focus on the Humility of David's House in Light of the Magnitude of God's Blessing
 - 2) (:19) Transition – Insight into God's Motivation
 - 3) (:20-22) Focus on the Uniqueness of Both God and Israel's Elect Status
 - b. (:23-25) Fulfillment of God's Promises Assured
 - c. (:26-27) Faithfulness of God's Blessing Acclaimed

D. (18-20) David's Conquests

1. (18:1-13) David's Military Victories Expedited by the Lord – Expansion of the Kingdom by Victories on All Sides
 - a. (:1) Military Victories against the Philistines in the West
 - b. (:2a) Military Victories against the Moabites in the East
 - c. (:2b) Military Victories against a Variety of Enemies in the North and Northeast
 - 1) (:3-4) Defeat of Hadadezer king of Zobah
 - 2) (:5-8) Defeat of the Arameans of Damascus
 - 3) (:9-11) Tribute from Tou King of Hamath via Hadoram
 - d. (:12-13a) Military Victories against the Edomites in the South
 - e. (:13b) Summary of the Lord's Assistance
- (18:14) Transition – David's Righteous Reign
2. (18:15-17) David's Cabinet – Administration of the Kingdom by Key Officials
3. (19:1 – 20:3) David's Rout of the Ammonites and Their Syrian Allies -- David Responds to the Ammonite Provocation by Aggressively Routing the Ammonites and Their Syrian Allies with Joab Leading the Troops
 - a. (19:1-5) Provocation – The Humiliation of David's Peaceful Delegation
 - 1) (:1-2) David's Peaceful Delegation
 - a) (:1) Leadership Transition in the Dynasty of Nahash
 - b) (:2) Leadership Diplomacy on the Part of David
 - 2) (:3-5) Hanun's Foolish Act of Humiliation
 - a) (:3) Poor Counsel
 - b) (:4) Perilous Contempt
 - c) (:5) Patient Consolation
 - b. (19:6-15) Response: The Rout of the Ammonites and Arameans
 - 1) (:6-7) Ammonites Solicit Mercenaries from Mesopotamia to Join Alliance
 - 2) (:8-9) Armies Engage in Battle
 - 3) (:10-13) Arrangement of Troops for Tactical Advantage by Joab
 - a) (:10-12) Cooperation and Mutual Support of Divided Forces
 - b) (:13) Charge to the Troops
 - 4) (:14-15) Attacking Rout
 - a) (:14-15a) Enemies Flee
 - b) (:15b) Entrance to Jerusalem by Joab
 - c. (19:16-19) Defeat of the Aramean Coalition
 - 1) (:16) Arameans Regroup and Recruit More Troops
 - 2) (:17-18) Arameans Routed
 - 3) (:19) Arameans Refrain from Future Aggression
 - d. (20:1-3) Defeat of the Ammonites at Rabbah
 - 1) (:1) Successful Campaign Led by Joab
 - a) Joab Leads the Troops
 - b) David Stays behind in Jerusalem
 - c) Joab Conquests Rabbah
 - 2) (:2a) Substantial Crown Placed on David's Head
 - 3) (:2b-3a) Successful Campaign Capped by Capturing the Spoil and Cutting the Captives

- a) (:2b) Capturing the Spoil
- b) (:3a) Cutting the Captives
- (:3b) Epilogue – Summary of Successful Ammonite Campaign
- 4. (20:4-8) Slaying of 3 Renowned Philistine Giants –
The Lord Solidifies David’s Kingdom with 3 Impressive Victories over Philistine Giants
 - a. (:4) Sibbecai Slays Sippai at Gezer
 - b. (:5) Elhanan Slays Lahmi the Brother of Goliath
 - c. (:6-8) Jonathan Slays Giant with 24 Fingers and Toes
 - 1) (:6) Distinctive Features = Giant with 24 Fingers and Toes
 - 2) (:7) Destroyed When He Taunted Israel
 - 3) (:8) Descended from Giants at Gath

II. (1 Chron. 21 – 2 Chron. 9) DAVID TRANSITIONS THE KINGDOM TO SOLOMON -- WITH FOCUS ON GOD’S TEMPLE

A. (21:1 – 29:9) David’s Preparations for the Temple Construction

- 1. (21:1 – 22:1) Its Location –
The Location of God’s Presence Mediates Forgiveness and Mercy
Despite Our Sin and God’s Mitigating Judgment
 - a. (:1-7) Sinful Census Ordered by David and Conducted by Joab
 - 1) (:1) Role of Satan = Inciting David’s Census
 - 2) (:2) Response of David = Issuing Directive to Joab
 - 3) (:3) Response of Joab = Cautioning David Not to Sin
 - 4) (:4-6) Resolve of David Forces Joab to Execute the Census
 - a) (:4) Forcing Joab’s Compliance
 - b) (:5) Finalizing the Numbers and Reporting back to David
 - c) (:6) Failing to Number Tribes of Levi and Benjamin
 - 5) (:7) Reaction of God
 - b. (:8-17) Sorrowful Confession and Mitigating Judgment
 - 1) (:8) Sorrowful Confession
 - 2) (:9-12) Mitigating Judgment
 - 3) (:13) Appeal to God’s Mercy
 - 4) (:14-17) Extent of Divine Judgment
 - a) (:14-15) Forbearance of the Lord
 - b) (:16-17) Intercession of David for the Nation Based on His Own Culpability
 - c. (:18-27) Purchase of Threshing Site
 - 1) (:18-19) Divine Directive Regarding Location for the New Altar
 - a) (:18) Command of the Lord
 - b) (:19) Obedience of David
 - 2) (:20-25) Process of Procurement of the Location for the New Altar
 - a) (:20-21) Arrival at the Threshing Floor of Ornan
 - b) (:22-24) Negotiations for the Procurement
 - c) (:25) Purchase of the Site
 - 3) (:26-27) Initial Offerings Confirmed by God’s Acceptance
 - a) (:26a) Initial Offerings
 - b) (:26b) Confirmation of God’s Acceptance of David’s Sacrifice
 - c) (21:27) Cease and Desist Order

- (21:28 – 22:1) Epilogue – Worship Transition from Gibeon to Jerusalem
 - 1) (21:28-30) Transition away from Gibeon
 - 2) (22:1) Transition to Jerusalem for the New House of the Lord
- 2. (22:2-19) David’s Preparations to Aid Solomon to Build the Temple –
The Transition from David to Solomon Focuses on the Preparation and Provision for the Building of the Temple
 - a. (:2-5) Preparation of Resources for Building the Temple
 - 1) (:2) Manpower Resources
 - 2) (:3-4) Material Resources
 - 3) (:5) Summary of Preparations
 - b. (:6-16) Preparation of Solomon for the Responsibility and Privilege of Building the Temple
 - 1) (:6-10) Charge to Solomon Regarding His Divine Appointment to the Task
 - 2) (:11-13) Spiritual Encouragement to Solomon of Divine Assistance
 - 3) (:14-16) Testimony of David’s Abundant and Generous Preparations
 - c. (:17-19) Preparation of the Leaders of Israel to Join in Partnership with Solomon
 - 1) (:17) Charging the Leaders to Assist Solomon
 - 2) (:18) Assuring Them of Divine Assistance
 - 3) (:19) Defining the Mission and its Purpose
- 3. (23:1 – 24:31) Census and Organization of Levitical and Priestly Families –
Proper Corporate Worship Requires Excellent Organizational and Administrative Skills
 - (:1) Prologue – Preparation for Transition to Solomon
 - a. (23:2-23) Divisions of Levites
 - 1) (:2-6) Census of the Levites
 - 2) (:7-23) Genealogical Table of Levitical Families
 - a) (:7-11) Sons of Gershon
 - b) (:12-20) Sons of Kohath
 - c) (:21-23) Sons of Merari
 - (23:24) Summary Statement and Transition
 - b. (23:25-32) Levitical Duties
 - 1) (:25-27) Association between Gift of Rest and a Permanent Temple
 - 2) (:28-32) Assistance Provided to the Sons of Aaron in Temple Service
 - c. (24:1-19) Divisions of Priests – Descendants of Aaron
 - d. (24:20-31) Further Divisions of Levites
- 4. (25:1-31) Organization of Levitical Musicians –
The High Priority of the Role of Music in Worship is Reflected in David’s Organization of the Temple Musicians
 - (:1) Prologue -- Summary
 - a. (:2-7) The Three Musical Guilds
 - 1) (:2-4) Composition of the Three Musical Guilds
 - a) (:2) Family of Asaph
 - b) (:3) Family of Jeduthun
 - c) (:4-5) Family of Heman
 - 2) (:6-7) Coordination of the Three Musical Guilds
 - b. (:8-31) The 24 Divisions of Levitical Musicians
- 5. (26:1-32) Organization of Levitical Gatekeepers, Treasurers and Other Officials –
Levitical Responsibilities Ensure Proper Administration

- a. (:1-19) Organization of Levitical Gatekeepers
 - 1) (:1-11) Composition of the Gatekeepers – Family Identity
 - 2) (:12-19) Coordination and Placement of the Gatekeepers
- b. (:20-32) Organization of Levitical Treasurers and Other Officials
 - 1) (:20-28) Organization of Levitical Treasurers
 - 2) (:29-32) Organization of Other Levites Serving away from the Temple
- 6. (27:1-34) Organization of Military Leaders and National Officials – King David Set the Stage for Solomon’s Temple Building Project by Organizing the Military and Relying on Wise Civil and Royal Officials
 - a. (:1-24) Organizing the Military Leaders
 - 1) (:1-15) Commanders of the 12 Monthly Rotations
 - (:1) Introduction
 - a) (:2-3) First Month – Jashobeam the Son of Zabdiel
 - b) (:4) Second Month – Dodai the Ahohite
 - c) (:5-6) Third Month – Benaiah the Son of Jehoiada
 - d) (:7) Fourth Month – Asahel the Brother of Joab and Zebadiah His Son
 - e) (:8) Fifth Month – Shamhuth the Izrahite
 - f) (:9) Sixth Month – Ira the Tekoite
 - g) (:10) Seventh Month – Helez the Pelonite
 - h) (:11) Eighth Month – Sibbecai the Hushathite
 - i) (:12) Ninth Month – Abiezer the Anathothite
 - j) (:13) Tenth Month – Maharai the Netophathite
 - k) (:14) Eleventh Month – Benaiah the Pirathonite
 - l) (:15) Twelfth Month – Heldai the Netophathite
 - 2) (:16-22) Register of Tribal Chiefs According to the Census of David
 - a) (:16a) Heading
 - b) (:16b-22a) Listing
 - c) (:22b) Summary
 - 3) (:23-24) Clarification Regarding the Census
 - b. (:25-34) Relying on Wise Civil and Royal Officials
 - 1) (:25-31) Register of Stewards of Royal Properties -- Civil Administrators
 - 2) (:32-34) Royal Council of 7 Key Figures
- 7. (28:1-21) David’s Charge to Solomon and Israel to Execute the Temple Plans – Divine Plans for God’s Kingdom Agenda Call for Courageous Obedience by God’s Appointed Leader with the Full Support of the Covenant Community
 - a. (:1-10) Second Charge to the People and to Solomon
 - 1) (:1) Convocation
 - 2) (:2-8) Charge to the People
 - a) (:2) David’s Intentions to Build the Temple Himself
 - b) (:3-4) God’s Plans for David
 - c) (:5-7) God’s Choice of Solomon to Build the Temple
 - d) (:8) Charge to Maintain Covenant Obedience and Thus Possess the Land
 - 3) (:9-10) Charge to Solomon
 - a) (:9a) Know the God of the Covenant
 - b) (:9b) Serve God Wholeheartedly and Seek Him Alone

- c) (:10) Carry Out Your Divinely Appointed Mission Courageously
 - b. (:11-19) Presentation of Temple Plans to Solomon
 - 1) (:11-12) Temple Plans – Architecture
 - 2) (:13a) Temple Plans -- Personnel
 - 3) (:13b-18) Temple Plans -- Contents
 - 4) (:19) Temple Plans – Summary
 - c. (:20-21) Concluding Charge and Encouragement
 - 1) (:20) Fulfill Your Mission Courageously with the Assurance of Divine Support
 - 2) (:21) Fulfill Your Mission Diligently with the Assurance of the Support of All Israel
- 8. (29:1-9) Final Preparation for Temple Construction – David’s Exemplary Giving Campaign
 - a. (:1-5) David’s Example of Sacrificial Giving to the Temple Project
 - 1) (:1) Significant Project – Contrasting Inexperience of Solomon with Enormity of the Task
 - 2) (:2-5a) Sacrificial Giving of David
 - 3) (:5b) Sacred Challenge
 - b. (:6-9) Voluntary Sacrificial Contributions from Israelite Leaders
 - 1) (:6-8) Magnanimous Response of the Israelite Leaders
 - 2) (:9) Mutual Rejoicing

B. (29:10-20) David’s Praise and Supplication

- 1. (:10-12) Doxology
- 2. (:13-16) Thanksgiving and Praise
 - a. (:13) Response of Thanksgiving and Praise
 - b. (:14-15) Recognition of Humble Status
 - c. (:16) Realization that Their Abundant Gifts Originated from God’s Grace
- 3. (:17-19) Supplication
 - a. (:17) Basis For Petition = God’s Insight into Motivations
 - b. (:18-19) The Bottom Line of the Petition = Heart to Obey God
- 4. (:20) Response

C. (29:21-30) Transition to the Reign of Solomon

- 1. (:21-25) Coronation of Solomon
 - a. (:21-22a) Sacrifices, Offerings and Joyful Celebration
 - 1) (:21) Sacrifices and Offerings
 - 2) (:22a) Joyful Celebration
 - b. (:22b) Formal Public Installation of Solomon and Zadok
 - c. (:23-24) Successful Initial Reign of Solomon
 - 1) (:23) Prospered by the Lord and Obeyed by the People
 - 2) (:24) Pledged Allegiance by Israel’s Leaders
 - d. (:25) Divine Exaltation of Solomon
- 2. (:26-30) Conclusion of David’s Reign
 - a. (:26-27) Extent and Duration of David’s Reign
 - b. (:28) Summary of David’s Reign
 - c. (:29-30) Historical Record of David’s Reign and International Influence

2 CHRONICLES

D. (1:1-17) Exaltation of Solomon's Kingdom by Divine Favor – Solomon's Kingdom Marked by Worship, Wisdom and Wealth

- (:1) Prologue – Divine Favor Secures Solomon's Kingdom
 - a. Secure Establishment of Solomon's Kingdom
 - b. Secret to Exaltation = Divine Favor
- 1. (:2-6) Solomon's Worship at Gibeon
 - a. (:2) Motivational Speech of Solomon to the Unified Leaders of Israel
 - b. (:3) Mass Pilgrimage to Worship at Gibeon
 - c. (:4) Mention of the Location in Jerusalem of the Ark of God
 - d. (:5-6) Main Focus = Burnt Offerings on the Bronze Altar of Bezalel in Gibeon
- 2. (:7-12) Solomon's Wisdom Gifted by God
 - a. (:7) Remarkable Invitation
 - b. (:8-10) Insightful Request
 - c. (:11-12) Unprecedented Response
- (:13) Transition
- 3. (:14-17) Solomon's Wealth in Abundance
 - a. (:14) Impressive Horses, Chariots and Chariot Cities
 - b. (:15) Impressive Silver, Gold and Cedars
 - c. (:16-17) Import/Export Business of Horses and Chariots

E. (2:1 – 5:1) Construction of the Temple

- 1. (2:1-18) Preparing Workers and Supplies for the Temple Building Project –
The Grandeur of the Temple Project Requires Skilled Craftsmen and Special Lumber
 - (:1-2) Prologue – Conscription of Labor Force
 - 1) (:1) Commitment to Build Both a Temple and Royal Palace
 - 2) (:2) Commissioning of Responsibilities
 - a. (:3-10) Solomon's Request of Hiram for Assistance in Grand Temple Building Project
 - 1) (:3b-5) Supporting Arguments for Solomon's Request for Assistance
 - a) (:3b) Past Assistance Provided to King David
 - b) (:4) Purpose of the Temple Building Project
 - c) (:5) Preeminence of the God of the Temple Corresponds to Grandeur of the Project
 - 2) (:6) Solomon's Humility
 - a) Immensity of God
 - b) Insignificance of Solomon
 - 3) (:7-9a) Skilled Workers and Special Building Materials Requested
 - a) (:7) Skilled Workers Requested
 - b) (:8a) Special Building Materials Requested
 - 4) (:9b) Spectacular Grandeur of the Temple Building Project
 - 5) (:10) Specific Pledge of Compensation
 - b. (:11-16) Hiram's Response Shows Respect for the God of Israel and Support for Solomon
 - 1) (:11b-12) Recognition of Solomon's Divine Calling
 - a) (:11b) Called by the Lord to be King of Israel
 - b) (:12) Called by the Lord to Build Both a Temple and Royal Palace

- 2) (:13-14) Recruitment of Hiram-abi to Contribute His Skilled Craftsmanship
- 3) (:15-16) Responsibilities of Both Parties to Fulfill the Building Contract
 - a) (:15) Responsibility of Solomon to Supply Material Provisions
 - b) (:16) Responsibility of Hiram to Supply Necessary Lumber for the Building Projects
- (:17-18) Epilogue – Description of Labor Force
 - 1) (:17) Census of Foreigners
 - 2) (:18) Commissioning of Responsibilities
- 2. (3:1 – 5:1) Temple Building Details – Structure and Furnishings – The Majesty and Glory of God are Reflected in the Ornate and Precious Design of the Temple Structures and Internal Furnishings and Utensils
 - (3:1-2) Prologue – Beginning of Temple Construction
 - 1) (:1a) Project Start
 - 2) (:1b) Project Strategic Location
 - a) Strategic via Theophany
 - b) Strategic via Staging by David
 - c) Strategic via Purchase from Ornan the Jebusite
 - 3) (:2) Project Starting Date
 - a. (3:3-17) Structure of the Temple
 - 1) (:3-7) Foundations, Overlays and Adornments
 - a) (:3-4) Dimensions of Foundations and Porch
 - b) (:5) Overlay of Main Room
 - c) (:6-7) Additional Adornments and Overlays
 - 2) (:8-14) Holy of Holies
 - a) (:8-9) Construction of the Holy of Holies
 - b) (:10-14) Cherubim and Veil in the Holy of Holies
 - 3) (:15-17) Construction of the Pillars
 - b. (4:1-22) Interior Furnishings and Utensils of the Temple
 - 1) (:1-6) Bronze Altar, Cast Metal Sea with Figures Like Oxen and Ten Basins
 - a) (:1) Bronze Altar
 - b) (:2) Cast Metal Sea with Figures Like Oxen
 - c) (:6) Ten Basins
 - 2) (:7-8) Ten Golden Lampstands, Ten Tables and One Hundred Golden Bowls
 - a) (:7) Ten Golden Lampstands
 - b) (:8a) Ten Tables
 - c) (:8b) One Hundred Golden Bowls
 - 3) (:9) Courts and Doors
 - a) Construction of the Courts and Doors
 - b) Placement of the Sea
 - 4) (:11-18) Summary of Hiram/Hiram-Abi's Contributions
 - 5) (:19-22) Furnishing of the Temple Completed by Solomon
 - (5:1) Transition – Completion of Temple Construction
 - 1) Completion of the Temple

- 2) Consigning the Valuable Davidic Spoils into the Treasuries of the Temple

F. (5:2 – 7:22) Dedication of the Temple

1. (5:2 – 6:11) The Glory of God Fills the Completed Temple –
Access to the Presence of God Should Cause Us to Joyfully Celebrate and Praise God for His Faithfulness

- a. (5:2-10) The Ark is Brought into the Temple
 - 1) (:2-3) Gathering of Israelite Leaders to Transfer the Ark into the Temple
 - 2) (:4-6) Transporting the Ark According to God's Good Pleasure
 - a) (:4-5) Proper Use of Levites
 - b) (:6) Abundant Offering of Sacrifices
 - 3) (:7-10) Stationing the Ark in the Holy of Holies
 - a) (:7-8) Stationed under the Protection of the Cherubim
 - b) (:9) Stationed in Verifiable Reality
 - c) (:10) Stationed with a Focus on Obedience to the Law of the Covenant
- b. (5:11-14) The Glory of God Fills the Temple
 - 1) (:11-13a) Musical Celebration of Praise in Glorifying the Lord
 - 2) (:13b) Memorized Psalm Extolling God's Everlasting Faithful Love to His Covenant People
 - 3) (:13c-14) Majestic Climax = Glory of the Lord Filling the House of God
- c. (6:1-11) Solomon Addresses the Assembly of Israel
 - 1) (:1-2) Theological Paradox: Mystery of Transcendent God Dwelling in His Earthly Temple
 - 2) (:3-11) Thanksgiving for the Faithfulness of God to His Promises
 - a) (:3-6) Faithful in His Choice of Israel, of Jerusalem and of David
 - b) (:7-9) Faithful in His Choice of Solomon to Build the Temple
 - c) (:10-11) Faithful to Locate His Glorious Presence in the Completed Temple

2. (6:12-42) Solomon's Temple Dedication Prayer –

- Highlights the Efficacy of Intercessory Prayer Based on God's Responsiveness and
 - Anticipates the Perpetuation of the Davidic Dynasty in Accordance with God's Covenant Commitment
- (:12-13) Prologue – Place and Posture in Approaching God in Prayer
 - 1) (:12) Posture of Standing before the Altar
 - 2) (:13) Posture of Kneeling before the Assembly
- a. (:14-17) Petition for Posterity – Fulfillment of Promises Regarding Davidic Dynasty
 - 1) (:14-15) Foundation for Making Requests of God
 - a) (:14) Praise for God's Uniqueness in Displaying Covenant Love
 - b) (:15) Praise for God's Past Faithfulness to His Promises to David

- 2) (:16-17) Future Faithful Performance of Covenant Promises Requested
 - a) (:16) Permanence of Davidic Dynasty
 - b) (:17) Performance of Davidic Covenant
 - b. (:18-21) Plea for Responsiveness to Intercession for Israel
 - 1) (:18) Responsive despite God's Transcendence
 - 2) (:19-21) Responsive Both to the Prayers of God's Servant (King Solomon) and God's People (the nation Israel)
 - c. (:22-39) Particulars of Intercession Regarding a Variety of Circumstances
 - 1) (:22-23) Case Study #1 = Oaths in Interpersonal Conflicts
 - 2) (:24-25) Case Study #2 = Defeated by an Enemy Due to Sin
 - 3) (:26-27) Case Study #3 = Drought Due to Sin
 - 4) (:28-31) Case Study #4 = Disasters (Famine, Pestilence, Plague, etc.)
 - 5) (:32-33) Case Study #5 = Foreigners Praying
 - 6) (:34-35) Case Study #6 = War
 - 7) (:36-39) Case Study #7 = National Exile and Captivity Due to Sin
 - d. (:40-42) Presence of God Invoked
 - 1) (:40) Be Attentive
 - 2) (:41a) Be Active
 - 3) (:41b) Be Accommodating
 - 4) (:42) Be Accepting
3. (7:1-22) Temple Dedication Ceremony –
The Importance of the Temple Derives from the Abiding Glory of the Lord –
Requiring Covenant Faithfulness
- a. (:1-11) Dramatic Response to Solomon's Prayer of Temple Dedication
 - 1) (:1-3) Dramatic Response of Divine Approval of Temple Dedication
 - a) (:1-2) Manifestation of the Glory of the Lord in the Temple
 - b) (:3) Motivation of the People to Worship God for His Goodness and Lovingkindness
 - 2) (:4-6) Dramatic Response of Celebratory Worship
 - a) (:4-5) Abundant Sacrifices
 - b) (:6) Accompanied by Musical Praise
 - 3) (:7-10) Dramatic Response of Dedicating the Altar and Celebrating the Festival of Booths
 - a) (:7) Volume of Sacrifices Required Consecrating the Middle of the Court
 - b) (:8-9) Dedication of the Altar Required Extended Duration of the Feast
 - c) (:10) Overwhelming Joy Focused on God's Goodness and Covenant Faithfulness
 - 4) (:11) Closing Summary Celebrating the Completion of the Building Projects (both the Temple and the Palace)
 - b. (:12-22) Divine Revelation to Solomon of Covenant Blessings on the Nation Whenever They Seek God in Repentance and Obedience
 - 1) (:12-16) Significance of the Temple to the Lord
 - a) (:12b) Chosen by God as a House of Sacrifice
 - b) (:13-14) Chastening for Sin Will Require Repentance for Healing to Maintain the Divine Presence
 - c) (:15-16) Consecrated as a House of Prayer Where God Dwells

- with His People
- 2) (:17-22) Stipulation of Blessings and Curses Associated with Covenant Faithfulness
 - a) (:17-18) Stipulation of Blessings
 - b) (:19-22) Stipulation of Curses

**G. (8:1 – 9:31) Solomon’s Excellencies –
Solomon’s Works, Worship, Wealth and Wisdom**

1. (8:1-16) Solomon’s Idealized Kingship Focused on Expanding Dominion and Enhancing Worship
 - a. (:1-10) Expanding Dominion Demonstrated in Critical Building Projects
 - 1) (:1-6) Cities Built by Solomon
 - a) (:1-2) Cities from Hiram
 - b) (:3-6) Cities for Military and Economic Dominion
 - 2) (:7-10) Labor Force Enlisted by Solomon
 - a) (:7-8) Forced Foreign Laborers
 - b) (:9-10) Leaders from the Sons of Israel
 - (:11) Aside: Complexities of Moral Compromise
 - b. (:12-15) Enhancing Worship Via Proper Administration of the Temple Service
 - 1) (:12-13) Administration of Religious Rites -- Required Offerings and Feasts
 - 2) (:14-15) Administration of Religious Personnel -- Priests and Levites
 - (:16) Summary – All Building Activities Related to the Preeminence of the Temple
2. (8:17 – 9:16) Solomon’s Wealth, Wisdom and International Fame – The Uniqueness and Supremacy of Solomon’s Blessed Rule Were Marked by Abundant Wealth, Wisdom and Fame
 - a. (8:17-18) Wealth of Solomon from Maritime Trading
 - b. (9:1-12) Recognition of Solomon’s Wisdom by the Visiting Queen of Sheba
 - 1) (:1-4) Checking Solomon Out
 - a) (:1) Purpose of Her Visit
 - b) (:2) Pressing Solomon for Wise Answers
 - c) (:3-4) Perceiving Uniqueness and Supremacy of Solomon’s Rule
 - 2) (:5-9) Certifying Solomon’s Divine Blessing (cf. Deut. 4:6)
 - a) (:5-6) Seeing is Believing
 - b) (:7-8) Blessing is Evident
 - c) (:9) Gifts are Exceptional
 - 3) (:10-11) Crafting Special Accessories to Enhance the Temple and Equip the Singers
 - 4) (:12) Completing the Queen’s Visit with Generous Reciprocal Gifts
 - c. (9:13-28) Summary of Solomon’s Excellencies – His Wealth, Wisdom and International Fame
 - 1) (:13-21) Solomon’s Splendor
 - a) (:13-16) Gold Ceremonial Weapons
 - b) (:17-21) Gaudy Display of Riches
 - 2) (:22-28) Solomon’s Wisdom and Wealth

- a) (:22-24) International Fame
- b) (:25-28) Summary of Solomon's Expansive Kingdom
- (9:29-31) Epilogue – Conclusion of Solomon's Idealized Reign
 - 1) (:29) Recorded Deeds
 - 2) (:30) Generational Reign over United Kingdom
 - 3) (:31) Death, Burial and Succession

III. (2 Chron. 10:1 – 36:21) HISTORY OF JUDAH (SOUTHERN KINGDOM) -- WITH EMPHASIS ON DECLINE

A. (10:1 – 21:3) Four Kings and the Prophetic Voice

1. (chs. 10-12) Reign of Rehoboam – Kingdom Division and Challenges
 - a. (10:1 – 11:4) Division of the Kingdom – Foolish Insistence on Tyrannical Oppression Causes a Division in the Kingdom
 - 1) (10:1-5) Reasonable Relief from Harsh Service Sought – Negotiations between Jeroboam and Rehoboam
 - a) (:1) Coronation of Rehoboam at Shechem Amidst Underlying Tensions
 - b) (:2-5) Critical Demand Jeroboam Makes of Rehoboam to Resolve Tensions
 - 1)) (:2) Return of Jeroboam
 - 2)) (:3-4) Role of Jeroboam in Negotiating with Rehoboam
 - 3)) (:5) Cooling Off Period to Allow for Deliberation
 - 2) (10:6-11) Cooling Counsel – Wise Elders vs. Foolish Contemporaries
 - a) (:6-7) Wise Counsel of the Elders
 - 1)) (:6) The Value of Experience
 - 2)) (:7) The Virtue of Kindness
 - b) (:8-11) Foolish Counsel of Rehoboam's Contemporaries
 - 1)) (:8) Danger of Advice-Shopping
 - 2)) (:9) Deceitfulness of Reinforcing Your Own Foolish Preferences
 - 3)) (:10-11) Despotism of Abuse of Power
 - 3) (10:12-15) Divine Discipline in Dividing the Kingdom
 - a) (:12) Regathering the People
 - b) (:13-14) Rendering the Verdict
 - c) (:15) Recognizing God's Sovereign Control over Prophetic Discipline
 - 4) (10:16-19) Rebellious Rejection of Rehoboam's Leadership
 - a) (:16) Fracturing of the Unified Kingdom
 - b) (:17) Followers of Rehoboam Limited to Southern Tribes (Judah)
 - c) (:18) Futile Last Ditch Effort to Maintain Control
 - d) (:19) Final Summary of Ongoing Division
 - 5) (11:1-4) Civil War Averted by Rehoboam's Submission to the Word of the Lord
 - a) (:1) Revengeful Reaction of Rehoboam
 - b) (:2-4a) Prophetic Restraint Based on Divine Discipline

- c) (:4b) Peaceful Submission to the Word of the Lord
- b. (11:5-23) Measures to Consolidate the Kingdom of Rehoboam – The Kingdom of God Must Address Its Vulnerabilities by Taking Appropriate Military, Religious, Family and Administrative Counter Measures
 - 1) (:5-12) Military Measures
 - a) (:5-10) Built Fortified Cities for Defense
 - b) (:11) Strengthened, Staffed and Supplied the Fortresses
 - 1)) Strengthened
 - 2)) Staffed
 - 3)) Supplied
 - c) (:12a) Provided Weapons for Every City
 - d) (:12b) Summary: Success of Defensive Preparation
 - 2) (:13-17) Religious Measures
 - a) (:13-14) Displaced Priests and Levites from the North Migrated to Jerusalem
 - b) (:15) Replacement False Priests Set Up by Jeroboam in Support of Idolatrous Practices
 - c) (:16) Popular Pilgrimages of the Faithful to Jerusalem for the Purpose of Sacrifice
 - d) (:17) Popular Support for Rehoboam Shown by Temporary Covenant Loyalty
 - 3) (:18-23) Family and Administrative Measures
 - a) (:18-21) Family Measures
 - 1)) (:18-19) Children from Marriage to Mahalath
 - 2)) (:20) Children from Marriage to Maacah
 - 3)) (:21a) Preference for Maacah among All His Wives and Concubines
 - 4)) (:21b) Children from His Many Wives and Concubines
 - b) (:22-23) Administrative Measures
 - 1)) (:22) Elevation of Abijah
 - 2)) (:23) Establishment of His Sons as Leaders in Various Fortified Cities
- c. (12:1-16) Invasion of Shishak – Tarnishing the Kingdom from Gold to Bronze – The Leadership Failure of Rehoboam Results in the Judgment of Shishak’s Invasion which is Mitigated by Humble Repentance But Still Painful in Its Outcome
 - 1) (:1-4) Apostasy under Rehoboam Resulted in Shishak’s Forceful Invasion as Divine Judgment
 - a) (:1) Apostasy Can Develop in Times of Security and Complacency – The Environment for Shishak’s Invasion
 - b) (:2-3) Apostasy Makes a People Vulnerable to Powerful Enemies – The Explanation for Shishak’s Invasion and the Enumeration of His Forces
 - c) (:4) Apostasy Leaves Us Defenseless – The Extent of Shishak’s Invasion
 - 1)) Inroads: Captured the Fortified Cities of Judah

- 2)) Terminus: Came as far as Jerusalem
 - 2) (:5-8) Acceptance of Humble Repentance Only Mitigates But Does Not Eliminate the Painful Consequences of Sin
 - a) (:5) Prophetic Indictment Justifying God's Judgment
 - b) (:6) Humble Confession of Sin and of God's Righteous Judgment
 - c) (:7-8) Divine Mitigation of the Extent of Judgment
 - 3) (:9-12) Appeasement of God's Wrath by Humbly Submitting to the Painful Consequences of Sin
 - a) (:9) Plundering of Jerusalem's Treasures
 - b) (:10-11) Positioning of Replacement Bronze Shields
 - c) (:12) Petitioning the Mercy of God to Mitigate the Judgment
 - 4) (:13-16) Summary Account of Rehoboam's Reign
 - a) (:13a) Completion of Rehoboam's Reign
 - b) (:13b) Age and Duration of Rehoboam's Reign
 - c) (:13c) Mother of Rehoboam
 - d) (:14) Moral Characterization of Rehoboam's Reign
 - e) (:15a) Recorded Deeds of Rehoboam's Reign
 - f) (:15b) Defining Characteristic of Rehoboam's Reign
 - g) (:16a) Death and Burial of Rehoboam
 - h) (:16b) Succession by Rehoboam's Son Abijah
2. (13:1-22) Reign of Abijah – The Futility of Fighting God – Trust in the Lord for Victory – When God Chooses Sides it is Foolish to Oppose Him – Abijah Tries Unsuccessfully to Get Jeroboam to Stand Down from Civil War
- (:1-2b) Prologue – Introduction to Abijah's Reign
 - 1) (:1) Timeline
 - 2) (:2a) Duration
 - 3) (:2b) Mother
 - a. (:2c-3) Prelude to Civil War between Abijah and Jeroboam
 - 1) (:2c) Reporting the Conflict
 - 2) (:3) Numbering the Forces
 - a) Forces of Abijah
 - b) Doubled Forces of Jeroboam
 - b. (:4-7) Learn Lessons from History – Stand Down Because This War Doesn't Make Sense
 - 1) (:4) Abijah Appeals to Jeroboam and Israel to Back Off – Abijah's Sermon on the Mount
 - 2) (:5) God Has Placed His Permanent Stamp of Approval on the Davidic Dynasty
 - 3) (:6-7) Both Sides Bear Blame for the Kingdom Division
 - a) (:6) Blame Falls to Jeroboam for His Rebellion
 - b) (:7) Blame Falls to Rehoboam for Weak Leadership
 - c. (:8-12) Evaluate Your Chances – Stand Down Because God Is on Our Side
 - 1) (:8) You Are Basing Your Chances of Success on Worldly Power = Faulty Thinking
 - a) Fallacy of Trying to Resist the Kingdom of God
 - b) Fallacy of Trusting in the Power of Superior Numbers
 - c) Fallacy of Trusting in the Power of Man-Made Gods

- 2) (:9) You Have Substituted Man-Made Counterfeit Religion for True Worship
- 3) (:10-11) God is On Our Side – You Have Forsaken Him; We Have Remained Faithful
- 4) (:12) You Have No Chance of Success Because God is Our Commander In Chief
- d. (:13-19) Battle Report
 - 1) (:13-14a) Ambush Tactics of Jeroboam Looked Promising
 - 2) (:14b) Judah Called on the Lord for Deliverance
 - 3) (:15-17) Divine Rout Accomplished by Abijah and His Troops
 - 4) (:18) Key to Victory = Trusting in the Lord
 - 5) (:19) Pursuit of Jeroboam Resulted in Capturing Key Cities
- (:20-22) Epilogue – Conclusion of Reign of Abijah
 - 1) (:20) Death of Abijah
 - 2) (:21) Family of Abijah
 - 3) (:22) Recorded Deeds of Abijah
- 3. (14:1 – 16:14) Reign of Asa – Religious Reformer with Late Life Lapses – Spiritual Faithfulness Must be Sustained – It's Not Enough to Just Start Out Strong
 - a. (14:1-15) The Early Years – Asa Seeks God and is Prospered
 - 1) (:1-7) Seeking God Brings Manifold Blessing of Peace and Prosperity
 - a) (:1a) Transition from Abijah to Asa
 - b) (:1b-2) Blessing of Peace Associated with Righteousness
 - c) (:3-5a) Essentials for Seeking God
 - d) (:5b-7) Blessing of Peace and Prosperity Leveraged in Building up Defenses
 - 2) (:8-15) Seeking God Brings Overwhelming Victory over Powerful Foes
 - (:8) Transition – Formidable Military Force of Asa
 - a) (:9-11) Overwhelming Force of the Attacking Enemy
 - b) (:12-15) Overwhelming Victory -- God Utterly Vanquishes His Enemies
 - 1)) (:12-13a) Routing the Enemy
 - 2)) (:13b-14) Plundering the Enemy
 - 3)) (:15) Devastating the Enemy
 - b. (15:1-19) The Exemplary Years – Asa Implements Religious Reforms
 - 1) (:1-7) Religious Reforms Motivated by Prophetic Exhortation of Azariah
 - (:1-2a) Introduction to the Message of Azariah
 - a) (:2b) Fundamental Principle – Lord is with You When You Seek Him
 - b) (:3) Recipe for Spiritual Disaster
 - c) (:4) Key to Spiritual Reformation = Repentance and Seeking God
 - d) (:5-6) Pressure from Divine Discipline
 - e) (:7) Encouragement to Bravely Persevere in Implementing Reforms
 - 2) (:8-15) Asa's Reforms and Covenant Renewal Ceremony
 - a) (:8-9) Asa's Reforms

- b) (:10-15) Covenant Renewal Ceremony
 - 3) (:16-19) Additional Reform Measures
 - a) (:16) Removal of the Queen Mother Maacah
 - b) (:17) No Removal of the High Places but Overall Integrity of Heart
 - c) (:18) Regathering of the Dedicated Things into the Temple
 - (:19) Result: Rest from War
 - c. (16:1-10) The Egocentric (Expedient) Later Years – Asa Fails to Trust God in the Time of Crisis or Listen to God’s Prophet
 - 1) (:1-6) Failure to Trust God in Time of Crisis
 - a) (:1-3) Expedient Solution to Aggression by Baasha of Israel
 - b) (:4-6) Execution of Asa’s Diversionary Plan by Ben-hadad
 - 2) (:7-10) Failure to Listen to God’s Prophet
 - a) (:7-9) Indictment by Hanani
 - b) (:10) Indignation of Asa
- (16:11-14) Closing Summary
 - 1) (:11) Recorded Deeds
 - 2) (:12) Severe Disease
 - 3) (:13) Death
 - 4) (:14) Burial
- 4. (17:1 – 21:3) Reign of Jehoshaphat – Religious Reformer with Unholy Alliances – Unholy Alliances Compromise a Sincere Heart for the Lord But Salvation Can Still Come as We Seek Him
 - a. (17:1-19) Sincere Heart for the Lord Reflected in Political and Religious Successes
 - 1) (:1-6) Political and Religious Mission --
Character and Rule of Jehoshaphat Modeled after His Godly Father
 - a) (:1-2) Political Mission -- Strengthening the Kingdom Via Wise Measures
 - b) (:3-6) Religious Mission -- Succeeding Via Divine Blessing
 - 2) (:7-9) Priority Mission = National Indoctrination in the Law of God
 - 3) (:10-11) Political Influence -- Motivated and Manifested
 - a) (:10) Motivated by Divine Dread that Restrained Aggression
 - b) (:11) Manifested in Generous Gifts from Surrounding Kingdoms
 - 4) (:12-19) Military Might
 - a) (:12a) Expanding Power and Prestige
 - b) (:12b) Fortified Cities
 - c) (:13) Large Supplies and Valiant Warriors
 - d) (:14-19) Impressive Roster of Leaders and Troops
 - b. (18:1 – 19:3) Unholy Alliance with Ahab Puts Pressure on God’s Prophet and Unleashes Divine Wrath
 - 1) (18:1-7) Unholy Alliance Pursued in Multiple Spheres
 - a) (:1) Sphere of Marriage
 - b) (:2-3) Sphere of Military Alliance
 - c) (:4-7) Sphere of Religious Guidance
 - 2) (18:8-17) Unholy Alliance Puts Pressure on God’s Prophet

- a) (:8-11) False Prophets Create Toxic Environment
- b) (:12-17) Faithful Prophet Resists the Pressure of Coercion
- 3) (18:18-27) Unholy Alliance Subjects God's Prophet to Persecution
 - a) (:18-22) Exposure of False Prophets
 - b) (:23-27) Expulsion of True Prophet
- 4) (18:28 – 19:3) Unholy Alliance Releases Divine Wrath
 - a) (18:28-34) Perfidy of Ahab Overturned by Divine Providence
 - b) (19:1-3) Prophecy Explaining Basis for God's Wrath
- (19:4) Transition – Revival Led by Jehoshaphat
- c. (19:5-11) Judicial Reforms Seek to Eliminate Corruption
 - 1) (:5-7) Appointment of Judges in Fortified Cities
 - a) (:5) Appointment – Locally in Each Fortified City
 - b) (:6) Motivation – Judge for the Lord
 - c) (:7) Charge – Avoid Corruption
 - 2) (:8-11) Appointment of Levites and Heads of Households for Judgment in Jerusalem
 - a) (:8) Appointment
 - b) (:9-10) Motivation
 - c) (:11a) Support and Oversight
 - d) (:11b) Charge
- d. (20:1-30) Salvation from Invading Enemies Comes by Seeking the Lord
 - 1) (:1-4) Invasion by a Powerful Eastern Coalition Spurs Judah to Seek the Lord
 - a) (:1) Invasion by a Powerful Coalition
 - b) (:2) Urgency of the Danger Reported
 - c) (:3) Response of Jehoshaphat
 - d) (:4) Response of the People
 - 2) (:5-12) Invoking the Help of God via Prayer and Faith
 - (:5) Audience with Lord at the Temple before the People
 - a) (:6) Praise for God's Sovereign Power
 - b) (:7-9) Praise for the Promised Land and Temple
 - c) (:10-11) Perplexity of Unjust Attack
 - d) (:12) Plea for Deliverance
 - 3) (:13-19) Instructions on Receiving God's Salvation
 - a) (:13-17) Revelation of Promised Salvation
 - b) (:18-19) Response to Promised Salvation = Worship and Praise
 - 4) (:20-30) Improbable Victory
 - a) (:20-23) Keys to Victory
 - b) (:24-25) Plundering the Slaughtered Enemy
 - c) (:26-28) Rejoicing in God-Granted Victory
 - d) (:29-30) Rest and Peace from Enemies
- (20:31 – 21:3) Conclusion of Jehoshaphat's Reign
 - 1) (20:31-34) Summary of Jehoshaphat's Reign
 - a) (:31a) Age and Duration of Reign
 - b) (:31b) Mother
 - c) (:32-33) Moral Evaluation
 - d) (:34) Recorded Deeds
 - 2) (20:35-37) Disastrous Maritime Venture Highlights Ongoing Danger

of Unholy Alliances

- a) (:35-36) Ship Building Venture = Another Unholy Alliance
- b) (:37-38) Shipwrecked Venture
- 3) (21:1-3) Final Conclusion to Reign of Jehoshaphat
 - a) (:1a) Death and Burial of Jehoshaphat
 - b) (:1b) Succession = Jehoram His Son
 - c) (:2) Brothers of Jehoram
 - d) (:3) Distribution of Inheritance

B. (21:4–23:21) Judah and the Dynasty of Ahab

1. (21:4–20) Reign of Jehoram – Leading Judah Astray –
Evil Leadership Puts the Kingdom in Jeopardy but Does not Nullify God’s Commitment to the Davidic Covenant

- a. (:4-7) Ruthlessness of Jehoram’s Reign Mitigated by God’s Faithfulness to His Covenant Promises
 - 1) (:4) Savage Tactics by Jehoram to Secure His Kingdom
 - a) Power of Assuming the Throne
 - b) Priority of Securing His Kingdom
 - c) Purging of All Potential Rivals
 - 2) (:5) Age and Duration of Reign of Jehoram
 - a) Age
 - b) Duration of Reign
 - 3) (:6) Moral Evaluation of Reign of Jehoram
 - a) Corrupted by Evil Influence of the House of Ahab
 - b) Characterized as Evil
 - 4) (:7) Faithfulness of the Lord to the Davidic Covenant
 - a) Patient Forbearance
 - b) Promised Dynasty
- b. (:8-11) Unruly Uprisings and Abominable Apostasy of Jehoram’s Reign Put Judah in Jeopardy
 - 1) (:8-10) Unruly Uprisings
 - a) (:8-10a) Revolt of Edom
 - b) (:10b) Revolt of Libnah
 - 2) (:11) Abominable Apostasy
 - a) High Places
 - b) Harlotry
 - c) Hijacking
- c. (:12-20) Decreed Demise of Jehoram’s Reign Consistent with His Shameful Legacy
 - 1) (:12-15) Calamitous Prophecy of Elijah of Coming Judgment
 - a) (:12-13) Reason for God’s Judgment
 - b) (:14-15) Revelation of God’s Judgment
 - 2) (:16-17) Campaign Waged against Jehoram by Philistine-Arab Alliance
 - a) (:16) Divine Judgment Using Pagan Nations
 - b) (:17) Devastation and Despoiling
 - 3) (:18-20) Conclusion of Jehoram’s Reign
 - a) (:18) Judged with Terminal Sickness
 - b) (:19) Ignominious Passing

- c) (:20a) Age and Duration of Reign
 - d) (:20b) No Respect at His Death and Burial
- 2. (22:1–9) Reign of Ahaziah – Kingdom Flame Almost Extinguished – Evil Counsel and Ecumenical Alliances Almost Wipe Out the Davidic Dynasty
 - a. (:1-4) Evil Counsel Compromised a Young and Inexperienced King
 - 1) (:1) Impromptu Crowning of Ahaziah as King of Judah
 - 2) (:2a) Immaturity and Inexperience -- Young Age and Short Duration of Reign
 - 3) (:2b) Mother of Ahaziah from the Corrupt Family of Ahab
 - 4) (:3-4) Moral Evaluation of Reign of Ahaziah
 - a) (:3) Pursued Wickedness Due to the Counsel of His Mother
 - b) (:4) Pursued Evil Due to the Counsel of the House of Ahab
 - b. (:5-6) Ecumenical Alliance of Judah with Israel Led to Ahaziah's Destruction
 - 1) (:5a) Lack of Discernment Led to Battle Alliance with Jehoram
 - a) Following Bad Counsel
 - b) Fighting Bad Wars
 - 2) (:5b-6) Lack of Discernment Led to Visiting the Wounded Jehoram
 - a) (:5b) Joram Wounded in Battle
 - b) (:6a) Joram Retreated to Jezreel to Recover
 - c) (:6b) Joram Visited by Ahaziah
 - c. (:7-9) Extinction of Davidic Dynasty a Very Real Danger
 - 1) (:7) Divine Discipline for Culpability of Ahaziah
 - a) Culpable for Alliance with Joram
 - b) Culpable for Fighting against God's Appointed Instrument of Judgment
 - 2) (:8) Collateral Damage on the Princes of Judah and Ahaziah's Close Relatives
 - 3) (:9a) Death and Burial of Ahaziah
 - a) Death – No Escaping God's Judgment
 - b) Burial – Mercy Shown Due to Godliness of Jehoshaphat
 - 4) (:9b) Leadership Crisis for the Davidic Dynasty
- 3. (22:10–23:21) Replacing Queen Athaliah with Young Joash – The Threat Athaliah Posed to the Davidic Dynasty Required Providential Protection to Elevate Joash to the Throne
 - a. (22:10-12) Providential Protection of Joash
 - 1) (:10) Attempt to Exterminate the Davidic Dynasty (All Rivals to the Throne)
 - 2) (:11) Hiding of Infant Joash by Jehoshabeath
 - 3) (:12) Preservation During Six Year Interregnum of Athaliah
 - b. (23:1-10) Jehoida's Coup to Replace Athaliah with Joash
 - 1) (:1-3) Preparation for the Coup
 - a) (:1) Enlisting Military Conspirators
 - b) (:2) Enlisting Levites and Heads of Families
 - c) (:3) Entering into a Covenant with King Joash under Divine Authority
 - 2) (:4b-9) Instructions for Executing the Coup

- a) (:4b-7) Roles and Responsibilities Defined
 - b) (:8) Execution of Roles and Responsibilities
 - 3) (:9-10) Security Forces Equipped and Positioned to Protect the King
 - a) (:9) Significant Weaponry
 - b) (:10) Strategic Positioning
- c. (23:1-10) Coronation of Joash
 - 1) Crowning the King
 - 2) Authenticating Him as King
 - 3) Anointing Him King
 - 4) Proclaiming Him King
- d. (23:12-15) The Reaction of Athaliah and Her Execution
 - 1) (:12-13) The Reaction of Athaliah
 - a) (:12) Investigation of the Tumult
 - b) (:13a) Images of Successful Insurrection
 - c) (:13b) Ironic Invective
 - 2) (:14-15) The Execution of Athaliah
 - a) (:14) Death Sentence Pronounced
 - b) (:15) Death Sentence Executed
- e. (23:16-21) The Reformation and Public Enthronement
 - 1) (:16-19) Reformation
 - a) (:16) Commitment to the Lord
 - b) (:17) Cleansing from Idolatry
 - c) (:18-19) Careful Administration of Divinely Ordained System of Worship
 - 2) (:20) Palatial Enthronement
 - a) Procession from the Temple to the Palace
 - b) Placement on the Royal Throne
 - 3) (:21) Rejoicing
 - a) Due to the Blessing of the Lord
 - b) Due to the Judgment of the Lord

C. (chs. 24–26) Three Kings and the Decline of Judah

1. (ch. 24) Reign of Joash – Early Success Contrasted with Later Failure – Promise and Privilege Can Quickly Degenerate into Apostasy When We Reject God’s Word and Follow Worldly Counsel

- (:1-3) Prologue – Opening Summary of Reign of Joash
 - 1) (:1a) Age and Duration of His Reign
 - 2) (:1b) Identification of His Mother
 - 3) (:2) Moral Evaluation
 - 4) (:3) Wives and Children
- a. (:4-16) The Good Years of King Joash – Mentorship of Jehoiada and Restoration of the Temple
 - 1) (:4-7) Initial Failed Attempt to Fund the Restoration of the Temple
 - a) (:4) Decision to Restore the Temple
 - b) (:5) Delinquent Response of the Levites to Collection Instructions
 - c) (:6-7) Desperate Need for Funds to Restore the Temple
 - 2) (:8-14) Revised Successful Plan to Collect Funds for the Restoration Project

- a) (:8-11) Generous Donations Deposited Daily at the Temple
 - b) (:12-14) Governing Diligence in Administering the Funds and Overseeing the Work
 - 3) (:15-16) Death and Burial of Jehoiada
 - a) (:15) Death
 - b) (:16) Burial
 - b. (:17-24) The Bad Years of King Joash – Poor Counsel, Apostasy and Rejection of Prophetic Warnings
 - 1) (:17-19) Apostasy of Joash
 - a) (:17b) Wayward Counsel Followed
 - b) (:18a) Worship of True God Abandoned in Favor of Idolatry
 - c) (:18b) Wrath of God Unleashed
 - d) (:19) Warnings from the Prophets Ignored
 - 2) (:20-22) Attack against Zechariah
 - a) (:20) Divine Indictment Delivered by Zechariah = Son of the Priest
 - b) (:21) Death of the Prophet by Stoning in Temple Courtyard
 - c) (:22) Dastardly Betrayal by Joash
 - 3) (:23-24) Aramean Invasion Constituted Divine Judgment
 - a) (:23) Devastating Defeat
 - b) (:24a) Divinely Enabled
 - c) (:24b) Defined as Disciplinary
 - (:25-27) Epilogue – Closing Summary of Reign of Joash
 - 1) (:25-26) Conspiracy to Murder Joash
 - a) (:25) Murder and Burial of Joash
 - b) (:26) Conspirators
 - 2) (:27a) Record of Deeds of Joash
 - 3) (:27b) Succession
2. (ch. 25) Reign of Amaziah – Success Compromised by Pride and Idolatry – Success Fosters Pride Which Often Leads to Idolatry and Stubbornness Which Then Result in Judgment
 - (:1-4) Prologue – Opening Summary of His Reign – Consolidation of Power
 - 1) (:1a) Age and Duration of Reign
 - 2) (:1b) Identification of His Mother
 - 3) (:2) Moral Evaluation
 - 4) (:3-4) Purging of Conspirators
 - a. (:5-10) Counsel of the Prophet Redirected Amaziah to Trust in the Lord Rather than in Military Might
 - 1) (:5) Preparing Troops for Battle
 - a) (:5a) Appointing Commanders
 - b) (:5b) Accounting of the Numbers
 - 2) (:6-10) Perverting Faith in the Lord by Hiring Mercenaries from Israel
 - a) (:6) Decision of Amaziah to Supplement Judah’s Forces
 - b) (:7-9) Directive Issued by God’s Prophet to Warn Amaziah
 - c) (:10) Dismissal of the Mercenary Troops from Ephraim
 - b. (:11-16) Conquering of the Edomites Caused Amaziah to Respond in Pride and Idolatry and Stubbornness
 - 1) (:11-13) Victory over the Edomites Mitigated by the Plundering of

- Judah by the Dismissed Mercenary Troops
 - a) (:11-12) Victory over the Edomites
 - b) (:13) Plundering of Judah by the Dismissed Mercenary Troops
- 2) (:14-16) Victory Fostered Response of Pride and Idolatry and Stubborn Rejection of God's Merciful Warnings
 - a) (:14) Repurposing of the Edomite Gods as Idols to Worship
 - b) (:15-16) Rebuke by the Prophet of God
- c. (:17-24) Crushing Defeat by Israel Due to the Pride and Idolatry of Amaziah
 - 1) (:17-19) Foolish Battle Initiated Between Judah and Israel
 - a) (:17) Initiative of Amaziah to Confront Joash
 - b) (:18-19) Inadvisable Folly of Amaziah Exposed by Joash
 - 2) (:20-24) Foreordained Defeat of Amaziah Executed
 - a) (:20) Stubbornness of Amaziah Led to Judgment for Idolatry
 - b) (:21-22) Self-Sufficiency of Amaziah Crushed in Battle
 - c) (:23-24) Success of Joash
- (:25-28) Epilogue – Closing Summary of His Reign
 - 1) (:25) Later Years
 - 2) (:26) Record of His Deeds
 - 3) (:27-28) Death and Burial
 - a) (:27) Death
 - b) (:28) Burial
- 3. (ch. 26) Reign of Uzziah – Success Compromised by Pride and Self-Exaltation – Success Fosters Pride Which Often Leads to Self-Exaltation Which Then Results in Judgment
 - (:1-5) Prologue – Opening Summary of the Reign of Uzziah
 - 1) (:1) Coronation by the People
 - 2) (:2) Prosperity
 - 3) (:3a) Age and Long Duration of Reign
 - 4) (:3b) Identification of His Mother
 - 5) (:4-5) Positive Moral Evaluation
 - a) (:4) Overall Positive Evaluation
 - b) (:5a) Dependent on a Godly Counselor = Zechariah
 - c) (:5b) Connection between Covenant Loyalty and Divine Prosperity
 - a. (:6-15) The Impressive Prosperity of Uzziah
 - 1) (:6-8) Impressive Foreign Campaigns – Assisted by God
 - a) (:6-7a) Campaigns against the Philistines
 - b) (:7-8a) Campaigns against the Arabians, the Meunites and the Ammonites
 - c) (:8b) Two Benefits to Uzziah – Fame and Power
 - 2) (:9-10) Impressive Domestic Accomplishments – Building Projects and Agricultural Focus
 - a) (:9) Building Projects
 - b) (:10) Agricultural Focus – Livestock and Crops
 - 3) (:11-15) Impressive Military Might
 - a) (:11) Battle-Ready Organized Troops
 - b) (:12-13) Large Number of Valiant Leaders and Elite Troops

- with Powerful Capabilities
- c) (:14-15a) Equipped with State of the Art Weaponry
- d) (:15b) Two Benefits to Uzziah – Fame and Power
- b. (:16-21) The Incurable Pride of Uzziah Leading to Self-Exaltation and Judgment of Leprosy
 - 1) (:16-18) Confronted over His Pride and Self-Exaltation
 - a) (:16) Root Problem of Pride and Manifesting Transgression of Burning Incense
 - b) (:17-18) Rebuke by the Company of Priests and Commanded to Depart the Temple
 - 2) (:19-20) Cursed by God with Incurable Leprosy
 - a) (:19a) Angry Response to the Rebuke
 - b) (:19b) Outbreak of Leprosy
 - c) (:20a) Visible Curse Marking Him as Unclean
 - d) (:20b) Urgent Exit from the Holy Temple
 - 3) (:21) Cut Off from the Temple and from the Throne
 - a) Isolated
 - b) Replaced
- (:22-23) Epilogue – Closing Summary of Reign of Uzziah
 - 1) (:22) Record of His Deeds
 - 2) (:23a) Death and Burial
 - 3) (:23b) Succession

D. (chs. 27–32 Three Kings and the Assyrian Threat

1. (ch. 27) Reign of Righteous Jotham – A Good King But Still Corrupt People – Despite the Positive Reign of Jotham and Divine Blessing of Building Projects and International Success, the People Fail to Reform

- (:1-2) Prologue – Opening Summary of His Reign
 - 1) (:1a) Age and Duration of Reign
 - 2) (:1b) Identification of His Mother
 - 3) (:2) Moral Evaluation
 - a) Positive Reign in Following the General Pattern of His Father
 - b) Avoided the Major Sin of His Father
 - c) Unable to Reform the People
- a. (:3-4) Extensive Building Projects
- b. (:5) Enduring Subjugation of the Ammonites
 - 1) Forced the Ammonites to Pay Valuable Tribute
 - 2) Forced the Ammonites to Pay Annual Tribute
- c. (:6) Empowered by His Godly Orientation
- (:7-9) Epilogue – Closing Summary of His Reign
 - 1) (:7) Recorded Deeds
 - 2) (:8) Repetition of Age and Duration of Reign
 - 3) (:9a) Death and Burial
 - 4) (:9b) Succession

2. (ch. 28) Reign of Wicked Ahaz – How Low Can You Go?

Desperation Drives the Wicked to Trust in False Sources of Power and Deliverance

- (:1-4) Prologue – Opening Summary of His Apostate Reign – Walked in the Ways of the Kings of Israel

- 1) (:1a) Age and Duration of Reign
- 2) (:1b-4) Moral Evaluation
 - a) (:1b-2a) General Evaluation
 - b) (:2b-4) Specific Areas of Apostasy = Abominable Idolatry
- a. (:5-8) Divinely Ordered Defeat by the Kings of Both Aram and Israel (with Severe Consequences)
 - 1) (:5a) Defeat by the King of Aram
 - a) Divine Ordination of Defeat
 - b) Historical Fact of Defeat
 - c) Severe Consequences of Defeat
 - 2) (:5b-8) Defeat by the King of Israel
 - a) (:5b) Divine Ordination of Defeat
 - b) (:5c-7) Historical Fact of Defeat
 - c) (:6-7) Severe Consequences of Defeat
 - d) (:8) Captivity and Despoiling of Judah
- b. (:9-15) Divinely Commanded Mercy Shown by Israel to Their Captives from Judah
 - 1) (:9-11) Prophecy of Oded Rebukes Israel for their Overreach
 - a) (:9a) Confrontation with Returning Army
 - b) (9b) Culpability Due to Angry Overreach
 - c) (:10) Caution against Further Transgression
 - d) (:11) Charge to Return the Captives and Escape God's Judgment
 - 2) (:12-15) Patriarchal Leadership of Ephraim Directs Israel to Repent and Show Mercy to the Captives
 - a) (:12-13) Confrontation with the Victorious Warriors
 - b) (:14) Change of Malicious Intent
 - c) (:15) Compassionate Care toward the Captives
- c. (:16-21) Depending on the King of Assyria for Help
 - 1) (:16) Placing Confidence in Foreign Power
 - 2) (:17-18) Pressure from Foreign Attacks
 - a) (:17) Attacks by the Edomites
 - b) (:18) Attacks by the Philistines
 - 3) (:19) Process of Divine Discipline
 - a) Reality of Discipline
 - b) Reasons for Discipline
 - 4) (:20-21) Payoff Attempted by Ahaz
 - a) (:20) Assyria Hurting Instead of Helping
 - b) (:21) Ahaz Unsuccessfully Attempting to Buy Assistance
- d. (:22-25) Degenerating into Compounded Apostasy
 - 1) (:22-23) Promoting False Worship
 - a) (:22) Wrong Response to Pressure
 - b) (:23a) Worship of False Gods
 - c) (:23b) Wreaking Havoc on Ahaz and Israel
 - 2) (:24-25a) Perverting True Worship
 - a) (:24a) Cutting up the Temple Utensils
 - b) (:24b) Closing the Doors of the Temple
 - c) (:25a) Creating High Places for Idolatrous Worship
 - 3) (:25b) Provoking the Lord to Anger

- (:26-27) Epilogue – Closing Summary of His Reign
 - 1) (:26) Record of His Deeds
 - 2) (:27a) Death and Burial
 - a) Death
 - b) Burial
 - 3) (:27b) Succession
- 3. (chs. 29–32) Reign of Righteous Hezekiah –
 - a. (29:1-36) The Restoration of Worship –
Spiritual Revival Requires Convicted Repentance, Cleansing of God’s Temple
and Commitment to Joyfully Worship Wholeheartedly
 - (:1-2) Prologue – Opening Summary of His Reign
 - a) (:1a) Age and Duration of Reign
 - b) (:1b) Identification of His Mother
 - c) (:2) Moral Evaluation
 - 1) (:3-11) Call to Consecration
 - a) (:3-4) Priority of Worship
 - 1)) (:3) Access to Worship at the Temple
 - 2)) (:4) Assembling the Worship Leaders
 - b) (:5-11) Preparation for Worship
 - 1)) (:5) Consecration of People and Place
 - 2)) (:6-7) Confession of National Culpability =
Convicted Repentance
 - 3)) (:8-9) Captivity Justified
 - 4)) (:10) Covenant Required
 - 5)) (:11) Calling to Temple Service = a Privilege
 - 2) (:12-19) Completion of Consecration
 - a) (:12-14) List of Worship Leaders
 - b) (:15) Performance of Consecration
 - 1)) Consecration of People
 - 2)) Consecration of Place
 - 3)) Commandment of God Communicated by the
King
 - c) (:16-17) Purification of the Temple = Cleansing of God’s
Temple
 - 1)) (:16) Purification Process
 - 2)) (:17) Purification Timeline
 - d) (:18-19) Preparation Work Completed
 - 3) (:20-30) Ceremony of Temple Sacrifices Reinstated
 - a) (:20-24) Applying the Blood of Sacrifice to Purify the Altar
 - b) (:25-30) Accompanying the Burnt Offering with Musical
Celebration = Commitment to Joyfully Worship
Wholeheartedly
 - 4) (:31-35a) Community Participation in the Abundant Offerings
 - a) (:31-33) Abundance of Offerings
 - b) (:34) Shortage of Priests
 - c) (:35a) Abundance of Offerings
 - (:35b-36) Epilogue – Restoration of Worship Completed
 - a) (:35b) Report of Restoration of Worship
 - b) (:36) Response to Restoration of Worship

- b. (30:1-27) Hezekiah's Unified Passover Celebration –
Repentance, Humility and Consecration Promote an Inclusive Spirit of Unified Corporate Worship that Issues in Great Joy
 - 1) (:1-9) Corporate Worship Should be Inclusive of All Who Repent and Seek God – The Invitation to Celebrate the Passover Extended to the Northern Kingdom
 - a) (:1) Gracious Invitation to Celebrate the Passover
 - b) (:2-5) Game Planning the Passover Invitation
 - 1)) (:2-3) Exceptional Circumstances Dictated Unusual Timing
 - 2)) (:4) Executive Decision Supported by the People
 - 3)) (:5) Expansive Communication Logistics
 - c) (:6-9) Gracious Call to Return to their Gracious and Compassionate God
 - 1)) (:6b) Welcoming -- Offer of Restoration of God's Favor
 - 2)) (:7) Warning -- Object Lesson of Past Judgment for Apostasy
 - 3)) (:8) Warning -- Opposition to God Brings His Wrath
 - 4)) (:9) Welcoming -- Opportunity to Experience God's Gracious Compassion
 - 2) (:10-12) Corporate Worship that is Inclusive Requires Hearts of Humility and Solidarity/Submission – The Mixed Response to the Invitation to Participate in Worship at the Temple in Jerusalem
 - a) (:10a) Message from Judah Communicated to Israel
 - b) (:10b-11) Mixed Response by Israel
 - 1)) (:10b) Negative = Mocking
 - 2)) (:11) Positive = Hearts of Humility
 - c) (:12) Motivated Response of Hearts of Solidarity and Submission by Judah
 - 3) (:13-22) Corporate Worship Requires Purification and Propitiation (Approaching God on the Basis of the Forgiveness and Access Only He Can Provide) – The Celebration of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread
 - a) (:13-19) Purification from Idolatry and Sin
 - 1)) (:13) People Gathered together for the Feast
 - 2)) (:14) Purification from Idolatry
 - 3)) (:15a) Passover Lambs Slaughtered
 - 4)) (:15b) Purification of the Priests and Levites
 - 5)) (:16-17) Priests Applying the Blood
 - 6)) (:18-19) Pardon Requested Due to Unusual Circumstances
 - b) (:20) Propitiation and Healing
 - c) (:21) Praise Celebration
 - d) (:22a) Pastoral Encouragement
 - e) (:22b) Particulars of Participating in the Feast
 - 1)) Eating for the Appointed Seven Days
 - 2)) Sacrificing Offerings

- 3)) Giving Thanks
- 4) (:23-27) The Extension of the Celebration Accompanied with Great Joy
 - a) (:23) Celebration Extended for Additional Seven Days
 - b) (:24) Consecration Commitment
 - 1)) Consecration Commitment from Hezekiah
 - 2)) Consecration Commitment from the Princes
 - 3)) Consecration Commitment from the Priests
 - c) (:25-26) Community Joy
 - 1)) (:25) Great Joy on the Part of All Participants
 - 2)) (:26) Great Joy Focused in Jerusalem
 - d) (:27) Consummated Blessing of the People
- c. (31:1-21) Hezekiah's Directives for Faithful Financial Stewardship – Administration of Spiritual Worship and Support for Leaders Requires Faithful Financial Stewardship
 - (:1) Transition – Spiritual Worship Cannot Coexist with Idolatry – Further Reformation Activities
 - a) Rooting Out All Vestiges of Idolatry
 - b) Return to Home Base
 - 1) (:1-10) Collection of Offerings to Support the Administration of Spiritual Worship
 - a) (:2-4) 3 Key Directives to Support the Administration of Spiritual Worship
 - 1)) (:2) Directive #1 – Organize the Leaders and Define their Worship Function
 - 2)) (:3) Directive #2 – Set the Example for Financial Support
 - 3)) (:4) Directive #3 – Charge the People with their Responsibility to Give
 - b) (:5-10) Generous Giving Should be the Response of God's People
 - 1)) (:5-7) Heaps of Tithes Collected by Voluntary, Enthusiastic Giving
 - 2)) (:8) Praise for the Abundance Collected
 - 3)) (:9-10) Financial Accounting to Make Sure All Needs Are Being Met
 - 2) (:11-19) Financial Stewardship of the Collected Offering
 - a) (:11-12a) Secure Storage of the Offerings
 - b) (:12b-19) Faithful Oversight and Distribution of the Offerings
 - 1)) (:12b-13) Faithful Oversight
 - 2)) (:14-19) Faithful Distribution
 - (:20-21) Epilogue – Summary of Hezekiah's Righteous Reign
 - a) (:20) Performance: Did What Was Good
 - b) (:21a) Motivation: Sought God Wholeheartedly
 - c) (:21b) Result: Prospered by God
- d. (32:1-33) Who Will Fight Your Battles? Where Do You Look for Deliverance? --
Despite Feet of Clay, Hezekiah Encourage Looking to the Lord for Deliverance Rather than Trusting the Arm of the Flesh

- 1) (:1-8) Desperate Times Present a Crisis of Faith
 - a) (:1) Siege by Sennacherib of Assyria
 - b) (:2-5) Strategic Defensive Measures
 - 1)) (:3-4) Diverting the Water Supply
 - 2)) (:5) Directing Effective Countermeasures
 - c) (:6-8) Strong Encouragement by Hezekiah
 - 1)) (:6) Appointment of Military Officers
 - 2)) (:7-8a) Charge to Courageously Trust the Lord
 - 3)) (:8b) Positive Impact of Hezekiah's Encouragement
- 2) (:9-19) Demand for Surrender Supported by Psychological Warfare
 - a) (:9-15) Attacking the Credibility of King Hezekiah
 - 1)) (:9) Crafting the Psychological Message to be Delivered by His Commanders
 - 2)) (:10) Calling into Question the Faith of Those Defending Jerusalem
 - 3)) (:11-12) Charging Hezekiah with Deceit and Oppression
 - 4)) (:13-14) Citing Historical Precedent of Assyrian Conquests to Prove the Inability of Foreign Gods
 - 5)) (:15) Challenging the People to Reject Hezekiah's Leadership
 - b) (:16-19) Attacking the Ability of the God of Jerusalem to Deliver
 - 1)) (:16) Talking Incessantly against the Lord and His Servant Hezekiah
 - 2)) (:17) Taunting the God of Hezekiah with Insulting Letters
 - 3)) (:18-19) Tactics of Intimidation
- 3) (:20-23) Divine Deliverance – Vindicating Theology of Immediate Retribution
 - a) (:20) Prayer for Deliverance
 - b) (:21a) Angel of Destruction
 - c) (:21b) Downfall of Sennacherib
 - 1)) Disgrace
 - 2)) Death at the hands of His Own Children in His Pagan Temple
 - d) (:22) Protection of Hezekiah and the Jews in Jerusalem
 - 1)) Deliverance
 - 2)) Guidance
 - e) (:23) Elevation of Hezekiah
 - 1)) Gifts
 - 2)) Glory
- 4) (:24-26) Deadly Disease Due to Pride
 - a) (:24a) Affliction Leading to Prayer for Deliverance
 - b) (:24b) Assurance of Recovery
 - c) (:25) Arrogance and Inappropriate Response go God's Grace
 - d) (:26a) Addressing Pride
 - e) (:26a) Avoidance of Divine Wrath during Days of Hezekiah

- 5) (:27-31) Divine Blessing of Riches and Reputation
 - a) (:27-29) Summary of Prosperity
 - 1)) (:27a) Supremacy of Wealth and Reputation
 - 2)) (:27b-29) Storehouses of Wealth
 - 3)) (:29c) Source of Wealth = Blessing of God
 - b) (:30a) Supreme Achievement
 - c) (:30b-31) Summary of Prosperity
 - 1)) (:30b) Reflected in Divine Favor
 - 2)) (:31) Reflected in Divine Testing
- (:32-33) Epilogue – Closing Summary of Hezekiah’s Reign
 - a) (:32) Recorded Deeds
 - b) (:33a) Death and Burial
 - 1)) Death
 - 2)) Burial
 - 3)) Honor Shown to Him
 - c) (:33b) Succession

E. (33:1–36:1) Three Kings and Repentance

1. (33:1–20) Reign of Wicked Manasseh Who Finally Repented –
Even the Worst Sinner, If He Humbly Repents, Is Not Beyond the Mercy of God

- a. (:1-9) Opening Summary of the Reign of Manasseh –
Relapse into Idolatry – the Depths of Depravity
 - 1) (:1) Age and Duration of Reign
 - 2) (:2) Summary Moral Evaluation
 - 3) (:3-8) Record of Idolatrous Practices
 - a) (:3-5) Worshiping False Gods
 - b) (:6a) Passing His Sons through the Fire
 - c) (:6b) Diving into the Occult
 - d) (:6c) Provoking God to Anger
 - e) (:7-8) Desecrating the Temple with a Prominent Idol
 - 4) (:9) Summary Moral Evaluation
- b. (:10-13) Captivity and Repentance –
The Breadth of God’s Mercy
 - 1) (:10) Spurning God’s Prophetic Warnings
 - 2) (:11) Subjected to Capture and Degrading Bondage
 - 3) (:12) Supplicating the Lord in Humility
 - 4) (:13a) Saved by the Mercy of God
 - 5) (:13b) Settled in His Knowledge of God
- c. (:14-17) Political and Religious Reforms –
The Fruit of Repentance
 - 1) (:14a) Rebuilding the Walls Protecting Jerusalem
 - 2) (:14b) Redeploying Military Commanders to Fortified Cities
 - 3) (:15) Removing Foreign Gods
 - 4) (:16a) Reestablishing the Altar in the Temple
 - 5) (:16b) Redirecting the People to Serve the Lord God
 - 6) (:17) Limitation of Manasseh’s Reforms
- (:18-20) Epilogue – Closing Summary of Reign of Manasseh
 - 1) (:18-19) Recorded Deeds
 - 2) (:20a) Death and Burial

- a) Death
 - b) Burial
 - 3) (:20b) Succession
- 2. (33:21–25) Reign of Wicked Amon – Short and Chaotic – Without Repentance Life Ends in Tragedy
 - a. (:21-22a) Opening Summary of Reign of Amon
 - 1) (:21) Age and Duration of Reign
 - 2) (:22a) Moral Evaluation
 - b. (:22b-23) Two Main Areas of Culpability
 - 1) (:22b) Idolatry
 - 2) (:23) Impenitence
 - c. (:24-25) Closing Summary of Reign of Amon
 - 1) (24) Assassination of Amon
 - 2) (:25a) Execution of Conspirators against Amon
 - 3) (:25b) Succession
- 3. (34:1–36:1) Reign of Righteous Josiah – Final Attempt at Restoration
 - a. (34:1-33) The Recovery of the Word of God Motivates Reformation
 - (:1-2) Opening Summary of Reign of Josiah
 - a) (:1) Age and Duration of Reign
 - b) (:2) Moral Evaluation
 - 1) (:3-7) Purge of Idolatry by Young Josiah – Priority of Waging War against Sin
 - a) (:3a) Seeking the Lord at an Early Age
 - b) (:3b-7) Stamping Out Idolatry Wherever It Was Found
 - 1)) (:3b-5) Beginning in Judah and Jerusalem
 - 2)) (:6-7) Continuing in Outlying Territories
 - 3)) (:7b) Returning to Jerusalem
 - 2) (:8-13) Repairs to the Temple – Priority of Worship
 - a) (:8-11) Administration of Funds for Temple Repairs
 - 1)) (:8) Directing Key Leaders to Head Up the Project
 - 2)) (:9) Delivery of the Collected Funds to Hilkiah the High Priest
 - 3)) (:10-11) Distribution of the Funds to the Workmen
 - b) (:12-13) Administration of the Work of Temple Repairs
 - 3) (:14-21) Recovery of the Lost Book of the Law – Priority of the Word of God
 - a) (:14-18) Communication of God’s Word
 - 1)) (:14) Finding the Book of the Law
 - 2)) (:15) Seeking Informed Interpretation of God’s Word
 - 3)) (:16-18) Communicating God’s Word to the King
 - b) (:19-21) Conviction of God’s Word
 - 1)) (:19) Immediate Impact of the Revelation
 - 2)) (:20-21) Implications of the Revelation
 - 4) (:22-28) Revelation from the Prophetess Huldah – Priority of Wrongdoing Deserving God’s Judgment
 - a) (:22) Solicitation of the Prophetess
 - b) (:23-25) Severe Judgment Proclaimed

- c) (:26-28a) Sparing of Josiah Due to His Humble Repentance
 - 1)) Humbling of Josiah
 - 2)) Mercy of God
 - 5) (:29-32) Response of Josiah to Commit to Reformation – Priority of Walking in the Ways of the Lord
 - a) (:29-30) Communication of God’s Word to the Leaders and All the People
 - b) (:31-32) Commitment to Reformation by the Entire Community
 - 1)) (:31) Covenant Renewal by the King
 - 2)) (:32) Covenant Renewal by All the People
 - (:33) Epilogue – Summary of Reformation Commitment
 - a) Purging of Idolatry
 - b) Pursuit of Covenant Faithfulness
 - c) Perseverance in Covenant Loyalty
- b. (35:1 – 36:1) Josiah’s Passover Celebration and Tragic End – The Heights and Depths of the Reign of Josiah – Obedience to the Word of God Elevates Worship Celebration While Disobedience Exposes One to Harm
 - 1) (:1-19) Obedience to the Word of God Elevates Worship Celebration – The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread
 - a) (:1-6) Preparation for Worship Celebration
 - 1)) (:1) Passover Summary
 - 2)) (:2-6) Preparation Instructions
 - b) (:7-9) Provision of Offerings for Worship Celebration
 - 1)) (:7) Generous Example of King Josiah
 - 2)) (:8-9) Generous Voluntary Contributions from Leading Officials
 - c) (:10-15) Procedure for the Passover
 - 1)) (:10) Staging the Passover Service
 - 2)) (:11a) Slaughtering the Sacrificial Animals
 - 3)) (:11b) Sprinkling the Blood
 - 4)) (:11c) Skinning the Animals
 - 5)) (:12) Separating the Burnt Offerings to Be Presented to the Lord
 - 6)) (:13-15) Serving Up the Passover Feast to All Participants
 - d) (:16-19) Perfection of Worship Celebration
 - 1)) (:16) Carrying Out the Commands of King Josiah
 - 2)) (:17) Collective Community Participation
 - 3)) (:18) Characterization of This Passover as Remarkable
 - 4)) (:19) Culmination of Reign of King Josiah
 - 2) (:20-25) Disobedience to the Word of God Exposes One to Harm – Death of King Josiah
 - a) (:20-22) Foolish Decision by King Josiah to Fight Neco King of Egypt
 - 1)) (:20) Foolish Support of the Assyrian Empire
 - 2)) (:21) Foolish Rejection of Neco’s Warning

- 3)) (:22) Foolish Engagement with Neco
- b) (:23-24b) Tragic End of King Josiah
 - 1)) (:23) Fatal Wounding of King Josiah
 - 2)) (:24a) Return to Jerusalem
 - 3)) (:24b) Death and Burial
- c) (:24c-25) Mourning for Beloved Josiah
 - 1)) (:24c) By All Judah and Jerusalem
 - 2)) (:25a) By Jeremiah
 - 3)) (:25b) By All the Male and Female Singers
- (35:26 – 36:1) Epilogue – Closing Summary of Reign of Josiah
 - a) (:26-27) Recorded Deeds of Josiah
 - b) (36:1) Succession

F. (36:2–21) Four Kings and the Exile of Judah

1. (36:2–4) Exile of Jehoahaz to Egypt
 - a. (:2) Age and Duration of Reign
 - b. (:3) Subjugation by King of Egypt
 - c. (:4a) Succession
 - d. (:4b) Captivity in Egypt
2. (36:5–8) Exile of Wicked Jehoiakim to Babylon
 - a. (:5a) Age and Duration of Reign
 - b. (:5b) Moral Evaluation
 - c. (:6-7) Subjugation by Nebuchadnezzar
 - 1) (:6) Bondage of Jehoiakim in Babylon
 - 2) (:7) Booty Carried Off to Babylonian Temple
 - d. (:8a) Recorded Deeds
 - e. (:8b) Succession
3. (36:9–10) Exile of Wicked Jehoiachin to Babylon
 - a. (:9a) Age and Duration of Reign
 - b. (:9b) Moral Evaluation
 - c. (:10a) Subjugation by Nebuchadnezzar
 - 1) Bondage of Jehoiachin in Babylon
 - 2) Booty Carried Off to Babylon
 - d. (:10b) Succession
4. (36:11–14) Rebellion of Wicked Zedekiah
 - a. (:11) Age and Duration of Reign
 - b. (:12a) Moral Evaluation
 - c. (:12b-13) Stubborn Rejection of God by King Zedekiah
 - 1) (:12b) Resisted God’s Prophetic Warnings
 - 2) (:13a) Rebelled against God’s Appointed Political Leader
 - 3) (:13b) Rejected God Stubbornly and Ultimately
 - d. (:14) Corresponding Unfaithfulness of the Priests and the People
 - 1) Depravity Paralleling Pagan Nations
 - 2) Defiling the Temple
5. (36:15–21) Destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple of God
 - a. (:15-16) Stubborn Rejection Leads to Certain Wrath
 - 1) (:15) Compassionate Entreaties by the Lord
 - 2) (:16a) Three Fatal Charges of Stubborn Rejection
 - 3) (:16b) No Remedy for the Deserved Wrath of God

- b. (:17-20) Severe Destruction of God's People, Temple and City
 - 1) (:17) Severe Destruction of God's People
 - 2) (:18) Severe Plundering of God's Temple
 - 3) (:19) Severe Destruction of God's Temple and City
 - 4) (:20) Subjugation in Babylon
- c. (:21) Sabbath Rests Required for the Land

(2 Chron. 36:22-23) EPILOGUE – THE EDICT OF CYRUS TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM – THE END BECOMES THE NEW BEGINNING

A. (:22a) Timing of the Edict of Cyrus

B. (:22b) Prophetic Background to the Edict of Cyrus

C. (:22c) Driving Force Behind the Edict of Cyrus

D. (:23) Substance of the Edict of Cyrus

- 1. Position of Worldly Dominion
- 2. Privilege of Divine Commissioning to Build God's Temple in Jerusalem
- 3. Proclamation Encouraging the Jewish Exiles to Return and Build

TEXT: I Chronicles 1:1 – 2:2

TITLE: *GENEALOGY FROM ADAM TO ISRAEL*

BIG IDEA:

THE CONTINUITY OF THE UNIVERSAL MISSION OF GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE REFLECTED IN TRACING ISRAEL'S ORIGINS BACK TO ADAM

INTRODUCTION:

Andrew Hill: God is everywhere assumed but nowhere mentioned in genealogies. The Chronicler also takes it for granted that his audience knows well the stories and personalities associated with the names logged in the genealogies. This fact is important to understanding the rest of the Chronicles as well. The highly selective retelling of Israel's history presupposes the Chronicler's audience knows their Hebrew Bible. . .

More important are the **theological threads** unifying this opening genealogy.

(1) The nations are introduced in such a way that all peoples are placed inside rather than outside the purposes of God's electing love.

(2) The nation of Israel lies at the center of the genealogical scheme. Thus, the Israel of the Chronicler's day is united with the earlier Israel and with the nations.

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler reminds Jews after the exile that they share a common humanity, created and known in its diversity by God. They are descendants of Abraham and Israel, but their ongoing story is part of a bigger picture of God's purpose for all peoples. . .

In short, this chapter brings together both a **universal perspective** of all humanity with its diversity and also a **particularity** as the line focuses, first to Seth and on to Abraham, then to Isaac and (in **1 Chron. 2:1**) to Israel. From that point forward, the book's focus will be on the Lord's covenant people.

J. A. Thompson: This section may be regarded as a preamble to the main genealogy in **2:3–9:1**. In **1:1–2:2** the name "*Israel*" does not appear. The nation yet to come into being was hidden within the general body of humankind. Meanwhile the genealogies of **chaps. 1–9** pursue their way, giving a **panorama** of the human background out of which the people of Israel emerged. The nation yet to be born emerged in due course from the Semites, one of the three great families of humankind: the Japhethites, the Hamites, and the Semites.

The Chronicler established Israel's place in the world through the lengthy genealogies of **chaps. 1–9** so that his audience might understand anew their role among the nations. Their mission was **universal** in nature, enabling all peoples to know the Lord through God's appointed means, the **Jerusalem temple**. It was temple more so than kingship

that indicated the presence of God's rule on earth. As long as there was the temple, Israel had its peculiar role among the nations.

The genealogies provided for the reconstituted Israel a sense of God's universal and ongoing work in the world. This continuity of design fueled Israel's ambition to be the holy vessel that God had envisioned for it (**Exod 19**). This same sense of **continuity** with God's work through the ages motivated the apostles to found the church in the shadow of Israel's religious tradition. But more importantly, it was the universal setting that explained the drive to bring the gospel to the Gentiles (**Acts 13**). God's people whether in past generations or in the present have this same commission to reach beyond themselves with the gospel to all the peoples of God's created world (**Rom 1:16–17**). . .

We may ask why this book burdens the reader with seemingly endless genealogies. Perhaps the best answer is provided by **M. Wilcock**, who observes that the generations after the exile needed a sense of history and legitimacy. In other words, they needed roots. Using the **analogy of a tree**, **Wilcock** observes that the genealogies reach from the very deepest root—Adam—to the very topmost branches of the tree—people who were living in the Chronicler's lifetime. With these roots God's people knew who they were and how they were to live. They may have felt like the most insignificant of peoples (a small, backwater country in the great Persian Empire), but the genealogies served to remind them that they were not only a people with a rich history but that their history was God's history.

Frederick Mabie: Thus, while the Chronicler's genealogical survey reviews the past, it also works to produce hope in God at the present because of the covenantal possibilities for the future. Similarly, the image of continuity between the past and present facilitates hope that God is still at work through his people. This **message of continuity** is part of the Chronicler's message of **hope** and call to **covenantal obedience** for his postexilic audience. While the history of Judah is clearly punctuated with sin and unfaithfulness, it is nonetheless permeated by divine grace and faithfulness. Indeed, the Chronicler's genealogical survey echoes the words of Jeremiah that God's mercies are new each morning and that his faithfulness is great.

I. (:1-27) ADAM TO ABRAHAM

A. (:1-4) Adam to Noah

“Adam, Seth, Enosh, 2 Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, 3 Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, 4 Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth.”

August Konkell: The general division of the nations among the three sons of Noah is clear: three spheres of peoples and lands converge in the region of Israel. The world is described from an Israelite point of view, looking in the three directions of inhabited lands.

Mark Boda: The line of Cain is ignored and unnecessary in light of the fact that Noah

would become the founder of a new humanity after the Flood.

B. (:5-7) The Descendants of Japheth

“The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

6 And the sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Diphath, and Togarmah.

7 And the sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.”

C. (:8-16) Descendants of Ham

“The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

9 And the sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

10 And Cush became the father of Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

11 And Mizraim became the father of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh,

12 Pathrus, Casluh, from which the Philistines came, and Caphtor.

13 And Canaan became the father of Sidon, his first-born, Heth, 14 and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, 15 the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites,

16 the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites.”

D. (:17-27) Descendants of Shem

“The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.

18 And Arpachshad became the father of Shelah and Shelah became the father of Eber.

19 And two sons were born to Eber, the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan.

20 And Joktan became the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 21 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 22 Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, 23 Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan. 24 Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, 25

Eber, Peleg, Reu, 26 Serug, Nahor, Terah, 27 Abram, that is Abraham.”

J.A. Thompson: The shorter name Abram (*abram*) is of uncertain meaning, though probably it means “the father is exalted.” The name rarely was used in the Old Testament. The name Abraham (*abrāhām*) probably means “father of a multitude,” and from the late perspective of the Chronicler in this genealogical context it testified to the verity of God's promises and to his faithfulness.

II. (:28-33) SONS OF ABRAHAM

“The sons of Abraham were Isaac and Ishmael. 29 These are their genealogies: the first-born of Ishmael was Nebaioth, then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 30 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, 31 Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah; these were the sons of Ishmael.

32 And the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine, whom she bore, were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

*And the sons of Jokshan were Sheba and Dedan.
33 And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah.
All these were the sons of Keturah.”*

J.A. Thompson: Only the descendants of Jokshan (v. 32) and Midian (v. 33) are listed, those of Dedan being ignored (cf. **Gen 25:3–4**). The descendants of Dedan were South Arabians. Perhaps the Chronicler thought they were only peripheral to his main theme.

III. (:34-42) SONS OF ISAAC

*“And Abraham became the father of Isaac.
The sons of Isaac were Esau and Israel.”*

A. (:35-37) Descendants of Esau

*“The sons of Esau were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.
36 The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, Kenaz, Timna, and Amalek.
37 The sons of Reuel were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.”*

B. (:38-42) Descendants of Seir

*“And the sons of Seir were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.
39 And the sons of Lotan were Hori and Homam; and Lotan's sister was Timna.
40 The sons of Shobal were Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam.
And the sons of Zibeon were Aiah and Anah.
41 The son of Anah was Dishon.
And the sons of Dishon were Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.
42 The sons of Ezer were Bilhan, Zaavan and Jaakan.
The sons of Dishan were Uz and Aran.”*

August Konkel: No genealogical link from Esau to Seir is provided in Genesis or Chronicles. An **etymological link** is made at the birth of Esau (**Gen 25:25**); the firstborn of Rebekah was both red (Edom) and hairy (Seir). The geographical location of Seir is uncertain. Edom is generally east of the southern Arabah (the rift valley through the Jordan and the Dead Sea and extending southward); a traditional site for Mount Seir is located there (Jebel esh-Shera'), southeast of the Dead Sea. Seir often appears as a synonym for Edom (**Gen 32:3; Num 24:18**). Seir was the home of the Horites until they were displaced by the Edomites (**Deut 2:12**; cf. **Gen 36:20**). The designation of Seir probably changed over time.

IV. (:43-54) RULERS IN EDMOM

A. (:43-51a) Early Kings in Edom

*“Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king of the sons of Israel reigned.
Bela was the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dinhabah.*

44 When Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah became king in his place.
45 When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites became king in his place.
46 When Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the field of Moab, became king in his place; and the name of his city was Avith.
47 When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah became king in his place.
48 When Samlah died, Shaul of Rehoboth by the River became king in his place.
49 When Shaul died, Baal-hanan the son of Achbor became king in his place.
50 When Baal-hanan died, Hadad became king in his place; and the name of his city was Pai, and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.
51 Then Hadad died.”

B. (51b-54) Chiefs of Edom

“Now the chiefs of Edom were:
chief Timna, chief Aliah, chief Jetheth,
52 chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon,
53 chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar,
54 chief Magdiel, chief Iram.
These were the chiefs of Edom.”

(2:1-3) TRANSITION – SONS OF ISRAEL

“These are the sons of Israel:
Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, 2 Dan, Joseph, Benjamin,
Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.”

Frederick Mabie: The account of the two sons of Isaac spills into **ch. 2** and ends with the listing of the actual twelve sons of Jacob/Israel (**1 Ch 2:1–2**). These sons will constitute both the geographical organization of the future nation that will likewise be named “Israel” (the tribal territories). As such, **1 Chronicles 2:1–2** serves as both a conclusion to **ch. 1** and an introduction to **chs. 2** and following (cf. **Japhet**, 65; **Selman**, 95).

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why did the Jews consider genealogies to be so significant?
- 2) What do modern readers lose if they choose to just skip over the genealogical sections?
- 3) What can we learn from the special details that are singled out for particular focus?

4) Why such a prominent role given to the three sons of Noah?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Iain Duguid: **Charles H. Kraft** tells of a Gentile student of OT studies who asked a Jewish student to identify his favorite Scripture passage. He immediately responded, “The first eight chapters of Chronicles.” To Jews and other tribal cultures, genealogical lists are the clearest way of showing the love of God for particular people that is central to the gospel.

John Goldingay: There are several points where someone who tries to read all though the Bible may get stuck or may at least ask the question, “What the heck?” The nine chapters of names that open Chronicles is one of the places where this question is most pressing. Yet the lists occupy a sixth of the book; evidently they were very important to its authors, so it’s worth trying to get into their way of thinking. What might postexilic Judahites infer from this first list? They might realize, “We are part of a story that has been going on for a long time. We are not so insignificant. We issue from a process going back to the very creation of humanity.” They might even infer, “God’s purpose for the whole world lies behind our being here. God intends to do something with us that will fulfill the original purpose of creating the world. We exist for the sake of the world, even if at the moment it thinks we are nothing.” They would indeed be likely to feel overwhelmed by the power of the superpowers of the day, which in the Second Temple period were Medo-Persia, then Greece. What is the nature of God’s sovereignty in relation to the empires of the day? Before it has completed five verses, Chronicles has mentioned Media and Greece. They are part of an unfolding of history that happens within God’s purview.

Hugh Williamson: Looking first at the “vertical” dimension of the lists, it is to be noted that they cover three main periods.

- **Chapter 1** moves along the line of God’s election from Adam to Israel (Jacob).
- **Chapters 2-8** then deal in much greater detail with the sons of Israel; nearly all the material refers to the pre-exilic period, and the impression is conveyed that much relates specifically to the time of David, to whose reign over a united Israel the first major narrative section is devoted.
- Finally, **ch. 9** narrows the spectrum again to list the chief representatives of the post-exilic community, with whom the Chronicler and his readers would most readily identify themselves.

This simple scheme, it will be argued, is not arbitrary. On the contrary, just as **ch. 1** clearly points to the special election of Israel within the family of the nations, so **ch. 9** balances this by indicating that the community it portrays stands in unbroken succession to the nation whose history is about to be related. In this dimension, therefore, the themes of election, continuity and restoration are prominent (cf. **Ackroyd**, *Age*, p. 48).

Andrew Hill: The basic purpose of the genealogy is to identify kinship relationships between individuals, families, and people groups. **Marshall Johnson** has isolated nine distinct functions that genealogies serve in the Old Testament:

- demonstrate existing relationships between Israel and neighboring tribes by establishing common ancestors (e.g., the relationship of Lot's descendants to Israel, **Gen. 19:36–38**)
- connecting isolated traditions of Israelite origins into a coherent literary unit by means of an inclusive genealogical system (e.g., the *toledot* formulas in **Genesis [5:1; 10:1; etc.]**)
- bridge chronological gaps in the biblical narratives (e.g., **Ruth 4:18–22**)
- serve as chronological controls for the dating of key Old Testament events (e.g., the date of the book of Esther in relationship to the Babylonian exile, **Est. 2:5–6**—although the selective nature of biblical genealogies may compromise the accuracy of the genealogy as a chronological device)
- perform a specific political and/or military function, as in the taking of a census (e.g., **Num. 1:3–46**)
- legitimize an individual or family in an office or enhance the stature of an individual by linkage to an important clan or individual of the past (e.g., **Zeph. 1:1**)
- establish and preserve the ethnic purity of the Hebrew community, as in the case of the records found in Ezra and Nehemiah (e.g., **Ezra 7**)
- assert the importance of the continuity of God's people through a period of national calamity (prominent in Chronicles, e.g., the line of David in **1 Chron. 3:17–24**)
- express order, structure, and movement in history according to a divinely prearranged plan (e.g., identifying Haman, the son of Hammedatha, as an Agagite, **Est. 3:1, 10**).

It is evident the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9 serve multiple purposes, especially in legitimizing the authority of Levitical priesthood as the rightful successors to the royal authority of Davidic kingship and in asserting the continuity of the Hebrew people through the national distress of the Babylonian exile. There is even a sense in which the juxtaposition of certain genealogies (e.g., that of Esau and Israel or Saul and David) works to express movement in history according to God's redemptive plan.

Mark Boda: Genealogies are reflections, as well as projections, of sociological structure. . . **First Chronicles 1** identifies Israel's relationship with the nations of the world, **chapters 2–8** note its privileged place among the nations, and **chapter 9** emphasizes continuity between privileged Israel and the restoration community centered around Jerusalem and the Temple. . .

One should keep in mind that the terms "*father/mother*" and "*son/daughter*" do not always signify immediately successive generations but can designate "*ancestor*" and "*descendant*" and even at times the "*founder*" of a city (see **2:24, 42, 55**). The technique of telescoping generations (see **2:10–17**; **Klein 2006:95**) may serve the

purpose of creating literary structure, conserving space, or bringing key generations into closer proximity.

Iain Duguid: In providing these genealogies, the Chronicler adapts **standard formats**. Sometimes a linear genealogy lists one person per generation. These can move forward (1 Chron. 1:1–3, 24–27) or backward (**6:33–38, 39–47**) in time. More often he provides a segmented, tree-shaped genealogy, in which more than one person is named in each generation (**1:4–23**). Forms may be mixed; e.g., **chapter 3** begins with a segmented genealogy of David (**3:1–9**) then continues with a linear listing of successive Davidic kings (3:10–16), expanding again to a segmented postexilic line of descent (**3:17–24**). As is known in other ancient Near Eastern genealogies, **various details** are seen alongside the simple listing of male names. These invariably provide examples of the Chronicler’s emphases. Occasionally the name of a wife, concubine, mother, or sister is included (e.g., **1:32, 50; 2:4, 16–19**); people may be associated with cities, towns, and regions, sometimes with mention of battles (e.g., **1:43–50; 2:22–23**); and occasionally, another narrative component is included (e.g., **2:3, 7; 4:9–10**). In contrast to other ancient Near Eastern genealogies, however, which are mainly lists of kings, the names in Chronicles cover the whole of society. What counts is belonging, not achievement. . .

What stands out is the **length of the “Esau/Edom” section** (almost half the chapter). Given the history of enmity between Judah and Edom, particularly resulting from Edom’s actions at the time of the Babylonian sacking of Jerusalem (e.g., **Ps. 137:7; Ezekiel 35**), the level of detail and lack of animosity in Chronicles are striking.

The genealogy is first a reminder that Israel and Edom share **common human heritage**, not only from Adam but also, more closely, from Abraham and Isaac. Further, while the statement that “*these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the people of Israel*” (**1 Chron. 1:43**) in itself could allow for subsequent Edomite kings, the Chronicler’s insertion of “*Hadad died,*” with no successor named (**v. 51a**; cf. **Gen. 36:31–39**), suggests that he saw Edomite kingship ending once Israel had a king. Indeed, he later tells how Edom became “*David’s servants*” (**1 Chron. 18:13**). And though it is true that Edom “*revolted . . . to this day*” during the reign of faithless Jehoram (**2 Chron. 21:8–10**), it is implied that Edom’s rebellion was due solely to Israel’s faithlessness—and might therefore end when Israel returns to faith. These factors, along with the irenic tone of this genealogy, thus encourage the hearer to look forward to a time in which Edom will again give allegiance to God and his anointed ruler.

Martin Selman: The result appears to be a real hotchpotch, sometimes with obvious gaps (e.g. no details are given about the tribe of Zebulun, though cf. **2:1**). Closer examination, however, reveals the presence of certain connecting threads which give the patchwork a real sense of design:

- Israel belongs to the past, but must not live in it.
- Certain people have a special significance in the purposes of God.
- Occupation of the Promised Land remains a priority.
- The nations of the world belong to God.

- All types of people have a place within the purposes of God. The good, the bad, and the ugly are all included in the lists.

TEXT: I Chronicles 2:3 – 4:23

TITLE: ROYAL FAMILY OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

BIG IDEA:

THE PROMINENT ROLE OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH (AS FOCUSED IN KING DAVID) IN GOD'S KINGDOM AGENDA EMPHASIZED

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkel: The genealogy of Judah is the longest and most complex genealogical unit in the Bible [*Genealogy*, p. 461]. It provides the history of the royal family of Judah down to the Chronicler's day. The promise to David, the anointed descendant of Judah (**1 Sam 16:1–14**), was of paramount importance to the Chronicler, since this promise pointed the way to the future for his community. Judah was also the most important tribe in the postexilic community. The tribal history of Judah is arranged to put the family history of David at the center. It is arranged in the form of a **chiasm** [*Chiasm*, p. 465]. . .

The goal of the Chronicler was to link the families of his own day with those who preceded the exile to Babylon. In the central section, the descendants of David are given in segmented and linear genealogies, providing clear lines of succession for all periods. Linear genealogies were sufficient during the period of the monarchy. Segmented genealogies were used to relate status and relationships within the Davidic family. These include the relationship between David's sons in the early period, and relationships between Davidic families living in the exilic and postexilic times.

Iain Duguid: Surrounded by the outer frame (A, A') of branches of the line from Judah to Hezron (**2:3–9; 4:1–23**), the descendants of Hezron's second son, Ram, have priority due to David. Ram's tree is separated into two sections: the first (B) stops at the time of David (**2:10–17**), while the second (B') resumes with the descendants of David through to the postexilic period (**3:1–24**). This separation serves to emphasize the Davidic dynasty. **Central in the chiasm**, however, are blocks of names for the other sons of Hezron: Caleb's two blocks (**2:18–24, 42–55** [C, C']) surround two for Jerahmeel, the oldest son (**2:25–33, 34–41** [D, D']). David may be emphasized, but other descendants are not forgotten.

Michael Wilcock: The framework of history is ... seen to comprise three pairs of events.

- God creates all things; in due course **Adam** procreates the rest of mankind.
- God calls Abraham; in due course **Israel** sires the twelve patriarchs.
- God calls Moses; in due course **David** sets up the kingdom.

In each of these three pairs, it is with the second member that the Chronicler is concerned.

I. (2:3-9) INTRODUCTION – SONS OF JUDAH UP TO HEZRON AND HIS SONS

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler gives the lineage of the tribe of Judah a position of literary and theological preeminence by his “fronting” of the genealogical summary of the fourth-born Judah together with his extended treatment of the descendants of Judah. This initial section gives the genealogical information for the five sons of Judah (v.4), building on earlier lists given in Genesis and Numbers (cf. **Ge 46:12; Nu 26:19–22**).

J.A. Thompson: From a genealogical perspective, the royal clan of Judah did not show much promise. His eldest son Er died because of wickedness. As a familiarity with the account would show (**Gen 38**), it did not get much better since Judah's second and third sons did not bear sons either. It was rather through the sordid incident of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar, disguised as a prostitute, that the promised heritage was perpetuated through their twin sons, Perez and Zerah. Ironically, the Chronicler could in one and the same breath show the consequences of sin (death of Er) and also the grace of God abounding in the midst of it as two sons were born by means of Judah's wicked deed. Out of this union came the ancestral father of Israel's greatest king (**Ruth 4:18–22**).

A. (:3-4) Sons of Judah Introduced

“The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, and Shelah; these three were born to him by Bath-shua the Canaanitess. And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, so He put him to death. 4 And Tamar his daughter-in-law bore him Perez and Zerah. Judah had five sons in all.”

Thomas Constable: A long list of Judah's descendants follows (**2:3—4:23**). This list begins by naming Judah's five sons (vv. 3-4; cf. **Gen. 38:3-5, 29-30; 46:12**). Of these, three founded significant families: Shelah, Perez, and Zerah.

B. (:5-8) Sons of Perez

“The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. 6 And the sons of Zerah were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara; five of them in all. 7 And the son of Carmi was Achar, the troubler of Israel, who violated the ban. 8 And the son of Ethan was Azariah.”

Iain Duguid: Achan's story is told in **Joshua 7**. In summarizing it here, the Chronicler introduces a major theme for the book: “breaking faith” (Hb. *ma'al*; translated elsewhere also as “be faithless”). The Chronicler will recount numerous examples of Israel's breaking faith, commonly stated explicitly as worshiping other gods. The results were always catastrophic, leading to defeat, death, or exile (**1 Chron. 5:25; 9:1; 10:13; 2 Chron. 12:2; 26:16, 18; 28:19, 22; 29:6, 19; 30:7; 33:19; 36:14**).

C. (:9) Sons of Hezron: Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb

“Now the sons of Hezron, who were born to him were Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai.”

Iain Duguid: Perez’s son Hezron had three sons. The chiasmic arrangement of **2:10–3:24** gives prominence to David by dividing the line of the middle son, “Ram,” into two parts, respectively ending and starting with the time of David (**2:10–17; 3:1–24**).

II. (2:10 – 3:24)

A. (2:10-17) Sons of Ram

“And Ram became the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, leader of the sons of Judah; 11 Nahshon became the father of Salma, Salma became the father of Boaz, 12 Boaz became the father of Obed, and Obed became the father of Jesse; 13 and Jesse became the father of Eliab his first-born, then Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, 14 Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, 15 Ozem the sixth, David the seventh; 16 and their sisters were Zeruihah and Abigail. And the three sons of Zeruihah were Abshai, Joab, and Asahel. 17 And Abigail bore Amasa, and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite.”

Frederick Mabie: Although Ram was not the oldest son of Hezron, he is treated with priority by the Chronicler, given his connection with David (**v.15**). Note that **vv.10–12** in this section reflect the genealogy leading to David given in **Ruth 4:18–22**. For more on the theology of divine grace and sovereignty reflected in these genealogical summaries, see comments on **vv.3–8**. Lastly, note that this genealogical summary shows that the military leaders Joab, Abishai, and Amasa (**vv.16–17**) were related to each other as well as to King David.

August Konkel: Having established Ram as central in the families of Judah, the Chronicler provides a linear genealogical link to Jesse, father of David (**1 Chron 2:10–12**). The list provides ten generations from Judah to Jesse. Aside from the note about Nahshon being a chief in Judah (**v. 10**), and several variations in spelling of names, this is the same genealogy found in **Ruth (4:19b-22)**. The Chronicler varies the ending in a segmented genealogy of Jesse, which makes David his seventh son.

John Schultz: The rather unusual feature in this genealogical list is the mention of Jesse’s three daughters and of the mother of Amasa.

B. (2:18-24) Sons of Caleb

“Now Caleb the son of Hezron had sons by Azubah his wife, and by Jerioth; and these were her sons: Jeshur, Shobab, and Ardon. 19 When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath, who bore him Hur. 20 And Hur became the father of Uri, and Uri became the father of Bezalel. 21 Afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he was sixty years old; and she bore him Segub. 22 And Segub became the father of Jair, who had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. 23 But Geshur and Aram took the

towns of Jair from them, with Kenath and its villages, even sixty cities. All these were the sons of Machir, the father of Gilead. 24 And after the death of Hezron in Caleb-ephraim, Abijah, Hezron's wife, bore him Ashhur the father of Tekoa."

August Konkel: The Chronicler returns to the descendants of Hezron to show the integration of different families in the region of Bethlehem, the home of Jesse, the father of David (**1 Chron 2:18**; cf. v. 9). These include the descendants of Caleb in the regions of Ephraim and Hebron to the south (vv. 19, 42). The introduction of Hur brings in another tribal relationship (v. 20). Hur is the grandfather of Bezalel, the chosen craftsman in the building of the tabernacle (**Exod 31:2; 35:30**). In the time of the exodus, Hur is the fourth generation from Judah. This is consistent with the genealogies found in the books of Exodus through Joshua, all of which are three to six generations from Jacob's sons (**Rendsburg**: 186–89). The relationship of Judah to the sons of Aaron is found in his marriage to Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab (**Exod 6:23**). Amminadab is a leader of the tribe of Judah (**1 Chron 2:10**; cf. **Ruth 4:19–20**).

Iain Duguid: "*Caleb the son of Hezron*" ("*Chelubai*," v. 9, is a variant form) is to be distinguished from the Caleb of the conquest stories, also a Judahite ("*son of Jephunneh*"; **4:15; 6:56; Num. 13:64**). His line ends here with "*Bezalel*," who had a key role in the construction of the tabernacle and was "*filled . . . with the Spirit of God*" (**Ex. 31:1–5; 35:30–36:2**).

C. (2:25–33) Sons of Jerahmeel, Firstborn Son of Hezron

"Now the sons of Jerahmeel the first-born of Hezron were Ram the first-born, then Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. 26 And Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. 27 And the sons of Ram, the first-born of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. 28 And the sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. And the sons of Shammai were Nadab and Abishur. 29 And the name of Abishur's wife was Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. 30 And the sons of Nadab were Seled and Appaim, and Seled died without sons. 31 And the son of Appaim was Ishi. And the son of Ishi was Sheshan. And the son of Sheshan was Ahlai. 32 And the sons of Jada the brother of Shammai were Jether and Jonathan, and Jether died without sons. 33 And the sons of Jonathan were Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel."

J.A. Thompson: The ominous repetition of "*died without children*" (**2:30, 32**) and the absence of male offspring for Sheshan (**2:34**) spoke volumes to readers anxious about their future. The linkage from Adam to Abraham to Jacob-Israel to David and so forth was never automatic. The harsh realities of life were that some families did not enjoy perpetuation. These startling exceptions to the rule showed how the genealogical survival of the appointed, such as the royal and high priestly houses, were a tribute to the **sustaining grace of God's hand** across the ages. This was the case for the house of Jesse and his "*seventh son*" David (**2:13**) whose male offspring were also numerous (**3:1–9**). There must have been a growing sense of confidence in the Lord's sovereignty as each clan and family's names resounded in the mind of the ancient reader. No person

was incidental to Israel's life, past or present. The Church has always experienced the same triumphant note in a future for God's people because of the testimony of the past.

Frederick Mabie: vv. 25-41 -- The section outlining the descendants of Jerahmeel provides genealogical information on this little known family that is mostly situated in the southern regions of Judah (cf. “the Negev of Jerahmeel,” **1Sa 27:10**). Particular attention seems given to women, even non-Israelite women, in this section (cf. **Hill**, 81). Note the inclusion of an Egyptian (Jarha) in this broader family line of Judah (recall Tamar [probably a Canaanite] and Ruth [Moabitess]). As Isaiah proclaims, God’s ultimate redemptive plan includes Israelites, Egyptians, and Assyrians serving him shoulder to shoulder, with God saying of the Egyptians, “*Blessed be Egypt my people*” (cf. **Isa 19:18-25**).

August Konkell: Having dealt with the sons of Ram and Caleb (**1 Chron 2:10-17, 18-24**), the Chronicler turns his attention to Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron (vv. **25-33**). Because Jerahmeel was the oldest descendant of Hezron, his descendants may be regarded as among the most established of Judah’s families. They divide into two groups. The first is a total of eight families, but only the eldest son, Ram, extends to a second generation in the genealogy. A second wife, whose name means “*crown*” (Atarah, v. **26**), provided him only one son (v. **26**), but the genealogy extends as far as six generations through Appaim (v. **31**). In the latter group, two families became extinct: Seled and Jether died without descendants.

C1. (2:34-41) Supplementary Material On Jerahmeel

“Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters. And Sheshan had an Egyptian servant whose name was Jarha. 35 And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant in marriage, and she bore him Attai. 36 And Attai became the father of Nathan, and Nathan became the father of Zabad, 37 and Zabad became the father of Ephlal, and Ephlal became the father of Obed, 38 and Obed became the father of Jehu, and Jehu became the father of Azariah, 39 and Azariah became the father of Helez, and Helez became the father of Eleasah, 40 and Eleasah became the father of Sismai, and Sismai became the father of Shallum, 41 and Shallum became the father of Jekamiah, and Jekamiah became the father of Elishama.”

B1. (2:42-55) Supplementary Material On Caleb, Brother of Jerahmeel

“Now the sons of Caleb, the brother of Jerahmeel, were Mesha his first-born, who was the father of Ziph; and his son was Mareshah, the father of Hebron. 43 And the sons of Hebron were Korah and Tappuah and Rekem and Shema. 44 And Shema became the father of Raham, the father of Jorkeam; and Rekem became the father of Shammai. 45 And the son of Shammai was Maon, and Maon was the father of Bethzur. 46 And Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza, and Gazez; and Haran became the father of Gazez. 47 And the sons of Jahdai were Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph. 48 Maacah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. 49 She also bore Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbena and the father of Gibeaz;

and the daughter of Caleb was Achsah. 50 These were the sons of Caleb. The sons of Hur, the first-born of Ephrathah, were Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim, 51 Salma the father of Bethlehem and Hareph the father of Beth-gader. 52 And Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim had sons: Haroeh, half of the Manahathites, 53 and the families of Kiriath-jearim: the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraitites; from these came the Zorathites and the Eshtaolites. 54 The sons of Salma were Bethlehem and the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joab and half of the Manahathites, the Zorites. 55 And the families of scribes who lived at Jabez were the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and the Sucathites. Those are the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.”

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler continues his summary of the family line of Caleb begun earlier (cf. **vv.18–24**). A number of these descendants are connected with cities in the southern areas of Judah that play a significant role in the broader history of Israel (e.g., Hebron, **v.42**; Kiriath Jearim, **v.53**; Bethlehem, **v.54**). The Netophathites (**v.54**) are later associated with two of David’s mighty men (cf. **2Sa 23:28–29**; **1Ch 11:30**), and the town of Netophah (about three miles south of Jerusalem) later served as a home to Levitical singers during the postexilic period (cf. **Ne 12:27–28**). Note that the Kenites (**v.55**) were not ethnically Israelites (cf. **Ge 15:18–21**) but were eventually “grafted in” to the tribe of Judah and the family of Israel, demonstrating God’s transethnic redemptive plan (cf. **Ge 12:1–3**; **Eph 2:19–22**).

Eugene Merrill: Of particular interest are the references to Bethlehem (**1 Chon. 2:51, 54**), birthplace of both David and Jesus. The town was founded by or named after the great-grandson of Caleb through Caleb’s wife Ephrathah (**v. 50**, spelled Ephrath in **v. 19**). The combination of Bethlehem and Ephrath(ah) appears also in the story of Rachel’s death in childbirth (**Gen. 35:19**), where it is used anachronistically; in **Ruth 4:11** in reference to blessing on Ruth; and in **Micah 5:2** with respect to the birth of the Messiah.

A1. (3:1-24) Davidic Family

August Konkell: The Davidic genealogy documents an unbroken succession of Davidides for approximately **seven centuries**. The genealogy names these descendants without distinction. There is no reference as to which were monarchs, nor to the tumultuous events that divided Israel and finally ended the monarchy of Judah. A pedigree of seven centuries is in itself a testimony to the divine preservation of the house of David. The survival of the Davidic house testifies to God accomplishing his divine purpose through David. All the other lineages of Judah merged in various ways to form new entities, as indicated in the records of Judah. The return from exile did not bring about a restoration of Davidic rule within the community of Israel. The absence of political authority made it all the more important to demonstrate the continuation of a particular line of succession within the Davidic house. The capital had been conquered, the temple burned, and members of the dynasty humiliated, exiled, or executed, but the concept of an eternal Davidic kingdom survived (**1 Chron 28:4**). Though history might

seem to have refuted the promise to David, it was the Chronicler's conviction that God had elected Judah, and within Judah had chosen David to bring about his eternal kingdom.

Andrew Hill: The family of David is the feature attraction of Judah's genealogy. The Chronicler's emphasis on David stems from his knowledge of prophetic statements about the unbreakable covenant God made with David and the reestablishment of Davidic kingship in Israel (cf. **Jer. 33:19–22**). He then offers this hope to his audience through the repetition of the word of the Lord to Nathan announcing the Davidic covenant (**1 Chron. 17:4–14**, esp. vv. **10–14**; cf. **2 Sam. 7:4–16**). The record of the royal line continues the genealogy tracing David's ancestry from Ram to Jesse (**1 Chron. 2:10–17**). The chapter divides naturally into three distinct sections:

- David's children (**3:1–9**),
- the kings of Judah (**3:10–16**), and
- the postexilic descendants of David (**3:17–24**).

1. (:1-9) Listing of Actual Sons of David

a. (:1-4a) Sons Born in Hebron

“Now these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: the first-born was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second was Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelitess; 2 the third was Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth was Adonijah the son of Haggith; 3 the fifth was Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth was Ithream, by his wife Eglah. 4 Six were born to him in Hebron, and there he reigned seven years and six months.”

b. (:4b-8) Sons Born in Jerusalem

“And in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 5 And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, four, by Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel; 6 and Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, 7 Nogah, Nepheg, and Japhia, 8 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet, nine.”

c. (:9) Summary

“All these were the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar was their sister.”

2. (:10-24) Listing of Davidic Kings of Judah

a. (:10-16) Up to the Fall of Jerusalem

“Now Solomon's son was Rehoboam, Abijah was his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, 11 Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, 12 Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, 13 Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, 14 Amon his son, Josiah his son. 15 And the sons of Josiah were Johanan the first-born, and the second was Jehoiakim, the third

Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. 16 And the sons of Jehoiakim were Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son.”

John MacArthur: Jeconiah – God’s curse resulting in no royal descendants from the line of Jeconiah (a.k.a. Jehoiachin), as given by Jeremiah (**Jer 22:30**), was enforced by God. Even though Jeconiah was in the line of Christ, the Messiah was not a physical child of that line, thus affirming the curse, yet sustaining the legality of His kingship through Joseph, who was in David’s line. His blood birthright came through Mary, who traced her line to David through his son Nathan, not Solomon (cf. **Lk 3:31**).

b. (:17-24) During and after the Exile

“And the sons of Jeconiah, the prisoner, were Shealtiel his son, 18 and Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. 19 And the sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei. And the sons of Zerubbabel were Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith was their sister; 20 and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed, five. 21 And the sons of Hananiah were Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah, the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shecaniah. 22 And the son of Shecaniah was Shemaiah, and the sons of Shemaiah were Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat, six. 23 And the sons of Neariah were Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam, three. 24 And the sons of Elioenai were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani, seven.”

Frederick Mabie: For the Chronicler, the ability to trace these “sons” of David was important for facilitating hope in God’s present and future plans for the house of David. This list clearly extends into the postexilic period, perhaps even to the time of the Chronicler. The leadership of Zerubbabel (v.19) corresponded with renewed prophetic hope that God was restoring the Davidic line in Judah (cf. **Zec 4:1–14; Hag 2:20–23**), a hope ultimately fulfilled in Christ (cf. **Mt 22:42; Lk 1:32; Ac 15:16**).

Iain Duguid: What stands out is that the **Davidic family continues**. Although no Davidic heir succeeded Zerubbabel as governor, **hope of dynastic renewal** is suggested in the way the Davidic line is focused on and traced. Thus in 1 Chronicles 3:17–24 each generation takes up just one son from the preceding generation (Zerubbabel, Hananiah, Shecaniah, Shemaiah, Neariah, Elioenai). Hope of restoration is also expressed in Zerubbabel’s sons’ names: Meshullam (“*repaid, restored*”), Hananiah (“*the Lord is merciful*”), Hashubah (“*considered*”), Ohel (“*[God’s] tent*”), Berechiah (“*the Lord blesses*”), Hasadiah (“*The Lord is steadfast love*”), and Jushab-hesed (“*May steadfast love return*”).

III. (4:1-23) CONCLUSION – MORE RECORDS OF JUDAH

Eugene Merrill: Having traced the Davidic line specifically and in detail (**chap. 3**), the chronicler returned to that of Judah generally. His intent here was:

- (a) to provide genealogical and geographical information and
- (b) to show the preeminence of the role of the Davidic tribe of Judah among the tribes by dealing with Judah first and by appealing to the antiquity of her residence in her allotted area (**4:22b**).

H.L. Ellison: This chapter is a collection of fragments which have little or no connection one with another or with the lists in **ch. 2**.

A. (:1-20) Sons of Judah

“The sons of Judah were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal. 2 And Reaiah the son of Shobal became the father of Jahath, and Jahath became the father of Ahumai and Lahad. These were the families of the Zorathites. 3 And these were the sons of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash; and the name of their sister was Hazzeleponi. 4 And Penuel was the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These were the sons of Hur, the first-born of Ephrathah, the father of Bethlehem. 5 And Ashhur, the father of Tekoa, had two wives, Helah and Naarah. 6 And Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hephher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah. 7 And the sons of Helah were Zereth, Izhar and Ethnan. 8 And Koz became the father of Anub and Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum. 9 And Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother named him Jabez saying, "Because I bore him with pain." 10 Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Thy hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldst keep me from harm, that it may not pain me!" And God granted him what he requested. 11 And Chelub the brother of Shuhah became the father of Mehir, who was the father of Eshton. 12 And Eshton became the father of Beth-rapha and Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Ir-nahash. These are the men of Recah. 13 Now the sons of Kenaz were Othniel and Seraiah. And the son of Othniel was Hathath. 14 And Meonothai became the father of Ophrah, and Seraiah became the father of Joab the father of Ge-harashim, for they were craftsmen. 15 And the sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh were Iru, Elah and Naam; and the son of Elah was Kenaz. 16 And the sons of Jehallelel were Ziph and Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel. 17 And the sons of Ezraah were Jether, Mered, Ephher, and Jalon. (And these are the sons of Bithia the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took) and she conceived and bore Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. 18 And his Jewish wife bore Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. 19 And the sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, were the fathers of Keilah the Garmite and Eshtemoa the Maacathite. 20 And the sons of Shimon were Amnon and Rinnah, Benhanan and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi were Zoheth and Benzoheth.”

Eugene Merrill: As a Judahite and ancestor of David, it seems quite likely that **Jabez** was a type of David and that his fervent appeal was made in anticipation of God's selection and blessing of the yet unborn house of David.

John Schultz: *The Prayer of Jabez* by **Bruce Wilkinson**, published in 2000 became an instant bestseller.

B. (:21-23) Sons of Shelah

“The sons of Shelah the son of Judah were Er the father of Lecah and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of the linen workers at Beth-ashbea; 22 and Jokim, the men of Cozeba, Joash, Saraph, who ruled in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And the records are ancient. 23 These were the potters and the inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah; they lived there with the king for his work.”

Iain Duguid: The concluding section of “*the sons of Judah*” demonstrates again openness to all who are prepared to be identified with God’s people. After the preceding focus on the Davidic line, which will find its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the recognition of a great diversity of named people and families is important. Later chapters will turn to religious leaders, but here the specification of “*craftsmen*,” “*linen workers*,” and “*potters*” is a reminder of the variety of gifts that enable the well functioning of a community (**1 Corinthians 12**).

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Given the abundance of providential circumstances required to protect and ensure the initial incarnation of the Messiah, what should this teach us regarding God’s faithfulness to the promise of the return of the Messiah?
- 2) What type of individuals can rise to significance in terms of their role in God’s kingdom agenda?
- 3) How much knowledge of Jewish history does this passage assume?
- 4) How has the **prayer of Jabez** been misapplied as a promise for Christian prosperity in almost a “name-it-claim-it” formula?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: The royal family of David (**3:1–24**) is sandwiched between records of the other sons of Judah (**2:1–55** and **4:1–23**) in a highly stylized literary structure. The

chiastic or inverted “A/B” pattern of this section has been widely recognized by biblical commentators and can be diagrammed as follows:

Introduction (2:3–9)
 Shelah (2:3–4)
 Perez (2:5–8)
 Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb (2:9)
 A Descendants of Ram (2:10–17, including David)
 B Descendants of Caleb (2:18–24)
 C Descendants of Jerahmeel (2:25–33)
 C' Descendants of Jerahmeel (2:34–41)
 B' Descendants of Caleb (2:42–55)
 A' Descendants of Ram (3:1–24, including David and his descendants)
Conclusion (4:1–23)
 Perez (4:1–20)
 Shelah (4:21–23)

The roots of Israel’s genealogical tree run deep, beyond the Hebrew patriarchs and matriarchs back to the faithful of God remembered in that universal history of earliest humanity. More than that, the Chronicler reminds his audience that the branches of Israel’s family tree are numerous and full, generation after generation sustaining the legacy of those twelve tribes descended from Jacob. **Wilcock** has rightly noted that there is great value in tracing the genealogical roots of a people uprooted by exile and later transplanted by waves of emigrants returning to their homeland.²⁰ In a real sense, postexilic Judah is rootless, with kingship but a memory and the institution of the temple and the office of the priest but a shadow of former times. The genealogical prologue serves the important purpose of grafting the postexilic Hebrew community into the family tree of her ancestors.

Establishing both the hereditary and the spiritual continuity between the past and present generations of Hebrews is important for several reasons. Two are crucial to the Chronicler’s message.

- (1) The Chronicler summons the postexilic community to move beyond tribalism and territoriality and to find unity in the stronger bond of faith in God as his people.
- (2) The Chronicler calls each postexilic generation of Israelites to stand in readiness and to serve the restoration effort as needed. This is especially true for the family of David, should the opportunity for the reestablishment of Israelite kingship materialize. The New Testament genealogy identifying Jesus Christ as the “*Son of David*” is all that more remarkable when viewed in light of Chronicles. Not only did God preserve the line of David until “*the time had fully come*” (Gal. 4:4), but also he sustained that spirit of readiness and obedience in the descendants of David—namely, Mary and Joseph (cf. Matt. 1:24; Luke 1:38).

Finally, the Chronicler uses the literary form of genealogy with great skill and considerable confidence. He is intentional in where he wants to take his audience through the vehicle of the records of Israel's family tree. The genealogical prologue works for the Chronicler because his audience is familiar with the story of Hebrew history, in many cases even the names of the "cast of thousands" participating in that story.

As **Wilcock** has observed, the Chronicler simply interprets and applies "facts" that his first audience knows already. He writes to a people steeped in its own history and well-schooled in its own Scriptures. His audience understands the overarching story of covenant history and Israel's role in God's redemptive plan for the nations. They grasp, if you will, the metanarrative of Old Testament revelation. The premium placed on teaching the words and deeds of God to the next generation by the Israelites assures the Chronicler that the "preaching" of names is enough; his audience knows "the rest of story" (cf. **Deut. 4:9–10; 6:2, 7; Ps. 78:5–6**).

August Konkel: In making **Judah** superior and the leader of the sons of Jacob (**1 Chron 5:2**), the Chronicler has judicially interpreted the Genesis narrative according to the story of the people. Judah suggested the sale of Joseph to an Ishmaelite caravan (**Gen 37:26–27**) and then became the spokesperson for his brothers to their father (**43:3–5, 8–10**). Judah assumes a position of leadership when the delegation comes into trouble in Egypt (**44:14–16**) and negotiates on behalf of the family for release of the youngest brother (44:18–34). Finally, Jacob selected Judah to spearhead the migration to Egypt (46:28). The narrative of Genesis tells of the rise of Joseph, but it also includes the supremacy of Judah. In the history of the people, Judah became the name of the Southern Kingdom while the Northern Kingdom was known as Joseph (cf. **Zech 10:6**). The Chronicler will deal extensively with the military power of Benjamin and its distinguished role among the people of Israel, but the promise to Abraham would be realized through Judah. Political power would come to be centered in David as the descendant of Judah. Before the formation of the nation, Judah had prevailed among his brothers.

TEXT: I Chronicles 4:24-43

TITLE: *TRIBE OF SIMEON – INVISIBLE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN BY GOD*

BIG IDEA:

HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES CANNOT COMPROMISE GOD'S KINGDOM AGENDA – WHICH INCLUDES THE FORGOTTEN TRIBE OF SIMEON

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: The second half of **ch. 4 (vv.24–43)** provides the genealogical summary of the tribe of Simeon, whose history was intertwined with that of Judah, given that Simeon's tribal territory was located within the tribal territory of Judah (cf. **Jos 19:1–9**).

J. Barton Payne: Simeon, with Levi, was scattered among the tribes because of the massacre of Shechem (**Gen 34:24-30; 49:5-7**).

Andrew Hill: The sources for the Chronicler's genealogy of Simeon include the records pertaining to Israel's (i.e., Jacob) second son by Leah found in **Genesis 46:10; Exodus 6:15; Numbers 26:12–14**; and **Joshua 19:2–8**. The lists of descendants in **Genesis 46:10** and **Exodus 6:15** name six sons of Simeon, while **Numbers 26:12–14** and **1 Chronicles 4:24** omit the name Ohad and cite only five sons. The Chronicler is unique among all the biblical sources in naming the third son Jarib instead of Jachin. . .

The genealogy demonstrates both **breadth** (the listing of a single generation of descendants from a common ancestor, e.g., 4:24) and **depth** (the listing of successive generations, e.g., 4:25–27). The passage reflects a three-part structure typical of the genealogical records of the lesser Hebrew tribes:

- the genealogy proper (4:24–27),
- settlements (4:28–33), and
- leaders and conquests (4:34–43).

Numerous **subfeatures** of the genealogy have been identified:

- the name list (a catalog of proper names, whether person or places, e.g., 4:28–31),
- the muster roll (a list of fighting men, e.g., 4:34–37) and
- tally (a cardinal number attached to the genealogical record, e.g., 4:42), and
- a battle report (a summary of a military encounter, e.g., 4:41–43). . .

The record of Israel's past serves as a barometer of sorts, indicating the full measure of covenant blessings God is capable of bestowing on the current generation of Jews.

August Konkel: Simeon was partner with Judah when the settlement in Canaan began (**Judg 1:1–3**). The settlements of Simeon were located within territory of Judah (cf.

Josh 19:1), in the southern regions. Simeon did not proliferate as did the other tribes (**1 Chron 4:27**). The history of Simeon was necessarily included with that of Judah, but the people of Simeon were distinguished from the divinely chosen tribe of royalty. Simeon therefore is first in the numeration of the tribes following the history of the royal family.

Thomas Constable: This section can be subdivided as follows:

- (1) the five founding families of Simeon (**vv. 24-27**; cf. **Gen. 49:10**; **Exod. 6:15**; **Num. 26:12-14**),
- (2) the 18 towns of Simeon (**vv. 28-33**; cf. **Josh. 19:2-6**), and
- (3) the emigrations of Simeonite families into other districts (**vv. 34-43**).

I. (:24-27) GENEALOGICAL SURVEY OF SIMEON

Frederick Mabie: Following a brief genealogical sketch of the Simeonites (**vv.24–27**) that includes a brief notation on the small size of Simeon vis-à-vis Judah (**v.27**), the Chronicler enumerates the towns that were settled by the descendants of Simeon (cf. **Jos 19:1–9**). The tribal territory of Simeon occupied a small area completely surrounded by the tribal territory of Judah. Over the course of time Simeon was effectively subsumed into Judah and ceased to be a distinct tribal entity. This near landlessness of Simeon together with that of Levi reflects the prophetic “*blessing*” of Jacob on his sons, which includes the scattering of Levi and Simeon (**Ge 49:5–7**) in the light of their response to the situation with their sister Dinah (cf. **Ge 34**). The Chronicler’s inclusion of the descendants of Simeon along with their long-lost tribal inheritance may be intended to instill hope that God’s covenantal promises (land and otherwise) still have significance for his people.

A. (:24-26) Sons of Simeon

“The sons of Simeon were Nemuel and Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Shaul; 25 Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. 26 And the sons of Mishma were Hammuel his son, Zaccur his son, Shimei his son.”

B. (:27) Comparison between Simeon and Judah

“Now Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brothers did not have many sons, nor did all their family multiply like the sons of Judah.”

David Guzik: The census data both at the beginning and the end of the Book of Numbers indicates that the population of the tribe of Simeon decreased radically during the wilderness years of the exodus. They were among the largest tribes at the beginning and among the smallest tribes at the end.

II. (:28-33) GEOGRAPHICAL SETTLEMENTS OF SIMEON (CITIES AND VILLAGES)

“And they lived at Beersheba, Moladah, and Hazar-shual, 29 at Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30 Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31 Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susim, Beth-biri, and Shaaraim. These were their cities until the reign of David. 32 And their villages were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan, five cities; 33 and all their villages that were around the same cities as far as Baal. These were their settlements, and they have their genealogy.”

August Konkler: In Joshua these cities are presented as an inheritance (vv. 1, 9), but in Chronicles they are described as native dwellings of the Levites. The Chronicler presents an alternate perspective of settlement, unrelated to the conquest, which appears to have been present in his sources (Japhet 1979). This was God’s design for his people to accomplish his purpose. The Chronicler interrupts the Joshua source to point out that this was the situation when David came to reign (1 Chron 4:31). This chronological notation is critical to the purpose of his history. The reign of David and Solomon becomes the ideal of the kingdom of God. Historically, the nation has had opportunity to return to this dominion of God. This is the essence of what the nation of Israel was meant to be. In the viewpoint of the Chronicler, Israel may yet be what it is.

John Schultz: These are cities in southern Canaan that are mentioned in Joshua.

- 1) Beesheba – **Jos. 15:28; 19:2**
- 2) Moladah – **Jos. 15:26; 19:2; Neh. 11:26**
- 3) Hazar-shual – **Jos. 15:28; 19:3; Neh. 11:27**
- 4) Bilhah – **Jos. 19:3** (“*Balah*”)
- 5) Ezrem – only here
- 6) Tolad – only here
- 7) Bethuel – only here, but possibly
 - a. the “*Bethul*” of **Jos. 19:4**
 - b. the “*Bethel*” of **1 Sam. 30:27**
- 8) Hormah – **Jos. 12:14; 15:30; 19:4** (changed to “*Zephath*”)
- 9) Ziklag – **Jos. 15:31; 19:5**
- 10) Beth-marcaboth – **Jos. 19:5**
- 11) Hazar-susim (or “*susal*”) – **Jos. 15:28; 19:5**
- 12) Beth-biri – **Jos. 19:6** (Beth-lehaoth)
- 13) Shaaraim – **Jos. 15:36; 1 Sam. 17:52**

III. (:34-43) GROWING EXPANSION

Frederick Mabie: Following a list of Simeonite clan leaders (vv.34–38), the Chronicler summarizes the successful tribal expansion of Simeon to the west (vv.39–41) and to the east/southeast (vv.42–43). The description of this expansion is reminiscent of the Danite tribal migration noted in **Judges 17–18** (compare **Jdg 18:7, 27–28** with **vv.39–41** above). The exact location of the Hamites (vv.40–41; cf. **1Ch 1:8–16; Ge 10:6–20**) is unknown, but their association with the Arabian Meunites (v.41) might imply the western or southwestern Negev region. The Meunites are also associated with the southern region of Transjordan and parts of the Sinai.

A. (:34-38) Clan Leaders and the Numeric Expansion of Their Households

“And Meshobab and Jamlech and Joshah the son of Amaziah, 35 and Joel and Jehu the son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, 36 and Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, 37 Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah; 38 these mentioned by name were leaders in their families; and their fathers' houses increased greatly.”

August Konkel: Enrollment in a genealogical record is an indication of notable rank: families are remembered by their leading representatives. A “*chieftain*” may be the leader of a tribe or a military leader (cf. **Num 1:4, 16**), but the term is used as the title of a respected and exalted individual (**Gen 23:6; 34:2**).

Mark Boda: These descendants are seen as enjoying great success as “*the house of their fathers exploded greatly*” (NLT, “*their families grew*”) a verb that is used in relation to an explosion of human population (**Gen 28:14; Exod 1:12; 2 Chr 11:23; Isa 54:3; Hos 4:10**) as well as of material wealth (**Gen 30:30, 43; Job 1:10**).

B. (:39-43) Tribal Geographic Expansion to Secure Adequate Pastureland

Iain Duguid: Some Simeonites expanded westward in successful search for pasture, possibly at the time of Hezekiah’s campaign in Philistine territory (**4:34–41; 3 2 Kings 18:8**). Yet another group went eastward into the region of Edom, remaining separate from Judah (**1 Chron. 4:42–43**). The Simeonites are included among those who “*were residing*” with Judah and Benjamin at the time of Asa (**2 Chron. 15:9**). The tribe may not have been strong, but they did occupy the land they were given, experiencing provision and victory as they expanded.

Andrew Hill: The example of geographical expansion is a reminder of the reality that territorial boundaries were always shifting, given the rise and fall of political fortunes in the ancient world. In the past the nation of Israel prospered materially and expanded geographically in accordance with her collective obedience to the stipulations of Yahweh’s covenant. The Chronicler understands that the earth is the Lord’s (**Ps. 24:1**) and that as owner of the land, God can restore to Israel what he once gave them (e.g., **Deut. 1:8; 3:18; 8:10**). Likewise, Israel has received the land as a divine gift by faith in Yahweh’s covenant promises, and so by means of covenant renewal Israel can again be restored in the land of her ancestors (cf. **Neh. 9:36–37; 10:28–39**).

1. (39-41) Expansion to the West

“And they went to the entrance of Gedor, even to the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. 40 And they found rich and good pasture, and the land was broad and quiet and peaceful; for those who lived there formerly were Hamites. 41 And these, recorded by name, came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and attacked their tents, and the Meunites who were found there, and destroyed them utterly to this

day, and lived in their place; because there was pasture there for their flocks.”

2. (:42-43) Expansion to East/Southeast

“And from them, from the sons of Simeon, five hundred men went to Mount Seir, with Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi, as their leaders. 43 And they destroyed the remnant of the Amalekites who escaped, and have lived there to this day.”

August Konkel: The Chronicler also knows of a later expansion to the east into the territory of Edom (**1 Chron 4:42–43**). The traditional Mount Seir is located to the southeast of the Dead Sea. A military force of five hundred Simeonites was involved in the raid; David’s soldiers numbered four hundred (**1 Sam 22:2**) or six hundred (**23:13**). The Amalekites were decimated in wars with Saul (**1 Sam 14:48; 15:2–3**) and David (**1 Sam 30:1; 2 Sam 8:12**). The Simeonites attacked at a time when the Amalekites were weakened after a military disaster. While other tribes expanded peacefully, the Simeonites were legendary for their violent ways (**Gen 34:25–29; 49:5–7**). The Chronicler reports the Simeonites as living in these areas until this day. It is possible that this is not just the time in which the record was written, but to the time of the Chronicler himself. The Babylonian exile never deported all of the Israelite peoples.

J. Barton Payne: For after the division of Solomon’s kingdom in 930 B.C., elements of Simeon either moved to the north or at least adopted its religious practices (cf. the inclusion of Beersheba along with the shrines of Ephraim that are condemned in **Amos 5:5**).... Other Simeonites carried on in a seminomadic life in isolated areas that they could occupy, such as those noted at the close of this chapter.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What sin led to the downfall of the tribe of Simeon?
- 2) How did God sustain the flocks of the tribe of Simeon when they ran out of sufficient pastureland?
- 3) Do you ever feel forgotten by God as if He has abandoned you in terms of His program for the future?
- 4) How can we hold on to the faithfulness of God – even in the face of our own unfaithfulness?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

J.A. Thompson: The section on Simeon serves to underline several features of the Chronicler's thinking. In the beginning of his discussion about the sons of Israel (2:1–2) he refers to the **twelve tribes**. The concept of twelve tribes was an **ideal**. Simeon, in fact, disappeared as a geographical and political entity long before the Chronicler wrote. Simeon's earlier history is also obscure, but its association with southern Judah was remembered. He is given a place among the lots set out in **Josh 19:1–9**, where the point is made that “*Judah's portion was more than they needed. So the Simeonites received their inheritance within the territory of Judah.*”

It seems odd to us that the Chronicler should detail the genealogical history of a tribe that, by his day, had all but vanished. But he is **presenting the ideal of Simeon as one of the tribes of Israel in tension with the historical reality of Simeon as a nonentity**. He selectively portrays the vitality of Simeon in order to show that historical circumstances have not brought an end to the ideal plan of God. By extension, the whole nation of Israel was a mere shadow of its Davidic glory by the time the Chronicler wrote, and yet he is asserting that ideal of Israel has not perished in God's eyes.

Beersheba was a focal point for Simeon, though his area was absorbed into Judah in David's time. Expansion of Simeon into Philistine areas (vv. 39–41) and into Edomite areas (vv. 42–43) brought them once again into regions occupied by Judah. It was evidently well known that Simeon was incorporated into Judah. Whether Simeon continued to maintain its tribal identity is impossible to say. Some of the towns referred to in **1 Chr 4:24** are mentioned in **Nehemiah 11** as being resettled by the returning exiles in areas to the south of Judah. They may have found people in these areas whom they recognized as their kinsmen. But enough has been recorded to secure the place of Simeon within the family of Israel and to stress the significance of the idea of “*all Israel.*”

Andrew Hill: The account serves as an exhortation to those postexilic Jews still inhabiting the very same towns and villages settled by the descendants of Simeon (cf. **Neh. 11:26–29**). Theologically, the Chronicler's selective portrayal of Simeon shows that historical circumstances have not thwarted God's initiative in the ideal of the twelve tribes of Israel. The presentation of Simeon as one of the twelve, given the historical reality of the tribe of Simeon as a nonentity by the time of the Chronicler, mirrors the situation for all the Israelite tribes in one sense after the Exile. The boundaries of the ancient Israelite territories have been radically altered, if not erased altogether. Tribal and clan distinctions have been blurred by numerous deportations and generations of intermarriage. But “*all Israel*” as the people of God continue to possess a portion of the land of God's promise—the covenant inheritance bequeathed to Abraham's descendants (**Gen. 12:1–3**). . .

Theologically, the focus of this third section of Simeon's genealogy is **faithfulness**—the faithfulness of God's Word concerning the destiny of Simeon as uttered by Jacob

(**Gen. 49:5–7**), the faithfulness of the Simeonites in possessing the land allotted to them by Joshua (note the correspondence of the place names between **Josh. 19:2–9** and **1 Chron. 4:28–33**), the faithfulness of God in helping the Simeonites overcome their enemies (cf. **Deut. 1:30; 3:22**), and the faithfulness of Shimei’s family in trusting God for the expansion of the Simeonite tribal holdings (**1 Chron. 4:38–43**). These are all important examples of a faithful God blessing his faithful people—a necessary history lesson for the Chronicler’s audience. . .

The Chronicler uses the genealogy of Simeon to address a phenomenon common to the human experience, namely, the **tendency to glorify the past**. Each generation is troubled by the disparity perceived between their understanding of the ideal life and their observation of reality. Often the idealized life is associated with the past, the notion of “the good old days.” Sometimes the actual or the contemporary situation is discounted against the future, in the sense that those things yet to come are presumed to be better than present conditions. In either case, the assumption is that the virtue of current circumstances pales when compared to the golden past or the silver-lined future.

..

The Bible dispels the myth that the past is better than the present, as the Hebrew sage cautions against even asking such questions (**Eccl. 7:10**). Jesus himself indicated each day has enough trouble of its own, so worrying about the future is futile (**Matt. 6:34**). The Bible also discourages living in the future because tomorrow is uncertain and the future is unknown to finite mortals (cf. **Matt. 24:42; James 4:13–16**). Essentially, that means we must live in “this day”—as recognized by the Jews (e.g., **Deut 30:15; Josh. 24:15; Ps. 118:24; Eccl. 5:18–20**) and affirmed by the teaching of the New Testament (e.g., **Matt. 6:11; Luke 19:9; Acts 22:16; Heb. 3:13**). . .

Despite the danger of escapism into memories, the Bible invites reflection on the past because the act of remembering is inherently educational. Israel’s primary mode of knowing is narrative or story, and only remembering the story of her past will keep Israel true to her divine calling. . .

The Chronicler offers his people a similar invitation. In general, his recitation of Hebrew history is a **theology of hope** couched in the call to remember the words and deeds of God connected with the Davidic covenant. Specifically here, the genealogy of Simeon is intended to stir the memory of postexilic Israel because they too have assumed they are living in the days of “*small things*” (cf. **Zech. 4:10**). . .

For the Chronicler the memory of Simeon is both **retrospect** (meditation on the past) and **prospect** (anticipation for the future). The God who prospered the initiatives of the Simeonites is the very same God who stirred Cyrus to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. Thus, careful reflection on the history of Israel serves two purposes.

- (1) It instills confidence in the future. Postexilic Israel has every reason to believe that the pattern of God’s activity in history will continue.
- (2) It functions as a catalyst in the restoration community.

The religious vitality and social mobilization of Israel is always conditioned by her ability to remember the words and deeds of God (cf. **Deut. 8:18; Neh. 4:14**). Whether as an antidote for times of individual and national distress (**Ps. 77:11–12**), as spiritual therapy prompting repentance and confession of sin (**Ps. 25:6–7**), or as an act of worship encouraging service to others in the name of God (**Deut. 15:12–15**), this activity of remembrance is essential to proper relationship with God.

Mark Boda: Before moving on to the first of two sections on the northern tribes (**ch 5** on the Transjordan tribes and **ch 7** on the Cisjordan tribes), the Chronicler first recounts the descendants of Simeon, who were considered within the orbit of the tribe of Judah. This section contains a significant amount of extranominal (non-name) material, possibly because the genealogical source material was sparse for this tribe.

TEXT: I Chronicles 5:1-26

TITLE: THE TRANSJORDANIAN TRIBES

BIG IDEA:

**THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD TO HIS COVENANT STIPULATIONS
ENABLES INITIAL MILITARY SUCCESS FOR THE TRANSJORDANIAN
TRIBES BUT EVENTUALLY RELEGATES THEM TO EXILE DUE TO
IDOLATRY**

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: As part of his survey of “*all Israel*,” the Chronicler now turns his attention to the Transjordanian tribes of Reuben, Gad, and (part) Manasseh. Prior to Israel’s entry into Canaan, Israel acquired land in Transjordan in conjunction with the defeat of Sihon and Og (cf. **Nu 21:21–35; Dt 2:24–3:10**). The area taken from Sihon extended from the border of Moab at the Arnon River/Wadi to the Jabbok River/Wadi and eastward to the border of the Ammonites. The allure of this region, given its agricultural richness and prime grazing areas (cf. Lot in **Ge 13**), prompted Reuben and Gad to seek the “*land of Gilead*” as their inheritance (**Nu 32**).

Although not well received initially (cf. **Nu 32:6–15**), this Transjordanian territory is ultimately allotted to Reuben, Gad, and part of Manasseh (cf. **Nu 32:33**). Although efforts were made to ensure that the Jordan River did not divide the tribes of Israel (cf. **Jos 22:21–34**), it nevertheless functioned as a barrier to tribal integration. As with the tribe of Simeon, these tribes had long ceased to exist within their original tribal territory by the time of the Chronicler. As such, the Chronicler’s presentation of the genealogical material of these tribes continues his emphasis on showing continuity between the past and present that can foster hope within his postexilic audience. With this in mind, the Chronicler’s remarks on God’s blessing and enablement to those who cry out to him in prayer and trust (**vv.20–22**) stand in important contrast to the remarks on God’s judgment of those who persist in covenantal unfaithfulness (**vv.25–26**).

Andrew Hill: The purpose of the passage is twofold.

- (1) The account explains the prominence of the tribe of Judah even though Reuben was the firstborn son of Jacob (renamed Israel).

- (2) The record contributes to the Chronicler’s goal of including all the tribes of Israel in the ideal “*all Israel*” identity he seeks to establish for the postexilic community.

J.A. Thompson: Up to this point the Chronicler has dealt with Judah and Simeon. But following his scheme of giving the total tribal picture built around the three central tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin who remained faithful to the Davidic kingship and the temple, he needed to give attention also to the other tribes. The first of these in his

order was the tribe of Reuben (5:1–10). We may postulate that the Chronicler had a source which preserved some personal details about Reuben and his descendants and brief notes of a very localized nature concerning pastures for their flocks.

I. (:1-10) TRIBE OF REUBEN

A. (:1-2) Explanation of the Demotion of Reuben from First-Born Privileges

“Now the sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel (for he was the first-born, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; so that he is not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright. 2 Though Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came the leader, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph),”

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler's genealogical summary of the tribal line of Reuben has an almost immediate digression that seeks to explain why the firstborn of Jacob's sons (namely, Reuben) was not afforded the typical benefits of the firstborn expected within the biblical world (note the repetition of “firstborn” in vv.1–3). As with the near landlessness of Simeon (see comments on 4:24–31), the basis for this demotion is based on an event within the story line of Genesis (the situation with Jacob's concubine Bilhah; cf. Ge 35:22) and anticipated in Jacob's prophetic “blessings” on his sons (cf. Ge 49:3–4). The demotion of Reuben is coupled with the promotion of Joseph, which also draws on the content of Genesis (cf. Ge 48:5; Dt 21:15–17).

August Konkel: The Chronicler distinguishes three levels of status for Reuben, Joseph, and Judah. At the death of Rachel, Reuben tried to prevent Bilhah from assuming his mother's position as the chief wife of his father (**Gen 35:22**; cf. **49:3–4**). His attempt to prematurely lay claim to his inheritance and become successor to his father resulted in disgrace and loss of leadership (Sarna 1989: 244–45). The birthright was given to Joseph, who achieved a special distinction from his father. Joseph's two sons became sons to Jacob (**Gen 48:5**). Each of them received an inheritance, so that Joseph was given a double portion (**48:22**), the right of the firstborn (**Deut 21:17**). The Chronicler uses this interpretation of the Genesis record to say that Reuben could not be registered as having the birthright (**1 Chron 5:1**), though he was the firstborn.

This interpretation is consistent with the tradition of Israel. Reuben is first in naming the tribal representatives (**Num 1:5–15**), but Judah occupies the primary position in the encampment of the tribes (**2:3–31**) and in the order of presenting daily offerings (**7:12–83**). According to the blessing of Jacob, the scepter belonged to Judah and would not be taken from him (**Gen 49:8–12**). Judah was the lion among his brothers, and they would bow before him.

J.A. Thompson: Normally the firstborn son would have taken precedence. But Reuben, Jacob's eldest son, born to Leah (**Gen 29:32; 35:23; 49:3; Exod 6:14; Num 1:20; 26:5**) defiled his father's bed (**Gen 35:22; 49:4b**) and was displaced from the first place in favor of Judah. Further, Reuben was associated with Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. As a result, Reuben was not listed in the genealogical record in accordance

with his birthright. Perhaps another factor that influenced the Chronicler in dropping Reuben from his place in the tribal list in favor of Joseph was that Joseph was the firstborn son of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife. Fathers could determine who was the "eldest" son, especially when the normal heir had committed an offense.

B. (:3-10) History of the Tribe of Reuben

Martin Selman: The Reubenites' history is divided into at least three periods (vv. 3-6, 7-9, 10). Beerah (v. 6) seems to represent the end of the tribe's existence when they were exiled by Tiglathpileser III (*Tilgathpilneser*, here and **2 Chr. 28:20**), probably in 733 BC. . . **Verses 7-10** describe Reubenite expansion in earlier times. Arver, Nebo, and Baal-meon (v. 8) were recaptured from Ahab by Mesha King of Moab in the second half of the ninth century BC. (cf. **Num. 32:3, 38; Josh. 13:16-17**). The Hagarites (v. 1-10, cf. vv. 19-21), who were defeated in Saul's time in the eleventh century BC, were associated both with the Arabs (cf. Hagar) and the Moabites (**Ps. 83:6**).

1. (:3-6) Genealogical Survey Up to the Exile

"the sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel were Hanoah and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. 4 The sons of Joel were Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, 5 Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, 6 Beerah his son, whom Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria carried away into exile; he was leader of the Reubenites."

2. (:7-9) Geographical Expansion

"And his kinsmen by their families, in the genealogy of their generations, were Jeiel the chief, then Zechariah 8 and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who lived in Aroer, even to Nebo and Baal-meon. 9 And to the east he settled as far as the entrance of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, because their cattle had increased in the land of Gilead."

August Konkel: The Chronicler's concern is the documentation of authority and genealogical relationships. He discusses registration of the families of Beerah (v. 7a) according to the subdivisions of each tribe. Unlike Joshua, where individual families are not identified (cf. **Josh 13:15, 24, 29**), the Chronicler supplies some of the tribal subdivisions. There is no indication when this registration occurred; it could have been any time from Saul to the Assyrian period.

Frederick Mabie: The geographical extent of the Reubenites of v.8 reflects Reuben's early territorial hub to the north of Moab (i.e., north of the Arnon River/Wadi) and west of Ammon, while the geographical markers in v.9 reflect eastward expansion by the tribe. Thus, as he did with the tribe of Simeon, the Chronicler highlights military successes and territorial expansions of the tribe of Reuben (vv.8-10), which resulted in additional pastureland for the tribe (recall the prayer of Jabez [4:9-10]).

Mark Boda: Although in the first half of this genealogy (**5:1-6**) the Chronicler was honest about Reuben's loss of firstborn status and blessing and did not hide the exilic nightmare his tribe faced in the Assyrian period, the second half (**5:7-10**) highlights signs of blessing with extensive tribal territory, accumulation of wealth, and success in battle.

3. (:10) Military Conquest of the Hagrites

“And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagrites, who fell by their hand, so that they occupied their tents throughout all the land east of Gilead.”

II. (:11-17) TRIBE OF GAD

“Now the sons of Gad lived opposite them in the land of Bashan as far as Salekah. 12 Joel was the chief, and Shapham the second, then Janai and Shaphat in Bashan. 13 And their kinsmen of their fathers' households were Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber, seven. 14 These were the sons of Abihail, the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; 15 Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, was head of their fathers' households. 16 And they lived in Gilead, in Bashan and in its towns, and in all the pasture lands of Sharon, as far as their borders. 17 All of these were enrolled in the genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.”

August Konkel: The tribe of Gad settled next to Reuben in the territory of Bashan (v. 11). Bashan is the fertile basaltic tableland mainly north of the Yarmuk, the river that flows into the Jordan just south of the Sea of Galilee. The area was proverbial for its cattle ranges (**Amos 4:1**). Mount Hauran (Jebel Druze) rises east of Bashan, protecting it from the desert; its snow-capped peaks have significant rainfall in spite of its eastern location. Salekah is the traditional eastern province of Bashan (**Deut 3:10; Josh 12:5; 13:11**), often associated with a spur of Mount Hauran. This is far north of the original settlement of Gad and the Arnon in Dibon, Ataroth, and Aroer (**Num 32:34**). The Gadites migrated northward, making Ramoth Gilead one of their cities (**Deut 4:43**). The Chronicler describes the Gadites as occupying Bashan alongside the half-tribe of Manasseh.

The Gadite record begins with one clan distinguished by four notable leaders and a total of eleven family heads (**1 Chron 5:12–13**). These are not connected to other known genealogies (**Gen 46:16; Num 26:15–17**). The relationship of the sons of Abihail (**1 Chron 5:14**) to the previous families is ambiguous. The name Ahi is textually uncertain (v. 15). Abihail may be regarded as the father of the preceding eleven family heads, having a pedigree of seven generations. Ahi is then identified as a chief among these Gadite clans, though his relationship to Joel, the first chief mentioned (v. 12), is left unexplained. If the name Ahi is omitted, Abihail is an earlier chief with a genealogy of nine more generations.

Gilead is a rugged mountain region that reaches altitudes of over three thousand feet on the north and south sides of the Jabbok. The actual tableland is fairly narrow, as the western slopes dominate the area, and the eastern desert draws nearer than Bashan, which has the protection of the Hauran Mountains. Gilead sometimes is a general reference to Transjordan; in the genealogy Gilead is a descendant of Gad (v. 14). The depiction of Gilead and the outlying villages of Bashan is unusual (v. 16); normally the expression is used of villages surrounding a major city, such as Jabesh in the mountainous area of northern Gilead. It may be that “*Jabesh*” was the original reading (Knoppers 2004a: 379); the loss of an initial letter *yod* resulted in the reading Bashan. In the Mesha Inscription of Moab, Sharon is a region or city in the area of Medeba, the northern area of Moab. “*Pasturelands*” is a term used for a designated grazing area about one thousand yards outside of town limits (Num 35:1–5). If this identification of Sharon is correct, the Chronicler names the northern and southern regions of Gad.

Eugene Merrill: The Gadites settled in Bashan, south and east of the Sea of Kinnereth and north of the Yarmuk River. There was no clearly defined border between Gilead and Bashan (v. 16) so no doubt the Eastern tribes mingled rather freely.

J.A. Thompson: The discussion on Gad is short, a mere seven verses. It does not contain material from the lists of Gen 46:6; Num 26:15–18 or from the list of those in David's army in 1 Chr 12:9–13. The Chronicler must have had access to an independent source. The list contains some important geographical information and an account of the Hagarite war.

Andrew Hill: During Old Testament times **Bashan** was an extremely fertile plateau and was renowned for its grain harvests and served as pasturage for cattle (cf. Deut. 32:14) and as a source of timber (cf. Isa. 2:13). The desire for control of this highly productive real estate led to repeated warfare between Israel and Aram.

III. (:18-22) MILITARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

“The sons of Reuben and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, consisting of valiant men, men who bore shield and sword and shot with bow, and were skillful in battle, were 44,760, who went to war. 19 And they made war against the Hagarites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. 20 And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites and all who were with them were given into their hand; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He was entreated for them, because they trusted in Him. 21 And they took away their cattle: their 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys, and 100,000 men. 22 For many fell slain, because the war was of God. And they settled in their place until the exile.”

Martin Selman: These verses are a summary dealing with expansion and conquest by the two-and-a-half tribes.

J.A. Thompson: **V. 18** -- We are given a glimpse of the composition of these military forces in three descriptions:

- “*men who could handle shield and sword,*”
- “*who could use a bow,*” and
- “*who were trained for battle.*”

V. 20 -- What is transparent from this report is that the impressive military credentials of the Transjordan tribes were not the deciding factor in their victory. God's response to their prayer prompted his intervention and their final victory (cf. **2 Chr 6:34–39**). Here is another piece of evidence collected by the Chronicler to demonstrate his ardent belief that kingship was not necessary for Israel to regain its lands and restore its good fortunes. What was required was a people devoted to God. A feature of the Chronicler's theology was that when God's people called on God in the day of battle, he helped them and handed their foes over to them. They cried out to God, they trusted him, and he answered their prayers.

Frederick Mabie: Although the genealogy of the half-tribe of Manasseh has not yet been given (cf. **vv.23–24**), the Chronicler provides an account of the three Transjordanian tribes that intersects with the crux of his message, namely, God's faithfulness to effect covenantal blessings to those who seek him (**vv.20–22**). When God is sought and trusted by his people, the battle of his people becomes his own battle (**v.22**; cf. **Dt 20:4**; **Lev 26:6–8**).

The theme of God's faithfulness is stressed over and over again by the Chronicler, no doubt for the encouragement of the postexilic community (cf. **Jer 29:10–14**). Conversely, as the summary of the genealogy of the Transjordanian tribes will show (**5:25–26**), God is also “faithful” to bring about covenantal consequences for disobedience and unfaithfulness.

August Konkel: The Hagrites were allied with three other Arabic tribes. Jetur and Naphish are found elsewhere in the genealogies, among the descendants of Ishmael (**Gen 25:15**; **1 Chron 1:31**). The battle description makes God the warrior on behalf of the three tribes, as in Pharaoh's defeat as Israel crossed the Red Sea or the fall of Jericho. The victory was not a result of military strategy or the massive number of warriors present. Land is a gift of God to his people; it is consistent with the Chronicler's theology that trust in God is rewarded with his provision.

Eugene Merrill: The chronicler interrupted the genealogies to comment on military matters common to the Eastern tribes. He recounted their war with the Hagrites (cf. **v. 10**) and their allies. The Transjordanian tribes, with their 44,760 soldiers, achieved a signal triumph by God's help in answer to their prayers. The number of captured livestock was huge (**v. 21**), revealing that that land area was fertile for sheep grazing. This occurred in the days of Saul (**v. 10**), perhaps in connection with Saul's Ammonite wars (cf. **1 Sam. 1:1-11**). The Hagrites, known now from Assyrian inscriptions, were replaced by the victorious Israelites until the Exile (**1 Chron. 5:22**), perhaps the

Assyrian Captivity of some Israelites led by Tiglath-Pileser III in 734 B.C. (not to be confused with the final Assyrian Captivity of Israel in 722 B.C.).

IV. (:23-26) TRANSJORDANIAN MANASSEH

A. (:23-24) Summary of Manasseh's Significance

1. (:23) Multiplied within Specific Geographic Areas

“Now the sons of the half-tribe of Manasseh lived in the land; from Bashan to Baal-hermon and Senir and Mount Hermon they were numerous.”

2. (:24) Major Leaders

“And these were the heads of their fathers' households, even Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty men of valor, famous men, heads of their fathers' households.”

B. (:25-26) Spiritual Failure Resulting in Exile

“But they acted treacherously against the God of their fathers, and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. 26 So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, even the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away into exile, namely the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and to the river of Gozan, to this day.”

Mark Boda: By linking the Exile to unfaithfulness, the Chronicler is again foreshadowing one of the key themes in his narrative work (see the account of Manasseh in **2 Chr 33**). Such unfaithfulness is consistently linked there as here to illicit worship of foreign gods, here described in terms of breaking marital vows. The results of such behavior throughout his narrative account is divine discipline, the ultimate expression of which is invasion by foreign armies and exile to foreign lands.

John Schultz: The final paragraph provides **reasons for the exile** of the northern tribes in general and the Transjordan tribes in particular. It follows Chronicles' typical practice of quoting earlier biblical material, in this case using **2 Kings 17:7-23** as a general background and selecting specific information from **2 Kings 15:19, 29; 17:6; 18:11**. But more importantly, it follows almost exactly the structure of the explanation of Judah's exile in **2 Chronicles 36:14-20**, occasionally employing even the same wording. The same four essential elements are found in both passages.

- (a) Israel and Judah were unfaithful to God (cf. **2 Chr. 36:14 ...**)
- (b) they were especially condemned for their idolatry (cf. **2 Chr. 36:14**);
- (c) God sent a foreign army to punish his people (cf. **2 Chr. 36:17**); and
- (d) they went into exile (cf. **2 Chr. 36:18-20**).

Frederick Mabie: Although the Chronicler has pointed out the successes of the Transjordanian tribes as they sought him (cf. **vv.20-22**), this summary of their genealogy reflects the reality that ultimately these tribes were unfaithful to God (cf. **2Ki**

17:7–17). In the light of the covenantal unfaithfulness of these tribes, God is “faithful” to bring about promised covenantal consequences for disobedience and unfaithfulness, including defeat by enemies (cf. **Lev 26:14–17**; **Dt 28:48**). The sovereign agency of God is seen in his use of the Neo-Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (ca. 745–27 BC; spelled “*Pilneser*” by the Chronicler and also noted by his throne name “*Pul*”), whom God “*stirred up*” both to defeat and disperse the Transjordanian tribes (**v.26**; cf. **Isa 10:5**).

August Konkel: The exile of the Transjordanian tribes was because of their unfaithfulness to the covenant, described as an adulterous relationship with other gods (**v. 25**). The campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser were primarily directed against Damascus, but his campaigns included northern Israel (**2 Kings 15:29**). A summary inscription in Tiglath-Pileser’s annals recounts the overthrow of Pekah, whose base of operations began in Transjordan (COS 2.291, Summary Inscription 9–10). The location of the deportation is known from **2 Kings 17:6**. Gozan was a location on the Habur River, a tributary to the Euphrates. Halah was a town and district northeast of Nineveh; the name Hara describes this area as the mountain. From the viewpoint of the Chronicler, that territory remained in exile in his time.

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler’s consistent understanding of **God’s sovereignty** is worth noting. It is God who stirred the spirit of the king of Assyria to judge the sin of Israel (**1 Chron. 5:26**). Likewise, it is God who stirred the spirit of the king of Persia to permit the Jews to return to their covenant homeland (cf. **2 Chron. 36:22–23**).

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How does the demotion of Reuben teach Israel important lessons about not basing their spiritual privileges on just physical connection to the family of Abraham?
- 2) How is God able to bless His covenant people with important victories?
- 3) How can we encourage one another to remain faithful to the Lord and not drift away into spiritual complacency?
- 4) How do idolatry and religious syncretism creep into a culture that previously had experienced such spiritual blessing?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler has taken great care to establish the primacy of the tribe of Judah as the “true center” of Israel (**2:3–4:23**). For him the Davidic covenant makes

the tribe of Judah the true center of the Israelites both historically and theologically. The focus of the genealogical prologue now moves east to the tribes of the Transjordan: Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. The literary structure of each tribal record here is similar to that of the genealogy of Simeon, featuring a three-part pattern: the genealogical register, related geographical materials, and select historical notes. As stated previously, the Chronicler's concern for the story of all the Israelite tribes is necessary to present a complete historical overview of Israel to his postexilic audience. The "twelve tribes" genealogical prologue is also important given the Chronicler's theological emphasis on the restoration community as the representation of "*all Israel*."

The Chronicler has spliced three originally independent tribal lists into a unified record of Israelite occupation of the Transjordan. In addition to the contiguous location of the three tribes east of the Jordan River, the clause "*lived next to them*" (5:11) logically joins Gad with Reuben in a sociological context. The repeated reference to all three of the Transjordan tribes (5:18, 26) also emphasizes the common heritage and shared experience of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh. More tragically, the destinies of the three tribes are entwined historically and theologically since all were exiled by the Assyrians (5:6, 22, 26). . .

According to Wilcock, this section of the genealogy preserves two experiences of opposite kinds.¹² These contrasting experiences are principal themes in Chronicles, and they essentially characterize the history of Israel in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Chron. 14:10; 18:13; 2 Chron. 13:12).

- The first of these antithetical experiences is victory in battle and the expansion of tribal boundaries because God helps his people (specifically victory over the Hagarites and their allies).
- The second experience, as tragic as the first was triumphant, is defeat at the hands of enemies and exile from the land of covenant promise (namely, the conquest of Israel by the king of Assyria, 1 Chron. 5:26)—something anticipated by Moses and cited as a threat in his historical sermon to the generation of Israelites about to enter the land of Canaan (cf. Deut. 4:25–31).

Like Moses, the Chronicler is concerned that the Israelites not suffer the latter experience by repeating the history of an earlier generation corrupted by idolatry and destroyed for unbelief (Deut. 1:35; 2:14–15; cf. Heb. 3:15–19). If that lesson from history were not enough, the writer drives the point home by recounting the sin of Reuben that led to his loss of the blessing normally reserved for the firstborn son (1 Chron. 5:1–2). The Chronicler must warn his audience of spiritual complacency spawned by an attitude of arrogance rooted in Israel's election as God's "firstborn" (Ex. 4:22; cf. Deut. 9:5). Selman offers the sober reminder that status before God is not a right inherited but a matter of privilege earned by obedience to the word of God.

As his final exclamation point, the Chronicler adds a second warning, again echoing the instruction of Moses concerning the pitfalls of human achievement. Material prosperity may undermine faith in God as it induces a type of "spiritual amnesia" that causes people to forget that God has authored their success (cf. Deut. 8:10–11). It was

important for the Transjordan tribes to remember that the expansion of their tribal boundaries, numerical increase, and material wealth were due to God's help, not self-help (**1 Chron. 5:20**). . .

When the two key ingredients of the Chronicler's formula for success in running the race of faith are unpacked in the light of the New Testament, it is apparent the new covenant serves to make explicit what was implicit in the old covenant.

(1) There is indeed a "race" to be run, whether in battle against the Hagarites (**1 Chron. 5:10**) or against "*the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil*" (**Eph. 6:12**).

(2) The race has a "finish line," and there is a prize to be won, whether "rest" in the land of covenant promise (**1 Chron. 23:25**; cf. **Heb. 3:11**) or the gift of God, which is eternal life (**Rom. 6:23**).

(3) The act of prayer itself is a constant reminder that the battle belongs to the Lord (**2 Chron. 20:15**) and that it will be won in the power of God's Spirit, not human strength (**Zech. 4:6**; cf. **Phil. 4:13**). Prayer also reminds us that the race cannot be run on "cruise control." The faith pilgrimage includes barriers, hurdles, trials, and setbacks. Such are used by God to encourage faith and strengthen hope since we know that although we will have trouble in the fallen world, Jesus Christ has overcome all such troubles (**Rom. 5:3-5**; cf. **John 16:33**).

(4) Finally, finishing the race brings glory to God and proclaims "*the gospel of God's grace*" to all those spectators on the sidelines still uncertain about Christianity (cf. **Acts 20:24**).

Iain Duguid: The **contrasting histories** of the Transjordanian tribes continue to encourage present faithfulness to God, warning against turning aside to "*gods of the peoples of the land.*" What might this mean in a diverse world today? Jesus contrasted serving God with serving "money" (**Matt. 6:24**). Writing in a context of ministry in New York, **Tim Keller** explores ways in which "money, sex and power. . . are vying to be counterfeit gods." For Christians in Nazi Germany it was national socialism, whereby thousands who went under the name "German Christians" spoke of following "a heroic Aryan Jesus." One's nation, with its leaders, was to be given the highest allegiance. The Chronicler's placing together of faithfulness and warning points to ways in which we are both to give thanks for past victories and to hear the call to be faithful "*today*" (**Heb. 3:13-15**). Paul did not lightly declare that believers must "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure*" (**Phil. 2:12-13**).

TEXT: I Chronicles 6:1-81

TITLE: THE LEVITES – BOTH PRIESTLY AND NON-PRIESTLY

BIG IDEA:

THE ADMINISTRATION OF WORSHIP UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE LEVITES ELEVATES THIS TRIBE TO A POSITION OF PROMINENCE

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: The length of the Chronicler's treatment of the tribe of Levi is second only to his survey of the line of Judah (**chs. 2–4**). The extra attention afforded to these two tribes relates to their key role in ancient Israel: the Davidic dynasty through the tribe of Judah and priests and Levites through the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi was chosen by God to mediate matters of sacrifice, temple/tabernacle caretaking, music, and worship. In addition, priests and Levites served as teachers of God's law, will, and ways to God's covenantal people. It should be noted that the Chronicler is careful to maintain the distinction between Levites and priests throughout his genealogical survey with items pertaining to genealogy and settlement cities handled separately for each. **While every priest was a Levite, not every Levite was a priest.**

J.A. Thompson: The tribe of Levi was one of the three tribes that occupied the central place in the thinking of the Chronicler. It was one of the tribes that in his view remained faithful to the Davidic kingship and to temple worship in the preexilic period. Far more attention is given to their genealogy than to the other tribes (Naphtali has one verse, **7:13**). Levi was scattered throughout "*all Israel*" and was in every era their clergy. In the words of **Wilcock**, "Levi thus provides a religious leadership which acts as a binding force through the length of Israel's history and the breadth of its territory."

Also the tribe of Levi represented Israel's central concern, the **worship of God**. The temple and its rituals stood at the heart of Israel's life. It was the tribe of Levi that cared for the temple and administered its rituals. No doubt the Chronicler owed something to the Book of Numbers when he placed Levi in the center of the genealogies of Israel, for, according to Numbers, the tribes of Israel as they were encamped in the wilderness were arranged in a square with the clans of Levi in the center around the tabernacle (**Num 1:44–2:34**). Moses, Aaron, and his sons "*were responsible for the care of the sanctuary on behalf of the Israelites*" (**Num 3:38**).

Iain Duguid: Section Outline -- Levi (6:1–81)

- a. The Levites and Their Roles (**6:1–53**)
 - (1) Kohathites: The Line of Priests from Aaron to the Exile (**6:1–15**)
 - (2) Gershomites, Other Kohathites, Merarites (**6:16–30**)
 - (3) David's Setting Some in Charge of Choral Music (**6:31–32**)

- (2') Head Singers of the Kohathites (Heman), Gershomites (Asaph), and Merarites (Ethan) (6:33–48)
 - (1') Descendants of Aaron and Sacrifices (6:49–53)
- b. Their Dwelling Places (6:54–81)
- (1) Aaronic Priests: The Kohathite Towns in Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin (6:54–60)
 - (2) Rest of the Kohathites, Gershomites, and Merarites (Tallies in Other Tribal Areas) (6:61–64)
 - (1') More on Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin (6:65)
 - (2') Place Names for the Other Kohathites (6:66–70), Gershomites (6:71–76), and Merarites (6:77–81)

Andrew Hill: The genealogy may be divided into two sections: Levitical genealogies (6:1–53) and the settlement of the priests and Levites (6:54–81). **Each section treats the priests and Levites separately:** the genealogy of the high priests (6:1–15), the genealogies of the three Levitical orders (6:16–30), the Levitical singers (6:31–47), priestly duties (6:48–53), the settlement of the priests (6:54–60), and the settlement of the Levites (6:61–81).

I. (:1-53) LEVITICAL GENEALOGIES AND KEY ROLES

A. (:1-30) Priestly and Non-Priestly Lines

1. (:1-15) Priestly Line

“The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. 2 And the sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 3 And the children of Amram were Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. And the sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 4 Eleazar became the father of Phinehas, and Phinehas became the father of Abishua, 5 and Abishua became the father of Bukki, and Bukki became the father of Uzzi, 6 and Uzzi became the father of Zerariah, and Zerariah became the father of Meraioth, 7 Meraioth became the father of Amariah, and Amariah became the father of Ahitub, 8 and Ahitub became the father of Zadok, and Zadok became the father of Ahimaaz, 9 and Ahimaaz became the father of Azariah, and Azariah became the father of Johanan, 10 and Johanan became the father of Azariah (it was he who served as the priest in the house which Solomon built in Jerusalem), 11 and Azariah became the father of Amariah, and Amariah became the father of Ahitub, 12 and Ahitub became the father of Zadok, and Zadok became the father of Shallum, 13 and Shallum became the father of Hilkiah, and Hilkiah became the father of Azariah, 14 and Azariah became the father of Seraiah, and Seraiah became the father of Jehozadak; 15 and Jehozadak went along when the LORD carried Judah and Jerusalem away into exile by Nebuchadnezzar.”

Frederick Mabie: This initial section focuses on the **lineage of Kohath**, who represents the line of the **Aaronic high priests**. This genealogy reminds the audience that while Aaron, Moses, and Miriam were from the family of Levi, only the line of Aaron served as high priests. Within this family line, the two eldest sons of Aaron—Nadab and Abihu—violated God’s holy space by not doing everything according to God’s will (“*unauthorized fire . . . contrary to his [God’s] command*”; cf. **Lev 10:1**), and Eleazar became the son through whom the high priesthood transferred. This genealogical survey of the line of Kohath extends into exilic times via the mention of Jehozadak (**v.15**). Only the lines of Judah and Levi are traced by the Chronicler into the exilic time frame, further attesting to their critical role in the covenantal life of Israel.

August Konkel: Though this has often been interpreted as a list of high priests, the Chronicler does not describe them as such. He provides a genealogy from Levi to the exile without distinguishing the role these individuals had in priestly duties.

Iain Duguid: Unlike the Davidic line, the Chronicler does not continue the high priestly line after the exile, although priests are among the returnees (**9:10–13**). His prime concern appears to be the offering of sacrifices and worship, rather than the high priestly line itself.

Andrew Hill: The genealogy highlights two priests with anecdotes: **Azariah**, who served as priest in Solomon’s temple (**6:10**), and **Jehozadak**, who was deported to Babylonia at the time of Jerusalem’s exile (**6:15**). Both events were watersheds in Israelite history. The erection of a permanent sanctuary for the worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem redefined the Levitical priesthood, while the Babylonian exile indelibly marked Israelite history and theology. . .

The story of triumph or tragedy attached to each name of the Levitical genealogy serves to exhort and admonish the Chronicler’s audience. More than that, they plant seeds of hope for the imminent installation of the kingdom of that royal priest after the order of Melchizedek, who will destroy the enemies of the Israelites (**Ps. 110:4**).

John Schultz: Two notable parallels occur in the lines of Aaron and David (cf. **2:10-17; 3:1-16**). Only these two families out of all the tribal lists are traced from the patriarchs to the exile (**2:10-17; 3:1-24; 6:1-15**), indicating that they form the basis of Israel’s future survival. Also, both lines follow immediately upon example of Israelite ‘unfaithfulness’ which resulted in national disaster (**2:7; 5:25**; cf. **6:15; 9:1**). Judah and Levi therefore seem to be the means through which even covenant-breaking sins could be atoned for (**6:49**; cf. **2 Chr. 36:22-23**). **Chapter 6** underlines the point by repeated reminders of Solomon’s temple (**vv. 10, 32, 53**), which was a visible sign of God’s desire to forgive sins (**2 Chr. 7:15-16**).

2. (:16-30) Non-Priestly Line

“The sons of Levi were Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. 17 And these are the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei. 18 And the sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 19 The sons of Merari

were Mahli and Mushi. And these are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' households. 20 Of Gershon: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, 21 Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeatherai his son. 22 The sons of Kohath were Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, 23 Elkanah his son, Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son, 24 Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziel his son, and Shaul his son. 25 And the sons of Elkanah were Amasai and Ahimoth. 26 As for Elkanah, the sons of Elkanah were Zophai his son and Nahath his son, 27 Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. 28 And the sons of Samuel were Joel, the first-born and Abijah, the second. 29 The sons of Merari were Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, 30 Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.”

Iain Duguid: The repetition of **verses 1, 2** in **verses 16, 18** affirms the importance of all three sons of Levi and of descendants of Kohath other than the high priests, reinforced by the way in which **verses 33–48** trace back to each son the ancestry of the key Davidic period head singers: **Heman, Asaph, and Ethan**. . .

While the Aaronic priestly line has prominence, by both its being first and its continuance to the exile, the complementary role of other Levitical families is affirmed by the repetition of **verses 1–2 (vv. 16, 18)**. The priestly line and the others are alike in being “*sons of Levi*.” The naming of Samuel and his sons (v. **28**) and the ending with “*Asaiah*” (v. **30; 15:6, 11**) show that these lines continued to the time of Saul and David.

Frederick Mabie: While the genealogy of each of the sons of Levi is developed by at least two generations, the line of Gershon and Merari is pursued for seven generations.

J.A. Thompson: Whereas the line of high priests is preserved in a vertical chronology, ignoring other lines of descent, in this section the three lines of Levi are followed up, namely, those of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Of these Gershon (v. **20**) and Merari (v. **29**) are followed for seven generations through the line of the elder sons Libni (v. **17**) and Mahli (v. **19**). The Kohath tradition develops through Amminadab for ten generations.

August Konkel: The genealogy of the descendants of Levi lists those families not in priestly lineage descended from Amram through Aaron. The sons of Gershon (var. of Gershon), Kohath, and Merari are given as found in the earlier genealogies (**Exod 6:17–19; Num 3:18–20**). The Kohathites (**Num 4:2–15**), Gershomites (**vv. 21–28**), and Merarites (**vv. 29–33**) were responsible for assembling, maintaining, guarding, dismantling, and moving the tabernacle in the wilderness. This was all part of the work in which the Levites served as assistants to the priests, who were descendants of Kohath through Amram and Aaron.

Martin Selman: Although this list begins in almost exactly the same way as **verses 1-15** (‘*Gershon*,’ **vv. 16, 17**, etc. [REB. NEB. RSV], is Chronicles’ usual spelling for the

more familiar Gershon, v. 1, **Exod. 6:16, Num. 3:17**), it leads into a different subject, viz, the three main Levitical divisions of the sons of Gershon (vv. **10-21**), Kohath (vv. **22-28**), and Merari (vv. **29-30**). The beginning (vv. **16-19**) is determined by Chronicles' source (**Num. 3:17-20**), and is in no sense a duplicate of the previous list. Seven generations are given both for the Gershonites and the Merarites, and all three lines seem to end at the time of David, as indicated by Samuel's sons (v. **28**; cf. **2 Sam. 8:2**) and Asaiah (v. **30**; cf. **15:6**).

B. (:31-47) Musical Branch of the Levites

“Now these are those whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark rested there. 32 And they ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem; and they served in their office according to their order. 33 And these are those who served with their sons. From the sons of the Kohathites were Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, 34 the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, 35 the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, 36 the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, 37 the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, 38 the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. 39 And Heman's brother Asaph stood at his right hand, even Asaph the son of Berechiah, the son of Shimea, 40 the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchijah, 41 the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, 42 the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, 43 the son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi. 44 And on the left hand were their kinsmen the sons of Merari: Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, 45 the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiyah, 46 the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shemer, 47 the son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi.”

David Guzik: The fact that David **appointed** these men over the **service of song** shows that the musical worship of God is *important*, it is *worthy of attention*, and *should be organized*. In fact, it is specifically said **they served in their office according to their order**.

Iain Duguid: vv. **31-32** -- The longest description of roles among all of the genealogies is this central statement of David's appointment of Levites "*in charge of the service of song in the house of the Lord.*" Temple worship, planned by David and implemented by Solomon, required **new arrangements**; for the Chronicler's hearers these continued for the postexilic second temple. Here the Chronicler introduces his major interest in **music** and **worship**. Other Levitical personnel and roles (alluded to in v. **48**), along with much more on music, will be detailed in **chapters 23-26**.

Frederick Mabie: This section of the Chronicler's survey of the family line of Levi focuses on David's organization of the musical branch of the Levites. In ancient Israel, numerous Levitical ministers are noted as being responsible for music and worship,

including “joyful songs, accompanied by musical instruments: lyres, harps, and cymbals” (1Ch 15:16; cf. the 288 musicians counted during the time of David; 25:1–8). By contrast, with the exception of the blowing of trumpets (cf. 15:24; 2Ch 5:13), the priests did not play a role in the musical service of ancient Israel.

The presentation of this genealogy is in the reverse (ascending) order (compare vv.22–28). As such, the subsections of this genealogy end with Kohath (v.38), Gershon (v.43), and Merari (v.47) rather than beginning with each of these sons of Levi. The focal point of the Chronicler’s overview of the Levitical musical corps is Heman the Kohathite (v.33; cf. 1Ch 15:16–17; 25:1, 4–5), with Asaph the Gershonite being described as serving at his right hand (v.39), and Ethan the Merarite described as being at his left hand (v.44). All three of these worship leaders are associated with the sounding of bronze cymbals (cf. 15:19).

Andrew Hill: The families of Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, each representing one of the three sons of Levi, were appointed as music directors for temple worship. Apparently the Levitical musicians split the duties of the music ministry between the “house of the LORD” in Jerusalem where “the ark came to rest” (6:31; cf. 15:1–3) and the tabernacle in Gibeon (cf. 16:39–42) until the completion of Solomon’s temple (6:32).

August Konkel: A change in the Levitical duties was instituted with the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chron 6:31–32). The duties for transporting the tabernacle were over; the symbol of divine rule over creation would be localized with the king’s residence in one place, as was customary in ancient culture. The primary function of the Levites in Chronicles is their leadership in song at the temple. Their work was done following all the regulations (v. 32), an indication that the practice of music was begun earlier at the tabernacle in Gibeon, led by Heman and Jeduthun (1 Chron 16:41). The ark found its resting place in Jerusalem, in the tent (house of the Lord) David prepared for it, when it was brought up from Obed-Edom (15:1–16:1). Song and liturgical ritual (service) in Jerusalem were part of the Levitical duty.

C. (:48-53) Key Levitical Roles

1. (:48-49) Summary

a. (:48) Non-Priestly Roles

“And their kinsmen the Levites were appointed for all the service of the tabernacle of the house of God.”

b. (:49) Priestly Roles

“But Aaron and his sons offered on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense, for all the work of the most holy place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.”

Frederick Mabie: As these verses reflect and as previously noted, the Chronicler is careful to maintain the **distinction** between Levites and priests throughout his survey of the tribe of Levi, and while every priest was a Levite, not every Levite was a priest. In

addition to the musical responsibilities of some Levites, other Levites functioned as servants to the Levitical/Aaronic priests, especially in matters of the tabernacle/temple (v.48; cf. Nu 8:19). Similarly, the Chronicler elsewhere writes, “*The duty of the Levites was to help Aaron’s descendants in the service of the temple of the LORD: to be in charge of the courtyards, the side rooms, the purification of all sacred things and the performance of other duties at the house of God*” (1Ch 23:28).

Levites were also called to be watchful stewards over God’s Word (cf. Dt. 33:8–11) and were entrusted with the responsibility of carrying the ark of the covenant (cf. Nu 4:15; Dt 10:8–9; 1Ch 15:14–15). In the light of these various duties, Levites had titles such as doorkeepers/gatekeepers, scribes, secretaries, treasurers, and temple-work supervisors (cf. 1Ch 23:2–32; 26:20–22; 2Ch 34:8–13).

By contrast, priests were descendants of the Aaronic Levitical family line (cf. Ex 28:1 and 1Ch 6:3–8) and were primarily responsible for the matters of temple service, particularly the sacrificial system and other aspects of worship that took place within the Most Holy Place (cf. v.49). As the Chronicler succinctly summarizes, “*Aaron was set apart, he and his descendants forever, to consecrate the most holy things, to offer sacrifices before the LORD, to minister before him and to pronounce blessings in his name forever*” (1Ch 23:13).

In addition, priests had the responsibilities of discerning between clean and unclean, and of teaching Israelites the ways of God (cf. Lev 10:10–11). The specific role of priests as teachers reflects God’s covenantal framework, in which priests are charged by God to “*teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them*” (Lev 10:11; cf. the poetic [and prophetic] description of Levi’s teaching and atonement commission in Dt 33:8–11 as well as the admonition directed at priests in Mal 2:1–9).

Iain Duguid: vv. 49-53 -- The priests’ tasks involve everything related to the “*Most Holy Place,*” with specific mention of “*to make atonement for Israel.*” The importance of this key role of the high priest (**Leviticus 16**) cannot be overestimated. Although “*mak[ing] atonement*” is mentioned elsewhere in Chronicles only at **2 Chronicles 29:24**, that most significant occasion was part of the temple worship restoration and reformation under Hezekiah and was “*for all Israel.*” Its result was that “*all the people rejoiced because God had provided for the people*” (**2 Chron. 29:36**). Here was encouragement to continue the sacrificial rituals faithfully after the exile.

2. (:50-53) Aaronic High Priests

“*And these are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, 51 Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son, 52 Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, 53 Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son.*”

Frederick Mabie: This list of Aaronic high priests is an abridged summary of the list of high priests given at **6:1–15** (e.g., **6:3–8**) and functions as a point of reference to the distinctions between priests and Levites articulated in vv.48–49. Since Zadok and

Ahimaaz (v.53) served during the reigns of David and Solomon, respectively, this review serves the Chronicler's ultimate focus on the Davidic dynasty and temple ministries served by the priests and Levites.

August Konkel: The lineage of Levi concludes with a summary statement of the priests from Aaron to Zadok (vv. 50–53), the time from the institution of tabernacle duties to the transfer of these duties to the temple in the days of Solomon.

Andrew Hill: The list of high priests is an **abbreviated version** of the descendants of Aaron found previously (6:3–8). The register of names completes the thought of **verse 49**, given the reference to Aaron and the duties associated with the high priests. Zadok was a contemporary of David (2 Sam. 15:27; 19:11), while Ahimaaz was the high priest during a portion of Solomon's reign (1 Chron. 6:8–9). Breaking the list of high priests off at this juncture is logical because David reorganized the priesthood (6:31–32) and Solomon built the temple where divinely ordained priestly tasks were performed (6:49).

Adam Clarke: We have already had a list of these, (see 1 Chron 6:3-16;) this is a second, but less extensive, and is a proof that the writer of this book had several lists before him, from which he borrowed as he judged proper.

II. (:54-81) LEVITICAL SETTLEMENTS

Martin Selman: The **structure** is as follows:

- vv. 54-60: Aaronites from the Kohathite clans;
- vv. 61-63: Summary of individual Levite clans (cf. vv. 66-81);
- vv. 64-65: General summary (v. 65 refers to the Aaronites, cf. Josh. 21:4, 9);
- vv. 66-70: Rest of the Kohathite clans (cf. v. 61);
- vv. 71-76: Gershonites (cf. v. 62);
- vv. 77-81: Merarites (cf. v. 63).

A. (:54-60) Settlements for Priestly Levites

“Now these are their settlements according to their camps within their borders. To the sons of Aaron of the families of the Kohathites (for theirs was the first lot), 55 to them they gave Hebron in the land of Judah, and its pasture lands around it; 56 but the fields of the city and its villages, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 57 And to the sons of Aaron they gave the following cities of refuge: Hebron, Libnah also with its pasture lands, Jattir, Eshtemoa with its pasture lands, 58 Hilen with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands, 59 Ashan with its pasture lands, and Beth-shemesh with its pasture lands; 60 and from the tribe of Benjamin: Geba with its pasture lands, Allemeth with its pasture lands, and Anathoth with its pasture lands. All their cities throughout their families were thirteen cities.”

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler also reorders the Levitical settlement list from Joshua, placing the allotment of towns for the descendants of Aaron first (6:54–60; cf. Josh. 21:9–19). The emphatic position of the Aaronides no doubt calls attention to the centrality of the priestly line in postexilic Judah, given the collapse of Davidic kingship. Although the three clans of Levi are listed by birth order (Gershom/Gershon, Kohath, Merari in 6:1, 16), the roster of Levitical cities is (apparently) ordered by the fall of the lot (Kohath, Gershom/Gershon, Merari; cf. Josh. 14:2; 21:4–7).

B. (:61-81) Settlements for Non-Priestly Levites

“Then to the rest of the sons of Kohath were given by lot, from the family of the tribe, from the half-tribe, the half of Manasseh, ten cities. 62 And to the sons of Gershom, according to their families, were given from the tribe of Issachar and from the tribe of Asher, the tribe of Naphtali, and the tribe of Manasseh, thirteen cities in Bashan. 63 To the sons of Merari were given by lot, according to their families, from the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. 64 So the sons of Israel gave to the Levites the cities with their pasture lands. 65 And they gave by lot from the tribe of the sons of Judah, the tribe of the sons of Simeon, and the tribe of the sons of Benjamin, these cities which are mentioned by name. 66 Now some of the families of the sons of Kohath had cities of their territory from the tribe of Ephraim. 67 And they gave to them the following cities of refuge: Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim with its pasture lands, Gezer also with its pasture lands, 68 Jokmeam with its pasture lands, Beth-horon with its pasture lands, 69 Aijalon with its pasture lands, and Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands; 70 and from the half-tribe of Manasseh: Aner with its pasture lands and Bileam with its pasture lands, for the rest of the family of the sons of Kohath. 71 To the sons of Gershom were given, from the family of the half-tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan with its pasture lands and Ashtaroth with its pasture lands; 72 and from the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh with its pasture lands, Daberath with its pasture lands, 73 and Ramoth with its pasture lands, Anem with its pasture lands; 74 and from the tribe of Asher: Mashal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands, 75 Hukok with its pasture lands, and Rehob with its pasture lands; 76 and from the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands, Hammon with its pasture lands, and Kiriathaim with its pasture lands. 77 To the rest of the Levites, the sons of Merari, were given, from the tribe of Zebulun: Rimmono with its pasture lands, Tabor with its pasture lands; 78 and beyond the Jordan at Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, were given them, from the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness with its pasture lands, Jahzah with its pasture lands, 79 Kedemoth with its pasture lands, and Mephaath with its pasture lands; 80 and from the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture lands, Mahanaim with its pasture lands, 81 Heshbon with its pasture lands, and Jazer with its pasture lands.”

Iain Duguid: The allocation in every tribal area ensures that temple personnel are throughout the land, so all tribes provide support for the Levites. Their presence is a constant reminder that temple worship is for “*all Israel*.” The spread also facilitates

nontemple related roles that may be administrative, judicial, and educational (e.g., **2 Chron. 17:7–9; 19:4–10**).

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler ends his summary of the tribe of Levi by giving a list of Levitical cities provided for both priestly and nonpriestly Levites. The tribe of Levi did not receive a landed inheritance like the balance of Israelite tribes. From a positive angle, this was because the Lord was their inheritance (cf. **Nu 18:20–24**). From a negative angle, this lack of a landed inheritance (like the near landlessness of Simeon; **1Ch 4:24–43**) reflects the prophetic “blessing” of Jacob on his sons that includes the scattering of Levi and Simeon (**Ge 49:5–7**) in the light of their response to the situation with their sister Dinah (cf. **Ge 34:1–31, esp. vv.25–31**).

Continuing his trend of addressing matters of priest and Levite separately, the Chronicler initially lists the settlement towns and pasturelands granted to Levitical/Aaronic priests (**vv.54–60**), largely echoing the content of **Joshua 21:1–42**. The towns and pasturelands allotted to the priests were only located in Judah and Benjamin, presumably to provide proximity to places of communal worship. Unlike the Levitical/Aaronic priests, whose towns were only in the tribal areas of Judah and Benjamin, the nonpriestly Levites were granted towns and pasturelands dispersed across the tribal territories of Israel (**vv.61–81**). The mention of Hebron and Shechem as cities of refuge (**vv.57, 67**) reflected their function (along with six other towns spread throughout the territory of ancient Israel) as safe havens for those accused of killing another person unintentionally (cf. **Jos 20:1–9**).

August Konkel: The Levitical settlements spread across the territories of ancient Israel (**Aharoni et al.:** 108), which would be necessary if they were to serve as **cities of refuge** and places of covenant instruction. The Kohathites were in the more southern tribes west of the Jordan (Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh). The Gershonites were in the more northern and eastern territories, including Golan and Ashtaroth in Bashan (Transjordan Manasseh); they were also found in the tribes of Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali to the west and north of Galilee (**vv. 71–76**). The Merarites were located in Zebulun, Reuben, and Gad, territories in the southern Transjordan, though their territory extended west to Tabor and Rimmono, the area north of Ephraim and Manasseh (**vv. 77–81**). The Aaronide cities were located in Judah and Benjamin, indicating that they were a southern group. Though not all these locations can be identified, the concentration of the Levitical cities was largely in Judah, Ephraim, and western Galilee, but their distribution extended to the far north in the remote parts of Transjordan.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What do you find confusing about this section of Scripture?
- 2) What were the main duties of the high priest?

3) How can we better educate the saints regarding the history of the ministry of music and its importance in today's worship?

4) What role do the cities of refuge play in the description of the settlements for the Levites?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Frederick Mabie: The teaching of God's will—both then and now—infuses God's people with the spiritual direction and energy needed to walk in a manner pleasing to him. In the Israelite covenantal community, priests were especially entrusted with being **stewards over God's Word**, which included discerning that which was holy and teaching God's people "*all the decrees the LORD has given them*" (see **Lev 10:10–11; Dt 33:8–11; Mal 2:1–9**). Part of their commission included battling against those having zeal without knowledge as well as the ever-present human tendency to do what is right in our own eyes rather than doing God's revealed will.

The Scriptures show that teaching God's ways and God's Word facilitates wisdom and godly living (cf. **Pr 2:1–9**). To do what is pleasing to God is the fundamental tenet of the spiritual life, and that which is pleasing to God must be taught, learned, and applied. The description of believers in priestlike ways in the NT (e.g., **Heb 4:16; 1Pe 2:5; Rev 1:6**) underscores our corporate responsibility to teach, admonish, rebuke, encourage, and exhort one another in the ways of God (see **Col 1:28; 3:16; Heb 3:13**).

August Konkel: The Chronicler has structured his information on settlements to correspond with that of the genealogies of Levi. The city list of Levi begins with the sons of Aaron (the priests) of the Kohathites (**1 Chron 6:54–60**), the rest of the Kohathites (v. **61**), the Gershonites (v. **62**), and the Merarites (v. **63**). The cities of the Levitical families are then added as specific information (vv. **66–81**; cf. **Josh 21:20–42**). This is also the sequence of the genealogy of Levi (**1 Chron 6:1–47**), which begins with the priests (**6:4–14**), followed by a genealogy of the nonpriestly Levites (vv. **16–30**). The families of the Levitical singers appointed by David are then named as descendants of each of the three sons of Levi (vv. **31–47**). An abbreviated genealogy of Aaronides (vv. **50–53**) anticipates the enumeration of the residences of the Kohathite priests (vv. **57–59**). The Chronicler has selected and arranged his material to portray the sons of Levi as ordered around the high priest.

Thomas Constable: The writer placed Levi's genealogy at the heart of the chiasmic (crossing) structure that he used to set forth these genealogies. In this way he drew attention to Levi's central importance in Israel. [**Leslie Allen**]

A The lineage of David (**chs. 1–3**)

B Judah and Simeon in the South (**4:1-43**)

C The Transjordanian tribes to the north (ch. 5)

D Levi (ch. 6)

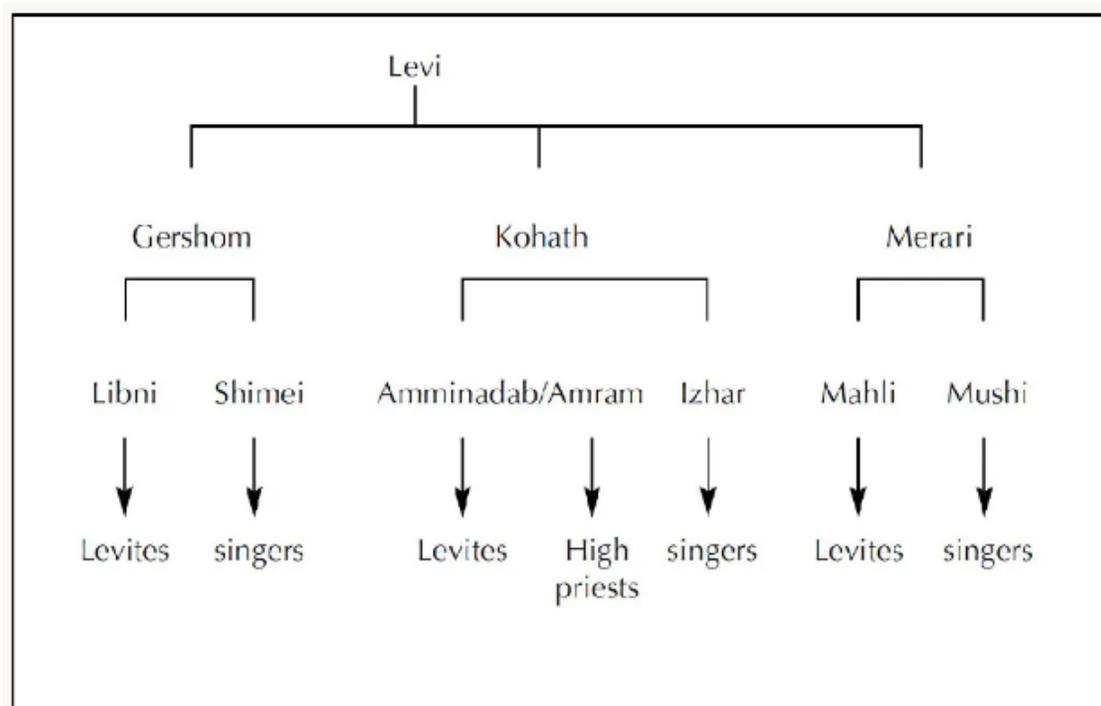
C' The other northern tribes (ch. 7)

B' Benjamin in the South (ch. 8)

A' The lineage of Saul (ch. 9)

"The emphasis on Judah and Levi in the genealogies marks the center of the Chronicler's hope and faith. Two things marked the true Israel: the king and the priest."
[Thompson]

Andrew Hill: quoting Williamson



The duty of teaching God's law is implicit in the Chronicler's recitation of the Levitical genealogies (cf. **2 Chron. 15:3**). The task of offering sacrifices to make atonement for all Israel is central to the Chronicler's understanding of the Levitical priesthood (**1 Chron. 6:49**). By faithfully discharging these twin duties of teaching the law and offering sacrifices to make atonement for Israel, the Levitical priesthood fulfilled their role as the keepers of Israel's tradition and the guardians of Yahweh's covenant.

The Chronicler well understands that by default, the priests and Levites now constitute the primary leadership office in the restoration community. The Exile brought an end to kingship in Israel. It appears that even the prophetic voice fell silent not long after the construction of the Second Temple (ca. 515 B.C.) at the prompting of Haggai and Zechariah. Naturally, the role of the sage has shifted from that of political adviser to that of scholar-teacher and scribe in the Jewish academic community. Until such a time when God will raise up another king like David, the fate of the nation of Israel lies in

the hands of the descendants of Levi. . .

I would suggest, however, there is still something “missing” in Tozer’s plan for **restoring worship** in the evangelical church. The missing component of which I speak is worship education itself—that is, formal instruction in the history, theology, and practice of Christian worship. This may be what Tozer advocates implicitly in his emphasis on the teaching of sound biblical doctrine. Nonetheless, the implicit must be taken to the next level. Explicit and systematic **worship education** must complement the teaching of sound Bible doctrine.

TEXT: I Chronicles 7:1-40

TITLE: *NORTHERN TRIBES – MIGHTY MEN OF VALOR*

BIG IDEA:

REMEMBER THE FORMER MIGHTY MEN OF VALOR IN THE NORTHERN TRIBES AS YOU CELEBRATE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkell: The Chronicler includes all the tribes of Israel not yet discussed. Dan is not actually named, but a comparison with the Chronicler's sources shows that he included it as one of the sons of Bilhah. The absence of Zebulun seems to be a result of some serious textual disruptions present in this chapter. The chapter breaks down into five sections: Issachar (7:1–5), Benjamin (vv. 6–11), the sons of Bilhah (vv. 12–13), the sons of Joseph (vv. 14–29), and Asher (vv. 30–39). These five sections are quite different from each other. Issachar, Benjamin, and Asher are distinguished by the length that is devoted to one tribe. Each records the father's house (rather than a simple genealogy), and all three have an emphasis on military enumeration. The sons of Bilhah are highly abbreviated; the sons of Joseph lack the military associations but include information on their settlements.

J.A. Thompson: Chapter 7 consists of smaller genealogies within the framework of the Chronicler's major interests of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin. The source of this material was largely **Numbers 26**, but something was culled from a military census list. The order of presentation escapes us now. It may have been the order he found in his sources, which were in any case inadequate. They had to be "supplemented" from available archives, largely contemporary Judean. There is nothing about Dan or Zebulun despite a brief notice in 2:1–2.

Andrew Hill: This section of the Chronicler's genealogical prologue contains the final installment of Hebrew tribal lists, broadly classified as northern and in certain cases Transjordan tribes. This treatment of six Israelite tribes is remarkably brief (forty verses) when compared to the preceding register of Levites (eighty-one verses). Yet the listing is in keeping with the Chronicler's overall purpose in the retelling of Israelite history. The inclusion of both the prominent and obscure northern Hebrew tribes is necessary for presenting a complete historical overview of Israel to the restoration community.

Iain Duguid: The second group of tribes surrounding Levi in the Chronicler's chiasmic arrangement is those north of Judah and west of the Jordan. The three most northerly tribes (Issachar, Naphtali, Asher), rather than being a single block, are interposed with the major tribes (Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh), having the effect of bringing all together as a whole. Unlike the Transjordanian tribes, there is no mention of being taken into exile by the Assyrians (cf. **1 Chron. 5:22, 26**), thus foreshadowing later

mention of faithful Israelites from the north (**2 Chron. 30:1, 18; 34:9**). Only the records of Ephraim and Manasseh include geographical information (**1 Chron. 7:28–29**).

Although Zebulun, a northerly tribe, is not included, it has been mentioned in the Levitical cities (**6:63, 77**) and will appear in later narrative (e.g., **12:33, 40; 27:19**). Dan is another notable absence. This may be intentional due to its alternative idolatrous worship (**Judges 18**), although Dan is included in troops loyal to David (**12:35; 27:22**). Alternatively, perhaps both Zebulun and Dan are missing due either to lack of information resulting from the Assyrian invasion (cf. the brevity of Naphtali's list; **7:13**) or to scribal error.

Throughout this chapter the presentation is **positive**. The tribes of Issachar, Naphtali, and Asher are not named among those who “*lived in Jerusalem*” after the return (**9:3**), but they are included in the genealogies of the “*sons of Israel*.” Even though details may be limited in extent (e.g., down to Joshua, **7:27**; or, for the most northern tribes, the time of David, **7:2**), similarly to the preceding scope of the Levitical allocations among these tribes (**6:61–81**) the overall vision continues of an **all-embracing Israel**.

I. (:1-5) ISSACHAR – MIGHTY MEN OF VALOR

“Now the sons of Issachar were four: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron. 2 And the sons of Tola were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Samuel, heads of their fathers' households. The sons of Tola were mighty men of valor in their generations; their number in the days of David was 22,600. 3 And the son of Uzzi was Izrahiah. And the sons of Izrahiah were Michael, Obadiah, Joel, Isshiah; all five of them were chief men. 4 And with them by their generations according to their fathers' households were 36,000 troops of the army for war, for they had many wives and sons. 5 And their relatives among all the families of Issachar were mighty men of valor, enrolled by genealogy, in all 87,000.”

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler's brief treatment of the genealogy of the tribe of Issachar reflects the style of a military census, and the mention of David may imply a census from that time (perhaps even David's ill-fated census of **1Ch 21**; cf. **2Sa 24**).

Andrew Hill: Issachar was the ninth son of Jacob, the fifth son born to him by Leah (**Gen. 30:17**). His name means “*hired workman*,” and Jacob's deathbed blessing of Issachar plays on that meaning in predicting that Issachar's descendants will toil in forced labor gangs (**Gen. 49:15**). Issachar is often paired with Zebulun in lists of the Israelite tribes (e.g., **Deut. 33:18–19**). The tribe of Zebulun is absent from this tribal register, but the list does agree with the ordering of the earlier reference to the twelve sons of Israel (**1 Chron. 2:1**). **Williamson** detects no particular significance in the sequence of tribal names in this passage, apart from the fact the list simply reflects the order of the Chronicler's source.

The genealogy of Issachar is both **descending** (i.e., parent to child) and **segmented** (i.e., it demonstrates breadth in listing a single generation of descendants as well as

depth in citing successive generations from a common ancestor). The muster tallies (7:2, 4, 5) suggest the record originally belonged to a military census from the time of David (see 7:3).

Mark Boda: The connection to David stresses the purpose of the list for the Chronicler. Issachar represents a key military resource for the Davidic kingdom, foreshadowing their participation in David's army in the Chronicler's narrative in **12:32**, where they will be singled out as those who "*understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take.*" Issachar is given the highest number of warriors in the genealogical accounts of the northern tribes, reflecting the Chronicler's high estimation of this tribe.

Peter Wallace: Why should you care about the mighty warriors of Issachar? Issachar has now been lost for nearly 3,000 years! Why should you care about **87,000** fighting men in David's day? One of the points that the Chronicler will come back to over and over again – is that when God's people are rightly related to their God, blessing and honor (in some form) will be theirs. **Remember Issachar!** Because "back in the day" – the glorious day of David, the Messiah of Israel – Issachar had 87,000 mighty warriors!

II. (:6-12) BENJAMIN – MIGHTY MEN OF VALOR

"The sons of Benjamin were three: Bela and Becher and Jediael. 7 And the sons of Bela were five: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri. They were heads of fathers' households, mighty men of valor, and were 22,034 enrolled by genealogy. 8 And the sons of Becher were Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. All these were the sons of Becher. 9 And they were enrolled by genealogy, according to their generations, heads of their fathers' households, 20,200 mighty men of valor. 10 And the son of Jediael was Bilhan. And the sons of Bilhan were Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar. 11 All these were sons of Jediael, according to the heads of their fathers' households, 17,200 mighty men of valor, who were ready to go out with the army to war. 12 And Shuppim and Huppim were the sons of Ir; Hushim was the son of Aher."

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler's genealogical survey of the tribe of Benjamin is also the topic of **ch. 8** and the end of **ch. 9 (9:35–44)**. As such, the tribe of Benjamin receives the third largest coverage by the Chronicler (after Judah and Levi). While the genealogical information on the lineage of the tribe of Benjamin in **chs. 8 and 9** largely focuses on the lineage before and after Saul, this genealogy is incomplete and does not directly include the Saulide family line.

Andrew Hill: The tribe of Benjamin was a **transitional** group in terms of Israelite geography, buffering Judah in the south and the rest of the tribes to the north. The insertion of the Benjamite genealogy at this juncture serves to introduce the more extensive family tree of Benjamin that follows in **chapter 8**. The highlighting of Benjamin calls to mind the fact that this tribe was also the transitional tribe of Hebrew

kingship. King Saul hailed from Benjamin, and the Chronicler uses his genealogy and royal history as a preface to the history of the Davidic dynasty.

III. (:13) NAPHTALI

“The sons of Naphtali were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.”

IV. (:14-29) JOSEPH

A. (:14-19) Cisjordan Manasseh – Highlighting the Role of the Mothers

“The sons of Manasseh were Asriel, whom his Aramean concubine bore; she bore Machir the father of Gilead. 15 And Machir took a wife for Huppim and Shuppim, whose sister's name was Maacah. And the name of the second was Zelophehad, and Zelophehad had daughters. 16 And Maacah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she named him Peresh; and the name of his brother was Sheresh, and his sons were Ulam and Rakem. 17 And the son of Ulam was Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. 18 And his sister Hammolecheth bore Ishhod and Abiezer and Mahlah. 19 And the sons of Shemida were Ahian and Shechem and Likhi and Aniam.”

Frederick Mabie: (:14-19) -- The Chronicler's treatment of the lineage of Joseph's son Manasseh continues his earlier description of the part of tribe of Manasseh that opted to settle in Transjordan (cf. **1Ch 5:23–24**). This Cisjordanian or western component of the tribe of Manasseh implies at least one point of **intermarriage** between the line of Manasseh and surrounding people groups (i.e., through Manasseh's Aramean concubine [v.14] and perhaps Makir's wife Maacah [v.16; cf. **Jos 12:5**]). As noted above (see comments on **2:3–8**), the mention of such intermarriage by the Chronicler seems to reflect his understanding of God's creative and faithful sovereignty rather than being a marker of spiritual compromise (as reflected at **Ne 13:23–27**).

B. (:20-27) Ephraim – Overcoming Temporary Loss

“And the sons of Ephraim were Shuthelah and Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, Tahath his son, 21 Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead whom the men of Gath who were born in the land killed, because they came down to take their livestock. 22 And their father Ephraim mourned many days, and his relatives came to comfort him. 23 Then he went in to his wife, and she conceived and bore a son, and he named him Beriah, because misfortune had come upon his house. 24 And his daughter was Sheerah, who built lower and upper Beth-horon, also Uzzan-sheerah. 25 And Rephah was his son along with Resheph, Telah his son, Tahan his son, 26 Ladan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, 27 Non his son, and Joshua his son.”

J.A. Thompson: This pericope (:20-29) is composed of three major parts:

- (1) the genealogy from Ephraim to Joshua (vv. **20–21a, 25–27**);
- (2) a historical notice concerning the birth of Beriah which interrupts the

genealogy of Joshua (vv. 21b–24); and
(3) a list of villages occupied by the sons of Joseph (vv. 28–29).

Andrew Hill: The story of **Ezer** and **Elead** is unique to Chronicles. Commentators are quick to note that the historical interlude serves etiological purposes, explaining the name Beriah (or “*misfortune*,” 7:23 [similar to the Jabez story, 4:9–10]) and the place name Uzzen Sheerah (7:24). The Chronicler, however, inserts the account as an example of temporary loss and setback overcome providentially by human initiative. What better way to remind his audience that the setback of the Exile was only temporary?

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler’s summary of the lineage of Joseph’s son Ephraim is presented in tandem with that of Joseph’s son Manasseh (cf. the summary of vv.28–29 below; also see **Jos 17:14–18**). Unlike the balance of genealogies in this chapter, the Chronicler provides settlement information for Ephraim (along with Manasseh) and does not include the military-like census numbers reflected in most of the other genealogies of this section. This divergence suggests that the Chronicler had a different set of sources (or additional sources) available for the prominent “House of Joseph.”

Note that the Chronicler’s summary of the tribe of Ephraim ultimately culminates with Joshua, the son of Nun, whom Yahweh used to deed the Promised Land and begin the process of occupying it—another way in which the Chronicler uses his genealogical summaries to draw attention to the covenantal hope(s) available for “*all Israel*.”

C. (:28-29) Settlement of Ephraim and Cisjordanian Manasseh

“And their possessions and settlements were Bethel with its towns, and to the east Naaran, and to the west Gezer with its towns, and Shechem with its towns as far as Ayyah with its towns, 29 and along the borders of the sons of Manasseh, Beth-shean with its towns, Taanach with its towns, Megiddo with its towns, Dor with its towns. In these lived the sons of Joseph the son of Israel.”

Frederick Mabie: In fact, the majority of the towns listed here (e.g., Gezer, Beth Shan, Taanach, Megiddo, and Dor) were previously listed as towns out of which the Israelites were unable to drive out the Canaanites. Thus the Chronicler is possibly including these cities to foster hope in his audience in **God’s faithfulness** to bring about the fullness of covenantal blessings as his people demonstrate obedience (see **Jdg 3:1–4**; see **N. Na’aman**, “Sources and Redaction in the Chronicler’s Genealogies of Asher and Ephraim,” JSOT 49 [1991]: 99–111).

V. (:30-40) ASHER – MIGHTY MEN OF VALOR

“The sons of Asher were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah, and Serah their sister. 31 And the sons of Beriah were Heber and Malchiel, who was the father of Birzaith. 32 And Heber became the father of Japhlet, Shomer and Hotham, and Shua their sister. 33 And the sons of Japhlet were Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These were the sons of Japhlet. 34 And the sons of Shemer were Ahi and

Rohgah, Jehubbah and Aram. 35 And the sons of his brother Helem were Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal. 36 The sons of Zophah were Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, and Imrah, 37 Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, and Beera. 38 And the sons of Jether were Jephunneh, Pispa, and Ara. 39 And the sons of Ulla were Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia. 40 All these were the sons of Asher, heads of the fathers' houses, choice and mighty men of valor, heads of the princes. And the number of them enrolled by genealogy for service in war was 26,000 men.”

J.A. Thompson: Asher was a peripheral tribe, descended from Zilpah, the handmaid of Leah (**Gen 46:17**). Evidently they furnished a useful body of fighters for Israel's army, 26,000, a reduced number from the 41,500 of **Num 1:40–41; 2:27–28**, and 53,400 of **Num 26:47**, perhaps reflecting accurately the situation at a later date.

John Schultz: These names are based on a military census list (cf. v. 40), combined with the basic clan names (v. 30) from **Genesis 46:17** and **Numbers 26:44–46**, and, as with Issachar, only on clan (Beriah) is followed through. The genealogy has several **symmetrical patterns**, as is structured around two descendants who each had four descendants, viz. Heber (v. 32) and his offspring Helem (v. 35). Since Helem is probably identical with Hotham (v. 32), and Shomer (v. 32) with ‘Shemer’ (v. 34, RSV), descendants of each of Heber’s sons occur in **verses 33–35**. The first two each had three sons, assuming Abi (v. 34, NIV, NEB) is really ‘his brother’ (GNB, RSV). Further descendants of Helem occur in **verses 36–39**, possibly in a regular pattern based on the names in **verse 35**. Zophah clearly recurs in **verse 36**, and the same may apply to Imna/Imra (v. 36), Shelesh/Shilshah (v. 37), and Amal/Ulla (v. 39). Ithran (v. 37) also appears to be the same as Jether (v. 38). Some of the names seem to be connected with the southern parts of Mount Ephraim, in the area where Saul’s asses went missing (cf. **1 Sam. 9:4–5**). This may well explain the inclusion of Asher after Ephraim (the order is different in **1 Chr. 2:1–2**), but its significance for a tribe that was otherwise located in western Galilee remains unclear.

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why did the Chronicler go to such extreme lengths to cover **all of Israel**?
- 2) What type of **sources** would the Chronicler have used to put together these genealogical records?
- 3) What is the author’s purpose in extolling mighty men of valor as well as exposing specific anecdotal accounts of sin and failure?
- 4) Why are some forgotten tribes remembered here and other tribes are omitted?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: Portions of the northern tribe genealogies have parallels in **Genesis 46** and **Numbers 26**. The Chronicler's genealogies, however, include names omitted in the other biblical accounts and at times demonstrate the same **fluidity** characteristic of Old Testament genealogical records in general (e.g., the Chronicler lists three sons of Benjamin [7:6] while **Gen. 46:21** counts ten and **Num. 26:38–39** records five). These variations suggest the Chronicler has access to other (unknown) sources, probably tribal census reports and clan genealogies. The military overtone of his genealogies, including muster rolls with tallies (e.g., **1 Chron. 7:2, 5, 7**), prompts many scholars to connect the records with King David's ill-fated military census (**2 Sam. 24**; cf. **1 Chron. 21**) or even his conscripting of troops at Hebron (cf. **1 Chron. 12:23–37**). . .

The nature of the message of the genealogical prologue in Chronicles is **emotional** as much as it is **theological**. The Chronicler wants to bolster morale and encourage participatory ownership of the postexilic restoration effort by appealing to the collective identity of Israel embodied in the names filling the genealogical rolls. The problem for him is twofold.

- (1) How does one motivate the individual to become proactive in the initiatives to restore Judah and Jerusalem, given the emphasis on corporate or national identity in ancient Israel?
- (2) Once the individual has been spurred into action, how does one ensure that the newly found imagination and energy will be applied to community as well as to self-interests?

This is the challenge facing the Chronicler: motivating the individual while maintaining the value of corporate responsibility in the covenant community. He chooses to do that in a couple of ways in the genealogical prologue, effectively using the powerful medium of personal story to engage and elicit a response from his audience. One cannot help but wonder if the Chronicler's blending of genealogy and report or story is not the literary precursor of the catalog of "*faithful witnesses*" recorded in the book of **Hebrews 11**.

Iain Duguid: Like an artist who draws a big picture with many brushstrokes, the Chronicler continues his reminder, using minute details from the past, that the people of God and God's purposes for his people are wider than present experience might suggest. The cameo story centering in the naming of Ephraim's son Beriah (**7:21b–24**) is an example that disaster is not determinative for the future. After defeat and death come victory and new life, seen in no greater way than in the crucifixion and resurrection of the Christ, who was given the name "Joshua."

Although Jesus is of the line of David, of the tribe of Judah (**Matthew 1**), it is in the regions covered by these northern tribes that he begins and conducts most of his ministry. Matthew, quoting **Isaiah 9:1**, speaks of "*the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali*" (**Matt. 4:15**), and Jesus surprises his disciples in speaking to a woman at

Jacob's well, in Manasseh's allocated area (**John 4:1–42**). Even soon after his birth, it is a prophetess from "*the tribe of Asher*," the elderly Anna, who gives thanks upon seeing the infant Jesus and speaks "*of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem*" (**Luke 2:36–38**). Strikingly, it is in the northern area of Dan that Peter makes the confession, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (**Matt. 16:13–16**; the ancient town of Dan is about 4 mi./6.4 km west of the Greco-Roman city of Caesarea Philippi). God is at work in surprising places, not only in Judah and Jerusalem.

Bob Utley: Why is there such divergence in the **spelling of the names**?

1. They are different persons by the same name. Often names recur in families and periods.
2. There are two separate genealogies combined by an editor.
3. The person went by two names.
4. The person's name was changed.
5. The term "son" can refer to a wide number of relatives (grandson, uncle, brother, etc.).
6. The first father died and the wife remarried or there was Levirate marriage involved.
7. Ancient Jewish genealogies are often incomplete.

Thomas Constable: In **chapters 4–7**, the writer stressed the following central features of God's covenant relationship with Israel: The leadership of Judah, that even swallowed up another tribe, came to a head in David and his descendants. The Transjordanian tribes experienced the results of unfaithfulness to God. The tribe of Levi enjoyed the privilege of priesthood in Israel. The writer also drew attention to the 12-tribe structure of the one Israelite nation.

Peter Wallace: Zebulun's territory was on the west side of the Sea of Galilee – next to Naphtali. Unlike Dan, you cannot explain Zebulun's omission by its location. Three other tribes had territory further north than Zebulun, and would have fallen to their enemies sooner. So it may be that Zebulun was absorbed into Ephraim or Manasseh – like Simeon was absorbed into Judah.

We don't quite know why Dan and Zebulun disappear from the genealogies here, but as **Michael Wilcock** points out, there are no fewer than 17 different groupings of the 12 tribes! Which one (or two) depends on context!

Certain things are clear: There are **12 sons of Jacob**. Because of the inclusion of Ephraim and Manasseh, there are **fourteen possible names** – but the biblical authors regularly stick to 12. There are **12 portions for the inheritance** (Ephraim and Manasseh each get one – but Levi does not). Manasseh gets two clearly defined territories – one on the east side and one on the west side of the Jordan – but because Simeon is lumped into Judah, there are still 12 territories.

So here in 1 Chronicles, the author provides us with 12 tribes. He has to ignore Zebulun and Dan to do this! But since there are 12 tribes, and since Manasseh has been (effectively) two tribes for a millennium, he treats Manasseh as two (giving Joseph three tribes), requiring him to “forget” Dan and Zebulun for the purpose of his genealogical discussion. . .

Israel’s future depends upon the connection between land and seed. These genealogies continue to point us to the hope of God’s people – that through the seed of the woman all the nations would be blessed – that though the inheritance of the land the glory of the nations would stream into Jerusalem.

Our hope continues to depend on the **connection between land and seed!** Because Christ himself is the seed of the woman – and Christ himself is our inheritance!

You need to remember the 12 tribes of Israel – and their “glory days” – because what God has done in Jesus Christ is restore (and advance) the glory of David. The kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ has already begun. We do not yet see all things under his feet (certainly the Chronicler did not yet see it, either!) but we see something better than the Chronicler saw: we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor.

As the Word of the LORD comes to you this night, Jesus himself is present before you. All these names that you have heard bear witness to you that Jesus is Lord – that he is the exalted Christ – the son of David who reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Therefore, you may not be nostalgic – wistful for some “good old days” that will never return! Something better is here! But you must remember those days! Remember that when God’s people were rightly related to God – they were blessed – they were honored – they were mighty warriors! And as you remember what God did for them, the exalted Warrior, Jesus Christ, draws near to you, equipping you for battle in his kingdom today!

TEXT: I Chronicles 8:1-40

TITLE: CONTINUATION OF GENEALOGY OF BENJAMIN

BIG IDEA:

THE PARTNERSHIP OF BENJAMIN WITH JUDAH IN SUPPORTING THE DAVIDIC LINE DERIVES FROM ITS CLOSE ASSOCIATION

- **WITH THE SOURCE OF THE KINGDOM
IN THE GENEALOGY OF SAUL AND**
- **WITH THE PROMISED LAND OF JERUSALEM**

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: Benjamin is given prominence by its closing outer position in the chiasmic arrangement of the genealogies of the “*sons of Israel*” and also by the amount of detail provided. Its importance is warranted, both as the tribe of the first king, Saul, and in its joining with Judah as a major participant in the narrative that follows (e.g., **12:16; 2 Chron. 11:1, 3, 10, 12, 23**). Further, after the exile the Persian province of Yehud included parts of the areas originally allocated to Judah and Benjamin in **Joshua 15** and **18**, centering on Jerusalem.

In contrast to the earlier brief list of Benjaminites, based on a military census and without mention of land occupation (**1 Chron. 7:6–12**), this list includes more than four times the number of names, locations are given (**8:6, 8, 12, 13, 28, 29, 32**), and only **verse 40** includes military census details. As for other tribes, the first generation is named, followed by focus on one son (**vv. 1–5**) and then a diverse collection of clans associated with specific towns (**vv. 6–28**). The concluding section (**vv. 29–40**) has Saul as its center, with four generations of ancestors and twelve of descendants. Linking the two halves is mention of many who “*lived (. . .) in Jerusalem*” (**vv. 28, 32**).

Martin Selman: Benjamin’s appearance here, therefore, is a sign of its **partnership with Judah** in preserving Israel’s identity and traditions. In particular, the antiquity of Benjamin’s claim to its tribal territory must have been a real source of encouragement for Chronicles’ readers who lived in the same area (cf. **9:2ff.**). The land mattered, because it was part of a promise which God had not withdrawn.

Andrew Hill: The genealogy of the tribe of Benjamin functions as a sequel to the brief listing of Benjaminites found in **7:6–12**. It also serves as an introduction to the genealogy of Saul in **9:35–44**. **Wilcock** has suggested the expansion of the Benjamite genealogy is due to the fact that Benjamin was a “**royal**” tribe, given the anointing of Saul as Israel’s first king. It is true that the focus of Chronicles is the idea of Israel’s kingship, whether located in the tribe of Benjamin or Judah. **Selman** has countered that the allocation of additional space in the Chronicler’s record for the tribe of Benjamin is more likely an issue of **geography**, especially the settlement of the tribe in and around Jerusalem (**8:6, 12, 13, 28, 32**). **Japhet** observes that the geographical principle governing the

genealogical prologue confirms **Selman's** argument. She depicts the sequence as a circle beginning with Judah (**2:3–4:23**) that widens to include the peripheral tribes and then returns to the center (Jerusalem, **ch. 9**) through the tribe of Benjamin (**ch. 8**).

The tribal territory of Benjamin is important since it represents a portion of the covenant promise made to Abraham about a specific geographical region (**Gen. 12:1–3**). The very fact that this piece of real estate remains a part of the postexilic province of Judah is testimony to the Chronicler's audience that God has been faithful to his Word.

Beyond that, however, the tribes of Benjamin and Judah essentially formed the southern kingdom of Judah and later the postexilic province of Judah. **Selman** has recognized a parallel between Judah as the first tribe listed in the genealogical prologue and Benjamin as the last tribe mentioned in that both lists emphasize tribal geography. Not only do these two tribes form the core of the restoration community geographically and numerically, but also they are partners in preserving Israel's social and political identity and maintaining the Hebrew religious tradition.

Thomas Constable: There were Benjamites who lived in Jerusalem (**8:28; 9:34**) and others who lived in Gibeon (**8:29; 9:35**). Both of these towns were important religious centers. Gibeon was where the central sanctuary stood during most of Saul's reign and from then on until Solomon built the temple. Nonetheless it was not God's chosen place of worship. The ark was never in the sanctuary at Gibeon. Rather, the Gibeon site was the people's choice, even as Saul was. God's choice was Jerusalem (**2 Chron. 6:6**). God did not choose Saul or Gibeon, but He had chosen David and Jerusalem. David and Jerusalem are the two major pieces in God's plan of salvation and blessing in Chronicles.

J. Barton Payne: The tribe of Benjamin not only produced the family of King Saul, that was prominent for many generations (**8:33-40; 9:39-44**), but also ranked second to Judah itself in post-Exilic Jewish society (**Neh 11:4, 7, 31, 36**).

H. L. Ellison: The very full details about Benjamin as contrasted with most of the other tribes should not be put down to the availability of greater information, but should be regarded as a tribute to Benjamin's loyalty to the Davidic line.

I. (:1-28) SETTLEMENT OF BENJAMINITE FAMILIES BY GEOGRAPHY

A. (:1-7) Descendants of Benjamin in Geba – Especially Sons of Bela and Ehud

“And Benjamin became the father of Bela his first-born, Ashbel the second, Aharah the third, 2 Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. 3 And Bela had sons: Addar, Gera, Abihud, 4 Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, 5 Gera, Shephuphan, and Hiram. 6 And these are the sons of Ehud: these are the heads of fathers' households of the inhabitants of Geba, and they carried them into exile to Manahath, 7 namely, Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera-- he carried them into exile; and he became the father of Uzza and Ahihud.”

Mark Boda: The first section of Benjamin’s genealogy uses a segmented format to trace Benjamin’s line down four generations from Benjamin through Bela to Abihud/Ehud, to Gera, to Gera’s sons (Uzza, Ahihud). Multiple sons are listed for each generation, but the line of only one of these sons is then traced to the next generation. The account of this line ends with a reference to an exile to Manahath, but it is uncertain whether it was Benjaminites who were deported to Manahath, whether Benjaminites deported former non-Israelite inhabitants of Geba to Manahath, or whether Benjaminite clans deported other Benjaminite clans to Manahath. Interestingly, Manahath is associated with the sons of the Calebite Salma in **2:54**, among whom also are found the inhabitants of Bethlehem. It is possible that this exile to Manahath suggests Benjaminite inclusion in the heart of Judahite territory and identity, but this is not certain.

B. (:8-13) Descendants of Shaharaim in Moab, Ono, and Lod

“And Shaharaim became the father of children in the country of Moab, after he had sent away Hushim and Baara his wives. 9 And by Hodesh his wife he became the father of Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, 10 Jeuz, Sachia, Mirmah. These were his sons, heads of fathers' households. 11 And by Hushim he became the father of Abitub and Elpaal. 12 And the sons of Elpaal were Eber, Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod, with its towns; 13 and Beriah and Shema, who were heads of fathers' households of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who put to flight the inhabitants of Gath;”

Iain Duguid: More numerous is the list of more than forty names of those who “*lived in Jerusalem*” (**1 Chron. 8:28**). Here is a striking reminder to hearers that Jerusalem had a substantial Benjaminite population alongside descendants of David (**3:4, 5**) and the priests and Levites serving at the temple (**6:10, 32**).

Andrew Hill: There is some question as to how Ono and Lod became cities of Benjamin when they were originally part of the tribal allotment of Dan (i.e., “*the area facing Joppa*”; **Josh. 19:46**). As the tribe of Ephraim gained in influence, it took control of the cities of Ono and Lod. Since Benjamin shared a border with Ephraim, it seems likely that the two cities were absorbed by Benjamin and Judah at the division of the monarchy.

Peter Wallace: Ono and Lod are ancient cities in the western part of the land – in the territory of Judah rather than Benjamin, but we have already seen that ancient tribal borders were not always followed carefully!

Mark Boda: Both of these sections cast a shadow across Benjamin’s past by noting Benjaminite foreign sojourns (**8:6-8**), which are always linked in Chronicles to some sinful cause (see **2 Chr 33; 36** and especially **2 Chr 6:36-39**). The reference to the divorcing of wives (**8:8**) does not appear to be a positive feature, since it is followed by a marriage to a wife in a foreign land (**8:9**). The fact that the line of one of the divorced wives dominates the list suggests the Chronicler’s disapproval.

C. (:14-28) Descendants of Ahio and others in Aijalon and Jerusalem

“and Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth. 15 And Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, 16 Michael, Ishpah, and Joha were the sons of Beriah. 17 And Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, 18 Ishmerai, Izliah, and Jobab were the sons of Elpaal. 19 And Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, 20 Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, 21 Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath were the sons of Shimei. 22 And Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23 Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, 24 Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah, 25 Iphdeiah, and Penuel were the sons of Shashak. 26 And Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27 Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri were the sons of Jeroham. 28 These were heads of the fathers' households according to their generations, chief men, who lived in Jerusalem.”

II. (:29-40) GENEALOGY OF SAUL'S FAMILY

Mark Boda: This genealogy focuses on the line of Saul, linking his ancestors to both Gibeon and Jerusalem, as well as tracing an enduring line of descendants after his death. It will be repeated in **9:35-44** (save **8:39-40**), and there it will function to introduce the story of Saul, which begins in **chapter 10**. In **chapter 8**, however, it is used to bolster the size of the Benjaminite account, making it the third-longest account after Judah (**chs 2-4**) and Levi (**ch 6**).

A. (:29-32) Militia at Gibeon

“Now in Gibeon, Jeiel, the father of Gibeon lived, and his wife's name was Maacah; 30 and his first-born son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, 31 Gedor, Ahio, and Zecher. 32 And Mikloth became the father of Shimeah. And they also lived with their relatives in Jerusalem opposite their other relatives.”

John Schultz: The first section is centered on Saul, the best known of all the Benjaminites in the Old Testament. The genealogy, most of which is repeated in **9:35-44**, follows the same pattern as the two preceding it, with the main figures in the center dividing the rest into two parts: the period up to Saul and his four sons (**vv. 29-32**), and twelve generations from Saul's sons Jonathan (**vv. 33-40**).

August Konkell: This list is supplementary to the Benjaminites that lived in Jerusalem. The name of the father of the Gibeonites is not in the text; the name Jeiel is found in the parallel passage in Chronicles (cf. **1 Chron 9:35**) and in a few Greek manuscripts. The parallel passage includes Ner as a son of Jeiel (**9:36**), a significant point because the genealogy of Saul begins with Ner (**8:33**). Reference to his wife Maakah may allude to a non-Israelite element within the Benjaminites. Gibeon was at the center of the Hivite population of the area (**Josh 9:3-7**), a foreign enclave within the Benjamite territory. Descendants of Mikloth resided opposite their brothers (**8:32 AT**) in Jerusalem, another reminder that in the division of Benjamin, Jerusalem was within its territory. Some families from Gibeon relocated to Jerusalem, in proximity to other Benjaminites.

In the time of Solomon, Gibeon and Jerusalem were affiliated with each other. Solomon offered sacrifices in Gibeon, where God granted him wisdom in a vision (**1 Kings 3:3-**

14), but returned to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices there after the vision (**1 Kings 3:15**; cf. **2 Chron 1:3–6**). After the temple was built in Jerusalem, Solomon received a second vision like that at Gibeon (**1 Kings 9:2**). For a time both Gibeon and Jerusalem served as places of worship, as indicated by the associations of the royal family in both places.

Though Gibeon was famous as a shrine site, it is recognized here for being a **military garrison**. The phrase translated *father of Gibeon* (**v. 29**) perhaps means “*commandant of Gibeon*” (i.e., the person in charge of the military garrison there) rather than patriarch. The sons associated with him would be his subordinate officers. These functioned in cooperation with the garrison at Jerusalem in defense of the country.

B. (:33-40) Family of Saul

“And Ner became the father of Kish, and Kish became the father of Saul, and Saul became the father of Jonathan, Malchi-shua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal. 34 And the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal, and Merib-baal became the father of Micah. 35 And the sons of Micah were Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz. 36 And Ahaz became the father of Jehoaddah, and Jehoaddah became the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri became the father of Moza. 37 And Moza became the father of Binea; Raphah was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. 38 And Azel had six sons, and these were their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah and Hanan. All these were the sons of Azel. 39 And the sons of Eshek his brother were Ulam his first-born, Jeush the second, and Eliphelet the third. 40 And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valor, archers, and had many sons and grandsons, 150 of them. All these were of the sons of Benjamin.”

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler’s treatment of the line of Benjamin ends with a focus on the family line that will both culminate in and proceed from Saul. As noted above, the majority of this genealogical survey is reiterated at the end of the next chapter (compare **vv.29–38** and **9:35–44**) in order to set up the Chronicler’s summary of the kingship of Saul (**ch. 10**).

This genealogy of the family line of Saul focuses on two cities: Gibeon (**v.29**) and Jerusalem (**v.32**). The city of Gibeon (also a Levitical city; cf. **Jos 21:17**) was located in the central hill country on the western side of the Benjamite plateau about five and a half miles northwest of Jerusalem. As with the cities noted in the first part of the chapter (**vv.1–28**), Gibeon was located at the intersection of important roads (passes) connecting the hill country with the Shephelah. The double mention of the city of Jerusalem within the genealogy of Benjamin (**vv.28, 32**; also cf. **9:3, 38**) may be a subtle connection with the notion of Saulide/Benjamite (versus Davidic/Judahite) kingship as Jerusalem is listed among the tribal inheritance of both Benjamin and Judah (cf. **Jos 18:28**; **Jdg 1:21**; but also see **Jos 15:8, 63**).

August Konkel: The Chronicler concludes his expansion of Benjamite history with a genealogy of Saul, beginning two generations before Saul and extending many generations to the families of Azel and Eshek (**vv. 38–40**). These mighty warriors were

the continuation of the distinguished royal family. The list records ten generations from Micah, in the time from Solomon to Ulam (vv. 35, 39), a period near the end of the kingdom of Judah, just before the destruction of Jerusalem. Saul is thus connected with his larger tribal history and with a noble heritage that carried on throughout the kingdom period.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What is the distinct focus of this treatment of the tribe of Benjamin?
- 2) What is the significance of Benjamin's connection to both Gibeon and Jerusalem?
- 3) How important are these family details to the introduction of the key figure of Saul?
- 4) How would this section have been encouraging to the audience of the Chronicler?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

August Konkell: Benjamin had always been the prominent representative of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The conclusion of the list in **1 Chronicles 8:40b**, that all these were Benjamites, is not meant as a quantitative statement but as an indication of character. These were all mighty military warriors. In the theology of the Chronicler, this lengthy addition of the tribe of Benjamin serves to put the kingdom of Israel on an equal basis with the kingdom of Judah, which had been given in a corresponding fashion (**1 Chron 2:3–4:23**), with considerable detail for the leading royal family. It also shows that the totality of the territory once occupied by Benjamin is included in the state of Yehud in the restoration.

Iain Duguid: The story of the tribe of Benjamin is an example of how disaster and division can be overcome by the grace of God and the faithfulness and compassion of his people. The name “Saul” can bring to the memory experiences of failure and enmity, but the inclusion of “Jonathan” is a reminder that “not all Benjaminites are like Saul,” and his son “Merib-baal” recalls David’s loyalty and compassion. David’s actions—and the consequent ongoing cooperative relationships between Judah and Benjamin—point forward to the compassion of Jesus Christ and the breaking down of barriers within his church. In remembering the past, there will always be the question, “What will we not forget?” Rather than wrongs done, here is an example of remembering acts of forgiving compassion. Christ has taught us to pray, “*Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors*” (**Matt. 6:12**), while Paul exhorts, “*See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone*” (**1 Thess. 5:15**).

Andrew Hill: A recurring theme in our analysis of Chronicles is the message of hope for postexilic Judah couched in the retelling of the story of Israelite kingship. Despite the delay of nearly two centuries, the Chronicler is **hopeful that kingship will be restored in postexilic Judah**. That hope is not utopian wishful thinking or sentimental daydreaming but confidence in the Word of God that promised a revived Davidic monarchy (cf. **Jer. 33:15; Amos 9:11**). The certainty of the Chronicler's conviction that God will make good that promise spoken through the prophets informs the structure of the genealogical prologue.

The compilation of tribal genealogies (**chs. 4–7**) is encased in an envelope featuring Judah (**chs. 2–3**) and Benjamin (**ch. 8**), the two “royal” tribes of Israel. It is the idea of kingship that inspires the Chronicler's retelling of Hebrew history. He knows beyond doubt that Israel's destiny is tied to a royal figure of some future time. I suspect the Chronicler is hopeful that kingship will again emerge in Israel during his lifetime. His questions penetrate the subsequent centuries of Jewish history even to the time of Christ's postresurrection ascension into the glory of heaven: “*Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?*” (**Acts 1:6**).

Mark Boda: The Chronicler's account of Benjamin clearly exalts the status of this tribe that was considered insignificant within Israelite tradition, which is indicated by Benjamin's status as youngest son and by the size of its territory (cf. **Ps 68:27**). . .

Although not certain, references to exile in **8:6–8** and to divorce of wives (through whom lines are then traced in **8:8–28**) cast a shadow on the tribe of Benjamin and possibly prepare the way for the negative evaluation of Saul at the outset of the Chronicler's narrative in **chapter 10**. But there is plenty to commend Benjamin in this chapter. Benjamin appears to play a role on behalf of mighty Ephraim and by association the northern tribes. Its potential as a military force possibly for Judah and certainly for Ephraim is evident in **8:13** and **40**.

Finally, the close association between Jerusalem, Gibeon, and the Benjaminites is important. After the fall of Jerusalem, the capital of the new Babylonian province was Mizpah (**2 Kgs 25:23–25; Jer 40–41**) in Benjaminite territory (**Josh 18:21–26**), most likely due to the lack of damage to the Benjaminite region – in contrast to the damage to Jerusalem. By associating Jerusalem from antiquity with all the clans of Benjamin (**8:28**) and then again with Saul's family (**8:32**), the Chronicler was reminding the Benjaminite community of the centrality of Jerusalem (and its Temple) in his own age. Similarly, Benjaminite Saul had roots in Gibeon, a city honored by the Chronicler as David's chosen intermediate location for the Tabernacle and Ark. . . As Jerusalem was central to Judah's and David's genealogy in **chapter 3**, so it is now central to Benjamin's and Saul's genealogy in **chapter 8**. The importance of Jerusalem to the Chronicler's age will become clear in **chapter 9**; Jerusalem is the destination of those who returned from both northern and southern tribes (**9:3, 34**).

TEXT: I Chronicles 9:1-44

TITLE: RETURN OF THE EXILES AND SAUL'S LINEAGE

BIG IDEA:

THE RESETTLING OF THE EXILES FOCUSED ON ESTABLISHING TEMPLE WORSHIP IN JERUSALEM UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE PRIESTS, LEVITES AND OTHER TEMPLE SERVANTS WHILE REMEMBERING THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL'S KINGS BEGINNING WITH SAUL

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkel: Anniversaries are not only about celebrating memorable events or certain achievements. Celebrating anniversaries is a way of putting the present into a life context. For this reason it is important for church congregations to celebrate anniversaries. As they look back to the vision of how a congregation came into being and trace what has happened since then, they may find a focus for decisions affecting the future. . . Chronicles has left no information as to what inspired the compilation of genealogy, but the purpose is quite clear. Before Israel can truly be who they are, they must understand who they are. The Chronicler's long look backward on the many centuries of their formation as Israel is to create an understanding and inspire a vision. No one could have predicted Cyrus when Zedekiah met his demise, but the resulting community has a calling and a future. For the people of Jerusalem, this transition initiates the foundation for inspiring **the hope of the kingdom of Yahweh**. . .

The Levites and the priests were at the center of the organization of the nation because they were central to its function and to its success. This was the nature of the nation of which God was king. The Chronicler drew upon the records of ancient times, as far back as Moses and David, to describe the historical possessions of the people and their rank. This description of all Israel not only served to legitimize the situation as the Chronicler knew it in his time, but also to defend it as ideal, a hope for the future.

Andrew Hill: The list of families resettling Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile joins the present to the past. It is through this extensive prologue cataloging the names of Hebrew ancestors that the restoration community is directly linked to the twelve patriarchs of Israel. As noted elsewhere, the purpose of the genealogical introduction was twofold:

- (1) to legitimize the restoration community as the rightful heirs of the promises made to the patriarchs and kings of Israel, and
- (2) to bolster the morale of those Hebrews returning to Judah from Babylonia and inspire full participation in the restoration initiative.

Thomas Constable: The rest of the chapter [after transition of vv.1-3] is organized as follows: heads of important families from the tribe of Judah that used to live in

Jerusalem (9:4-6), similar heads of leading families of Benjamin (9:7-9), priestly family heads (9:10-13), Levitical family heads (9:14-16), the family heads of the city gatekeepers (9:17-27), the family heads that were responsible for other temple service (9:28-34), and finally the family of King Saul (9:35-44).

(:1) TRANSITION

Iain Duguid: This one verse contains two contrasting statements. First is the picture that has been laid before the hearers of “*all Israel*,” of all the tribes spread throughout the whole land. Its extent is much broader in both people and places than is their current experience. The passage that follows, describing returnees, will include only some of the tribes (1 Chron. 9:3), and the land occupied is small, although centered in Jerusalem and with Levites serving in the temple. The genealogies provide a picture that uses details from the past to envision a future.

The second statement summarizes what went wrong. The genealogies of the “*sons of Israel*” began with Judah, soon recalling the “*trouble*” that came because Achan “*broke faith*” (2:7). Further on came details of how the Transjordanian tribes “*broke faith*” and as a result were taken into exile by the Assyrians (5:25–26). Now the genealogies conclude by focusing on Judah again; this time the whole tribe “*was taken into exile . . . because of their breach of faith*.” “*Breaking faith*,” being disloyal to God by turning away from him and his ways, not worshiping him alone, has its consequences. The concise statement foreshadows the details at the end of Chronicles of God’s response to Judah’s being “*exceedingly unfaithful*” (2 Chron. 36:14).

A. Focus on the Unity of All Israel as Reflected in the Historical Genealogies

*“So all Israel was enrolled by genealogies;
and behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel.”*

August Konkel: The registration of all Israel forms an *inclusio* with *these are the sons of Israel* in 2:1. Acknowledgment of the exile of Judah in 9:1b is an assertion that the identity of the people is bound up with their land. Living in foreign lands is an interlude rather than a normal way of life. The Judean distinctiveness in the age of the Chronicler derived from its settlement in the land and the centrality of Jerusalem within it. The identity of the people in the present is to be found in their continuity with the generations of the past. Not all had returned to the land, but Jerusalem remained central to the identity and hope of those Israelites scattered among the diverse nations.

B. Focus on the Culpability of Judah in Deserving Exile in Babylon

“And Judah was carried away into exile to Babylon for their unfaithfulness.”

Frederick Mabie: This two-part verse summarizes the Chronicler’s genealogical portrait of Israel in chs. 1–8 (note that the NIV section headings places the first part of v.1 with the previous section) and also succinctly summarizes the time frame just prior to his own, namely, the captivity and exile. As will be portrayed throughout the balance of his

theological summary of the southern kingdom (Judah), the root cause of the nation's captivity and exile was **unfaithfulness**.

August Konkel: Each group in the registration of Israel inhabited its territories as affirmed by the official records. The nation had suffered deportations because of its disobedience but had never lost its identity with the land of its inheritance. Whatever the scope of the deportation of Judah, it had been reversed by the decree of Cyrus (**2 Chron 36:22–23**). The people living in Jerusalem in the days of the Chronicler were regarded as continuous with those of the past.

I. (:2-34) RESETTLEMENT OF THE EXILES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF TEMPLE WORSHIP IN JERUSALEM

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler's listing of those in the postexilic setting who had resettled Jerusalem reflects important familial connections between the Chronicler's postexilic audience and the covenantal community of ancient Israel (cf. **Hill**, 178). Such continuity between the past (particularly the patriarchs and the tribes of Israel) and the Chronicler's present audience provides a tangible means for covenantal hope in the light of God's faithfulness. . .

The Chronicler's introductory statement on those who returned to their "own" property (**v.2**, *ahuzzâ* [GK 299]; cf. **Jos 22:9**) in the postexilic period includes individuals ("Israelites") associated with tribes from the house of Judah (i.e., Benjamin and Judah—the southern kingdom) as well as the house of Joseph (i.e., Ephraim and Manasseh—the northern kingdom). The Chronicler's mention of the key tribal units from both sides of the long-divided Israelite kingdom acts as a powerful display of the Chronicler's message of tribal unity and covenantal hope. . .

In addition to these Israelites from northern and southern tribes, the Chronicler mentions individuals central to the Israelite covenantal community (namely, priests, Levites, and temple servants). While some of these covenantal fiduciaries relocated to their "own" towns (Levitical and priestly cities [**v.2**]; cf. **Ne 11:3**), a significant number resettled in Jerusalem, hub of the Israelite covenantal community (**vv.10–34**; recall **Ne 11:1–2**). The importance of priests as teachers of God's ways and will (cf. **Lev 10:11**; **Dt 33:8–11**), together with the musical worship and temple service provided by the Levites, underscores the Chronicler's emphasis on hope and covenantal renewal.

The Chronicler's list of priests and Levites includes extended details regarding the Levitical gatekeepers (**vv.17–28**). In these verses, the repeated stress of protecting and guarding Yahweh's holy space seems to reflect the importance of guarding and watching over all that pertains to God, as seen in earlier days (note the references to tribal forefathers, Phinehas, Samuel, and David within this section; e.g., **vv.19–22**). Such faithfulness ("*positions of trust*," **v.22**) on the part of these Levitical gatekeepers will foster God's presence with them as with Phinehas (**v.20**).

Beyond gatekeeping, the Chronicler mentions other temple and worship duties of Levites, including the caretaking of temple items (vv.29, 31–32) and music (v.33; see [Johnstone](#), 1:119–29; for more on the specific duties and distinctions of priests and Levites, see comments on 6:31–47, 48–49). In closing this section, the Chronicler again makes mention of Jerusalem, the physical and metaphysical center of the Israelite covenantal community (v.34).

(:2) Overview

“Now the first who lived in their possessions in their cities were Israel, the priests, the Levites and the temple servants.”

A. (:3-9) Centrality of Jerusalem

“And some of the sons of Judah, of the sons of Benjamin, and of the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh lived in Jerusalem: 4 Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, from the sons of Perez the son of Judah. 5 And from the Shilonites were Asaiah the first-born and his sons. 6 And from the sons of Zerah were Jeuel and their relatives, 690 of them. 7 And from the sons of Benjamin were Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah, 8 and Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah; 9 and their relatives according to their generations, 956. All these were heads of fathers' households according to their fathers' houses.”

Andrew Hill: vs. 3 -- The Chronicler's report of the reoccupation of Jerusalem (9:3) is another important tie between the present and the past for the postexilic community. The resettling of Jerusalem is a sure sign of God's blessing and a hopeful omen since the prophetic promises for the rebuilding of the nation of Israel are centered in the city of David ([Isa. 44:26, 28](#); [Jer. 33:16](#)).

August Konkel: The Chronicler turns his attention to the **inhabitants of Jerusalem** because it had always been the center of all Israel, where people from all the tribes lived. To make this point explicit, the Chronicler says that the inhabitants of Jerusalem came from Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh (v. 3). Ephraim and Manasseh are not named in the parallel list in [Nehemiah 11:4](#). Their mention is an affirmation of the presence of all the tribes, since the Chronicler does not supplement the list found in [Nehemiah](#) with family heads from the northern tribes.

B. (:10-13) Priestly Families of Israel

“And from the priests were Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin, 11 and Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the chief officer of the house of God; 12 and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer; 13 and their relatives, heads of their fathers' households, 1,760 very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.”

August Konkel: The whole priestly passage appears to give the records of three priests: Jedaiah (v. 10), Adaiah (v. 12a), and Maasai (v. 12b). This short priestly list needs to be compared with related lists of priests in Ezra-Nehemiah. Jedaiah belongs to the house of Joshua (**Ezra 2:36**), Adaiah belongs to the house of Pashhur (**1 Chron 9:12a; Ezra 2:38**), and Maasai belongs to the house of Immer (**1 Chron 9:12b; Ezra 2:37**). No mention is made of the family of Harim (**Ezra 2:39**), which might indicate that it was absorbed by the other groups. . .

There were various offices among the priests. Ahitub was the chief officer of the house of God (**1 Chron 9:11**). Though the high priest could also be the chief officer, as might have been the case with Azariah of the house of Zadok (cf. **2 Chron 31:10, 13**), there could be at least three chief officers at the same time (cf. **2 Chron 35:8b**). In his conclusion of the priests (v. 13), the Chronicler refers to three separate titles found in Nehemiah: the heads of the father's houses (**Neh 11:13a**); the mighty men of valor (**11:14a**); those who did the work for the house of God (**11:12a**). The total number of priests who were family heads given by the Chronicler is larger than the totals of Nehemiah (**1 Chron 9:13; Neh 11:12–14**). These differences could be a change of situation in the time of writing, but the reason for the variables cannot be determined.

C. (:14-16) Levites and Their Duties

“And of the Levites were Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; 15 and Bakbakkar, Heresh and Galal and Mattaniah the son of Mica, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph, 16 and Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.”

August Konkel: The work of the Levites is distributed in the list of Nehemiah. Three Levites (Shemaiah, Shabbethai, Jozabad) were responsible for the tasks outside of the temple itself (**Neh 11:15–16**); three others (Mathaniah, Bakbukiah, Abda/Obadiah) were to take the lead in thanksgiving and prayer (**Neh 11:17**). The Chronicler includes only Shemaiah of the first three (**1 Chron 9:14**). Though Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal might belong to the list of temple servants (v. 15), it appears that there may be a confusion of names with Bakbukiah (seen in the Nehemiah list) and Galal found later in the Chronicler's list (v. 16). The Chronicler has listed Mathaniah, Obadiah, and Berechiah from the villages of the Netophathites as the singers. Berechiah is not named by Nehemiah, but he does refer to the singers from the villages of the Netophathites (**Neh 12:28**). The Nehemiah list contains two singers related to Asaph and one related to Jeduthun. Chronicles has one singer each for Asaph and Jeduthun, plus an additional family. The family of Berechiah in Chronicles may be an indication of developments in the families of the singers. Elkanah, the grandfather of Berechiah, is prominent in the genealogy of Heman (**1 Chron 6:33–36**), a dominant group of singers for the Chronicler.

J.A. Thompson: The list of Levites is now given, a little longer than the list in **Nehemiah 11**. The reason may be that it is an updating. The families of Shemaiah,

Mattaniah, and Obadiah are singled out for special mention. These were descended from the chief Levitical families of Merari, Asaph, and Jeduthun. Netophath was somewhere near Jerusalem. The villages of the Netophathites were the home of Levitical singers (**Neh 12:28**). The town is closely identified with Bethlehem (**2:54; Ezra 2:21–22; Neh 7:26**) and is sometimes identified with a site some three and a half miles southeast of Bethlehem.

D. (:17-33) Gatekeepers – Defined by Roles

1. (:17-23) Sentries Securing the Gates

“Now the gatekeepers were Shallum and Akkub and Talmon and Ahiman and their relatives (Shallum the chief 18 being stationed until now at the king's gate to the east). These were the gatekeepers for the camp of the sons of Levi. 19 And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his relatives, of his father's house, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent; and their fathers had been over the camp of the LORD, keepers of the entrance. 20 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar was ruler over them previously, and the LORD was with him. 21 Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was gatekeeper of the entrance of the tent of meeting. 22 All these who were chosen to be gatekeepers in the thresholds were 212. These were enrolled by genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer appointed in their office of trust. 23 So they and their sons had charge of the gates of the house of the LORD, even the house of the tent, as guards.”

2. (:24-27) Stewards Providing Oversight

“The gatekeepers were on the four sides, to the east, west, north, and south. 25 And their relatives in their villages were to come in every seven days from time to time to be with them; 26 for the four chief gatekeepers who were Levites, were in an office of trust, and were over the chambers and over the treasuries in the house of God. 27 And they spent the night around the house of God, because the watch was committed to them; and they were in charge of opening it morning by morning.”

J.A. Thompson: There is a break in the prescriptions at **v. 26b**. The emphasis changes from the specific duties of the gatekeepers to a more general discussion of the duties of the Levites. This can be made clearer by translating **vv. 25–26a**: *“Their brothers in their villages had to come from time to time and share their duties for seven-day periods because they were faithful. The four chief gatekeepers were Levites.”* The general outline of Levitical duties follows, beyond that of being gatekeepers. In addition to the opening of the temple each morning, they also were responsible for the implements used in the temple service, the care of the furnishings and all other articles of the sanctuary, and the handling of the flour, wine, oil, incense, and spices.

3. (:28-32) Servants Responsible for Tasks Related to Temple Worship

“Now some of them had charge of the utensils of service, for they counted them when they brought them in and when they took them out. 29 Some of them also were appointed over the furniture and over all the utensils of the sanctuary and over the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the frankincense and the spices. 30 And some of the sons of the priests prepared the mixing of the spices. 31 And Mattithiah, one of the Levites, who was the first-born of Shallum the Korahite, had the responsibility over the things which were baked in pans. 32 And some of their relatives of the sons of the Kohathites were over the showbread to prepare it every sabbath.”

4. (:33) Singers

“Now these are the singers, heads of fathers' households of the Levites, who lived in the chambers of the temple free from other service; for they were engaged in their work day and night.”

Iain Duguid: More extensive is the listing of Levites and their diverse responsibilities (vv. 14–34). The increasing level of detail is like a **crescendo**, rising to the culmination of “singers . . . on duty day and night” (v. 33).

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler’s section on the gatekeepers is an extensive expansion of a single verse in Nehemiah (Neh. 11:19). The gatekeepers are numbered with the Levites (1 Chron. 9:26) and form a separate class in the catalog of priests, Levites, and other temple ministers and servants. In addition to their Levitical descent, this listing emphasizes their exemplary behavior in heeding the call to live in Jerusalem (9:22, 25) and in their self-sacrificing spirit as they willingly accept additional tasks (9:26–32). The essential function of a gatekeeper was “guarding the thresholds of the Tent . . . the entrance to the dwelling of the LORD” (9:19).

Four chief gatekeepers are identified, as there were four entrances to the temple precincts. A gate was located on each of the cardinal compass points, with the east gate being the most important. This gate was the King’s Gate and faced the entrance to the temple sanctuary (9:18; cf. Ezek. 46:2). According to 1 Chronicles 26:13, the gate assignments of the chief gatekeepers were originally determined by the casting of lots. The gatekeepers worked their shifts in pairs for seven-day periods (9:25), and in all they manned twenty-two stations around the clock (26:17–18). The census of Nehemiah tallies 172 gatekeepers (Neh. 11:19), and by the time of the Chronicler that total has increased to 212 gatekeepers (1 Chron. 9:22).

Selman has conveniently outlined the section treating the gatekeepers according to the basic aspects of their temple ministry: authority (9:17–23), leadership (9:24–27), and tasks (9:28–32). The authority of the gatekeepers rested in their genealogical association with the Levites through Korah (9:18–19) and their spiritual association with Phinehas, who supervised the gatekeepers during the days of Moses (9:20; cf. Num. 25:7–13). As if to emphasize the point by “name-dropping,” the Chronicler adds

the fact that the position of gatekeeper itself was formally constituted by the likes of Samuel and David (**1 Chron. 9:22**; cf. **23:4–5**).

The gatekeepers provided leadership in the day-to-day operations of the temple by continually guarding the premises and its contents and opening the gates for temple services every morning (**9:27**). In addition, the gatekeepers supported the temple ministries by maintaining the furniture and the implements used in the worship rituals and by preparing the ingredients required for the priestly sacrifices and offerings (**9:29–30**).

It has been suggested the anomalous inclusion of the unnamed temple musicians is a concession to a group of disgruntled Levites who feel they have been slighted by their more prominent associates. But it seems more likely they are included for the sake of completeness in the recitation of priestly ministries connected with the temple.

August Konkel: The detailed description of the gatekeepers' responsibility is divided into the arrangement of the guards at the gates (**9:23–26a**), and their specific responsibilities (**vv. 26b–29**). Four chief gatekeepers were responsible for the four gates of the temple court. They received help from their colleagues, who lived in the surrounding villages and at an appointed time would lodge in the vicinity of the temple for a week. They were responsible for protecting the rooms and the treasuries, opening the gates each morning, keeping count of the sacred utensils, and providing the supplies for the regular services.

Certain other temple functions were carried out by other members of the clergy (**9:30–33**). The gatekeepers were responsible for maintaining the flour, wine, oil, incense, and spices (**v. 29**); the priests prepared the mixture of the spices (**v. 30**). Other Levites prepared the flat cakes (**v. 31**) and arranged the table bread every Sabbath (**v. 32**). The Levitical singers, who also lived in the temple chambers, were free from all such duties (**v. 33**) because they had responsibility for their own work day and night.

(:34) Summary and Transition

“These were heads of fathers' households of the Levites according to their generations, chief men, who lived in Jerusalem.”

August Konkel: This conclusion and transition to the next major section of the book refers to the two major sections of the previous passage. The Levites have been the central concern in designating the responsibilities of the community (**vv. 14–33**). The reference to Jerusalem brings the reader back to the topic of defining all Israel in terms of its representatives living in the city (**vv. 3–9**). All the tribes were represented in the residents of Jerusalem.

J.A. Thompson: **Verse 34** is a transitional verse between the Levitical musicians and the genealogy of Saul. It is preparatory to the accounts of the death of Saul related in **chap. 10**.

II. (:35-44) LINEAGE OF SAUL

“And in Gibeon Jeiel the father of Gibeon lived, and his wife's name was Maacah, 36 and his first-born son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 37 Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. 38 And Mikloth became the father of Shimeam. And they also lived with their relatives in Jerusalem opposite their other relatives. 39 And Ner became the father of Kish, and Kish became the father of Saul, and Saul became the father of Jonathan, Malchi-shua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal. 40 And the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal; and Merib-baal became the father of Micah. 41 And the sons of Micah were Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz. 42 And Ahaz became the father of Jarah, and Jarah became the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri became the father of Moza, 43 and Moza became the father of Binea and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. 44 And Azel had six sons whose names are these: Azrikam, Bocheru and Ishmael and Sheariah and Obadiah and Hanan. These were the sons of Azel.”

Frederick Mabie: The purpose of the Chronicler's reiteration of the genealogical information presented at **8:29–38** is to set up the subsequent summary of the reign of Saul (or at least the closing moments of Saul's reign) in the following chapter. The Chronicler's pursuit of the line of Saul for several (twelve) generations after Saul provides hope for the line of Saul and the tribe of Benjamin that extends well beyond Saul's reign (cf. **Selman**, 131).

J.A. Thompson: Before dealing with the story of Saul, the Chronicler repeats his genealogy from **8:29–38**, although there are **differences**. This text has Ner between Baal and Nadab in **v. 36**; it includes the name “*Mikloth*” in **v. 37**, has “*Shimeam*” for Shimeah in **v. 38**, and adds Ahaz to the sons of Micah (**v. 41**). Some spellings also are different. It may seem unusual to us to repeat the genealogy of Saul, but in a sense it is quite appropriate as an introduction to **1 Chronicles 10**.

August Konkel: In the record of Saul, the introduction of the military at Gibeon continues the theme of residence. The introductory phrase *those who lived in Gibeon* (**1 Chron 9:34** AT) forms a literary parallel with *those who lived in Jerusalem* (**9:3** AT). Gibeonites also lived in Jerusalem (**v. 38**). The Chronicler provided the abrupt genealogy of Saul (*Ner was father of Kish*) with an introduction (**v. 39**). It is generally recognized that the Chronicler was responsible for joining together the militia list of Gibeon with the genealogy of the royal family of Saul. There were logical reasons for such a union: both had to do with the military, both were very significant components in the social order of Benjamin, and though distinguished by genealogy, both came from the same area and were closely related to each other. The Chronicler regarded both as essential to his portrayal of Benjamin. As he embarks on the story of the nation, he begins with the aspects that best represented its roots.

Iain Duguid: Of all that could have been said about Saul and events prior to his final battle, the Chronicler has chosen to tell only of his family and its association with

Gibeon. In contrast to “in Jerusalem” (the last words of v. 34), the story starts “*in Gibeon*” (the first words in the Hebrew text of v. 35). A major town 6 miles (9.7 km) northwest of Jerusalem, Gibeon features in Chronicles as the location of the tabernacle and altar of burnt offerings until the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem (16:39; 2 Chron. 1:3–6). Starting the story with Gibeon and Saul sets the scene for the future movement to Jerusalem as the national center of rule and worship under David, foreshadowed in the mention of Saul’s relatives who came to live “*in Jerusalem*” (1 Chron. 9:38).

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) As you look back at the history of your church, what lessons can you glean that motivate you to press forward in trusting in the Lord’s promises?
- 2) What consequences have you experienced for past unfaithfulness?
- 3) How does the variety of ministry roles described in this passage speak to the diversity of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ?
- 4) Does the genealogy of Saul in verses 35-44 fit more with chapters 1-9 or as the introduction to the account of Saul in chapter 10?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Thomas Constable: These nine chapters of genealogy prepare for the narrative section of the book that follows and the very next section: the record of Saul's death (10:1-14). God permitted leadership by Saul and worship at Gibeon, but His plan called for leadership by David and worship at Jerusalem. Thus the Chronicler reminded his readers that their forefathers' premature insistence that God give them a king like all the other nations was a serious mistake. They should learn from their history and not seize the initiative from God again, but simply follow Him faithfully.

August Konkel: The Chronicler says nothing about the situation in Jerusalem that the exiles returned to. Like the other Scripture passages, his history of Israel ends with the destruction of Jerusalem and begins again with those who returned from exile. Jerusalem did not cease to exist in the interim, nor was its previous population entirely removed. The fate of Jerusalem after its destruction is left in obscurity. Nothing is known of the struggles of its inhabitants in the interim or of their conflicts with those who returned about two generations later. . . The Chronicler is concerned with continuity. For him, this was the best way forward in resolving differences, overcoming apathy, and inspiring commitment to the opportunities of the new era.

The Chronicler implicitly defends the right of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the area around it to their land claims. His use of *riš'on* to describe the first or principal inhabitants of Jerusalem carries the nuance of an ancient claim (**1 Chron 9:2**). . .

During the Persian period, worship is described in terms of two critical eras: Moses and Aaron; David and Samuel. The function of the temple in Jerusalem was viewed as a continuation and fulfillment of the tabernacle worship of the earlier period. Shallum was the gatekeeper at the entrance to the tent of meeting (**1 Chron 9:19**). The gatekeeper work at the King's Gate in the east was done by those who belonged to the camp of the Levites (**v. 18**). Further connection to the time of the wilderness is made in the detail of the sacrificial ingredients: the holy utensils, the choice flour, the wine, the oil, the frankincense, and the spices (**v. 29**). **Continuity** with the institutions of antiquity was more important than the more recent past that ended with the exile. Identifying with an ancient heritage reduced the trauma of the more recent events and contextualized the significance of the new era that had begun. . .

Andrew Hill: The concluding genealogy fixes attention on an issue common to God's people in both the old and new covenants, namely, **leadership during an interim or transition period**. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel predicted a royal figure would arise after the Exile and rule in righteousness after the example of King David (**Jer. 33:15; Ezek. 34:23**). The restoration process in postexilic Israel has been underway for more than a century by the time the Chronicler writes, but the Davidic ideal is still unrealized. The concluding genealogy indicates the Levitical priests assume they are the interim caretakers of the destiny of regathered Israel until such time as the Davidic prince establishes his rule.

In part, this hierocracy (rule by a priestly class) is based on the legitimacy of recognized "office gifts" ordained by God for the political and spiritual direction of Israel. Specifically mentioned are the offices of priest, sage, and prophet (cf. **Jer. 18:18; Ezek. 7:26**). The role of the priest is primarily one of **instructor in the law of God**, offering both exhortation and rebuke. This educational function of the priesthood is necessary in order to ready God's people to receive the future rule of the Davidic prince. The emphasis on the sacred duties for each of the priestly guilds recorded in the final genealogy suggests they take Malachi's earlier message to heart and apply themselves to proper ministry and instruction (cf. **Mal. 2:1-9**).

J.A. Thompson: **Chapter 9** begins with a sad testimony to sin and judgment (**v. 1**). Not only had the northern tribes been deported to foreign lands (**5:25-26**), but now Judah, despite the presence of the temple in its midst as a witness to God and to his claim on the people, was carried away captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness. But with God, there is hope of a return. The passage from **vv. 2-24** is the story of a restored people in a restored city and land. The Chronicler, with his overall concern for the Davidic monarchy from David to Zedekiah, takes a moment to concern himself with the postexilic period. The whole history of God's people is the story of **fresh starts** by God's grace. God always picks up the broken pieces and puts them together again.

There is ever a way back to God, and so it proved again in the sixth century B.C. **Chapter 9** gives evidence of a continuation of God's purposes for Israel.

John Schultz: Verses 2-34 are a sure sign that the restoration of Israel and Jerusalem was a **continuing process**. Here at the meeting-point of the genealogies (**1 Chr. 1 – 9**) and the narratives (**1 Chr. 10 – 2 Chr. 36**), post exilic Israelites are shown to be caught up in God's still-developing purposes for Israel. They are heirs of the generations descended from Adam (**ch. 1**) and from the twelve tribes (**chs. 2 – 8**) – it is surely no mistake that Ephraim and Manasseh (**v. 3**) are added to **Nehemiah 11:4**, even though there is no up-to-date information about their settlements. Their return to the Promised Land (**v.2**), and particularly to Jerusalem (**vv. 3-34**), is a clear and visible sign that Israel has survived the exile (cf. **v.1**). Divine judgment on Israel's 'unfaithfulness' (**v. 1**; cf. **v. 25**; **2 Chr. 36:14**) had not after all brought Israel's history to a full stop. Rather, genealogies that once seemed dead are now alive again (cf. **Ezek. 37:1-14**), and the Chronicler and his community are living witness to a hope rooted in the very creation of humanity.

David Silversides: Kept by the Power of God (Amil perspective)

Concluding part of the genealogical background of **chaps. 1-9** leading up to the account of the fall of the house of Saul and rise of the kingship of David.

I. None Lost –

A. Deliverance for Sinners –

vs.1 does not conceal why the captivity took place.

Restoration by the Grace of God – return to Jerusalem by the present generation that is tied to the former people who had been exiled. All who wanted to return could do so. The way was open for those who wanted the Promised Land and wanted to worship the Lord.

B. There are no lost tribes of Israel –

vs. 3. Ephraim and Manasseh represented the 10 tribes of the northern kingdom.

2 Chron. 30:1 – all tribes invited to worship and keep the Passover at Jerusalem.

2 Chron. 34:5-9 – 10 tribes well represented in days of Josiah

2 Kings 18:11 – those who had been deported to Assyria were not lost either

2 Kings 17:23 – some 200 years later their identity remained intact and stayed in those Median cities;

Ezra 6:1, 16, 21 – not all who returned were called Jews; children of Israel not confined to tribe of Judah and Benjamin

12 tribes are spoken of in the NT – **Acts 26:7** – no reduction of the number of tribes; still recognizable; not scattered to Europe or America; **James 1:1**; **Luke 2:36**;
Rom. 10 – Paul's prayer for Israel for their salvation – talking about identifiable Israelites

Application: There always will be a church on earth. Glorified church inhabiting new heavens and new earth; God of grace provides this. Lord can cause the church to be

small or great.

II. The Importance of the Mediator

Temple worship was central; return to the land was not just a return to the homeland; it was particularly a return that was to be governed by the establishment of the appointed worship of the Lord

Levites, priests and temple servants given prominence; kingship has been diminished at this time; did not recover until coming of Messiah.

Reminding the people to look beyond the return to the land to God's promises regarding His kingship and worship.

Continuation of the church by the grace of God to a new generation despite the unfaithfulness of God's people.

Application: Christ is always set forth in the church as the mediator.

III. The Central Theme (:35-44)

Same as **8:29-32**; the reason it is repeated here it gives the lineage and family line of Saul.

Chap. 10 gives account of fall of house of Saul and David being elevated to the throne.

Messianic promise to be fulfilled in throne of David.

People are encouraged to look to the Messianic fulfillment of both kingship and priesthood – combining the kingship and priesthood.

Ps. 110 –

Application: The harmony of all the parts of God's Word. God is faithful in all generations. We should be students of the Word – it all is true and points to Christ.

TEXT: I Chronicles 10:1-14

TITLE: DEATH OF SAUL – TRANSFERING THE KINGDOM TO DAVID

BIG IDEA:

THE DESERVED DIVINE EXECUTION OF SAUL PAVES THE WAY FOR THE TRANSFER OF THE KINGDOM TO DAVID

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler’s account of Saul shows the high cost of covenantal unfaithfulness, described as rejecting the word of the Lord (v.13; cf. **1Sa 13:14; 15:26**). In fact, Samuel told Saul that God “*would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time*” (**1Sa 13:13**). Instead, Saul’s unfaithfulness causes the Lord to seek a leader “*after his own heart*” (**13:14**). . .

The Chronicler’s review of Saul’s reign is brief and works to succinctly summarize the final event through which God “*turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse*” (**10:14**).

Andrew Hill: The abruptness of the shift from the genealogical prologue to the narrative of Hebrew kingship is striking. The brevity of the Chronicler’s account of King Saul’s reign is arresting as well.

- (1) Note that David, not Saul, is the focus of the Chronicler’s retelling of Israelite history. Saul’s death is a tragic but necessary introduction to Davidic kingship.
- (2) The writer of Chronicles has assumed his audience is familiar with the reign of King Saul on the basis of the records preserved in Samuel.
- (3) Finally, the theological appraisal explains the motive for this terse summary of Saul’s reign: the transition of kingship from the house of Saul to the house of David because of Saul’s disobedience to God’s word (**10:14**).

Iain Duguid: Just as an individual and a corporate “*breach of faith*” framed Israel’s tribal genealogies (**2:7**, Achan [a Judahite]; **9:1**, Judah), so the narrative of the monarchic period begins with the first king’s “*breach of faith*” (**10:13**) and will end with king, priests, and people as “*exceedingly unfaithful*” (**2 Chron. 36:14**).

Hugh Williamson: In the Chronicler’s view, however, the kingdom was God’s. This underlines the independence in the Chronicler’s scheme of the Saul narrative, leaving Israel at its close in a position of total defeat and “*exile*”, a situation from which only the faithfulness of a David could lift them. . .

The reigns of Saul, David and Solomon over a united Israel are central to the concerns of the Chronicler, about half his narrative material being devoted to these three kings alone. Nearly all the many themes of his work are developed here, and it is in their light

that the subsequent history of the people is assessed.

Martin Selman: The main purpose of this chapter is to show how and why the kingdom was transferred from Saul to David.

I. (:1-7) DEMISE OF THE HOUSE OF SAUL -- REPORT OF SAUL'S DEATH IN BATTLE WITH THE PHILISTINES

A. (:1-3) Losing Pivotal Battle

“Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 And the Philistines closely pursued Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. 3 And the battle became heavy against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was wounded by the archers.”

Mark Boda: Saul's retreat into the mountain reveals that his army was no match for the Philistines in the large valley of Jezreel; which was ideally suited for a battle with chariots but not for a force accustomed to guerrilla warfare in mountainous terrain.

B. (:4-6) Losing Saul's Life

“Then Saul said to his armor bearer, ‘Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me.’ But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword and fell on it. 5 And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell on his sword and died. 6 Thus Saul died with his three sons, and all those of his house died together.”

J.A. Thompson: There clearly was great apprehension in Saul's mind about what his fate would be if he fell into the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines. Humiliation, torture, and mutilation surely would be likely to follow Saul's capture. Death at his own hands or at the hands of his armor bearer would be preferable. Suicide practically was unknown in Israel although **1 Sam 31:3–6** has preserved the story of Saul's own suicide. **Second Samuel 1:10** has preserved the account of an Amalekite who claims to have killed Saul out of mercy. The Amalekite was apparently lying, and, as a result, David had the Amalekite put to death.

Frederick Mabie: The account of Saul's death by his own hand noted here and at **1 Samuel 31:4–5** is described in **2 Samuel 1:5–10** as coming by the hand of an Amalekite, whom Saul asks to put him out of his misery as he lay upon his spear (**2Sa 1:6–9**; cf. **1Ch 10:5**; **1Sa 31:4**). While some try to present this as a contradiction, the account of 2 Samuel has simply provided additional details of Saul's final moments.

C. (:7) Losing Israelite Cities

“When all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that they had fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and lived in them.”

Andrew Hill: Saul was anointed king over Israel in order to deliver God's people "from the hand of the Philistines" (1 Sam. 9:16). Ironically, Saul and his sons were killed by these very same Philistines. In the end, Israel actually lost more territory than it gained in these wars. The national hopes that fueled the fervent clamor for a king were dashed at Mount Gilboa (cf. 1 Sam. 8:20). The chant of victory slogans (e.g., "Saul has slain his thousands," 1 Sam. 18:7) gave way to the wail of the funeral dirges ("How the mighty have fallen!" 2 Sam. 1:19).

Frederick Mabie: Although Yahweh used Saul to temper the Philistine threat against his people (cf. 1Sa 9:16), it was not completely eradicated. In fact, Philistine dominance over Israel is reflected in the garrisons they were able to establish in Judah and Benjamin (cf. 1Sa 10:3-5; 13:3) as well as their ability to prohibit metalworkers in Israel (13:19-22). Despite this dominance, Saul had some success in pushing the Philistines back to the coastal plain and reasserting Israelite control over the Negev (cf. 13:3-14:46). Nonetheless, there was "bitter war" between Israel and the Philistines "all the days of Saul" (14:52).

The Chronicler focuses on the final moments of the last extended battle narrative between Saul and the Philistines, which ends in his demise (for the full account see 1Sa 28-31). This conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines is unique in that it is centered in the environs of the Jezreel Valley rather than the typical location in the Shephelah or hill country, and it may relate to control of key trade routes that pass through the Jezreel and Beth Shan valleys. As the Chronicler succinctly summarizes, the Israelites were routed in this battle, Saul died, his sons were killed, and the Israelite army fled (vv.6-7). This victory gave the Philistines control over the important Jezreel-Harod-Beth Shan valleys (v.7), effectively driving a wedge between the Cisjordanian tribes (see J. M. Monson, *The Land Between* [Mountain Home, Id.: Biblical Backgrounds, 1996], 57).

II. (:8-12) DESECRATION OF THE BODY OF SAUL BY THE PHILISTINES CONTRASTED WITH HEROIC ACTIONS OF MEN OF JABESH-GILEAD

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler shows the honor of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead in contrast to the dishonor of the Philistines. The displaying of the spoils of war or the body of an important enemy in a temple (v.10) was, in the biblical world, a means of thanking a deity for victory in battle (cf. v.9). The motivation behind the Jabesh Gileadites' rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons for proper burial may well stem from Saul's efforts to save that city from a brutal assault by the Ammonites (1Sa 11:1-11).

A. (:8-10) Reveling in the Demise of the Royal Family -- Desecration of the Body of Saul by the Philistines

1. (:8-9) Declaring the Good News of Saul's Humiliation

"And it came about the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the

slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 So they stripped him and took his head and his armor and sent messengers around the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to their idols and to the people.”

2. (:10) Dedicating Trophies to the Philistine Gods

“And they put his armor in the house of their gods and fastened his head in the house of Dagon.”

John Schultz: The Chronicler’s mention of Dagon’s temple, where Saul’s head ended up, is an indication of the spiritual implications of Saul’s unfaithfulness to the God of Israel. The Philistines must have believed that their victory over Israel was an indication of their idol’s superiority over the Yahweh.

B. (:11-12) Rescuing the Royal Bones -- Heroic Actions of Men of Jabesh-Gilead

“When all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all the valiant men arose and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.”

Frederick Mabie: Saul’s motivation to aid the city of Jabesh Gilead likely stemmed from the close connection between the Benjamites and the city of Jabesh Gilead. Recall that two-thirds of the decimated tribe of Benjamin (four hundred men out of six hundred survivors) received their wives from the city of Jabesh Gilead in the aftermath of the Benjamite war (**Jdg 19–21**; cf. esp. **21:5–12**). Thus two-thirds of Saul’s kin (including perhaps his own mother or grandmother) could trace their lineage through the city of Jabesh Gilead, facilitating a unique and strong bond between this city and the tribe of Benjamin.

III. (:13-14) DIVINE JUDGMENT EXECUTED AGAINST SAUL FOR HIS UNFAITHFULNESS – TRANSITIONING THE KINGDOM TO DAVID

A. (:13-14a) Failures of Saul

1. (:13a) Unfaithfulness to the Covenant Relationship

“So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD,”

2. (:13b) Disobedience to the Word of God

“because of the word of the LORD which he did not keep;”

3. (:13c) Seeking Guidance from Satanic Sources

“and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it,

John Schultz: Saul’s **syncretism** is a microcosm of Israel’s unfaithfulness in the Old Testament. It is also a contradiction of ‘*the first and greatest commandment*’ (**Matt. 22:37-38; Deut. 6:5**).

4. (:14a) Failing to Depend on the Lord
“and did not inquire of the LORD.”

August Konkel: Unfaithfulness is a personal matter, but its effects are never limited to one person. The tragic story of Saul was the consequence of the low priority he placed on obedience to God. His personal potential as a representative of a leading family in the tribe of Benjamin was eroded. He became increasingly insecure and desperate, even to the point of seeking help from a medium. Saul did not determine to be unfaithful; his intentions were not to turn away from God, who had called him and anointed him (**1 Sam 10:1**). His unfaithfulness manifested itself in a lack of trust that then led to a succession of wrong choices.

J.A. Thompson: The consulting of a medium was as grievous an act of unfaithfulness as any ritual offense. The practice of consulting mediums was expressly forbidden in Israel (**Deut 18:9–14**; cf. **1 Sam 15:23**). It was a phenomenon recognized by twittering communications from within a man (**Lev 20:27**; **Isa 29:4**) Saul should have taken his problems to the Lord, but he did not “*inquire*” (*šā'al*) of the Lord. It meant for him not merely seeking information but a **deep dependence** on God born out of a trustful attitude of personal faith and loyalty. Failure to inquire of the Lord on this occasion was a further indication of Saul's whole attitude. Godly leadership is characterized by complete obedience to the Lord and by seeking guidance from him in faith. Saul failed on both counts.

Iain Duguid: “*Seek guidance*” (*darash*) is a key word in Chronicles, occurring almost forty times in a religious context. While often, as here, it refers to guidance in a specific matter (“*inquire*”), more generally it expresses wholehearted devotion to God (“*seek*”; e.g., **1 Chron. 16:11**).

Mark Boda: Without losing sight of the many good sources of truth and knowledge that can be found in our world because of God’s common grace to all humanity, as Christians we need to ensure that the priority of revelation is found in “*asking the Lord for guidance*” (**10:14**) in the person of Jesus, in the presence of the Spirit, and in the witness of Scripture.

B. (:14b) Fatal Execution of Saul and Transition to David’s Dynasty

1. Fatal Execution of Saul

“Therefore He killed him,”

2. Transition to David’s Dynasty

“and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.”

Townsend: Having established the remnant's genealogical link with the Davidic and priestly lines, he [the writer] focused on the groundwork of the Davidic promises. His design was to show how the kingly and priestly concerns came together in David. David is then seen as a model for the postexilic community as they look forward to One like David.

Mark Boda: The final phase of the evaluation brings into focus the main purpose of the chapter as a whole, that is, to describe how the kingship came to David. As the Lord was the subject of the action of judgment against Saul, so he was the subject of the transference of the kingship from Saul to David. This is a key reminder that this office was God's to appoint to one who was faithful to him. In this uneasy transition between dynasties, the reader is reminded who the true king was.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why does the Chronicler choose to start his narrative of the kings of Judah at this particular point in history?
- 2) How does God demonstrate His sovereign control over the kingdom of Israel?
- 3) What is involved in *inquiring of the Lord*?
- 4) How can the church protect itself today against the **sins of Saul**?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Martin Selman: The key to Chronicles' presentation of Saul has usually been viewed in one of two ways. It has been seen either as a mere prelude or foil to the account of David (**von Rad, Galling**), or more recently as a paradigm of the conditions which ultimately brought about the exile (**Mosis, Ackroyd, Williamson**). . .

David's kingdom and covenant receive even greater prominence of course in the New Testament. There they are transformed by Jesus, "great David's greater Son" (**J. Montgomery**), who is both a turning-point and continuation of the Old Testament's hope. Ultimately, it is Jesus, rather than David, who makes this covenant non-transferable (**Luke 1:32-33; Acts 2:29-36; Phil. 2:5-11**). **1 Chr. 10** is therefore neither just a **prelude** nor a **pattern**, though it includes elements of both. It highlights a juncture when under the Lord's sovereignty a **permanent foundation** was laid, which was crucial not only for the rest of Chronicles, but for the whole of biblical history.

August Konkel: In Samuel, the death of Saul brings to a conclusion the story of a long war between Saul and the Philistines. In Chronicles, the death of Saul brings a definitive end to his claim to royalty, which never did include all Israel. The Chronicler makes no mention of the defeat of the army; his point is that **the overthrow of the house of Saul was complete**. The death of Saul was a **divine action**, which terminated the claim of Benjamin to rule the nation. This divine action was not capricious; though

the details are not given, a summary distinct to the Chronicler makes the point clear (10:13–14). Saul sought a medium instead of God, a violation of the covenant that disqualified him entirely as a representative of the divine kingdom. . .

Neither Ish-Bosheth, who was finally slain (2 Sam 4:5–12), nor Mephibosheth, who was crippled in the chaos that followed the death of Saul (4:4; 21:7), had any real claim to the throne of Saul. Abner, who made Ish-Bosheth king, never granted him independent authority (3:6–11); eventually Abner deserted Ish-Bosheth in favor of David. Though the line of Saul continued through Mephibosheth, there never was opportunity for him to even claim succession to Saul. Instead, David effectively preempted it by making him a part of his own household. In the view of the Chronicler, **the dynasty of Saul ended conclusively** on Mount Gilboa. . .

The death of a king might portend the demise of the institution and the nation, but the presentation of the Chronicler emphasizes instead the continuity of the kingdom in the transfer of the royal house from one tribe to another. By focusing on the death of Saul without mention of Jonathan's achievements, the failure of the first king is limited to one member of the Benjamite tribe. The narrative of Samuel shows that David's ascent to power was a long and protracted affair and that negative relations continued throughout much of David's reign. The Chronicler brings closure to the reign of the first king. His transgression ends the legitimacy of his royal claims, but it does not end the Israelite kingdom or the distinction of the Benjamite tribe.

Andrew Hill: Saul's tragic death serves as a grim reminder of God's sovereignty over Israel and all the nations—a theological truth not lost on the Chronicler's audience as they languish in the aftermath of the Babylonian exile. The Philistines were merely agents of God's just punishment of King Saul's disobedience (even as the Babylonians were instruments of divine judgment in the exile of Judah). Finally, the Chronicler's narrative of Saul's death has a twofold purpose:

- (1) The Israelite kingdom and kingship belong to God;
- (2) God had good reason for transferring the kingdom from the family of Saul to the family of David.

Thomas Constable: The Chronicler's presentation of Saul supplied a backdrop and a contrast for his portrayal of David. Saul was the king that the people had demanded prematurely. He was the king after the people's heart. His name means "He Who Was Requested." Saul failed to submit to Yahweh's authority and to obey His Word as God had revealed it in the Mosaic Law—and through the prophet Samuel (vv. 13-14).

Saul had failed to respond appropriately to God's elective grace in placing him on the throne. He had no heart for God. Consequently, God brought discipline on Saul and on Israel under him. Because Saul failed to listen to God, God eventually stopped listening to him (cf. Jer. 7:13-16). Finally God killed him (v. 14). This is the only place in Chronicles where we read that the LORD directly intervened to substitute one king for another.

The reason the writer recorded the death of Saul at such length seems to have been to show that David had no hand in it. Disloyalty to God always results in catastrophe, especially for His servants (cf. **Luke 12:48**). Another reason may have been to present Saul as a prototype of all the evil kings that follow, and to present David as a prototype of all the good kings that follow.

Iain Duguid: Saul’s death is a tragic example of leadership that promises much due to natural abilities and charisma and even God’s choice (e.g., **1 Sam. 9:15–17; 10:23–24**) but fails because it is not undergirded with a steady commitment to God, evident in obeying his known commands and humbly seeking his guidance. Saul’s fear of what the Philistines might do culminates a life of actions governed by fear of what others might do rather than by trusting obedience and seeking God (e.g., **1 Sam. 13:4–14; 15:24; 17:11; 28:5**).

Martin Selman: By deliberately omitting so much of this material from 1 and 2 Samuel, Chronicles is able to concentrate on two aspects of the kingdom in **chapters 10 – 12**. In **chapter 10**, kingship in Israel is transferred from Saul’s house to David’s (**vv. 13-14**), with further references to the importance of this changeover in **11:1-2, 12:23**. The second feature, found in **chapters 11 – 12**, traces the gradual expansion of David’s kingdom to include ‘*all Israel*’ (**11:1-3; 12:38-40**), repeatedly emphasizing how support was transferred from Saul’s former subjects to the new king. In this way, **chapters 10 – 12** serve as an introduction to the United Monarchy under David and Solomon, but also as a challenge to the Chronicler’s contemporaries about the true nature of kingship and authority in Israel. The Chronicler gives no direct advice about the practical implications of this material for his own time, and certainly issues no invitation to rebellion against Persian (or Greek) emperors. He is simply content to indicate that the kingdom of Israel transferred from Saul to David was part of God’s own kingdom.

J.A. Thompson: In this, and the following chapters, four themes interweave. These themes are: the nation, the ark, the testimony, and the temple, as the following chart illustrates:

Themes	Chapters								
Nation	10	11	12						
Ark				13	15	16			
Testimony				14			18	19	20
Temple					17				21 22

TEXT: I Chronicles 11:1 – 12:40

TITLE: UNIFIED SUPPORT FOR DAVID AS KING

BIG IDEA:

MIGHTY WARRIORS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS RALLIED THEIR UNIFIED SUPPORT FOR DAVID AS KING IN HARMONY WITH HIS DIVINE CALLING

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: The opening chapters of David's account (1Ch 11–12) present a clear image of unity in affirming the Lord's will in David's rise to power (cf. 11:2–3) and stress the depth and breadth of support enjoyed by David. This introductory unit begins and ends with David's enthronement at Hebron (1Ch 11:1–3; 12:38–40; see Selman, 137–38).

August Konkel: David was not responsible for uniting the tribes into all Israel, but all Israel came together to make David their king. Hebron becomes the place where all Israel gathers to declare their uncompromising allegiance to David as their king. This purpose is declared repeatedly: 1 Chronicles 11:1–3, 10; 12:23, 31, 38. The account begins and ends with those who came to Hebron to make David king: 11:1–3; 12:38–40. The military success of David is not presented as a personal achievement but as a saving event in the history of the nation. . .

Mark Boda: The appointment to royal office (or better, dynasty) in the books of Samuel consists of four steps:

- private divine election / anointing (1 Sam 10:1-8; 16:1-13),
- Spirit endowment (1 Sam 10:9-13; 16:13-16),
- great feat (1 Sam 11:1-11; 17:1-58), and
- public confirmation (1 Sam 11:12-15; 2 Sam 2:1-7; 5:1-5).

Andrew Hill: The **chiastic structure** may be outlined as follows:

- A David enthroned in Hebron (11:1–3)
 - B David conquers Jerusalem (11:4–9)
 - C Support of David's mighty men (who came to Hebron) (11:10–47)
 - D Support of David at Ziklag (12:1–7)
 - E Men of Gad support of David at his desert stronghold (12:8–15)
 - E' Men of Judah and Benjamin support David at his desert stronghold (12:16–18)
 - D' Men of Manassesh support David at Ziklag (12:19–22)
 - C' Divisions of tribal militia support David at Hebron (12:23–37)
 - A' Celebration of David's enthronement in Hebron (12:38–40)

For the Chronicler, the unity of the Israelite tribes forged under King David is the operative template for a similar reunification of the Jews during the postexilic period as a result of God's promised restoration of the Davidic dynasty.

(11:1-3) PROLOGUE -- DAVID'S CORONATION AT HEBRON

A. (:1) Confession of Israelite Unity

*"Then all Israel gathered to David at Hebron and said,
'Behold, we are your bone and your flesh.'"*

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler's account of David's reign begins with the clear portrayal of Israelite unity in the gathering of "*all Israel*" to David. This unity is reinforced with the declaration of the familial-ethnic oneness of the tribes of Israel ("*we are your own flesh and blood*").

B. (:2a) Confidence in David's Leadership

*"In times past, even when Saul was king,
you were the one who led out and brought in Israel;"*

Frederick Mabie: The people of Israel had ample opportunity to observe God's hand of blessing on the life of David, particularly in military victories that began in earnest during the reign of Saul (e.g., **1Sa 18:6–9**). The people here express recognition that David's elevation to "*shepherd*" and "*ruler*" is an element of divine election and sovereignty. The imagery of David as shepherd reflects the king's fiduciary role of protecting the flock (i.e., people) and leading them in righteousness (cf. **Dt 17:14–20**). The theological significance of the shepherd image is also reflected in exilic and postexilic prophetic literature (e.g., **Eze 34:1–31**) and in Christ's self-revelation (cf. **Jn 10:1–18**). The reminder that these are God's people whom David will lead underscores the reality that David's authority has been delegated by God.

C. (:2b) Call of God to be Shepherd-King of Israel

*"and the LORD your God said to you,
'You shall shepherd My people Israel,
and you shall be prince over My people Israel.'"*

D. (:3) Coronation of David via Covenant Commitment

1. Initiative of All Israelite Elders

"So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron,"

2. Ratification of Covenant Commitment

"and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD;"

3. Anointing of David as King

"and they anointed David king over Israel,"

4. Fulfillment of Divine Prophecy

“according to the word of the LORD through Samuel.”

Andrew Hill: The account of David’s accession to Saul’s throne in Hebron faithfully represents the earlier parallel found in **2 Samuel 5:1–5**. The Chronicler omits the record of David’s age at accession (thirty), the length of his reign (forty years, **5:4**), and the fact that he ruled in Hebron as the capital of a separate kingdom of Judah for a span of nearly eight years (**5:5**). The Chronicler assumes that knowledge on the part of his audience since his purpose is to **idealize the Israelite unity** achieved under David with the hope of instilling similar expectations in postexilic Judah. By way of Old Testament chronology, David’s forty-year reign is dated tentatively from about 1010 to 970 B.C.

According to **Wilcock**, the Israelites rightfully justify the installation of David as king over Israel for several good reasons.

- (1) They recognize their kinship with David as their own *“flesh and blood”* (**11:1**).
- (2) David has earned the loyalty of the Israelites by his prowess in battle as Saul’s general (**11:2**).
- (3) The people enter a compact with David and accept him as their king by anointing him (**11:3**).
- (4) Finally, the people confess that all has been done in accordance with the word of the Lord spoken by Samuel (**11:3**).

I. (11:4-9) CAPTURE OF ZION – THE CAPITAL CITY OF DAVID

August Konkel: Striking in this regard is the inclusion of the conquest and rebuilding of Jerusalem within an extensive account that has its focus on the coronation of the king in Hebron. . .

The main point is to show the **support** of all Israel for David as king. The Chronicler develops this point by associating the heroic acts of David’s mighty men with the coronation at Hebron. This serves to illustrate the strong support for David as king. Support for David is the theme of the following chapter, as indicated by the introduction to each of its main paragraphs (**12:1, 8, 16, 19**). Support grew until his army was immense, like the army of God (**12:22**). The Chronicler’s purpose was to develop an ideal portrayal of Israel united around David as king at Jerusalem (**Williamson** 1981: 168). Though the coronation was at Hebron, for the Chronicler the kingdom began with Jerusalem as its capital. Chronology is subordinated to the more comprehensive theme of the succession of David as king over all Israel in Jerusalem. The Chronicler has made the bond between David and Jerusalem inalienable.

A. (:4-5a) Confrontation with Jebusites at Jerusalem

“Then David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (that is, Jebus); and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, were there. 5 And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, ‘You shall not enter here.’”

B. (:5b) Capture of Stronghold of Zion

“Nevertheless David captured the stronghold of Zion (that is, the city of David).”

August Konkel: The origin of the name “*Zion*” is unknown, but etymology based on Arabic suggests that it referred to a range of hills serving as a base of security. Geographically it was the southern end of the eastern slopes of Jerusalem. These were built up with a fill to establish an inaccessible fortification. Zion came to refer to a political center, either as a synonym for Jerusalem, or as a reference to the capital of Judah. Perhaps even more important, the location of the temple on Zion made the name representative of divine presence. Zion as the capital of the kingdom of David and the location of the temple quickly became a synonym for the city of God (**Ps 48:1–2**).

J.A. Thompson: No question of the chronology of events is involved in the placing of the capture of Jerusalem at this point in the story. The focus is rather political than chronological. A united Israel would need a center of government. This was to be Jerusalem. The religious significance of Jerusalem as the site of the temple came later.

C. (:6) Commander of the Military = the Role Earned by Joab

“Now David had said, ‘Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall be chief and commander.’ And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became chief.”

D. (:7-8) City of David Established and Strengthened

“Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore it was called the city of David. 8 And he built the city all around, from the Millo even to the surrounding area; and Joab repaired the rest of the city.”

J.A. Thompson: Clearly the city of David needed both repair and extension. Joab also was involved in the repair work and is said to have literally “*restored to life*” the rest of the city.

E. (:9) Critical Factor in David’s Ascending Greatness = God’s Favor

“And David became greater and greater, for the LORD of hosts was with him.”

Frederick Mabie: The taking of Jerusalem and David’s subsequent transfer of his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem (“*the City of David*,” v.7) was a significant step in deepening solidarity across the tribes and constituencies of Israel for a number of reasons. It was:

- geographically central to the twelve tribes (in contrast to deep in the territory of Judah, as Hebron was)
- politically neutral, as it was taken from the Jebusites and was not occupied by any particular tribe (cf. Washington, D.C.)
- connected with the patriarch Abraham via the earlier names “*Salem*” (cf. **Ge 14:18–20; Ps 76:2**) and “*Mount Moriah*” (cf. **Ge 22; 2Ch 3:1**)

- earned by David (reflecting divine blessing; recall **vv.2, 9**) and advanced the fulfillment of Yahweh’s promise to Israel of land (previous efforts at taking Jerusalem [Jebus] were only temporarily successful [see, e.g., **Jos 10; 15:63; Jdg 1:8, 21**])
- a central location for religious and political power bases (cf. **chs. 15–17; 2Sa 6–7**)

All these factors worked together to minimize potential tribal jealousies, promote national and religious unity, and demonstrate the tangible blessing of God on the leadership of David. This account also shows the backdrop to the ascendancy of David’s military leader Joab (**v.6**) and introduces two common synonyms used for Jerusalem, namely “*Zion*” (**v.5**) and the “*City of David*” (**v.7**).

II. (11:10-47) SUPPORT FOR DAVID AT HEBRON BY THE MIGHTY MEN

A. (:10-14) Mighty Men Supporting David’s Kingship

“Now these are the heads of the mighty men whom David had, who gave him strong support in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel. 11 And these constitute the list of the mighty men whom David had: Jashobeam, the son of a Hachmonite, the chief of the thirty; he lifted up his spear against three hundred whom he killed at one time. 12 And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighty men. 13 He was with David at Pasdammim when the Philistines were gathered together there to battle, and there was a plot of ground full of barley; and the people fled before the Philistines. 14 And they took their stand in the midst of the plot, and defended it, and struck down the Philistines; and the LORD saved them by a great victory.”

August Konkel: The roster listing chiefs of David’s mighty men names four warriors: Jashobeam (**1 Chron 11:11**), Eleazar (**v. 12**), Abishai (**v. 20**), and Benaiah (**v. 22**). They are identified by their patronym, their rank, and the exploits that entitled them to be included among the Three (Jashobeam, Eleazar; **vv. 11–12**) or the Thirty (Abishai, Benaiah; **vv. 20–22, 25**).

Andrew Hill: These **elite troops** are professional soldiers, not vulgar mercenaries. They live and die by the military code of their day—a code of honor that even prohibited the enjoyment of personal pleasures while on “active duty” (cf. **2 Sam. 11:11**). David’s “*mighty men*” (*haggibborim*) are the ancient equivalent of both the modern-day “special forces” military units and the “secret service,” charged with the protection of our highest elected officials (note their roles as both irrepressible warriors in the face of overwhelming odds and as bodyguards to the king, (**2 Sam. 23:23; 1 Chron. 11:25**).

B. (:15-19) Heroic Loyalty of the Three Mighty Men

“Now three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam, while the army of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim. 16 And David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the

Philistines was then in Bethlehem. 17 And David had a craving and said, 'Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!' 18 So the three broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David; nevertheless David would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD; 19 and he said, 'Be it far from me before my God that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of these men who went at the risk of their lives? For at the risk of their lives they brought it.' Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did."

C. (:20-25) Specific Exploits of Abshai and Benaiah

1. (:20-21) Abshai

"As for Abshai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the thirty, and he swung his spear against three hundred and killed them; and he had a name as well as the thirty. 21 Of the three in the second rank he was the most honored, and became their commander; however, he did not attain to the first three."

August Konkel: Abishai was one of the three sons of Zeruah, the sister of David (1 **Chron 2:16**). These three are distinguished for their ruthless tactics in warfare (2 **Sam 3:39; 16:9–10**). Abishai was distinguished among the Thirty but was not among the Three (2 **Sam 23:18; 1 Chron 11:21**).

2. (:22-25) Benaiah

"Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, mighty in deeds, struck down the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion inside a pit on a snowy day. 23 And he killed an Egyptian, a man of great stature five cubits tall. Now in the Egyptian's hand was a spear like a weaver's beam, but he went down to him with a club and snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. 24 These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and had a name as well as the three mighty men. 25 Behold, he was honored among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three; and David appointed him over his guard."

August Konkel: Benaiah is given pride of place among the chiefs. Three heroic deeds illustrate his achievements as a warrior (1 **Chron 11:22–23**).

- He killed two 'ari'el from Moab. The import of the term—literally *lion of God*—is unclear. Ariel may refer to sons of a man by that name (cf. **Ezra 8:16**), or this may be a certain term for warrior (HAL 1:80). The meaning "warrior" may be found in a Phoenician inscription (KAI 30), but the context there is not complete.
- Benaiah also killed a lion on a snowy day, an act not associated with war, but simply a daring deed that showed his courage and valor.

- Finally, Benaiah killed an Egyptian over seven feet tall, much as David killed Goliath, by snatching the giant man's weighty weapon and then using it to kill him.

Benaiah may have been among the later warriors of David. He became commander over the Davidic militia of twenty-four thousand who served during the third month (**1 Chron 27:5–6**). He was a chief commander instrumental in establishing Solomon as king during the revolt of Adonijah (**1 Kings 1–4**).

D. (:26–47) List of Additional Mighty Men from Various Tribes Supporting David

“Now the mighty men of the armies were Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 27 Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite, 28 Ira the son of Ikkes the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, 29 Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, 30 Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, 31 Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, 32 Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, 33 Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, 34 the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shagee the Hararite, 35 Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphal the son of Ur, 36 Hopher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, 37 Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, 38 Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, 39 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armor bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah, 40 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, 41 Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, 42 Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a chief of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, 43 Hanan the son of Maacah and Joshaphat the Mithnite, 44 Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, 45 Jediel the son of Shimri and Joha his brother, the Tizite, 46 Eliel the Mahavite and Jeribai and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, 47 Eliel and Obed and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.”

III. (12:1-22) SUPPORT FOR DAVID WHEN A FUGITIVE IN THE EARLY YEARS

August Konkel: Support to make David king did not begin with the demise of Saul's reign. The Chronicler goes back in time to show the support that David received while Saul was king and David was a fugitive. This list is to be distinguished from the preceding in that these warriors are not part of all Israel that made David king in Hebron (**11:1**). The main point of this list is that warriors kept coming to David until they became a vast camp of various tribes, capable of representing all Israel in support for David as king (**12:1, 8, 16, 19–20, 22**). Their support for David as his helpers is emphasized repeatedly (**vv. 1, 17–18, 21–22**).

J.A. Thompson: We probably should not be looking for any chronological presentation here but rather the development of a theme, namely, that the men of Israel came as part

of a concerted movement to stand with David to ensure that Saul's kingdom was handed over to him according to the plan and purpose of God (v. 23).

Thomas Constable: Chapter 12 has no parallel in Samuel. Its unique emphases are these: Men from Israel as well as Judah followed David, and there was a very large number of them (v. 22). David also had many other supporters (vv. 39- 40). Even Saul's relatives followed him (vv. 2, 16, 29). God sanctioned the plan of these men to turn the kingdom of Saul over to David (v. 23).

SOLDIERS WHO CAME TO SUPPORT DAVID IN HEBRON		
Tribe	Number of soldiers	Verses
Judah	6,800	24
Simeon	7,100	25
Levi	4,600	26-28
Benjamin	3,000	29
Ephraim	20,800	30
Western Manasseh	18,000	31
Issachar	200 chiefs and their brethren	32
Zebulun	50,000	33
Naphtali	38,000	34
Dan	28,600	35
Asher	40,000	36
Reuben, Gad, and Eastern Manasseh	120,000	37
Total	336,900 plus	

Hugh Williamson: This section is made up of four short paragraphs, each one of which illustrates the accumulating support for David in the period before his elevation to the throne. The opening sentence of each paragraph makes this theme clear:

- “*These are the men who came to David*” (1);
- “*there went over to David*” (8);
- “*came . . . to David*” (16);
- “*deserted to David*” (19), while the concluding v. 22 stresses it even more strongly.

It is thus closely related to the aim of **chs 11-12** as a whole (cf. **11:1, 3, 9, 10; 12:23, 33, 38**).

Martin Selman: **Chapters 11-12** are a single unit with a clear design. The programmatic theme of David’s recognition as king by the whole of Israel introduces (**11:1-3**) and concludes (**12:23-40**) the whole unit. Significantly, the conclusion to the whole account of David’s reign has an identical emphasis (**1 Chr. 29:25-26**), and parallels the opening here. The intervening verses (**11:4 – 12:37**) develop the basic theme. They reveal **David’s widespread support**, even from those tribes most distant geographically from Judah and those who formerly owed allegiance to Saul.

The emphasis on Israel’s unity under David must have had considerable implications for postexilic Israel. . . . Although Chronicles reports several attempts at reunification during the Divided Monarchy period (e.g. **2 Chr. 30:1-12**), no other passage expresses so clearly that the open commitment of previously separated groups to God’s appointed leader was a vital ingredient in making that unity possible. Though the Chronicler’s hope remained unfulfilled in his own day, it did become a real possibility in Christ. Those Jews and Samaritans who first put their faith in Jesus (**John 4:4-42; Acts 8:4-25**) began a reunifying process which is still moving towards its climax. It was accelerated when 3,000 ‘*Jews from every nation under heaven*’ (**Acts 2:5**) were joined by Gentiles from many nations in acknowledging the risen Son of David as God’s appointed leader. It remains the church’s privilege and task to break down human barriers and to work towards the final gathering of a ‘*great multitude . . . from every nation, tribe, people and language*’ to Jesus as ‘*KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*’ (**Rev. 7:0; 19:16**). Only then will Chronicles’ hope for the Davidic kingship be fully and finally transformed.

Andrew Hill: **Chapter 12** divides neatly into two parts: the defectors from Saul’s army who join David while he is a fugitive as the rival king (**12:1–22**), and the assembly of the Israelite militia at Hebron for David’s coronation (**12:23–40**). The Chronicler resorts to a familiar structure, the **geographical chiasm**. In this case, he arranges the tallies of the tribal contingents lending support to David around three geographical locations:

- A Hebron (**11:10**)
 - B Ziklag (**12:1**)
 - C Desert stronghold (**12:8**)
 - C’ Desert stronghold (**12:16**)
 - B’ Ziklag (**12:20**)
- A’ Hebron (**12:23**)

A. (12:1-7) Support for David at Ziklag

“Now these are the ones who came to David at Ziklag, while he was still restricted because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men who helped him in war. 2 They were equipped with bows, using both the right hand and the left to sling stones and to shoot arrows from the bow; they were Saul's kinsmen from Benjamin. 3 The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth, and Beracah and Jehu the Anathothite, 4 and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty. Then Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad the Gederathite, 5 Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, Shephatiah the Haruphite, 6 Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, Jashobeam, the Korahites, 7 and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.”

Mark Boda: This section begins with relatives from Saul’s own tribe (Benjamin) and even his own town (Gibeah) who were both expert archers and stone slingers, showing that there was discontent within Saul’s own power base. They came to Ziklag, a town on the southern border of Judah’s traditional territory, which was held by the Philistines during the reign of Saul. At that time it had been given to David as reward for his defection from Saul and loyalty to the Philistine king Achish of Gath (**1 Sam 27:1-6**). It would become the base of his operations until Saul’s death (**2 Sam 1:1**), when David’s base would move to Hebron (**2 Sam 2:1**).

B. (12:8-18) Support for David at the Fortress

1. (:8-15) Gadite Skilled Soldiers Supporting David

“And from the Gadites there came over to David in the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for war, who could handle shield and spear, and whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the gazelles on the mountains. 9 Ezer was the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, 10 Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, 11 Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, 12 Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, 13 Jeremiah the tenth, Machbannai the eleventh. 14 These of the sons of Gad were captains of the army; he who was least was equal to a hundred and the greatest to a thousand. 15 These are the ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month when it was overflowing all its banks and they put to flight all those in the valleys, both to the east and to the west.”

Andrew Hill: Unlike the archers and slingers from the tribe of Benjamin who are effective in battle from a distance (**12:1–7**), the Gadite soldiers excel in hand-to-hand combat because of their speed and strength. According to **Williamson**, the metaphorical comparison of the heroic qualities of warriors with animals (**12:8**) is commonplace in the ancient world to the degree that such designations often become titles for warriors.

Mark Boda: Next, the Chronicler relates the defection of warriors from Gad who were experts with shield and spear. They approached David while at an unnamed “stronghold in the wilderness.”

2. (:16-18) Defectors from Benjamin and Judah Supporting David

“Then some of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold to David. 17 And David went out to meet them, and answered and said to them, ‘If you come peacefully to me to help me, my heart shall be united with you; but if to betray me to my adversaries, since there is no wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look on it and decide.’ 18 Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was the chief of the thirty, and he said, ‘We are yours, O David, And with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, And peace to him who helps you; Indeed, your God helps you!’ Then David received them and made them captains of the band.”

Mark Boda: Only then does the Chronicler introduce defectors from David’s own tribe of Judah, who, together with others from Saul’s tribe Benjamin, approached David at the stronghold to join him. . . David’s speech challenged them to reveal their loyalties; it oriented the discussion theologically by calling on “*the God of our ancestors*” to judge the answer. The response was given by Amasai (**12:18**), who would later become a leader in “*the Thirty*” and is probably the later Amasa of Absalom’s revolt (**2 Sam 17:25**; cf. **1 Chr 2:17**). He functions in this narrative as a Spirit-inspired spokesperson (“*the Spirit came upon Amasai*”).

C. (12:19-22) Support for David at Ziklag from Manasseh Defectors

“From Manasseh also some defected to David, when he was about to go to battle with the Philistines against Saul. But they did not help them, for the lords of the Philistines after consultation sent him away, saying, ‘At the cost of our heads he may defect to his master Saul.’ 20 As he went to Ziklag, there defected to him from Manasseh: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai, captains of thousands who belonged to Manasseh. 21 And they helped David against the band of raiders, for they were all mighty men of valor, and were captains in the army. 22 For day by day men came to David to help him, until there was a great army like the army of God.”

Andrew Hill: The theme of “help” joins this passage with the preceding unit (**12:16–18**). Amasai’s generalized prophecy of God’s help in bringing about success for David’s kingship (**12:18**) is fulfilled specifically through the loyal “help” of others against the Amalekite bandits (**12:21–22**). **Allen** has noted this motif of “help” for David is further emphasized in the wordplay with the noun for “*help*” (‘ezer) in the names of certain of the soldiers defecting to the rival king (e.g., Ahiezer, **12:3**; Joezer, **12:6**; Ezer, **12:9**).

J.A. Thompson: Seven defectors from Manasseh are listed. These men must have joined David just before the battle of Mount Gilboa, where Saul was killed. David was sent away by the Philistines because they mistrusted him, though Achish did not (cf. **1 Sam 29**). Apparently David accompanied the Philistines part of the way, at least as far as Aphek (**1 Sam 29:1**), which lay near Manasseh. The term “*thousand*” (**1 Chr 12:20**) probably denotes a tribal subdivision. These men assisted David in his raids against the

Amalekites who attacked Ziklag during David's absence (1 Sam 30).

IV. (12:23-37) SUPPORT FOR DAVID AT HEBRON

“Now these are the numbers of the divisions equipped for war, who came to David at Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD. 24 The sons of Judah who bore shield and spear were 6,800, equipped for war. 25 Of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor for war, 7,100. 26 Of the sons of Levi 4,600. 27 Now Jehoiada was the leader of the house of Aaron, and with him were 3,700, 28 also Zadok, a young man mighty of valor, and of his father's house twenty-two captains. 29 And of the sons of Benjamin, Saul's kinsmen, 3,000; for until now the greatest part of them had kept their allegiance to the house of Saul. 30 And of the sons of Ephraim 20,800, mighty men of valor, famous men in their fathers' households. 31 And of the half-tribe of Manasseh 18,000, who were designated by name to come and make David king. 32 And of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their kinsmen were at their command. 33 Of Zebulun, there were 50,000 who went out in the army, who could draw up in battle formation with all kinds of weapons of war and helped David with an undivided heart. 34 And of Naphtali there were 1,000 captains, and with them 37,000 with shield and spear. 35 And of the Danites who could draw up in battle formation, there were 28,600. 36 And of Asher there were 40,000 who went out in the army to draw up in battle formation. 37 And from the other side of the Jordan, of the Reubenites and the Gadites and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, there were 120,000 with all kinds of weapons of war for the battle.”

(12:38-40) EPILOGUE -- DAVID'S CORONATION CELEBRATION AT HEBRON

“All these, being men of war, who could draw up in battle formation, came to Hebron with a perfect heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one mind to make David king. 39 And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking; for their kinsmen had prepared for them. 40 Moreover those who were near to them, even as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought food on donkeys, camels, mules, and on oxen, great quantities of flour cakes, fig cakes and bunches of raisins, wine, oil, oxen and sheep. There was joy indeed in Israel.”

August Konkel: The Chronicler has gone to some length, perhaps through the use of a military census list, to portray an ideal enthronement for David as God's anointed king. Though no ceremony is mentioned in Samuel, Chronicles has a fitting festival, including the northern tribes assisting in making provisions for a three-day feast. The unfaithfulness of Saul had led to the near dissolution of the nation, but God had intervened. By the time David was made king, a vast and well-equipped army was present to support the new ruler with singular resolve. . .

This symmetry of the divine and human initiatives culminates in a joyful banquet as one of the high points in Israel's history (**1 Chron 12:38b-40**). The long-protracted conflict related in **2 Samuel 2:1-4:12**, in which David's army subdued the warriors of Saul, is not included in the Chronicler's version of David's rise to power in Hebron. The growing consensus ends in the solidarity of a great celebration at Hebron.

Andrew Hill: It is important to note that all who come to Hebron are "*fully determined*" to make David king. Literally the assembly of the Hebrews is of a "*peaceable mind*" or "*undivided heart*" (**12:39**). This wholehearted service to God and king is a repeated theme in Chronicles (cf. **28:9; 2 Chron. 19:9; 25:2**). The three days of "*eating and drinking*" with King David are covenantal terms. It was customary in biblical times to conclude covenant ceremonies with celebrations that climaxed in a meal (e.g., **Gen. 31:54; Ex. 24:11**). The feast ratifies the compact or covenant brokered between David and the elders of Israel (**1 Chron. 11:3**). The duration of the ratification festival (three days) indicates the strength of Israel's support for David's kingship.

The Chronicler is careful to report that the outcome of that tribal unity is "*joy in Israel*" (**1 Chron. 12:40**; cf. **29:22; 2 Chron. 7:8-10; 30:21-26**). He is hopeful, no doubt, that this recipe for joy will be the experience of post-exilic Judah as well.

Hugh Williamson: The combination of feasting and of joy in Israel on major occasions was clearly regarded as appropriate by the Chronicler. Together with his emphasis on faith, it indicates that his religion was by no means the joyless ritualism that has sometimes been thought; see especially **1 Chr. 29:22; 2 Chr. 7:8-10 and 30:21-26**, but also **1 Chr. 15:25 with 16:3; 29:7, 17; 2 Chr. 20:27f.; 23:16-18 and 29:30**.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) When you look at the **diverse backgrounds** of the unified forces galvanizing around David what can you learn about the **unity** of the church?
- 2) What are some of the indicators today that help to **inspire confidence** in a spiritual leader?
- 3) What can we accomplish if **the Lord of hosts is with us**?
- 4) How does the celebration feast of **12:38-40** prefigure the **joy and celebration** we will experience when Christ returns to reign from the throne of David?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Thomas Constable: David's eventual coronation was inevitable because God had chosen him as king long before Saul died. The Chronicler began his history of David with his coronation over all 12 tribes (cf. **2 Sam. 5:1-5**). This fact probably reflects the writer's concern for the unity of God's chosen people. The people recognized David as the appropriate king because he had led Israel. Furthermore, God had anointed him to shepherd the people (his function) and to be prince over them (his office under Yahweh, vv. **1-2**). David's elevation happened as God had announced through Samuel (v. **3**). God was leading the nation. These verses provide solid evidence that David, not Saul, was God's preference as king of Israel.

David's capture of Jerusalem was foundational to all the political and religious events that followed (cf. **2 Sam. 5:6-10**). The earliest reference to Jerusalem (also called Salem, Jebus, Zion, the city of David) that archaeologists have found so far occurs in the Ebla tablets that date from about 2400 B.C. Joab's deed shows that he was a mighty warrior (**11:6**).

By fortifying Jerusalem, David established a secure base of operations at a politically neutral site between Israel and Judah. This led to his succeeding, though the real reason for his greatness was that the LORD of armies was with him. God was with David because David was with God, as well as because God had chosen David as His vice-regent. Payne believed that David established a "constitutional" monarchy, which was unique in the ancient Near East.

Andrew Hill: The heroic story of David's passage from fugitive to king hinges on the **principle of allegiance or loyalty**. It was the disloyalty of King Saul that disqualified both him and his descendants from establishing a royal dynasty (**10:13-14**). . . Disloyalty to God inevitably results in disaster, whether Saul on an individual level or Israel on a national level (cf. **1 Chron. 9:1**).

By stark contrast, David's loyalty to God propels him into kingship. The next section of Chronicles preserves concrete examples of David's loyalty to God, including

- the return of the ark of the covenant (and hence Yahweh) to the national religious life of Israel (**chs. 13-15**),
- the reestablishment of Yahweh and his saving deeds as the centerpiece of worship (**ch. 16**), and
- the prayer that David's dynasty will make known Yahweh as Israel's God to the nations (**17:23-24**).

David's loyalty to God also fosters a like-minded response to David himself among those who recognize him as the Lord's "*anointed*." This included the "disenfranchised" of Israel (e.g., **1 Sam. 22:2**) and defectors from Saul's camp (e.g., **1 Chron. 12:2**). Eventually David inspires the loyalty of all Israel (**12:38**). The ripple effect of his loyalty to God is not lost on the Chronicler. The subtext of his "sermon" on David's loyalty may be stated accordingly: **Loyalty to God induces the mutual loyalty of the**

tribes to each other, which results in the blessing of God on Israel. For the Chronicler, nothing less than a similar formula is necessary to restore the postexilic community to the former greatness of Israel united under King David.

The Chronicler **views loyalty to God as a catalyst for tribal unity.** We must be careful, however, not to reduce this insight into a mechanistic cause-and-effect relationship dependent solely on the emotive and volitional human response of allegiance (to God and/or king). **Allen** reminds us that in **chapters 11–12** we have the “triad of Israel, David, and God cooperating in beautiful harmony.” Clearly David is the focal point of the Israelite unity, but the Chronicler unmistakably credits David’s success to the fact that “*the LORD Almighty was with him*” (11:9). Those defecting from Saul to join with the rival king do so because they also perceive that God’s help rests with David (12:18). Not long afterward all Israel joins together to support David (12:38).

Ultimately, the issue is not one of allegiance conditioned by charismatic personality or military prowess. The psalmist provides ample warning against placing such trust in princes or warriors (Ps. 146:3; 147:10–11). No genuine or lasting help can be found with mortal leaders. **Allegiance and loyalty must be rooted in an authority and in principles that transcend human ingenuity and strength.** Greater than King Saul or King David is the idea of **divinely ordained kingship in Israel (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:1, 13).** Greater still is the God of Israel, who has established that sacred office for the purpose of shepherding his people (cf. Ps. 45). This formed the basis, in part, for David’s loyalty to God and explains his reluctance to take any action against Saul despite the repeated attempts against his life by the tormented king (1 Sam. 18:11; 19:1).

David’s loyalty is rewarded and enshrined in a divinely initiated treaty mediated by the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17). The divine promises incorporated into this covenant of grant provides for perpetual leadership for the Israelites through a Davidic dynasty, security and rest for Israel among the nations in the land bequeathed to Abraham and Sarah, and the blessing of God’s presence with his people. We must remember that biblical theology tends to be practical theology because God is good (cf. Ps. 25:7–8; 34:8; 100:5). His goodness prompts him to seek the welfare of all through the instrument of Israel as his chosen people and through David as his chosen king (cf. Ps. 86; 89).

The immediately tangible benefits of loyalty to God for the tribes of Israel at David’s accession to the throne included

- strength, resilience, mutual help in corporate solidarity (12:21–22),
- a single-mindedness of purpose (12:38), and
- national joy (12:40).

Even as disloyalty to God results in the curse of punishment, so loyalty to God yields the blessing of unity (Ps. 133).

Mark Boda: All of this evidence was mustered by the Chronicler to support the picture of the **progressive growth** (“*day after day more men joined David,*” **12:22**) and **comprehensive scope** (“*everyone in Israel agreed that David should be their king,*” **12:38**) of those who joined David’s side and who were eager to replace Saul with David. The resulting force, beginning at Ziklag and continuing at Hebron, created an army that the Chronicler called “*a great army, like the army of God.*” To equate David’s army with the hosts of heaven at Yahweh’s disposal certainly legitimized David’s rule. As has been noted at several points in the lists of warriors, David was appointed by divine election (“*just as the Lord had promised,*” **12:23**) and confirmed by communal acceptance (“*everyone in Israel agreed that David should be their king,*” **12:38**). The emphasis throughout this section is clearly on the unified purpose of Israel: “*They were all eager*” (**12:23**), “*all these men . . . with the single purpose*” (**12:38**), “*everyone in Israel agreed*” (**12:38**), and “*throughout the land of Israel*” (**12:40**). . .

Writing in a period when there was little hope in the reemergence of the Davidic line, the Chronicler’s idealized portrait suggests that he was concerned not merely with leveraging the past to legitimate the present, but rather with leveraging the past to stimulate hope for the future. In other words, he was writing a portrait of the ideal future David, employing a messianic historiography. David called for help, for oneness of heart. This is repeated at the end of the passage in **12:38**, as the people became one in heart and supported David. In particular the message is directed to the “*remnant of Israel,*” the group that had returned from exile (**2 Chr 36:20**), to join together in unity and support of Davidic kingship.

TEXT: I Chronicles 13:1-14

TITLE: INITIAL ATTEMPT TO TRANSFER THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

BIG IDEA:

DAVID'S INITIAL ATTEMPT TO TRANSFER THE ARK OF THE COVENANT TO JERUSALEM VIOLATES GOD'S HOLINESS AND ENDS IN TRAGEDY

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkel: The **transfer of the ark** is not a new topic in the narrative, as the chapter division might suggest. The attempt to return the ark is a continuation of the celebration that began at Hebron. All the remnant of Israel that made David king at Hebron is now urged to participate in the return of the ark (**1 Chron 12:38; 13:2–3**). In Hebrew syntax this is a direct sequence. Though readers are well aware of a significant gap in time between the seven-year rule of David at Hebron and his conquest of Jerusalem (**11:4–9**), the Chronicler invites them to view events from the perspective of the divine plan for David and Jerusalem. David immediately takes initiative for the restoration of the ark. His initiative is an evident contrast to the days of Saul, when the ark had been neglected for about twenty years (**13:3**). The presence of the ark was essential to the confession of divine rule. The Chronicler's history presents the anointing of David and his initiation of worship in Jerusalem as the visible commencement of the kingdom of Yahweh (**28:5–6**). His history explains the events known from Samuel as the work of God in moving all Israel to inaugurate divine rule from Jerusalem.

Martin Selman: The ark was an earthly representation of a heavenly reality; it symbolized the **throne of God** and **His presence**. God had said to Moses: "*There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.*" The cover of the ark was the place where the sins of the nation were atoned for. The cover was called "*the atonement cover.*" The Hebrew word is *kapporeth*, which the KJV renders as "*mercy seat.*" The LXX renders this in Greek as *hilasteérion*, which is the word the Apostle Paul uses when he describes the atonement brought about by Jesus Christ when He died on the cross. We read: "*God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.*" That identifies the atonement cover with Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins."

Chapter 13 clearly commends the **priority** David gives to the ark, but it also contains a **warning** that it was much more than a symbol of the divine presence. The enthusiasm of **verse 3** (*Let us bring the ark of our God back to us*) gives way swiftly to David's despair, *How can I ever bring the ark of God to me?* (**v. 12**). Even David could not take the reality of God's presence for granted. If Chronicles' readers wanted Israel's former glories restored, they too must reckon with a God whose dynamic holiness could not be contained within human limitations.

Andrew Hill: The deadly mishap involving Uzzah (13:9) dramatically and immediately changes the mood surrounding the transfer of the ark of the covenant. The festive enthusiasm and joyous celebration of the procession suddenly turn into confusion, despair, and mourning. Interestingly, the Chronicler avoids all comment on the response of the Israelites participating in the event. What is clear is that Uzzah is struck down and killed by the Lord (13:10). King David's response of both anger and fear to the tragedy is also readily reported (13:11–12). David's visceral reaction seems to be based on the assumption that Uzzah is an innocent victim and that God has capriciously shown his disapproval for the enterprise of transferring the ark.

Thomas Constable: The lesson that the writer intended this incident to teach the readers is that Yahweh is holy, so His people should not take His presence among them lightly (cf. Lev. 10:1-11; Num. 16). God's presence is real, and His people must deal with Him in harmony with His character (cf. Exod. 25-31). It would have been tempting to regard the rituals and physical objects used in worship as common. The writer warned his readers not to make this fatal mistake.

I. (:1-4) GOOD INTENTIONS – THE DECISION TO TRANSFER THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

Frederick Mabie: Although this episode quickly moves from human celebration to divine judgment (cf. vv.8–12), the Chronicler nonetheless maintains his emphasis on **the unity of all Israel**. Thus David confers with his military leaders (v.1) and engages “*the whole assembly of Israel*” at Hebron and the rest of the Israelites “*throughout the territories of Israel*” (v.2). Moreover, David receives support from “*the whole assembly*” and approval from “*all the people*” (v.4) regarding the relocation of the ark of the covenant (also cf. vv.5–6).

A. (:1) Soliciting Buy In for the Mission

“Then David consulted with the captains of the thousands and the hundreds, even with every leader.”

Peter Wallace: Notice that David does not merely impose his will. The king does not rule by arbitrary force. He rules by wisdom – and so he proposes a course of action which the people ratify.

John Schultz: The second theme is that of **consultation**, a special interest of Chronicles rarely found in Samuel or Kings. Kings such as Solomon (2 Chr. 1:2), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 20:21), and Hezekiah (2 Chr. 30:2; 32:3), are commended for this, in stark contrast with the failure of Rehoboam (2 Chr. 10:6-14) and Amaziah (2 Chr. 25:16-17) to follow good advice. David's consultation here allows the Israelite people to take a **corporate decision** on the central issue of the ark's future (v. 4). In so doing, Chronicles presents a leadership ideal for the people of God very different from authoritarian patterns well known in ancient and modern times. It is notable that in

Chronicles, the kings who consult their people are also those who seek Yahweh (cf. v 3; **2 Chr. 1:5**, Solomon; **2 Chr. 20:3-4**, Jehoshaphat; **2 Chr. 30:18**; **31:21**, Hezekiah).

B. (:2-3) Stressing the Priority of This Unified Mission

“And David said to all the assembly of Israel, ‘If it seems good to you, and if it is from the LORD our God, let us send everywhere to our kinsmen who remain in all the land of Israel, also to the priests and Levites who are with them in their cities with pasture lands, that they may meet with us; 3 and let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul.’”

C. (:4) Securing Solidarity of Purpose

“Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.”

Frederick Mabie: While the loss of the ark is theologically connected with Yahweh’s rejection of the Elide priesthood (cf. **1Sa 2:27–34**; **3:11–14**; **4:12–22**), the Chronicler implies that it was subsequently neglected during the time of Saul (v.3). Given the connection between the ark and the presence of God in the midst of his people (cf. **Ex 25:17–22**; **1Sa 4:21–22**), such neglect is a subtle but significant negative commentary on the spiritual priorities reflected in Saul’s reign. Conversely, the implication of v.3 is that David’s reign will be marked by seeking God and, by extension, attentiveness to the covenantal stipulations safeguarded within the ark. Ironically, the final remark of this section (“*it seemed right to all the people,*” v.4) seems to anticipate that what was right to God was not being sufficiently considered by David and the people (cf. **15:13**).

II. (:5-8) MISGUIDED METHODOLOGY – CARRYING THE ARK ON A CART

A. (:5-6) Far-reaching Momentum for the Mission

“So David assembled all Israel together, from the Shihor of Egypt even to the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. 6 And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, that is, to Kiriath-jearim, which belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, the LORD who is enthroned above the cherubim, where His name is called.”

Andrew Hill: The point of departure for the processional transferring the ark of God to the central shrine in Jerusalem is **Kiriath Jearim (1 Chron. 13:5)**. The city was a border town between Judah and Benjamin located approximately eight miles west of Jerusalem. The site was also known as Kiriath Baal and Baalah (**Josh. 15:9**; **18:14**, **15**; cf. **2 Sam. 6:2**).

B. (:7) Fatal Mistake

“And they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart.”

Peter Wallace: But there's a problem. God had told Moses that the ark was to be carried by the priests – not on a cart! And the reason for this prescription was because the ark of God is holy. The ark is "*called by the name of the LORD*" – and so if you profane the ark, you profane the name of the LORD.

C. (:8) Full-blown Musical Celebration

"And David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their might, even with songs and with lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and with trumpets."

Peter Wallace: All during the days of Saul, the people of Israel had allowed the ark of God to remain forgotten in the house of Abinadab – just as Saul had forgotten the LORD himself. Now, "*David and all Israel*" (note how this phrase is used both in **verse 6** and **verse 8**) engage in a corporate act of remembering, as they carry the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem. And this corporate act of remembering overflows in rejoicing before God "*with all their might, with song and lyres and harps and tambourines and cymbals and trumpets.*"

III. (:9-13) TRAGIC OUTCOME – UZZA STRUCK DEAD

A. (:9) Seemingly Innocent Triggering Event

"When they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, because the oxen nearly upset it."

Frederick Mabie: While Uzzah's action seems well-intentioned, it is nonetheless an act of spiritual profanity that violates God's holy space (cf. **Nu 4:15**). This incident is reminiscent of the situation involving the two eldest sons of Aaron, who likewise violated God's holiness by offering "*unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his [the LORD's] command*" (**Lev 10:1**). In both situations, the individuals did what was right in their own eyes rather than what was right in God's eyes and required in the light of his holiness.

Ron Daniel: Saints, this is so important for us to understand. If we disobey the Scriptures and put ourselves in compromising positions, then we can expect two things to happen. One, we will find ourselves in situations where we don't have time to think, meditate, contemplate, and pray before having to react. And two, we will be judged for the sin that results, because the time to think, meditate, contemplate, and pray was when we were deciding whether or not to be involved in the situation in the first place.

B. (:10) Angry Reaction of the Lord

"And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzza, so He struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark; and he died there before God."

Rich Cathers: **Holiness** is that quality about God describing His absolute purity, glory, power, and absence of sin.

Peter Wallace: God struck Uzzah down because Uzzah dared to touch the ark of the covenant. God is holy. And when an unholy man touches the ark of the holy God, holiness and unholiness collide. And when holiness and unholiness collide, something has to give! There are different levels of holiness in the OT. There are some objects that become holy – foods, clothes, etc. – if something unclean touches them, they become unclean. But the closer something gets to God, the more holy it becomes. There is no object on earth that is more holy than the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant is the place on earth where God’s feet rest. The ark is called by God’s Name – the LORD (Yahweh). Nothing in all of history is more holy – until the coming of the Holy One himself!

C. (:11-13) Angry Response of David

1. (:11) Perplexity – What’s the Big Deal?

“Then David became angry because of the LORD’s outburst against Uzza; and he called that place Perez-uzza to this day.”

August Konkel: When Uzzah died, David’s immediate response was anger at the outburst (*peres*) of God against him (**13:11**). The great celebration with all manner of musical instruments (**vv. 7–8**) had instantly turned to tragedy. Uzzah died at the hands of the Lord he worshiped and whose sacred throne he had attempted to protect. The Lord bursting out against Uzzah resulted in a breach (*peres*) of his family lineage; the place came to be known as *Perez Uzzah* from that time onward. At that moment it seemed to David that it was impossible to please God. The ark did not make its way to the citadel of Mount Zion that David had prepared for it; it was redirected to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.

2. (:12) Fear – Inability of Completing the Mission

“And David was afraid of God that day, saying, ‘How can I bring the ark of God home to me?’”

3. (:13) Paralysis – Aborting the Mission

“So David did not take the ark with him to the city of David, but took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.”

(:14) EPILOGUE – ARK PARKED AT HOME OF OBED-EDOM

A. Temporary Resting Spot for the Ark

“Thus the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months;”

B. Targeted Blessing

“and the LORD blessed the family of Obed-edom with all that he had.”

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How can **good intentions** with respect to worship practices actually violate God's stated commands?
- 2) How diligent are we to seek God's will regarding not only the mission He wants us to accomplish but the **proper methodology**?
- 3) What was good and bad about **David's reaction** to God's judgment on Uzzah?
- 4) How can we avoid putting ourselves in potentially **compromising situations** where it is easy to transgress?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Frederick Mabie: The sad story of Uzzah's fatal attempt to steady the ark of God is a painful lesson underscoring the necessity of doing what is right in God's eyes, not our own eyes. The **tendency to do what seems good in our eyes** is at the heart of human rebellion against the authority of God (cf. **Ge 3:6**). In anticipation of a settled covenantal community, the Israelites were instructed not to worship God "*in their way*" or "*everyone as he sees fit*" (cf. **Dt 12:4, 8**). Unfortunately, the early history of Israel demonstrated the power of this human tendency (cf. **Jdg 17:6; 21:25**).

Andrew Hill: The centerpiece of this portion of the Chronicler's history is a piece of tabernacle furniture, **the ark of the covenant**. The ark was a rectangular chest made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold (cf. **Ex. 25:10–22**). The box measured 2.5 cubits long by 1.5 cubits high and 1.5 cubits wide (roughly 3.75 ft. × 2.5 ft. × 2.5 ft. The ark rested on four short legs equipped with rings for transporting on a set of wooden poles, also overlaid with gold. The ark and its carrying poles were the only pieces of furniture in the Most Holy Place (**26:31–35**). The ark contained the stone tablets of the Decalogue, hence the name for this sacred chest—"the ark of the covenant" (**Deut. 10:5**). Also housed in the ark was a jar of manna from the desert wandering of the Israelites after the Exodus (**Ex. 16:33**), Aaron's rod (**Num. 17:10**), and later a complete book of the Law was placed beside the ark (**Deut. 31:26**; cf. **Heb. 9:4**).

Atop the ark was a lid of pure gold called the "*atonement cover*" (NIV) or "*mercy seat*" (NRSV; **Ex. 37:6–9**). Fixed at the ends of this lid were two cherubim facing each other, with wings outstretched. Above the cover of the box and between the cherubim is where God met with Israel (**25:22**). Thus, the ark became the **symbol of God's presence** in the midst of Israel. Since the ark also contained the law of Moses, it also **symbolized the Mosaic covenant** enacted at Sinai. David's concern for properly housing and attending to the ark of God represented his obedience to the law of Moses. According to Selman, this provided a natural lead-in to the announcement of the Davidic covenant for the Chronicler (**ch. 17**). A third aspect of the ark's symbolism—

the rule of God over Israel and all creation—will be developed in more detail later in this chapter. . .

The idea of the mysterious and majestic presence of God enthroned between the cherubim of the ark of the covenant is based on the understanding that this is where God meets his people (**Ex. 25:22**). The idea behind God's "meeting" with Israel is comparable to that of a king holding audience with subjects—hence, the ark represented the throne of God on earth. The psalmist associates the enthronement of God between the cherubim of the ark with his sovereign rule of the nations (**Ps. 99:1**). Clearly, he wants to impress on his audience the fact that Yahweh is not a local deity after the fashion of the gods and goddesses of the pantheons of Israel's neighbors. Rather, the Lord Almighty is a universal deity, and his rule encompasses all of creation.

Mike Miller: The Ark had been in the house of Abinadab for 20 years and all had been well.

1. Before this wherever the Ark was with the Philistines it was a disaster for them – Dagon fell and broke his head off; the hemorrhoids; God's hand heavy on them to destroy them.
2. Then the Philistines carried the Ark to Gath and the disaster continued there; then to Ekron and the same things kept happening. (**1 Samuel 5:10-12**)
3. So they decided to send it back to Israel and it rested in the house of Abinadab and no one got hemorrhoids or plagues because of its presence.
4. This simply shows that when unrepentant, ungodly people are in the presence of God it is miserable and painful and disastrous for them.

The sons of Abinadab drove the Ark – one before and one behind.

1. They were familiar with the Ark and had grown up with it in their house.
2. Yet Uzza committed a transgression worthy of death – God killed him.
3. "... *Uzza put forth his hand to hold the Ark; for the oxen stumbled.*"
4. The Ark was not to be carried by oxen.
5. The Ark was not to be touched by human hands, but carried on staves through the rings on the sides by four men who were Levites.
6. Uzza was a victim of the carelessness and zeal of leadership that failed to obey the Word of God.
7. Uzza attempted to preserve and protect the symbol of the presence of God with his own hands.

J.A. Thompson: David was afraid of God and despaired of restoring the ark to the City of David. He needed to learn that there was a proper way to carry out God's will. When David and the people went to get the ark, the excitement of the moment and the sense that they were doing God's will gave the event a festive atmosphere. This very excitement gave them a sense of familiarity with the things of God that became unhealthy, and they neglected to give the ark the respect God demanded. David, in his fear, came back to sobriety about this issue. The whole incident reminds us that even our enthusiasm for God can cause us to forget the holiness of God and the need to fear

him. Doing what we believe to be God's will in a way that violates God's Word is wrong and displeases God.

Hugh Williamson: In the Chronicler's view, however, on this first occasion the ark was not carried "*in the way that is ordained*", and so God "*broke forth*" upon them (v. **11** and **15:13**); but this was more than offset by God's "*breaking forth*" on their behalf against the Philistines (**14:11**), which demonstrated his approval of their intention in general, if not the detail of their procedure. This word-play thus develops the contrast with the situation under Saul (cf. **Mosis**, pp. 60f.).

TEXT: I Chronicles 14:1-17

TITLE: DAVID -- PROSPERED AND PROTECTED IN JERUSALEM

BIG IDEA:

DAVID CONSOLIDATES HIS RULE IN JERUSALEM AS THE LORD PROSPERS AND PROTECTS HIM

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: This section of the Chronicler's work begins and ends with statements reflecting God's blessings on David both in Israel and in the surrounding nations (**vv.2, 17**). In between, the Chronicler details how God enabled David to defeat the Philistines, who had been in a position of power over Israel during the judges' time (cf. **Jdg 13–16**), the time of Eli and Samuel (cf. **1Sa 4–7**), and the reign of Saul (cf. **1Sa 8–31**). This chapter is out of chronological order, perhaps as a means of contrasting the house of David and the house of Saul.

August Konkel: The construction of a palace, the recognition of the new state by a powerful neighboring kingdom, and the growth of a harem are all features of an established king. David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and that his kingdom had been highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel (**1 Chron 14:2**). This kingdom belongs to God. To further demonstrate the point, the new king seeks divine guidance in military decisions (**v. 10**), which assures his victory in battle.

J.A. Thompson: The Chronicler presents a theological contrast between David and Saul. David, unlike Saul, was concerned for the ark (**13:3**). By incorporating indications of David's prosperity and success against the Philistines, the Chronicler demonstrated God's blessing on his servant for his faithfulness. By contrast, Saul's defeat because of his unfaithfulness (**chap. 10**) stresses the point. It is a theme that runs throughout Chronicles. The reigns of faithful kings are marked by divine blessing.

Martin Selman: The constant focus on Jerusalem throughout **chapter 14** as not only David's conquered city (**11:4-9**), but also where David receives God's varied blessings, marks it out as a city prepared for the ark. . .

All this would have reminded the Chronicler's own generation that in spite of the exile, God was still willing to pour out the blessings of his kingdom on those who would seek him for direction. The aim of the chapter is therefore much wider than glorifying David (**Michaeli**) or even underlining David's savior role (**Williamson**).

I. (:1-2) PROSPERED VIA INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

A. (:1) Gift of Materials and Craftsmen to Build Royal Palace

“Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David

with cedar trees, masons, and carpenters, to build a house for him.”

J.A. Thompson: Hiram's delegation brought assistance to David. He gave David recognition, respect, and gifts—each a sign of God's blessing.

Frederick Mabie: It is noteworthy that David accepts Phoenician assistance in the building of his palace (cf. Solomon in the building of Yahweh's temple [**2Ch 2:3–16**]). The Phoenicians were noted for supplying raw building materials and having the technical expertise to construct buildings and fabricate artistic objects with wood, metal, fabric, and stone.

The area of Tyre (Phoenicia or Lebanon more broadly) was a well-known source for quality lumber such as cedar. In the biblical world the wood of the slow-growing cedar tree was especially desired for important building projects, such as palaces and temples, given its fragrance and durability. Phoenician stonemasons were skilled in both construction techniques and specialty craftsmanship, such as dressed masonry (ashlar) and carved basalt orthostats (e.g., lion figures shaped from stone).

August Konkel: The rule of David in Jerusalem received **international recognition** from the king of Tyre, who allied with him to assist in building a royal residence. This was the beginning of a long and profitable relationship with Hiram, which continued into the time of Solomon (**2 Chron 2:3–16**). Tyre was dependent on Israel for food, and the Tyrian king provided materials and skilled workers for major construction projects. Tyrian expansion began in the days of Hiram; Phoenician colonization extended as far as Carthage (**Katzenstein:** 84–86). David and Hiram had a common enemy in the Philistines. Philistia battled with Israel on land and the Phoenicians at sea.

The cedar logs supplied by Hiram (**1 Chron 14:1**) were from the *Cedrus libani*, trees renowned for their beauty and height, reaching as high as thirty meters. Kings of Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Persia, and Greece all used cedar for building temples and palaces. The legendary cedar forests of Lebanon go back to the beginnings of written script (**Daoud:** 49–51). Cedar was particularly desirable for its fragrance.

Martin Selman: His recognition of David, whether for trade (**GNB**), tribute (**Ackroyd**), or for other purposes, demonstrated Yahweh's renewed blessing for David's house (**v. 1**) and kingdom (**v. 2**), in anticipation of the covenant blessings of **17:10bff**.

Mark Boda: The exaltation of David's kingdom is most intimately related to Hiram's sending of messengers in **14:1a**, a move that signals the establishment of diplomatic relations with David's emerging court. As **Japhet** (1993:285) writes, this “implies some kind of a treaty between David and Hiram.” At the outset at least, Hiram was clearly the more powerful partner in this relationship, ruling a major Canaanite city-state that predated the rise of David's kingdom and controlled the Phoenician region, including its ports and timber resources. Possibly this action by the Tyrian king was to establish an alliance with David against the Philistines, whose military tactics as far north as the Jezreel Valley (cf. **ch 10**) may have threatened the Phoenicians. Hiram also could have

held out hope that David would become a vassal of the Phoenician state and so supported David; however, the text identifies Hiram as the one bringing tribute (Williamson 1982:116). [Indicative of God's supernatural blessing]

B. (:2) Grace of God Establishing and Exalting David's Kingdom

“And David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted, for the sake of His people Israel.”

Mark Boda: This is a reminder that Israel's royal house functioned as a mediatorial figure serving both as vice-regent of the Lord in Israel and on earth (**Ps 2**), but also as the one who ensured righteousness, justice, and even blessing for the people of God. Any exaltation for the human monarch found its source in the divine kingdom and was for the sake of the people he represented and served.

II. (:3-7) PROSPERED VIA FAMILY EXPANSION

A. (:3) Increased Wives

“Then David took more wives at Jerusalem, and David became the father of more sons and daughters.”

Thomas Constable: The progress of revelation helps us understand this issue. Old Testament saints had revelation concerning the sin of polygamy (**Gen. 2:24; Deut. 17:16-17**). However, they did not have the added privilege and responsibility of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles on this subject (**Matt 5; 19; 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5; Col. 3; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; Heb. 13; 1 Pet. 3**).

Greater privilege always results in greater responsibility. David's understanding of God's will was not as comprehensive as ours is, and consequently God did not hold him as culpable as He holds us in this particular matter.

B. (:4-7) Increased Children

“And these are the names of the children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 5 Ithar, Elishua, Elpelet, 6 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 7 Elishama, Beeliada and Eliphelet.”

Mark Boda: Noticeably, the children born in Hebron were not mentioned because the focus of this account is on Jerusalem. In this aspect of numerous children, David transcended Saul, whose dynasty came to an end with the loss of his house (**10:6**).

III. (:8-16) PROTECTED IN TWO SEPARATE ATTACKS BY THE PHILISTINES

Frederick Mabie: In these two instances of David's success against the Philistines at the beginning of his reign, the Chronicler's emphasis is that David *“inquired of [sought] God”* (**vv.10, 14**) and that God *“answered him”* (**vv.10, 14**). David's seeking of God

stands in sharp contrast to Saul, who either did not inquire of God (cf. **1Ch 10:13–14**) or sought insight from pagan sources (cf. **1Sa 28:7–25**). Moreover, the Chronicler illustrates that God brings success to David as “*David did as God commanded him*” (**v.16**), an important spiritual lesson for the Chronicler’s audience and God’s people at all times (cf. **Johnstone**, 1:180). . .

After realizing that David has reconsolidated the tribes of Israel, the Philistines attack twice (**vv.8, 13**) but are defeated and driven back. David’s victory succeeds in removing the Philistine foothold in the hill country and part of the Shephelah (**v.16**). Following his first victory, David burns the abandoned Philistine idols (**v.12**), according to Deuteronomic instruction (cf. **Dt 7:5–6; 12:1–3**). Thus David’s twofold victory over the Philistines at the beginning of his reign emphatically shows God’s hand of protection and blessing over the king and the nation as David seeks him and obeys his Word (cf. **vv.10–11, 14–16, 17**).

Japhet: The Davidic victories determined unequivocally his position as an independent king, completely free of any subordination to Philistine patronage. However, these victories were not final, and military encounters with the Philistines were to continue for some time (**II Sam. 8.1/I Chron. 18.1**, etc.).

A. (:8-12) Attack #1

1. (:8) Initiating Aggressive Attack against David

“When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up in search of David; and David heard of it and went out against them.”

Andrew Hill: The news of David’s being anointed as king of Israel prompts a Philistine invasion of Judah, presumably an attempt to dethrone him before their former vassal has sufficient time to solidify his power among God’s people (**14:8–12**). The attack takes place at the Valley of Rephaim, a border region between the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, immediately southwest of Jerusalem (**Josh. 15:8**).

Martin Selman: David had been no great threat to the Philistines while Israel and Judah remained divided, but an all-Israelite kingdom (**v. 8**) was a different matter. So the Philistines gathered in Rephaim valley, probably located south west of Jerusalem near Bethlehem (the incident of **11:15-20** is linked here).

2. (:9-10) Inquiring of God for Battle Strategy

“Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. 10 And David inquired of God, saying, ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? And wilt Thou give them into my hand?’ Then the LORD said to him, ‘Go up, for I will give them into your hand.’”

3. (:11-12) Implementing God’s Tactics for Victory

“So they came up to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there; and David said, ‘God has broken through my enemies by my hand, like the

breakthrough of waters.’ Therefore they named that place Baal-perazim. 12 And they abandoned their gods there; so David gave the order and they were burned with fire.”

Frederick Mabie: As God did with Uzzah (**13:11**), so God “*breaks out*” against the Philistines. In the same way that the place where God broke out against Uzzah is renamed “*Perez Uzzah*” (**13:11**), so the name of the city where God breaks out against the Philistines is renamed “*Baal Perazim*” (**v.11**).

J.A. Thompson: The gods (idols) of the Philistines were taken into battle but failed them in the encounter, and the Philistines abandoned them. They were not taken as booty but were burned on David's orders (cf. **Deut 7:5; 12:3**).

Martin Selman: The initial victory is understood as a divine break through comparable with an irresistible onrush of water (**5:11**), perhaps having in mind heavy rainfall in hilly country (**Hertzberg**) or “the breaking of a clay vessel full of water” (**Tg.**).

B. (:13-16) Attack #2

1. (:13) Initiating Aggressive Attack against David

“And the Philistines made yet another raid in the valley.”

2. (:14-15) Inquiring of God for Battle Strategy

“And David inquired again of God, and God said to him, ‘You shall not go up after them; circle around behind them, and come at them in front of the balsam trees. 15 And it shall be when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines.’”

Andrew Hill: The Philistines launch a second offensive at the same location, although the interval of time between the two attacks is unspecified (**14:13–16**). As before, the narrative reports that David appropriately “*inquires*” of God as to his response to the Philistine aggression (**14:14**). Once again, David is assured of God’s help in battle, but this time the tactics are changed. Instead of meeting the enemy in a head-on clash, David is instructed to entrap the enemy by circling around the Philistine army. The divine signal for engaging the enemy is most unusual, as David and his army are cautioned to wait for the “*sound of marching*” in the treetops before attacking (**14:15**). The rustling of the leaves in the trees is most likely the **Spirit of God**, since David is told God will go before him in battle. The noise, perhaps akin to soldiers’ feet rushing into battle, is designed to confuse the Philistine army (cf. **2 Kings 7:6**). David and the Israelites rout the Philistines and drive them in a northwesterly direction away from Jerusalem through Gibeon (or Gibeah?; cf. “Geba” in **2 Sam. 5:25**) to Gezer (**1 Chron. 14:16**).

Martin Selman: Again David consults the Lord before engaging in any military action. This time God tells him not to employ in a frontal attack like the first time, but to move

behind the enemy lines and attack from the back. Actually, it would not be David's attack, but the Lord's. An **army of angels** would move ahead of David's and strike the Philistines. David could not see the angelic force, but he would hear them as they marched above the balsam treetops.

3. (:16) Implementing God's Tactics for Victory

*“And David did just as God had commanded him,
and they struck down the army of the Philistines
from Gibeon even as far as Gezer.”*

(:17) EPILOGUE – INCREASED FAME AND RESPECT

*“Then the fame of David went out into all the lands;
and the LORD brought the fear of him on all the nations.”*

Frederick Mabie: This **summary statement** reflects the Chronicler's sustained focus on God's goodness in establishing and blessing the reign of David. This blessing is expressed via the position of respect and power attained by Israel during the reign of David and is likewise seen during the reigns of Solomon (**2Ch 9:9, 24**) and Jehoshaphat (cf. **2Ch 17:10–11**).

Andrew Hill: The spread of David's fame and the fear of Yahweh among the nations are interrelated (**14:17**). As God blesses David's faithfulness, so David's success brings glory and honor to God. The Chronicler's report of David's growing reputation foreshadows the covenant blessing of God's promise to make David's name among the greatest of the world (**17:8**). Fittingly, the defeat of the Philistines at Rephaim reverses the outcome at Mount Gilboa and avenges the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, closing the story on that tragic first chapter in the history of Israelite kingship. Presumably the Chronicler intends this account of the reversal of fortune for Israel under King David as a message of hope and encouragement for his audience—“fodder” for possibility thinking on the part of his generation.

John Schultz: David's double victory over the Philistines made him internationally famous. We are not told which countries expressed appreciation or interest, but simply that all the nations feared him. This emphasized Israel's security. No other nation would want to attack Israel and occupy its territory. Israel became known as the most powerful nation in the world.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) What contrasts do you see between David and Saul and their respective kingdoms in this passage?

- 2) Why do we not see moral outrage in this text regarding David's multiple wives?
- 3) How do you go about seeking guidance from the Lord?
- 4) Why was the Lord so intent on establishing the reputation of David's kingdom in international circles?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

John Ellicott: This section is a duplicate of **2 Samuel 5:11-25**. In the older work it follows immediately upon the account of the taking of Jebus (**2 Samuel 5:6-10**), and precedes that of the removal of the Ark. Neither Samuel nor the chronicler has observed the order of chronology. The chronicler may have transposed the two accounts, in order to represent the removal of the Ark to the new capital in immediate connection with the acquisition of the city.

August Konkel: The method specified for such inquiry was consulting the Urim and the Thummim (**Num 27:21**; cf. **1 Sam 23:9-12**). These two stones were part of the very ornate priestly vestments, placed in the shoulder straps of a full apron called an ephod. The two stones were next to the breastplate, which had twelve stones representing each of the tribes. The function of the stones can only be inferred from the meaning of their names: *'urim* is the word for light and *tummim* the word for perfection. The divine response seems to have been associated with a revelation of light in which complex answers could be received, as in the events narrated here. In the first episode, the Lord burst through the enemy like a flood of water (**1 Chron 14:11**). The victory gave the place its name: "*Lord of the Bursting Out*" (*Baal Perazim*). In contrast to the failed attempt of bringing up the ark, when God burst out against Uzzah, David followed divine direction precisely. With these affirmations, the way was prepared to give attention to bringing the ark to the city of David.

J. Wolfendale: A proof of God's providence.

1. In Hiram's conduct.
2. In David's accession to the throne.
3. In the honour and extension of David's kingdom.

J. Spencer: The Israelites usually asked counsel of God by the ephod, the Grecians by their oracles, the Persians by their magi, the Egyptians by their hierophantae, the Indians by their gymnosophistae, the ancient Gauls and Britons by their Druids, the Romans by their augures or soothsayers. It was not lawful to propose any matter of moment in the senate, *priusquam de coelo observatum erat*, before their wizards had made observations from the heaven or sky. That which they did impiously and superstitiously, we may, nay we ought to do in another sense, piously, religiously, conscionably, *i.e.*, not to embark ourselves into any action of great importance and consequence, *priusquam de Coelo observatum est*, before we have observed from

Heaven, not the flight of birds, not the houses of planets, or their aspects or conjunctions, but the countenance of God, whether it shineth upon our enterprises or not, whether He approve of our projects and designs or not.

J. P. Lange: Victory comes from the Lord

1. When it is beforehand humbly asked for according to the Lord's will and word.
2. When the battle is undertaken in the Lord's name and for His cause.
3. When it is fought with obedient observation of the Lord's directions and guidance.

TEXT: I Chronicles 15:1 – 16:3

TITLE: *SUCCESSFUL TRANSFER OF THE ARK TO JERUSALEM*

BIG IDEA:

FOLLOWING THE LORD'S DIRECTIVES, DAVID USED THE LEVITES TO SUCCESSFULLY TRANSFER THE ARK TO JERUSALEM IN CELEBRATORY FASHION

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkel: In Samuel, bringing the ark up to Jerusalem is the immediate sequel to the failed attempt to restore the ark (**2 Sam 6:12b-19**). The motivation for David to return to the ark is the blessing that comes to the house of Obed-Edom because of the presence of the ark there (**2 Sam 6:12a**). The Chronicler omits this half verse; blessing to David is shown in the description of the rise of his kingdom. The three-month interval when the ark was with Obed-Edom provides time to make the proper preparations for the ark as well as for the ordering and purifying of those who would carry it. **First Chronicles 15:25–16:3** draws on this record of Samuel to feature the inauguration of worship in Jerusalem, including the function of the Levites in relation to the ark.

Eugene Merrill: At last David prepared once more to relocate and house the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem. Though he planned to place the ark in a substantial temple (**17:1-4**), for the present he set up a tent (**15:1**), perhaps similar to the Mosaic tabernacle. Then, careful to observe proper protocol (**vv. 2, 13, 15**), he gathered the priests and Levites and commanded them to transport the ark from the house of Obed-Edom (cf. **13:14**) to its new shrine in Jerusalem. . .

One cannot . . . understand the theology of Chronicles without understanding the centrality of worship and its formal apparatus to the life of the theocratic people.

J.A. Thompson: The most arresting feature of this narrative is not obvious to the modern reader. The Chronicler was devoting great time and attention to describing incidents surrounding the ark and the need to treat it as a holy object even though by the time of the Chronicler **it had already ceased to exist**. In other words, the original readers of this book had no more opportunity to worship God before the ark than we do. Why would the Chronicler stress the joy and holiness associated with it if his readers would never have opportunity to emulate David's obedience?

The answer must be that for the Chronicler it was not the object itself but what the object represented that mattered. The ark represented two great truths.

- First, **God was with them and would go with them** wherever they went. The ark traveled with the exodus generation, was with Joshua's generation as they entered Canaan, and had been in various locations now in their land.

- Second, the ark represented the **holiness of God**. It contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments—the essence of the law—and they had seen for themselves that God's ark was not to be trifled with (**13:10**).

These two truths, that God is with us and that God is holy, are what really mattered to the Chronicler. We need to keep this in mind lest we think of the Chronicler simply as one full of nostalgia for the good old days. Finally, the chapter teaches God's compassionate forgiveness in allowing Israel a second chance. Israel's initial failure was not final and God's judgment was not just positive but instructive.

I. (:1-3) PREPARATIONS FOR TRANSFERRING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

A. (:1) Overview of David's Main Priorities

1. Building Royal Compound

“Now David built houses for himself in the city of David;”

2. Preparing a Place for the Ark

“and he prepared a place for the ark of God;”

3. Pitching a Tent for the Ark

“and pitched a tent for it.”

B. (:2) Ordinance Regarding the Role of the Levites in Carrying the Ark

“Then David said, ‘No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of God, and to minister to Him forever.’”

Frederick Mabie: While David's previous attempt to move the ark was well-intentioned, it ultimately fell short of God's will and did not appropriately respect God's holiness. On this occasion, however, David is careful to make appropriate preparations (**v.1**; cf. **v.12**) and consult the covenantal teachings revealed through Moses (cf. **v.15**) that specified that Levites had the special responsibility of carrying the ark (cf. **Nu 4:15–33; Dt 10:8–9**).

C. (:3) Organization of Israel to Transfer the Ark to Jerusalem

“And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it.”

Frederick Mabie: While David appropriately involves the Levites in their covenantal role in moving the ark of the covenant (**v.2**), the Chronicler is also careful to stress that this spiritually significant step is an activity that involved the whole community (“*all Israel*”).

II. (:4-15) PURIFICATION OF THE LEVITES WITH THE GOAL OF TRANSFERRING THE ARK

Frederick Mabie: In addition to the involvement of “*all Israel*” (v.3), David summons key individuals representing the priests and Levites. A similar group will be convened by Solomon to bring the ark to the newly constructed temple (2Ch 5:4–6). The Chronicler’s emphasis is that the individuals who had particular responsibility in the holy things of God (priests and Levites) needed to be consecrated (vv.12–13), reflecting the Chronicler’s broader work that deeper internal issues such as faithfulness, obedience, and personal purity must coincide with external acts of worship (cf. 2Ch 29:11; 35:5–6; Eph 4:1).

A. (:4-10) Summons of the Different Levitical Groups

“And David gathered together the sons of Aaron, and the Levites: 5 of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and 120 of his relatives; 6 of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and 220 of his relatives; 7 of the sons of Gershon, Joel the chief, and 130 of his relatives; 8 of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and 200 of his relatives; 9 of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and 80 of his relatives; 10 of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and 112 of his relatives.”

J.A. Thompson: The three Levitical groups—Kohath, Merari, and Gershon, and the numbers of their families—are mentioned along with descendants of three other families—Elizaphan, Hebron, and Uzziel, who must have attained sufficient numbers or prestige to gain independent status. They all derive from Kohath (Exod 6:18, 22). This sixfold division of Levites is otherwise unknown and may represent an updated statement nearer to the time of the Chronicler.

B. (:11-15) Instructions Regarding Consecration and Purification

1. (:11-12) Charge to Carry Out Their Responsibility to Transfer the Ark

“Then David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab, 12 and said to them, ‘You are the heads of the fathers’ households of the Levites; consecrate yourselves both you and your relatives, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it.’”

Andrew Hill: The word “consecrate” (15:12, 14) means to set things or persons apart from impurity and profane use and dedicate them to the service of God in holiness. Chronicles records the similar consecration of the Levitical priesthood during the reigns of Solomon (2 Chron. 5:11), Hezekiah (29:5), and Josiah (35:6). In each case, Selman has noted, God subsequently blesses the nation. The act of consecration included ritual washing and abstinence from sexual relations (Ex. 19:14–15). Elsewhere we learn that priests and Levites are to avoid contact with corpses (Lev. 21:1–4) and are subject to more stringent requirements concerning marriage (21:13–15).

2. (:13) History Lesson Regarding Past Failure and Judgment

“Because you did not carry it at the first, the LORD our God made an

outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance."

Mark Boda: David is clear about the fact that it was inappropriate cultic procedures that led to the judgment upon Uzzah. David is first and foremost a figure who learned his lesson on cultic matters and rectified the situation with precision.

3. (:14-15) Faithful Obedience to David's Instructions

a. (:14) Consecration

"So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel."

b. (:15) Carrying of the Ark in Accordance with God's Instructions

"And the sons of the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders, with the poles thereon as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD."

III. (:16-24) PERFORMANCE ROLES FOR MUSICAL CELEBRATION

"Then David spoke to the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their relatives the singers, with instruments of music, harps, lyres, loud-sounding cymbals, to raise sounds of joy. 17 So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel, and from his relatives, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and from the sons of Merari their relatives, Ethan the son of Kushaiah, 18 and with them their relatives of the second rank, Zechariah, Ben, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, the gatekeepers. 19 So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan were appointed to sound aloud cymbals of bronze; 20 and Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with harps tuned to alamoah; 21 and Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah, to lead with lyres tuned to the sheminith. 22 And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was in charge of the singing; he gave instruction in singing because he was skillful. 23 And Berechiah and Elkanah were gatekeepers for the ark. 24 And Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, blew the trumpets before the ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah also were gatekeepers for the ark."

Frederick Mabie: In addition to their role as carriers of the ark of God (vv.2, 15), the Levites have responsibilities in areas of song and music to facilitate the worshipful atmosphere surrounding the movement of the ark of the covenant ("*sing joyful songs accompanied by musical instruments*").

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: These eminent Levites were instructed to train the musicians and singers who were under them for the solemn procession. The performers were ranged in three choirs or bands, and the names of the principal leaders are given, **1 Chron 15:17-18, 21**, with the instruments respectively used by each [psalteries, and

harps, and cymbals. **Josephus** says that these instruments were made of electrum, a precious alloy of gold, of a pale yellow color].

Andrew Hill: The concluding section of the report summarizing David’s extensive preparations for the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem (**15:16–24**) showcases the priests and Levites as musicians, another theme in Chronicles. The purpose in David’s appointments is simple: The Levitical corps is to provide appropriate music for the processional (**15:16**). The occasion of installing the ark in Jerusalem is to be **celebratory and festive**—the ark and God are to be “serenaded” into the city with joyous music. The king instructs the leaders of the Levites to divide their group into singers and musicians (**15:16**). The musicians are sorted into divisions on the basis of the instrument played (lyre, harp, or cymbal). The citation of Kenaniah as a musical director of sorts references his “*skill*” (or perhaps “musical knowledge”), suggesting the appointments of the Levites as singers and musicians may have been based on some type of audition (**15:22**). . .

It was customary in the ancient world for **doorkeepers** to attend the various entrances of the palace complex, both to serve as guards and to welcome and announce those passing through the doors as part of the royal protocol. This may have been another way for David to show proper reverence to God as king as the ark enters the city of Jerusalem and is installed in the tent-sanctuary. On a more practical note, since the Levitical porters are carrying the ark on poles hoisted on their shoulders, the gatekeepers can see to it that another tragedy was averted by carefully directing the Levites as they crossed the thresholds of gates and doorways.

IV. (15:25 – 16:3) PLACEMENT OF THE ARK IN JERUSALEM

A. (15:25-28) Transfer of the Ark Accompanied by Joyful Sacrifices

1. (:25) Joyful Participation of Israel’s Key Leaders

“So it was David, with the elders of Israel and the captains over thousands, who went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-edom with joy.”

2. (:26) Offering of Sacrifices

“And it came about because God was helping the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams.”

3. (:27) Identification of David with the Levites Carrying the Ark and Singing

“Now David was clothed with a robe of fine linen with all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the leader of the singing with the singers. David also wore an ephod of linen.”

J.A. Thompson: The question about who offered the sacrifices may be asked. This was normally a priestly act. The fact that David was clothed in “*a robe of fine linen*” (v. 27), which is also described as a “*linen ephod*,” as did the Levites who carried the ark, has

raised the question of whether David had assumed priestly garments. The wearing of the ephod was restricted to the high priest in the Chronicler's day (**Exod 28:4ff.; Lev 8:7**). In the parallel text in **2 Sam 6:14, 20** the reference may be to a loin cloth, which would explain Michal's rebuke. The occasion was special, and the full temple rituals were yet in the future when the rituals and offices could be regulated.

Probably we should see some priestly function for David here, but not as a pretext for Israelite kings to assume Levitical prerogatives. This was, in the history of Israel, an exceptional but significant event. David functioned as the type for the Messiah as a king who is also a priest.

Thomas Constable: How could David, clothed in a priestly garment (**15:27**), offer sacrifices to God since he was not an Aaronic priest? Evidently he did so as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, fulfilling the provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant, rather than as an Aaronic priest serving under the Mosaic Covenant. David realized he was the king promised to the patriarchs (**Gen. 17:6; 49:10**; et al.) for whom Israel had been looking (cf. **1 Sam. 2:10**).

4. (:28) Summary of Musical Celebration

“Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the horn, with trumpets, with loud-sounding cymbals, with harps and lyres.”

B. (15:29) Treachery of Michal

“And it happened when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and making merry; and she despised him in her heart.”

C. (16:1-3) Transfer of the Ark Completed

Hugh Williamson: **16:1-3** follows **2 Sam. 6:17-19** without significant change; the successful conclusion of the undertaking, the unity of the people and David's provision for them all coinciding with the Chronicler's own understanding.

John Schultz: Quoting **The Pulpit Commentary** which suggests that these verses actually belong to the close of the last chapter, and they carry on the parallel of **2 Samuel 6**. in its **verses 17-19**.

1. (:1a) Positioning Inside the Tent

“And they brought in the ark of God and placed it inside the tent which David had pitched for it,”

2. (:1b) Offering of Sacrifices

“and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God.”

3. (:2) Blessing the People

“When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.”

4. (:3) Feasting Celebration

“And he distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread and a portion of meat and a raisin cake.”

Pulpit Commentary: Each little clause of this verse is replete with interest. The royal giver, who now dealt to every one of Israel, was, after all, but a channel; yes, and only one channel, through which the fullness and the bounty of the royal Giver of every good and perfect gift, of all good whatsoever, of all things necessary to life and godliness, are supplied to every one of his creature-subjects. But it is highest honor, as servant and instrument alone, to figure forth him in any way.

The second little clause tells us either that women took a recognized place on occasion of this joyous festival, or that the hospitality of such an occasion did not forget them and their homes.

And the following three little clauses require closer examination. The word here translated ‘loaf’ in the expression *loaf of bread* is *kikar*, for which in this sense we may turn to ... **Exodus 29:23**; ... **Judges 8:5**; ... **1 Samuel 2:36; 10:3**; ... **Proverbs 6:26**; ... **Jeremiah 37:21**. The corresponding word, however, in the parallel place is *challah* (for which see **Exodus 29:2, 23**; ... **Leviticus 2:4; 7:12, 13; 8:26; 24:5**; ... **Numbers 6:15, 19; 15:20**). The essential meaning of the former word is a circle, hence applied to the cake because of its shape, and of the latter word perforation, hence applied to the cake because it was perforated. *A good piece of flesh*. This is the Authorized Version rendering of *eshpar*, which occurs only in the parallel place and here. ... *And a flagon*. This is the Authorized Version rendering of the original *'ashiyshah*, found in the parallel place as well as here, and also in the only other places (two in number, and in the plural) where it occurs... **Song of Solomon 2:5; Hoses 3:1**). But there is no doubt, or but little, that the rendering should rather be ‘*dried, pressed cakes of raisins or grapes*.’ ... The substantive has both masculine and feminine form in plural. The Vulgate translates *similam frixam oleo*, which means a ‘*baked cake of flour and oil*,’ and the Septuagint, *laganon apo tegavou* in the parallel places. But here the Septuagint reads *apton ena aptokopikon kai amoriten* as the whole account of the loaf, the good piece of flesh, and the flagon.

August Konkkel: As the ark approached the citadel, Michal the daughter of Saul disdained the whole event (**1 Chron 15:29**). In Samuel, her response is that of an offended aristocrat who feels that she has been compromised. Samuel has no mention of the garments worn by David; Michal charges him with being exposed in his leaping and dancing (**2 Sam 6:20**). Michal has a tragic history. She was caught in the conflict between Saul and David. Her marriage to David was encouraged by her father in a sinister scheme to end David’s life (**1 Sam 18:20–27**). She rescued David when her father plotted to kill him (**19:11–14**), was forcibly separated from David by her father (**25:44**), and then was victimized in being separated from her second husband in order

to be restored to David (**2 Sam 3:14–16**). The Chronicler makes no mention of any of these details. Michal is portrayed as a member of the house of Saul, which neglected the ark. This is the first and only comment the Chronicler makes about her. In Chronicles, David is the divinely appointed king, acting in a fully appropriate manner with proper dedication, so that he deserves to receive nothing but uncompromised affirmation.

Andrew Hill: By contrast, David earns the disapproval of his wife Michal (**15:29**), Saul’s daughter. She “*despises*” (*bzh*) him for his joyous abandon in celebrating the transfer of the ark of God—to her own detriment, for as a result of rebuking the king, she is barren (**2 Sam. 6:23**). According to Selman, Michal is out of sympathy with David’s and all Israel’s concern for the ark. In one sense she represents the last vestige of King Saul’s “unfaithfulness,” and her story provides yet further justification for God’s rejection of Saul’s dynasty.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Do we give enough priority in our church to the **music ministry** and the encouragement of a joyful, celebratory atmosphere?
- 2) How can we learn the lessons from history about the danger of **carelessness** in our approach to worshipping the holy God?
- 3) What lessons can we apply to our lives today from the practice we see here of consecration and purification?
- 4) What are the practical ramifications in our lives of the two truths that God is with us and God is holy?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

August Konkell: As at the first time, the processional was accompanied by triumphant music, to make the occasion a great celebration of all Israel. The Levitical officers each appointed members of their group for their part in the festivity. Official appointment of singers and musicians is unique to Chronicles. Singers and musicians play an integral role in the national administration established by David. Harps, lyres, and cymbals are frequently associated and seem to be an ensemble that accompanied Levitical singing.

Heman, Asaph, and Ethan are appointed as leaders of the musical guilds (**15:17**). They are named again as the singers sounding the bronze cymbals in **verse 19**. The three led three sections of the accompanying musicians, each assigned with particular responsibilities. Musicians of second rank listed in **15:18** appear again in the list of singers in **verses 20 and 21**, which includes the additional name of Azariah. These

fourteen were also gatekeepers. The multiple functions of gatekeepers result in the complicated presentation of three lists (vv. 18, 23, 24). Musicians with harps set to the *alamoth* refers to the role of female musicians (from *'almah*, meaning “young woman”), either as singers or women trained to play stringed instruments. Female musicians are found as important participants throughout the world of the Bible. Another group of musicians led with lyres set to the *sheminith* (v. 21). This term means “eighth,” though it is entirely ambiguous as to whether this indicates “octave” (in the lower register) or “an instrument with eight strings.” The term appears in the titles of certain psalms (e.g., Pss 6; 12), which might indicate a term for musical directions.

Andrew Hill: The report of the “tent” David pitches for temporarily housing the ark (15:1) emphasizes the thoroughness of his preparations for transferring the ark (cf. 15:12). More important to the venture of relocating the ark of God in Jerusalem is the role of the Levites as porters (15:2). This time the ark is to be carried by the Levites, not driven on a cart (also noted in the Samuel parallel by “those ... carrying the ark”; 2 Sam. 6:13). David has learned from his earlier mistake in transporting the ark, although the text is silent as to the source of the instruction. The tone and circumstance of David’s lecture to the priests concerning their role in the transfer of the ark suggests God himself may have revealed this to David through the king’s study of the Mosaic law (Deut. 10:8; 18:5; cf. 1 Chron. 15:13).

Martin Selman: The two central themes seem to be David’s role vis-à-vis the Levites and the priority of worship in Israel. David is the person chiefly responsible for the Levites’ transformed role (vv. 3, 11, 16). This is not meant to eulogize David’s kingship, but to emphasize his stature as a second Moses, adapting Moses’ original instructions (e.g. Num. 3:5-9) to new circumstances. This theme, however, is subsidiary to the primary aim of giving special encouragement about the activities and personnel of Israel’s worship. Israel had neglected the Levites in the days of Nehemiah (Neh. 13:10), which effectively meant that God himself was being neglected. It is therefore probable that Chronicles was stimulating both all Israel (vv. 3, 28) and the Levites (vv. 4-15) to ensure that proper preparations were made for the nation’s worship. If they adopted David’s priorities, Chronicles’ readers could see God’s glory (I Chr. 16:24; cf. Ezek. 44:4) and salvation (I Chr. 16:35) restored again to his people.

Mark Boda: What, then, made the difference between this attempt to bring the Ark into Jerusalem and the earlier one?

- First, it is because David followed the ordained legislation laid out by Moses – that is, the Levitical clans played their proper role, and David deferred to them (15:2, 12-13).
- Second, it is because the Levites purified themselves (15:12).
- Third, it is because David and the community inquired properly of God for his will (15:13).
- Finally, it is because God recognized these acts of obedience and “was clearly helping the Levites” (15:26). As Japhet (1993:306) has summarized it, “Nothing can be achieved without the help of God, which is granted to those who seek him ‘as ordained.’”

TEXT: I Chronicles 16:4-43

TITLE: CELEBRATING THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITH PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

BIG IDEA:

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING COMMEMORATE THE INSTALLATION OF THE ARK IN JERUSALEM AND ANTICIPATE THE COVENANT PROMISE OF FUTURE POSSESSION OF THE LAND

INTRODUCTION:

Andrew Hill: The Psalm of Thanksgiving commemorating the installation of the ark in Jerusalem, in one sense, is the **theological center** of the Chronicler's retelling of Israel's history. The installation of the ark marks Israel's return to God under David's leadership and a renewal of the nation's covenant loyalty to the God of their ancestors. The ark itself symbolizes the covenant agreement established by Yahweh with Israel at Mount Sinai. The Sinai treaty was mediated by the prophet Moses, and the written record of that binding pact was archived for Hebrew posterity in the sacred ark. The Chronicler's song of praise celebrates God as both covenant maker and covenant keeper, the lynchpin in his theology of hope for postexilic Judah.

King David's appointment of certain members of the Levites to attend the ark indicates a division of labor among the Levitical corps. One group of Levites and the priests are stationed at the shrine in Gibeon housing the Mosaic tabernacle (**16:39; 21:29**). The other group of Levites are stationed in Jerusalem to minister before the ark of the Lord (**16:4**).

August Konkel: The transfer of the ark to Jerusalem required that worship be established in two locations, since the tabernacle remained at Gibeon. The various locations of the tabernacle are somewhat obscure in the biblical narrative (**Friedman:** 293–94). Following the conquest, the tabernacle was located at Shiloh (**Josh 18:1; 19:51**), which was the designated place of sacrifice (**22:19, 29**). Jeremiah tells us that Shiloh was destroyed (**7:12, 14; 26:6, 9**); there is no information on the fate of the tabernacle.

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler's placement of this psalm of thanksgiving underscores the spiritually significant event of the return of the ark. The ark was a tangible reminder of God's ongoing presence in the midst of the Israelite community and also housed the covenantal texts outlining the relationship of blessing between God and Israel (cf. **Ex 25:17–22; Dt 10:1–5**). As such, the content of this psalm spans broadly across a number of themes significant to the life of the covenantal community.

The concept of **covenant** is central to this psalm as well as to the Chronicler's message as a whole. For example, note the repeated references to "*covenant*" and the covenantal name of God ("*LORD*" [Yahweh]), references to the patriarchs (**vv.13, 16–17**), mention

of the land promised in the Abrahamic covenant (v.18), and reminder of God's protection of his people (vv.21–22). In short, the poet's declaration that Yahweh "remembers his covenant forever" (v.15) provides the theological foundation for the community's songs of joy, declarations of praise, and expressions of faith. Lastly, the psalmist makes clear that doxological truths are to be shared by God's people with all humankind.

Thomas Constable: This hymn (vv. 8-36) was probably one of many that the people sang on this occasion. It expressed the hopes and thoughts of the Israelites assembled that the returned exiles needed to emulate. This thanksgiving song is a medley of several psalms (96:1-13; 105:1-15; 106:1, 47-48). It stresses that the intended result of Israel's worship was the salvation of the nations so that they, too, might come and worship Yahweh (cf. Exod. 19:5-6; Isa. 42:6; Zech. 2:10-11).

The hymn began with a call to worship that embraced the nations (vv. 8- 13; cf. Isa. 12:4). The people next extolled God's greatness and glory (vv. 14-22). They stressed God's unmerited favor toward Israel's patriarchs in this section. Another call to worship (vv. 23-24) led to another section of praise that emphasizes Yahweh's superiority over the nations' gods (vv. 25-26) and His creative power (vv. 27-30). The final part of the hymn called on all people to turn to Yahweh in trust and obedience in view of His coming to judge and save (vv. 31-36). Throughout this hymn the emphasis rests on **God's deeds, God's words, God's greatness, and God's worth.**

J.A. Thompson: The Levites' main responsibilities were the musical aspects of worship:

- to **make petitions** through psalms of lament,
- to **give thanks** in thanksgiving psalms, and
- to **praise the Lord**, the God of Israel, in song.

Elements of each of these three are to be found in the composite psalm of Asaph and his associates in vv. 8–36.

(:4-6) PROLOGUE – MUSICAL APPOINTMENTS FOR WORSHIP

A. (:4) General Function for the Levites Ministering Before the Ark

“And he appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel.”

B. (:5-6) Specific Appointments of Levites to Musical Roles

“Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, with musical instruments, harps, lyres; also Asaph played loud-sounding cymbals, 6 and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests blew trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.”

Frederick Mabie: These verses (also see vv.37–38) briefly summarize the Levitical musicians who had particular responsibility in the realm of worship in music and song

in the presence of the newly arrived ark (cf. **1Ch 15:17–21**; on the musical responsibilities of the Levites.

Martin Selman: Another interesting detail is that **Asaph**, who was appointed to be the conductor of the orchestra, was given the task to sound the cymbals. It could be that he would thus determine the beat and rhythm of the music. As we have seen earlier, Asaph would be the greatest contributor to the book of Psalms, after David himself. As a matter of fact, it was David who wrote the text for the hymn to be played in the thanksgiving service.

II. (:7-36) PSALM OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

Andrew Hill: The psalm of thanksgiving (**16:8–36**) is a composite of selections from three psalms:

1 Chronicles 16:8–22 = Psalm 105:1–15

1 Chronicles 16:23–33 = Psalm 96:1–13

1 Chronicles 16:34–37 = Psalm 106:1, 47–48

The theological themes of the three divisions of the composite psalm rehearse the key emphases of **1–2 Chronicles** as a “biography” of God.

(1) The first unit (**16:7–22**) highlights God as a covenant maker and keeper and Israel’s unique place among the nations as his elect (**16:15–17**). Without question, the emphasis in this extract from **Psalm 105** on the “*land of Canaan*” as the inheritance of Israel is important to the Chronicler and his audience in the light of the recent Babylonian exile (**1 Chron. 16:18**).

(2) The second unit (**16:23–33**) from **Psalm 96** extols God as Creator and Sovereign over all the nations and over all their gods (**1 Chron. 16:26, 30**).

(3) The third unit (**16:34–36**) from **Psalm 106** praises the goodness and mercy of the God of salvation.

Last, and not to be overlooked, the entire composite psalm repeats the covenant name Yahweh (NIV “*LORD*”) some sixteen times.

(:7) Introduction

“Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD.”

A. (:8-22) Express Praise and Thanksgiving by Remembering God’s Deeds and Covenant

1. (:8-13) Remember God’s Wonderful Deeds

“Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples. 9 Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; Speak of

all His wonders. 10 Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad. 11 Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually. 12 Remember His wonderful deeds which He has done, His marvels and the judgments from His mouth, 13 O seed of Israel His servant, Sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!”

2. (:14-22) Remember God’s Everlasting Covenant of the Land of Canaan

“He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth. 15 Remember His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations, 16 The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac. 17 He also confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant, 18 Saying, ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan, As the portion of your inheritance.’ 19 When they were only a few in number, Very few, and strangers in it, 20 And they wandered about from nation to nation, And from one kingdom to another people, 21 He permitted no man to oppress them, And He reprov’d kings for their sakes, saying, 22 ‘Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.”

J.A. Thompson: Verse 19 reads (in Hebrew) “when you were but few,” rather than **Ps 105:12** “when they were but few.” The second person “you” would encourage a sense of unity with the patriarchs and their experience with God. When Israel was few and strangers, wandering from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another, the Lord allowed no one to oppress them and rebuked any who tried to do them harm. This would have been an **encouragement** to the relatively small community of Jews in the Chronicler's age who found themselves not only few but under foreign domination.

B. (:23-33) Express Praise and Thanksgiving by Boasting in God as Creator and King

1. (:23-29) Boast in God’s Glory as Creator and Savior

“Sing to the LORD, all the earth; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. 24 Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. 25 For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He also is to be feared above all gods. 26 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens. 27 Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and joy are in His place. 28 Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. 29 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the LORD in holy array.”

J.A. Thompson: The theme changes. The **kingship** of Yahweh comes to the fore. If the Chronicler's readers could identify themselves with their forebears, the patriarchs, who were a politically insignificant group that grew to a significant people as their story unfolded, the people of Israel of the Chronicler's day might well take hope and look to a brighter future. Their God was a great God whose salvation was to be proclaimed from day to day. He was great and most worthy of praise, to be revered above all gods. The

gods of the nations were but idols, but Israel's God made the heavens. Before him was splendor and majesty; strength and joy were in his dwelling place.

William Jackson: vv. 23-24 -- Declaring God's glory

I. Declare among the heathen the glory of God's perfections, that they may acknowledge Him as the true God.

II. Declare the glory of His salvation, that they may accept Him as their only Redeemer.

III. Declare the glory of His providence, that they may confide in Him as their faithful guardian.

IV. Declare the glory of His word, that they may prize it as their chief treasure.

V. Declare the glory of His service, that they may choose it as their chief occupation.

VI. Declare the glory of His residence, that they may seek it in their best home.

Pulpit Commentary: The grandeur and unusual comprehensiveness of the adoration and homage here proclaimed, as to be offered to the omnipotent Ruler of all nations, should be well pondered. Our eye and ear may have become too familiar with it, but when put a little into relief, and referred to its original time of day, it is fit to be ranked among the strongest moral evidences of inspiration in the word and the speaker.

2. (:30-33) Boast in God's Sovereignty as King and Judge over All the Earth

"Tremble before Him, all the earth; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. 31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; And let them say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns.' 32 Let the sea roar, and all it contains; Let the field exult, and all that is in it. 33 Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD; For He is coming to judge the earth."

J.A. Thompson: These words are a powerful statement asserting that Israel's God, Yahweh, is the supreme ruler over all. All nature responds with joy (vv. 31–33). The Lord will come to judge the earth.

C. (:34-36) Express Praise and Thanksgiving by Extolling God's Attributes as Good, Loving, Holy and Faithful

1. (:34) Extolling God's Goodness and Love

"O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."

2. (:35-36) Extolling God's Holiness and Faithfulness

"Then say, 'Save us, O God of our salvation, And gather us and deliver us from the nations, To give thanks to Thy holy name, And glory in Thy praise.' 36 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, From everlasting

even to everlasting. Then all the people said, 'Amen,' and praised the LORD."

Frederick Mabie: the final section (vv.34–36), which may reflect the exilic/postexilic reality of dispersion (“*Save us, O God our Savior; gather us and deliver us from the nations,*” v.35), is especially laden with praise and thanksgiving—a reality no doubt meant to resonate with the Chronicler’s postexilic audience (cf. **Php 4:4–7**). Even the created realm is exhorted to join in the praise and exaltation of the Creator God (vv.30–33). In addition, note that this worship poetry is preceded and followed by a brief list of Levites (most notably Asaph) appointed by David to serve before the ark in the realm of petition, thanksgiving, worship, and music (vv.4–6, 37–38).

Martin Selman: These wonderful works of God’s past salvation form the basis for making Israel’s present known to God. The request is for two things. First, the Chronicler asks God to save/deliver his people again and to gather them from the nations (v. 35; cf. **Deut. 30:3**). What exactly the Chronicler has in mind remains unspecified. It is sometimes proposed that frankness was politically inadvisable, but more probably the real thrust of the prayer is that Israel might regain its lost identity. The Chronicler’s readers were very aware of being subject to a pagan imperial power, and they needed above all to be re-identified as the as the people of the God who reigns over the nations (v. 31). Whether this involved a gathering from Babylonia (cf. **Ezra 1 – 2, 7-8**) or from the scattered villages of Judah (cf. **I Chr. 9:2-34; Neh. 7:4-5; 11:1-36**) cannot be decided. What matters is that Israel should have a new understanding of its status as God’s covenant people (cf. **14-18**).

The second request is that Israel may have a new understanding of God: that we may glory in your praise (v. 35). Deliverance could happen only by God’s intervention. Again, details are not given, but the Chronicler pleads with God to show himself unmistakably as the supreme Deliverer/Savior, and to act in such a way that praise and glory could be given only to him.

The whole psalm, therefore, is much more than an illustration of the post-exile liturgical cultus ... or an establishing of the identity of Jerusalem’s cultus. It is an impassioned plea for God to restore his own and his people’s identity in the Chronicler’s own generation by performing fresh acts of salvation.

III. (:37-42) MINISTRY BEFORE THE ARK

J.A. Thompson: These verses provide a concluding observation or summarizing remark on the way David ordered the Levites. Asaph and his associates were left before the ark to minister there regularly as each day required. Obed-Edom and his sixty-eight associates ministered with them although Obed-Edom and Hosah were gatekeepers. Zadok and his fellow priests were at the tabernacle at Gibeon to attend to the morning and evening burnt offerings in accordance with the law of the Lord.

A. (:37-38) Levites Ministering in Jerusalem

“So he left Asaph and his relatives there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required; 38 and Obed-edom with his 68 relatives; Obed-edom, also the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah as gatekeepers.”

Frederick Mabie: These names complement the list of Levites given in **verses 4–7** above and specify those who will serve on an ongoing basis in Jerusalem (City of David) in conjunction with the newly installed ark. The focus of these Levites appointed to serve in the presence of the ark is that of music, in contrast to the priests who serve in sacrificial ministry at Gibeon (**vv.39–42**; cf. **Hill**, 238).

B. (:39-42) Levites Ministering in Gibeon

“And he left Zadok the priest and his relatives the priests before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place which was at Gibeon, 40 to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering continually morning and evening, even according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which He commanded Israel. 41 And with them were Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because His lovingkindness is everlasting. 42 And with them were Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those who should sound aloud, and with instruments for the songs of God, and the sons of Jeduthun for the gate.”

Frederick Mabie: In contrast to the emphasis on the musical ministry of those assigned to serve “*before the ark*” (**vv.37–38**), David appoints priests to serve at Gibeon in their covenantal responsibilities of sacrifices and offerings “*in accordance with everything written in the Law of the LORD*” (**v.40**). The city of Gibeon was located on the western side of the Benjamite plateau, about five and a half miles northwest of Jerusalem. Since the tabernacle (tent of meeting constructed during the time of Moses) and the bronze altar constructed by Bezalel (also from the time of Moses) were located at Gibeon, this location became a significant worship center prior to the construction of the Solomonic temple (cf. **1Ch 21:29**; **2Ch 1:2–6**).

As well as noting the priests who will discharge their sacrificial duties, the Chronicler specifies that the Levitical families of Heman and Jeduthun were appointed to oversee music and worship at Gibeon. As noted in the earlier poetry (**v.34**), these Levites remind God’s people of God’s steadfast covenantal love (“*his love endures forever,*” **v.41**).

Thomas Constable: David let the sanctuary (the Mosaic tabernacle) remain at Gibeon and provided for worship and sacrifice to continue there (**vv. 37-42**). He appointed Zadok as the priest in charge of that tabernacle. Throughout Israel's history, the ark was a symbol of God's grace and the altar was a symbol of human response to that grace. Normally they were together, but in Saul's day they were separate. The ark was in Philistia, Bethshemesh, or Kiriath-jearim, and the tabernacle was at Shiloh or Gibeon.

(:43) EPILOGUE

*“Then all the people departed each to his house,
and David returned to bless his household.”*

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why do some people argue that musical instruments should **not** be used in church worship services in NT times? How would you respond to those arguments?
- 2) Does your worship focus both on **What** God has done on your behalf as well as on **Who** God is in His Person?
- 3) Does your worship combine both a **corporate** focus as well as a daily **individual** and **family** focus?
- 4) Does your worship **begin with truth** and then engage your **emotions** or does it begin with emotions and give truth little play?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Martin Selman: The chapter is arranged chiastically, with a psalm celebrating Yahweh’s kingship over the nations as the central feature:

- a. (16:1-3) – God’s blessing for every Israelite
- b. (16:4-7) – Levites appointed for worship at Jerusalem
- c. (16:8-36) – Psalm of praise
- b1 (16:37-42) – Levites and priests appointed for worship at Gibeon
- a1 (16:43) – Blessing for David’s household.

August Konkel: **Obed-Edom** is named as one of sixty-eight members of the singers of Asaph remaining at Jerusalem to direct worship there (v. 38). He is one of the musicians previously mentioned in **verse 5**. Obed-Edom, son of Jeduthun, and Hosah provided security as gatekeepers, making a total of seventy Levites serving in Jerusalem (v. 38). This is the only case where Obed-Edom is said to be a son of Jeduthun. This is surprising, because Jeduthun is prominent as a singer (1 Chron 25:1, 3, 6; 16:41). Obed-Edom appears consistently elsewhere as a gatekeeper (1 Chron 15:18, 24; 26:4). Thus, 1 Chronicles 16:38 appears to distinguish between Obed-Edom as part of a guild of singers and **another Obed-Edom** as a son of Jeduthun (Knoppers 2004b: 624). **Verse 42** makes clear that the sons of Jeduthun are gatekeepers. If the Chronicler distinguishes two individuals with the name Obed-Edom, the son of Jeduthun refers to

the gatekeeper. Of course, the Chronicler's gatekeepers could have more than one function. They are a class of Levites whose responsibilities may encompass more than guard duty.

Marc Grimaldi: God's Tabernacle Surrounded by Perpetual Praise and

Thanksgiving – Now brethren, as we span over this Psalm (**verses 8-36**), I want you to notice that there is a three-fold focus, which David utilizes, **to incite worship**. Indeed, when worship takes place, it is not to be guided by non-objective feelings and some mystical form of ecstasy. That is pagan worship. Worship is to be governed, guided and incited by important truths about God; who He is, and what He does...etc. Worship is to begin with the mind, and then it makes its way out to the feelings and emotions. The truth of God is reasonably processed, and this stirs the whole heart unto worship. The problem with much of today's worship, is that many, operating out of a principal of serving the flesh, attempt to begin by stirring the emotions, by means of music, sounds, repetitive chants, and other avenues, which do not begin with God's truth. But notice in **verse 4**, how David gives us the framework, out of which true worship proceeds. And we will find this framework, mapped out throughout the course of the Psalm that he has written here. Notice, David lists three main categories, out of which, the Levites are to draw their worship of God: [Read **verse 4**]

1) To Commemorate: That is, to "*remember*" or to "*recall*." To remember or recall what? This is what I call, the "**what**" category of worship, because the people of God were to call to remembrance, the "what" actions of God, on their behalf. "What" has God done? "What" has He promised to do? "What" is He doing? The overarching emphasis, being, on recalling "What" He has done already, which reassures His people concerning what He is doing now and will do in the future, according to His unwavering promises.

2) To Thank: Thanksgiving is the **proper response** to the first category. In other words, as they recall the "whats" of God's faithful actions, they are then prompted to thank Him for His faithful actions, being assured that the past evidence confirms His faithfulness in the present and in the future. If God has done such and such already, He will certainly do this. "Thank You Lord for what you have done for us, and for what you will continue to do, in accordance with Your covenant mercy, though we are well undeserving!"

3) To Praise: While praise is attached to thanksgiving in many respects, I believe that it also, especially involves the "**who**" category of worship. If "commemorating" speaks of recalling the "actions of God" (for which, He ought also to be praised and thanked), "praise" speaks especially of the "**Person of God**" **Himself**. "Praise" relates especially to "Who" God is, which again, is also revealed in "What" He does. Here, we especially consider God's glorious attributes; who He is, in the essence of His Person. We recall His sovereignty, His power and might, His majesty, His Holiness, His righteousness, His mercy and grace, His goodness, His unchangeability...etc, provoking us to fall down, as it were, and praise Him!

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Hugh Williamson: It would be a mistake, however, to dismiss the passage as no more than an example of liturgical worship which the Chronicler deemed appropriate to the historical setting. He has been able to select from a wide variety of material, and to order it according to his own preference, so that it would be surprising if it did not reflect some of his major concerns. Moreover, since these Psalms were doubtless used regularly by his contemporaries in their worship, it is probably that he would be inviting them to renew their faith in the God who, having answered the prayers and aspirations expressed in these verses so abundantly in the days of David and Solomon, could be relied upon to do so again despite all appearances in a later day. At a time such as the Chronicler's when great caution had to be exercised in the expression of political aspirations, Israel's "theological leaders turned to the collection of cultic poetry and edited it in such a manner as to rekindle fires of hope for a despondent people" (Butler, VT 28 [1978], p. 150).

Mark Boda: What is interesting is that these three psalms represent the three basic types of psalms: **Psalm 105** is a psalm of thanksgiving (New Orientation), **Psalm 96** is a psalm of praise (Orientation), and **Psalm 106** is a psalm of penitence (Disorientation). These represent the diversity of liturgical speech that was acceptable among the people of God. . .

Psalm 105 gives thanks to God for the covenant established with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; it traces the story of God's faithfulness through the narratives related to Joseph and Moses in the Exodus and Wilderness; and it ends with an allusion to the conquest of the land. The focus of **Psalm 105** is entirely on the grace and faithfulness of God toward Israel founded firmly on the Abrahamic covenant, ending with a clear emphasis on the response of Israel as obedience to the law (**Ps 105:45**). . .

Psalm 96 is a psalm of orientation, calling the entire creation, both animate and inanimate, to sing praise to God. . . [it] focuses on the power and glory of their cosmic God who demands the submission and praise of the nations among whom his people wander. To those who lived vulnerably among the nations the declarations "*the Lord reigns*" (**16:31**) and "*the Lord is coming to judge the earth*" (**16:33**) were essential to sustain faith. . .

Psalm 106 not only signals the legitimacy of petition in the worship of Israel but also shows how such petition is intricately linked to the other two forms of prayer – that is, God's answer to their deepest plea will result in both thanksgiving and praise to God ("*so we can thank . . . and praise you,*" **16:35**). . .

In **chapter 16** the Chronicler highlights David's meticulous provision for worship of God at the newly installed Ark. The Chronicler focuses on both tradition and innovation – that is, the ways in which David continues the worship rituals established by Moses, but also the ways in which David develops the worship of Israel, especially through the incorporation of verbal and musical forms of worship. This depiction of David would have supported the rituals used in the Chronicler's age, rituals that would

endure throughout the Second Temple period. It is not surprising, then, that this Davidic legacy would be picked up by the early church and incorporated into their worship (see **Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:16-17; Jas 5:13**).

David Whitcomb: But what does serious thanksgiving to God look like for us? It probably looks much like it did for David and his peers. Our text ends with about six conclusions of a truly thankful heart (vv.8-12).

First, we will thank the LORD. *Oh give thanks to the LORD (v.8a)*. Thankfulness requires understanding of activity. For what are you thankful? What exactly happened that makes us think we should be thankful? Identify it. As we identify the reason for thankfulness, we will discover that God is in it. Thankfulness requires knowledge of God who is active. Was this event for which you are thankful a coincidence or was it the direct intervention of God? . . .

Second, when we are thankful, we pray to the LORD. *Call upon his name (v.8b)*. If we are thankful, we should tell God. Granted, the omniscient God knows our thoughts. But God loves the expressions of our hearts that reveal our love for Him, our recognition of His works, and our thanksgiving because of it.

Third, thankful people testify about the LORD. The text says that *we make known his deeds among the peoples (v.8c)*! This requires that we not only think thankful thoughts, but we express our thanksgiving to God vocally. In real terms it means that if we are truly thankful, we will tell other people about God.

Fourth, we express thanksgiving when we rejoice in the LORD. *Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice (v.10)*! Being sad, or agitated, or discouraged, or even angry is very natural and easy. What can change that natural attitude? We each are responsible to refocus. When we feel discouraged, we need to seek the Lord and rejoice.

Fifth, a great way to show thankfulness to the LORD is to depend on Him. *Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually (v.11)*! David reminded his peers, When you were few in number, and of little account, and sojourners in it, wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people, he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account (**vv.19-21**). People who recognize that they are few, weak, and wandering are more likely to depend on God. When we see ourselves as weak and vulnerable, we are more likely to depend on the Lord. Through dependence on the Lord, we realize how thankful we should be. Self-made men and women are generally proud not thankful.

Sixth, we are more likely to be thankful when we think about the LORD. *Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered (v.12)*. It is good to read the Bible and meditate on God's works in the past. It is good to read the Bible and meditate on God's work in your life today. It is good to read the Bible and meditate on God's promises for the future. That kind of remembering will

make us thankful.

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A.C. Gaebelein: A careful study will show the far reaching meaning of this composite Psalm. It is a **great prophecy**. It begins with the celebration and praise of what Jehovah has done. Israel is called to remember His covenant. It is not the covenant at Sinai, with its conditional promises, but the unconditional, the grace-covenant, made with Abraham, an **everlasting covenant** that his seed is to have the land. But prophetically the Psalm points to the time when “*His judgments are in all the earth*”; it is at that time when the covenant made with Abraham will be remembered. Such a time will come according to the prophetic Word. **Verse 22**, “*Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm,*” speaks of Israel’s preservation; for Israel is His anointed, a kingdom of kings and priests. The day must come when the covenant made with Abraham will be realized and when Israel shall possess the land, after their wanderings from nation to nation (**verse 20**). Then there will be a throne in Zion and a King shall reign in righteousness, even Christ (**Psalms 2**).

TEXT: I Chronicles 17:1-27

TITLE: THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

BIG IDEA:

THE PROMISES OF THE DAVIDIC COVENANT TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE CONSTRUCTION OF GOD'S HOUSE

INTRODUCTION:

J.A. Thompson: The Chronicler was ready to embark on his primary theme—the **building of the temple**—but certain steps had yet to be taken.

- the individual who would actually build the temple had to be identified (**chap. 17**),
- the political conditions had to be propitious (**chaps. 18–20**),
- the precise site had to be chosen (**chap. 21**),
- the materials and plans had to be in hand (**chaps. 22; 28–29**), and
- the personnel to undertake the proper functioning of the temple had to be selected and authorized (**chaps. 23–27**).

All of these important items are taken up in the last part of **1 Chronicles**, which closes with David's prayer, the recognition of Solomon as king, and the death of David (**chap. 29**). The present chapter describes David's desire to build the temple, a desire that failed to receive God's blessing (**17:1–15**).

Thomas Constable: In some particulars, the promises God gave David related to him personally. However, other promises pertained to his descendants and, in particular, to one descendant who would do for Israel much more than David could do. In **chapters 17–21** the emphasis is on the promises that related to David personally. The writer evidently wanted to establish God's faithfulness in fulfilling these to encourage his readers to trust God to fulfill the yet unfulfilled promises concerning David's great Son.

In **2 Samuel 7**, the warnings of discipline if David's descendants failed God focused attention on Solomon and the kings that followed him through Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. In **1 Chronicles 17** those warnings are absent. This fact probably indicates that the Chronicler was looking beyond the kings of Judah who had failed and died to the King who was yet to come. This King would carry out God's will perfectly (cf. **Isa. 9:6; John 4:34**). This would have given the restoration community renewed hope.

August Konkel: The Chronicler's vision for the future of the people of faith was established on the fulfillment of the promise to David. There were two aspects to this promise: **land** and **dynasty**. The promise of land was expressed in terms of **rest** (**Deut 3:20; 12:10; 25:19; Josh 21:44; 1 Kings 5:4**). The promise of rest in the land was grounded in God's words to the patriarchs (**Exod 6:2–8; Deut 1:8**). Fulfillment of rest

came with the conquests of David (**2 Sam 7:1, 11**). This is the occasion for David's decision to build a temple. David regards his conquests as a divine provision; in return he seeks to affirm his loyalty and devotion to God. His proposal meets with prophetic approval from Nathan. God's instructions from the time of the covenant with Moses were to cross the Jordan, enter the rest in possessing the land (**Deut 12:9–10**), and there establish one central place where all Israel would worship (**vv. 5, 11, 14**). The conquest of Jerusalem, a central location uniting north and south, was regarded as divine provision, according to the ideal of Deuteronomy.

In the interpretation of the Chronicler, the intent of David to build the temple was premature because David had not yet secured the rest required for building the temple. David was a man of war (**1 Chron 22:7–8**). Rest would come in the time of his son Solomon, who would benefit from the achievements of David (**vv. 9–10**).

Andrew Hill: This narrative genre is classified broadly as “report,” specifically a **prophetic commission report (17:3–15)** and a **prayer (17:16–27)**. The report contains a number of specialized formulas often found in prophetic literature, including

- the messenger formula (“*this is what the LORD says,*” **17:4, 7**),
- the word formula (“*the word of God came,*” **17:3**),
- the adoption formula (“*I will be his father, and he will be my son,*” **17:13**),
- the self-abasement formula (“*who am I?*” **17:16**), and
- the covenant formula (“*you made your people Israel your very own,*” **17:22**).

Chronicles is the story of two “houses”: the house or dynasty of King David and the house or temple of God. According to **Selman**, the building blocks for the Chronicler's narrative are the two words from God—one blessing David's house (**17:3–15**) and the other blessing the house King Solomon built for Yahweh in Jerusalem (**2 Chron. 7:11–22**).

Martin Selman: For the Chronicler, a proper understanding of the covenant involved recognizing the presence of the kingdom of God as well as God's activity in and through an individual descendant of David who would build God's house/temple. In spite of Solomon's weaknesses, therefore, and the fact that conditions in post-exilic Israel made a mockery of any real hope of restoring David's monarchy, the Chronicler's belief in the ongoing relevance of the Davidic promise surely meant that the contemporary shadow of a theocracy had not exhausted the vitality of God's covenant promise. Chronicles clearly points both to the special significance of Solomon and to a longing for another son of David who would finally rebuild God's house and establish God's kingdom *forever* (this phrase occurs eight times in **1 Chr. 17**).

I. (:1-6) LOWERING THE PRIORITY ON BUILDING GOD'S HOUSE

A. (:1-2) David's Good Intentions to Build God a Temple

“And it came about, when David dwelt in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, ‘Behold, I am dwelling in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under curtains.’ 2 Then Nathan said to David, ‘Do all

that is in your heart, for God is with you.”

Mark Boda: The contrast here was probably both one of **quality** – that is, a grand palace versus a humble tent – as well as one of **permanence**, a settled palace versus a transient tent.

Pulpit Commentary: David’s thoughts respecting the honor due to God and to the ark of the covenant had time to grow into convictions, and they were greatly and rightly stimulated by reflection on his own surroundings of comfort, of safety, of stability and splendor.

J.A. Thompson: David wanted to build a house for God, but God himself would do something far greater in building a house for David. This house, the Davidic dynasty with its eternal and messianic implications, was of far greater importance than any building. This chapter reminds the reader that the house God builds surpasses any human house however grand it may be and however honorable the motivations were behind its building. This should once again remind us that it is superficial to think of the Chronicler as someone who could not see beyond legal and ceremonial religion. . .

In Near Eastern thought there was a widely recognized relationship between the earthly kingship and the temple of the protecting deity of the city-state. The state was seen as a reflection of the cosmic reality of the divine government, which stood behind the state. The state, with its various hierarchies, culminated in the earthly kingship at its apex. This was thought to be parallel to a cosmic state of affairs with its own gradations in which the major deity headed a pantheon of lesser deities. The ultimate kingship of the protecting deity was thought to be expressed through, and paralleled by, the empirical kingship exercised by the ruler of the city-state on earth. This concept was given concrete expression in the relationship that existed between the temple of the city-state and the palace of the king of the city-state. The temple was the earthly residence of the deity, and the palace was the residence of the earthly representative of the deity, that is, the king.

Peter Wallace: Of course, Nathan and David are also influenced by their **culture**. And in the ancient world, there are three things that characterize great kings:

- 1) they defeat their enemies in battle,
- 2) they speak wise and persuasive words
- 3) they build impressive buildings (especially temples for their gods).

B. (:3-6) Divine Correction that the Building of God’s House is Not Top Priority

“And it came about the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, 4 ‘Go and tell David My servant, Thus says the LORD, You shall not build a house for Me to dwell in; 5 for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel to this day, but I have gone from tent to tent and from one dwelling place to another. 6 In all places where I have walked with all Israel, have I spoken a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I

commanded to shepherd My people, saying, Why have you not built for Me a house of cedar?"

Frederick Mabie: The anticipation of a place where God would choose to cause his name to dwell (**Dt 12:5**) is coupled with the negative reality that human beings tend to approach God “*in their way*” (**Dt 12:4**) and “*everyone as he sees fit*” (**Dt 12:8**).

Martin Selman: 3 Reasons for the delay in the building of the temple:

- 1) throughout Israel’s existence, from the exodus to the judges, no such place of worship was required.
- 2) to remind David that his own role as Israel’s *ruler* (v. 7; cf. **11:2**) was bound up with God’s purposes, not his own.
- 3) for the present, God has given a higher priority to his promise of a dynasty than to the construction of a physical temple (v. **10b**).

II. (:7-15) RAISING THE PRIORITY ON BUILDING THE DYNASTY OF DAVID

Frederick Mabie: Although David’s idea to build a temple for God is not well received, God reveals through the prophet Nathan that David’s son will be given the honor of building a house (i.e., temple) for God. Yet God further reveals through Nathan that he (Yahweh) will build a house (i.e., dynasty) for David (the Davidic covenant). This blessing is consistent with God’s election of David (v.7), his ongoing presence with David (v.8), and his plans to strengthen David (v.8).

A. (:7-8) Divine Elevation of David and His Dynasty

“Now, therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be leader over My people Israel. 8 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a name like the name of the great ones who are in the earth.’”

J.A. Thompson: The Lord’s plan was to grant him a great name and provide his people a place and a secure home free from oppression by wicked people who once harassed them. These words would have conjured up a great sense of longing and encouragement on the part of the Chronicler’s postexilic readers.

B. (:9-10a) Divine Establishment of Israel in Their Secure Land

“And I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place and be moved no more; neither shall the wicked waste them anymore as formerly, 10 even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel. And I will subdue all your enemies.”

Andrew Hill: The idea of a permanent and centralized structure for the worship of Yahweh is not the issue in God’s veto of David’s plan to build a temple. The problem is

not the erection of a temple for Yahweh, but David. David's legacy as a warrior means he will serve only as Solomon's contractor for the building of the temple (cf. **22:8; 28:3**). It appears that the construction of a permanent sanctuary or temple for the worship of God is connected to Israel's secure position in the land of covenant promise (**17:9–10**). Unlike the era of the judges ("*leaders*," **17:10**), the Israelites are no longer oppressed by the neighboring people groups. God enables David to achieve this relative peace and safety by cutting off and subduing Israel's enemies (**17:8**), as reported in the account of his successful military campaigns (**chs. 18–20**).

C. (:10a-14) Divine Encouragement Regarding David's Lasting Legacy

"Moreover, I tell you that the LORD will build a house for you. And it shall come about when your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up one of your descendants after you, who shall be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. 14 But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."

Mark Boda: The phrase at the core of this covenant ceremony is found in **17:13**: "*I will be his father, and he will be my son.*" This phrase reflects the reciprocity that is central to all covenants in the Old Testament. . . The language here, however, is slightly different from that of the Abrahamic, Sinaitic, and new covenants, which place the emphasis on the national character of the covenant (God with his people). With David, the terms are far more **intimate**, emphasizing the unbreakable bonds of **family relationship** with its depth of loyalty.

D. (:15) Divine Enlightenment from Nathan the Prophet to King David

"According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David."

III. (:16-27) PRAYER OF RESPONSE REFLECTING THE AWE AND HUMILITY OF DAVID IN PRAISE OF GOD'S GRACIOUS COVENANT PROMISES

Frederick Mabie: David's prayer in response to God's revelation of the "Davidic covenant" (cf. **vv.7–15**) reflects his **awe** in the light of God's blessings already bestowed on him (**vv.16–17**) as well as God's promise to establish his "*house*" (dynasty) into the future ("*forever*"). David's **humility** and awe are directly tied to **God's singularity** ("*there is no one like you, O LORD,*" **v.20**; cf. **2Ch 14:11; 20:6**) and his choice of Israel to be his redeemed people (**vv.21–22**). David understands God's blessing on his house as part of God's broader relationship of blessing with his people, Israel, which in turn is a conduit to God's goodness and ways becoming known to all humankind ("*Then men will say . . .*" **v.24**).

August Konkel: The prayer of David focuses on the redemptive acts of God on behalf of his people (**1 Chron 17:20–21**), recalling the unique status of Israel among all other nations, who do not have a God such as this (cf. **Deut 4:7–8**). God has acted freely in creating Israel as his people, and in the same way he has now chosen to create a dynasty (house) for David (**1 Chron 17:17–19**); God has acknowledged and recognized David in a manner incomparable to any other king. David can only pray that these words be confirmed and that the name of God may be magnified in Israel. This does not absolve David of accountability before God, as is fully shown in the narrative in Samuel. David expresses the desire that the purposes of God may be fulfilled in his dynasty and in God’s people Israel (**vv. 26–28**). The doxology of David’s prayer affirms that all of this is so that God may be blessed forever. The marvel expressed in the prayer is that God could be so honored in his action of not only bringing David to his current position but also declaring to him his purpose for the future.

J.A. Thompson: The text of David's prayer here is substantially the same as in **2 Sam 7:18–29** although there are some alterations and omissions. The prayer is offered in the newly established tent shrine in Jerusalem to which the ark has been brought. It acknowledges the greatness and uniqueness of God and refers to the election and deliverance of Israel, revealed especially in the exodus. The continuity of David's throne also is acknowledged (**vv. 23–24**). The reference to the exodus in **vv. 21–22** is important. The saving events of the exodus were basic in Israel's theology although they were not always made explicit by the Chronicler. Even Solomon's prayer of dedication (**2 Chr 6**) of the temple pays scant attention to the exodus, which is mentioned only in passing (**2 Chr 6:5**). Those earlier events seem to be lost sight of in the new emphasis on the Davidic covenant.

Iain Duguid: David’s prayer is in three parts: **verses 16–22** expand “*thus far*”; **verses 23–25** follow “*and now*” with a **single petition**; and **verses 26–27** follow “*and now*” with a **concluding affirmation**. If there is no other god like the Lord, then there is no other nation like Israel, for they are “*your people*.” Just as the oracle had set God’s choice of David in the context of his purpose and past actions relating to Israel (**vv. 5–10**), so David affirms God’s actions from the exodus on; Israel is to be “*your people forever*,” and the “*Lord*” is to be “*their God*” (**vv. 21–22**). God’s actions on behalf of his people have led from Moses to David. The Davidic covenant marks a new phase, not replacing but building on the foundation of God’s earlier covenantal promises and deeds.

Martin Selman: David’s response illustrates two central aspects of the Chronicler’s view of prayer.

- First, God’s unconditional promises are not to be received casually, as though their advantages were automatic, but with submissive faith and thanksgiving.
- Secondly, for the Chronicler, faith is often expressed through prayer, notably in the examples of David (also **29:10–19**), Solomon (**2 Chr. 1:8–10; 6:14–42**), Jehoshaphat (**2 Chr. 20:6–12**), and Hezekiah (**2 Chr. 30:18–20; 32:20, 24**).

Prayers are often strategic in Chronicles, especially those which introduce and conclude the temple-building narratives in the reigns of David and Solomon.

Chronicles makes a closer connection between prayer and the building of the temple than Samuel or Kings (**I Chr. 29:10-19** has no parallel), and seems to have specifically encouraged the thought in the post-exilic period of the temple as a ‘*house of prayer*’ (cf. **Isa. 56:7**). As in the prayer-psalm in **chapter 16** and the Lord’s Prayer itself, the requests come toward the end of the prayer (**vv. 23-27**; cf. **Matt. 6:11-13**). Precedence is given to praise for God’s amazing and undeserved generosity.

A. (:16-22) Focus of David’s Prayer Analyzed

“Then David the king went in and sat before the LORD and said,”

Martin Selman: The prayer is not just a conventional religious response to good news, for God’s word has brought about a marked change in David’s perspective. He has a new perception of his dependence (cf. **v. 1**), and the similar questions in the prayer of **29:14** show that this was not a passing phase. Even more importantly, an awareness has emerged of God as not only unique but without any rival (**v. 20**).

1. (:16-18) Focus on the Humility of David’s House in Light of the Magnitude of God’s Blessing

“Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my house that Thou hast brought me this far? 17 And this was a small thing in Thine eyes, O God; but Thou hast spoken of Thy servant’s house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the standard of a man of high degree, O LORD God. 18 What more can David still say to Thee concerning the honor bestowed on Thy servant? For Thou knowest Thy servant.”

2. (:19) Transition – Insight into God’s Motivation

“O LORD, for Thy servant’s sake, and according to Thine own heart, Thou hast wrought all this greatness, to make known all these great things.”

3. (:20-22) Focus on the Uniqueness of Both God and Israel’s Elect Status

“O LORD, there is none like Thee, neither is there any God besides Thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 21 And what one nation in the earth is like Thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make Thee a name by great and terrible things, in driving out nations from before Thy people, whom Thou didst redeem out of Egypt? 22 For Thy people Israel Thou didst make Thine own people forever, and Thou, O LORD, didst become their God.”

B. (:23-25) Fulfillment of God’s Promises Assured

“And now, O LORD, let the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant

and concerning his house, be established forever, and do as Thou hast spoken. 24 And let Thy name be established and magnified forever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel; and the house of David Thy servant is established before Thee. 25 For Thou, O my God, hast revealed to Thy servant that Thou wilt build for him a house; therefore Thy servant hath found courage to pray before Thee.”

Martin Selman: Two requests emerge in the latter part of the prayer.

- The first is that God’s ‘word’ (NRSV, RSV) *promise* (NIV, GNB) should be established for ever (v. 25). David recognizes that the giving of the promise and its future depends on God, though from now on its success or otherwise will be bound up with the faith and obedience shown by David’s descendants. The Davidic covenant is usually described in this chapter as the *word/promise* (vv. 3, 23; cf. v. 6), but it is also called *this great thing* (v. 19), ‘*this good thing*’ (v. 26, NRSV, RSV), and what God has revealed (v. 25; cf. v. 15). Verse 23 contains a good example of prayer not always changing the circumstances but the attitude of the person who prays – ‘*Do what you said*’ (GNB) or *Do as you promised* (NIV) is in direct opposition to Nathan’s original advice to the king (*Do whatever you have in mind, v.2*).
- The second request is that God’s name (‘*fame*,’ GNB, REB, NEB) will be magnified forever (v. 24, NRSV, RSV). David has shown understandable human interest in the implications of the divine word for himself and his house (vv. 16-19, 23), but the prayer concludes, as the next will begin (29:10- 13), with a **concern for God’s honor**. The greatness of God’s name through both ‘*houses*’ is in the end more important to David than the promise of a great name for himself (cf. v. 8).

C. (:26-27) Faithfulness of God’s Blessing Acclaimed

“And now, O LORD, Thou art God, and hast promised this good thing to Thy servant. 27 And now it hath pleased Thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may continue forever before Thee; for Thou, O LORD, hast blessed, and it is blessed forever.”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why did both Nathan and David assume that building God’s house should be top priority?
- 2) Why did the Lord overrule them with His own agenda?
- 3) What are the foundational tenets of the Davidic Covenant?

4) What lessons regarding prayer can be learned here?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Frederick Mabie: The messianic (and unconditional) application of the Davidic covenant is gleaned from the broader setting of Nathan's prophetic word to David and subsequent biblical revelation. For example, note the details of complete peace ("*no longer be disturbed*," v.9; cf. **2Sa 7:10**), never being oppressed and having all enemies subdued (vv.9–10; cf. **2Sa 7:10–11**), an everlasting kingdom (v.14; cf. **2Sa 7:16**), and perhaps even the motif of temple reflected in the person of Christ (cf. **Jn 2:18–22**).

In addition, the broader notion of the Davidic covenant is reinforced through the theological details provided via progressive revelation (cf. **Isa 9:7; Lk 1:32; Heb 1:5**). Thus God ultimately bases his commitment to preserve the house of David on account of his Word and his character rather than human effort. God's enduring promise to David is exalted in the poetry of **Psalms 89** and the prophetic oracle of **Jeremiah 33**.

August Konkel: Covenant is a formal relationship established by oath involving at least two parties. Because covenants involve at least two parties, all parties are affected in the making of a covenant. Such covenants may not affect all parties equally. Some may emphasize the promise made by the dominant party; others may stress the commitments made by the lesser party. But in all cases there is some sense of mutual obligation. A covenant ensures that the relationship will be continued into the future, but the dynamic of the relationship may be altered. One or both parties may accept obligations, but these may not be imposed in all cases. There may be unconditional language, but this does not mean that the covenant is one-sided or that there is no further accountability on behalf of one of the parties. Continuing future loyalty can be assumed or stipulated even though the fundamental promise is not affected by disloyalty. Even in the most one-sided covenants, there may be an element of reciprocity. All biblical covenants and the promise to David must be understood in this more comprehensive manner.

Andrew Hill: The **contextual relationship** to the preceding and following materials is **ideological** rather than literary or chronological.

(1) The formal installment of the ark of God in Jerusalem is preliminary to David's plan and all his preparations for building a permanent sanctuary for Yahweh (**chs. 13–16**). On this point, **Williamson** has noted that the remainder of 1 Chronicles is devoted to the single theme of the Jerusalem temple by noting the builder (**ch. 17**), setting the political conditions (**chs. 18–20**), drafting the plans and securing the materials (**chs. 22; 28–29**), and appointing the personnel (**chs. 23–27**).

(2) God's covenant with the house of David is understood as the natural outcome of Israel's covenant renewal with God as a part of the ark installment ceremony.

(3) The divine promise to build a Davidic dynasty in Israel is played out in the Chronicler's subsequent record of the rise and fall of kingship in Israel (**2 Chron. 1–36**). . .

The repeated use of the word “forever” (*‘olam*) points to the distant future and indicates the Chronicler's message is intended for another audience as well (**17:23, 24, 27**). Previously, the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel attached messianic expectations to the promises of the Davidic covenant (cf. **Jer. 23:5; 30:9; 33:21; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24**). The New Testament recognizes Jesus Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of those promises. He is the heir of David, and he inherited the throne of King David (**Luke 1:32**). Jesus is both the Son of David (**Matt. 1:1**) and the Son of God charged to build and oversee the very “house” of God (**Heb. 3:6**). God continues to build his “house,” the church, through the Son of David—a spiritual house that will prevail against the opposition of hell itself (**Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5**)!

Martin Selman: This dynasty has five main features:

(a) God will establish a kingdom and a throne for David's offspring (**vv. 11, 12, 14**). This is the major promise of the covenant. The ambiguity inherent in the Hebrew word *zera'* (**v. 11**), like its English equivalents ‘seed’ (AV)/offspring (NIV, NRSV, RSV), means it can apply both to the dynasty as a whole and to individual members of it (cf. the use of the same word in **Gen. 3:15, 12:7; 17:7, 16**).

(b) One of David's descendants will build the desired temple which will be a sign that David's throne or kingdom has been divinely established (**v. 12**). Like circumcision in the case of the Abrahamic covenant (**Gen. 17**), building the temple is the act of human obedience by which God's covenant promise is accepted and confirmed. So the temple will glorify not David's name but God's.

(c) David's heirs will enjoy the privileged status of God's adopted sons, with Yahweh himself as their adoptive Father (**v. 13**). This promise which was given originally to Israel (**Exod. 4:22**; cf. **Isa. 55:3**) is now concentrated in the Davidic line (cf. **Pss. 2:7; 89:27**). Ultimately it leads to Jesus, in whom this promise is finally and perfectly fulfilled. In the light of Jesus' resurrection and ascension, the early church constantly saw this as the supreme Old Testament promise concerning Jesus as the Son of God, frequently referring to this and similar passages (e.g. **Acts 2:30; 13:22-23; Rom. 1:3-4; Heb. 1:5, 8-9; 5:5**). Through Jesus too, it has amazingly been extended by adoption to every believer, so that Jesus is ‘*the firstborn among many brothers*’ (**Rom. 8:29**; cf. **vv. 15-17**).

(d) David's house will be **everlasting**, ultimately secured in God's love. The future of David's kingdom would be wholly different from the uncertainty and disaster that befell Saul's reign (**v. 13**). It is initially surprising that the clause in **2 Samuel 7:14b** about human sinfulness and divine discipline has been discarded. The reason, however, is not an unawareness of the extent of human failure in the Davidic line or because royal

obedience was no longer a priority. David and Solomon were still required to obey God's instructions (**I Chr. 22:12-13; 28:8-9**), and the Chronicler does not hide their failures (see **I Chr. 13:11-12; 15:13; 21:1, 7-8, 17** for David; **2 Chr. 9:29; 10:4; 10-11, 14** for Solomon), any more than he does those of their successors on the throne. Rather, repeated failure by David's line to meet the conditions of the covenant serves only to highlight God's **unconditional commitment** to David's house. This in fact is the focus of the Chronicler's attention, confirming that even human sin cannot ultimately undermine or divert God's declared purposes.

(e) The most striking development of the Davidic covenant in Chronicles is its explicit **association with the kingdom of God (v. 14)**.

Peter Wallace: The Word and Prayer

The Word addresses David's existential situation (**:3-6**)

(wanting to build a house for the LORD),

then puts David's situation in its ecclesiastical context (**:7-10a**)

(what the LORD is doing for his people, Israel), and

concludes with an eschatological focus (**:10b-15**)

(that when the LORD builds up David's house, then David's Son will build a house for the LORD).

In the same way **David's prayer** starts with his existential situation (**:16-20**)

(who am I before You?),

then situates himself in his ecclesiastical context (**:21-22**)

(who is Israel in Your plan?), and

concludes with an eschatological focus (**:23-27**)

(therefore, do what You have promised!)

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/104112032530.pdf>

TEXT: I Chronicles 18:1-17

TITLE: DAVID'S MILITARY VICTORIES EXPEDITED BY THE LORD

BIG IDEA:

THE LORD HELPED DAVID IN ALL OF HIS MILITARY CAMPAIGNS – EXPANSION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkel: Between the dynastic oracle in **chapter 17** and David's purchase of the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (Ornan, NRSV) as the location of the future temple (**ch. 21**), the Chronicler has provided a summary of the wars of David that provided the circumstance in which Solomon had peace to build the temple. . .

David's victories are extensive: the Philistine territory along the Mediterranean (**1 Chron 18:1**), Moab across the Jordan (**v. 2**), Hadadezer and the Arameans of Damascus in the north and northeast (**vv. 3–8**), Edom in the southeast (**vv. 12–13**). He is known as far north as Tou of Hamath, who receives relief from his own wars with Hadadezer (**vv. 9–11**). Booty is garnered from Edom, Moab, the Philistines, Ammonites, and Amalekites (**18:11**), though no battles are mentioned for the last two. . .

Outline:

- Expansion of the Kingdom, **18:1–13**
- Administration of the State, **18:14–17**
- Victories over Ammonites and Arameans, **19:1–20:3**
- Victories over Philistines, **20:4–8**

Martin Selman: **Chapters 18–20** contain an outline of David's creation of an Israelite empire. This achievement was mainly the result of external expansion through military victories, though one short passage (**18:14–17**) shows that internal reorganization also played a part. The material is clearly selective, with few details and little analysis of the causes and progress of individual conflicts.

Andrew Hill: The **literary genre** of this section may be identified as **historical story** and includes a variety of subgenres like the battle report (e.g., **18:1–6, 12–13; 19:16–19**), booty lists (e.g., **18:7–11; 20:2–3**), exploit report (e.g., **20:4, 5**), and anecdote (e.g., **20:6–7**). Structurally, the literary unit of **chapters 18–20** is loosely organized by the repetition of the conjunctive formula "*in the course of time*" (**18:1; 19:1; 20:4**). **Allen** has detected a more subtle structural marker in the repetition of the word "*subdue*" (*kn'*) at the beginning and the end of the passage, creating a type of envelope construction for the account of David's wars (**1 Chron. 18:1; 20:4** [NIV "*subjugated*"]; cf. **17:10**). This theme is reinforced by the repeated phrase "*became subject to*" (*bd*) in each of the battle reports (**18:2, 6, 13; 19:19**).

Theologically, the retelling of David's wars and the subduing of the nations demonstrates a partial fulfillment of the covenant Yahweh granted David, an important theme in the Chronicler's theology of hope for postexilic Judah. The narrative also verifies David's role as a faithful servant in the fulfillment of the commission entrusted to him to provide a haven for the people of Israel (cf. **17:8–10**). . .

More important to the Chronicler's message is the theological commentary found at the midpoint and end of the chapter (**18:6, 13**). The God who "*gave David victory*" is the God of the Chronicler and postexilic Judah. That same blessing of divine approval awaits those who dedicate themselves in expectant faith to the spiritual and physical restoration of Jerusalem, even as King David dedicates the silver and gold plundered in war to the work of the Lord (**18:11**).

Iain Duguid: The collation of David's victories carries the story forward in two ways.

- First, we see how God fulfills his promise (**1 Chron. 17:10**) as David "*subdues*" his enemies (**18:1; 20:4**) and neighboring peoples become his "*servants*" (**18:2, 6, 13**; and "*became subject*," **19:19**).
- Second, the collation illustrates how David was indeed one who "*shed much blood and . . . waged great wars*," but the result was the "*rest*" that enabled Solomon to build the temple (**22:8–10; 28:3**). **Chapters 18–20** will be followed by arrangements for the temple and its worship.

It is possible that the overall arrangement is intentionally chiasmic: Philistine victories provide the outer frame (**18:1; 20:4–8**) and victories east and north the inner frame (**18:2–13; 19:1–20:3**), with administrative arrangements central (**18:14–17**). This is a pointer that the military ventures were a means of providing stability and security for the good administration of "*all Israel*."

I. (:1-13) EXPANSION OF THE KINGDOM IN EVERY DIRECTION

A. (:1) Military Victories against the Philistines in the West

"Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines."

August Konkel: David's earlier wars with the Philistines in **1 Chronicles 14:8–17** were defensive battles to preserve Israelite territory. The wars described here are to subjugate enemies, as Nathan the prophet had promised (**17:10**), to eliminate threat and fear, to provide security and rest.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: The full extent of David's conquests in the Philistine territory is here distinctly stated; whereas in the parallel passage, **2 Sam 8:1**, it is only described in a general way. Gath was the '*Methegammah*,' or '*arm-bridle*,' as it is there called, either from its supremacy, as the capital, over the other Philistine towns, or because, in the capture of that important place and its dependencies; he obtained the complete control of his restless neighbors.

Rich Cathers: Gath -- About 30 miles west and south of Jerusalem. The parallel passage states:

2 Samuel 8:1 *Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them; and David took control of the chief city from the hand of the Philistines.*

So, apparently Gath was considered the **chief** of the five Philistine cities. (Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza, Lachish, Gath) Also, Gath was the home of David's first conquest, Goliath.

B. (:2) Military Victories against the Moabites in the East

“And he defeated Moab, and the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute.”

Andrew Hill: David apparently leaves local leadership in place [in the land of the Philistines and of Moab] but imposes annual tribute as a **satellite state** of Israel.

Ron Daniel: The Moabites had been enemies of Israel ever since they hired Balaam the prophet to curse the Jews (**Num. 22**) as they wandered in the wilderness. When David defeated them, he made them subject to Israel, forced to pay tribute, which is essentially "protection money."

C. Military Victories against a Variety of Enemies in the North and Northeast

1. (:3-4) Defeat of Hadadezer king of Zobah

“David also defeated Hadadezer king of Zobah as far as Hamath, as he went to establish his rule to the Euphrates River. 4 And David took from him 1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers, and David hamstringed all the chariot horses, but reserved enough of them for 100 chariots.”

August Konkel: The encounter with Hadadezer king of Zobah, a territory north of Damascus toward Hamath, is introduced immediately following the subjugation of Philistia and Moab (**18:3**). It was the result of an intervention in setting up a monument at the Euphrates River. Kings would set up monuments outside their own territory to represent their presence in territory they controlled. The Euphrates was a natural boundary for such a monument because it separated the northwest from the east. It is not certain whether David or Hadadezer was engaged in setting up the monument, which was north of both of their territories. The inference of the Chronicler, made from **2 Samuel 8:3**, is that David was setting up the monument as a testament to his expanded conquests when Hadadezer resisted him. The result was an expanded war with the Arameans (**2 Sam 8:4–6**), which brought about a very significant dominion to the young state. The territory of David now extended to the boundaries of Tou, king of Hamath, and its territories on the Orontes River (**1 Chron 18:9–11**). The king of Hamath was eager to form an alliance with David since the Israelites effectively ended his conflict with the Arameans to the south. Tou had no desire to engage the military might of David, but he was content to have a secure southern border to his territories. Summary statements are given in **verses 6 and 13**: *The LORD gave David victory*

wherever he went. These episodes demonstrate the fulfillment of the prophetic promise in **17:8–10a**. . .

David also engaged in **destroying the weaponry** of the Arameans. The Chronicler tells us that David hamstringed all but a hundred of the chariot horses (**1 Chron 18:4b**). This practice follows the analogy of **Joshua 11:6–9**, where God requires that the horses be disabled and the chariots burned. In both cases this was to cripple the military of mercenary forces. It may have been a precaution against them being hired again in a military attack, but it also may have been regarded as a stipulation of what is termed **holy war**. All booty of those battles won by direct divine intervention belonged to God and could not be used as plunder [*War in Chronicles*, p. 481]. In **Joshua 11:6** the spoils of war at Hazor were regarded as *profane* (*ḥalalim*) for Israel, a categorization that always carries moral implications.

Ron Daniel: We can see how riches might corrupt a king, and we certainly understand the problems associated with multiple wives. But what harm could there be in having lots of horses? God wanted the king of Israel to be dependent upon the Lord, not on his own military might. David understood this, and even wrote in one of his psalms,

Psa. 20:7 *Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.*

Andrew Hill: David opposes Hadadezer's declaration of sovereignty, perhaps because he has designs on controlling the trade route known as the King's Highway (running from Sela in Edom to the city of Hamath through Damascus; this would explain David's expansionist policy in the Transjordan against the Edomites, Moabites, and the Ammonites).

2. (:5-8) Defeat of the Arameans of Damascus

*“When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed 22,000 men of the Arameans. 6 Then David put garrisons among the Arameans of Damascus; and the Arameans became servants to David, bringing tribute. **And the LORD helped David wherever he went.** 7 And David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 Also from Tibhath and from Cun, cities of Hadadezer, David took a very large amount of bronze, with which Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the bronze utensils.”*

Iain Duguid: vv. 7-11 -- Although still involving Hadadezer, focus shifts from the victory itself to the **spoils** and their use. Emphasis is on the **temple**, so reinforcing the Chronicler's association of victories and temple building.

Andrew Hill: Among the spoils David takes from Hadadezer and the cities of Zobah are large quantities of bronze. The Chronicler adds the fact that the booty is later used by Solomon in casting the bronze vessels for the temple (**18:7–8**). This not only provides further detail as to what became of the plunder, but also it is another way in which the

Chronicler connects David to the preparations made for building Yahweh's temple.

Rich Cathers: It seems that **gold shields** seem to be a picture of God's blessing and protection. Here we see David capturing and taking gold shields. Later, Solomon would make 300 shields of gold, the pinnacle of the kingdom.

II Chronicles 9:16 *And three hundred shields [made he of] beaten gold: three hundred [shekels] of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.*

Under Solomon's son Rehoboam, the nation began its decline, as pictured with the gold shields being taken away.

II Chronicles 12:9 *So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.*

3. (:9-11) Tribute from Tou King of Hamath via Hadoram

“Now when Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, 10 he sent Hadoram his son to King David, to greet him and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and had defeated him; for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou. And Hadoram brought all kinds of articles of gold and silver and bronze. 11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD with the silver and the gold which he had carried away from all the nations: from Edom, Moab, the sons of Ammon, the Philistines, and from Amalek.”

Frederick Mabie: In the north against the Arameans (Syrians) of Damascus (who pay tribute and allow Israelite garrisons in Damascus; cf. v.6) and in territory previously held by Hadadezer, king of Zobah, in the Beqa Valley (prompting the king of Hamath to seek peace; vv.9–10; cf. 2Sa 8:9–10).

August Konkel: The wars against the Ammonites and the Arameans granted David control of the territory east of the Jordan as far north as the kingdom of Tou at Hamath, on the Orontes River (**1 Chron 18:9–11**).

D. (:12-13a) Military Victories against the Edomites in the South

“Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah defeated 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 13 Then he put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became servants to David.”

August Konkel: The subjugation of all the north and east side of Jordan provided David with the opportunity to subdue Edom and establish garrisons there. This not only granted Israel a strategic seaport to the south; it also secured the southern border. By this description, David had created a small empire. He had enlarged the size of his territory in the conquest of Philistia, and had secured subordination and contribution of tribute from all the surrounding nations.

J. Parker: Spoils from Edom

If we have conquered an enemy we must hold the conquest as an illustration of the power of God rather than of the skill of our own might or hand. The idols which we bring away from the lands of darkness are to be set up in God's house, and are to mark points in the progress of Christian civilization. They are to be regarded as indications of a universal conquest which Christ has yet to win over the nations of the whole world. If we have brought back spoils--such as art, music, or any form of pleasure by which the popular mind can be touched and moved in an upward direction--we are to remember that in all these spoils we are to see the Divine power, and not proofs of our own military genius.

E. (:13b) Summary of the Lord's Assistance

“And the LORD helped David wherever he went.”

Iain Duguid: In all these battles, the key element is that *“the Lord gave victory [Hb. verb *yasha*] to David wherever he went.”* God's actions through David provide for postexilic hearers an example of his answer to the cry of **1 Chronicles 16:35**: *“Save (*yasha*) us . . . from . . . the nations.”* (Forms of *yasha* occur over 350 times in the MT, describing *“salvation, deliverance, victory, help.”* The LXX almost always has a form of *sōzō*, common in a variety of contexts in the NT with similar English translations, including *“healing.”*)

(:14) TRANSITION – DAVID'S RIGHTEOUS REIGN

*“So David reigned over all Israel;
and he administered justice and righteousness for all his people.”*

August Konkel: Israel itself was a confederation of disparate tribes, genealogically related, but they retained their separate identities. David was able to reduce the hostile states to agreements of taxation and thereby provided domestic security. This could be described in a brief eulogy as governing *with justice and equity* (**18:14** AT), much as could be said of King Solomon (**1 Kings 4:21**). If such a kingdom were to survive, it would require very **judicious administration**.

Andrew Hill: The NIV includes **18:14** in this section as an introduction to the catalog of King David's officers, recognizing the organizational structure as a demonstration of his *“just and right”* rule. Some scholars mark the paragraph break at **18:15**, arguing that the summary statement characterizing David's reign better serves as the conclusion to the report of David's victories on the battlefield. The theological assessment of David's reign may serve double duty, functioning as a summary statement to the report of David's wars and as an introduction to the roster of the king's primary advisers (so **Japhet**). The remark does stress the fact that David rules over *“all Israel,”* an important theme in the Chronicler's retelling of Israelite history. The statement also stresses that David's reign is one of justice and righteousness. According to **Japhet**, this confirms that David has satisfied the Israelites' expectations of the ideal king. Doing what is

“*just and right*” becomes the standard by which later kings are measured (cf. **Jer. 22:15**) and the model for future Davidic kingship (cf. **Jer. 23:5**).

Mark Boda: The final phrase is literally “*he enacted justice and righteousness,*” qualities related to the proper administration of **justice**, which was a key role for the king in ancient Israel as vice-regent of the Lord (**Pleins**, 2001; **Weinfeld** 1995). These qualities typify conformity to an ethical standard or norm set by God and his law (see **Ps 72:2-4, 12-14**). Those who benefit from such righteous justice are the vulnerable of society, often listed as the poor, the needy, the widow, and the fatherless. Such justice has both a positive and a negative quality, that is, it involves frustrating the schemes of the oppressor as well as protecting the rights of the oppressed (see **Ps 72:4**). Such characteristics of royal justice ultimately find their source in the character and action of the High King of Israel, the Lord (**Ps 146:7-10**).

Peter Wallace: Too often we think that treating everyone “fairly” means treating everyone the same. But the **equitable** administration of justice means doing what is right and fair in this case. No one has ever devised a code of justice that covers every possible situation. So the question for the judge is this: given the law, how do we apply the law rightly? How do we apply the law equitably to the case before us?

II. (:15-17) ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM BY KEY OFFICIALS

*“And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army,
and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder;
16 and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar were priests,
and Shavsha was secretary;
17 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites,
and the sons of David were chiefs at the king's side.”*

Frederick Mabie: This list summarizes leaders entrusted to oversee particular sectors of government within David’s royal administration, perhaps as an aspect of his “*just and right*” rule of “*all Israel*” (**v.14**; cf. **Japhet**, 351). In addition, such governmental needs would stem from the territorial expansions of David’s kingdom (**vv.1–13**) and reflect the maturing of the Israelite nation. In addition to the royal princes (David’s sons) who served in various leadership roles within the royal bureaucracy, the Chronicler notes two areas of administration (recorder and secretary [scribe]), two areas of military service (the regular army and the specialty wing of the Kerethites [Cretans] and Pelethites [Philistines]), and one area of religious oversight (priests).

August Konkel: One of the positions in the king’s administration was that of **recorder**. It is not possible to determine his precise function, but it may have included the oversight of public records, necessary in a royal court, as well as reporting to the king and transmitting royal decrees, as was true in Egyptian courts. Kings were reliant on scribes, who no doubt had to function in several languages for international correspondence. **Shavsha** is not a Hebrew name (**v. 16**); it is possibly Egyptian.

J.A. Thompson: This was a carefully planned administration, a sort of **cabinet**. Certain parallels with Egyptian models have been noted. The “recorder” was parallel to the royal herald in the Egyptian court whose duties included regulation of the palace ceremonies, admission to royal audiences, reporting to the king matters concerning the people and the country, reporting the orders of the king to the people as the official interpreter, accompanying the king on his travels as his personal secretary, arranging for the stages of his itinerary, and serving as chief of police for the pharaoh.

Andrew Hill: The list of royal cabinet members is borrowed directly from **2 Samuel 8:15–18** (cf. also **20:23–26**). This naming of the royal bureaucracy is not directly related to the accounts of David’s wars, but there are logical connections between territorial expansion and the need for administrative oversight of the Israelite empire. The source for the Israelite administrative model remains a topic of scholarly debate, with both Egyptian and Canaanite governments suggested as likely paradigms. **Selman** correctly reminds us, however, that native Hebrew developments in the political structure of the Israelite empire should not be overlooked.

Three distinct “departments” comprise David’s royal cabinet: a war office, a priestly office, and an administrative office.

Iain Duguid: The brief **overview of administrative personnel** prepares for both Joab’s key role in the census narrative that leads to the temple site (**1 Chronicles 21**) and the subsequent detailed temple and palace administrative arrangements (**chs. 23–27**).

Ron Daniel: Ben-aw-YAW, the son of Yeh-ho-yaw-DAW was over the Ker-ay-thites ("executioners") and the Pel-AY-thites ("couriers"). These were David's two teams of bodyguards, his secret service agents. It would seem that the Ker-AY-thites were the guys that would take down anyone who would attempt to attack David in his house, while the Pel-AY-things seem to have specialized in protection of David when traveling from one place another.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How can we determine whether we are truly trusting in the Lord or in the flesh?
- 2) Why such an emphasis on the spoils of war being dedicated to the building of the Temple?
- 3) How would you define an administration that rules in fairness and equity?
- 4) What type of cabinet did David appoint? How important is the division of labor?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler deviates from **2 Samuel 8:18** in identifying the sons of David as “chief officials” (*hari’ šonim*, **1 Chron. 18:16**) instead of “priests” (*kohanim*; cf. NIV “royal advisers”). **Japhet** argues that the sons of David are unacceptable to the Chronicler as “priests” because they are not of Levitical lineage. **Thompson** contends the text of **2 Samuel 8:18** is corrupt in that the term for priest (*kohen*) was mistaken with the term for “administrator” (*soken*). **Selman** seeks to mediate the extremes by suggesting David’s sons are non-Levitical priests, who function as the king’s personal priests or as “royal chaplains.”

There is little reason to doubt the text of **2 Samuel 8:18**. It is also clear that King David violates several of the prescriptions for Hebrew kingship outlined by Moses (e.g., the prohibition against taking many wives, cf. **Deut. 17:14–20**). Why is it surprising that David would appoint his sons as “priests” of some sort when he himself usurped the role of priest on occasion (cf. **1 Chron. 15:27; 16:2–3**)? **Selman** may be correct in his assumption that, as priests, David’s sons have duties that differ from the Levitical priesthood.

J.A. Thompson: The point in Chronicles is surely not that the Jews of the Chronicler's day should aspire to military greatness again; they were genuinely puny in comparison to Persia. Rather, the message here is that God continues to be **God of all nations**. Just as he could raise up a David, so also he could **control events** in the heart of the Persian Empire (as illustrated by the Book of Esther). Rather, for the Chronicler's original readers and for us, the message is that we should see that the real prestige of the people of God is in the person of David's greater son, **the Messiah**.

Martin Selman: In a New Testament context, where God’s victory and deliverance are demilitarized and denationalized, it is nonetheless expected to be part of the believer’s experience (cf. **2 Cor. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:17-18**). As with David, however, it is not an automatic right, but a free gift dependent on God’s promise and sovereign action (**2 Cor. 2:14**), to be received through faith (**1 John 5:14**) and prayer (**2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-20**).

Mark Boda: Following **chapter 17**, the Chronicler drew upon his source in Samuel to focus on David’s victories over the surrounding nations. At the same time, however, the Chronicler excised a large quantity of material in Samuel, the focus of which is mainly on the sin of David and the resulting consequences within his family (**2 Sam 11:2 – 12:25; 13:1 – 21:17**). This presentation accomplishes several things for the Chronicler.

- First, the inclusion and piecing together of the military narratives showcase God’s fulfilling his promises (see **17:8, 10; Knoppers 2004:740**).
- Second, the focus on David’s battles shows why David was not the one to build the Temple. He was truly a man of blood and war, while his son Solomon would be a man of peace and rest (**22:8-10**).

- Third, these military battels serve as a segue to the key chapter, **chapter 21**, which will identify the site on which Solomon will build the Temple, a narrative based on the need for a census for military purposes.
- Finally, the exclusion of the narratives related to the sin of David and to the threats to his kingdom produces a picture of stability and prosperity for the king who laid the foundation for Solomon's rule and the Temple's construction. The Chronicler and his audience are well aware of the dark side of the Davidic tradition, an aspect of the tradition that was very important to the exilic Deuteronomic historian with his concern for admission of guilt and repentance in heart and deed. The Chronicler, however, had a slightly different focus as he wrote to an audience with the Second Temple and its services in view.

Peter Wallace: The focus in **chapter 18** is on how the nations **bring tribute** to David. Some are forced to pay tribute (like Moab in **verse 2**, or Syria in **verse 6**); while others do so voluntarily (like Tou of Hamath in **verse 11**) – though it is worth pointing out that “voluntary” tribute is usually a way of saying, “please don't attack me! I'll be your friend!”

Psalm 2 is especially relevant here: “*Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you perish in the way.*” (v12) If you do not yield to the Son of God – then you will surely perish. . .

The narrative might lead you to believe that once David wins a victory, and imposes tribute on a nation, therefore that nation is now pacified, and will submit to David for the rest of his life. Of course, as soon as I say that, you will no doubt realize what is happening! The Chronicler (as Samuel-Kings had done earlier) doesn't tell you everything that happens. They are focusing on the **good things** that David did. David may have left a garrison in Damascus, but that doesn't mean that Damascus remained under David's rule.

TEXT: I Chronicles 19:1 – 20:3

TITLE: ROUT OF THE AMMONITES AND THEIR SYRIAN ALLIES

BIG IDEA:

DAVID RESPONDS TO THE AMMONITE PROVOCATION BY AGGRESSIVELY ROUTING THE AMMONITES AND THEIR SYRIAN ALLIES WITH JOAB LEADING THE TROOPS

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkel: When David came to power, he negotiated terms of agreement with Nahash that were successful in maintaining peace. As was the case with treaties, this probably included taxation revenues from the Ammonites. Nahash was succeeded by his son Hanun (**2 Sam 10:1; 1 Chron 19:2**). The death of a king could trigger **instability**, as treaties were made between individuals. Even though an heir was appointed before the king's death, the previous agreement could be challenged. David hoped to renew a covenantal agreement (*hesed*) with the ascension of the new king. The overture of David was spurned, not surprising under the circumstances. The messengers were disgraced, with half their beard shaved and half their garment cut off up to the hip. They were treated somewhat as prisoners of war. This **humiliation** outraged David. The Ammonites then hired mercenary soldiers of the Arameans to help them in hope of relief from Israelite control. This is a classic scenario of how wars begin.

Andrew Hill: The parallel account of the Ammonite war is found in **2 Samuel 10:1–19**. The biblical record yields no account of an event or events resulting in a pact of friendship between David and the Ammonite king Nahash (**1 Chron. 19:1–2**). **Selman** has suggested the relationship may be “best explained by their common hostility toward Saul” (cf. **1 Sam. 11:1–2; 14:47**). The use of the word “*kindness*” (Heb. *hesed*) has covenant connotations and may imply some sort of **informal treaty** between David and Nahash. Hanun's treatment of David's entourage is interpreted as an annulling of the treaty and an act of belligerence threatening war.

J.A. Thompson: This section contains the account of David's wars against potential invaders of his territory. It further illustrates the fact that David was a man of war and thus disqualified from building the temple. Nevertheless, just as he was successful in campaigns against the Philistines, Moab, Aram, and Edom, so also in his war against Ammon he was granted victory and success, enjoying Yahweh's further blessing on his enterprises. The Chronicler devoted considerable space to the Ammonite campaigns. The account is based on **2 Sam 10:1–11:1; 12:26, 30–31** although it omits the disgraceful affair of David's seduction of Bathsheba. We are not able to place the Ammonite campaign into a chronological perspective although it would seem that David had taken care of Moab and Edom before this so as to obviate any attacks on his southern flank. Perhaps also a secure southern flank would give him confidence to

undertake his Aramean campaigns. Perhaps Ammon was also well in control before he embarked on his Aramean adventure.

Iain Duguid: David's leadership is described positively as he desires good relationship with a neighboring nation (19:2) and shows consideration of his shamed messengers (v. 5). Unlike the offensive battles of **chapter 18**, his military action is presented as initially a limited response to the Ammonites' provocation (19:8), and his later leadership of "*all Israel*" in battle is an answer to the threat imposed by a Syrian coalition army (vv. 16–17). The narrative explains how "*peace*" resulted, with the Syrian states becoming David's vassals (v. 19).

Mark Boda: **Chapter 19** begins with the second of three appearances of the phrase *wayehi 'akhareken (some time after this)*, which introduces three of the four sections in **chapters 18-20 (18:1; 19:1; 20:4; so Japhet 1993:344)**. **Chapters 18 and 19** contain two key contrasts. First, **chapter 18** presents David on the offensive, moving out to exert his power, while **chapter 19** presents David on the defensive, drawn into war by the arrogant Ammonite and fearful Arameans. Second, while **chapter 18** reads more like annals of the exploits of David with shorter descriptions of various battles unrelated to one another, **chapter 19** contains a narrative with its own integrity. The original tension is produced by the folly of King Hanun's rebuff of David's sympathy at the death of Hanun's father, the Ammonite king Nahash. This led to a battle between Israel and Ammon that also involved the Arameans.

I. (19:1-5) PROVOCATION -- THE HUMILIATION OF DAVID'S PEACEFUL DELEGATION

Frederick Mabie: While David's military operations in the Transjordanian territories of Edom and Moab may have created concern for the leadership of Ammon with respect to David's motives, David's gesture toward the family of Nahash was a sincere gesture of sympathy and kindness. Nevertheless, his act was misinterpreted by the leadership of Ammon as a cover for espionage. The treatment of the Israelite delegation by the Ammonites was intended to cast a maximum shame on David's men (directed at their manhood) and, by extension, on David and Israel.

A. (:1-2) David's Peaceful Delegation

1. (:1) Leadership Transition in the Dynasty of Nahash

"Now it came about after this, that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon died, and his son became king in his place."

John Schultz: The Ammonites were somewhat related to the Israelites. They were the descendants of Lot through an incestuous relationship of one of Lot's daughters. King Nahash had been kind to David at the time when David was fleeing from Saul. Their friendship may have been based on the fact that Saul was their common enemy.

2. (:2) Leadership Diplomacy on the Part of David

*“Then David said, ‘I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me.’
So David sent messengers to console him concerning his father.
And David's servants came into the land of the sons of Ammon to Hanun, to console him.”*

B. (:3-5) Hanun’s Foolish Act of Humiliation

1. (:3) Poor Counsel

*“But the princes of the sons of Ammon said to Hanun,
‘Do you think that David is honoring your father, in that he has sent comforters to you?
Have not his servants come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?’”*

J.A. Thompson: Hanun was suspicious, no doubt because he had witnessed that acts of kindness sometimes were a cover for treachery. His nobles interpreted the visit as a not-too-subtle attempt to explore and to spy out the country with a view to attacking Ammonite territory.

2. (:4) Perilous Contempt

*“So Hanun took David's servants and shaved them,
and cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips,
and sent them away.”*

Pulpit Commentary: To shave them was an affront to their customs, dignity, and religion; to shave them half added mockery; and to cut off half their garments completed the tale of ignominious and contemptuous insult (... **Isaiah 20:4**). The beard was held almost in reverence by Easterns.

Mark Boda: As **Isaiah 7:20** shows, this shaving probably included all forms of hair on the men’s bodies from head to toe; it was a form of official humiliation. By cutting their garments in half, they revealed their private areas, another form of shame (see **Isa 47:2-3**).

3. (:5) Patient Consolation

*“Then certain persons went and told David about the men. And he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said,
‘Stay at Jericho until your beards grow, and then return.’”*

II. (19:6-15) RESPONSE: THE ROUT OF THE AMMONITES AND ARAMEANS

Frederick Mabie: A good gesture gone awry (**vv.1–5**) prompts the forming of an anti-Israel coalition by the Ammonites, who hire Arameans from Beth Rehob and Zobah,

mercenaries from Maacah and Tob, as well as chariots and horsemen from Aram Naharaim, Aram Maacah, and Zobah to battle against David (vv.1–15; cf. 2Sa 10:1–14). Joab’s words to his military leaders are reminiscent of the words spoken to Joshua as the Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land (cf. Dt 31:7–8; Jos 1:5–9). To be strong, biblically speaking, is to be immovably committed to obedience and trust in God.

Moreover, Joab reminds his warriors that their efforts ultimately protect their kin and people back home (“our people”) as well as God’s ultimate ownership of the land and cities (cf. Lev 25:23), especially Jerusalem (cf. Ps 48; cf. Selman, 195). Finally, note that Joab’s exhortation is rooted in the notion of God’s sovereign rule and ultimate goodness (“The LORD will do what is good in his sight”). While the Ammonites and Arameans retreat, two more series of battles (vv.16–19 and 1Ch 20:1–3) will be needed before the Ammonites are completely subdued.

A. (:6-7) Ammonites Solicit Mercenaries from Mesopotamia to Join Alliance

“When the sons of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the sons of Ammon sent 1,000 talents of silver to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, from Aram-maacah, and from Zobah. 7 So they hired for themselves 32,000 chariots, and the king of Maacah and his people, who came and camped before Medeba. And the sons of Ammon gathered together from their cities and came to battle.”

Martin Selman: The Ammonites realized that they had literally ‘made themselves stink’ (v. 6), a word used for decaying animal or vegetable matter (e.g. Exod. 7:18, 8:10; 16:20; Isa. 50:2) and applied metaphorically where relationships had totally collapsed (e.g. Gen 34:30; 1 Sam. 27:12; 2 Sam. 16:21). They therefore formed a temporary coalition with various Aramean states, most, if not all, subject to Hadadezer of Zobah (cf. 18:3-6), and hired Aramean troops

August Konkell: The stakes of this battle were very high. The forces involved included all the areas to the east and north of Israel, making it potentially vulnerable to attacks on all sides, or to their being subject to Aramean and Ammonite powers. In summary form the Chronicler has identified the forces involved so he can focus on the strategic victory that God granted David in giving him rest from his enemies all round (1 Chron 19:9). This battle was on behalf of the cities of our God (v. 13). All the territories, including the Arnon and Jabbok Rivers to the south and north respectively, were regarded as Israelite.

Andrew Hill: The Ammonite preparations for war consist largely of hiring Aramean mercenaries (19:6–7). The soldiers are recruited from Aram Naharaim (a region north of the Euphrates River bounded by the Habur River), Aram Maacah (a small kingdom north and east of Lake Huleh), and Zobah. The thousand talents of silver (19:6) translates into more than thirty-seven tons of the precious metal. This incredible sum speaks to the desperation of the Ammonites (although this may be another case where the number “1000” must be examined carefully). The idiom “to become a stench in

[someone's] nostrils" (19:6) means to "make oneself repulsive" or "to incur the wrath" of someone (so NJPSV).

B. (:8-9) Armies Engage in Battle

"When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men. 9 And the sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, and the kings who had come were by themselves in the field."

C. (:10-13) Arrangement of Troops for Tactical Advantage by Joab

1. (:10-12) Cooperation and Mutual Support of Divided Forces

a. (:10-11) Troop Deployment

1) (:10) Led by Joab and Arrayed against the Arameans

"Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him in front and in the rear, he selected from all the choice men of Israel and they arrayed themselves against the Arameans."

Iain Duguid: Joab responded to this unexpected maneuver by dividing his own men, giving priority to attacking the Syrians in open country. Did he reason that, being mercenaries, they would be less committed, or was it his "best men" who could face the larger force with their chariots? Whatever his reasoning, he ensured that each group would be ready to "help" the other (*yasha'*).

2) (:11) Led by Abshai and Arrayed against the Ammonites

"But the remainder of the people he placed in the hand of Abshai his brother; and they arrayed themselves against the sons of Ammon."

Andrew Hill: David's response is swift and thorough: the mobilization of the entire Israelite army against the Ammonites under the command of Joab (19:8). The Arameans and the Ammonites are deployed in such a way that Joab is compelled to wage the war on two fronts: the Arameans in the open field (near Medeba in Moab south of Rabbah, cf. 19:7) and the Ammonites stationed just outside the city gates (presumably the capital of Rabbah, cf. 20:1).

b. (:12) Teamwork Dependence

"And he said, 'If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you.'"

Ron Daniel: This was an inspired plan. Each army was outnumbered, and would be forced to rely upon God for the victory. But each was also to keep an eye on his brother, to offer support if it was needed. How similar is this to our lives as Christians? We fight the good fight, and must rely upon God to win. However, there are times when we are being defeated, and need a brother to come and offer his support. There are other times

when we see a brother beginning to stumble and be defeated. It is our obligation to step in and raise him up again, so that the battle will be won.

2. (:13) Charge to the Troops

“Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight.”

Andrew Hill: Joab concludes his precombat exhortation with a prayer, committing the outcome of the battle to the sovereignty and goodness of God (**19:13b**). Expressions of such trust in the providence of Yahweh are an important feature of the Chronicler’s theology of hope for postexilic Judah (cf. **2 Chron. 19:11; 20:15; 32:7–8**).

J.A. Thompson: Joab prepared to fight a battle on two fronts. He decided to fight on the front against the Arameans, and he needed someone he could trust to command the troops at the other front, against Ammon. His brother Abishai was the man. He realized that a smaller force could fight a two-front battle to its own advantage if both commanders kept their heads and supplied reinforcements to the other front as needed. He also committed the outcome to God. The enemy was outdone by superior leadership in the Israelite army and the purpose of God.

Martin Selman: Joab was not known as a “religious person.” His immoral behavior at some instances indicates this. His pious remarks may have been more intended to install trust in God among his troops than an expression of his own faith. Joab must have realized that people who trusted in a “superior power” are better fighters than those who trust in their own strength. A more modern example is General Patton’s prayer at the invasion of Nazi Germany during WWII. The opening words of his prayer in front of his troops, “Lord, this is Patton speaking ...” have become famous.

D. (:14-15) Attacking Rout

1. (:14-15a) Enemies Flee

a. (:14) Arameans Flee

“So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to the battle against the Arameans, and they fled before him.”

b. (:15a) Ammonites Flee

“When the sons of Ammon saw that the Arameans fled, they also fled before Abshai his brother, and entered the city.”

2. (:15b) Entrance to Jerusalem by Joab

“Then Joab came to Jerusalem.”

III. (19:16-19) DEFEAT OF THE ARAMEAN COALITION

Frederick Mabie: After an initial setback at Medeba (**vv.6–15**), the Arameans regather

their forces and send for help from other Arameans “*beyond the River*” in the territory of Hadadezer but lose again at Helam (in the Land of Tob) against the forces of “*all Israel*” rallied by David. Following this defeat the people of Hadadezer seek peace with David and refuse to help Ammon any longer, further solidifying David’s position in northern Aram and Transjordan (v.19; cf. **2Sa 10:15–16**). Such respect and submission from other nations is celebrated in Hebrew poetry such as **Psalm 18** (= **2Sa 22**, esp. vv.44–50//Ps 18:43–49 [18:44–50]). While the Arameans flee and become subject to David (v.19), one final battle is needed against the Ammonites (see **20:1–3**).

Andrew Hill: Joab’s defeat of the coalition of Ammonite and Aramean armies is not decisive. Interestingly, **Japhet** notes that what was originally a mercenary enterprise for the Arameans has now become “the subject of Aramaean self-interest.” The Aramean troops sent from beyond the Euphrates River (**19:16**) are summoned to wage war with Israel in an attempt to check David’s growing military strength. The reinforcements are sent by King Hadadezer of Zobah, both to restore national pride and to protect territorial boundaries from Israelite encroachment (this event represents a previous encounter between David and Hadadezer prior to Hadadezer’s eventual capitulation, cf. **18:3–6**).

The battle is fought at Helam, perhaps the site of Alma some thirty-five miles east of the Sea of Galilee (cf. **2 Sam. 10:16–17**). The result of the battle is similar to the previous engagement led by Joab (**1 Chron. 19:14–15**). David is victorious as the Arameans again are routed and flee the battlefield (**19:17–18**). Shophach (or Shobach, **2 Sam. 10:16**), Hadadezer’s general, is killed in battle (**1 Chron. 19:18**).

A. (:16) Arameans Regroup and Recruit More Troops

“When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers, and brought out the Arameans who were beyond the River, with Shophach the commander of the army of Hadadezer leading them.”

B. (:17-18) Arameans Routed

“When it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan, and came upon them and drew up in formation against them. And when David drew up in battle array against the Arameans, they fought against him. 18 And the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed of the Arameans 7,000 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers, and put to death Shophach the commander of the army.”

C. (:19) Arameans Refrain from Future Aggression

“So when the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and served him. Thus the Arameans were not willing to help the sons of Ammon anymore.”

IV. (20:1-3) DEFEAT OF THE AMMONITES AT RABBAH

A. (:1) Successful Campaign Led by Joab

1. Joab Leads the Troops

“Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that Joab led out the army and ravaged the land of the sons of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah.”

2. David Stays behind in Jerusalem

“But David stayed at Jerusalem.”

Ron Daniel: Winter was not an ideal time for warfare. Rain-soaked land made chariots worthless and cold temperatures could be deadly to soldiers. Thus, winters were spent strategizing and preparing for the wars in the springtime.

But one spring, King David decided not to go out to battle with his men as he'd done every year prior. He decided to stay at home. Yo-AWB could lead the army to victory at Rab-BAW.

Why did David stay that spring? Maybe he thought that at the age of 50, he deserved a break. Maybe he was just tired, or thought it was time to start taking it easy. Whatever his motivation, it was a terrible decision. You see, it was that spring at home that he fell into adultery, lies, and ultimately murder because of his desire for a neighbor lady named Bathsheba (**2Sam. 11**).

3. Joab Conquests Rabbah

“And Joab struck Rabbah and overthrew it.”

Ron Daniel: Loyalty of Joab

Although David is beginning to slip as a righteous leader, Yo-AWB doesn't take the opportunity to rebel against him. He remains committed to him, even to the point of bringing David up for the final victory. We read in **2Samuel 12** that once the city was nearly defeated, Yo-AWB was actually concerned that if he led the final capture of it, then he would be taking the glory away from David (**2Sam. 12:28**).

So he sent for David to come and at least make a ceremonial showing that this was his victory.

This level of loyalty and submission is practically unheard of today. Oh, it's not difficult to find a man who claims loyalty. But as soon as you slip up, look out, because odds are he's going to use your back as a stepladder to move himself up. As soon as he sees that he can take the city without you, he will.

God describes men like this in Hosea, saying,

Hos. 6:4 *...your loyalty is like a morning cloud and like the dew which goes away early.*

B. (:2a) Substantial Crown Placed on David's Head

“And David took the crown of their king from his head, and he found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there was a precious stone in it;

and it was placed on David's head."

Rich Cathers: Approximately **75 pounds of gold**. One heavy crown!

August Konkel: The Hebrew (*mlkm*) should be read as the name of their god Milkom, rather than their king (cf. **1 Kings 11:5, 7, 33**). As the crown of the deity, its weight is reasonable. A talent was about the weight that a man could carry, around seventy pounds. The crown was taken from the head of the idol, but the narrator relates it as if it were from the head of the god himself. The biblical writers delight in satire on the religions of idols.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: Joab could have added points to his own honor by capturing the city, but instead, he invited David to lead the final assault in order to receive the credit. Joab may have felt that David needed a boost of morale after the affair with Bathsheba. But this we are not told.

C. (:2b-3a) Successful Campaign Capped by Capturing the Spoil and Cutting the Captives

1. (:2b) Capturing the Spoil

"And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount."

2. (:3a) Cutting the Captives

"And he brought out the people who were in it, and cut them with saws and with sharp instruments and with axes."

Hugh Williamson: "*set them to labour and axes*" -- both emendations (cf. **2 Sam. 12:31**) are undoubtedly correct and are widely accepted.

J.A. Thompson: The citizens of Rabbah were brought out and consigned to forced labor with saws, iron picks, and axes (cf. **2 Sam 12:31**). One more kingdom was thus added to David's jurisdiction, and his prestige was further enhanced.

Rich Cathers: But others (me included) tend to think it means what it says in the King James and NASB versions, that David **slaughtered** these prisoners.

(:3b) Epilogue – Summary of Successful Ammonite Campaign

*"And thus David did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon.
Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem."*

Andrew Hill: The report of the Israelite victory over the Ammonites ends abruptly, with David and his army returning to Jerusalem (**20:3c**). Clearly David takes his full revenge against King Hanun and the Ammonites for the humiliating treatment of his ambassadors. Nothing is said of the fate of the Ammonite king or the political status of Ammon after the war. **Japhet** has noted, however, that among Solomon's queens is Naamah (an Ammonite and Rehoboam's mother, **1 Kings 14:21, 31**)—"a matter which no doubt should be interpreted politically."

Iain Duguid: The example of **God's grace**, continuing to give victory with much spoil to David after his horrific sins, would have spoken powerfully to postexilic hearers who were only too conscious of the nation's sin that had led to the destruction of Jerusalem and to exile.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why did Hanun take such a foolish risk in humiliating David's delegation when he must have known that there would be swift retaliation?
- 2) How does trusting God for victory in battle mesh with taking responsibility to plan and execute a successful military strategy?
- 3) Was David wrong to stay home from the war season – even though he had confidence in his loyal commander Joab?
- 4) What was the significance of the crown being placed on David's head?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Martin Selman: David's rule over Ammon seems to be part of a complex four-stage system of administration of the empire outside the land of Israel.

- **Zobah** was in a straightforward state of vassalship (**19:10**), but control was tightened increasingly by imposing tribute on Moab (**18:2**, cf. v. **6**) and garrisons or governors in Damascus and Edom (**18:6, 13**).
- **Ammon** was most restricted of all, apparently demoted to provincial status. The Philistines' role is unclear.
- Although **Gath** suffered a heavier defeat than all the other Philistine cities, it was allowed to keep its native ruler (**I Kgs 2:39-40**).
- The **Philistines** as a whole remained subject to Solomon (**2 Chr. 9:26**) and did not trouble Israel again for well over a hundred years (**2 Chr. 21:16**).

J. Barton Payne: One of David's last (bout 995 B.C.) and most desperate international struggles arose in connection with two campaigns against the Ammonites, a people kindred to Israel and inhabiting an area to their immediate east in Trans-Jordan. The chronicler details this specific instance of God's care for his own (**19:13**), including:

- (1) The causes of the conflict (**19:1-5**);
- (2) Joab's victorious campaign against the double army of the Ammonites and their mercenary Syrian allies (**vv. 6-15**);

- (3) David's crushing of an attempted Syrian counterattack (**vv. 16-19**); and
- (4) Joab's second campaign, which resulted in the destruction of the Ammonite state.

These records, except for their omission of David's crime with Bath-sheba, are parallel to **II Sam 10-12**.

Eugene Merrill: The Ammonites guarded the gate of their capital city (Rabbah; cf. **20:1**) and the Arameans took to the surrounding fields (the open country). This meant that Joab, David's commander, would have to defeat the Arameans on the outer perimeter before he could even get close to the Ammonites themselves. In order to effect this, Joab divided his troops into two units, one of which he led against the Arameans and the other he entrusted to his brother Abishai to engage the Ammonites (**19:10-11**). After agreeing to come to each other's aid if need be (**v. 12**), Joab and Abishai undertook the campaign. Confident in the Lord (**v. 13**), they achieved success. The Arameans were routed, and the Ammonites retreated to the security of the fortifications of their city, Rabbah (**vv. 14-16**).

Meantime the Arameans called for reinforcements from across the Euphrates (the River) and with Shophach (spelled Shobach in **2 Sam. 10:15**) as their leader engaged David's troops at Helam (**2 Sam. 10:16-17**) in the Transjordan. Again David was victorious, killing 7,000 . . . charioteers, 40,000 infantrymen, and Shopach himself (**1 Chron. 19:16-18**). This squelched any further desire of the Arameans to confront David; in fact the Arameans made themselves vassals to Israel (**v. 19**).

John MacArthur: (**20:1-3**) – The chronicler was not inspired by God to mention David's sin with Bathsheba and subsequent sins recorded in **2Sa 11:2 – 12:23**. The adultery and murder occurred at this time, while David stayed in Jerusalem instead of going to battle. The story was likely omitted because the book was written to focus on God's permanent interest in his people, Israel, and the perpetuity of David's kingdom.

TEXT: I Chronicles 20:4-8

TITLE: *SLAYING OF 3 RENOWNED PHILISTINE GIANTS*

BIG IDEA:

THE LORD SOLIDIFIES DAVID'S KINGDOM WITH 3 IMPRESSIVE VICTORIES OVER PHILISTINE GIANTS

INTRODUCTION:

Hugh Williamson: To conclude his survey of David's wars, the Chronicler returns rather appropriately to further victories over the Philistines, drawn from **2 Sam 21:18-22**.

Frederick Mabie: These brief summaries of battles with the Philistines underscore David's continued dominance over even the formidable champions of the Philistine city-states. Each of these champions is directly or indirectly associated with the Rephaites (descendants of Rapha), an ethnic group noted for their massive physical size. Recall that Goliath was over nine feet tall, while the bed of King Og (who was "*left of the remnant of the Rephaites*" [**Dt 3:11**]) was thirteen feet long and six feet wide. While God is not specifically mentioned in these short vignettes, nor is David the one defeating these champions, the victory of David's men nonetheless reflects the Chronicler's earlier note that "*the LORD gave David victory everywhere he went*" (**1Ch 18:6**). Thus to oppose David or Israel was to oppose God (cf. **Dt 20:4**; see **McConville**, 65).

August Konkel: All three of the episodes against the Philistines engage descendants of Rapha in Gath (**1 Chron 20:4, 8**). This has traditionally been interpreted to be descendants of legendary giants of the past (**Gen 14:5**; **Deut 2:10–11, 20–21**; etc.). Their habitat was Bashan, the most northern part of the area east of Jordan (**Deut 3:13**). Descendants of the Rephaites (**1 Chron 20:4**) and descendants of Rapha (v. 8), literally those descended (*nulledu*) from Rapha, is a metaphorical use of the verb *yld* (*to bear a child*). In this case it refers to a group bound by another loyalty, such as a servant giving military service (cf. **Gen 14:14**; *yalid*, **Schreiner** and **Botterweck**: 81). Inclusion in the group was by adoption, initiation, or consecration. At Ugarit the term "*Rapha*" is the name of a deity who functions as a patron of elite warriors. It may be that these warriors were devoted to the god Rapha, a divine epithet meaning "one who is in a healthy condition" (**L'Heureux**: 84–85). These may have been warriors who constituted a choice group of soldiers [**Ugarit**, p. 467].

Martin Selman: The account of David's wars is completed by three cameos taken from the Philistine wars. All three incidents are probably associated with David's assault on Gath (**18:1**), since two of his three opponents came from that city (vv. **5, 6, 8**). The Philistine warriors are also all called '*Rephaites*' (RSV) or descendants of Rapha ('*giants*,' NRSV), who were one of the pre-Israelite groups in Canaan (e.g. **Gen. 15:20**)

and famous for their size (cf. v. 6). These people were known elsewhere as the ‘Avvites’ (or *Avvim*), whom the first Philistines had driven out (**Deut. 2:23**, where *Caphtorites*, i.e. Cretans, certainly = Philistines), and as the ‘Anakites’ (or *Anakim*), who had also presumably been overrun by the Philistines since Joshua removed them from all but three Philistine towns, including Gath (**Josh. 11:22**).

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler returns to the Philistine “problem” to conclude his summary of David’s wars. The Philistines were the nemesis of the Israelites. The ongoing conflict stemmed primarily from the fact that the Israelites needed a seaport, as the kingdoms of Saul and David were landlocked. The narrative relates border skirmishes settled by duels between champion warriors more than full-scale war. According to **Selman**, “the duel was a recognized form of combat in Canaan and in the Philistines’ original homeland in the Aegean.”

I. (:4) SIBBECAI SLAYS SIPPAI AT GEZER

“Now it came about after this, that war broke out at Gezer with the Philistines; then Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Sippai, one of the descendants of the giants, and they were subdued.”

August Konkell: The first battle was at Gezer, located at the entrance to the Aijalon Valley in the Shephelah, to the west of Gibeon [**Shephelah**, p. 467]. This may have served as the Philistine boundary. Sibbekai the Hushathite was one of the valiant warriors who came to be in charge of one of the military divisions (**1 Chron 11:29; 27:11**). Elhanan is also one of David’s valiant warriors (**11:26**), who killed the brother of Goliath (**1 Chron 20:5**).

David Guzik: This description of victory over Philistine giants shows that Israel could slay giants without David. **Sibbechai... Elhanan... Jonathan:** These men accomplished heroic deeds when David was finished fighting giants. God will continue to raise up leaders when the leaders of the previous generation pass from the scene.

David’s legacy lay not only in what he accomplished but in what he left behind – a people prepared for victory. David’s triumphs were meaningful not only for himself but for others who learned victory through his teaching and example. . .

The defeat of these four giants is rightly credited to **the hand of David and the hand of his servants**. David had a role in this through his example, guidance, and influence.

II. (:5) ELHANAN SLAYS LAHMI THE BROTHER OF GOLIATH

“And there was war with the Philistines again, and Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.”

Frederick Mabie: The brother of Goliath is identified in the parallel passage in Samuel as Goliath himself, suggesting that the term “*Goliath*” may be a title for Philistine national champions.

Andrew Hill: Selman speculates that the contest between Elhanan and Lahmi may have been a “round two” so to speak, after David killed Goliath.

David Selman: Finally, Goliath’s weapon, a spear with a shaft like a weaver’s rod, also has known parallels and is not the unhistorical creation which some have alleged. It was actually a javelin with a loop and cord round the shaft for greater distance and stability, and was known in the Aegean area from the twelfth century BC. Even the Old Testament reports one in the possession of another non-Israelite (**1 Chr. 11:23**).

III. (:6-8) JONATHAN SLAYS GIANT WITH 24 FINGERS AND TOES

A. (:6) Distinctive Features = Giant with 24 Fingers and Toes

“And again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature who had twenty-four fingers and toes, six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot; and he also was descended from the giants.”

B. (:7) Destroyed When He Taunted Israel

*“And when he taunted Israel,
Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him.”*

C. (:8) Descended from Giants at Gath

*“These were descended from the giants in Gath,
and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.”*

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What were the importance of these one-on-one duels between national “champions” in ancient wars?
- 2) How were the Philistines a constant source of irritation and conflict for the nation of Israel?
- 3) How are Christians called to fight for victory in the motif of spiritual warfare?
- 4) What was David’s role in these victories – given that he did not personally slay these giants?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

August Konkell: The ordering of the kingdom enables David to prepare for building the temple and organizing all its personnel. He secures the endorsement of all Israel for his projects. The wars of David create an image of David's reign as the normative experience of Israel. The exodus and the wilderness wanderings provide instruction for the life of the covenant people, but the time of David and Solomon are the classical age in which prosperity and unity are possible. This is the time when the monarchy, the city, and the temple define the Israelite kingdom. It is the standard by which other times are measured. . .

Three elements were central to the kingdom: the Davidic kingship, the establishment of the temple personnel, and the presence of the temple itself. The establishment of the kingdom focuses on each of these three elements to the neglect of all other matters. David's failures and their consequences (**2 Sam 12:11–12**), the question of the succession of David (**1 Kings 1:18–21**), and the fatal compromise of Solomon in doing what was wrong (**1 Kings 11:5–6**)—these have no part in the Chronicler's account. The Chronicler presents David and Solomon as divinely anointed kings through whom God established the three central elements of the kingdom. David received the kingdom and the eternal promise; David made all the preparations for the temple and installed Solomon as his successor; Solomon completed all the work that David had begun.

Andrew Hill: One can only muse over the factors influencing the Chronicler's selective appeal to the summary accounts of the wars of King David. No doubt, the stories of the success of David and his army in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds are a source of inspiration for postexilic Judah. They are also a stirring reminder of the power of God to deliver his faithful servants from dark circumstances. The Chronicler's audience needs to hear that!

J.A. Thompson: The closing words of vv. 3, 8 and the statement in v. 4 that the Philistines were subjugated completes the account of how God blessed David's work and provide a fitting climax to the Chronicler's story of all the work he had done prior to the building of the temple. One further insight into the methods of the Chronicler comes in the omission of the incident where Ishbibenob, another giant, sought to kill David (**2 Sam 21:16–17**). According to **2 Sam 21:17**, David's men adjured him not to go out to battle again lest the lamp of Israel be quenched. The Chronicler bypassed several of David's personal faults and family history. Nothing was allowed to interrupt God's plan to have a home in Jerusalem where he could dwell among his people. God's plans were brought to fruition despite the frailties of those through whom he carried out his work.

Iain Duguid: The concluding “*They fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants*” serves well as a summary not only of **1 Chronicles 20:4–8** but of the overview of victories in **18:1–20:3**. It is a reminder of the interplay between leaders and people. David has not been named in **20:4–7**, but the three heroes were “*servants*,”

acting as representatives on behalf of their king and his army for the good of the whole; previously Joab led when David was absent (20:1). David as king may provide strategic leadership, but he is powerless without his men, and as king his rule is for the sake of “*all his people*” (18:14). Each of the battles recounted in **chapters 18–20** illustrates in varying ways the dynamic relationship between king, key individuals, and the people as a whole—there is **mutual dependency**. Further, the victories result from God’s keeping his word that “*I will subdue all your enemies*” (17:10; cf. 18:1; 20:4). David’s willing submission as the Lord’s “*servant*” (17:17–27 [10x]) has resulted not only in individual Israelites as “*his servants*” (19:2; 20:8) but also in other peoples’ changing from threatening enemies to his “*servants*” (18:2, 6, 13; 19:19). . .

The account of David’s victories tells how they came about through the initiative and bravery of various individuals, a foreshadowing of the way Christ’s followers participate in the battles and the victories. While Christ alone brings forgiveness through his death and resurrection, he calls all to follow him and take part in the life of the kingdom. In his earthly ministry, Jesus sent out the twelve disciples to “proclaim as you go, saying, ‘*The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*’ *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons*” (Matt. 10:7–8), and later the seventy-two “*returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!’*” (Luke 10:17). His final words are a royal commission to call others to become his disciples, empowered and guided by his presence and the indwelling Spirit (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:8).

TEXT: I Chronicles 21:1 – 22:1

TITLE: PREPARATION FOR BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE – ITS LOCATION

BIG IDEA:

THE LOCATION OF GOD’S PRESENCE MEDIATES FORGIVENESS AND MERCY DESPITE OUR SIN AND GOD’S MITIGATING JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: Through the reality of David’s sinfulness the Chronicler presents the backdrop to the place that God will choose to cause his name to dwell—a place of atonement, prayer, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Andrew Hill: In retrospect, the purchase of the threshing floor becomes the foundational event for a series of actions by David to make ready for the building of Yahweh’s temple. In the Chronicler’s mind, what better place for God’s permanent sanctuary than the site identified as the prime location for repentant prayer and divine absolution? As **Thompson** has aptly noted, God has empowered Israel to defeat their human enemies, and now he provides a **place of atonement** where they can (at least) hold at bay their spiritual enemy—Satan. . .

The story of David’s census-taking consists of three main episodes, to which the Chronicler has appended a conclusion:

- (1) David orders Joab to count the Israelites (**21:1–7**);
- (2) God is displeased with David’s census and sends his judgment against Israel (**21:8–17**);
- (3) God stays his wrath against Israel by means of David’s sacrificial offering at the threshing floor of Araunah and his securing of that site for the future temple of Yahweh (**21:18–27**).

Knoppers: The David of the census story is a person of confession and supplication par excellence, a human sinner who repents, seeks forgiveness, intercedes on behalf of his people, and ultimately secures the site of the future Temple.

Iain Duguid: In the story of his reign as told by the Chronicler, David’s census and what follows provide the transition from David’s victories to preparation for the temple. This involves spiritual forces, human sin, God’s judgment, David’s wholehearted repentant response and intercession, and God’s mercy and his word, all leading to “*the house of the Lord God*” and the “*altar of burnt offering for Israel.*” This narrative points the Chronicler’s hearers to the ongoing reality of God’s provision for forgiveness and new beginning: the location of the temple is God’s chosen place for atoning sacrifice. . .

It is easy to summarize the narrative as told, but **questions** arise as to what is going on and what message is being communicated.

- How is the opening mention of “*Satan*” to be understood?
- What is David’s **motivation**, and on what basis does Joab oppose?
- What is David’s **sin**? And if it is David’s sin, why did so many Israelites suffer?
- What does the whole incident communicate regarding the Lord’s character and purposes?
- How are hearers able to see the connection between David’s era and their own contexts?

These questions are examined as the commentary moves through the passage.

Martin Selman: David’s great sin (v. 8) comes as a considerable shock after the high points of covenant promise (**chapter 17**) and military victory (**chapters 18-20**). The central theme, however, is actually **God’s forgiving grace** (vv. 15-27) rather than David’s sin or the resultant judgment (vv. 9-14), and it is this to which the **temple** becomes a permanent witness (**21:28 – 22:1**).

I. (:1-7) SINFUL CENSUS ORDERED BY DAVID AND CONDUCTED BY JOAB

A. (:1) Role of Satan = Inciting David’s Census

“Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.”

Andrew Hill: The fact that the Chronicler attributes the inciting of David’s census to Satan and not to the Lord (as in **2 Sam. 24:1**) reveals subtle developments in Old Testament theology from the time of David to that of the Chronicler. As a result of God’s **progressive revelation** during those intervening centuries, the Hebrews came to understand the **agency of Satan** in relationship to God and the problem of evil. That is, as sovereign Lord, it is God’s prerogative to use Satan as his agent of testing and/or judgment to accomplish his redemptive purposes in the created order. This fact, however, does not absolve David of his personal guilt in the matter.

Iain Duguid: In favor of understanding this as a **heavenly adversary** is how these actions are similar to those in **Zechariah 3:1**, where the heavenly adversary “*stood against*,” and **Job 2:3**, where he “*incited*.” More significant may be the several literary parallels with **Numbers 22:22–35**, where God’s “*anger*” against Balaam resulted in “*the angel of the Lord*” appearing as Balaam’s “*adversary*” (*satan*, without the definite article). This passage may be behind the Chronicler’s substitution of *satan* for Samuel’s “*the Lord*.” In the rest of **1 Chronicles 21** an increased prominence is given to “*the angel of the Lord*” (vv. 12, 15–20, 27, 30; cf. **2 Sam. 24:16–17**). This “*angel*” is clearly separate from God, who “*sends*” him with the drawn sword; as a “*messenger*” (the meaning of *mal’ak* and the equivalent Gk. *angelos*) he also communicates God’s word to the seer, Gad. As in **Numbers 22** and elsewhere, the weight of evidence supports the long tradition that here *satan* without the article is used as a name of a heavenly being, Satan, who acts against the interest of humans.

B. (:2) Response of David = Issuing Directive to Joab

“So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people,

*‘Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan,
and bring me word that I may know their number.’”*

C. (:3) Response of Joab = Cautioning David Not to Sin

“And Joab said, ‘May the LORD add to His people a hundred times as many as they are! But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why does my lord seek this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt to Israel?’”

Andrew Hill: Joab’s strenuous objection to the king’s request suggests that David orders the census as a tribute to his own strength and power rather than a testimony to God as the true warrior of Israel and the builder of Israel’s army (**21:3**).

Iain Duguid: Thus Satan’s “*inciting*” diverts David from focusing on temple building, as it is a census with no collection for the tabernacle; Joab speaks of “*cause of guilt*,” using a word seen elsewhere commonly in cultic settings (e.g., **Lev. 4:3; 6:7; 22:16; 2 Chron. 24:18**); and a census without each person’s paying the tax would indeed be “*cause of guilt for Israel*,” not just for David. The result is that God “*struck Israel*” (**1 Chron. 21:7**), with this striking described as a “*pestilence*” (**vv. 12, 14**).

John Schultz: The reason for which David’s idea to have a count was considered sinful, may have been that the people were not required to pay the amount prescribed in the law, or that David wanted to experience a sense of glory in knowing exactly how large the group was over which he was ruling. David’s **pride** may have been the main issue.

D. (:4-6) Resolve of David Forces Joab to Execute the Census

1. (:4) Forcing Joab’s Compliance

“Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore, Joab departed and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.”

2. (:5) Finalizing the Numbers and Reporting back to David

*“And Joab gave the number of the census of all the people to David.
And all Israel were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword;
and Judah was 470,000 men who drew the sword.”*

3. (:6) Failing to Number Tribes of Levi and Benjamin

*“But he did not number Levi and Benjamin among them,
for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab.”*

J.A. Thompson: The exclusion of Levi is explained because they were excluded from military service (**Num 1:49; 2:33**). Benjamin's exclusion may have been because the tabernacle rested at Gibeon (**1 Chr 21:29**).

E. (:7) Reaction of God

*“And God was displeased with this thing,
so He struck Israel.”*

II. (:8-17) SORROWFUL CONFESSION AND MITIGATING JUDGMENT

Frederick Mabie: In the aftermath of his census, David realizes his actions and motives are “*evil in the sight of God*” (v.7) and he repents deeply. However, despite his earnest grief and repentance, divine judgment follows in the form of a divinely delivered plague (“*the sword of the LORD,*” per the choice of David). The prophet (“*seer*”) Gad mediates this choice of judgment (vv.9–13), and he will also mediate the path to God’s grace and reconciliation (cf. vv.18–27). The outworking of God’s judgment is especially difficult for David as he realizes that the consequences of his sin spill over onto his “*sheep*” (vv.14, 17). In the midst of David’s vision of the destroying angel executing God’s judgment (v.16), David gathers the elders to seek God and appeal for his grace and mercy (cf. “*in wrath remember mercy,*” **Hab 3:2**). This said, God had already exercised mercy and grace even before David prayed (cf. v.15).

A. (:8) Sorrowful Confession

“And David said to God, ‘I have sinned greatly, in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of Thy servant, for I have done very foolishly.’”

August Konkel: This census is for military purposes; David is relying on strength in numbers rather than on God. In Chronicles, divine punishment is immediate, as might be expected, given the stern warnings of Joab. The nature of the manifestation of judgment is not specified, but David immediately recognizes it as punishment for his sin. It is then that he asks for forgiveness and is given the choice of the consequences.

John Schultz: David comes under **conviction of sin**, even before the prophet Gad announces God’s punishment. David recognized the **enormity** of his sin. The Hebrew text reads literally: “*I have sinned greatly,*” and “*I have done foolishly.*” David asks for forgiveness, using the Hebrew verb *abar*, which can mean “*to cover.*” It is the verb found in the context of the original Passover in Egypt where we read: “*When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.*”

B. (:9-12) Mitigating Judgment

*“And the LORD spoke to Gad, David’s seer, saying,
10 ‘Go and speak to David, saying, Thus says the LORD,
I offer you three things; choose for yourself one of them,
that I may do it to you.’”*

*So Gad came to David and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD,
Take for yourself 12 either three years of famine, or three months to be swept
away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else
three days of the sword of the LORD, even pestilence in the land, and the angel*

of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel. Now, therefore, consider what answer I shall return to Him who sent me.”

“Take for yourself...”

OPTION #1: 3 years of famine

OPTION #2: 3 months of military defeat

OPTION #3: 3 days of the sword of the Lord

C. (:13) Appeal to God’s Mercy

“And David said to Gad, ‘I am in great distress; please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man.”

D. (:14-17) Extent of Divine Judgment

1. (:14-15) Forbearance of the Lord

“So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel; 70,000 men of Israel fell. 15 And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw and was sorry over the calamity, and said to the destroying angel, ‘It is enough; now relax your hand.’ And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”

2. (:16-17) Intercession of David for the Nation Based on His Own Culpability

“Then David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, covered with sackcloth, fell on their faces. 17 And David said to God, ‘Is it not I who commanded to count the people? Indeed, I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? O LORD my God, please let Thy hand be against me and my father's household, but not against Thy people that they should be plagued.”

III. (:18-27) PURCHASE OF THRESHING SITE

A. (:18-19) Divine Directive Regarding Location for the New Altar

1. (:18) Command of the Lord

“Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”

2. (:19) Obedience of David

“So David went up at the word of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the LORD.”

B. (:20-25) Process of Procurement of the Location for the New Altar

1. (:20-21) Arrival at the Threshing Floor of Ornan

“Now Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons who were

with him hid themselves. And Ornan was threshing wheat. 21 And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out from the threshing floor, and prostrated himself before David with his face to the ground.”

John Schultz: Araunah is called a Jebusite, which suggests that he was one of the original inhabitants of Canaan, living in Jebus before it fused with Salem into the city of Jerusalem. His dwelling place was on Mount Moriah, the place where Abraham had brought the aborted sacrifice of Isaac. According to Second Chronicles, it was the place where ultimately the temple was built. We read: *“Then Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David.”* David arrived at the threshing floor of Araunah while the angel in charge of the plague was still standing there. Araunah came out of his hiding when he saw the king. He greeted David, as a subject was supposed to greet a king, prostrating himself, bowing down with his face to the ground.

Whether Araunah was actually willing to give up his threshing floor without any charge is doubtful. He may merely have given the king the polite answer that was expected according to the culture of that time. But it could also be that Araunah, having seen the angel of death, was willing to give up everything for free in exchange for his life and the lives of his sons.

2. (:22-24) Negotiations for the Procurement

a. (:22) Initial Request of David – Explaining His Objective

“Then David said to Ornan, ‘Give me the site of this threshing floor, that I may build on it an altar to the LORD; for the full price you shall give it to me, that the plague may be restrained from the people.’”

b. (:23) Initial Response of Ornan – Take Whatever You Need

“And Ornan said to David, ‘Take it for yourself; and let my lord the king do what is good in his sight. See, I will give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for wood and the wheat for the grain offering; I will give it all.’”

c. (:24) Intention of David to Pay Full Price

“But King David said to Ornan, ‘No, but I will surely buy it for the full price; for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, or offer a burnt offering which costs me nothing.’”

3. (:25) Purchase of the Site

“So David gave Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site.”

August Konkel: The negotiations with Araunah play on the word “give.” David asks Araunah to give him the place of the threshing floor and insists that he should give it at

full price. Araunah counters with the offer that David should take the place, and he in turn will give the oxen, the wood, and the grain for the offering. The king counters with the insistence that he will pay for it at full price and would not offer to the Lord anything that he did not purchase. David then gives Araunah six hundred shekels of gold for the place. There is an emphasis on **the place** (AT), which echoes “*the place that the LORD your God will choose*” for all the people to worship (**Deut 12:5-7**). The price that David pays is multiple times that in Samuel, both in the amount (six hundred shekels as opposed to fifty) and the metal (gold instead of silver). The purchase described in Chronicles is the entire area, not just the threshing floor itself. Six hundred shekels amounts to fifty shekels per tribe, which may be an indication that this is on behalf of all Israel.

C. (:26-27) Initial Offerings Confirmed by God’s Acceptance

1. (:26a) Initial Offerings

*“Then David built an altar to the LORD there,
and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.
And he called to the LORD”*

2. (:26b) Confirmation of God’s Acceptance of David’s Sacrifice

*“and He answered him with fire from heaven
on the altar of burnt offering.”*

August Konkel: The Chronicler’s conclusion to the choice of the temple site establishes the theological points of critical importance. God answers David’s prayer for mercy in two ways. First, fire from heaven consumes the offerings upon the altar. Second, God commands the divine agent to restore his sword to its sheath. There is more to these events than just ending the plague (cf. **2 Sam 24:25**), which is decisively terminated following the earlier suspension (**1 Chron 21:15-16**). The function of the altar is divinely approved in the same way as the altar of the tabernacle in the wilderness (**Lev 9:24**). For the Chronicler, this sign from heaven provides **continuity** between the Mosaic tabernacle and the future temple. The consumption of the sacrifices by fire from heaven is the **divine approval** of this altar for the temple that is to be built (**1 Chron 21:26**). . .

The association between the mountain of Abraham and the Temple Mount is explicit. The Lord had appeared to David as he had to Abraham. Continuity of worship is established at this site; temple worship is linked to the promises of the past. While David initiates worship at a new location with unprecedented features, it stands in continuity with not only the tabernacle but also the worship of the patriarchs before that.

J.A. Thompson: vv. 22-26 -- There was an urgent need to build an altar to the Lord so that the plague on the people might be stopped. David paid a fairly high price for the land in spite of Araunah's offer and showed himself to be above the selfish conniving that seeks to avoid personal payment or loss (cf. **Mal 1:8-14**). We are reminded of Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah for Sarah's burial in spite of Ephron's

generous response (**Gen 23**). The text does not indicate whether David personally made the sacrifice or whether a priest was present to officiate, although on superficial reading it appears that David himself made the sacrifice. This seems surprising in light of the Chronicler's concern with ritual purity (contrast **1 Sam 13:1–15**). In any case, the consumption of the sacrifice by fire from heaven served to confirm God's acceptance of David's sacrifice (see **1 Kgs 18:36–40**) and pointed forward to the successful completion and dedication of the temple (cf. **2 Chr 7:1**).

3. (21:27) Cease and Desist Order

*“And the LORD commanded the angel,
and he put his sword back in its sheath.”*

Andrew Hill: The NIV follows the MT in breaking the paragraph at **21:26**, although most biblical commentators understand the report of the destroying angel sheathing his sword (**21:27**) as the logical conclusion of the episode addressing the staying of divine judgment against Israel.

Mark Boda: God's great mercy is manifested at the moment the death angel was hovering with sword drawn over Jerusalem. That God's compassion wells up at this very moment points to the preciousness of Jerusalem to the Lord. This may be linked to the Ark of his presence now being housed in this city or that the king after his own heart was enthroned there. In either case, it is indicative of an enduring tradition of Jerusalem's special status before the Lord (**Zech 1:12–17; 2:12; 3:2**). This is important to the theology of the Chronicler, who was addressing a community whose key unifying symbol was Jerusalem and its Temple.

(21:28 – 22:1) EPILOGUE – WORSHIP TRANSITION FROM GIBEON TO JERUSALEM

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler adds a conclusion to this story to demonstrate the God-ordained **continuity** between worship centered in the Mosaic tabernacle (located in Gibeon) and the future temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem. The answer to David's prayer for God's mercy by the sign of fire sent from heaven upon the altar is presented as **divine confirmation** of this shift in the location for Israel's worship center (**21:26**). The theological addendum also explains why the Israelite sanctuary is transferred from Gibeon to Jerusalem, since David is unable to go to Gibeon to inquire of the Lord because of the “*destroying angel*” (cf. **21:16**).

Iain Duguid: Not only is “*the plague . . . averted from Israel*” (**2 Sam. 24:25**), but, more importantly for the Chronicler's hearers, the Lord has clearly chosen this place and accepted sacrifices offered on the altar. So David is simply the first of all succeeding generations who “*sacrificed there*.” There remains the matter that the “*tabernacle of the Lord*” and “*altar of burnt offering*” are still at Gibeon (**1 Chron. 16:39–42**), yet the experience of the “*sword of the Lord*” and the Lord's command to “*raise an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite*” (**21:18**) means that the temple now

must be “*here*.” David does not dare risk a return of judgment. He is a faithful observer of Mosaic law, but he also introduces new cultic arrangements in response to the Lord’s action. So it is that the rest of David’s reign is given over to preparations for temple building. The final phrase, “*the altar of burnt offering for Israel*,” serves as an answer to the opening “*then Satan stood against Israel*” (21:1). Spiritual forces may seek to bring harm to Israel, and Israel may succumb and suffer, but God has provided an answer in the provision of the atoning sacrifices on the altar at his chosen place.

Mark Boda: First Chronicles 21:28 – 22:1 is a key segue in the Chronicler’s work. It functions both as a postscript to the census debacle as well as an introduction to the material that will consume the rest of 1 Chronicles. The Chronicler acknowledges the extraordinary nature of David’s offering sacrifices away from the altar of burnt offering at the Tabernacle at Gibeon. This sacrifice was necessary because of the events that unfolded in **chapter 21**. It was this exceptional action of sacrifice that was key to the identification of the site for Temple building.

A. (21:28-30) Transition away from Gibeon

“At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he offered sacrifice there. 29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were in the high place at Gibeon at that time. 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was terrified by the sword of the angel of the LORD.”

B. (22:1) Transition to Jerusalem for the New House of the Lord

“Then David said, ‘This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel.’”

Frederick Mabie: The location at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (spelled “*Araunah*” in 2Sa 24:18) is described as chosen by God to be the place of sacrifice and atonement for David’s sin (note God’s choice via Gad [v.18]; cf. 2Ch 7:12, a divine choice anticipated by Moses [Dt 12:5–7]). Thus David’s decision (1Ch 22:1) regarding this location for the future Jerusalem temple is simply following God’s previously announced choice.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How does our sin impact others in our spiritual community?
- 2) How do churches sometimes pridefully make their boast in numbers?
- 3) Was Joab wrong to obey King David’s order to conduct the census if he knew that it was displeasing to God?

4) Why did Israel need God to put His stamp of approval on the designated site for sacrifice and worship?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: The structural relationship of Chronicles to the Samuel parallel is outlined below:

<u>1 Chronicles</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>2 Samuel</u>
21:1–4a	David orders a census	24:1–4a
—	Census itinerary	24:4b–7
21:4b–7	Tally of the census	24:8–10
21:8–12	Method of judgment chosen	24:11–13
21:13–17	Divine judgment stayed	24:14–17
21:18–27	Temple site purchased	24:18–25
21:28–22:1	Conclusion	—

Frederick Mabie: Note that the **chosen place for the temple** connects with both divine grace and forgiveness (following David’s sin) and a divine encounter (via the angel of Yahweh). Also, this place is associated with God’s hearing the prayers of those who seek him in humility and obedience (cf. **vv.17, 19, 26, 28**). The chosen location for the temple is also connected with Mount Moriah (cf. **2Ch 3:1**), which further associates this location with God’s provision of a substitutionary sacrifice (**Ge 22**) and God’s presence (“*the mountain of the LORD*”; **Ge 22:14**). Put together, the location chosen for the future temple is associated with a place of propitiation, divine grace and mercy, divine presence, prayer, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

John Schultz: The most amazing feature of this particular incident is that God turned that, which was originally a punishment for sin, into an eternal blessing. It was the plague and its consequences that brought about the revelation of the place God had chosen to be worshiped. Moses had stated:

“You are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. There, in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you.”

This prefigures the cross of Christ by which God turned the shameful of human sin into a symbol of His glory.

Dennis Prutow: Our Missteps and God's Perfect Steps

You might reduce this theme into a statement that would go something like this. God uses your missteps in the performance of his perfect steps. . .

Joab understands David's heart better than David understands his own heart. David is desirous of numbering the people so that he can understand the kind of army he has at his disposal and the power he has.

Now part of the difficulty is that the kings were to seek the Lord in the designated place. That is, before God in the tabernacle. The tabernacle is now located north of Jerusalem in Gibeon. And at this point David has brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem and put it in a tent in Jerusalem. And, as we will read later, David is afraid. David is afraid to go up to Gibeon to seek the Lord because, as you may remember, when they first attempted to bring the Ark of the Covenant down from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem Uzzah put out his hand to steady the ark and God killed him on the spot because he wasn't a Levite.

And so now David is fearful. And he is not seeking the Lord as he ought. On the other hand, astoundingly, he is seeking his own strength and doing this through the temptation of the enemy to number the people. . .

David says to himself, "Over 400 years ago God promised that when we entered the land he would show us a place of his choice where the temple was to be built. And now I see. This is the place. This is the place God talked about in Deuteronomy chapter 12 when he said to the people, 'You shall go up to the place I designate, I choose, and there you shall offer your burnt offerings and your sacrifices to me and pay your vows and pay your tithes.'" David is now saying, "This is the place. God has now revealed to us, after these many centuries, the place of his choosing."

"So David gave orders to gather the foreigners who were in the land of Israel, and he set stonecutters to hew out stones to build the house of God." God, in the order of his perfect steps, was now showing David and all Israel the place he had chosen to dwell and where the temple would be built. And it was through David's misstep that he began to discern, as an outcome in this case, God's perfect steps.

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/1509161950.pdf>

Matthew Black: Accept God's chastening!

Abandon your sin in godly Devotion. This is what David did. He humbled himself. He abandoned his sin. What did that look like?

A. Sheer Awe of God! Verse 16, *"And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces."* We've got to see God in His majesty! We've got fall down before Him in awe at His great power and mercy. We deserve so much more than

He gives, but Oh the power! Our Lord created the universe instantaneously! We ought to fear Him!

B. Sincere, earnest Acknowledgement and ownership of sin. Verse 17, *“And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father’s house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.”* You know when God is working because you are ready to bring all the sin out and deal with it.

C. Sacrificial Attitude. Verses 22-25, *“Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar therein unto the LORD: thou shalt grant it me for the full price: that the plague may be stayed from the people. 23 And Ornan said unto David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give thee the oxen also for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all. 24 And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost. 25 So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight.”*

D. Supernatural Answer! Verse 26, *“And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.”*

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/123109042390.pdf>

Mark Boda: To some readers, God’s response with choices of punishment is at odds with David’s request for forgiveness. However, there is plenty of precedence elsewhere in the Old Testament for this. For instance, in **Numbers 14** Moses pleads for forgiveness from Yahweh (**Num 14:17-19**) because of the people’s refusal to conquer the land. Yahweh responded with the promise to pardon them as requested (**Num 14:20**), but then declares his punishment on the rebels (**Num 14:21-23**; cf. **Exod 32:30-35**). **Sklar** (2005:91-92) explains, “The Lord does forgive them: he does not wipe them out completely . . . this forgiveness does not mean the remission of all penalty . . . a mitigated penalty is placed upon the people: instead of completely wiping them out, the Lord ‘smites’ some of them.” In the same way, David’s sin had serious consequences for his kingdom, but there is forgiveness, which is a mitigation of the penalty deserved (cf. **Sklar** 2005:53, see his notes 33-34).

Martin Selman: This willingness on God’s part to forgive the sinner is now permanently affirmed through Jesus Christ, in whom all Old Testament sacrifices have been fulfilled (e.g. **Heb. 9:14, 25-26**). Jesus’ sacrifice opened a way into God’s heavenly temple, which is superior to Solomon’s and Zerubbabel’s (**Heb. 6:19-20; 9:11-15, 24-28**). Like the Chronicler, the writer to the Hebrews also finds significance in the place of atonement by drawing parallels between the earthly and heavenly altars. Invitations are given to both the heavenly sanctuary (*“Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith . . .”*, **Heb. 10:19-25**) and the earthly site of Jesus’ death (*“Let us*

. . . *go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore*”, **Heb. 13:11-14**). The cross of Christ makes both Satan’s incitements (e.g. **Rev. 20:1-10**) and the angel’s sword of judgment (**Rev. 6:4, 8**) totally ineffective.

TEXT: I Chronicles 22:2-19

TITLE: DAVID'S PREPARATIONS TO AID SOLOMON TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

BIG IDEA:

THE TRANSITION FROM DAVID TO SOLOMON FOCUSES ON THE PREPARATION AND PROVISION FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: All in all, the Chronicler makes a clear shift in these chapters from a focus on David to a focus on David and his son (and designated heir) Solomon. This focus on David and Solomon is one of transition, largely within the context of David's expansive preparations for the Jerusalem temple and the requisite personnel.

J.A. Thompson: The Chronicler includes three speeches by David:

- (1) 22:2–19;
- (2) 28:1–21;
- (3) 29:1–9.

Chapters 22–29 are unique to Chronicles, having no parallel in the Bible.

Andrew Hill: In 22:2–19 the spotlight shifts from a focus on David alone (cf. **ch. 21**) to a wider angle that highlights the relationship between David and his son and successor, Solomon. Repeated words and phrases indicate that the chapter is all about providing materials and preparing Solomon and Israel's leaders to build the temple of Yahweh ("*build*" [*bnh*] occurs nine times, 22:2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 19; the verb to "*provide*" or "*make preparation*" [*kwn* in the Hiphil] occurs five times in 22:3, 5, 14). David's "*extensive preparations*" (22:5) for the temple included readying Solomon to accept the charge to build a house for God (22:6–13), making provision for the building materials and skilled laborers (22:14–16), and establishing support for the project among the leadership of Israel (22:17–19). No doubt the Chronicler regards this concern for preparation before embarking on the work of God an important lesson for his own audience.

A.C. Gaebelien: God had accepted the sacrifice. The judgment had passed. Prayer had been answered and David, therefore, could truthfully say "*this is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel.*" The place had therefore been pointed out on which the temple was to be reared. And from now on up to the **twenty-eighth verse of chapter 26** all concerns the house which is to be built. The temple is from now on prominently in the foreground and that which the book of Kings does not mention, David's great interest in making preparations for it, is recorded in these chapters. And so we see David with great energy making vast preparations. It shows again how grace had worked in his heart. All else seems to have been forgotten by him. Only one desire controls the king, to make provision of everything necessary for the construction of the Temple. And the house, according to David's conception "*must be*

exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries.” His heart burned with zeal to glorify Jehovah, whose mercy and grace he knew so well and who had kept and prospered him in all his ways. *“I will therefore now make preparation for it,”* David said. Then he prepared abundantly before his death. David, making preparation for the temple his son was to put up, is not without a very striking typical meaning. Both David and Solomon are types of our Lord Jesus Christ. David typifies Him in His humiliation and suffering, Solomon in His exaltation and glory. What Christ has done in His grace results in the coming glory. This is foreshadowed in the preparations David made for the house and the glorious reign of his son. If this is kept in mind these historical statements will take on a blessed meaning.

Iain Duguid: First are details of gathering together the artisans and a brief overview of major resources David has provided (vv. 2–5). Next is David’s charge to Solomon: he first repeats God’s previous word concerning the temple and Solomon (vv. 6–10; cf. 17:7–14); following is the charge itself, beginning and ending with the prayer, *“The Lord be with you”* (22:11–16). God’s promise and presence form the basis for the future. David’s concluding commands to *“all the leaders of Israel”* also start with what God has done, leading to the leaders’ involvement in the task of building (vv. 17–19).

I. (:2-5) PREPARATION OF RESOURCES FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE

A. (:2) Manpower Resources

“So David gave orders to gather the foreigners who were in the land of Israel, and he set stonecutters to hew out stones to build the house of God.”

Frederick Mabie: In order to address the challenge of supplying skilled and unskilled workers common to large building projects in the biblical world, David taps into the resident aliens living within Israel. That some of the individuals are skilled in certain trades is reflected both here (v.2) and in the further details on the craftsmen noted later (cf. vv.15–16).

Andrew Hill: The *“aliens”* (1 Chron. 22:2) are non-Israelite inhabitants of territories occupied and controlled by Israel. David’s conscription of *“aliens”* fits the pattern in the ancient Near East of using prisoners of war and subjugated people as forced laborers for major building projects. Typically, the resident aliens were free citizens with limited legal rights. They enjoyed the rights of assistance, protection, and religious participation in the Israelite community under Mosaic law (Deut. 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:14). The alien was under divine protection, and the Israelites were to love aliens as themselves, since they had been aliens once in Egypt (Deut. 10:18–19). It is assumed these legal principles inform the Israelite treatment of the aliens levied in the labor details. We know from the register of David’s cabinet members that Adoniram is supervisor of the forced labor units, a position he held under kings Solomon and Rehoboam as well (2 Sam. 20:24; cf. 1 Kings 12:18).

John Schultz: It seems strange that no Israelites but foreigners were recruited for the preparation of the stones that were needed for the construction of the temple. The main

reason may have been that they had an expertise that was not found among the Israelites. Foreigners had built David's palace for the same reason. It may also be that the Israelites found that stonecutting was labor that was "below them."

On the other hand, or maybe better, seen from above, from God's perspective, the whole world population, not only Israel, ought to be involved in preparing a place for God's revelation on earth.

B. (:3-4) Material Resources

"And David prepared large quantities of iron to make the nails for the doors of the gates and for the clamps, and more bronze than could be weighed; 4 and timbers of cedar logs beyond number, for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought large quantities of cedar timber to David."

Frederick Mabie: In addition to the provision of manpower, David also provides a significant amount of the raw materials necessary for the temple construction project (again, note the further details on precious metals, timber, and stone noted later; cf. **v.14**). The raw materials noted here reflect a combination of David's hegemony over the Philistines (iron), his economic-political alliance with Phoenicia (cedar), and his earlier military conquests (bronze; e.g., **18:8**; see further remarks on these raw materials at **2Ch 2:7-9**).

August Konkel: **Abundance** is the key concept in the Chronicler's account of David making preparation for the temple materials (**1 Chron 22:3-4**). These include sculpted stone, iron to secure fasteners for the doors of the gates, material for the joins (it is not certain if these fittings were wood or metal), and bronze and wood in large quantities. The bronze would be used for the columns, the altar, and the great molten sea. The cedars of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) were renowned for their impressive size, reaching to nearly one hundred feet; by the mid-nineteenth century CE this vast resource was depleted (**Konkel 2006: 123**). These trees were legendary for building palaces in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece.

Andrew Hill: Some of the raw materials were probably secured through trade agreements of some sort, much like Solomon's bartering with the king of Phoenician Tyre for additional lumber with payments of grain (**1 Kings 5:10-12**). The cedar timbers imported from the Sidonians and Tyrians are one of the temple's outstanding features (cf. **1 Chron. 17:1, 6**). These logs are one of the defining characteristics of the second temple as well (cf. **Ezra 3:7**). **Selman** has reminded us, however, that the magnificence and splendor of Yahweh's temple is not about the celebration of the edifice as an architectural wonder. Rather, the temple is a theological statement to the nations (**1 Chron. 22:5**) about God's faithfulness to his covenant with David and the embodiment of his kingdom in the Israelite monarchy.

C. (:5) Summary of Preparations

"And David said, 'My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD shall be exceedingly magnificent, famous and

glorious throughout all lands. Therefore now I will make preparation for it.' So David made ample preparations before his death."

Frederick Mabie: This statement (largely repeated later at **29:1**) reflects David's desire that the temple built for Yahweh bring together the apex of beauty and craftsmanship in such a way as to remind God's people of the beauty of God's holiness (cf. **Ps 29:2**). David's extensive preparations (also cf. **v.14**) and plans for the temple (plans received via divine revelation, cf. **1Ch 28:11–12, 19**) underscore the Chronicler's perspective that the Jerusalem temple was in many ways a joint project of David and Solomon. David's concern for Solomon's youth and inexperience is likewise reflected in Solomon's own prayer for wisdom (**1Ki 3:6–9**).

II. (:6-16) PREPARATION OF SOLOMON FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY AND PRIVILEGE OF BUILDING THE TEMPLE

Andrew Hill: David's actual charge to Solomon to build the temple is an invocation or prayer that offers encouragement, delineates the task at hand, and gives assurance of divine help. This threefold structure has been identified as the pattern in what is called the "induction into office" formula in Old Testament literature. Typically, the induction formula begins with a **word of encouragement** to the one about to enter the office. It then includes a **description of the task** to which the individual is called and concludes with the **promise of divine accompaniment** as enablement for the successful completion of the commission (cf. Moses' charge to Joshua, **Josh. 1:6–9**). In this case, the installation of office formula authorizes or establishes Solomon as the builder of Yahweh's temple. The installation formula reminds Solomon (and the Chronicler's audience) that God's call invariably includes the means to accomplish it—even as Moses learned when God called him and equipped him to deliver Israel from Egypt (cf. **Ex. 3–4**).

A. (:6-10) Charge to Solomon Regarding His Divine Appointment to the Task

"Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. 7 And David said to Solomon, 'My son, I had intended to build a house to the name of the LORD my God. 8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, You have shed much blood, and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood on the earth before Me. 9 Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. 10 He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever."

August Konkel: War did not make soldiers individually guilty of murder, but at the same time it involved the taking of human life. David had not only engaged in war; he had also waged much war. The holy temple to be built (**1 Chron 29:3**) would represent the power and gift of life within the kingdom. For the Chronicler, David was far too

closely associated with death to be the one who should build a house representing a kingdom of life and peace.

J.A. Thompson: David is here to Solomon much like Moses was to Joshua. David could do all the preparations for the temple but could not build it, just as Moses could not lead Israel into Canaan. A life of violence, even in God's service, had disqualified him. The one who built God's house must be a man of peace. The name “*Solomon*” (Heb. *šēlōmōh*) is a cognate of the word for “*peace*” (*šālōm*). Israel would have peace and quiet during his reign (v. 9). On the other hand, we should not forget that it was David's warfare and many victories that enabled Solomon and the nation to have the peace in which they could build the temple. David was not qualified to build the temple, but he was not thereby condemned in the text.

B. (:11-13) Spiritual Encouragement to Solomon of Divine Assistance

“Now, my son, the LORD be with you that you may be successful, and build the house of the LORD your God just as He has spoken concerning you. 12 Only the LORD give you discretion and understanding, and give you charge over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. 13 Then you shall prosper, if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and courageous, do not fear nor be dismayed.”

Frederick Mabie: David's charge to his son Solomon reflects the reality that the building of the temple for the Lord is a **spiritual exercise** as much as it is a building enterprise. The notion of “*success*” (vv.11, 13) is that which is pleasing in the eyes of the Lord, which in turn has a direct correlation to obedience and covenantal faithfulness (vv.12–13). Such obedience is enabled by God's presence (v.11) together with the gifts of wisdom and understanding that come from above (v.12). Moreover, success in temple building is consistent with God's promises to David regarding Solomon (“*as he said you would,*” v.11; cf. 1Ch 17:11–12).

C. (:14-16) Testimony of David's Abundant and Generous Preparations

“Now behold, with great pains I have prepared for the house of the LORD 100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weight, for they are in great quantity; also timber and stone I have prepared, and you may add to them. 15 Moreover, there are many workmen with you, stonecutters and masons of stone and carpenters, and all men who are skillful in every kind of work. 16 Of the gold, the silver and the bronze and the iron, there is no limit. Arise and work, and may the LORD be with you.”

J.A. Thompson: The **quantities** specified here seem to be **exceptionally large**. One explanation is that it was a standard figure of speech for stressing the magnificence of the temple and drawing attention to David's vast preparations for the temple that was soon to be erected. This sort of **hyperbole** is often used in ancient literature and speeches, and the round numbers further imply that they are not to be taken literally. Our western propensity to be precise allows little room for a characteristic feature of the

literary methods of the ancient Near East. A comparison may be made with the amount of gold that Solomon's fleet brought to Israel from Ophir (**1 Kgs 10:14**).

III. (:17-19) PREPARATION OF THE LEADERS OF ISRAEL TO JOIN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SOLOMON

Frederick Mabie: While the temple project is prepared by David and completed by Solomon, it is nonetheless an expression of the mutuality of the whole Israelite congregation and their “*help*” in the project. Note that David’s charge to the leaders to devote their heart and soul to “*seek*” God is inseparably connected with their obedience to God’s Word. Moreover, as seen with Solomon (**vv.11, 16**), divine presence (“*Is not the LORD your God with you?*” **v.18**) is at the center of David’s admonition to the leaders of Israel, as only God’s enabling power can shape human hearts to his pleasure (cf. **Php 2:13**). Moreover, David’s reminder of God’s faithfulness to his covenantal promises (“*has he not granted you rest . . . handed the inhabitants of the land over to me,*” **v.18**; cf. **Dt 12:10**) will encourage these leaders that God will complete the good work he has begun in the covenantal life of Israel (cf. **Php 1:6**).

A. (:17) Charging the Leaders to Assist Solomon

“David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon,”

B. (:18) Assuring Them of Divine Assistance

“saying, 18 ‘Is not the LORD your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the LORD and before His people.’”

C. (:19) Defining the Mission and its Purpose

“Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise, therefore, and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD.”

August Konkel: Worship at the place God has chosen, confirmed by the sign of fire from heaven (**1 Chron 21:26**), requires a sanctuary for the altar that has been brought to Jerusalem, along with all of the sacred artifacts that belong with it.

Andrew Hill: The same contingency for success given to Solomon applies to the leaders of Israel (cf. **22:12**). They too must “*seek*” the Lord, recognizing that this is the act of obedience to God’s law, not a search for divine guidance. David envisions two distinct purposes for the temple as the sanctuary of God:

- housing the sacred vessels and furniture essential to Israel’s worship, especially the ark of the covenant, and
- exalting the name of the Lord before his people and the nations (**22:19**; cf. **2 Chron. 5:5** on the “*sacred furnishings*” of the Tent of Meeting that are transferred to the temple).

The rhetorical question affirming God’s presence with the leaders assures them that God’s interests do not lie with Solomon alone (22:18; cf. 22:11). The phrase “*God be with you*” is a **covenant formula** and has implications for the “Immanuel” theology that will continue with the temple even as it began with the tabernacle (cf. Ex. 25:8).

Martin Selman: David again (cf. v. 9) stresses in three distinct ways that the rest (v. 18; ‘*peace*,’ GNB, NRSV, RSV, REB, NEB) which Israel enjoys is a God-given precondition for the building of a sanctuary (v. 19; cf. 28:1). With two of Chronicles’ characteristic phrases, the leaders are challenged to participate with Solomon, so continuing into Solomon’s reign the positive qualities associated with his father. They are to help (v. 17) Solomon, a term which strongly evokes Israel’s help for David (I Chr. 12:1, 17, 18, 21, 22), and they must seek the LORD (v. 19) as David had sought him (cf. 13:3; 14:10, 14). David explains how to seek (‘*devote your heart and soul*’; cf. REB, NEB, JB) and what it meant in practice (**Build the sanctuary**). As elsewhere, ‘*seeking*’ is an act of obedience rather than a search for guidance, and David will yet again underline its importance (I Chr. 28:8-9)

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How are we preparing the next generation to carry on the work of the kingdom?
- 2) Are we committed to excellence in our pursuit of our Christian ministry?
- 3) How does divine sovereignty mesh with human responsibility in the carrying out of our spiritual mission?
- 4) How does God’s work depend on the active partnership and involvement of both leaders and all the people?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Konkel: The Chronicler identifies Solomon as the focus of this rest and makes this rest the equivalent of peace and quiet for a man whose very name (*šalomoh*) signifies peace. The fulfillment of rest for the Chronicler is the people of Israel worshiping around the temple. David had provided security from the threat of surrounding enemies, thus providing for the people’s rest.

Such rest could not be experienced apart from the covenant. The generation entering the land would be required to renew the covenant and take the vow of loyalty to God (**Josh 8:30-35; 24:1-29**). The stones under the oak at Shechem stood as testimony to the oath that was taken. Peace and rest for Solomon and his people require the same

commitment (**1 Chron 22:13**). Rest can be present only when commitment is made to relationships that provide for peace. The responsibilities of relationships with God and others are summarized in the Ten Words of the covenant. The application of these to specific situations is provided in decrees and judgments that Solomon and his people must observe.

Andrew Hill: King David's preparations for the building of the Jerusalem temple highlight two great theological continuities between the Old and New Testaments: the theme of leadership and the theme of worship. One theme from **chapter 22**, in which David takes steps to secure both the raw materials and labor for building the temple, that points toward the contemporary significance of the larger literary unit (**21:1–29:9**) is the understanding that Yahweh will be exalted among the nations (**22:5**). From the beginning, God's redemptive plan has been directed to the nations—starting with the promise to bless all nations through Abram and Sarai (**Gen. 12:1–3**), being fulfilled in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who is the light of revelation for the nations and the glory of Israel (**Luke 2:30–32**), and evident eternally in the worship of people from every nation (**Rev. 5:9–10**).

Iain Duguid: The bringing together of **king and leaders in partnership** is an encouraging reminder to the Chronicler's postexilic hearers living without a king. The successful building of the temple depended from its very inception on "*all the leaders of Israel*" being actively involved. There was a unity of "*mind and heart*." The Lord was with not only the king (David and Solomon) but the people as well. The combination of "*(a)rise*" and "*build*" is significantly used after the exile for the involvement of all in building both the temple and the walls of Jerusalem (**Ezra 1:5; 3:2; Neh. 2:18, 20; 3:1**). It is pertinent that, in the Chronicler's order of telling, the first public mention of Solomon's role concerns the **temple** (a similar priority is in David's later words to the larger assembly; **1 Chron. 28:1–8**). Again, for hearers living within the Persian Empire, attention is not on the political situation but on the temple as the enduring focal point for the people, bringing glory to God "*throughout all lands*" (**22:5**).

Ron Daniel: God will use building blocks of unrighteous and disreputable sources.

- After all, wasn't the tabernacle made with Egyptian gold and thread (**Exo. 12:35-36**)?
- Wasn't the wall around Jerusalem repaired with timber from the King of Persia's forest (**Neh. 2:8**)?
- Wasn't the temple restored with King Cyrus' subjects being commanded to give the Jews gold and silver (**Ezra 1:4**)?

This is what it is to be sanctified, to be set apart for God's use. . .

I have met many believers who feel ashamed and condemned about where their talents or experience has come from, believing that God couldn't and wouldn't use those things because of their history. But when we allow the Lord to melt those things down and be re-created, or to be sanctified and set apart for God's use, He is delighted to use them.

Phil Kayser: Passing on a Legacy

I. Introduction

When we think of David's legacy, there were both **positive** and **negative** images that come to mind. His polygamy was a negative legacy that was copied by his children all the way up to the exile. And it was in the exile that they finally became monogamous. So he had a negative legacy.

But he also passed on a legacy that was so positive, that every king after David was compared to him. He had faith, devotion to God, loyalty, heroism, sacrifice, and many other virtues. Most people remember him for his heroic stand against Goliath. But if you were to ask David what his biggest passion was, the Bible seems to indicate his answer would be **to build a temple**. He couldn't build it himself, but he wanted to pass on everything needed so that it could eventually be built. And this chapter gives us several clues on **how to be effective in building a legacy** over more than one generation.

II. Building a legacy requires seeing what others cannot see (v. 1, 5)

The first essential to legacy-building is that you need to be able to see what others cannot yet see. In the previous chapter of **1 Chronicles**, David bought the threshing floor from Araunah, the Jebusite. Even though the threshing floor was littered with grain, manure, and chaff, and looked anything but exciting, he saw the potential in **verse 1**. *Then David said, 'This is the house of Yehowah God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel.'* All most people could see was dirt. Not a single stone for the temple had been laid and not an ounce of bronze for the brazen altar was present, yet David had a vision for what would become of this property.

Verse 1 was a statement of faith of what would be on this spot. And seeing it by faith enabled every other aspect of legacy building to take place. We will never attempt to achieve what we cannot see in our mind's eye. That's where you have got to start with legacy building. You need to have a God-given dream or a vision of what you want in the future. And I emphasize a God-given vision because we do not want to pass on a self-centered or humanistic legacy.

III. Building a legacy requires planning & preparation (vv. 2-5)

Every one of those actions required discussions, planning, and various forms of preparation for the future. . . thinking through the financial issues, the potential obstacles, what specific tools and vehicles need to be in place to accomplish their vision. Legacies don't normally get passed on from generation to generation without starting to make concrete plans and actions long before others can see what you are hoping for. In fact, it is at this stage that you will get the most criticism for being too idealistic. The nay-sayers will try to kill your vision - maybe not intentionally, but their lack of faith has the potential of being a dream killer. Don't listen to them.

But do listen to God. You need to be prepared for God to change those plans that you are making. But you need to start somewhere. And just as seeing what others cannot see requires faith, it takes faith to do point III - to actually make plans and preparations

before there is much more than dirt and chaff and manure on the threshing floor. Most of us in this church probably don't have a lot of resources, do we? We can identify with the dirty threshing floor of Arauna. We feel like we are starting from ground zero.

IV. Building a legacy requires passing on resources and tools (vv. 2-5)

V. Building a legacy requires a synergy of skills and a network of experience that is multigenerational (v. 5a)

Legacy building appreciates the skills, experience, technologies, and all the other things that have accumulated over the generations. But it doesn't stop there. It is critical that the extended family itself networks with each other to help true legacy building to happen rather than reinventing the wheel each generation. If you don't somehow instill this seven generation perspective you will never produce a dynasty that will have an impact. So even the clan needs to be networked. . .

We are not talking about one person controlling everyone's life; we are talking about leveraging the power of networks - networks within the extended family and outside the extended family.

VI. Building a legacy requires humility (vv. 6-10)

VII. Building a legacy requires generosity (vv. 6-10)

David's generosity was something that would never come back to benefit him in any earthly tangible way. Oh yes, he was laying up treasures in heaven. But he gave generously with no thought of personal gain. And by the way, this was not tax money. I won't get into that, but this was not socialism. This was David giving from his own personal wealth. He gave because he wanted a multi-generational legacy to be passed on.

VIII. Building a legacy requires education (vv. 6-16)

IX. Building a legacy requires encouragement (vv. 11- 13)

X. Building a legacy requires sacrifice (v. 5b, 14)

XI. Building a legacy involves investing in the future and requires future orientation (vv. 14-16)

XII. Building a legacy requires enlisting the help of others (vv. 17-19)

XIII. Building a godly legacy requires dedication to God (v. 19)

And by the way, we shouldn't expect the next generation to be faithful to us parents. That's backwards thinking. We should expect the next generation to be faithful to God, and God's vision, and God's kingdom. Even if they do things differently than we did, it should not bother us if we see them sold out to Lord.

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/8201817377.pdf>

TEXT: I Chronicles 23:1 – 24:31

TITLE: *CENSUS AND ORGANIZATION OF LEVITICAL AND PRIESTLY FAMILIES*

BIG IDEA:

PROPER WORSHIP REQUIRES EXCELLENT ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

INTRODUCTION:

J.A. Thompson: Chapters 23–27 sometimes are looked upon as an interruption, if not an interpolation, in this narrative. In fact, they are very important for showing that David fulfilled all his duties as a good king by seeing to it that the proper worship of the Lord would continue. From the Chronicler's perspective, the account of David's reign would be truncated if this material were not included.

The total preparations for the temple included the allocation of personnel to undertake the various **spiritual ministries** of the temple. These were more crucial than the material structure alone—a perspective that David understood better than many of his modern Christian counterparts. **Chapters 23–26** take up various branches of the Levites (**chap. 23**), priests (**chap. 24**), musicians (**chap. 25**), and the gatekeepers and treasury officials (**chap. 26**). These chapters form a unit in themselves. It seems likely that the Chronicler used for his composition some traditions that were reduced to writing earlier although in their present form they bear unmistakable signs of the Chronicler's hand.

August Konkel: “Administration” does not sound positive to most people. It is too closely affiliated with concepts of bureaucracy, thought of as a cumbersome interference in getting things done. But worse than bloated bureaucracy is a lack of organization. Organizations have the name because they involve an administration capable of accomplishing desirable tasks. The Chronicler spends much of his work in laying out good administration. This unique section on administration concludes the reign of David.

The remainder of 1 Chronicles is directed to assemblies of people. Chapters 23 through 27 address smaller groups of officials with specific duties. Chapters 28 to 29 address all Israel concerning their responsibility for the temple.

Wilcock: To entitle this section the 'organization of the Levites' is to make it sound like bureaucratic regimentation. It is rather to be seen as a scaffolding for that house, a structure to enable God's people to function as they ought.

Iain Duguid: The concluding chapters of 1 Chronicles are framed by statements about David's being “*old*” and Solomon's becoming “*king*” (**23:1; 29:28**). Two parts commence in a similar manner:

- (1) **chapters 23–27** describe David’s organizational arrangements, while
- (2) **chapters 28–29** recount his stirring charges and actions in handing over temple and kingdom, along with the people’s responses.

David has charged Solomon and the leaders to “*build the sanctuary of the Lord God*” (22:19) and has already provided for materials and artisans (22:2–5), but that dealt briefly with only the building itself. The Chronicler’s **focus is on people** and their continuing responsibilities, with organization of both temple personnel and national administration to the fore. Organizational details (160 verses) far outweigh those of the physical building and its objects (41 verses; 28:11–12; 2 Chron. 3:1–4:22). Whereas **1 Kings 1–2** portrays the weakness of David’s old age and intrigues surrounding the succession, the Chronicler chooses to focus on positive aspects particularly relevant to his hearers.

Peter Wallace: As we go through this passage, I want you to see the big picture: what the Chronicler is talking about is the careful organization of worship and music, of church finance and discipline – all under the rule of the LORD’s Anointed.

(:1) PROLOGUE – PREPARATION FOR TRANSITION TO SOLOMON

“Now when David reached old age, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.”

Iain Duguid: David’s life has not been cut short (cf. **Isa. 65:20**); he shares the honored description of Abraham, Isaac, Job, and the later faithful priest Jehoiada (**Gen. 25:8; 35:29; Job 42:17; 2 Chron. 24:15**).

Andrew Hill: The general heading provides an entrée into the rest of the Chronicler’s account of David’s reign (23:2–29:30) by explaining the series of organizational moves by David that permit the successful transition of power to his son. **Selman** connects the heading implicitly to the Davidic covenant because David’s organization of the priests and Levites links his “house” or dynasty with the God’s “house” or temple (**1 Chron. 17**).

This means that neither the kingship nor the temple is an independent institution; both partner in establishing God’s kingdom in Israel.

J.A. Thompson: It was not that Solomon became king at the very close of David’s life. Indeed, there may have been a period of co-regency between David and Solomon based on Egyptian models. The statement means simply that as David grew older and in order to protect the succession, he installed Solomon as king (cf. **1 Kgs 1–2**). There is no indication of Solomon’s age at this time.

I. (23:1-23) DIVISIONS OF LEVITES

A. (:2-6) Census of the Levites

J.A. Thompson: David gathered the three leading segments of Israelite society—

princes, priests, and Levites. These groups were a stereotyped division of the people current at the time (cf. **13:2**; **2 Chr 30:25**; **35:8**; **Ezra 2:70**). They will be dealt with in the reverse order in the following chapters: Levites (**chap. 23**), priests (**chap. 24**), and others (**chaps. 25–27**).

Andrew Hill: David organized the Levites according to four distinct categories of labor: the work of the temple, officials and judges, gatekeepers, and musicians (**23:3–5**). Three of the four Levitical guilds are treated later as David prepares for the building of the temple, again in reverse order (see **chs. 25–26**). In addition to the legal functions of those Levites appointed as judges, it is possible that those described as “*officials*” have record-keeping responsibilities. The Levites assigned to the work of the temple assist the priests with the sacrificial rituals and certain aspects of temple worship (perhaps their duties are prescribed in **23:28–31**). . .

This census should not be seen as a contradiction to the ill-advised military census previously ordered by David and implemented by Joab (**ch. 21**). The purpose of this census of the Levites is to establish a rotation of Levitical service for temple worship.

“And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel with the priests and the Levites. 3 And the Levites were numbered from thirty years old and upward, and their number by census of men was 38,000. 4 Of these, 24,000 were to oversee the work of the house of the LORD; and 6,000 were officers and judges, 5 and 4,000 were gatekeepers, and 4,000 were praising the LORD with the instruments which David made for giving praise. 6 And David divided them into divisions according to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.”

Frederick Mabie: In the presence of the priests and key officials of the community (**v.2**), David articulates the responsibilities that will be undertaken by the main family lines of Levi (**v.6**) once a temple is established in Jerusalem (note **vv.25–26**). The various responsibilities of these Levites are divided between those who will supervise the temple service (**v.4**), those who will serve in the civil realm (officials and judges; **v.4**), the gatekeepers (**v.5**), and the musicians/worship leaders (**v.5**). The latter part of the chapter (cf. **vv.24–27**) reflects the significant diversity of service ultimately performed by the Levitical community.

August Konkel: The census of Levites follows the pattern of including them only in connection with their assigned tasks, not in a general census (**1Chron 23:3-4**; cf. **Num 1:3, 49-50**). The census classifies Levites according to their clerical function (those supervising the work of the temple, officers and judges, guards, and musicians). The enumeration and registration of the Levites are not in the traditional system of father’s houses or families. The organization of the Levites is according to smaller administrative units that the Chronicler calls divisions (**1Chron 23:6-23**). The anticipation of centralized worship at a national sanctuary required a system of divisions of alternating services.

Iain Duguid: New under David is the major function of those who “*offer praises to the Lord with the instruments that I have made for praise.*” Priests had previously blown “*trumpets,*” but David expands the variety with other instruments made specifically for the Levites “*for praise*” in the temple (2 Chron. 7:6; 29:26; Neh. 12:36). The organization of musicians is detailed in 1 Chronicles 25 (cf. 15:16–24; 16:4–7).

All tasks are to be perpetual, day and night, throughout the year. The Levites are accordingly organized on the basis of clans “*in divisions,*” who will work on a rotational basis, ensuring an equitable involvement. David retains the traditional threefold grouping of Levites based on the descendants of Levi’s sons, “*Gershon, Kohath, and Merari*” (6:1–53; cf. Ex. 6:16–19; Num. 3:17–39), but he will adapt their tasks to the new setting of the temple.

B. (:7-23) Genealogical Table of Levitical Families

Frederick Mabie: These Levitical families are organized by David in light of the transition from a worship setting that included a portable shrine and changing sites of worship, to a centralized worship setting at the Jerusalem temple.

August Konkel: There are two notable developments within these divisions of Levitical families. The first is that two of the families of Shimei became too small to support a division of Levites (1Chron 23:11). They came to be enumerated as one ancestral house. Presumably another of the father’s houses that was more prolific divided and came to fill the void. The replacement is not named since this was a development that took place after the time the divisions were established. A second development was that Eleazar, one of the sons of Mahli, son of Merari, did not have any sons (v. 22). This did not eliminate that ancestral house from having a share in the Levitical divisions. Here is a case of implementing the provisions of Numbers 27:1-7 and 36:1-12, made for instances of property inheritance when there were no sons. The daughters through their husbands would retain the property within the family. The daughters of Eleazar married their relatives of the house of Qish, but their family retained its identity. As in the regulations of Numbers, the women do not actually assume the role of the male but bridge the generational gap.

John Schultz: In this section we find ourselves in the same situation as in the opening chapters of First Chronicles in which long lists of genealogy are given. It may be difficult to find food for the soul in these lists. We refer to the remarks of **J. Sidlow Baxter** in his book *Explore the Book*, who stated that these lists were a reminder to the Jews who returned from exile who might have forgotten their roots and divine election. Those, who had returned to the Promised Land for the purpose of rebuilding the place of God’s revelation on earth, needed to be reminded where they came from in order to know where they were going.

1. (:7-11) Sons of Gershon

“Of the Gershonites were Ladan and Shimei. 8 The sons of Ladan were Jehiel the first and Zetham and Joel, three. 9 The sons of Shimei were

Shelomoth and Haziel and Haran, three. These were the heads of the fathers' households of Ladan. 10 And the sons of Shimei were Jahath, Zina, Jeush, and Beriah. These four were the sons of Shimei. 11 And Jahath was the first, and Zizah the second; but Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons, so they became a father's household, one class.”

2. (:12-20) Sons of Kohath

“The sons of Kohath were four: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. 13 The sons of Amram were Aaron and Moses. And Aaron was set apart to sanctify him as most holy, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him and to bless in His name forever. 14 But as for Moses the man of God, his sons were named among the tribe of Levi. 15 The sons of Moses were Gershom and Eliezer. 16 The son of Gershom was Shebuel the chief. 17 And the son of Eliezer was Rehabiah the chief; and Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very many. 18 The son of Izhar was Shelomith the chief. 19 The sons of Hebron were Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third and Jekameam the fourth. 20 The sons of Uzziel were Micah the first and Isshiah the second.”

Andrew Hill: Aaron and Moses are sons of Amram of the Kohathites (**23:12–20**). The line of Aaron is excluded from the Levitical census as the high priestly family (**23:13**). Aaron was “*set apart*” (*bdl*) or singled out for holy service to God and his people. The family of Moses, however, was numbered among the Levites (**23:14**). Unlike Aaron’s family, the family of Moses receives no special status despite his standing as a “*man of God*.” This title signifies one chosen and sent by God as a prophet or a human agent of divine revelation and an example of holiness.

The fourfold list of duties prescribed for Aaron and his descendants is the most comprehensive statement of priestly function in Chronicles and is perhaps a commentary on the anointing of Aaron and his sons (**23:13**; cf. **Ex. 30:30**). Both the priests and the Levites are called “*to minister*” before the Lord and “*pronounce blessings*” in his name (cf. **Deut. 10:8**). **Allen**’s poignant insight calls attention to this priestly blessing as it “formed a bridge between temple worship and mundane life back home.” The distinctive service of the priests consists of consecrating holy things and of offering sacrifices (**23:13**). The priests are responsible to sanctify the vessels and furniture of the Lord’s sanctuary and to maintain the holy status of these objects as they are utilized in worship (cf. **Ex. 30:22–29**). The expression “*offer sacrifices*” (lit., “*burn incense*” or “*go up in smoke*,” Heb. *qtr*) refers in general to the various types of ritual sacrifices superintended by the priests (e.g., **Lev. 1:9; 2:2; 3:5**).

3. (:21-23) Sons of Merari

“The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli were Eleazar and Kish. 22 And Eleazar died and had no sons, but daughters only, so their brothers, the sons of Kish, took them as wives. 23 The sons of Mushi were three: Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth.”

(:24) SUMMARY STATEMENT AND TRANSITION

“These were the sons of Levi according to their fathers' households, even the heads of the fathers' households of those of them who were counted, in the number of names by their census, doing the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from twenty years old and upward.”

Andrew Hill: The summary statement concluding the register of the Levitical heads of families emphasizes the meticulous nature of the census, registered by name and counted individually (23:24). . . serves double duty in that it closes the genealogical tables by summarizing the methodology of the census-taking and directly introduces the unit describing the functions of the Levites.

II. (23:25-32) LEVITICAL DUTIES

A. (:25-27) Association between Gift of Rest and a Permanent Temple

“For David said, ‘The LORD God of Israel has given rest to His people, and He dwells in Jerusalem forever. 26 And also, the Levites will no longer need to carry the tabernacle and all its utensils for its service.’ 27 For by the last words of David the sons of Levi were numbered, from twenty years old and upward.”

Iain Duguid: Again comes a reminder that the new organization and assignments are not simply a matter of a king's desire and authority but flow from the Lord's actions. It is God who has given the “rest” the nation enjoys, and the building of the temple leads to his “dwelling in Jerusalem.” The association between “rest” and temple was a key factor in earlier words to Solomon (1 Chron. 22:9–10) and will be again in words to the people (28:2–6), while the Lord's “dwelling” (Hb. *shakan*, 23:25; replacing the movable “tabernacle,” *mishkan*, v. 26) features in the beginning of his words to David (17:4–5). That the Lord's chosen site is “in Jerusalem” has been the climax of David's abortive census (22:1). The addition of “forever” not only affirms the fixed location but also gives David's arrangements ongoing authority (2 Chron. 35:4; Neh. 12:45).

B. (:28-32) Assistance Provided to the Sons of Aaron in Temple Service

“For their office is to assist the sons of Aaron with the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts and in the chambers and in the purifying of all holy things, even the work of the service of the house of God, 29 and with the showbread, and the fine flour for a grain offering, and unleavened wafers, or what is baked in the pan, or what is well-mixed, and all measures of volume and size. 30 And they are to stand every morning to thank and to praise the LORD, and likewise at evening, 31 and to offer all burnt offerings to the LORD, on the sabbaths, the new moons and the fixed festivals in the number set by the ordinance concerning them, continually before the LORD. 32 Thus they are to keep charge of the tent of meeting, and charge of the holy place, and charge of the sons of Aaron their relatives, for the service of the house of the LORD.”

Andrew Hill: In addition to their role as a supporting cast to the priesthood, the Levites are also in charge of the music that accompanies the rituals of temple worship (**23:30–31**). The key idea of the passage is the contribution of the Levites to the continuity of Israelite worship through the faithful discharging of their responsibilities, first in the Tent of Meeting and then in the temple of David and Solomon (**23:32**). The subordination of the Levites to the priests characteristic at David’s time seems to have changed by the postexilic period, when priest and Levite seem to function more as equals in the service of the second temple.

August Konkel: With the establishment of the temple at Jerusalem, the Chronicler describes the **transformed work** of the Levites. The Levites serve alongside the priests (**1Chron 23:28**); it does not mean that their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord (KJV). The appointment of the Levites is to serve with the sons of Aaron and not in subordination to them. Levites are not assistants to the priests. The service of the Levites is in every aspect of temple function. This is a complete evolution from their service to the tabernacle. Before the temple, Levitical service pertained to the physical labor in moving the tabernacle and providing security (**Num 8:25-26**). The tabernacle, the outer altar, and their respective utensils are forbidden to Levites on the pain of death (**Num 18:3**). As **Milgrom** has unequivocally established, this situation pertained so long as the tabernacle functioned (**Milgrom 1983: 18–28, 30–38**). In Chronicles this situation changes with the building of the temple (**1Chron 23:25-26**). The work of the Levites becomes cult service and is described in considerable detail.

J.A. Thompson: Part of their duty was to provide thanksgiving and praise in the temple, that is, to carry out musical duties. If some of the details of this and subsequent chapters appear trivial and even irrelevant to us, they were evidently important to the Chronicler and his postexilic audience. The details of God's relationship with his people are significant in every age. Organization and planning is not necessarily contrary to sincerity in worship. As **J. G. McConville** has written, “Worship can be sublime and spiritual without becoming disorganized; and the converse is probably not true” (cf. **1 Cor 14:48**). These chapters also remind us of the many tasks and the many people necessary for proper worship and service (cf. **1 Cor 12:14–31**).

III. (24:1-19) DIVISIONS OF PRIESTS – DESCENDANTS OF AARON

“Now the divisions of the descendants of Aaron were these: the sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father and had no sons. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests. 3 And David, with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to their offices for their ministry. 4 Since more chief men were found from the descendants of Eleazar than the descendants of Ithamar, they divided them thus: there were sixteen heads of fathers' households of the descendants of Eleazar, and eight of the descendants of Ithamar according to their fathers' households. 5 Thus they were divided by lot, the one as the other; for they were officers of the sanctuary and officers of God, both

from the descendants of Eleazar and the descendants of Ithamar. 6 And Shemaiah, the son of Nethanel the scribe, from the Levites, recorded them in the presence of the king, the princes, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' households of the priests and of the Levites; one father's household taken for Eleazar and one taken for Ithamar. 7 Now the first lot came out for Jehoiarib, the second for Jedaiah, 8 the third for Harim, the fourth for Seorim, 9 the fifth for Malchijah, the sixth for Mijamin, 10 the seventh for Hakkoz, the eighth for Abijah, 11 the ninth for Jeshua, the tenth for Shecaniah, 12 the eleventh for Eliashib, the twelfth for Jakim, 13 the thirteenth for Huppah, the fourteenth for Jeshebeab, 14 the fifteenth for Bilgah, the sixteenth for Immer, 15 the seventeenth for Hezir, the eighteenth for Happizzez, 16 the nineteenth for Pethahiah, the twentieth for Jehezkel, 17 the twenty-first for Jachin, the twenty-second for Gamul, 18 the twenty-third for Delaiah, the twenty-fourth for Maaziah. 19 These were their offices for their ministry, when they came in to the house of the LORD according to the ordinance given to them through Aaron their father, just as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.”

Frederick Mabie: While these priestly divisions are situated within the general context of David’s preparations for Solomon’s incoming administration (v.3; cf. **chs. 22–29**), they are also rooted in divine instruction previously given to Aaron (cf. v.19). In addition, the outworking of these priestly appointments advances via the casting of lots (cf. vv.5–18), reflecting both equity (“*impartially*,” v.5) and divine involvement (cf. **Pr 16:33**). The casting of lots culminates in the appointment of twenty-four priestly divisions that constitute their “*appointed order of ministering*” in the context of temple service (vv.3, 19).

Mark Boda: the key for the Chronicler is that these families followed the “*procedures*” Aaron had established based on the command of the Lord. As with the Levites, so with the priests, faithful obedience to God’s revelation is key to this new phase of Israelite worship.

IV. (24:20-31) FURTHER DIVISIONS OF LEVITES

“Now for the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. 21 Of Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, Isshiah the first. 22 Of the Izharites, Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. 23 And the sons of Hebron: Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. 24 Of the sons of Uzziel, Micah; of the sons of Micah, Shamir. 25 The brother of Micah, Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. 26 The sons of Merari, Mahli and Mushi; the sons of Jaaziah, Beno. 27 The sons of Merari: by Jaaziah were Beno, Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri. 28 By Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons. 29 By Kish: the sons of Kish, Jerahmeel. 30 And the sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth. These were the sons of the Levites according to their fathers' households. 31 These also cast lots just as their relatives the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, Zadok, Ahimelech,

and the heads of the fathers' households of the priests and of the Levites-- the head of fathers' households as well as those of his younger brother."

Frederick Mabie: Note that the Chronicler does not include the Levitical family line of Gershon in this listing. The reason for this omission is uncertain but may relate to this chapter's focus on those having particular duties at the Jerusalem temple.

August Konkel: The introduction designating the rest of the descendants of Levi in **verse 20** is a sequel to the preceding list of Levites in **1 Chronicles 23:3-23**. The singers and the gatekeepers of the following chapters are also Levites, so this list must be a supplement to the divisions of the Levites already given. It is modeled on the list of priests. The closing verse parallels the introduction of the priests (**1Chron 24:6, 31**), the only omission being the king's officers. For reasons not evident, it does not include the families of Gershon.

Iain Duguid: The careful delineation of the procedures for organizing the "*divisions*" and of the distinct role for the "*sons of Aaron*," but with Levites involved in the process and having specific roles alongside the priests, allocated with the same procedures, may suggest that the Chronicler is addressing postexilic tensions among priestly families and the Levites. He gives greatest attention in **chapters 23–26** to the Levites, but, while the "*sons of Aaron*" are mentioned only in **23:13, 32** and **24:1–19**, they are central. He is affirming that all, as "*brothers*," are involved "*in their service to come into the house of the Lord*" (**24:19**; cf. **23:32**).

J.A. Thompson: The list of Levites here presupposes and updates the list in **23:6–23** by recapitulating parts of it in the same order and extending them by one generation. Thus to the family of Kohath the line of Shubael is extended to Jehdeiah (**v. 20**); the line Rehabiah, to Isshiah (**v. 21**); that of Izhar, to Jahath (**v. 22**). The Hebron line is not changed (**v. 23; 23:19**); Uzziel extended to Shamir (**v. 24**), and so on. A new line is added to Merari, that of Jaaziah, who had three sons. Ten more names were added, apparently reflecting the situation at the time of the author. The addition of only one name in most cases suggests a generation later than the list in **chap. 23**.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What is the relationship between **organization** and **spontaneity** and **sincerity** in our worship?
- 2) Why are so many different people in different roles needed for the successful execution of worship?
- 3) Do we place enough importance on the value of excellent **administration** in the church?

4) What type of tension do you think might have developed between various families of the Levites and the priests? Why would this be so?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Frederick Mabie: David's organization of these Levites is noted here as involving men age thirty and older (v.3), though in the summary of these organizational details the Chronicler also notes the age of twenty and older (vv.24, 27; cf. 2Ch 31:17). While there is no certain explanation for this difference, one possibility is that the different ages of service reflect different time frames. The Chronicler's remark that Levites were enrolled beginning at the age of twenty "*according to the last instructions of David*" (v.27) may suggest that David later modified his earlier instructions. Another option is that Levites entered a type of "apprenticeship" program that began at age twenty, with full service beginning at age thirty (perhaps reflected in earlier instructions; cf. Nu 4:34–49 with Nu 8:24; also note the reference to teachers and students at 1Ch 25:8).

Thomas Constable: David lowered the age required for Levitical service from 30 to 20. He may have done this because there was a need for many more Levites under the new system of worship (vv. 24, 27; cf. v. 3).

Iain Duguid: The account of the **process of allocation** is noteworthy in its detail; there is to be no doubt that, despite one family's being clearly stronger (1 Chron. 24:5–6), the allocation of divisions was transparent and equitable.

(1) The process was directed by David, together with both Zadok and Ahimelech ("*they*"; cf. v. 3);

(2) it was by "*lot*," with the addition of "*all alike*" (Hb. idiom, "*these [one group] with these [the other group]*") underlining the absence of bias;

(3) both families have people who are qualified for the title "*sacred officers and officers of God*," the two terms being in apposition; *sare qodesh*, whether translated "*sacred officers*" or "*princes of the sanctuary*" (as in Isa. 43:28), and the unique *sare ha'elohim* ("*officers/princes of God*") are reminders from both families that the people have been set apart for God;

(4) all the names were recorded at the time by a scribe who is himself named, a Levite from outside the two families;

(5) the whole process was carried out publicly, with a wide representative audience; and

(6) the “heads of the fathers’ houses” (1 Chron. 24:4) were chosen alternatively for the first sixteen, before the final eight for Eleazar (cf. a similar procedure for the singers; ch. 25).

Mark Boda: A comparison of chapters 23 and 24 with their stress on the interaction between priest and Levite, the careful delineation of the duties of each, and the careful presentation of the choice of the various priestly family heads suggests some tension among these groups in the period of the Chronicler.

Martin Selman: Perhaps [the Levites’] main significance for Christians is to emphasize that the people who serve God are just as important as the architectural splendor of the building in which they worship. In the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, God was not content with his own presence in his temple. God’s desire then and now is for true worshippers (cf. John 4:23-24; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16), and for this, the Levites’ role was vital.

Phillip Kayser: David also understood the sound principles of management and administration. He didn't abdicate on the implementation of those issues. I have read authors who take the exact opposite stand on leadership. One author said, "Accountants are in the past, managers are in the present, and leaders are in the future." And while that can be true as a stereotype or an emphasis, David was a leader par excellence, yet he showed great skills in accounting and management. Solomon was an even greater administrator, though everyone would recognize his skills in leadership. And even though many other leaders down through history were visionaries, they did not lose touch with the rubber-meets-the-road issues of administration. And those who could not administrate made sure that they hired great administrators. They did not minimize the importance of administration. . .

- Leadership and management take some degree of maturity, experience, and previous mentorship (23:3, 24; etc.)
- There is great value in specialization, division of labor, organization, networking, and administration in God's kingdom.
- The purpose of musical instruments was not ceremonial, but was "for giving praise" (23:5; 25:5-6; etc.)
- Preparing for leadership takes time and God wants us to use our gifts, not our neighbors (25:8)

Peter Wallace: I want you to see something here. The **ceremonial law** – the regulations for Israel’s worship – had **fixed principles** (here: the Levites were charged with assisting the priests) but some **flexibility in application**. And over time, as the redemptive historical situation of Israel changed, the ceremonies might change as well. For instance, here, we see how the Levites move from carrying the tabernacle and guarding it, to serving in the temple and guarding it. The basic point remains the same:

the Levites are charged with assisting the priests; but the particular work may change. The minor changes that you see in David's application of the Mosaic covenant help us understand what Ezekiel talks about when he describes the **eschatological temple** in **Ezekiel 40-48**. As I said when we went through Ezekiel, Ezekiel is the Hebrews of the Old Testament. Just as Hebrews sees Moses in the (faint) light of Christ, Ezekiel sees Christ dimly in the light of Moses.

TEXT: I Chronicles 25:1-31

TITLE: ORGANIZATION OF LEVITICAL MUSICIANS

BIG IDEA:

THE HIGH PRIORITY OF THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP IS REFLECTED IN DAVID'S ORGANIZATION OF THE TEMPLE MUSICIANS

INTRODUCTION:

Andrew Hill: This section is devoted to the rostering and duties of the temple musicians, the first of several special classes of Levites. The passage suggests that singing in the temple liturgy was typically accompanied by the playing of musical instruments. As in the case with the priests, the Levitical musicians are ordered in families and arranged in twenty-four courses (cf. **24:20–31**).

Martin Selman: The arrangements for the musicians, the first of the specialist groups of Levites, are now given. Music was of the highest importance in Israelite worship, as is clear from many parts of the Old Testament, notably the Psalms. The Levitical musicians' role in leading and directing worship was crucial, for it was they who encouraged the people to worship God with conviction, harmony, and vitality. David's organization prepared for the Levites' leading of worship in Solomon's temple, as illustrated by the temple dedication service when the great Levitical orchestra and choir made their declaration: "*He is good; his love endures for ever*" (**2 Chr. 5:12-14; 7:1-6**; cf. **1 Chr. 15-16**).

J.A. Thompson: The establishment of a temple choir is in one sense surprising. Elsewhere the Chronicler is profoundly concerned that the worship be carried on in strict accord with the law, which makes no provision for a choir. How then does he **justify a levitical choir** in David's reign? **J. W. Kleinig** observes that the Chronicler uses several strategies to support the validity of this institution. Above all, it was authorized by a **prophetic word** from Nathan and Gad (**2 Chr 29:25**). Three other sources of justification for the choir, however, are possible.

- First, in **Num 10:10** the priests are to proclaim the Lord's grace by blowing trumpets at the altar, and this serves to vindicate the use of music in praise.
- Second, **Deut 10:8** and **18:5** say that the Levites "*pronounce blessings*" in God's name (cf. **Deut 18:5**); hence the use of a levitical choir is reasonable.
- Third, the general admonitions in Scripture to rejoice in God's presence allow for worship in song.

Iain Duguid: Such meticulous detailing of arrangements for music in the temple is a unique feature of Chronicles. For his hearers, now with a second temple, the Chronicler

is clearly commending the importance of traditional structures and procedures for ongoing music serving and praising God. The book of Psalms, also postexilic in its canonical form, contains many references to “*singing*” and instruments, together with titles that at times have tantalizing Levitical and musical notes; Chronicles can be read as a complement, reminding hearers to give attention to implementation, thus facilitating corporate praise. . .

The Chronicler’s comments are a reminder that church music is “*to the Lord.*” There is a breadth of involvement as people of different ages and skill levels come together; choirs and musicians are to prepare and perform in a way that points the congregations to God, not themselves. It could be said that every occasion, irrespective of location or numbers present, is a “royal performance” to the King of kings.

Mark Boda: Both the link to the royal house and the link to prophecy strengthen the claim of superior status for the Levitical singers among the Levitical orders.

(:1) PROLOGUE -- SUMMARY

“Moreover, David and the commanders of the army set apart for the service some of the sons of Asaph and of Heman and of Jeduthun, who were to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals; and the number of those who performed their service was:”

Iain Duguid: It is possible that “*Jeduthun*” is the same man as “*Ethan,*” who was appointed initially with Asaph and Heman (**15:17; 6:31–48**). (“*Ethan*” is not named elsewhere [*“Ethan the Ezrahite*” in the superscription to **Psalm 89** is a different person; cf. **1 Chron. 2:6; 1 Kings 4:31**].) “*Jeduthun*” is named several times, including after the exile (**Neh. 11:17**), but with no preceding genealogy. . .

Standing out in its difference is the “*promise of God to exalt*” Heman (**1 Chron. 25:5**). Regarding the priests, the Chronicler simply states the relative strength of the sons of Eleazar to explain why they were allocated more divisions (**24:4**), but with Heman the large family is first said to be a fulfillment of a promise (otherwise unmentioned). Their numerical strength is not fortuitous but God’s active blessing. Further, the last seven sons’ names are unusual in their structure and meaning and may be phrases at the start of psalms (e.g., “*Hananiah, Hanani*”: “Be gracious to me, Yahweh, be gracious to me”; “*Eliathah*”: “You are my God”; “*Giddalti*”: “I have magnified”). This personal note points to the material as being early.

I. (:2-7) THE THREE MUSICAL GUILDS

A. (:2-4) Composition of the Three Musical Guilds

1. (:2) Family of Asaph

“Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah; the sons of Asaph were under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied under the direction of the king.”

2. (:3) Family of Jeduthun

“Of Jeduthun, the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the direction of their father Jeduthun with the harp, who prophesied in giving thanks and praising the LORD.”

3. (:4-5) Family of Heman

“Of Heman, the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, Mahazioth. 5 All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer to exalt him according to the words of God, for God gave fourteen sons and three daughters to Heman.”

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler traces the origin of the temple music ministry in three Levitical families: Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (**25:1**). There is a sense in which these families represent musical guilds, as witnessed in their contribution to the Psalms (cf. Ps. 73–89). Perhaps each family or guild has its own distinctive musical style or repertoire, or some other distinctive feature (note, e.g., the musical notations introducing the psalms of the Asaph and Korah collections, **Ps. 73–89**).

There seems to be some **fluidity in the membership** of the core families responsible for the music ministry of the temple since Ethan replaces Jeduthun in another of the Chronicler's lists of Levitical musicians (cf. **15:19**), and the sons of Korah are connected with nearly a dozen different psalms (**Ps. 42; 44–49; 84–85; 87–88**). David's organization of a corps of Levitical temple musicians is important to the legitimacy of music in worship as temple liturgy developed. This is another way for the Chronicler to connect his present with Israel's past, especially since the postexilic community is still bereft of Davidic kingship. For the Chronicler, the community is still linked to Davidic kingship, at least indirectly, through the temple worship he organized.

B. (:6-7) Coordination of the Three Musical Guilds

“All these were under the direction of their father to sing in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, harps and lyres, for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman were under the direction of the king. 7 And their number who were trained in singing to the LORD, with their relatives, all who were skillful, was 288.”

II. (:8-31) THE 24 DIVISIONS OF LEVITICAL MUSICIANS

“And they cast lots for their duties, all alike, the small as well as the great, the teacher as well as the pupil.”

Mark Boda: As with the priests and then the other Levites in **chapter 24**, so now with the musicians, the appointments are made through “*sacred lots*” without preferential treatment, here defined as discrimination on the basis of age (“*young or old*”) or

expertise (“*teacher or student*”). As with the priestly divisions, 24 lots were cast for 24 families and in each case the leader of the family was accompanied by 12 relatives (25:9-31).

Andrew Hill: The opening verse bridges the two sections of the chapter in the collective reference to the preceding roster of Levitical musicians (“*young and old, teacher and student*”) and in the introduction of the lot-casting for assigned duties. The casting of lots is also the method used to determine the order of ministry for the priestly divisions (24:31) of the Levites and the gate assignments for the gatekeepers (26:13). The Israelites considered the drawing of lots (24:5) as an **impartial selection process** as well as a **divinely superintended one**, since they understood that the decision of the lot is from the Lord (Prov. 16:33). It is unclear whether the lot-casting determines the composition and ministry routine of the Levitical singers or their rotation of liturgical service.

The rota of twenty-four divisions of Levitical musicians is actually one long sentence (25:9–31). Unlike the register of the priests (ch. 24) and the Levitical gatekeepers (ch. 26), the Levitical singers are identified first by family affiliation according to three main branches (25:1–7) and then by the ordering of divisions (25:8–31).

“9 Now the first lot came out for Asaph to Joseph, the second for Gedaliah, he with his relatives and sons were twelve;

10 the third to Zaccur, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

11 the fourth to Izri, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

12 the fifth to Nethaniah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

13 the sixth to Bukkiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

14 the seventh to Jesharelah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

15 the eighth to Jeshaiiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

16 the ninth to Mattaniah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

17 the tenth to Shimei, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

18 the eleventh to Azarel, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

19 the twelfth to Hashabiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

20 for the thirteenth, Shubael, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

21 for the fourteenth, Mattithiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

22 for the fifteenth to Jeremoth, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

23 for the sixteenth to Hananiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

24 for the seventeenth to Joshbekashah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

25 for the eighteenth to Hanani, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

26 for the nineteenth to Mallothi, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

27 for the twentieth to Eliathah, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

28 for the twenty-first to Hothir, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

29 for the twenty-second to Giddalti, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

30 for the twenty-third to Mahazioth, his sons and his relatives, twelve;

31 for the twenty-fourth to Romamti-ezer, his sons and his relatives, twelve.”

Frederick Mabie: As with their priestly brothers (cf. **24:5–18, 31**) and their Levitical brothers (cf. **24:20–31**), these Levitical musicians have their divisions determined by lot without partiality to age or stature (**v.8**; cf. **Pr 16:33**). The Levitical musicians appointed to musical ministry at the temple are organized into twenty-four divisions in analogy to the twenty-four divisions of Levitical-Aaronic priests appointed to minister at the Jerusalem temple (cf. **1Ch 24:1–19**). This suggests that these Levitical musicians ministered in tandem with the twenty-four divisions of priests in the context of temple worship, feasts, and morning and evening sacrifice together with others who led in expressions of praise and thanksgiving (cf. **1Ch 23:30–31**; note the superscriptions to **Pss 92; 100**; cf. **Isa 30:29**; **Selman**, 236; **Hill**, 310). When these roles are understood together, it is clear that David envisioned the temple as home to a vibrant tapestry of praise and worship, reflecting the splendor of God’s goodness and holiness.

August Konkel: The casting of lots for the priests was to assign the rotation of duties without prejudice (**1 Chron 24:3, 31**). The divisions rotated every week, each serving for a total of two weeks of the year, irrespective of the festival times. The casting of lots for the musicians is not specific to the rotations of service, as in the case of the priests. **Equality** is emphasized in casting lots for the duties of the singers (**25:8**), so there could be no discrimination in the assignment of less significant responsibilities or in the skill level of the performer. Both apprentice and skilled performer are assigned their duties by lot. These assignments appear to be the designation of performers and their duties within the divisions. The singers seem to be in general groupings to fulfill the requirements of duty, which may have helped facilitate considerable responsibility for a relatively small number of people.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How important are skill level, musical training, and practice for the execution of worship music?
- 2) Why do some denominations believe that there should be no musical accompaniment in NT churches today?
- 3) How effective is our use of the Psalms as music in our NT churches?
- 4) How can we better utilize the teaching function of worship music?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

August Konkel: As indicated by the ancestral heads, divisions of responsibility between music, worship, and security overlapped. The temple was a sacred place of enormous treasure. It needed to be protected from intrusion by unqualified individuals and from those with nefarious intentions. In time of war or political instability, the temple was a primary object of attack. Those leading in music and worship shared in security matters. This was not just a matter of musical capabilities, but also of character and loyalty. Officials responsible for state security were actively engaged to watch over all individuals employed by the state. Ancient governments did not have sharp distinctions of civil and military departments.

Music is described as prophecy (**1Chron 25:1-3**). Heman is also described as a seer (**v. 5**). Prophets and seers were important personnel in royal courts, frequently consulted in times of war and distress. It is only in Chronicles that prophets are immediately associated with music of the temple, but prophets are elsewhere a part of the court of the king, to advise him (such as Nathan and Isaiah), and prophets also made use of music (**1Sam 10:5; 2Kings 3:15**). Prophecy included a broad range of activities that were carried out in a great diversity of ways. In the view of the Chronicler, an important function of prophecy was to make confession and give praise, which involved music. This conforms to fundamental concepts of prophecy, to lead people in knowing the work of God in his world. Certain psalms are exhortation, drawing lessons from the past (e.g., **Ps 77**); others are confessions about the character of God as the Creator (e.g., **Pss 103; 104**). Psalms were one of the most important aspects of prophets doing the work of admonishment, correction, and confession.

Frederick Mabie: Another aspect of the organization of personnel in anticipation of a centralized temple in Jerusalem (cf. **23:2-32; 24:1-31**) relates to the branch of the Levites responsible “*for the music of the temple of the LORD*” (**v.6**). Following the completion of the temple, music was one of the primary responsibilities of the Levites

(cf. **23:2–32**; **2Ch 5:7–13**). As reflected here, numerous (288; **v.7**) Levitical ministers had responsibility in the realm of music and worship, which featured “*joyful songs, accompanied by musical instruments: lyres, harps and cymbals*” (**15:16**).

As reflected in the earlier treatment of the musical branch of the Levites (cf. **6:31–47**), prominence is attributed to Heman the Kohathite (**vv.4–5**; cf. **6:33**; **15:16–17**), who is noted as the “*king’s seer*” (**v.5**). Heman was also blessed in conjunction with God’s promises to exalt him (**v.5**). The musical leadership of these Levites affected subsequent generations of Israelites (and Christians), as reflected in the sixteen Psalms attributed to these three Levitical leaders (Heman: **Ps 88**; Asaph: **Pss 50, 73–83**; and Jeduthun [**v.3**]: **Pss 39, 62, 77**). . .

While the oracle proclaimed through the Levite Jahaziel during the time of Jehoshaphat certainly shows that Levites may be used of God to receive and proclaim **prophetic utterances** (see **2Ch 20:14–17**), the context here of Levites appointed to musical service at the Jerusalem temple suggests that the acts of “*prophecy*” discharged by these musical Levites relates to their role in the proclamation of God’s truth through music rather than ecstatic utterances (cf. **Japhet**, 440–41). In line with this view, note that Moses’ blessing of the Israelite tribes states that a responsibility of the tribe of Levi was teaching God’s precepts and law (cf. **Dt 33:10**). As such, the singing of songs that proclaimed God’s truth and exhorted God’s people to obedience (cf. the theological content of the Psalms attributed to Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun) functions in parallel to prophetic ministry.

Andrew Hill: Music and singing are connected with Hebrew liturgy from its inception in the covenant code ratified at Mount Sinai. God’s deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt was the redemptive event that prompted worship in song throughout Hebrew history. The Song of Moses and the Song of Miriam are the precursors of later praise hymns and songs of thanksgiving celebrating Yahweh’s activity in history (**Ex. 15:1–21**). In fact, another song of Moses was sung as an oath of witness or testimony to covenant renewal with God (**Deut. 31:19**; **31:30–32:47**).

Singing to instrumental accompaniment seems to be the norm in the Old Testament. Such music was a part of the temple dedication (**Ps. 30**), Sabbath worship (**Ps. 92**), temple worship (**2 Chron. 29:28**; **Ps. 100:2**), and other special festivals (**Isa. 30:29**). It is not surprising that David organizes the Levitical musical guilds responsible for the music of the temple liturgy since he himself accounts for nearly half of the songs in the Psalter (cf. **2 Sam. 23:1**). No doubt, his example of exuberant and skillful musicianship serves the Levitical corps well as they direct the worship of Israel.

The three families of musicians trace their lineage to Levi. Asaph is a descendant of Gershon, a son of Levi (**6:39**). Jeduthun is identified as a Levite; his ancestry is not traced, although the name appears in the titles of three psalms (**Ps. 39**; **62**; **77**). Heman is a descendant of Kohath, another son of Levi (**1 Chron. 6:33**; cf. **Ps. 88**). The four sons of Asaph, the six sons of Jeduthun, and the fourteen sons of Heman account for the twenty-four divisions of temple musicians. Each is under the supervision of their father.

TEXT: I Chronicles 26:1-32

TITLE: ORGANIZATION OF LEVITICAL GATEKEEPERS, TREASURERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS

BIG IDEA:

LEVITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES ENSURE PROPER ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: Levitical responsibilities for the tabernacle in **Numbers 3:6–10** included “keep[ing] guard over” (Hb. *shamar*) Aaron “and over the whole congregation, . . . [and] all the furnishings,” with a warning that “if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death” (cf. **1 Chron. 23:32**). The temple’s physical structure was much larger and more complex, with its four gates leading into the courtyard and to rooms in the gate complexes and along a colonnade used for administration and storage of temple treasures, equipment, clothing, and food (**9:26–27**). There was thus a need both to provide security against illegal (i.e., not clean) entry and theft or damage and to be responsible for financial and material resources. The organization of such matters is the concern of this chapter, the appointment of “gatekeepers” (**26:1–19**) who will also have oversight and administration of “treasuries” (**vv. 20–28**) and related external matters (**vv. 29–32**). The term “gatekeeper” (*sho‘er*) describes those responsible for all activities associated with the “gate” (*sha‘ar*) and its associated rooms—hence a combination of maintaining security and keeping the treasury and stores (collecting and disbursing). Multiple responsibility is clear in the listing and detailed description in **9:17–32**.

Andrew Hill: This chapter continues the lengthy section on the organization of the Levites and civil service corps under David (**23:2–27:34**). This passage contains two basic units: the register of Levitical gatekeepers and their duties (**26:1–19**), and a second register of other Levites and a list of their corresponding duties (**26:20–32**). The essential genre of the chapter is “register.”

August Konkel: **vv. 20-32** -- This closing section deals with two main topics: responsibility for the treasuries and duties of administration in the northern areas west and east of the Jordan. The treasuries are said to be those of the temple and the dedicated offerings. There is frequent reference to temple and palace treasuries. The dedicated offerings are not likely a third treasury, but are a part of the temple treasury, to provide for its maintenance.

Martin Selman: As God’s people pay proper attention to their status as a worshipping community, the distinction between the sacred and the secular disappears. All tasks, whether mundane or specialized, “religious” or “lay”, have value in the eyes of God. Every Levite was as much involved in the “*service of the temple of the Lord*” as the priests and their immediate assistants (cf. **23:24, 32**). The gatekeepers were “to serve in

the house of the Lord side by side with their kinsmen” (v. 12, REB, NEB), and even the Levitical officials in Transjordan were occupied with “the business of God and of the king” (v. 32, JB).

I. (:1-19) ORGANIZATION OF LEVITICAL GATEKEEPERS

A. (:1-11) Composition of the Gatekeepers – Family Identity

“For the divisions of the gatekeepers there were of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. 2 And Meshelemiah had sons: Zechariah the first-born, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, 3 Elam the fifth, Johanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh. 4 And Obed-edom had sons: Shemaiah the first-born, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, 5 Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, and Peullethai the eighth; God had indeed blessed him. 6 Also to his son Shemaiah sons were born who ruled over the house of their father, for they were mighty men of valor. 7 The sons of Shemaiah were Othni, Rephael, Obed, and Elzabad, whose brothers, Elihu and Semachiah, were valiant men. 8 All these were of the sons of Obed-edom; they and their sons and their relatives were able men with strength for the service, 62 from Obed-edom. 9 And Meshelemiah had sons and relatives, 18 valiant men. 10 Also Hosah, one of the sons of Merari had sons: Shimri the first (although he was not the first-born, his father made him first), 11 Hilkiyah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth; all the sons and relatives of Hosah were 13.”

Andrew Konkel: David’s administrative reorganization included the integration and assignments of security personnel. The rotation of sanctuary guards provided continuous protection for the temple complex. **Korah** is a descendant of the Levites through Levi’s second son, Kohath. The other line of gatekeepers is from **Merari** (v. 10). No gatekeepers are named from **Gershon**.

Andrew Hill: The clause “*capable men with the strength to do the work*” (26:8) is not a reference to the military character of these Levites (cf. “*able men,*” 26:7, 9). Rather, it indicates that these individuals possess the **physical strength** demanded for the difficult task of opening, closing, and guarding the large doors or gates providing access to the temple precinct.

B. (:12-19) Coordination and Placement of the Gatekeepers

“To these divisions of the gatekeepers, the chief men, were given duties like their relatives to minister in the house of the LORD. 13 And they cast lots, the small and the great alike, according to their fathers' households, for every gate. 14 And the lot to the east fell to Shelemiah. Then they cast lots for his son Zechariah, a counselor with insight, and his lot came out to the north. 15 For Obed-edom it fell to the south, and to his sons went the storehouse. 16 For Shuppim and Hosah it was to the west, by the gate of Shallecheth, on the ascending highway. Guard corresponded to guard. 17 On the east there were six Levites, on the north four daily, on the south four daily, and at the storehouse two by two. 18 At the Parbar on the west there were four at the

highway and two at the Parbar. 19 These were the divisions of the gatekeepers of the sons of Korah and of the sons of Merari.”

Frederick Mabie: In addition to protecting each of the compass-point entrances to the temple complex (cf. **vv.13–18**; especially the eastern entrance, which faced the main temple entrance and received added protection; cf. **v.17**), gatekeepers worked with the priests to ensure the sanctity of sacred space and sacred objects (cf. **15:18, 23–24**). In light of the critical importance of protecting holy space and holy things, the Chronicler earlier described the task of the gatekeepers as a “*position of trust*” (cf. **9:22**). Similarly, here he describes the gatekeepers as being “*very capable men*” (**v.6**), “*able men*” (**vv.7, 9**), “*capable men with the strength to do the work*” (**v.8**), and in the case of one of the east gate guards a “*wise counselor*” (**v.14**).

J.A. Thompson: What precisely did the gatekeepers do? They have generally been regarded by commentators as “cultic officials of a more or less peripheral nature,” and yet they were regarded as important and were classified as Levites, even if of a somewhat lower order. Recent study, however, suggests that the gatekeepers were a paramilitary security force. They possessed three significant roles in the Jerusalem temple-state:

- (1) the governance of the state,
- (2) the administration of temple revenue, and
- (3) the maintenance of the temple and its paraphernalia.

There is evidence for this in **1 Chr 26:1–19**, and further confirmation is found in the activities of these individuals throughout Chronicles. This information may be gained both in the list of names (**vv. 1–11**) and in their placement (**vv. 12–18**). They were stationed at entry ways to buildings and intersections within the city. They functioned as guards for the temple and its precincts from theft or from illegal entry into sacred areas. The vocabulary used by the Chronicler in relation to the gatekeepers ties them firmly to the Judean military establishment. Some of the soldiers who fought in David's army in **1 Chronicles 12** were Levites (**1 Chr 12:27**), and priests (**1 Chr 12:28**), including Zadok, were described in military terms. The priests and Levites were thus related to David's military organization in **1 Chronicles 12**, which explains why **chap. 27** fits into these chapters.

August Konkel: There were twenty-four gatekeepers on duty at any one time (**1Chron 26:17-18**): six at the east, four at the north, four at the south, two at the storehouse, four at the west, two at the gate above the ascent, and two at the colonnade (*parbar*; NIV, court).

Andrew Hill: The summary statement tracing the divisions of the temple gatekeepers to two of the sons of Levi, **Kohath** indirectly (from Izhar to Korah) and **Merari** (directly), legitimizes or sanctions these Levitical servants by means of their genealogy (**26:19**). The conclusion also attaches the family of **Obed-Edom** to the Kohathites through Korah (cf. **26:15, 19**).

Iain Duguid: The “east” gate, “the king’s gate” (1 Chron. 26:14, 17; 9:18), had the most activity. It was common in walled towns for major business to be conducted at the gate (e.g., Ruth 4:1), and, at least in the later Persian and Greek Empires, people gathered at the gate of a royal complex to seek an audience, with gatekeepers crucial in determining access and communication of messages (e.g., Dan. 2:49 [“court”]; Est. 2:21; 3:2). Accordingly, it is relevant that “Zechariah,” allocated to the east gate, was a “shrewd counselor” (“one who counsels with insight”); all other instances of “counselor” in Chronicles are associated with a king (1 Chron. 26:14; 27:32, 33; 2 Chron. 22:3, 4; 25:16; cf. Ezra 4:5; 7:28; 8:25). This suggests a key administrative role for some of the gatekeepers.

II. (:20-32) ORGANIZATION OF LEVITICAL TREASURERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS

A. (:20-28) Organization of Levitical Treasurers

“And the Levites, their relatives, had charge of the treasures of the house of God, and of the treasures of the dedicated gifts. 21 The sons of Ladan, the sons of the Gershonites belonging to Ladan, namely, the Jehielites, were the heads of the fathers’ households, belonging to Ladan the Gershonite. 22 The sons of Jehieli, Zetham and Joel his brother, had charge of the treasures of the house of the LORD. 23 As for the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites, 24 Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was officer over the treasures. 25 And his relatives by Eliezer were Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiiah his son, Joram his son, Zichri his son, and Shelomoth his son. 26 This Shelomoth and his relatives had charge of all the treasures of the dedicated gifts, which King David and the heads of the fathers’ households, the commanders of thousands and hundreds, and commanders of the army, had dedicated. 27 They dedicated part of the spoil won in battles to repair the house of the LORD. 28 And all that Samuel the seer had dedicated and Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner and Joab the son of Zeruiah, everyone who had dedicated anything, all of this was in the care of Shelomoth and his relatives.”

Frederick Mabie: This section of the Levitical personnel who will serve at the Jerusalem temple focuses on stewards of temple treasures and other items dedicated to Yahweh (v.20). While the specifics of the main temple treasures are not given, the Chronicler provides additional details concerning the “dedicated things.” These separately kept treasures are connected with five individuals (Samuel, Saul, David, Abner, and Joab) and three groups of military leaders. Given the number of military leaders included in this list, most of these dedicated items originated from plunder following military victories (cf. v.27). A portion of these dedicated things will provide for the repair and maintenance of the temple complex (v.27), which suggests another aspect of David’s preparation.

August Konkel: The dedicated offerings are an accumulation of booty from many wars, going all the way back to Samuel and Saul. These were dedicated to repair of the

temple (26:27), the usual meaning of the word (*lehazzeq*). These dedications were gathered in anticipation of the temple that would be built. Treasure left for repair of the temple is a most noble legacy. Israel's military and civil leadership are credited with the foresight of not only building the temple but also of maintaining it for later generations.

Andrew Hill: the duties of the treasurers certainly include tracking the inventory of the treasuries, periodic accounting of the goods in storage, and the guarding of the repositories.

Iain Duguid: The “treasuries” are of **two types**, each assigned to a family from a different Levitical line. Levites from the line of Gershon were assigned the “treasuries of the house of God/the Lord” (26:20, 22; 28:12), which covered a range of revenue; later we read of the collection of revenues at the east gate (2 Chron. 31:14), probably including the flour, wine, and so on mentioned in 1 Chronicles 9:29. More detail is given of the content of the second type, the “treasuries of the dedicated gifts” (26:20, 26; 28:12), assigned to an Amramite family (line of Kohath). These contained the battle “spoils” (26:27); those David dedicated were previously detailed in 18:11 (and placed in the temple by Solomon; 2 Chron. 5:1), but those others set aside are not mentioned elsewhere (except possibly by Saul; 1 Sam. 15:15, 21). That these spoils are explicitly to be used for “maintenance of the house of the Lord” is a statement showing the Chronicler’s message to his hearers at least a century after the second temple was built: provision only for the act of building is not sufficient, as maintenance is an ongoing need, aided by the faithfulness of previous generations. The example of key people from Samuel onward is to be emulated.

B. (:29-32) Organization of Other Levites Serving away from the Temple

“As for the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were assigned to outside duties for Israel, as officers and judges. 30 As for the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his relatives, 1,700 capable men, had charge of the affairs of Israel west of the Jordan, for all the work of the LORD and the service of the king. 31 As for the Hebronites, Jerijah the chief (these Hebronites were investigated according to their genealogies and fathers' households, in the fortieth year of David's reign, and men of outstanding capability were found among them at Jazer of Gilead) 32 and his relatives, capable men, were 2,700 in number, heads of fathers' households. And King David made them overseers of the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of the Manassites concerning all the affairs of God and of the king.”

Frederick Mabie: Twice the Chronicler notes that these “capable” (v.31) Levites are entrusted with a two-pronged service: **spiritual service** (“all the work of the LORD,” v.30; cf. “every matter pertaining to God,” v.32) and **royal service** (“the king’s service,” v.30; cf. “the affairs of the king,” v.32). Given their mandate as officials and judges, presumably they have the responsibility to settle and enforce matters in the **religious realm** (e.g., Torah law) and the **civil realm** (perhaps in conjunction with civil obligations toward the royal infrastructure; recall 1Sa 8:11–17).

J.A. Thompson: The descendants of **Izhar** and **Hebron** were assigned “*duties away from the temple, as officials and judges over Israel.*” These outside duties evidently were different from “*the king's service*” (v. 30) and “*the affairs of the king*” (v. 32), both of which were taken over by the Hebronites. The descendants of Izhar thus performed a judicial role. The “*officials*” were the “*helpers*” of the judges, a kind of subordinate executive. The Hebronites (vv. 30–32) may have been responsible for religious and secular taxes. Clearly the Levites had a much broader role than that of subordinate temple servants.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Do we make artificial distinctions between “spiritual” and “non-spiritual” areas of service in the church?
- 2) Do we show proper respect for those involved in the physical upkeep of the church facilities?
- 3) What type of confluence do we see in Israelite leadership between the religious, civil and military realms?
- 4) What type of fiscal responsibility and accountability do we enforce on our churches and Christian organizations?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: Two special groups of Levites are placed in charge of public administration in regions west of the Jordan River (26:29–32). The passage has troubled commentators on three counts.

- (1) Civil-service assignments for the Levitical corps are usually understood as a postexilic development (cf. 2 Chron. 19:8–11; Neh. 11:16).
- (2) According to the Chronicler’s tallies, there are more Levites in service east than west of the Jordan River.
- (3) Some biblical scholars have questioned whether the Israelites had political authority over the Transjordan between the united monarchy and the Maccabean period.

It should be noted, however, that precursors of this type of civil service by the tribe of Levi may be found in the census-taking of Israel after the Exodus (cf. Num. 1:44) and

in Samuel, the “circuit-riding” judge (cf. **1 Sam. 7:15–17**). **Selman** has countered that the unusual geographical location and large number of the Levites employed as civil servants may be part of the “*army of officials*” commissioned by Solomon (cf. **1 Kings 4:7–19; 9:23**).

Mark Boda: Following the organization of the musicians, the Chronicler lists the gatekeepers. As has been the trend so far in this section of Chronicles, the list is inserted at the outset (**26:1b-11**), followed by notes on the selection process and their vocational function (**26:12-19**).

The list in **26:1b-11** reveals a tripartite division of gatekeepers.

First, from the Levitical line of Kohath was the Horahite **Meshelemiah**, whose seven sons are listed in **26:2-3**. . .

Second, **Obed-edom** was from the Levitical line of Kohath and possibly also the clan of Korah (**26:19**), not surprising in light of his earlier function as gatekeeper in the Chronicler’s account of the transport of the Ark to Jerusalem in **15:24**. . .

The final division of gatekeepers the Chronicler lists is that of **Hosah** from the Merari clan of Levi. Little is said of Hosah’s clan except for a listing of four sons, enumeration of thirteen relatives, and the odd note that his eldest son did not assume the mantle of leadership in the family.

John Schultz: No explanation is given as to what would be involved in “*all the work of the Lord*” which was the responsibility of the Levites west of the Jordan. **Barnes’ Notes** suggests: “The ‘business of the Lord’ in the provinces would consist especially in the collection of the tithes, the redemption-money, and the free-will offerings of the people. It may perhaps have included some religious teaching. Compare **2 Chron 17:7-9**.”

TEXT: I Chronicles 27:1-34

TITLE: ORGANIZATION OF MILITARY LEADERS AND NATIONAL OFFICIALS

BIG IDEA:

KING DAVID SET THE STAGE FOR SOLOMON'S TEMPLE BUILDING PROJECT BY ORGANIZING THE MILITARY AND RELYING ON WISE CIVIL AND ROYAL OFFICIALS

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: One further block completes the listing of personnel: heads of the military divisions (**1 Chron. 27:1–15**), leaders of the tribes (**vv. 16–24**), stewards of royal property throughout the land (**vv. 25–31**), and royal counselors (**vv. 32–34**). They represent the “*leaders of Israel*” David called together along with the “*priests and the Levites*” (**23:2**). These personnel are then represented in the large assembly David calls in **28:1 . . .**

The Chronicler’s portrayal is of David making these arrangements and having wise counselors, so setting the scene to enable Solomon to focus his energies on temple building in accord with David’s provision and instructions (e.g., **1 Chron. 28:10–21; 2 Chron. 1:4; 2:7, 14; 3:1; 5:1; 7:6; 8:14**).

Mark Boda: With **chapter 27** the Chronicler leaves behind the enumeration of the Levitical families, moving to the “secular” leadership of his kingdom. He begins with the military (**27:1-15**), then moves to the tribes (**27:16-22**), and finally, after a short note on the census, concludes with the property managers (**27:25-31**) and royal advisers (**27:32-34**).

Martin Selman: What then is the Chronicler’s purpose in including [these lists]? It seems that the various aspects of Israel’s political structures, including the military divisions (**vv. 1-15**), the twelve-tribe structure (**vv. 16-22**), and a single monarchical authority across the geographical regions (**vv. 25-31**), confirm the whole nation’s readiness to build the temple. The participation of the royal officials is especially interesting, since it is notable that **chapters 23-27** begin (**23:1**) and end (**27:25-34**) with an emphasis on royal commitment.

I. (:1-24) ORGANIZING THE MILITARY LEADERS

August Konkel: The rotation of military units each month ensured continuous protection for the major institutions of Jerusalem. This arrangement anticipates the expanded administrative system of Solomon, in which there were twelve districts, each headed by an officer, to provide regular revenues from all parts of the country (**1Kings 4–5**). . .

Distinctions of jurisdiction between temple and state are not mutually exclusive. The military could include a priest. Duties of gatekeepers providing security for the temple were by necessity carried out by warriors.

J.A. Thompson: David set up arrangements to call fighting men together (**1 Chr 21**) into a citizen's army. The compiler of this record presents a carefully ordered statement about David's army—twelve divisions each consisting of twenty-four thousand men, each obligated to serve the king's army for a month a year, each commanded by an officer bearing the name of one of David's heroes. The army was arranged in perfect order in a strictly systematic scheme.

Andrew Hill: Rather than a standing army, the military divisions described in **27:2–15** represent a militia or citizen army, perhaps akin to our National Guard.

A. (:1-15) Commanders of the 12 Monthly Rotations

(:1) Introduction

“Now this is the enumeration of the sons of Israel, the heads of fathers' households, the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and their officers who served the king in all the affairs of the divisions which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, each division numbering 24,000.”

1. (:2-3) First Month – Jashobeam the Son of Zabdiel

“Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel had charge of the first division for the first month; and in his division were 24,000. 3 He was from the sons of Perez, and was chief of all the commanders of the army for the first month.”

2. (:4) Second Month – Dodai the Ahohite

“Dodai the Ahohite and his division had charge of the division for the second month, Mikloth being the chief officer; and in his division were 24,000.”

3. (:5-6) Third Month – Benaiah the Son of Jehoiada

“The third commander of the army for the third month was Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, as chief; and in his division were 24,000. 6 This Benaiah was the mighty man of the thirty, and had charge of thirty; and over his division was Ammizabad his son.”

4. (:7) Fourth Month – Asahel the Brother of Joab and Zebadiah His Son

“The fourth for the fourth month was Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; and in his division were 24,000.”

5. (:8) Fifth Month – Shamhuth the Izrahite

“The fifth for the fifth month was the commander Shamhuth the Izrahite;

and in his division were 24,000.”

6. (:9) Sixth Month – Ira the Tekoite

“The sixth for the sixth month was Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; and in his division were 24,000.”

7. (:10) Seventh Month – Helez the Pelonite

“The seventh for the seventh month was Helez the Pelonite of the sons of Ephraim; and in his division were 24,000.”

8. (:11) Eighth Month – Sibbecai the Hushathite

“The eighth for the eighth month was Sibbecai the Hushathite of the Zerahites; and in his division were 24,000.”

9. (:12) Ninth Month – Abiezer the Anathothite

“The ninth for the ninth month was Abiezer the Anathothite of the Benjamites; and in his division were 24,000.”

10. (:13) Tenth Month – Maharai the Netophathite

“The tenth for the tenth month was Maharai the Netophathite of the Zerahites; and in his division were 24,000.”

11. (:14) Eleventh Month – Benaiah the Pirathonite

“The eleventh for the eleventh month was Benaiah the Pirathonite of the sons of Ephraim; and in his division were 24,000.”

12. (:15) Twelfth Month – Heldai the Netophathite

“The twelfth for the twelfth month was Heldai the Netophathite of Othniel; and in his division were 24,000.”

Frederick Mabie: Another aspect of David’s organization of personnel in anticipation of the handover of power to Solomon is the matter of the strength and security of the nation. The structure of this section implies that these military conscripts “*served the king*” (v.1) one month per year and thus are not fulltime soldiers (except in times of war).

Iain Duguid: Whereas previously mustering for battles had been ad hoc on a basis of tribes, now the nation had a standing citizen militia, organized independently of tribal structure. Apart from battles, the troops likely guarded borders and provided security, as well as manning various strongholds. As each division “*came and went,*” changing guard each month, there was no interruption.

B. (:16-22) Register of Tribal Chiefs According to the Census of David

1. (:16a) Heading

“Now in charge of the tribes of Israel:”

2. (:16b-22a) Listing

“chief officer for the Reubenites was Eliezer the son of Zichri;

for the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maacah;

17 for Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; for Aaron, Zadok;

18 for Judah, Elihu, one of David's brothers;

for Issachar, Omri the son of Michael;

19 for Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah;

for Naphtali, Jeremoth the son of Azriel;

20 for the sons of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah;

for the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiiah;

21 for the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah;

for Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner;

22 for Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham.”

3. (:22b) Summary

These were the princes of the tribes of Israel.”

August Konkell: The list of officers is closely related to the registry of tribal names, an indication that these leaders had responsibility in gathering the census data. The census of David was not entirely misguided; the fault lay with David's personal motives. Reference to that census in **verses 23-24** indicates that it was the basis for establishing tribal officers, unless the enumeration of **27:1** is regarded as a separate census. Tribal information has evident parallels with the divinely mandated census in **Numbers 1:1-19**. As in that census, those under age twenty are not counted. The Chronicler indicates that to do so would cast doubt on the promise to Abraham (**1Chron 27:23**). The tribal order is substantially followed. Naphtali is out of place in comparison with any other list, as it usually comes near the end (cf. **Gen 35:23-26**). . . This administrative registry is to maintain order in the respective territories as well as make provision for the temple.

Frederick Mabie: In addition to the rotating division commanders noted above (**vv.1-15**), the Chronicler also delineates military leaders at the **tribal level**. Although the Chronicler does not specifically state that David made these appointments, the broader context of **chs. 24-27** suggests that David selected these tribal leaders as part of his organizational efforts.

Iain Duguid: The list of tribal leaders illustrates some of the **fluidity** of the division into twelve. The two halves of Manasseh are treated separately, while Gad and Asher are missing (Gad's territory was east of the Jordan, so perhaps it was subsumed under Reuben or the eastern half of Manasseh, while Asher's is on the coast; they are the last two names in **2:2**). The separation of "Aaron" (**27:17**) recognizes the distinction between priests and other Levites.

Thomas Constable: Notice that there are two layers of administration: the **tribal leaders** of **v16-22** are important for their connections to their tribes, but David does not rely entirely on them (the period of the judges showed that the tribes could be selfish and independent). Rather, he appoints his **mighty men** to run the central administration of the kingdom.

C. (:23-24) Clarification Regarding the Census

"But David did not count those twenty years of age and under, because the LORD had said He would multiply Israel as the stars of heaven. 24 Joab the son of Zeruiah had begun to count them, but did not finish; and because of this, wrath came upon Israel, and the number was not included in the account of the chronicles of King David."

Frederick Mabie: David's nonregistration of those twenty and younger (**v.23**) is connected with God's promise to Abraham concerning his descendants (cf. **Ge 15:5**) as well as David's ill-fated census (**v.24**). The Chronicler's mention of the census commissioned by David reminds the reader of the fundamental issue that covenantal faithfulness necessitates complete trust in God to fulfill his promises (e.g., **v.23**). Recall that David's census (cf. **21:1-22:1**) implied a level of trust in his troops rather than complete trust in God.

Andrew Hill: The brief but important paragraph explaining why no census statistics are recorded for the tribes of Israel in the book of the annals of King David (**27:23-24**) is significant for two reasons.

(1) The report of Joab's failure to complete the census is not an effort by the Chronicler to transfer blame from David to Joab. Rather, the writer assumes the audience's knowledge of the parallel account in Samuel. The record notes Joab's aversion to the task and God's judgment against David and Israel for the king's presumption in equating political strength with the size of his military forces (**2 Sam. 24:3, 10**; cf. **1 Chron. 21:3, 7-8**). Apparently Joab recognized more clearly than David that "*no king is saved by the size of his army*" (**Ps. 33:16**; cf. **147:10**).

(2) Implicit in the reference to the Abrahamic covenant to make Israel as numerous as the stars in the sky is the sovereignty of God in "growing" Israel as a nation (cf. **Gen. 12:2**). David has compromised God's rule over Israel

because, as **Selman** has observed, “any unauthorized census could limit Israel’s faith and God’s freedom.”

II. (:25-34) RELYING ON WISE CIVIL AND ROYAL OFFICIALS

A. (:25-31) Register of Stewards of Royal Properties -- Civil Administrators

“Now Azmaveth the son of Adiel had charge of the king's storehouses.

And Jonathan the son of Uzziah had charge of the storehouses in the country, in the cities, in the villages, and in the towers.

26 And Ezri the son of Chelub had charge of the agricultural workers who tilled the soil.

27 And Shimei the Ramathite had charge of the vineyards;

and Zabdi the Shiphmite had charge of the produce of the vineyards stored in the wine cellars.

28 And Baal-hanan the Gederite had charge of the olive and sycamore trees in the Shephelah;

and Joash had charge of the stores of oil.

29 And Shitrai the Sharonite had charge of the cattle which were grazing in Sharon;

and Shaphat the son of Adlai had charge of the cattle in the valleys.

30 And Obil the Ishmaelite had charge of the camels;

and Jehdeiah the Meronothite had charge of the donkeys.

31 And Jaziz the Hagrite had charge of the flocks.

All these were overseers of the property which belonged to King David.”

August Konkell: Royalty typically owns **vast property holdings**, generating significant industry. Twelve administrative officials are listed, following the pattern of the two previous enumerations of officials. The administration of royal affairs includes storehouses in Jerusalem and the outlying provinces, as well as property for various types of agriculture and livestock. Included in the list of names are an Ishmaelite (**v. 30**) and a Hagrite (**v. 31**), which is quite natural in the time of David.

Wine and oil were two staples of a Palestinian economy. . .

Camels and donkeys were not related to agriculture but to trade routes (Aharoni 1979: 15–16). The main arteries of commerce passed through Palestine, making trade an important branch of the economy. Control over this commerce was a virtual monopoly of kings and rulers.

Andrew Hill: The diversified range of agricultural and pastoral activities sponsored by the king are striking and suggest a far more extensive administrative system in place under David than is sometimes recognized. The overseers may be distinguished in four categories:

- the treasurers (27:25),
- the overseer of agriculture (27:26),
- the overseers of wine and oil (27:27–28), and
- the overseers of livestock (27:29–31).

J.A. Thompson: There is no indication of formal taxation in the modern sense. Crown expenditure was met by income from crown property. Kings in the ancient Near East acquired large areas of land, often as a result of military conquest, and drew on these resources for state expenses. These verses provide an interesting insight into the range of income-producing activities that provided the economic strength of the kingdom. . .

The management of crown property also was important—the text mentions the farmers (v. 26), the vineyards and the wineries (v. 27), the olive and sycamore-fig trees and the production of olive oil (v. 28), the cattle herds (v. 29), the camels and she-asses (v. 30), and the flocks (v. 31). The far-reaching agricultural and pastoral activities of the king are striking, but the king needed considerable support for the maintenance of his court and his administration. All this wealth enhanced the prestige of the king and bore testimony to the way God had blessed his loyal and faithful servant.

B. (:32-34) Royal Council of 7 Key Figures

“Also Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counselor, a man of understanding, and a scribe;

and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni tutored the king's sons.

33 And Ahithophel was counselor to the king;

and Hushai the Archite was the king's friend.

34 And Jehoiada the son of Benaiah,

and Abiathar succeeded Ahithophel;

and Joab was the commander of the king's army.”

Iain Duguid: The concluding list names the inner circle of counselors, showing that “wisdom” in the court was a part of David’s reign as well, not only Solomon’s. . . It is

possible that the Chronicler's naming of **seven people** who held positions as counselors is a literary move to match the seven counselors of the Persian emperor at the time of his hearers. David's court not only prepared for Solomon's but was comparable to that of the later Persians.

Andrew Hill: This list of David's **personal advisers** is usually contrasted with the registers delineating the king's public counselors and the official members of his royal cabinet (cf. **18:14–17**; also **2 Sam. 8:15–18; 20:23–26**). Although there is **some overlap** in the membership of the two groups of advisers, David's personal counselors are those "influential persons in the immediate entourage of the king."

Frederick Mabie: David's relationship with several of these advisors changed for the worse in the context of the attempted coups of Absalom and Adonijah (Ahithophel: **2Sa 16:20–23**; Joab: **2Sa 18:9–15; 1Ki 1:7**; Abiathar: **1Ki 1:7**). Ahithophel's replacement was necessitated both by his disloyalty to David and his subsequent suicide (cf. **2Sa 15:31; 16:20–23; 17:23**). Conversely, David's relationship with Hushai was no doubt deepened during the Absalom crisis (cf. **2Sa 15:32–37; 16:16–19**), perhaps earning him the title "*king's friend*" (v.33).

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: In summing up **Joab's character**, we must remember the stirring times in which he lived. That he was a most able general, there is no doubt. He was, however, very jealous of his position, and this accounts for Amasa's murder, if not partially for that of Abner too: if he was afraid that Abner would supplant him, that fear may be held to be justified, for Amasa, who had not been too loyal to David did take Joab's place for a time. But blood revenge for Asahel's death was perhaps the chief cause. Yet even when judged in the light of those rough times, and in the light of eastern life, the murder of Abner was a foul, treacherous deed.

J.A. Thompson: With this list of the king's inner circle of advisors and counselors the description of David's administration comes to a close. The whole picture that emerges gives expression to the belief that Israel's total religious and governmental structure was inaugurated by David and provided a pattern for the future. The subsequent centuries showed that the pattern was not as static as may appear at first sight but was open to the possibility of change and development.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How is David's model for militia different than a centralized standing army?
- 2) Why did David place so much importance on local tribal leadership?
- 3) How was David able to avoid the sin of excessive taxation of the people and yet maintain his administration and its institutions and structures?

4) How would you defend from Scripture that the Lord placed the responsibility for conducting war solely on men rather than on women?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

August Konkel: This section of Chronicles describes a way of life far removed from that of the Torah. The regulations of the Torah are based on a rural tribal society, not an empire engaged in international relations, with a complex internal economy and a highly structured national order [Torah, p. 481]. This does not make the Torah irrelevant to the new circumstance, but it demands that the values of individual enablement for livelihood must be applied in very different ways. Chronicles gives no indication as to whether this was consciously done or how such applications might have been made. It does assume that this is an administration that is fair to all of its citizens.

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler shows the **holistic character** of David's arrangements that centered in the temple but embraced the total life of the nation. Structures for peace and prosperity supported and enhanced the life and worship of the temple.

Phillip Kayser: Let me be even more politically incorrect and say that the Scripture prohibits women from serving in the military. A lot of Christians will take issue with me on this point, but I would challenge them to show me the Scripture to say otherwise. I think it is really shameful that America is putting women into combat positions and elevating them through the ranks, not based on valor or abilities, but based on a quota of females. There are politicians who want to institute a draft of women, and if that ever happens, I hope everyone here is willing to fight it tooth and nail. Not only does it violate the family's jurisdiction, such a draft would be utterly destructive of the integrity of the family's jurisdiction.

Adam Clarke: Twenty-four persons, chosen out of David's worthies, each of whom had a second, were placed over twenty-four thousand men, who all served a month in turn at a time; and this was the whole of their service during the year, after which they attended to their own affairs. Thus the king had always on foot a regular force of twenty-four thousand, who served without expense to him or the state, and were not oppressed by the service, which took up only a twelfth part of their time; and by this plan he could at any time, when the exigency of the state required it, bring into the field twelve times twenty-four thousand, or two hundred and eighty-eight thousand fighting men, independently of the twelve thousand officers, which made in the whole an effective force of three hundred thousand soldiers; and all these men were prepared, disciplined, and ready at a call without the smallest expense to the state or the king. These were, properly speaking, the militia of the Israelitish kingdom.

Mark Boda: In **chapters 23-27** the Chronicler once again provides a series of long lists akin to the genealogies that began his work. To the Western reader such lists test the

mettle of the most devoted scholar, but to the Chronicler these lists were significant to his story. They not only highlighted David's meticulous care in preparing for the construction of the first Temple and maintenance of its services but also provided the foundation for the worship in the second Temple in his own time. Through this the reader is given a vision for the kind of commitment and involvement necessary to sustain the worship of Yahweh. And in this the glory of David's God was further enhanced.

TEXT: I Chronicles 28:1-21

TITLE: DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON AND ISRAEL TO EXECUTE THE TEMPLE PLANS

BIG IDEA:

DIVINE PLANS FOR GOD'S KINGDOM AGENDA CALL FOR COURAGEOUS OBEDIENCE BY GOD'S APPOINTED LEADER WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: Following his extensive preparations in workers, raw materials, and leadership (**chs. 22–27**), David now seeks to prepare the hearts of the leaders of the Israelite community to embrace Solomon's rule and strive for covenantal faithfulness and obedience. . .

The crux of David's heartfelt speech ("*my brothers and my people,*" **v.2**) is wholehearted **obedience to the covenantal framework** established between Yahweh and his people ("*be careful to follow all the commands of the LORD your God,*" **v.8**, emphasis added). David connects his exhortation to obedience with Israel's continued possession of the Promised Land (**v.8**) in a manner reminiscent of earlier biblical passages connected with Abraham, Moses, and Joshua (e.g., **Ge 17:1–8; Dt 8:1; Jos 23:6–13**).

August Konkil: The **enthronement of Solomon** is presented as a gathering of all of the leaders and officials of David's kingdom, including the administrators of the various divisions, whether Levitical or civil, all of the military officers, and all those engaged in state employment. The gathering is representative of all Israel (**Willi: 161–62**); they must accept responsibility for enabling the new king to carry out his charge for the divine kingdom. A great festivity accompanies the installation of the new king, and a summary statement provides assurance that all Israel supported their new king, who was increasingly successful in his rule. The section concludes with a summary statement of David's reign typical of that found for other kings. . .

Genre of a **Levitical sermon** with 3 main motifs:

- (1) Solomon is the one who will bring rest (**28:20**).
- (2) Solomon is a successor of David as Joshua was of Moses.
 - He must be resolute and courageous (**28:7, 10, 20**; cf. **Josh 1:6-7, 9, 18**);
 - He must observe and protect God's commandments (**1Chron 28:7-8; 29:19**; cf. **Josh 1:7-8**), which will ensure his success (**Josh 1:8; 1Chron 29:23**).
- (3) Finally, there is strong emphasis on Solomon as the one whom God has chosen (**28:6, 10; 29:1**), a distinction that never applies to Levites or kings other than David.

Andrew Hill: The emphasis on the theme of obedience to God’s law and the exhortation to “*be strong and courageous*” (28:20) echoes the commissioning of Joshua by Moses as his successor (cf. Deut. 31:7–9; 32:44–47). Two distinct threads tie the chapter together:

- (1) the stress placed on obedience by the leadership of Israel, both to God and to Solomon as David’s successor (1 Chron. 28:7–8, 21), and
- (2) the understanding that the temple-building project is really a divine initiative (cf. 28:2, 10, 12, 19).

Iain Duguid: David’s final actions in the Chronicler’s account of his reign were to assemble a large number of leaders from across the country and charge both the leaders as “*my brothers*” and Solomon as “*my son*,” his successor, to follow God’s commands and to build the temple (1 Chron. 28:1–10). He delivered to Solomon the God-given plans of the temple (building, vessels, and personnel), reinforcing the charge to build and affirming the support that he would receive from the many leaders (28:11–21).

I. (:1-10) SECOND CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE AND TO SOLOMON

A. (:1) Convocation

“Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the commanders of the divisions that served the king, and the commanders of thousands, and the commanders of hundreds, and the overseers of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons, with the officials and the mighty men, even all the valiant men.”

Iain Duguid: “*Jerusalem*” is the place to which David has brought the ark and at which God has authorized David’s son to build the temple (11:4–8; 15:1; 16:1; 17:11–12). David’s reign reaches its culmination as it is there he “*assembled*” the widely representative “*all the officials of Israel*” to charge them concerning the temple and Solomon.

Martin Selman: The Hebrew text uses the word *sar* for “*officials*.” It is a general term for anyone occupying a high position. The “*officers over the tribes*” are called “*princes*” in the Hebrew text, but that does not necessarily mean that they were of royal blood. They must have been the ones who represented each of the twelve tribes that constituted the nation of Israel. The highest army personnel was invited, including, what we would call colonels, majors and captains. The administrators of the personal property of David and his family were high ranking civilians. The Hebrew word for “*palace officials*” is *cariyc*, which refers to a eunuch. They were the men in charge of the king’s harem, the servants of the queens. Added to the group were some who had been decorated for heroic feats performed in war. They are called “*valiant men*” and “*mighty men*.”

B. (:2-8) Charge to the People

“Then King David rose to his feet and said,”

Pulpit Commentary: The expression, *David the king stood up upon his feet*, probably means to emphasize the fact that hitherto, having been in a sitting or recumbent position, owing to his age and infirmity, he now with effort forced himself to stand in the presence of the unusual congregation and in consideration of what he felt was due to the occasion.

1. (:2) David's Intentions to Build the Temple Himself

"Listen to me, my brethren and my people; I had intended to build a permanent home for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God. So I had made preparations to build it."

Andrew Hill: The plural imperative verb forms encasing David's first address indicate that the speech is directed to all the "officials of Israel" (28:2–8; e.g., "listen to me," v. 2; "be careful to follow," v. 8). The pastoral heart of David as Israel's shepherd-king is seen in his appeal to the leaders of Israel as "my brothers" and the citizens of Israel as "my people" (28:2). . .

The royal *footstool* (28:2) is a symbol of a **king's authority**, a symbol of the **peaceful rest** enjoyed by his kingdom, and a sign of **humble loyalty** to the monarch on the part of his subjects. By means of this symbol the Chronicler recognizes that Israel's "rest," whether in David's time or his own, is entwined with God's restful presence among his people. God's rejection of David as the builder of his temple because he is a warrior repeats information previously reported in David's private charge to Solomon as his successor (cf. 22:8–9). The temple will be built by a "man of peace and rest" (22:9).

2. (:3-4) God's Plans for David

"But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name because you are a man of war and have shed blood.' 4 Yet, the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me from all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. For He has chosen Judah to be a leader; and in the house of Judah, my father's house, and among the sons of my father He took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel."

Andrew Hill: The opening lines of David's speech are a historical summary of sorts, outlining his aspirations for building Yahweh's temple (28:2–3). The expressions "house ... of rest" for the temple and "footstool" for the ark of the covenant are found only in **Psalm 132** and Chronicles (though cf. also **Isa. 66:1**). Clearly, **Psalm 132** is important to the Chronicler because it contains reflections about David's restless ambition to build a sanctuary for God. The addition of **132:8–9** to the end of Solomon's prayer of dedication for the temple (**2 Chron. 6:41–42**) is further evidence of the Chronicler's interest in this song of ascent. . .

It is widely agreed that the next segment of David's speech to the officials of Israel serves to **legitimize his dynasty** both retrospectively and prospectively. By way of the past, David traces his lineage to the tribe of Judah, the tribe given the "scepter" in Jacob's blessing of his sons (cf. **Gen. 49:8–12**). By way of the future, David points to

the selection of Solomon as his successor (no doubt with allusions to the Davidic covenant announced by Nathan the prophet, **2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17**). Indeed, God's choice of Solomon from among David's many sons makes his divine election all the more remarkable (**1 Chron. 28:5**; David had nineteen sons, see **3:1-9**).

3. (:5-7) God's Choice of Solomon to Build the Temple

"And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons), He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. 6 And He said to me, 'Your son Solomon is the one who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be a son to Me, and I will be a father to him. 7 And I will establish his kingdom forever, if he resolutely performs My commandments and My ordinances, as is done now.'"

4. (:8) Charge to Maintain Covenant Obedience and Thus Possess the Land

"So now, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek after all the commandments of the LORD your God in order that you may possess the good land and bequeath it to your sons after you forever."

Frederick Mabie: One of the more striking aspects of David's speech is the emphatic stress on the **agency of God** in shaping the path of the nation:

- *"But God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my Name'" (v.3).*
- *"The God of Israel chose me" (v.4).*
- *"He chose Judah as leader" (v.4; cf. the "scepter" of Judah in **Ge 49:8-12**).*
- *"He chose my family" (v.4).*
- *"He was pleased to make me king" (v.4).*
- *"He has chosen my son Solomon" (v.5).*
- *"I have chosen him" (v.6).*
- *"I will be his father" (v.6).*
- *"I will establish his kingdom" (v.6).*

This stress on God's expression of his will underscores that Solomon's imminent coronation as king and temple builder (note **vv.12, 19**) is part of God's sovereign design, which includes the reality that Solomon will be sitting *"on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel"* (v.5). While kings of the biblical world were seen as sovereign monarchs over nations and people, in the case of the Israelite covenantal community, the people led by the king are God's people (**2Ch 1:10**), the kingdom is God's kingdom (**1Ch 17:14; 2Ch 13:8**), the king is God's son (**1Ch 22:10; 28:5-6**), and the king sits on God's throne (**1Ch 29:23; 2Ch 9:8**; cf. **Dillard**, 12; **Hill**, 380).

J.A. Thompson: The use of plural verb forms in the Hebrew behind *"be careful to follow all the commands of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever"* indicates that this exhortation is still part of the address to the leaders of Israel. Within David's speech to the men

before him—and to the readers of Chronicles—there lies a profound message. David, the great king and leader of Israel, must pass from the scene. What future or hope can the people have? **Their hope must not be in David**, whom they see but whose strength and wisdom are limited, **but in God**, whom they do not see but whose presence, power, goodness, and wisdom are forever. It was God who chose the house of David, God who determined who would build the temple, God who gave the commandments in which are life and peace, and God who would remain when David was gone. Israel must not despair the loss of their great king but realize that their only hope is in God.

Iain Duguid: They are not only to “*observe [“keep”] . . . all the commandments*” (*shamar* has a note of watchfulness) but also to “*seek*” them (*darash*; cf. **Ps. 119:45, 94, 155**); the people are to be intentional in a devotion that continues to the next generation. For hearers who have returned after exile, the message is clear: here is the path to enjoyment of “*this good land . . . forever.*”

C. (:9-10) Charge to Solomon

“As for you, my son Solomon,”

1. (:9a) Know the God of the Covenant

“know the God of your father,”

2. (:9b) Serve God Wholeheartedly and Seek Him Alone

“and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.”

3. (:10) Carry Out Your Divinely Appointed Mission Courageously

“Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be courageous and act.”

Andrew Hill: The public transfer of power, accomplished “*in the sight of all Israel*” (**28:8**), completes the succession ritual begun with David’s private charge to his son (**22:11–13**). Both admonitions link Solomon’s success to his obedience to God’s law, and both urge the new king to “*be strong.*” The king’s general exhortation to obedience continues that thematic emphasis in **28:9** and is followed by the specific command to build the Lord’s temple (**28:10**).

II. (:11-19) PRESENTATION OF TEMPLE PLANS TO SOLOMON

A. (:11-12) Temple Plans -- Architecture

“Then David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch of the temple, its buildings, its storehouses, its upper rooms, its inner rooms, and the room for the mercy seat; 12 and the plan of all that he had in mind, for the courts of the house of the LORD, and for all the surrounding rooms, for the storehouses of the house of God, and for the storehouses of the dedicated things;”

B. (:13a) Temple Plans -- Personnel

*“also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites
and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD”*

C. (:13b-18) Temple Plans -- Contents

“and for all the utensils of service in the house of the LORD; 14 for the golden utensils, the weight of gold for all utensils for every kind of service; for the silver utensils, the weight of silver for all utensils for every kind of service; 15 and the weight of gold for the golden lampstands and their golden lamps, with the weight of each lampstand and its lamps; and the weight of silver for the silver lampstands, with the weight of each lampstand and its lamps according to the use of each lampstand; 16 and the gold by weight for the tables of showbread, for each table; and silver for the silver tables; 17 and the forks, the basins, and the pitchers of pure gold; and for the golden bowls with the weight for each bowl; and for the silver bowls with the weight for each bowl; 18 and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the model of the chariot, even the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD.”

Andrew Hill: The gold and silver vessels are especially important to the Chronicler because they are among the goods the Persians restored to the Jews when they returned to the land after the Babylonian exile (cf. **Ezra 1:7–11**). Thus, they are tangible representations of the continuity of postexilic temple worship with preexilic temple worship. But more important, they are tokens of God’s faithfulness in preserving and restoring his covenant people.

The table displaying the consecrated bread (**28:16**) is a notable feature of both the tabernacle and temple furnishings because it symbolizes God’s constant presence and provision for his people. The “*chariot*” (**28:18**) is unmentioned elsewhere in the listings of tabernacle and temple furnishings. This may simply be a cryptic allusion to the cherubim on the lid of the ark of the covenant as a symbolic chariot of some sort. The idea of the chariot, whether real or symbolic, is the **mobility of God’s presence**—he is always among his people (cf. Ezekiel’s vision of God’s throne mounted on a carriage or chariot, **Ezek. 1**).

The ark is given special emphasis in the inventory of temple furnishings by virtue of its placement at the end of the list (**28:18**). It was the symbol of God’s presence with his people, and in its glorious uniqueness it embodied the nature and character of the special relationship he established with Israel through the mediator and lawgiver—his servant Moses.

D. (:19) Temple Plans -- Summary

“‘All this,’ said David, ‘the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern.’”

John Schultz: The fact that David had not been allowed to build a temple for the Lord must have been very difficult for David to accept. His elaborate preparations in getting ready the blueprint and gathering much material for the construction, as well as his substantial contribution of personal funds are indication of the fact that the temple was very much on his heart.

Frederick Mabie: Following his charge to Solomon to serve God with “*wholehearted devotion*” (vv.9–10), David entrusts Solomon with the plans for the temple complex. David’s plans and provisions for Yahweh’s temple are **detailed** (e.g., “*the weight of gold for each gold dish . . .*,” v.17) and **wide-ranging** (from architectural details [vv.11–12] to implements used in the Israelite sacrificial system [vv.17–18]). This degree of detail reflects the depth of David’s dedication to the temple project (cf. 22:2–4, 14–16). Similarly, note that David’s detailed organization of the priestly and Levitical divisions (v.13) occupies much of the content of **chs. 23–26**.

David’s motivation for his vast preparatory efforts relate to both Solomon’s inexperience as well as David’s desire that the temple be “*of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations*” (22:5; cf. 29:1). In short, David wants the beauty of the temple to reflect brightly the beauty of God’s holiness (cf. Ps 29:2).

August Konkel: This whole section has emphasized the divine plan for the construction of the temple (28:11-12, 18-19). The plan was a **written document** rather than a blueprint or drawing, thus comparable to the divine instructions that Moses received on Mount Sinai for building the tabernacle (Exod 25:9, 40). The plan provided much more than architectural designs or the shapes and sizes of utensils and furnishings. It included weights of metals, their quality, and even the organization of personnel to carry on the rituals of the new temple. The plan presented everything David had in mind (v. 12), though it may be that this is a reference to the mind of God that came to David via God’s spirit (*ruah*). In any case, none of this was of David’s own initiative. Every detail given by God was put in writing (v. 19); God granted David insight over every aspect of the plan.

The description of the written plans that David gave to Solomon is inclusive of everything to do with the temple. First listed are aspects of the building itself: the entrance area, the building with its storerooms, the upper levels (perhaps some architectural feature of the temple roof), the inner rooms, and the most holy place, where the ark was located. The temple was surrounded by courts, and there were store chambers around the sides. Some of these served as treasuries for the temple revenues and for the offerings dedicated to temple maintenance (cf. 26:20). The weight of gold was calculated for the lampstands; usually there were ten, with seven lamps on each one. The other basic furnishings were the table for the rows of bread, and silver tables, unknown in other contexts. The altar furnishings included the long-tined forks for turning roasting meat, bowls for collecting blood (28:17), jars of pure gold for libations, and basins, both gold and silver. These basins are only mentioned in late sources and are not found in Exodus. The articles most closely associated with the most holy place were the altar of incense and the cherubim.

III. (:20-21) CONCLUDING CHARGE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

A. (:20) Fulfill Your Mission Courageously with the Assurance of Divine Support

“Then David said to his son Solomon, ‘Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished.’”

Frederick Mabie: Although David exhorts Solomon to be strong and courageous to complete the temple project, Solomon’s ability to have such strength and courage completely hinges on divine presence and enablement (“*the LORD my God is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the LORD is finished,*” v.20; cf. 22:11–12, 16–17). As such, David’s exhortation reflects the reality that the building of the temple for the Lord is a **spiritual exercise** as much as it is a **building enterprise**.

J.A. Thompson: Once again Solomon is given a charge by David to be strong and courageous and to do the work (cf. 22:11–13; 28:10). Helpers lay ready to assist in the building who would obey Solomon's every command. The extent of this support is spelled out in 29:1–9. Solomon also was given the assurance by David that “*the Lord God, my God, is with you.*” David stressed that God is Yahweh, the God of Israel, but that he also is specifically the God of David and his dynasty. In this Solomon could take the throne with full confidence of success.

John Schultz: The two Hebrew words David uses to encourage Solomon in regards to the task ahead of him are *chazaq* and *‘amats*. *Chazaq* contains an element of help and encouragement. It first occurs in Scripture in the story of Lot leaving Sodom. We read: “*When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them.*” There is a suggestion of **divine support**.

‘Amats speaks of strength that can be either positive or negative. It has a sense of superiority, as in the verse where God reveals to Rebecca that she is pregnant with twins and that the younger will be stronger than the older. It has also an element of **divine assistance**. Solomon will not be on his own as king over Israel.

B. (:21) Fulfill Your Mission Diligently with the Assurance of the Support of All Israel

“Now behold, there are the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God, and every willing man of any skill will be with you in all the work for all kinds of service. The officials also and all the people will be entirely at your command.”

John Schultz: While it is true that this is a very different account of David’s end from that in Kings (1 Kgs 1:1 – 2:12), Chronicles’ aims are also quite different. The

Chronicler's purpose is to draw attention to God's sovereign control of David and Israel throughout David's reign in spite of some of his difficulties (cf. especially **2 Sam. 11 – 12; 1 Chr. 21**). God's power has been made perfect in David's weakness (cf. **2 Cor. 12:8**).

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How can we mobilize the church to pursue its mission with unity and focus?
- 2) When has God redirected our good intentions to fulfill His divine plan in new and different ways than we would have pursued on our own?
- 3) Why is the Lord so concerned with the details of the contents of the temple?
- 4) Do we see in our Christian service the synergy between divine support and the engagement of the church's support?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler's emphasis on the divine authorization of the temple in Jerusalem and on the links with Moses and the tabernacle may well be addressing the challenge posed by other temples to the Lord that were built after the exile, for example, in Egypt at Elephantine and Leontopolis and on Mount Gerizim in Samaria. The concern to worship God according to his desires is something to emulate. That the issue continued is reflected in the comments of the woman at the well to Jesus, to which Jesus responds by shifting attention from a specific place to the call to worship "*in spirit and truth*" (**John 4:20–24**). Jerusalem has its place in the drama of God's purposes, but in Christ the movement is not to or in but from Jerusalem.

Martin Selman: These speeches, however, are certainly not vain repetition. On four key points, David goes far beyond what was said previously.

(a) First, a new dimension of the idea of '*rest*' is expounded (**vv. 2-3**). The temple is described, for example, as a house of rest and God's footstool (**v. 2**, cf. NRSV, RSV; cf. **Ps. 132:7, 8, 14**), expressions which are found only in Chronicles (cf. **2 Chr. 6:41-42**) and **Ps. 132**. Further, God's resting place is meant, in place of the more usual symbol of the ark for Israel's rest (**22:9; 23:25**; cf. **Deut. 12:8- 11**). Israel's rest therefore cannot be thought of apart from God's rest. As in the case of God's sabbath rest at creation (**Gen. 2:1-3**), God's rest represents the completion of his work. The idea of rest was so significant for the temple that even though David's role as a '*man of war*' (**v. 3**, JB) was a vital part of the temple preparation in creating the necessary conditions for the work,

it disqualified him from building the temple himself. Only Solomon, the *'man of rest'* (22:9), was sufficiently fitted for the task....

(b) This leads into **David's main theme, Solomon's election (v. 4)**. It is unparalleled in the Old Testament to read of the divine choice of any individual king after David. Yet here, the verb *'to choose'* occurs five times (vv. 4-10), three times of Solomon himself. He was chosen to sit on God's throne (v. 5), to be God's (adopted) son (v. 6), and to build the temple (v. 10, cf. v. 4). Divine election in the Old Testament represents selection for a specific task, clearly here to build the temple. It has little to do with a person's innate qualities or achievements. For example, whenever the corresponding verb *he was pleased to* (v. 4) has God as its subject, any personal object is always described as helpless, humble, fearing or serving God (e.g. Pss 44:3; 147:11; 149:4; Isa. 42:1). Very frequently too, there is an element of surprise in God's choice. The mention of David's many sons (v. 5), among whom Solomon was by no means the eldest (cf. 2 Sam. 3:2-3; 5:13-16), is one instance of this. Others occur in the unsavory circumstances surrounding his birth (2 Sam. 11:1 – 12:25) and his accession (1 Kgs 1). This divine right of kings, as it is developed here, is far from giving unqualified approval to the king's every move. Rather it confirms that despite Solomon's weaknesses, God was still working out his own purposes through him. Furthermore, Solomon's election was not an isolated act. God had also chosen his father and his tribe, Judah (Gen. 49:10; cf. 1 Chr. 2:3 – 4:23). This was of great significance for post-exile Israel through Zerubbabel and his family (cf. 1 Chr. 3:19; Hag. 2:23).

(c) The sense of God's overarching purpose leads to another new feature, the reference to the **throne of the kingdom of the LORD (v. 5; '... of the LORD's sovereignty,'** REB, NEB). This important idea was hinted at in 17:14 (cf. also 29:11, 23; 2 Chr. 13:8, etc.), but now it explicitly confirms the link between God's throne and David's. God's kingdom would be represented jointly by Solomon and the temple. Indeed, in the Chronicler's own time, when Solomon and the Davidic monarchy had long since disappeared, the temple remained the chief symbol of the continuing reality of the kingdom of the Lord....

(d) Finally, David dwells at length on the need of the leaders (v. 8) as well as Solomon (vv. 7, 9- 10) for **obedience** (cf. 22:12-13). Obedience to all the commands of the LORD your God (v. 8) was the condition for Israel's continued occupation of the Promised Land. For Solomon, the priority was to build a temple as a sanctuary (v. 10). These demands undermine neither Solomon's election nor God's unconditional promise (17:13-14). On the contrary, they make the promise effective. Election in the Old Testament is for **service**, and the way for Solomon to make his *'calling and election sure'* was to acknowledge, serve, and seek God (v. 9).

Merrill: the Temple of Old Testament Israel was not essentially a 'religious' center where religious activities such as sacrifice and worship were carried out; it was the **house of Yahweh**, the **palace** of the Great King who could and must be visited there by His devoted subjects. Losing sight of this downplays the centrality of covenant as a fundamental theological principle. When one understands that Yahweh had redeemed

and made covenant with His elect people Israel as a great king makes covenant with a vassal, the role of the Temple as the focal point of Israel's faith becomes immediately apparent. It is the palace of the Sovereign, the place to which they make periodic pilgrimage to proffer their allegiance and to offer up their gifts of homage. Seen as such, the care with which even its most minute details are revealed and executed is most intelligible, for as the visible expression of the invisible God, the Temple with all its forms and functions becomes a sublime revelatory vehicle of the character and purposes of the Almighty.

Thomas Constable: David may have thought that Solomon would fulfill the rest of the promises in the covenant (28:5-7). He must have realized that to do so Solomon would have to obey God faithfully (28:7). Solomon, however, was not completely obedient. Consequently, if God is faithful to His promises, a faithful Son of David had to arise. The Chronicler looked forward to this future hope.

In describing David's plans for building the temple, the Chronicler seems to have wanted to present David as a second Moses. He also seems to have wanted to present Solomon as a second Joshua to some extent.

TEXT: I Chronicles 29:1-30

TITLE: FINAL PREPARATION FOR TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION AS KINGSHIP
TRANSITIONS FROM DAVID TO SOLOMON

BIG IDEA:

DAVID'S EXEMPLARY GIVING CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION IN THE CONTEXT OF OVERFLOWING PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING MARKS THE TRANSITION TO THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkel: vv. 1-9 -- This address of David has several distinct emphases: Solomon is the one whom God has chosen; generous provision has been made for all the materials of the temple; the leaders are enthusiastically dedicated to completing the work. David himself has been exemplary in his personal generosity for building the temple. The palace was more than a human project. The term "palace" is only found in late writings; it seems to include all the fortifications on the citadel of Jerusalem. It may have included the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred (**Neh 3:1**). However, the main point is that this palace represented the kingdom of God; it was not for humans. The whole cluster of buildings associated with the royal complex therefore gained a certain sanctity. This task could not be accomplished by one person; it required the complete dedication of all the leaders. Further, Solomon was young and inexperienced. If Solomon was born shortly after the time David conquered Jerusalem, he would have been about thirty years old. Very few can be prepared for the highest levels of executive leadership at that age. It was necessary that Solomon receive complete support, without detraction of competing interests.

Andrew Hill: The "bookends" of King David's life for the Chronicler are the two great events shaping the worship life of ancient Israel:

- the installation of the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem (**chs. 15–16**) and
- the preparations for the building of Yahweh's temple (**chs. 28–29**).

Both accounts conclude with doxology and contribute purposefully to the recurrent themes of Chronicles as a "biography of God," a "theology of hope," a "call to worship," and "joy." Not surprisingly, all four remain timely topics for consideration in the church.

Mark Boda: With **chapters 28-29** the Chronicler comes to the end of his account of David. The founder of the dynasty has been depicted as one passionate for the worship of Israel at Jerusalem and now hands the rei(g)n over to his son Solomon, who will perfectly fulfill the vision Yahweh gave to David in **chapter 17**. It is fitting that the Chronicler would close his account of David with the long prayer in **29:10-19** and that this prayer would be followed immediately by David's exhortation to the assembly to give praise to Yahweh. This summarizes one of the central elements in the Chronicler's depiction of David – that is, David as catalyst of faithful worship in Israel. Against this brilliant backdrop, all the kings that follow in his line will be evaluated.

J.A. Thompson: Only some concluding aspects of David's story remain to be recorded:

- (1) contributions of the people for the temple building (29:1–9),
- (2) David's prayer of thanksgiving (29:10–19),
- (3) Solomon's accession to the throne (29:20–25), and
- (4) the close of David's reign (29:26–30).

David left the affairs of the kingdom in perfect readiness for his son Solomon to take up his own work.

Jerry Barber: King David gathers the leaders of Israel to pass the torch to Solomon and encourages them to give for the building of the temple. After they give willingly, he worships God.

I. (:1-9) CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TEMPLE

A. (:1-5) David's Example of Sacrificial Giving to the Temple Project

"Then King David said to the entire assembly,"

Frederick Mabie: David's final recorded speech in Chronicles is oriented to the "*whole assembly*" of Israel (v.1; cf. vv.10, 17–18, 20, 30) and the integral role the community will play in the construction of the Jerusalem temple. David's opening words declare that the temple is "*for the LORD God*" (v.1) and thus should have the finest of materials and craftsmanship so that the beauty of God's holiness is aptly reflected (vv.2–5; cf. 22:5, 14; Ps 29:2). Many of these materials were also used in the construction of the tabernacle during the time of Moses. David is also motivated to facilitate Solomon's success in the completion of such a monumental project. Note that David's observation of Solomon's youth and inexperience (v.1) is echoed by Solomon in his prayer for wisdom (1Ki 3:6–9).

1. (:1) Significant Project –

Contrasting Inexperience of Solomon with Enormity of the Task

a. Inexperience of Solomon

*"My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen,
is still young and inexperienced"*

b. Enormity of the Task

*"and the work is great;
for the temple is not for man, but for the LORD God."*

J.A. Thompson: It is called here a "*palatial structure*" to remind the people and Solomon that the true King of Israel was to be the Lord God. The degree to which Solomon and his royal successors were to succeed as kings and Israel was to flourish would depend upon the extent to which they remembered that fact. This is what made the task of temple building so great.

Mark Boda: Although emphasizing that Solomon was clearly the one chosen by God (lest anyone would think from this introduction that he was disqualified from the job), David contrasted the immaturity of Solomon (“*young and inexperienced*”) with the enormity of the task (building the Temple “*for the Lord God himself*”). The structure referred to here is *habbirah*, “*the palace or citadel*” (NLT, “*Temple*”; also found in **29:19**), a term that appears to encompass a much larger complex of buildings that included the Temple. The enormity of the task, however, was not linked by David ultimately to the size of the job but rather to the greatness of the one for whom it was being built. If it was merely for a human king, then the new king was qualified, but because it was for the divine king, “*the Lord God himself*,” the task was immeasurable. David here offers important theological orientation for the task, even as he lays the foundation for his appeal to the assembly.

2. (:2-5a) Sacrificial Giving of David

“Now with all my ability I have provided for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold, and the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, onyx stones and inlaid stones, stones of antimony, and stones of various colors, and all kinds of precious stones, and alabaster in abundance. 3 “And moreover, in my delight in the house of my God, the treasure I have of gold and silver, I give to the house of my God, over and above all that I have already provided for the holy temple, 4 namely, 3,000 talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and 7,000 talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the buildings; 5 of gold for the things of gold, and of silver for the things of silver, that is, for all the work done by the craftsmen.”

3. (:5b) Sacred Challenge

“Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the LORD?”

Frederick Mabie: David’s speech also indicates that the vast supplies of precious materials and resources he devoted to the temple project (vv.2–4) are supplemented further by significant gifts from his personal treasure (v.5). David’s gifts are a reflection of his devotion to God and the place that will be built in honor of his God (note the triple reference of “*the temple of my God*,” vv.2, 3 [2x]). In the light of David’s abundant personal gifts to the temple project, he challenges the congregation to follow his example—expressed as personal choice to show devotion to God (“*who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?*” v.5; cf. **Ro 12:1**).

August Konkel: David’s example is a challenge to the leaders to give equally generously, filling their hands for the work of the temple (v. 5). This expression is typically used for the dedication of priests. David has given according to his ability; the people accordingly should have an undivided desire to complete this task. Thus David is asking for a consecration similar to that of priestly dedication to finish this task (**Snijders**: 305). The officials responded accordingly with vast amounts of wealth. Five

thousand talents of gold may be compared with the thirty talents of gold that Hezekiah paid to Sennacherib (**2Kings 18:14**), a tribute from the country.

B. (:6-9) Voluntary Sacrificial Contributions from Israelite Leaders

1. (:6-8) Magnanimous Response of the Israelite Leaders

“Then the rulers of the fathers' households, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, with the overseers over the king's work, offered willingly; 7 and for the service for the house of God they gave 5,000 talents and 10,000 darics of gold, and 10,000 talents of silver, and 18,000 talents of brass, and 100,000 talents of iron. 8 And whoever possessed precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the LORD, in care of Jehiel the Gershonite.”

Mark Boda: The gifts were not only given “willingly” and “wholeheartedly,” they were also enormous. The Chronicler depicts a community that had fully embraced this project and was able to outdo even David himself. The scene ends on a tone of joy as both people and king (David) rejoice over this response.

2. (:9) Mutual Rejoicing

“Then the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the LORD with a whole heart, and King David also rejoiced greatly.”

Frederick Mabie: In the light of David’s challenge to the people to follow his example of abundant generosity (v.5), the leaders of the Israelite community respond with their own display of generosity toward the Jerusalem temple project. The Chronicler emphasizes the “willing response” (v.9; cf. “willingly,” v.6; “freely and wholeheartedly,” v.9) of the community leaders and the resulting joy of both people and king (v.9). Note that the focus of the leaders’ giving is Godward—“toward the work on the temple of God” (v.7); “to the LORD” (v.9).’

Iain Duguid: Some giving can be for self-glorification (cf. **Matt. 6:2**), but here it is “freely to the Lord.” The parallels with the description of generous giving for the tabernacle (**Ex. 25:1–7; 35:4–9, 20–29**) are yet another way in which the temple continues the Mosaic traditions associated with the tabernacle. It is a privilege to give to God, and when this is done by a whole congregation, the result is that all “rejoice.” Worship and giving is not just a matter of duty but a “joy” (cf. **1 Chron. 12:40; 15:25; 16:10, 31**; etc.).

Andrew Hill: Several themes important to the Chronicler are knit together in the response of the Israelites to David’s speech. The first is that of unity among the leadership of the various Hebrew administrative structures. The clan and tribal leaders, political officials, and military officers are of a single mind in responding to the king’s challenge to give to the temple building fund (**29:6a**; the same leaders registered by name previously in **ch. 27**). A second emphasis is that of a charitable attitude—they “give willingly” (**29:6b**). It is a proven leadership principle that **generosity needs an**

example (e.g., note how often the “matching gift” of a donor is used to spur philanthropic giving). The open-handed giving of Israelite leaders serves as an inducement for a similar response on the part of the people. Sadly, this kind of generosity is not always seen in later Hebrew kingship (e.g., Elijah rebuked King Ahab for his greed, **1 Kings 21:18–19**; Micah condemned leaders who rendered judgment for a bribe, **Mic. 3:11**). . .

One thing is clear: The Israelites honor God with their wealth since it all belongs to him anyway (**Prov. 3:9**; cf. Job 41:11). . .

The voluntary generosity of leaders is contagious in a couple of ways (**29:9**).

(1) The modeling of unselfish behavior prompts similar acts of generosity—reminding us of Paul’s exhortation to “*give generously ... to the needs of others*” (**Rom. 12:8**).

(2) The lavish gifts prompt both king and people to rejoice (**1 Chron. 29:9a, c**).

This spirit of rejoicing characterizes the major religious events reported in Chronicles (cf. **12:40**). In fact, the Chronicler has spliced together three closely related themes that are somewhat paradigmatic of Israel’s relationship with God: **a pure heart** (cf. **28:9**) that prompts **generous giving**, which in turn results in **joy**.

J.A. Thompson: That the bringing of gifts to the Lord caused rejoicing is interesting. It implies that the people gave *freely and wholeheartedly* (cf. **2 Cor 9:7**). **J. G. McConville** has written, “People are closest to God-likeness in self-giving, and the nearer they approach God-likeness the more genuinely and rightly they become capable of rejoicing.” As David had learned vividly and painfully, “The search for true happiness cannot be along the path of self-gratification.”

John Schultz: The main point is that the contribution made by the people was substantial, but it is assumed that the people’s contribution amounted to a total that was smaller than David’s personal gift. The total amount contributed caused both people and king to rejoice greatly, since it was an indication of a willingness to give sacrificially.

II. (:10-20) COMMUNICATION OF PRAISE IN DAVID’S BLESSING AND SUPPLICATION

August Konkel: The **blessing of David** is the climax of his history as told in Chronicles. The leaders and officials are united with Solomon for the task of temple building. The proper response is a prayer of joyful faith, expressing humility and submission before God. The prayer draws on a rich liturgy of worship. Much of what is expressed here can be found in other biblical texts, but this prayer more likely draws on a common heritage of praise. Several themes are prominent:

- (1) the people of Israel are sojourners, even within the secure boundaries of the kingdom;
- (2) the kingdom belongs to God alone; and

(3) the people have freely given of themselves to God. If Israel now enjoys an unprecedented prosperity, it is testimony to the truth that all things come from God (**1 Chron 29:14**). David prays for their minds to remain so devoted that the impulse of every thought may forever be directed toward God. David's closing petition is that the heart of Solomon may never be compromised in his commitment to this great work.

Andrew Hill: David's prayer of thanks for God's enabling him to complete the necessary preparations to build the temple is one of ten royal prayers in Chronicles. According to **Throntveit**, the royal prayers are an important vehicle for themes enhancing the Chronicler's theology of hope, especially the ideas of human inability, the power of God, and the effectiveness of prayer.

A. (:10-12) Doxology

“So David blessed the LORD in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, ‘Blessed art Thou, O LORD God of Israel our father, forever and ever. 11 Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O LORD, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. 12 Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone.’”

J.A. Thompson: The presentation of such a wealth of gifts to the Lord called forth David's praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift in the first place. The words translated “*praise*” and “*praised*” are from the verb *bārak*, “*bless*.” Usually it is God who blesses us, but the word is used of praise to God elsewhere in **Neh 8:6; Ps 145:21**.

The first part of this prayer has found its way into Christian liturgy as the **doxology** appended to the Lord's Prayer: “*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory,*” *although this ascription of praise here adds “and the majesty and the splendor.”* As **Allen** has noted, David's prayer “ransacks the theological dictionary” for terms expressing God's sovereign and boundless power and regal grandeur. It ascribes to Yahweh the possession of everything in heaven and earth. His is the kingdom, and he is exalted as head over all (cf. **2 Chr 20:6**). Wealth and honor come from him. He is ruler over all things, and in his hands are the strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

Andrew Hill: The key theme of the doxology is the **eternal kingdom of God (29:11d)**. David equates God's kingdom with the entirety of the created order (**29:11c, 12a**) and acknowledges that temporal human kingdoms (including his own) can only survive and thrive as they concede all power and strength and honor and wealth belong to God alone.

John Schultz: In an effort to describe the indescribable, David mentions particularly God's greatness, power, glory, majesty and splendor. The Hebrew word for "greatness" is *geduwlah*, which elsewhere is rendered with "recognition," as in: "*What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this? the king asked.*" "Power" is the rendering of the Hebrew word *gebuwrah*, which can be rendered "victory" as in "*Moses replied: 'It is not the sound of victory, it is not the sound of defeat; it is the sound of singing that I hear.'*" "Glory" is the translation of the Hebrew word *tiph'arah*, which is derived from a word meaning "ornament." We find it for the first time in Scripture in the description of Aaron's garment as high priest. "*Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honor.*" "Majesty" translates the Hebrew word *netsach*, which stands for a bright goal toward which one travels. The word is first used in the verse: "*He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.*" "Majesty" in Hebrew is *howd*, which is used in the transfer of authority from Moses to Joshua, when God says: "*Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him.*" Finally, "splendor" is another word for "kingdom," *mamlakah* in Hebrew. It is used in describing Nimrod, whose kingdom(s) were Babylon, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, in Shinar.

In all this David makes an effort to praise God for who He is, recognizing that he is unable to do this in a sufficient and satisfactory manner.

B. (:13-16) Thanksgiving and Praise

1. (:13) Response of Thanksgiving and Praise

"Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name."

2. (:14-15) Recognition of Humble Status

"But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from Thee, and from Thy hand we have given Thee. 15 For we are sojourners before Thee, and tenants, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope."

J.A. Thompson: The terms translated "aliens" and "strangers" frequently were used of the patriarchs (**Gen 17:8; 21:23; 23:4; 1 Chr 16:19**; cf. **Heb 11:13-14**). They spoke of persons without property and therefore without security of their own who lived in an area only by the good graces of its citizens. Like widows and orphans, they were in need of protection (**Lev 19:10, 33-34; Deut 10:18-19**). Even after possessing the land, Israel was to have this attitude about themselves, remembering that the land really belonged to the Lord (**Lev 25:23**). In his very nature man is only a resident alien and a sojourner on earth. His days are like a shadow and without hope. Not even the wealth and security that had been granted to David would alter man's lot (cf. **Job 7:6; 8:9; Ps 144:4**). **D. J. Estes** sees in this verse an advance toward a concept of a spiritual

pilgrimage. The life of the foreigner serves as the analogy to the life of the pious man in a world estranged from God (**1 Pet 2:11**).

3. (:16) Realization that Their Abundant Gifts Originated from God's Grace

"O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided to build Thee a house for Thy holy name, it is from Thy hand, and all is Thine."

Andrew Hill: Typically, a **song of thanksgiving** opens with a statement of the worshiper's gratitude (**29:13**), moves to a narration of some past experience of God's gracious help in a time of need (**29:14–15**), and concludes by confessing Yahweh's graciousness and goodness (**29:16**).

C. (:17-19) Supplication

1. (:17) Basis For Petition = God's Insight into Motivations

a. Integrity of David's Voluntary Giving

"Since I know, O my God, that Thou triest the heart and delightest in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things;"

Iain Duguid: That God "*test[s] the heart*" and knows the genuine willingness of David and the people is not a reason to be fearful or, alternatively, self-congratulatory; instead it becomes the basis for two petitions. Matching the previous order and content of the charge to the people to "*observe and seek out all the commandments of the Lord your God*" and then to Solomon to "*serve him with a whole heart*" (**28:8, 9**), the petitions are, first, that God might enable current "*purposes and thoughts in the hearts of [the] people*" to continue and, second, that Solomon may be given "*a whole heart . . . [to] keep your commandments.*" All of the preparations to date are inadequate if the people and king do not continue to serve God wholeheartedly. The call to obey is tied together with God's enabling. While "*every intention [and] thoughts of [human] hearts*" may be "*evil*" (**Gen. 6:5** has same Hb. phrase as in **1 Chron. 29:18**; also **28:9**, "*plan and thought*"), by God's grace and in prayer they can become pleasing.

Again the Chronicler affirms the place of the Davidic king, set within a context of priority to God and the willing service of all the people, centered in the building of God's "*palace*" (cf. **29:1**). His hearers would be well aware of the subsequent failures of people and kings, but the inclusion of this prayer as the final words of David is an encouragement for them to make it their own humble and heartfelt prayer in their present.

b. Integrity of Israel's Voluntary Giving

"so now with joy I have seen Thy people, who are present here, make their offerings willingly to Thee."

2. (:18-19) The Bottom Line of the Petition = Heart to Obey God

a. (:18) Heart for God for the People of Israel

"O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers,

preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of Thy people, and direct their heart to Thee;”

b. (:19) Heart for God for the King Solomon

“and give to my son Solomon a perfect heart to keep Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes, and to do them all, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision.”

Andrew Hill: Thus, perception of our “**pilgrim**” status as the faithful of God fans gratitude that expresses itself in continual praise as we become shareholders in the divine kingdom despite our lack of entitlement. David’s insight comes from his firsthand experience as an “*alien*,” first as a fugitive from King Saul (**1 Sam. 21:10**) and later as a fugitive from his own son Absalom (**2 Sam. 15:14**). The undeserved goodness of God not only sparks gratitude but also prompts the emotive response of joy. Joy, permitted its complete work, issues in loyalty or continued obedience to God.

The Chronicler’s “praise formula” may be diagrammed something like this:

“pilgrim” status → gratitude → joy → loyalty

This is not, however, a simplistic and mechanical cause-and-effect relationship between the Creator and his creatures. God cannot be manipulated in this way. Rather, it is the result of “*wholehearted devotion*” to God (**29:19**)—the mystery of a “synergistic” faith relationship between a people called to obey God and a God who keeps their hearts loyal to him (**29:18**).

J.A. Thompson: David's special supplication was that the Lord himself would establish a perfect heart in both Israel and Solomon so that God's commandments might be kept and the temple built. It is noteworthy that the keeping of the law is set alongside the building of the temple. These two were indissolubly bound together. A temple without wholehearted devotion to the law was an empty gesture.

D. (:20) Response

“Then David said to all the assembly, ‘Now bless the LORD your God.’ And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and bowed low and did homage to the LORD and to the king.”

III. (:21-25) CORONATION OF SOLOMON

A. (:21-22a) Sacrifices, Offerings and Joyful Celebration

1. (:21) Sacrifices and Offerings

“And on the next day they made sacrifices to the LORD and offered burnt offerings to the LORD, 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams and 1,000 lambs, with their libations and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel.”

2. (:22a) Joyful Celebration

“So they ate and drank that day before the LORD with great gladness.”

Frederick Mabie: In the light of David’s challenge to the people to follow his example of abundant generosity (v.5), the leaders of the Israelite community respond with their own display of generosity toward the Jerusalem temple project. The Chronicler emphasizes the “willing response” (v.9; cf. “willingly,” v.6; “freely and wholeheartedly,” v.9) of the community leaders and the resulting joy of both people and king (v.9). Note that the focus of the leaders’ giving is Godward—“toward the work on the temple of God” (v.7); “to the LORD” (v.9).

B. (:22b) Formal Public Installation of Solomon and Zadok

“And they made Solomon the son of David king a second time, and they anointed him as ruler for the LORD and Zadok as priest.”

August Konkel: The anointing of Zadok at the time of Solomon might be related to Zadok receiving a new office when Solomon began to reign. The role of king and priest were central to the preaching of Zechariah; Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the Davidic descendant were the leaders in resurrecting the temple in Jerusalem (**Zech 3:1–4:14**). They were the “sons of oil” (**4:14** MT; divinely anointed) to stand before the Lord of all the earth. In the Damascus Document of Qumran times, reference is repeatedly made to the anointed of Aaron and Israel (CD 12.23; 14.19; 19.10). The documents of the community anticipate two messiahs or anointed leaders, one from the priestly order and another of the royal order. The Chronicler may have had a similar concept in mind.

J.A. Thompson: The Chronicler presents not one but two great kings as the ideal for Israel. The one was David, the warrior-king, who subdued the enemies of the people of God and established a secure domain. He was now passing, and the other, Solomon, was taking his place. Solomon was a man of peace who would build up the prosperity of the nation. These two things together—**victory over enemies** and a **reign of peace**—are both essential. For Christian readers these two ideals are fulfilled in the one man, Jesus Christ. He conquers all his foes but at the same time establishes a reign of peace for his own people. In this the tandem of David and Solomon are a type of Christ.

C. (:23-24) Successful Initial Reign of Solomon

1. (:23) Prospered by the Lord and Obeyed by the People

“Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father; and he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him.”

2. (:24) Pledged Allegiance by Israel’s Leaders

“And all the officials, the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David pledged allegiance to King Solomon.”

Andrew Hill: The record of the pledge of loyalty by David’s mercenary guard and the other princes (**29:24**) is a significant political datum. The stability of the Davidic throne

was twice challenged by rivals within the royal family: by Absalom (**2 Sam. 15–18**) and by Adonijah (**1 Kings 1**). Solomon knows that such an oath of allegiance is crucial to the smooth transfer of power in the aftermath of Adonijah's attempted coup. It is significant that the prince (i.e., Solomon), with the support of David's mercenary guard, is eventually installed as David's successor.

D. (:25) Divine Exaltation of Solomon

“And the LORD highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him royal majesty which had not been on any king before him in Israel.”

Iain Duguid: At the very beginning of Solomon's reign we are alerted to his subsequent unequalled prosperity and success, but this is not to be ascribed simply to Solomon's abilities. The similar summary in **1 Kings 2:12** includes *“and his kingdom was firmly established,”* repeated in **2:46** after Solomon ruthlessly ensures the death of potential opponents! The Chronicler, in contrast, speaks of how *“all Israel obeyed him,”* including leaders, and insists this was due to the Lord's actions: *“The Lord made Solomon very great in the sight of all Israel and bestowed on him such [unequaled] royal majesty.”*

IV. (:26-30) CONCLUSION OF DAVID'S REIGN

A. (:26-27) Extent and Duration of David's Reign

“Now David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27 And the period which he reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned in Hebron seven years and in Jerusalem thirty-three years.”

Pulpit Commentary: These verses contain last words respecting David's reign, its extent and its length; respecting his death and age, and the succession of Solomon; and respecting the sources of the history of himself, his reign, his people, and other countries. The words of this verse, not indeed hard to follow here, but marking the close instead of the commencement or career of David's reign over all Israel, are paralleled by the earlier passage, ... **1 Chronicles 18:14**; ... **2 Samuel 8:15**.

B. (:28) Summary of David's Reign

“Then he died in a ripe old age, full of days, riches and honor; and his son Solomon reigned in his place.”

Andrew Hill: The reference to Solomon as David's successor (**29:28b**) is both a statement of simple fact and a subtle reminder that in Solomon God has fulfilled his promise to the house of David through Nathan the prophet (**2 Sam. 7**; **1 Chron. 17**). The Chronicler essentially tells two related stories in closing the book on David's career: the subplot of David's greatness as Israel's ideal king and the main plot of God's faithfulness as Israel's “king maker.”

C. (:29-30) Historical Record of David's Reign and International Influence

“Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of

Samuel the seer, in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet, and in the chronicles of Gad the seer, 30 with all his reign, his power, and the circumstances which came on him, on Israel, and on all the kingdoms of the lands.”

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler’s closing remarks on the reign of King David reflect God’s blessings on him through a long life (cf. **Ps 91:16; Pr 3:16**), wealth (recall **1Ch 29:2–4**), and honor. Recall that David’s earlier prayer attributed such blessings of wealth, honor, and strength to God’s goodness (cf. **29:12**). The Chronicler’s reference to the “*kingdoms of all the other lands*” (**v.30**) is likely a reference to David’s victories over nations to the east, west, south, and north summarized in **chs. 18–20**.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Should our church leaders use their example of sacrificial giving to spur the people to follow in kind?
- 2) What are the significant elements of any Doxology?
- 3) How do both David and Solomon serve as effective types of Jesus Christ?
- 4) What lessons do we learn here about how to motivate sacrificial giving for Christian ministry?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

August Konkel: The Chronicler writes an **eschatological history**, one that represents God’s purposes for these events. This purpose included **a future for the promise to David**, though it is not in the purview of the Chronicler to specify more precisely what that might be. . . the Chronicler’s doctrine of retribution espoused a firm belief that God was directly involved in history. In his view, the future of his people in part rested on their faithfulness and loyalty to God. In writing the history that should have been, he was not only calling attention to that responsibility, but also continuing a hope that rested on the promises of God. The presence of God would be experienced in the worship of the temple. The continuous fulfillment of the covenant in supporting the temple and its festivals was in itself reason for joy, which brought hope for the future and anticipation of life as God meant it to be. . .

There is more to the present than waiting for the apocalyptic end. The eschatology of Chronicles, and the eschatology of the present, calls upon us to treasure this opportunity of worship, to engage in it faithfully. This is the kingdom of God and the work of God. It is recognition of the fulfillment of the divine promise as a visible presence in the

present, a presence that began in a particular way with the promise to David brought to realization in the kingdom of Solomon. This is the present that should be, analogous to the history of the Chronicler that should have been.

Andrew Hill: All three sections of the verses under consideration form a **call to worship God**. David's praise-prayer (29:10–20) closes with the king's invoking the "*whole assembly*" to praise God. One senses that the Chronicler is issuing the same invitation to his audience through the declaration of David. The narrative preserving the second anointing of Solomon (29:21–25) climaxes with "*all Israel*" celebrating "*in the presence of the LORD*." No doubt, the Chronicler envisions a similar experience for the people of postexilic Judah. Even the eulogy of David (29:26–30) serves as an indirect call to worship because the king's long life, wealth, and honor are understood as gifts from God (cf. **Prov. 22:4**).

This call to worship incisively supports **Allen's** observation that Chronicles may be considered a commentary on **Psalm 84:4**: "*Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.*" It seems the Chronicler is inviting his audience, all of postexilic Judah, to share in the joy experienced daily by the priests and Levites in their service of worship to Yahweh in the Jerusalem temple.

Mark Boda: David's prayer to God reflects a strong theocentricity, consistently placing God as the subject of actions that must be performed by human characters. In this prayer, human decision and action dissipates at the expense of divine decision and action. As **Japhet** (1993:511) has said, "Confidence in God's justice and benevolence is so complete that it is only [humanity's] part in the relationship which needs to be assured." It is God to whom belong all the resources of the world that human beings are able to give. It is God who must make his people obey him and see to it that their love never changes. It is God who must give Solomon the desire to obey and to do everything necessary to build the Temple. In the Chronicler's view humanity shrinks in the presence of this almighty God. Although much is made of David's grand preparations, his prayer deflates even this human action when he asks, "Who am I?"

Iain Duguid: Reverberating throughout David's concluding words and the Chronicler's narrative has been a theme of **God's kingly rule**: the throne on which Solomon was to sit was the Lord's throne, and Israel was his kingdom. People who have given allegiance to Christ, the Son of David, pray, "*Our Father, your kingdom come*" and look forward to the time when "*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever*" (**Rev. 11:15**). Here is great cause to join in humble and joyful praise.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 1:1-17

TITLE: EXALTATION OF SOLOMON'S KINGDOM BY DIVINE FAVOR

BIG IDEA:

SOLOMON'S KINGDOM MARKED BY WORSHIP, WISDOM AND WEALTH

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: The idea of divine presence (as reflected in the Chronicler's note that the Lord God was "*with*" Solomon, **2Ch 1:1**) is an important theological motif that threads its way through the pages of Scripture. In the beginning of the creation of humankind, the presence of God was up front and center, before being marred and lost through sin. From the opening chapters of Genesis to the closing chapters of Revelation, the redemptive plan of God is working to reestablish the fullness of divine presence to his people.

August Konkel: **Wealth** and **wisdom** seem to be a rare combination, as much as they are universally regarded as desirable. Not many in contemporary time would be generally acclaimed as having both qualities. Solomon is legendary in both respects. The Chronicler shows how the legend is true. . .

Solomon is introduced as wise and wealthy, a result of God's gifts to him. Wisdom in Chronicles is precisely for building the temple. Solomon is modeled after Bezalel (**Dillard** 1980: 296); it is only after seeking God at the altar built by Bezalel that Solomon is endowed with wisdom. In **2 Chronicles 1:12**, God promises to grant Solomon riches, wealth, and honor; these are declared in **verses 14–17** and again after the account of temple building in **9:25** and **27–28**. The wealth of Solomon frames the narrative to highlight Solomon's wisdom as temple builder. The word *hokmah* (*wisdom*) is used for technical skill and life skills. The wisdom of technical skill is given to Bezalel to build the tabernacle (**Exod 31:1–3; 35:30–35**). This is the wisdom the Chronicler attributes to Solomon at Gibeon. . .

Solomon is renowned for wealth and wisdom. The Chronicler is correct in affirming these virtues. Sadly, Solomon's end was not as the beginning. Solomon's life ended in disaster, and his kingdom divided at his death. Nevertheless, the kingdom promised to David endured.

Martin Selman: The covenant theme in fact underlies Chronicles' entire presentation of Solomon, which is much more concerned with Solomon's significance in the purposes of God than listing the major events of Solomon's life. It is for this reason that Chronicles has left out many important features found in the Kings account, such as Solomon's personal details.

Andrew Hill: Solomon's request for wisdom serves as a foil for the opening chapter and provides the framework for the entire literary unit (**chs. 1–9**). Instead of “*wealth, riches or honor*,” Solomon entreats Yahweh for wisdom and knowledge to govern God's people effectively (**1:11**). Although he does not ask for these material blessings, God chooses to grant them to Solomon as a reward for his righteous prayer (**1:12**). The report of Solomon's wealth found in **1 Kings 10:26–29** are placed as bookends encasing the story of David's successor and the building of the Jerusalem temple (cf. **2 Chron. 1:14–17; 9:25–28**). The emphasis of the opening chapter on wisdom and wealth as divine gifts mean they do not die with King Solomon. This is a cue to the postexilic Hebrew community that they too might acquire similar gifts from God through prayer.

J.A. Thompson: Above all else, this chapter reminds us that Solomon began his reign by seeking God (**v. 5**). Here, as elsewhere, it is not the specific facts of Solomon's reign but the principles behind it that the Chronicler stresses. The postexilic Jews, like Israel after the death of David, faced an uncertain future. The right place to begin was with God. His favor and direction alone could give health and peace to the nation. Once again, therefore, the king is portrayed in a favorable light not in order to obscure his sins but in order to make the point that the good things he did are what we should imitate.

Iain Duguid: The opening chapter of Solomon's reign describes three different aspects of preparation that set the scene.

- First comes affirmation of continuity of the worship established by Moses in the wilderness: Solomon and the nation's leaders go to Gibeon to offer on the “*bronze altar*” of the “*tent of meeting of God*” (**2 Chron. 1:2–6**).
- Second, there the Lord appears and promises to Solomon “*wisdom and knowledge*” together with “*riches, possessions, and honor*” that will be used mainly for the temple (**vv. 7–13**).
- The final aspect of preparation is the riches acquired through trading that provide for the building and its ongoing worship (**vv. 14–17**).

(:1) PROLOGUE – DIVINE FAVOR SECURES SOLOMON'S KINGDOM

A. Secure Establishment of Solomon's Kingdom

“Now Solomon the son of David established himself securely over his kingdom,”

B. Secret to Exaltation = Divine Favor

“and the LORD his God was with him and exalted him greatly.”

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler begins his account of Solomon's reign by emphasizing **God's favor** on Solomon during the transition from Davidic to Solomonic rule in Israel. The theological notions of **divine election, presence, and enablement** are all succinctly noted within this opening statement of 2 Chronicles. In addition, this opening remark connects Solomon with the divine favor of the Davidic dynasty via similar statements of divine favor made concerning David (cf. **1Ch 11:9; 17:8**).

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler opens and closes his “photo album” of Solomon’s reign with a similar “snapshot”: the king firmly in control of the empire he has inherited from his father, David (**1:1**; cf. **9:26**). The expression “*established himself firmly*” (Hithpael of *hʒq*) may be an oblique reference to the steps taken by Solomon to secure the throne after his accession (including “*showing kindness*” to political assets and “*striking down*” political liabilities, cf. **1 Kings 2:5–46**). The introductory verse also affirms Solomon as God’s choice for governing his people. Much like his father, God is “*with*” Solomon (**2 Chron. 1:1b**; cf. **1 Chron. 11:9; 17:8**).

Raymond Dillard: “*Exalted him.*” The Chronicler twice uses the piel in reference to Solomon (**1:1**; **1 Chr 29:25**). The same verb is also used twice in reference to Joshua (**Josh 3:7; 4:14**), suggesting that the Chronicler has used the succession of Moses and Joshua as a paradigm for his account of the succession of David and Solomon.

I. (:2-6) SOLOMON’S WORSHIP AT GIBEON

A. (:2) Motivational Speech of Solomon to the Unified Leaders of Israel

“And Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds and to the judges and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' households.”

Andrew Hill: The reference to “*all Israel*” (**1:2**) hearkens back to the unity of God’s people under King David as Israel’s divinely appointed leader (cf. **1 Chron. 28:4; 29:21, 23, 25**).

Frederick Mabie: Solomon’s speech to all levels of the Israelite leadership emphasizes the breadth of unity and oneness that shapes this pilgrimage to Gibeon by the Israelite community. A gathering of a similar group of individuals was organized by David to announce that Solomon would build the temple for the Lord (**1Ch 28:1–8**) as well as the procession that accompanied David in moving the ark of the covenant from Kiriath Jearim to Jerusalem (**1Ch 13** and **15**).

Raymond Dillard: In Kings Solomon’s visit to the high place at Gibeon is presented essentially as an act of private devotion; the Chronicler has recorded instead a national cultic assembly in which representatives of “*all Israel*” assemble in Jerusalem and journey to the high place. The Chronicler had earlier shown the same concern to introduce “*all Israel*” into the record of David’s reign (**1 Chr 11:4 // 2 Sam 5:6; 1 Chr 11–12**); the unity and fullness of the people continue through the reign of Solomon.

B. (:3) Mass Pilgrimage to Worship at Gibeon

“Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place which was at Gibeon; for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness.”

Frederick Mabie: The mention of a mass pilgrimage to a high place is at first startling in the light of the negative association of high places within biblical literature. However, prior to the construction of the temple, high places were often generic worship sites not necessarily connected with pagan worship, and they reflect a noncentralized worship setting (cf. **1Ki 3:2**). Because of the possibility that the Chronicler's audience would view Solomon's trip to a high place negatively, much is done to emphasize that the high place at Gibeon was a **legitimate** place of worship. Of particular importance, we learn here that the Tent of Meeting made by Moses "*the LORD's servant*" as well as the bronze altar for burnt offerings crafted by Bezalel (**2Ch 1:5**; cf. **Ex 38:1–2**) were at Gibeon (see also **1Ch 21:29**).

The Tent of Meeting underscores continuity with Moses, while the bronze altar connects the site with the Israelite sacrificial system and the Aaronic priesthood (see **1Ch 16:39–40**). These details combine to make it clear that the high place at Gibeon was not only a legitimate sacred place, but also an important site prior to the construction of the temple (note its description as the "*great*" or "*most important*" high place in the parallel text at **1Ki 3:4**).

Andrew Hill: **Worship** is also a topic of paramount importance for the Chronicler. His narrative of Solomon's reign underscores the purpose of the Jerusalem temple as both a place of prayer and ritual sacrifice (**6:29, 40; 7:12**). The king's own worship life illustrates the complementary nature of prayer and sacrifice, as Solomon began his rule by inquiring of the Lord and presenting burnt offerings to him (**1:5–6**). Beyond this, Solomon prays and God immediately and explicitly answers his requests (e.g., **1:8–10** [see **1:11–12**]; **6:14–42** [see **7:12–22**]). As David's son and successor, Solomon understands that only "wholehearted" worship is acceptable to God (**6:14**).

For the Chronicler **prayer** is the heart of worship, which ensures that ritual sacrifice is more than just the empty form of religion (**6:21**). Maintaining a proper relationship with God and restoring wholehearted worship is at times dependent on the forgiveness of God as a response to humble repentance (cf. **7:14**). Yahweh is a merciful God (**Deut. 4:31**), and his compassions never fail (**Lam. 3:22**). No doubt, the Chronicler's "shorter catechism" for postexilic Judah includes these essential theological truths: Prayer still works, and there is always hope for the sinner!

C. (:4) Mention of the Location in Jerusalem of the Ark of God

"However, David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the place he had prepared for it; for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem."

D. (:5-6) Main Focus = Burnt Offerings on the Bronze Altar of Bezalel in Gibeon

"Now the bronze altar, which Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, was there before the tabernacle of the LORD, and Solomon and the assembly sought it out. 6 And Solomon went up there before the LORD to the bronze altar which was at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it."

Frederick Mabie: Solomon's extensive sacrifice at Gibeon ("*a thousand burnt offerings*") is a tangible way of showing his reverence of God at the outset of his reign. Similarly abundant sacrifice is connected with the dedication of the temple (cf. **7:5**). As reflected in the dedication of the temple, there is a close connection between sacrifice and prayer in this setting.

August Konkell: The Chronicler is fully supportive of the high place at Gibeon. This high place is part of the process by which a single location for centralized worship can be established. David had already moved the ark with its cherubim to Jerusalem, at the location he had designated. The bronze altar and worship at the tent of meeting were still accommodated at Gibeon. Solomon went there to worship, offer sacrifices, and seek divine guidance. The action and the location are both laudatory.

Andrew Hill: The prayer and ritual sacrifice offered at Gibeon is symbolic of the new king's primary task, as the acts of piety show Solomon to be a fitting candidate for building Yahweh's temple. The worshipers convene at Gibeon (or Gibeah of God), a town with an adjacent worship center some five miles northwest of Jerusalem (**1:3a**). The Chronicler reminds his audience (and us as later readers of his history) of the importance of Gibeon, a flashback to the account of David's transfer of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem (**1:3–5**; cf. **1 Chron. 13–17**). After a temporary shrine for the ark was established in Jerusalem, David appointed a group of priests and Levites to minister there before the Lord (**1 Chron. 16:4–6**). But the other priests and Levites remained stationed at Gibeon because "*the tabernacle of the LORD [was located] at the high place*" there (**16:39**).

The draw of Gibeon for the new king is more than simply its reputation as the site of the Mosaic portable shrine or "God's Tent of Meeting" and the original altar associated with Israelite sacrificial ritual. The pilgrimage to Gibeon is a return to first things for Solomon, a reconnection with the ancient Hebrew religious traditions. This report is in keeping with the Chronicler's interest in the theological principles informing Solomon's reign. . .

The verb "*to inquire of* [*drš*; lit., *to seek*] *the LORD*" is an important theme in Chronicles. It denotes an act of faith, and the goal or aim of this spiritual quest is generally to seek God's direction and help at a crucial moment in one's life (or even confirmation of an earlier divine word of instruction).

The propensity "*to inquire*" of God is one measure of the faithfulness of the leaders of Israel (e.g., **1 Chron. 10:14**; **2 Chron. 22:9**). Curiously (and sadly) **Selman** observes that the term is not used of Solomon again, despite his exhortation in the prayer of dedication for the temple (**2 Chron. 7:14**). Isaiah's admonition is still pertinent for the Chronicler's audience (and the church today)—"*Seek [drš] the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near*" (**Isa. 55:6**).

II. (:7-12) SOLOMON'S WISDOM GIFTED BY GOD

A. (:7) Remarkable Invitation

“In that night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, ‘Ask what I shall give you.’”

Frederick Mabie: Solomon’s dream (noted as such in the parallel passage at **1Ki 3**) at Gibeon includes a theophany (appearance by God) and provides the setting for Solomon’s reception of wisdom from above. Note that Solomon’s temple building project is “framed” by **revelatory dreams** (here and at **7:12–22**, following the completion of the temple).

B. (:8-10) Insightful Request

“And Solomon said to God, ‘Thou hast dealt with my father David with great lovingkindness, and hast made me king in his place. 9 Now, O LORD God, Thy promise to my father David is fulfilled; for Thou hast made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. 10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can rule this great people of Thine?’”

Frederick Mabie: Solomon’s attitude of thanksgiving and declaration of God’s covenantal faithfulness within a context of prayer and worship form a significant reminder and exhortation to the Chronicler’s postexilic audience (cf. Solomon’s prayer in conjunction with the dedication of the temple; **2Ch 6:14–42**).

Following Solomon’s expression of thanksgiving, Solomon asks for two things:

- (1) that God will continue to bring the fullness of the Davidic covenant to pass (**v.9**), and
- (2) that God will grant him wisdom and knowledge (**v.10**).

As with the theme of divine favor (cf. **1:1**), Solomon’s words stress **continuity** with Yahweh’s **covenantal promises to David**. In addition, the phraseology describing the people as being “*as numerous as the dust of the earth*” implies continuity with the **Abrahamic covenant** (cf. **Ge 13:16; 28:14**).

It is interesting to note that Solomon’s words here together with the previous verse imply that while some aspects of the Davidic covenant have been fulfilled, other elements have not yet come to pass (compare David’s prayer in **1Ch 17:16–27**, esp. **17:23**). In addition, both verses imply that Solomon understands himself as being part of God’s promise to David. . .

With respect to decision making, Solomon’s request for wisdom is connected to his ability to govern (judge) God’s people and facilitate an ordered, God-honoring society. It is significant to note that the term translated “*govern*” (GK 9149) is the verbal form of the noun “*judge*.” The relationship between **judgeship** and **kingship** is stressed repeatedly at the outset of the Israelite monarchy (see **1Sa 8:1–22**, esp. **vv.5–6, 20**). The overlap between the role of judge and king may imply that the office of king in Israel could be likened to a national (supratribal) judgeship. Along these lines, Solomon’s first

“wise” act is an act of judgeship (see **1Ki 3:16–28**). In order to judge wisely, Solomon must be able to discern and apply God’s will. This element of wisdom is paramount in leading a God-pleasing life for all believers.

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler seems to emphasize Solomon’s recognition of the theocratic ideal, that he as the Davidic king is God’s vice-regent because the people of Israel are “*God’s people*” (**2 Chron. 1:10**). This is the gist of the Chronicler’s message for his own audience. Israel is still God’s people after the return from the Exile, and God is still the de facto sovereign of Israel. The Chronicler reminds his generation that God is enthroned in Israel through the worship of his people and that the Davidic kingdom (as the precursor of the kingdom of God) will be established through the prayers of the righteous. . .

Here Solomon is a **model of how the righteous should pray** because

- he first inquires or seeks God (implying he approaches God in good faith, **1:5**).
- He then couches his prayer in the history of God’s “*great kindness*” to David (**1:8**), acknowledging that the Lord has indeed proven himself as a good God (cf. **Ps. 25:7–8; 31:19; 34:8**).
- Next, Solomon voices his humility and dependence on God in his rhetorical question, “*Who is able to govern this great people of yours?*” (**2 Chron. 1:10**).
- Beyond this, Solomon seeks spiritual blessing over material blessing in asking God for wisdom and knowledge to rule instead of personal wealth and riches (**1:10–11**).

J.A. Thompson: Solomon's request for “*wisdom and knowledge*” to lead and govern “*this great people of yours*” is an acknowledgment of his own weakness in the tasks of government and of the fact that Israel was God's people, not Solomon's.

C. (:11-12) Unprecedented Response

“And God said to Solomon, ‘Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth, or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge, that you may rule My people, over whom I have made you king, 12 wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed, nor those who will come after you.’”

August Konkel: The items Solomon did not ask for are in a group of three and a group of two. God grants the first set of three things that Solomon does not ask for (v. **12 b-c**), in a measure that is unequalled for any other king. Nothing is said about the second set of two items for which Solomon did not ask. In Chronicles no mention is made of the enemies named in Kings (**1 Kings 11:14, 23**), neither those whom Solomon dispatched nor those who later threatened his kingdom. Here the emphasis is limited to

- the mission of the temple,
- the wealth that supported it, and
- the honor that it brought.

(:13) TRANSITION

“So Solomon went from the high place which was at Gibeon, from the tent of meeting, to Jerusalem, and he reigned over Israel.”

Andrew Hill: Clearly the Chronicler wants his audience to understand a cause-and-effect relationship between Solomon’s worship of God and his “firm rule” of Israel.

III. (:14-17) SOLOMON’S WEALTH IN ABUNDANCE

A. (:14) Impressive Horses, Chariots and Chariot Cities

“And Solomon amassed chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots, and 12,000 horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem.”

Frederick Mabie: Solomon’s development of a chariot force required a considerable amount of infrastructure, as reflected in the construction of chariot cities, the organization of workers (cf. **1Sa 8:11**), and the organization of Solomon’s taxation structure (which included provisions for chariot horses; cf. **1Ki 4:28**). Solomon even arranged to have tribute paid in the form of horses (see **2Ch 9:24**; **1Ki 10:25**).

The text also notes that Solomon stationed chariots and horsemen in “*chariot cities*” as well as with him in Jerusalem. Solomon’s chariot cities have long been identified as **Hazor** (in the far north), **Megiddo** (in the Jezreel Valley), and **Gezer** (in the Shephelah). Each of these cities has similar fortification plans that suggest a certain amount of state planning, including casemate walls (a double wall connected with crosswalls that can be used for storage or filled in during a siege) and gateways with three chambers on each side having nearly the same dimension.

August Konkell: Archaeological excavations at Megiddo indicate that Solomon was deeply involved in chariotry, approximating the numbers indicated by the Chronicler. Excavations of the tenth century have uncovered five units of stabling built in a row in the southern complex of buildings (**Ussishkin** 1992: 677). Each unit contained about 30 horses, and the entire complex about 150 horses. The stables opened into a large courtyard, leveled on a large artificial fill. This indicates that a unit of chariot horses was maintained and trained there. There is also evidence of stables for riding horses in several units that would have housed over 300 horses. Megiddo is on the route that Solomon would have used in trade between Cilicia and Egypt, as well as for his own military units at Jerusalem.

B. (:15) Impressive Silver, Gold and Cedars

“And the king made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as plentiful as sycamores in the lowland.”

Frederick Mabie: Israel's terrain is rocky throughout much of the country, especially in the Judean hill country where Jerusalem is located, and this provides a vivid image of the abundance of silver and gold enjoyed during Solomon's reign. Beyond gold and silver, Israel's prosperity during the reign of Solomon included the purchase of an abundance of the highly-valued cedar trees. The durability and pleasant scent of the cedar tree made it an especially popular wood for important building projects in the biblical world. However, cedar was rare in Israel and needed to be imported (usually from the Phoenician coast—cf. the OT expression “*the cedars of Lebanon*”), whereas the less-valued (see **Isa 9:10**) sycamore tree was widely distributed throughout Israel—enough to justify the appointment of an individual during David's reign who was in charge of olive and sycamore trees (**1Ch 27:28**). These raw materials (gold, silver, cedar) will occupy a central role in the construction of the temple.

C. (:16-17) Import/Export Business of Horses and Chariots

“And Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue; the king's traders procured them from Kue for a price. 17 And they imported chariots from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver apiece, and horses for 150 apiece, and by the same means they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.”

Andrew Hill: The threefold measure of Solomon's wealth includes “military hardware” (**1:14**), precious metals (**1:15**), and profits from international trade (**1:16**, of which horses and chariots are but one example). Solomon's merchants broker a lucrative import-export trade in chariots and chariot horses between the Egyptians, Hittites, and Arameans (**1:16–17**). It seems likely that Kue (**1:16**) denotes a region of Asia Minor, suggesting Solomon as the “middle man” for the trading of horses from Asia Minor for chariots from Egypt.

Iain Duguid: Solomon's gathering of chariots and horsemen marked a new development. These were the advanced military equipment of the day, although not useful in hilly terrain. David had hamstring captured horses (**1 Chron. 18:4**; cf. **Deut. 17:16**; **Ps. 20:7**), but it appears that the expansion of territory led to changes. With David's reign bringing peace and wide hegemony, Israel's location on the land bridge between Africa, Asia, and Europe was ideal for prosperity through trade involving Egypt to the south and Kue (in Cilicia, southern Turkey) and Syria to the north. The image of Solomon becoming prosperous through trade in military equipment is noted without comment!

J.A. Thompson: Solomon's kingdom lay across the only land bridge between Asia and Africa so that he was able to control the trade routes over a wide area, particularly between Syria and Egypt.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What is the connection in the NT church tying together worship, wisdom and wealth?
- 2) How has God's favor manifested itself in your life and exalted you and your ministry?
- 3) What lessons about prayer can we learn from this passage?
- 4) How did God's covenant promises both look backwards as well as look forward?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: The **chiastic** structure of **2 Chronicles 1–9** may be outlined as follows:

- A Solomon's Wisdom and Wealth (**1:1–17**)
 - B Solomon Prepares to Build the Temple (**2:1–18**)
 - C Solomon Erects Yahweh's Temple (3:1–5:1)**
 - C' Solomon Dedicates Yahweh's Temple (5:2–7:22)**
 - B' Solomon Completes the Temple and Other Building Projects (**8:1–16**)
- A' Solomon's Wisdom and Wealth (**8:17–9:28**)

A quick reading of the Chronicler's retelling of King Solomon's reign yields numerous theological emphases. Chief among them is the **building of the temple**, an event that dominates six of the nine chapters (**chs. 2–7**).

Frederick Mabie: The literary shaping of the Chronicler's account of Solomon's reign is reflected by sustained points of repetition (mirroring):

- A Solomon's God-given wisdom, wealth, and regional trading success (**2Ch 1:7–17**)
 - Note repetition of details between **2 Chronicles 1:12–17** and **9:23–28**
 - B Solomon's wisdom facilitates good relations with the nations (**2:1–18**)
 - (Hiram King of Tyre: "*The LORD loves his people,*" **2:11**)
 - (Hiram King of Tyre: "[*God*] *has given David a wise son,*" **2:12**)
 - (Hiram King of Tyre: "*Praise be to the LORD,*" **2:12**)
 - C Temple construction and dedication (3:1–7:22)**
 - B' Solomon's wisdom facilitates good relations with the nations (**8:1–9:22**)
 - (Queen of Sheba: "*Your wisdom is true,*" **9:5**)
 - (Queen of Sheba: "*Praise be to the LORD,*" **9:8a**)
 - (Queen of Sheba: "*God has delighted in you,*" **9:8b**)

A' Solomon's God-given wisdom, wealth, and regional trading success (9:23–28)

Note repetition of details between 2 Chronicles 9:23–28 and 1:12–17

The overlapping statements and themes work to “frame” the account of Solomon and draw attention to the role of divinely-gifted wisdom in the construction of the temple (as with Bezalel and the construction of the tabernacle) and in Israel's outreach to the nations (cf. Dt 4:6). The focal point of the Chronicler's summary of Solomon's reign is that of the “middle” chapters (2Ch 3–7), where he has situated the ultimate outworking of this divinely enabled wisdom and success, namely, in the construction and dedication of the Jerusalem temple—the place of divine presence, holiness, forgiveness, worship, and prayer “*for all nations.*” . . .

The **role of wisdom** within one's spiritual life does not always receive the attention it ought—particularly with respect to the role of wisdom vis-à-vis the popular lingo of “spiritual formation.” Biblical wisdom is not a matter of smarts, education, or the like, but rather the **application of life-shaping divine truth** that begins with the fear of the Lord (cf. Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Pr 9:10). Biblical wisdom is much more **functional** than it is abstract and theoretical.

Put another way, wisdom involves **cultivating a way of thinking**—God's way—and helping others to do the same. Such thinking is part of the process of renewing our minds that facilitates Spirit-driven transformation, which (as Paul writes) enables us to discern God's good and perfect will (see Ro 12:2). Biblical wisdom involves **skillfully applying God's Word to everyday life** and thus connects intimately with one's spiritual walk, sanctification, spiritual fruit, and more.

Mark Boda: This introduction to the account of Solomon showcases the new king as one dedicated to the same values of his father (**consulting the Lord**) and receiving the same privilege of God's **theophanic presence**. The king was granted the **wisdom** he asked for and much more. The key distinction between the Chronicler's account and that of his source is actually in what follows. Rather than how this gift of wisdom and wealth was used to enhance Solomon's ability to rule and judge (as suggested in the exchange between Solomon and God in 1:8-12), the Chronicler will show how these gifts were used for the purpose of **constructing the Temple**.

Raymond Dillard: The dream narrative is a subunit within the larger temple building narrative. **Kapelrud** (Or 32 [1963] 56-62) noted ten items commonly present in ancient Near Eastern literature depicting a temple built by a king; these items and the corresponding passages in Chronicles and the tabernacle account are as follows:

- (1) A temple to be built—Exod 25:1–8; 1 Chr 28:11–21
- (2) The king visits a temple overnight—Exod 24:12–18; 2 Chr 1:2–7
- (3) A god reveals what to do and gives plans—Exod 25:8—30:38; 1 Chr 28:2–3, 11–19; 2 Chr 1:7–12
- (4) The king announces intentions to build—Exod 35:4–10; 36:2–35; 2 Chr 2:1–10

- (5) Master builder and materials (cedar, gold, silver) secured—**Exod 31:1–6; 35:4–29; 36:3–7; 1 Chr 22:14–15; 29:1–9; 2 Chr 2:7–14**
- (6) Temple finished according to plan—**Exod 39:42–43; 2 Chr 5:1; 6:10**
- (7) Offerings and dedication—**Exod 40:9–11; 2 Chr 6:12–42; 7:4–7**
- (8) Assembly of people—**Exod 39:32–33, 42–43; 2 Chr 5:2–13**
- (9) God enters the temple—**Exod 40:34–35; 2 Chr 5:13–14; 7:1–3**
- (10) King is blessed and promised dominion—**2 Chr 7:12–18**

J.A. Thompson: Several theological issues are raised in this chapter. In contrast with the account in Kings, where Solomon's visit to the high place at Gibeon was an act of private devotion, the Chronicler sees it as a national cultic assembly that involved “all Israel.” This emphasis is maintained throughout the Chronicler's account of Solomon's reign. The writer does not display any concern about Solomon's visit to Gibeon but legitimizes it by reference to the tabernacle and Bezalel's altar at that site. As part of his idealization of David and Solomon, he emphasizes the patriarchal promises (**Gen 15:5; 22:17; 26:4** used in **1 Chr 27:23**; and **Gen 13:16; 28:14** used in **2 Chr 1:9**).

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 2:1-18

TITLE: PREPARING WORKERS AND SUPPLIES FOR THE TEMPLE BUILDING PROJECT

BIG IDEA:
THE GRANDEUR OF THE TEMPLE PROJECT REQUIRES SKILLED CRAFTSMEN AND SPECIAL LUMBER PROVIDED BY HURAM OF TYRE

INTRODUCTION:

J.A. Thompson: With **2 Chronicles 2** the writer reaches the point to which he has been aiming, the **building of the temple**. The events recorded in **2 Chr 2:1–7:22** were central for the Chronicler's work as a whole. In fact, since the introduction of David in **1 Chronicles 11** the story leads to its focal point in the erection of the temple, its physical building, its dedication with prayer and sacrifice, and God's acceptance of it when he appeared to Solomon and declared some important theological values for which the temple was intended to stand. Having established the pedigree of the true Israel in **1 Chronicles 1–9** and having dealt with Israel's experimental king, Saul, son of Kish, the crucial story begins in **1 Chronicles 11**. Thereafter the narrative is bent toward the planning and building of the temple, the physical symbol of God's presence among his people Israel and the place where he might be worshiped according to his divine prescriptions.

Iain Duguid: As Solomon gives attention to building the temple (**2 Chron. 2:1**), he first arranges for the people that will be needed, including artisans and laborers, as well as the large amount of good timber unavailable in Israel. The Chronicler tells how Solomon “*sent word*” to “*Hiram the king of Tyre*” requesting a “*skilled*” artisan and also timber (**vv. 3–10**), to which Hiram responds (**vv. 11–16**). The correspondence is framed by repeated statements of the counting and assigning of “*resident aliens*” as laborers (**vv. 2, 17–18**). The Chronicler has reshaped the account in **1 Kings 5**, incorporating material found later in **1 Kings 7:13–14**.

Solomon’s words to Hiram and Hiram’s reply highlight two themes concerning the temple that are relevant in the postexilic era.

- First, the temple is to be a place for offerings “*as ordained forever for Israel*” (**2 Chron. 2:4, 6b**). Mosaic prescriptions continue, with another Mosaic parallel seen in the variety of skills required by the lead craftsman, similar to those needed for the tabernacle (**vv. 7, 14**).
- A second theme is the greatness of the temple as pointing to “*the Lord our God*” who surpasses all gods and cannot be limited to the temple (**vv. 5, 6, 12**), and who “*loves his people*” (**v. 11**). The Chronicler also notes association with David and the artisans he provided (**vv. 3, 7b, 14b, 17**).

Andrew Hill: Despite David’s extensive preparations for the building of the Jerusalem temple (**1 Chron. 21–29**), the scope of the task still requires Solomon to supplant his father’s work with preliminary efforts. The bulk of the present chapter is devoted to the exchange of correspondence between Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre. Brief notes pertaining to the labor force for the temple project frame the negotiations of Solomon and Hiram (**2:1–2, 17–18**). . .

Solomon makes three requests of Hiram: cedar logs, a skilled craftsman, and pine and algum logs (**2:3–9**). In return for these raw building materials Solomon will provide Hiram with supplies of wheat, barley, honey, and olive oil (**2:10**). The foodstuffs bartered for the lumber are sent overland to Tyre, while the timbers are floated down to Joppa from Tyre in rafts (**2:16**). The more interesting features of the correspondence are the synopsis of temple worship (**2:4**) and theological treatise (**2:5–6**) Solomon offers the Phoenician king.

(:1-2) PROLOGUE – CONSCRIPTION OF LABOR FORCE

A. (:1) Commitment to Build Both a Temple and Royal Palace

“Now Solomon decided to build a house for the name of the LORD, and a royal palace for himself.”

Frederick Mabie: The construction of Solomon’s temple (building on David’s preparations; cf. **1Ch 21–29**) began in his fourth year as king (ca. 967 BC) during the spring month of Ziv (part of April and May) and was completed in the eleventh year of his reign (ca. 960 BC), a seven-year building process (cf. **1Ki 6:1; 2Ch 3:2**). Unlike the account of Solomon’s building activities in **1 Kings** (e.g., **1Ki 7:1–12**), the Chronicler only mentions Solomon’s palace in passing. The central narrative focus of **chs. 2–7** is the construction of the Jerusalem temple.

Iain Duguid: The “*temple*” is to be “*for the name of the Lord,*” an expression that brings together both his presence and his transcendence and includes his honor and glory. In the ancient world, a “*name*” was more than an identifier, being also used to describe character and (as today) reputation and fame (good or bad). God cannot be “contained” by a building, but the temple, identified as the Lord’s house, is to display his greatness and his covenantal relationship with his people (**vv. 6, 9b**); it is a focal point for worship (**vv. 4–6, 9b**), leading to others’ recognizing his honor and glory (**Deut. 12:5; 1 Chron. 13:6; 17:23–24; 22:19**).

David Guzik: We might think that the greatest thing about Solomon was his wisdom, his riches, his proverbs or his writings. Clearly, for the Chronicler the most important thing about Solomon was the temple he built. This was most important because it was most relevant to a community of returning exiles who struggled to build a new temple and to make a place for Israel among the nations again.

B. (:2) Commissioning of Responsibilities

“So Solomon assigned 70,000 men to carry loads,

*and 80,000 men to quarry stone in the mountains,
and 3,600 to supervise them.”*

Frederick Mabie: An ongoing challenge in the construction of large building projects in the biblical world was the supply of skilled and unskilled workers. Given this challenge, manpower requirements for such projects were commonly extracted from slaves, prisoners of war, and lower sectors of the society. In the case of larger empires the acquisition of human resources was a motivating factor for military excursions along with the perennial goal of obtaining financial assets such as gold and silver. In the aftermath of such military operations, both skilled and unskilled laborers would become part of an indentured workforce. In military annals from the biblical world, the number of individuals seized for work projects was listed together with other plunder obtained in battle.

August Konkel: The commissioners are likely to be broken down to 3,000 supervisors over labor and 600 officers in the higher echelons of government. Each supervisor would be responsible for about 50 men. The levy is recruited from the alien population, non-Israelites living within Israelite society. Apparently the census was in part necessary because of Israelite hegemony expanded over the new areas that David had brought under his control (**Rainey** 1970: 201–2). These non-Israelites would now be participants within Israelite society, but they would not have had the same status as those from native Israelite families. The Chronicler will return to the question of conscripted labor when he concludes the account of Solomon (**2 Chron 8:7–10**). A second kind of forced labor is introduced there, which apparently was also conscripted from nonnative peoples living among Israel.

I. (:3-10) SOLOMON’S REQUEST OF HURAM FOR ASSISTANCE IN GRAND TEMPLE BUILDING PROJECT

“Then Solomon sent word to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying,”

Raymond Dillard: According to Josephus (Ag.Ap. 1.117) Hiram ascended the throne after the death of his father Abibaal ca. 970 B.C.; he was nineteen years old at his accession and reigned for thirty-four years. Josephus is the main source of chronological information on the Phoenician kings, though estimates of the worth of his data vary; see the discussion in **Katzenstein**, Tyre, 80–84. The Chronicler consistently writes the name “*Huram*,” a variant of the form used in Kings, “*Hiram*.” Both are shortened forms of the name *’Ahîrām* (**Harris**, Grammar of the Phoenician Language [New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1936] 75).

Iain Duguid: Tyre was the major Phoenician port and trading center, around 50 miles (80 km) north of Jerusalem. The main center was on an island and thus easily protected; Tyre had its own fleet (cf. **8:18**). The movement of goods through the port to and from the Mediterranean coasts and inland saw Tyre’s prosperity and influence grow under Hiram. (Four hundred years after Solomon, **Ezekiel 27** describes her prosperous trade and false security; a similar description is used of “*Babylon*” in **Rev. 18:9–20**.)

A. (:3b-5) Supporting Arguments for Solomon's Request for Assistance

1. (:3b) Past Assistance Provided to King David

*“As you dealt with David my father,
and sent him cedars to build him a house to dwell in,
so do for me.”*

Iain Duguid: He provides two reasons to support his request: Hiram's past relationship with David (a parity treaty) and, more importantly, the greatness of God and the diversity of offerings to be presented to him.

2. (:4) Purpose of the Temple Building Project

*“Behold, I am about to build a house for the name of the LORD my God,
dedicating it to Him, to burn fragrant incense before Him,
and to set out the showbread continually,
and to offer burnt offerings morning and evening, on sabbaths and on
new moons and on the appointed feasts of the LORD our God,
this being required forever in Israel.”*

Bob Utley: This verse lists many of the aspects of tabernacle worship.

- incense – **Exod. 30:1-7**
- showbread – **Exod. 25:30; 40:23; Lev. 24:5-9**
- burnt offerings each morning and evening (the continual) – **Exod. 29:38-42; Num. 28:3-31; 29:6-30**
- offerings on the sabbaths – **Num. 28:9,10; 1 Chr. 23:31**
- offerings on the new moon – **Num. 28:11-15; 1 Chr. 23:3**
- the appointed feasts – **Exod. 23:14-17; 34:22-24; Leviticus 23; Deut. 16:16; 1 Chr. 23:31**

All of these were meant to be permanent.

3. (:5) Preeminence of the God of the Temple Corresponds to Grandeur of the Project

*“And the house which I am about to build will be great;
for greater is our God than all the gods.”*

Martin Selman: We don't know what Hiram's religious beliefs were. It could be that some traces of the knowledge of YHWH had been preserved in Phoenicia. Solomon may have tried to insert some “evangelism” in his message to Hiram. That would account for the mention of some of the sacrifices and celebration of certain special days. Also the reference to YHWH as being “*greater than all other gods*” would fit that idea.

B. (:6) Solomon's Humility

1. Immensity of God

*“But who is able to build a house for Him,
for the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain Him?”*

2. Insignificance of Solomon

“So who am I, that I should build a house for Him, except to burn incense before Him?”

Morgan: He never conceived it as a place to which God would be confined. He did expect, and he received, manifestations of the Presence of God in that house. Its chief value was that it afforded man a place in which he should offer incense; that is, the symbol of adoration, praise, worship, to God.

C. (:7-9a) Skilled Workers and Special Building Materials Requested

1. (:7) Skilled Workers Requested

a. Particular Skill Sets of Craftsmen

“And now send me a skilled man to work in gold, silver, brass and iron, and in purple, crimson and violet fabrics, and who knows how to make engravings,”

b. Partnership of Labor

“to work with the skilled men whom I have in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided.”

Payne: Despite a growing number of ‘skilled craftsmen’ in Israel, their techniques remained inferior to those of their northern neighbors, as is demonstrated archaeologically by less finely cut building stones and by the lower level of Israelite culture in general.

2. (:8a) Special Building Materials Requested

a. (:8a) Particular Types of Lumber

“Send me also cedar, cypress and algum timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants know how to cut timber of Lebanon;”

August Konkel: From Egypt to Mesopotamia, Lebanon was renowned for its huge cedar trees, which could reach a height of 100 feet (30 meters). The pine tree may be a collective name for several types of fir. Aljum wood is not precisely identified; it was used to make supports for the temple (possibly pillars or balustrades) and musical instruments. This was imported by the Phoenicians and perhaps further processed there

b. (:8b-9a) Partnership of Labor

“and indeed, my servants will work with your servants, 9 to prepare timber in abundance for me,”

D. (:9b) Spectacular Grandeur of the Temple Building Project

“for the house which I am about to build will be great and wonderful.”

E. (:10) Specific Pledge of Compensation

“Now behold, I will give to your servants, the woodsmen who cut the timber, 20,000 kors of crushed wheat, and 20,000 kors of barley, and 20,000 baths of wine, and 20,000 baths of oil.”

Raymond Dillard: Tyre may have been rich in trade but apparently needed substantial imports to feed her population. The kor is a unit of dry measure, slightly above six bushels, for a total of 125,000 bushels each of wheat and barley. The bath is a unit of liquid measure, approximately six gallons, though the precise standard for these measures at a given time and locality is not known with confidence.

II. (:11-16) HURAM’S RESPONSE SHOWS RESPECT FOR THE GOD OF ISRAEL AND SUPPORT FOR SOLOMON

“Then Hiram, king of Tyre, answered in a letter sent to Solomon.”

Thomas Constable: Hiram's reply (vv. 11-16) shows that in Solomon's day, Israel was drawing Gentile nations to Yahweh. This was part of God's purpose for Israel and was something that the ideal Son of David would accomplish (cf. **Exod. 19:5-6; Hag. 2:7; Zech. 8:22-23**).

A. (:11b-12) Recognition of Solomon’s Divine Calling

1. (:11b) Called by the Lord to be King of Israel

“Because the LORD loves His people, He has made you king over them.”

2. (:12) Called by the Lord to Build Both a Temple and Royal Palace

“Then Hiram continued, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, endowed with discretion and understanding, who will build a house for the LORD and a royal palace for himself.’”

B. (:13-14) Recruitment of Hiram-abi to Contribute His Skilled Craftsmanship

“And now I am sending a skilled man, endowed with understanding, Hiram-abi, 14 the son of a Danite woman and a Tyrian father, who knows how to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone and wood, and in purple, violet, linen and crimson fabrics, and who knows how to make all kinds of engravings and to execute any design which may be assigned to him, to work with your skilled men, and with those of my lord David your father.”

C. (:15-16) Responsibilities of Both Parties to Fulfill the Building Contract

1. (:15) Responsibility of Solomon to Supply Material Provisions

“Now then, let my lord send to his servants wheat and barley, oil and wine, of which he has spoken.”

2. (:16) Responsibility of Hiram to Supply Necessary Lumber for the Building Projects

“And we will cut whatever timber you need from Lebanon, and bring it to you on rafts by sea to Joppa, so that you may carry it up to Jerusalem.”

James Duguid: Compared to the portrayal of Hiram-abi in Kings, the Chronicler has added material connecting him closely to Oholiab, the master-craftsman who worked on the tabernacle. The list of Hiram-abi’s skills in **verse 14** has been expanded to include Oholiab’s skills from Exodus 38:23, and whereas **1 Kings 7:14** notes that Hiram-abi’s mother was from Naphtali, Chronicles traces his genealogy among the Danites, the tribe of Oholiab. (In 1 Kings, Hiram-abi is called “Hiram”—not to be confused with the king by that name.) Given the mention of Bezalel in **1:5**, the Chronicler seems to be connecting Solomon and Hiram-abi to the two artificers of the tabernacle, Bezalel and Oholiab. Why do you think establishing continuity between the tabernacle and the temple is so important to the Chronicler? What impact should this continuity have on Israel’s worship and faith?

(:17-18) EPILOGUE – CONSCRIPTION OF LABOR FORCE

A. (:17) Census of Foreigners

“And Solomon numbered all the aliens who were in the land of Israel, following the census which his father David had taken; and 153,600 were found.”

B. (:18) Commissioning of Responsibilities

“And he appointed 70,000 of them to carry loads, and 80,000 to quarry stones in the mountains, and 3,600 supervisors to make the people work.”

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler’s account of Solomon’s preparations, supplementing those made by David, concludes by repeating with more details the opening numbers of foreign workers (v. 2), following the pattern set by David (**1 Chron. 22:2**). The details summarize **1 Kings 5:13–16**, but the Chronicler omits the “30,000” who appear to be Israelites who worked in three shifts to help in Lebanon and mentions only “*all the resident aliens who were in the land of Israel*” (cf. **2 Chron. 8:9 = 1 Kings 9:22**); “153,600” is his own total of the three figures matched in Kings (70,000 + 80,000 + 3,600).

Workers and resources, from within Israel and paid for from outside, some arranged by David and the rest by Solomon, are now organized and at hand. Work can begin on the temple that is “*for the name of the Lord*” (**2 Chron. 2:1**).

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Was Hiram a believer in the true God of Israel? What was the relationship between the two countries?

2) How do the religious rites cited here (cf. vs. 4) as performed in the context of temple worship find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ?

3) What type of preparation and dedication and quality should be evidenced in our corporate worship today?

4) Were only foreign laborers used in the building project or did Solomon conscript some native born Israelites to help with the project?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: The actual relationship between Israel and Tyre was one of **parity**, not vassalage:

- (1) note the use of “*brother*” in **1 Kgs 9:13**; cf. also **1 Kgs 20:33**;
- (2) Hiram’s services required full recompense, hardly a sign of vassalage (*1 Kgs 5:23 [9]*);
- (3) the treaty between the powers gives no hint of subordination (*1 Kgs 5:23 [9]*).

The relationship between Hiram and Solomon may have been cemented by diplomatic marriage (1 Kgs 11:1, 5).

Iain Duguid: The mention of this foreign support is a looking forward to the time when “*every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (**Phil. 2:10–11**). Past events become pointers to the purposes of the Maker of heaven and earth. . .

Solomon’s focus on the function of “*offerings*,” the activity for which the temple was built, is a reminder that all of the resources and structures of the church are to bring glory to God as we bring him the sacrifices of “*praise . . . , not neglect[ing] to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God*” (**Heb. 13:15, 16**). We are enabled to do so because God has first given to his people the gifts that are needed (**Eph. 2:8–10; 4:4–24**).

J.A. Thompson: Several aspects of worship emerge from Solomon's letter.

- First, true worship cannot abandon all tradition. On the one hand, of course, the temple would be a new thing in Israel. On the other hand, it would include worship—the sacrifice, incense, and prayers—with which the people were familiar and indeed which had been decreed by God himself (v. 4). Novelty can be good, but not if neither Scripture nor the people of God recognize it as true worship.
- Second, true worship is spiritual and recognizes that the architecture and ceremony of human houses of worship cannot capture what God himself is (v. 6). If we ever think that some place, ceremony, or object has captured the

essence of the God we worship, we are in idolatry.

- Third, true worship pays attention to quality. Solomon demanded that Hiram send only the best (**vv. 7–10**). We make a mockery of worship if we suppose that God is indifferent to shabbiness and laziness in our preaching, singing, and even our preparation of the place of worship.
- Finally, true worship bears witness to the outside world of the great God whom we worship (**v. 5**).

Frederick Mabie: The importance of a temple relates directly to the notion of **sacred space**—a place wherein the human realm could intersect with the divine realm and act as a conduit for divine presence and blessing. Since temples were understood to be sacred space (holy ground), the layout, features, and requisite rituals of these temples were connected to the attributes, provision, and strength of the deity. In Israel, the mediation of divine presence and holiness was the driving force behind the great importance attached to the proper procedures of approaching the holy space, usage of sanctified items, and human holiness.

The careful attention to the design of the temple structure and legal stipulations pertaining to entering the temple reflect the importance of properly navigating sacred space. Such procedure and protocols function to establish and maintain proper boundaries between the sacred and human realm. The importance of maintaining boundaries for sacred space is also reflected in the use of veils and doors to separate the innermost area of the temple. Such barriers reflect metaphysical and theological points of separation between a holy God and a fallen human race. Moreover, such barriers are reminders of the necessity of approaching—and worshiping—God on his terms within the temple context.

Matthew Henry: The reasons why he makes this application to Hiram are here more fully represented, for information to Hiram as well as for inducement.

(1.) He pleads his father's interest in Hiram, and the kindness he had received from him (**2 Chron. 2:3**): *As thou didst deal with David, so deal with me*. As we must show kindness to, so we may expect kindness from, our fathers' friends, and with them should cultivate a correspondence.

(2.) He represents his design in building the temple: he intended it for a place of religious worship (**2 Chron. 2:4**), that all the offerings which God had appointed for the honour of his name might be offered up there. The house was built that it might be dedicated to God and used in his service. This we should aim at in all our business, that our havings and doings may be all to the glory of God. He mentions various particular services that were there to be performed, for the instruction of Hiram. The mysteries of the true religion, unlike those of the Gentile superstition, coveted not concealment.

(3.) He endeavors to inspire Hiram with very great and high thoughts of the God of Israel, by expressing the mighty veneration he had for his holy name: *Great is our God*

above all gods, above all idols, above all princes. Idols are nothing, princes are little, and both under the control of the God of Israel; and therefore,

[1.] “The house must be great; not in proportion to the greatness of that God to whom it is to be dedicated (for between finite and infinite there can be no proportion), but in some proportion to the great value and esteem we have for this God.”

[2.] “Yet, be it ever so great, it cannot be a habitation for the great God. Let not Hiram think that the God of Israel, like the gods of the nations, *dwells in temples made with hands*, **Acts 17:24**. No, *the heaven of heavens cannot contain him*. It is intended only for the convenience of his priests and worshippers, that they may have a fit place wherein to burn sacrifice before him.”

[3.] He looked upon himself, though a mighty prince, as unworthy the honour of being employed in this great work: *Who am I that I should build him a house?* It becomes us to go about every work for God with a due sense of our utter insufficiency for it and our incapacity to do anything adequate to the divine perfections. It is part of the wisdom wherein we ought to walk towards those that are without carefully to guard against all misapprehension which anything we say or do may occasion concerning God; so Solomon does here in his treaty with Hiram.

Geoffrey Kirkland: What are some **LESSONS ON PROPER WORSHIP** from **2 Chronicles 2**... 8 instructive lessons for us:

1. We need a proper **FORM/STRUCTURE** of worship (ordained by God Himself in Scripture)
2. We need a proper **WITNESS** in worship (bear witness to the outside world of our great God)
3. We need a proper **GOD-CENTEREDNESS** in worship (our house/temple doesn't capture who God is)
4. We need a proper **QUALITY** in worship (we give God our best)
5. We need a proper **INTEGRITY/HEARTFULNESS** in worship (no shabby slothful 'leftovers' worship)
6. We need a proper **CORPORATENESS/TOGETHERNESS** in worship (this is together)
7. We need a proper **REGULARITY** in worship (they sacrifice daily, weekly bread, this is repeated, ongoing, regular, frequent)

8. We need a proper HUMILITY in worship (Solomon said: "*who am I that I should come and bring to God worship?*")

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/11118749151.pdf>

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 3:1 – 5:1

TITLE: *TEMPLE BUILDING DETAILS – STRUCTURE AND FURNISHINGS*

BIG IDEA:

THE MAJESTY AND GLORY OF GOD ARE REFLECTED IN THE ORNATE AND PRECIOUS DESIGN OF THE TEMPLE STRUCTURES AND INTERNAL FURNISHINGS AND UTENSILS

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: In light of the dominant role the temple plays in the Chronicler's history the most striking feature of his account of the building of the temple is its **brevity**: forty-six verses in Kings (**1 Kgs 6:1–38; 7:15–22**) compared to seventeen in Chronicles. Much of the extensive detail regarding the architecture of the temple is omitted (**6:4–19, 22, 26, 29–38; 7:15, 17b–20, 22**), along with the description of Solomon's palace (**7:1–12**). The Chronicler adds only a few details not found in the parallel text (**3:1, 6, 8b–9, 14**). At the very least the author is depending on the reader's knowledge of the account in Kings, for without that information his description of the temple is relatively opaque.

Iain Duguid: David and Solomon's preparations had reached their end; next, "*Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.*" The account of preparation subsequent to God's first announcement (**1 Chron. 17:3–15**) has been extensive (14 chapters), but the actual details of the buildings and its furnishings are given briefly. The Chronicler's account (**2 Chron. 3:1–5:1**) is only half the length of that in **1 Kings 6:1–38; 7:13–51**—and this includes places where he expands on that content. He focuses on details that are pertinent to the second temple and his hearers' context.

Geoffrey Kirkland: Consider how the Chronicler acts as a sort of TOUR GUIDE to lead us (in **2 Chronicles 3**)!

- he starts with the PORCH (**3-4**)
 - o then the interior room - "*the holy place*" (**v.5-7**)
 - then the Holiest of all, the Most Holy Place (**v.8-13**)
 - then the VEIL of separation (**v.14**)
 - o then the PILLARS on the outside of symbolic praise (**v.15-17**)

Mark Boda: Chapters 3 and 4 were compiled as a continuous section, as indicated by the regular use of the verb *wayya'as* ("and he made/did") in **3:8, 10, 14, 15, 16; 4:1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 18, 19**. This becomes a "*Leitmotif*, lending the pericope a touch of uniformity" (**Japhet** 1993:563; cf. **Williamson** 1982:208). The section begins with a summary note (**3:1-2**), a structuring signal that matches others found throughout the Chronicler's account of the Temple building (**1:1; 2:1; 3:1-2; 5:1; 7:11; 8:1, 16**). It then presents the building account in two parts: first, the construction of the building

structures (3:3-17) and, second, the fashioning of the furnishings and utensils within those structures (4:1-22).

(3:1-2) PROLOGUE – BEGINNING OF TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION

A. (:1a) Project Start

“Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem”

B. (:1b) Project Strategic Location

1. Strategic via Theophany

“on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David,”

August Konkel: Two designations are brought together: the threshing floor of Araunah, where the plague was stopped, and Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered Isaac to God (**Gen 22:2**).

2. Strategic via Staging by David

“at the place that David had prepared,”

3. Strategic via Purchase from Ornan the Jebusite

“on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”

Frederick Mabie: Moreover, the location of Mount Moriah connects with God’s provision of a substitutionary sacrifice for Abraham (**Ge 22**), after which the area was called the *“mountain of the LORD”* (**Ge 22:14**). The location at the threshing floor of Ornan (*“Araunah”* in **2Sa 24:18**) the Jebusite adds a further level of significance to the site of the Jerusalem temple. This location hearkens back to David and reminds the reader that the chosen place for the temple connects with both divine grace (following David’s sin) and a divine encounter (via the angel of Yahweh). All told, careful narrative attention connects the temple location to Abraham, Moses, and David.

C. (:2) Project Starting Date

“And he began to build on the second day in the second month of the fourth year of his reign.”

David Guzik: This was probably in the year 967 B.C. Connecting this with **1 Kings 6:1**, this marking point shows just how long Israel lived in the Promised Land without a temple. The tabernacle served the nation well for more than 400 years. The prompting to build the temple was more at the direction and will of God than out of absolute necessity.

Frederick Mabie: The fact that Solomon did not begin the temple construction until his fourth year reflects the significant amount of preparation and planning that still needed to take place beyond that accomplished by David.

Matthew Henry: The time when it was begun; not till the **fourth year** of Solomon's reign, **2 Chron. 3:2**. Not that the first three years were trifled away, or spent in deliberating whether they should build the temple or no; but they were employed in the necessary preparations for it, wherein three years would be soon gone, considering how many hands were to be got together and set to work. Some conjecture that this was a sabbatical year, or year of release and rest to the land, when the people, being discharged from their husbandry, might more easily lend a hand to the beginning of this work; and then the year in which it was finished would fall out to be another sabbatical year, when they would likewise have leisure to attend the solemnity of the dedication of it.

I. (3:3-17) STRUCTURE OF THE TEMPLE

A. (:3-7) Foundations, Overlays and Adornments

1. (:3-4) Dimensions of Foundations and Porch

“Now these are the foundations which Solomon laid for building the house of God. The length in cubits, according to the old standard was sixty cubits, and the width twenty cubits. 4 And the porch which was in front of the house was as long as the width of the house, twenty cubits, and the height 120; and inside he overlaid it with pure gold.”

Frederick Mabie: The description of the temple is replete with notations of **gold**, both by type and amount of gold. Examples in the immediate context include “*pure gold*” (*zāhāb ṭāhōr*; v.4), “*fine gold*” (*zāhāb ṭōb*; v.5), gold from Parvaim (v.6), and, in the broader context of Chronicles, “*pure gold*” (*zāhāb sāgūr*; e.g., **2Ch 4:20, 22**), “*beaten gold*” (*zāhāb šāhūt*; e.g., **2Ch 9:15–16**), and gold from Ophir (**2Ch 8:18**; cf. David's words in **1Ch 29:1–5**). While the exact significance of each term (or geographic location) used in conjunction is not clear, the intended meaning and emphasis are clear—the temple built for Yahweh utilized top-quality gold sourced from locations known for special gold, reflecting the preciousness of God and the devotion of Solomon.

J.A. Thompson: It is evident that Israel used two standards for the cubit, a short cubit (17.4 inches) and a long cubit (20.4 inches), both based on an Egyptian dual standard of six and seven palms respectively (cf. **Ezek 40:5; 45:13**). It is not clear what the Chronicler meant by “*the old standard*,” but excavations at the temple of Arad yielded evidence of these two standards. The temple of the tenth century had a north-south measurement of nine meters (twenty short cubits) for its main hall while the ninth-century temple had been lengthened to 10.5 meters (twenty long cubits). The latter measurement is exactly the same as that of the Jerusalem temple, that is, twenty cubits.

2. (:5) Overlay of Main Room

“And he overlaid the main room with cypress wood and overlaid it with fine gold, and ornamented it with palm trees and chains.”

Frederick Mabie: The **palm tree** was a common symbol of fertility, life, and agricultural bounty in the ancient Near East and symbolized God’s blessings on his people.

3. (:6-7) Additional Adornments and Overlays

“Further, he adorned the house with precious stones; and the gold was gold from Parvaim. 7 He also overlaid the house with gold-- the beams, the thresholds, and its walls, and its doors; and he carved cherubim on the walls.”

August Konkell: The building was **ornate**: the beams, doorposts, walls, and doors were overlaid or inlaid with gold and precious stones, depending on the feature intended (Dillard 1987: 28). The carefully carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and chain festoons (curved lattices as if suspended from two points) were probably enhanced by gold and stone gems. The reliefs were possibly covered or embellished with gold, distinguishing them on the flat surface of the surrounding walls. The quality of materials increased in proximity to the most sacred spaces.

J.A. Thompson: The various areas that were covered with gold are listed—ceiling beams, door frames, walls, and doors. Cherubim were carved on the walls (cf. **1 Kgs 6:29**).

B. (:8-14) Holy of Holies

1. (:8-9) Construction of the Holy of Holies

“Now he made the room of the holy of holies: its length, across the width of the house, was twenty cubits, and its width was twenty cubits; and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to 600 talents. 9 And the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. He also overlaid the upper rooms with gold.”

Frederick Mabie: The weight of the gold nails or pegs (50 shekels) amounts to more than one pound each. If these are the same nails as the type mentioned at **1 Chronicles 22:3**, then the nails were made of iron and coated with gold.

2. (:10-14) Cherubim and Veil in the Holy of Holies

a. (:10-13) Cherubim

“Then he made two sculptured cherubim in the room of the holy of holies and overlaid them with gold. 11 And the wingspan of the cherubim was twenty cubits; the wing of one, of five cubits, touched the wall of the house, and its other wing, of five cubits, touched the wing of the other cherub. 12 And the wing of the other cherub, of five cubits, touched the wall of the house; and its other wing of five cubits, was attached to the wing of the first cherub. 13 The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits, and they stood on their feet facing the main room.”

Frederick Mabie: The imagery of the expanse of the cherubim's wingspan may reflect God's comprehensive coverage (protection) over the ark, namely, his protective watching over his law delineating his covenantal relationship with Israel contained in the ark (cf. **Ex 37:7–9; 1Ch 28:18; 2Ch 5:7–8**). Moreover, the stationing of the cherubim facing the main temple hall suggests their fuller function as guardians of sacred space. Such a guardian role of cherubim is also reflected in **Genesis 3:24**, where these creatures guard the tree of life.

In the biblical material, cherubim are associated with the context and imagery of God's glory and majesty (cf. **Ps 99:1; Eze 10:18–22**). The imagery of fearsome supernatural creatures (referred to as sphinxes, griffins, and composite creatures) protecting the realm of deity and royalty is a common feature of temples and palaces from the biblical world. Within the broader motifs of the temple interior, the cherub, the sacred tree, and the lights conjure up images of the garden of Eden and the heavenly firmament.

Iain Duguid: The description of their standing "*on their feet, facing the nave*" distinguishes them from the cherubim who formed the cover of the ark looking at each other and the cover (**Ex. 25:17–22**). Like the cherubim that guarded the "*way to the tree of life*" (**Gen. 3:24**) they protect the Most Holy Place, God's throne. Other links between the Most Holy Place and Eden, places of God's presence, can be seen in the gold (cf. **Gen. 2:11–12**) and the imagery of "*palms*" (**2 Chron. 3:5**) and, on the external pillars, "*pomegranates*," a common symbol of fertility throughout the ancient Near East (**v. 16; 4:13**).

b. (:14) Veil

“And he made the veil of violet, purple, crimson and fine linen, and he worked cherubim on it.”

C. (:15-17) Construction of the Pillars

“He also made two pillars for the front of the house, thirty-five cubits high, and the capital on the top of each was five cubits. 16 And he made chains in the inner sanctuary, and placed them on the tops of the pillars; and he made one hundred pomegranates and placed them on the chains. 17 And he erected the pillars in front of the temple, one on the right and the other on the left, and named the one on the right Jachin and the one on the left Boaz.”

August Konkel: The **two pillars** naturally generate a great deal of interest, partly because they remain somewhat mysterious. They seem to be freestanding pillars in front of the porch, but what they represent is never explained. In a vision Zechariah sees chariots burst out from between two bronze mountains (**Zech 6:1**), which is the closest biblical reference that might be an analogy to the significance of the pillars. The prophet depicts a scene at the entrance to God's divine council. The meaning of the pillars was probably not one simple analogy, but a way of representing the rule of the Creator over the earth. The cosmos can be described as resting on pillars (**Job 26:11**), and in the garden of Eden, life and knowledge of God were represented by trees (**Gen 2–3**). All of these concepts are related. The names of the pillars are equally ambiguous:

Jakin (it is firm) might refer to the security of the divine promise; *Boaz (with strength)* might be testimony to the strength of God for his kingdom.

Raymond Dillard: Though there is no doubt that the pillars were a common architectural feature in ancient temples, little unanimity exists beyond this assertion. Difficulties attend their **size, placement, names, and function.**

Various scholars have described them as fire cressets, cosmic pillars, maṣṣebôth, Egyptian obelisks, mythological mountains between which the sun (-god) appeared (cf. **Zech 6:1**), trees of paradise, means of determining the equinox, gateposts, etc. As much as they have kindled the interest of the modern reader, the Bible itself does not clearly articulate their function. . .

On the basis of the evidence from most temples, the consensus among archeologists is that the pillars were **freestanding**; their function was symbolic and decorative rather than structural. . .

The **names** of the pillars have also produced a wide variety of opinion, some transparently less probable than others; they have been viewed

- (1) as the names of donors or builders;
- (2) as a reference to other gods;
- (3) as the names of maṣṣebôth that stood on the site prior to the time of David;
- (4) as predicates of deity: “*He is the one who establishes; in him is strength*”;
- (5) together as a verbal sentence, “*he establishes in strength*”;
- (6) as opening words of two longer inscriptions in some way associated with dynastic oracles;
- (7) as ancestral names of King Solomon.

David Guzik: The house of God was a place where people experienced what the pillars were all about. At that house, people were *established* in their relationship with God. At that house, people were given *strength* from the LORD. From this building, it should go out to the whole community: “Come here and get *established*. Come here and receive the *strength* of God.”

Geoffrey Kirkland: Why the pillars in front of the Temple complex?

1. The PILLARS are Monuments of God’s Majesty!
2. Also, they served to *REMIND* each generation of Israelites of the greatness and power of the One True and Living God, that they had the privilege of worshipping and coming to Him!

II. (4:1-22) INTERIOR FURNISHINGS AND UTENSILS OF THE TEMPLE

A. (:1-6) Bronze Altar, Cast Metal Sea with Figures Like Oxen and Ten Basins

1. (:1) Bronze Altar

“Then he made a bronze altar, twenty cubits in length and twenty cubits in width and ten cubits in height.”

Pulpit Commentary: It must be observed that the altar is the first item mentioned in the list of furniture that leads to the ark, which symbolized the presence of God. In New Testament terms, we could say that the way to the throne of God begins at the cross. Without the sacrifice of Christ there would be no possibility of fellowship with the Father.

2. (:2) Cast Metal Sea with Figures Like Oxen

a. (:2) Dimensions of Cast Metal Sea

“Also he made the cast metal sea, ten cubits from brim to brim, circular in form, and its height was five cubits and its circumference thirty cubits.”

b. (:3) Figures Like Oxen

“Now figures like oxen were under it and all around it, ten cubits, entirely encircling the sea. The oxen were in two rows, cast in one piece.”

c. (:4) Orientation of Cast Metal Sea

“It stood on twelve oxen, three facing the north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east; and the sea was set on top of them, and all their hindquarters turned inwards.”

Iain Dillard: The calm water in the large “sea” thus reminded worshipers of the Lord’s rule over all creation and history; the supporting “*twelve oxen*,” three facing each of the compass directions, provide an image of strength covering all the earth. They may also represent the twelve tribes of Israel, which in the wilderness encamped around the tabernacle (**Num. 2:1–31**).

d. (:5) Capacity of Cast Metal Sea

“And it was a handbreadth thick, and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like a lily blossom; it could hold 3,000 baths.”

3. (:6) Ten Basins

“He also made ten basins in which to wash, and he set five on the right side and five on the left, to rinse things for the burnt offering; but the sea was for the priests to wash in.”

J.A. Thompson: v. 6 -- Reference is made here to the **ten basins**, five placed on the south side of the Sea and five on the north side. A distinction is made in the use to which these basins were put in contrast to that of the Sea. The basins were used for washing the utensils used for the burnt offerings, while the Sea was reserved for the priests. The parallel passage in Kings is longer and includes a section that deals with the portable stands for the basins (**1 Kgs 7:27–37**).

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler assigns to the Sea and the basins a function in ritual cleansing of the priests and the sacrificial implements. This addition by the Chronicler gives these vessels the same function as that of the laver in the tabernacle (**Exod 30:18–21**); the inclusion of this information is one more example of the Chronicler’s efforts to parallel the building of the temple and the tabernacle. Most interpreters have viewed the Sea as symbolic of the primeval sea or chaos ocean over which Yahweh rules in triumph (**Ps 29:10; 74:12–17; 89:9–10; 93:3–4; 98:7–9; 104:1–9; Isa 51:9–10; Hab 3:8–10**); it is Yahweh who rules over the Sea, not the Babylonian Marduk or the Canaanite Baal whose victories are recorded in mythological literature. If the function of the Sea in the temple courtyard is primarily that of cosmological symbolism, then the Chronicler could be viewed as demythologizing the Sea of the pagan associations it may have evoked by giving it instead a utilitarian function (**C-M, Rudolph, Albright, Michaeli, Coggins**). There is, however, insufficient evidence to determine which was the original use intended for the Sea or to associate either view of it with a different time period or sociological group. **Biblical imagery pertaining to water** is multifaceted: it not only represents the threatening waters which must be subjected to God, but also water for cleansing and purification (**Exod 30:18–21; Lev 15:5–11; Ezek 36:25; Zech 13:1; Ps 51:7, 10; Isa 1:16**). In Ezekiel’s temple vision the brazen Sea has been replaced by a life-giving river (**Ezek 47:1–12; cf. Rev 22:1–2**). If the Sea was to be used by the priests for ablution, some stairs or other means of ascent must also have been provided, but are not mentioned. The twelve bulls forming the base were likely symbolic of the tribes of Israel; three tribes at each of the four compass points is reminiscent of the arrangement of camp in the wilderness (**Num 2**) and of Ezekiel’s vision of the city gates (**Ezek 48:30–35**). . .

While the tabernacle had a single lampstand, a single table for the consecrated bread, and a single laver, Solomon’s temple had ten of each. The description of these mobile basins is much more elaborate in **1 Kgs 7:27–40**. For a discussion of the Sea and the basins and archeological parallels, see **Busink**, *Der Tempel* 1:326–52. The decoration on the panels of these wheeled stands (lions, bulls, cherubim) and their being likened to chariots (**1 Kgs 7:32–33**) evokes imagery of the divine chariot (**Ezek 1:4–28**) with its wheels, creatures, and the sound of rushing water; cf. **1 Chr 28:18**.

B. (:7-8) Ten Golden Lampstands, Ten Tables and One Hundred Golden Bowls

1. (:7) Ten Golden Lampstands

*“Then he made the ten golden lampstands
in the way prescribed for them,
and he set them in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left.”*

2. (:8a) Ten Tables

*“He also made ten tables and placed them in the temple,
five on the right side and five on the left.”*

3. (:8b) One Hundred Golden Bowls

“And he made one hundred golden bowls.”

C. (:9) Courts and Doors

1. Construction of the Courts and Doors

“Then he made the court of the priests and the great court and doors for the court, and overlaid their doors with bronze.”

2. Placement of the Sea

“And he set the sea on the right side of the house toward the southeast.”

D. (:11-18) Summary of Hiram/Huram-Abi’s Contributions

“Hiram also made the pails, the shovels, and the bowls. So Hiram finished doing the work which he performed for King Solomon in the house of God: 12 the two pillars, the bowls and the two capitals on top of the pillars, and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the capitals which were on top of the pillars, 13 and the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, two rows of pomegranates for each network to cover the two bowls of the capitals which were on the pillars. 14 He also made the stands and he made the basins on the stands, 15 and the one sea with the twelve oxen under it. 16 And the pails, the shovels, the forks, and all its utensils, Hiram-abi made of polished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the LORD. 17 On the plain of the Jordan the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredah. 18 Thus Solomon made all these utensils in great quantities, for the weight of the bronze could not be found out.”

Andrew Hill: The summary of Hiram-Abi’s achievements (4:11–16) completes the record of the skilled smiths sent by King Hiram of Tyre to oversee the metal work and engraving for the temple (2:13–14). The added detail concerning the location of bronze casting (east of the Jordan River, halfway between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, 4:17) puts the process of metal casting a considerable distance from the source of copper used in the bronze casting if it was mined at Timnah. The “golden altar” is equivalent to the altar of incense in the Mosaic tabernacle (4:19a; cf. Ex. 30:1–10).

E. (:19-22) Furnishing of the Temple Completed by Solomon

“Solomon also made all the things that were in the house of God: even the golden altar, the tables with the bread of the Presence on them, 20 the lampstands with their lamps of pure gold, to burn in front of the inner sanctuary in the way prescribed; 21 the flowers, the lamps, and the tongs of gold, of purest gold; 22 and the snuffers, the bowls, the spoons, and the firepans of pure gold; and the entrance of the house, its inner doors for the holy of holies, and the doors of the house, that is, of the nave, of gold.”

Frederick Mabie: The gold noted in conjunction with the altar utensils (vv.21–22) reflects their supreme importance in the sacrificial system. No expense was spared in even the smallest details of the construction and furnishing of the temple complex. The gold doors of the temple (v.22), like the veil, were both works of art and functional means of protecting holy space.

Martin Selman: The symbolism of flora and fauna in the temple may either indicate God’s sovereignty over the created order or be another allusion to the harmony of all created things in God’s presence as in the Garden of Eden.

(5:1) TRANSITION – COMPLETION OF TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION

A. Completion of the Temple

“Thus all the work that Solomon performed for the house of the LORD was finished.”

B. Consigning the Valuable Davidic Spoils into the Treasuries of the Temple

“And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated, even the silver and the gold and all the utensils, and put them in the treasuries of the house of God.”

J.A. Thompson: This verse marks the transition between the story of the construction and that of the dedication of the temple. It follows **1 Kgs 7:51**. The last action mentioned in this section is Solomon's moving to the treasuries of God's temple (**1 Chr 18:8, 10–11; 22:3–4, 14, 16; 26:26; 29:2–9**) the things David, his father, had dedicated. The spoils taken from Egypt went into the building of the tabernacle. The spoils taken from Israel's enemies built the temple. The treasuries of God's temple are not described in the Chronicler's account of the temple construction (cf. **1 Kgs 6:5–10**). The verb “*was finished*” (*wattišalam*) may be a play on Solomon's name (*šēlōmōh*), for it uses the same consonants. Solomon, the chosen temple builder, brings his task to fulfillment.

Raymond Dillard: *The things dedicated by David.* See **1 Chr 18:1–13; 26:25–27; 29:1–5**. Just as the spoil taken from Egypt had gone into the building of the tabernacle, so also the spoil of Israel’s enemies built the temple. The prophets often portray the wealth of the nations at the disposal of Israel (**Isa 60:10–14; Mic 4:13; Zech 14:14**). David’s generosity stimulated the giving of the people (**1 Chr 29:6–9**); their giving is another parallel chosen by the Chronicler with events at the building of the tabernacle (**Exod 35:4–36:7**). The dedicated things were stored in the treasuries of the temple (**1 Chr 26:26; 28:12**), though these rooms are not described in the Chronicler’s account of the construction (**1 Kgs 6:5–10**).

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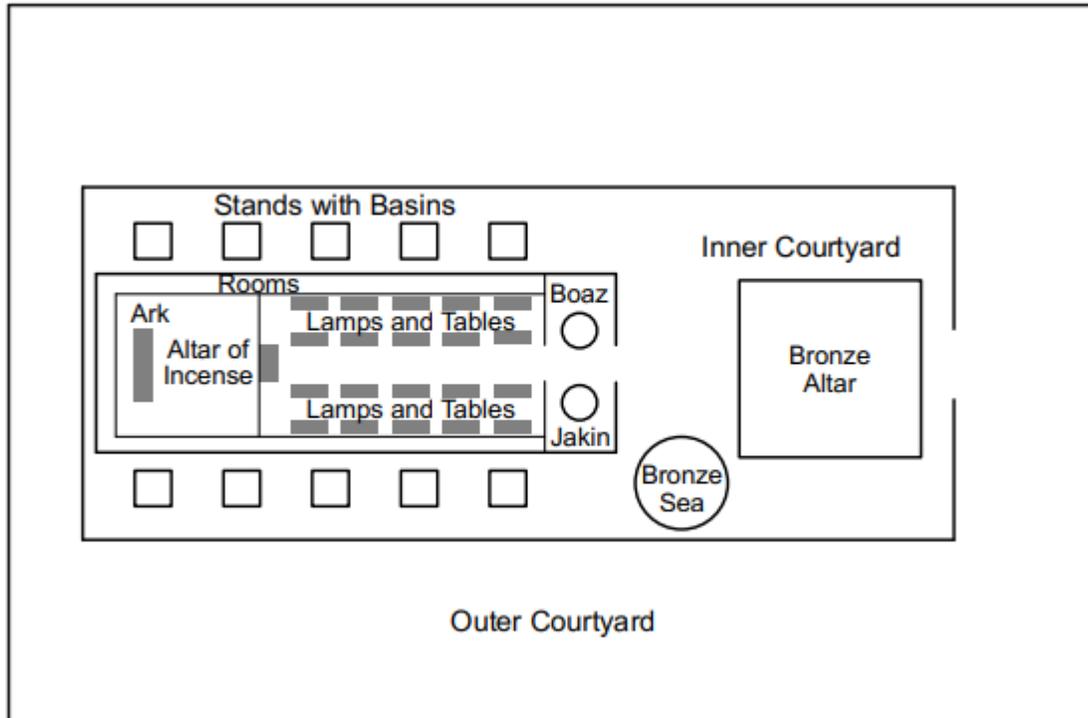
DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How can the details of our worship better praise and glorify the Lord?
- 2) What is the Christological symbolism of the bronze altar, the showbread, the lampstands, the pillars, etc.?
- 3) How does our worship today reflect the holiness and majesty of God?

4) Do the design and architecture of the temple set any type of model for how God wants us to design our church buildings today?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Thomas Constable: Temple Layout



Andrew Hill: King Solomon’s construction and dedication of the Jerusalem temple highlight several important theological continuities between the Old and New Testaments: the appropriate understanding God’s holiness and the liturgical use of “sacred space,” the role of sacred space in mediating God’s immanence and transcendence, the centrality of prayer in worship, the significance of “pilgrimage” in the life of faith, the relationship between the sacred place and religious instruction, and the idea that sacred space (and worship) brings order out of chaos. **Second Chronicles 2:1–5:1**, reporting the construction phase of the Jerusalem temple, points toward the contemporary significance of the larger literary unit (**chs. 1–9**) by calling attention to the association between the event of theophany and worship at a “sacred place” and the idea of pilgrimage to a sacred place.

Raymond Dillard: If the Chronicler was the source for all the material in this section, it is striking that so much more attention is given to the temple accouterments than to the building itself (**2 Chr 3**). Interest in the furnishing and implements of temple service is

of a piece with the author's pervasive concern with the cult and presumably had immediate relevance to the needs of his readers. The temple vessels represent an important continuity theme into the restoration period.

NT authors frequently draw imagery from the tabernacle or the temple; see the Explanation in the preceding chapter. The author of Hebrews views the old covenant shrines as a copy of the heavenly one (**Heb 9**), and he reflects on the paraphernalia and furnishings; the work of Christ is the reality which the service there anticipated (**Heb 10**). John saw the Christ standing among seven lampstands (**Rev 4:12–20**); in the holy city the Lamb of God is the lamp (**Rev 21:23–24; 22:5**). There is no cosmic Sea in the heavenly Jerusalem (**Rev 21:1**); the great basin in the temple court has been replaced by the life-giving river (**Rev 22:1–2**; cf. **Ezek 47:1–12**). Instead of the twelve loaves on the table (**Lev 24:5–9**) in the presence of God, the church partakes of one loaf (**1 Cor 10:17**).

Iain Duguid: The rich lavishness of the “gold” of the Most Holy Place foreshadows the picture of the **new Jerusalem**. The Chronicler's hearers may have been awed by the use of gold in the Persian Empire in comparison to their own economic situation, and thus the Chronicler reminds them of the gold of the temple; similarly, the people to whom Revelation was addressed could see the riches of the Roman Empire (the “*woman sitting on a scarlet beast*,” **Rev. 17:3–4**; “*Babylon*,” **Rev. 18:10, 12, 16**), but they were given a vision of the beautiful wealth of the new Jerusalem: the whole city, even the “*measuring rod*,” is “gold” (**Rev. 21:15, 18, 21**).

Mark Boda: The distinction between “bronze” and “gold” not only symbolizes the distinction between regions of sacred space and relative proximity to the manifest presence of the Lord but also the distinction between Solomon and Hiram-abi. Solomon as the lead craftsman was associated with the gold items, while Hiram-abi was his assistant and worked in bronze. Furthermore, **Japhet** has noted that the items of bronze were all David's innovations, while those of gold were all original to the ancient Tabernacle sanctuary (1993:570).

Geoffrey Kirkland: Lessons about Worship:

- God's Worship must be **PRIORITY** -- preeminent, important, weekly, regular!
- God's Worship must be **LOFTY** -- give God our best, focused, prepared, elevated, truthful, w/ Scripture!
- God's Worship must be in **PURITY** -- come in purity, with repentant hearts, cleanness.
- God's Worship must be **ANTICIPATORY** -- hungry to meet with God, ready for heaven!!
- God's Worship must have a **CHRIST-CENTRALITY** -- must be anchored to Christ in Word! Tethered to/fixed upon Jesus!

Reminder of the Temple Building and its Theology:

- The Temple is **DETAILED**
- God is a God of detail The Temple is **ELABORATE**

- God is the God of gods The Temple is COSTLY
- God is worthy of the best The Temple is BEAUTIFUL
- God is a beautiful God The Temple is A HOUSE
- God dwells in this place The Temple is HOLY
- God is an unapproachable God

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 5:2 – 6:11

TITLE: *THE GLORY OF GOD FILLS THE COMPLETED TEMPLE*

BIG IDEA:

ACCESS TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD SHOULD CAUSE US TO JOYFULLY CELEBRATE AND PRAISE GOD FOR HIS FAITHFULNESS

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: The dedication of the temple is essentially one literary unit, beginning with the assembly of the leaders of Israel in **5:2** and closing with the dismissal of this assembly in **7:10**, followed by a postscript indicating Yahweh’s appearance and response to Solomon’s temple-dedication prayer (**7:11–22**). The stress of Yahweh’s response to Solomon’s dedicatory prayer is that Deuteronomic covenantal blessings can be obtained and renewed through repentance, humility, and prayer. This emphatic message of hope and available reconciliation with God would have special significance for the Chronicler’s postexilic audience, whose *Sitz im Leben* (life context) follows on the heels of the outworking of the divine threats noted in **7:19–22**.

Andrew Hill: The reports of the installation of the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place and the dedication of the temple constitute the **climax** of the Chronicler’s narrative of Israelite history. Historically, the reign of King Solomon was the zenith of Israelite political power and influence in the biblical world and the “golden age” of Israelite history culturally. The narrative reporting the events of the reign of Solomon, however, is important to the Chronicler for another reason. Theologically, this literary unit emphasizes the themes of the ark of the covenant, the temple, and the Davidic dynasty—the essential building blocks in the theology of hope he lays for his audience in the retelling of the history of Israelite kingship.

This section contains three distinct movements:

- the transfer and installation of the ark of the covenant (**5:2–6:11**),
- the dedicatory prayer for the temple (**6:12–42**), and
- the concluding ceremonies (**7:1–11**).

Solomon’s dream theophany (**7:12–22**), in which God voices his approval of the king’s temple-related initiatives, provides a natural closure. The parallel that provides the primary historical source for this section of the Chronicler’s narrative is **1 Kings 8:1–9:9**.

Mark Boda: With the summary note at the outset of **chapter 5**, the Chronicler moves into a new phase of his account of the Temple building, a section that will continue until the end of **chapter 7**. While the Chronicler abridged the previous section from his source in Kings, in the present section he expands his account. The result is that greater emphasis is placed on the **dedication** of the Temple than on the **construction** of the Temple. This suggests that the Chronicler was more interested in the functioning of the

Temple and its services than in its construction, as he addressed readers after the second Temple was completed.

J.A. Thompson: With the completion of the temple it was time to bring the ark to the temple because once the ark was in place, the temple rituals could proceed. The bringing of the ark to the temple, Solomon's prayer of dedication, and the concluding ceremonies of dedication brought the climax toward which the Chronicler had been moving throughout his story.

I. (5:2-10) THE ARK IS BROUGHT INTO THE TEMPLE

A. (:2-3) Gathering of Israelite Leaders to Transfer the Ark into the Temple

“Then Solomon assembled to Jerusalem the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' households of the sons of Israel, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. 3 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves to the king at the feast, that is in the seventh month.”

John MacArthur: The ark was in Jerusalem in a temporary tent (**2Sa 6:17**), not the original tabernacle, which was still at Gibeon (**1 Ch 16:39**).

Frederick Mabie: Solomon's gathering of leaders underscores the image of national unity and oneness at the dedication of the temple. A similar group of national leaders accompanied David in moving the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem (cf. **1Ch 13–16**; cf. **28:1–8**). The ark of the covenant is being relocated the short distance (about 500 meters) from the City of David (Zion) to the new palace-temple complex.

Iain Duguid: These few verses are packed with details affirming the people's identity as the Lord's covenant people, “*Israel*.” While other nations would bring an idol in procession to a new temple, Israel brings the Lord's throne, the “*ark of the covenant of the Lord*” (the first mention of the “*covenant*” in Solomon's reign, repeated in v. 7). The “*feast that is in the seventh month*” is the Feast of Booths, remembering the wilderness journey that shaped the life of the people as they traveled with the ark in the “*tent of meeting*” at their center. That “*tent*,” which had been at Gibeon (**1:6**), is now also in the temple in Jerusalem; continuity with the past is affirmed.

The active involvement of “*Israel*” as a whole is emphasized (four times in **5:2–6**); “*Solomon*” may be in charge, but he is named only twice, both together with the leaders (**vv. 2, 6**). Finally, while **1 Kings 8:1** has the leaders coming “*before King Solomon in Jerusalem*,” Chronicles' simple “*in Jerusalem*” provides another example for postexilic hearers: it is “*all . . . Israel*” coming to the place, not to the king, that is most important.

Mark Boda: This [**Festival of Shelters** (Tabernacles)] was one of the three key festivals (Passover/Unleavened Bread, Weeks/Pentecost, Tabernacles) that coincided with the three harvest periods in Canaan and to which all Israelites were to journey to Jerusalem to offer their tithes and offerings (**Exod 23:14-17**; **Deut 16:16**). It is not surprising that

Solomon would plan his dedication to coincide with a major festival with so many people gathering in Jerusalem to celebrate the harvest.

B. (:4-6) Transporting the Ark According to God's Good Pleasure

1. (:4-5) Proper Use of Levites

“Then all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. 5 And they brought up the ark and the tent of meeting and all the holy utensils which were in the tent; the Levitical priests brought them up.”

Frederick Mabie: Solomon employs both Levites and priests for the handling and moving of the sacred objects, including the ark and the Tent of Meeting (the tabernacle in the wilderness). The mention of these groups implies differing responsibilities. In short, every priest must be a Levite; yet not every Levite would function as a priest.

Andrew Hill: The rest of the sacred furniture from the Tent of Meeting, as well as the tent itself, is also transported to the temple precinct (**5:4-5**). Previously, the Tent of Meeting was located in Gibeon (cf. **1 Chron. 16:39**). There is no mention of the Tent of Meeting being relocated in Jerusalem, so presumably these materials have been dismantled and transported from Gibeon to Jerusalem for the installation ceremony. The ark itself undoubtedly leads the procession from the temporary structure David erected in Zion to the Jerusalem temple (**2 Chron. 5:2**; cf. **1 Chron. 15:1-2**).

2. (:6) Abundant Offering of Sacrifices

“And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him before the ark were sacrificing so many sheep and oxen, that they could not be counted or numbered.”

C. (:7-10) Stationing the Ark in the Holy of Holies

1. (:7-8) Stationed under the Protection of the Cherubim

“Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the house, to the holy of holies, under the wings of the cherubim. 8 For the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering over the ark and its poles.”

Bob Utley: v. **5:8** -- Apparently in Solomon's temple there were two sets of these angel guardians.

- two large pairs that faced toward the altar of sacrifice; they filled the entire inner room
- two smaller ones on the lid of the ark, facing inward

Frederick Mabie: The imagery of the expanse of the cherubs' wingspan over the ark likely reflects God's complete **protection** over the ark and the sacred inner sanctum (as holy space). This protection over the ark would visually portray God's protection over his Word, especially his covenantal relationship with Israel as inscribed on the two tablets placed within the ark (v.10).

No remark is made concerning the other two items previously kept in the ark, namely, the omer of manna (**Ex 16:32–34**) and Aaron’s rod (**Nu 17:10**). It is possible that these items were removed or lost during the ark’s transient period (including years in Philistine possession).

2. (:9) Stationed in Verifiable Reality

“And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles of the ark could be seen in front of the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen outside; and they are there to this day.”

3. (:10) Stationed with a Focus on Obedience to the Law of the Covenant

“There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the sons of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.”

II. (5:11-14) THE GLORY OF GOD FILLS THE TEMPLE

A. (:11-13a) Musical Celebration of Praise in Glorifying the Lord

“And when the priests came forth from the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to divisions), 12 and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets 13 in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music,”

Geoffrey Kirkland: 9 Distinctives of the singing of God’s people (from verses 12-13):

- It’s CONGREGATIONAL — many priests, leaders, 120 priests, the singers
- It’s PURE — they sanctified themselves
- It’s LOFTY — they were dressed/clothed in fine linen (**Rev.19.8**)
- It’s ORCHESTRAL — cymbals, harps, lyres, trumpets, cymbals, instruments of music
- It’s LOUD — cymbals and trumpets
- It’s VOCAL (singing/one voice) — singers were to make themselves heard
- It’s GOD-CENTERED — with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD
- It’s WORSHIPFUL — they praised the LORD
- It’s BIBLICAL — quoting previous biblical truth from Psalms (e.g, **Ps 136:1**, etc).

B. (:13b) Memorized Psalm Extolling God’s Everlasting Faithful Love to His Covenant People

*“and when they praised the LORD saying,
‘He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting,’”*

Martin Selman: The quotation from the Psalms (v. 13b) encapsulates in a sentence what the entire temple project was about, that over the years since God's first promise to David (1 Ch. 17:12), God's faithful love (Heb. *hesed*) had ensured the project's success. Underlying the temple was the person of God. **He is good.** That is why he responds to Israel's worship with what later Jews called the **shekinah glory** (vv. 13c-14).

Mark Boda: This phrase links God's characteristic goodness with the enduring quality of his love. The term "*faithful love*" (Heb. *khesed*) refers to God's faithfulness to the covenant he had established with Israel. Before God favored Israel with his manifest presence in the first Temple, the Levites rehearsed the covenant values that made this experience possible.

C. (:13c-14) Majestic Climax = Glory of the Lord Filling the House of God

"then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, 14 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God."

Iain Duguid: The coming of the "*glory of the Lord*" meant that, as at the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35), human activity could not continue as usual. For his presence to come so clearly was evidence that the Lord accepted the temple as a settled replacement for the mobile tabernacle (1 Chron. 17:3-6, 12). "*Clouds*" appear often in Scripture as a sign of the glorious presence of God, visibly present yet veiled from human eyes (e.g., Ex. 13:21-22; 40:34-38; Pss. 97:2; 104:3; Ezek. 1:4; 10:3-4; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 17:5; 24:30; Rev. 10:1).

Importantly for the Chronicler's hearers, for whom the ark is no more, it was "*when the song was raised*" that "*the glory of the Lord filled the house of God*" (2 Chron. 5:13-14). Song continued to accompany God's glory as the people later joined in praise (7:3). God's presence as King was indeed surrounded by praise (Pss. 9:11; 22:3). Here is encouragement to continue praising God: in song God's glory is proclaimed as people pray for his glory to return.

Frederick Mabie: Music was an important dimension of worship in ancient Near Eastern cultures, and a wide variety of musical instruments were employed. Music was also used to motivate work, as attested in the use of music in the repairing and restoration of Yahweh's temple during Josiah's reforms (34:12-13). Stringed instruments ranged from those with three to ten strings mounted on wooden frames and having various shapes and sizes. Cymbals were typically forged from bronze, while trumpets were made of various metals, such as seen in the large silver trumpet found in King Tutankhamun's tomb.

Vs. 14 -- After the declaration of God's attributes of goodness and love (**hesed**), the temple is filled with a **cloud**, reminiscent of the cloud that filled the tabernacle in the wilderness following its completion (cf. Ex 40:34-35). Similarly, at the beginning of **ch. 6** Solomon notes that "*the LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud*"

(6:1). The cloud communicates the awesomeness of God's presence and his unapproachable glory.

Andrew Konkel: The ceremony concludes with a **confessional statement** made by Solomon, which follows very closely its source in Kings. The words of Solomon in Kings reiterate the main themes of the Chronicler concerning the **covenant with Israel** and the **election of David** as king. This central theme from Scripture is the basis of the Chronicler's history. The temple, which David had intended to build, is now the place where the name of God dwells. **Name indicates possession;** in the Amarna letters it is an idiom for **ownership** [Amarna Tablets, p. 464]. Just as the Pharaoh owned Jerusalem by placing his name there, so the Lord now owns the temple and all that it represents. The repeated reference to name in this promise is to establish a memorial to perpetuate a reputation. It was customary for kings to establish the legitimacy of their rule by building or refurbishing a temple as an affirmation of the god that enabled their rule. David was denied this assurance, but in its place he received a divine promise now fulfilled. Solomon utilized the name to make the temple the ultimate symbol of the faith of the Israelites: it fulfills the promise, is the place of covenant preservation, and embodies the land promised to Israel and owned by God. The temple signifies the election of David and the choice of Jerusalem as the central place of worship.

J.A. Thompson: A cloud symbolizing God's presence filled the house (cf. **Exod 40:34–35; Ezek 43:4**). This marked the acceptance by God of the temple as the place of sacrifice. The priests were not able to take their place to perform their service because the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The cloud as a symbol of the presence of Yahweh is mentioned several times in the Old Testament (**Exod 13; Num 9; Ezek 10:3–4**). The Chronicler's expanded account places the Lord's filling the temple in the context of a great celebration of praise and affirmation of faith as if to encourage future generations of Israel to continue praising and worshiping God until his glory returns.

III. (6:1-11) SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY OF ISRAEL

A. (:1-2) Theological Paradox: Mystery of Transcendent God Dwelling in His Earthly Temple

“Then Solomon said, ‘The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud. 2 I have built Thee a lofty house, And a place for Thy dwelling forever.’”

J.A. Thompson: These two verses are Solomon's response to the appearance of the divine glory in the shape of a dark cloud. The cloud formerly had appeared at Sinai (**Exod 20:21; Deut 4:11; 5:22**). There God revealed his presence. The darkness of the most holy place was a dwelling suited to a thick darkness (**Exod 20:21**). The picture is thus linked with the cloud of **5:13–14** and also with the thick darkness of Sinai. Once again the Chronicler points out a continuity between past revelation and the temple. This small structure in Jerusalem, moreover, was the place where divine transcendence and divine immanence would meet. On the one hand, no building, not even the whole earth, could contain God. He dwells in thick darkness, and indeed he fills all. On the other hand, in some special way God would be here, in this temple, more than in any

other place. Perhaps this helps us understand the mystery of the incarnation of God in Christ—while God fills the whole universe, he also is specially present in the person of Christ. This is why Jesus referred to his body as a “*temple*” (**John 2:20–21**).

Martin Selman: This brief statement, which is part testimony and part prayer, evokes a sense of wonder that the same God whose glory fills the temple (**5:13–14**) also dwells in “*thick darkness*” (v. 1, NRSV, RSV, REB, NEB). This latter phrase is associated with the cloud of God’s mysterious presence at Mount Sinai (**Exod. 20:21; Deut. 5:22**) and with his appearing on the Day of the Lord (**Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15**). Solomon is amazed that this intangible, sovereign deity whose mystery is symbolized by the darkness of the windowless Holy of Holies now promises to dwell in this temple (v. 2). The theme of **God’s dual residence** cascades through the chapter, without ever being logically resolved. It is enough to know that God lives on earth as well as in heaven. Even though the temple is “*exalted*” (NRSV, RSV, KB; cf. REB, NEB), it cannot physically contain God any more than he can be confined by human philosophy. And yet anyone can approach him in prayer (vv. 18–40).

B. (:3–11) Thanksgiving for the Faithfulness of God to His Promises

1. (:3–6) Faithful in His Choice of Israel, of Jerusalem and of David

“Then the king faced about and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. 4 And he said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David and has fulfilled it with His hands, saying, 5 Since the day that I brought My people from the land of Egypt, I did not choose a city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house that My name might be there, nor did I choose any man for a leader over My people Israel; 6 but I have chosen Jerusalem that My name might be there, and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel.’”

Frederick Mabie: Solomon’s temple-dedication prayer begins with expressions of praise and thanksgiving that focus on God’s faithfulness to fulfill his promise to David (compare vv.4–10 with **1Ch 17**). Solomon’s declaration of God’s covenantal faithfulness within a context of prayer and thanksgiving would be a significant reminder to the Chronicler’s postexilic audience.

J.A. Thompson: vs. 5 -- in Solomon's address to the assembly he was stressing the fulfillment of God's promise to David more than the exodus. The building of the temple and the establishment of the Davidic dynasty as a consequence of the divine promise was the important focus for the Chronicler (cf. **1 Chr 17**).

2. (:7–9) Faithful in His Choice of Solomon to Build the Temple

“Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 8 But the LORD said to my father David, ‘Because it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. 9 Nevertheless you shall not build the

house, but your son who shall be born to you, he shall build the house for My name.”

3. (:10-11) Faithful to Locate His Glorious Presence in the Completed Temple

“Now the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke; for I have risen in the place of my father David and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 11 And there I have set the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD, which He made with the sons of Israel.”

Andrew Hill: After Solomon has turned from the dazzling spectacle of the cloud of Yahweh’s glory filling the temple (5:14), he addresses the “*whole assembly of Israel*” (6:3). Like his father, David, Solomon assumes a priestly or pastoral role when addressing the nation of Israel (cf. 1 Chron. 16:43). The Chronicler, however, portrays Solomon as one who represents the interests of the people more than the office of the Levitical priesthood. He blessed the populace as one of them. The king’s blessing underscores God’s selection of David as Israel’s ruler and the city of Jerusalem as the site for the temple (6:6). The succession of Solomon to David’s throne and the completion of the temple inaugurate the Davidic covenant announced previously by the prophet Nathan (cf. 1 Chron. 17:3). The people are blessed by these developments because through the Davidic covenant God has made provision for righteous leadership over the people and established a national “house of prayer” for Israel. Through prayer (whether praise, confession, petition, or intercession) Israel will maintain her covenant relationship with Yahweh. . .

The second half of Solomon’s address to the people of Israel is basically a prayer of thanksgiving, acknowledging God as a “promise-keeper” (6:7–11). The king specifically cites his succession to David’s throne (6:10a), the completion of the temple (6:10b), and the installation of the ark of the covenant (6:11) as proof positive that Yahweh is faithful to his word. The ark of the covenant is the symbol of God’s presence among his people and a tangible witness of his special relationship with Israel. The installation of the ark in the Jerusalem temple signifies that these theological truths now undergird the Davidic covenant as well.

Raymond Dillard: The accession of Solomon and the completion of the temple were for the Chronicler **stages** in the inauguration of the Davidic covenant. Instead of exhausting God’s promises so that the Chronicler would show no eschatological expectations or royalist hopes in the post-exilic period, these realizations of God’s promises were but the beginning of an unending dynasty (6:14–17; 13:5; 21:7; 23:3; 1 Chr 17:12–17, 23–27; 22:10; 28:7–8).

Martin Selman: Four emphases stand out in the speech.

- Firstly, the focus on God’s choice in **verses 5-6** is emphatic and unusual (it is paralleled in Chro. Only in **1 Ch. 28:4-6**). Here God’s original choice of David and Jerusalem is in mind, rather than of Solomon as in **1 Chronicles 28**. This

specific link of chosen king and chosen city is rare in the Old Testament, being found mainly in the Psalms (e.g. **Pss 2:6-7; 78:67-72**).

- The second emphasis is the rather surprising commendation for David's heartfelt desire to build the temple, in contrast to his previous disqualification because of his wars (v. 8; cf. **1 Chr. 22:8-9; 28:3**). In fact, this is a complementary rather than contradictory statement. It confirms that David's disqualification was not due to sin, but because the concept of God's rest must be regarded as the unique and final stage in building the temple (cf. v. 41). David's motives actually set a pattern for others to follow, for a right attitude of heart is essential for any worship (vv. 14, 30; cf. **1 Chr. 29:17-19; Mark 7:6**).
- Thirdly, the temple was especially associated with God's Name (vv. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). This typically Deuteronomic idea fits in well with the chapter's overall sense of God's presence in earth and heaven, though here it extends to the idea of God's choice.
- Finally, there are more frequent reminders than usual in Chronicles that the Sinai covenant underlies all that God is doing.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How excited should we be to have access to the living God and assurance of His presence with us always?
- 2) What do we learn here about the role of music in our corporate worship?
- 3) How does God's faithfulness to these promises reinforce our expectations regarding the eschatological aspects of God's promises?
- 4) What is the significance of our bodies being the temple of God in light of this dramatic passage?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: Here [the Chronicler] parallels Solomon's movement of the ark to the temple with the earlier effort by David to transfer the ark to Jerusalem; the following features are in common:

- (1) A national assembly: **1 Chr 13:1-5; 15:3; 2 Chr 5:2-3**
- (2) Sacrifices during the procession and installation: **1 Chr 15:26; 16:1; 2 Chr 5:6**
- (3) Musical accompaniment: **1 Chr 13:8; 15:16-28; 2 Chr 5:12-13**
- (4) A royal blessing for the people: **1 Chr 16:1-3; 2 Chr 6:3**

Matthew Henry: 6:1-11 -- It is of great consequence, in all our religious actions, that we design well, and that our eye be single. If Solomon had built this temple in the pride of his heart, as Ahasuerus made his feast, only to show the riches of his kingdom and the honour of his majesty, it would not have turned at all to his account. But here he declares upon what inducements he undertook it, and they are such as not only justify, but magnify, the undertaking.

1. He did it for the glory and honour of God; this was his highest and ultimate end in it. It was for the name of the Lord God of Israel (**2 Chron. 6:10**), to be a house of habitation for him, **2 Chron. 6:2**. He has indeed, as to us, made darkness his pavilion (**2 Chron. 6:1**), but let this house be the residence of that darkness; for it is in the upper world that he dwells in light, such as no eye can approach.

2. He did it in compliance with the choice God had been pleased to make of Jerusalem, to be the city in which he would record his name (**2 Chron. 6:6**): I have chosen Jerusalem. A great many stately buildings there were in Jerusalem for the king, his princes, and the royal family. If God chooses that place, it is fit that there be a building for him which may excel all the rest. If men were thus honoured there, let God be thus honoured.

3. He did it in pursuance of his father's good intentions, which he never had an opportunity to put into execution: "*It was in the heart of David my father to build a house for God;*" the project was his, be it known, to his honour (**2 Chron. 6:7**), and God approved of it, though he permitted him not to put it in execution (**2 Chron. 6:8**), Thou didst well that it was in thy heart. Temple-work is often thus done; one sows and another reaps (**John 4:37, 38**), one age begins that which the next brings to perfection. . .

4. He did it in performance of the word which God had spoken. God had said, *Thy son shall build the house for my name*; and now he had done it, **2 Chron. 6:9, 10**. The service was appointed him, and the honour of it designed him, by the divine promise; so that he did not do it of his own head, but was called of God to do it. It is fit that he who appoints the work should have the appointing of the workmen; and those may go on in their work with great satisfaction who see their call to it clear.

Martin Selman: Like the cloud which subsequently fills the temple (**vv. 13c-14**), the ark symbolizes God's presence, so that the chapter describes God taking up residence at the center of the people's life. The ark also speaks of the covenant God made with Israel at the exodus (**vv. 7-10**) – in fact, "*ark of the covenant*" is a specially favored phrase in Chronicles. In the context, it refers particularly to God's commitment to Israel, and emphasis which would have been especially appreciated by the Chronicler's original readers. Even though, in their time, the ark had long disappeared and their own temple was but a shadow of Solomon's glory, this was a reminder that the God represented by these symbols had certainly not abandoned them. Indeed, they could be equally aware of his presence by engaging in praise and worship led by the Levites' musical ministry (**vv. 11-14**).

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 6:12-42

TITLE: *SOLOMON'S TEMPLE DEDICATION PRAYER*

BIG IDEA:

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE DEDICATION PRAYER HIGHLIGHTS THE EFFICACY OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER BASED ON GOD'S RESPONSIVENESS AND ANTICIPATES THE PERPETUATION OF THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD'S COVENANT COMMITMENT

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkel: Solomon takes his place before the great altar to petition that the temple may serve the purpose for which it was built, to keep God's covenant central in the lives of the people.

Thomas Constable: In his prayer, Solomon explained the significance of God coming to indwell His temple. God had come to empower, to have fellowship, and to judge, if necessary. God was present among His people, and He would hear their prayers when they obediently called out to Him.

Solomon acknowledged that God had fulfilled some of the promises of the Davidic Covenant already (v. 15), but he also saw that there were others yet unfulfilled. He called on God to grant them (v. 16).

Solomon's view of God was that He was both transcendent (above all) and immanent (at hand, v. 18). Even though God is everywhere at once, He can and does localize—but not limit—His presence as well (e.g., the incarnate Christ, cf. **John 2:20-21**). At this period in history, He localized His presence in the temple. Nevertheless, in heaven, He would hear the prayers of His people, wherever they might be when they called out to Him (vv. 38-39).

Solomon specified seven specific situations in which he asked the LORD (Yahweh) to intervene in answer to prayer. These were when the people swore an oath in the temple (vv. 22-23), suffered defeat and exile from an enemy (vv. 24-25), and lacked rain (vv. 26-27). They were also when they experienced disease or other disasters (vv. 28-31), and when foreigners would come to pray toward the temple (vv. 32-33). The final two situations were when Israel was at war (vv. 34-35), and when Israel was in captivity due to sin (vv. 36-39).

In this prayer, there is plenty of evidence that Solomon understood God's purpose for Israel. He referred to God's name Yahweh 14 times, showing his concern for the reputation of Israel's God. His concern for foreigners (vv. 32-33) shows that he realized that Israel was to reach out and share the knowledge and blessings of God with

Gentiles. His concern for Israel's restoration and cleansing, following sin, shows that he realized that Israel would need forgiveness in order to return to fellowship with God and fruitfulness as His servant.

Mark Boda: The remainder of **chapter 6** is filled with Solomon's long prayer to God. The prayer is introduced by a description of Solomon standing in the outer courtyard between the bronze altar and the assembled community of Israel. The Chronicler adds to his source in **1 Kings 8** the description of the bronze platform Solomon had constructed for the occasion (**6:13**). This verse carefully delineates that although Solomon was standing, he subsequently knelt while lifting his hands toward heaven. The Chronicler's description places Solomon in the posture of humility in this sacred precinct.

(:12-13) PROLOGUE – PLACE AND POSTURE IN APPROACHING GOD IN PRAYER

A. (:12) Posture of Standing before the Altar

“Then he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands.”

Frederick Mabie: The description of Solomon as standing, spreading out his hands, and kneeling reflect the variety of postures of worship attested in the OT (cf. **2Ch 29:29–30**; **Ne 9:1–3**; **Pss 5:7**; **141:2**). Such outward gestures and postures reflect submission to God, respect of his power, reverence, and the like. . . . Solomon's posture of kneeling declares his submission to the lordship and sovereignty of God in the presence of the Israelite assembly. The term for the platform used by Solomon (*kîyôr*; GK 3963) can refer to an elevated area used for official functions as reflected in the biblical world.

Andrew Hill: Bodily movement in worship generally, and posture in prayer specifically, are important parts of one's response to God because outward actions demonstrate and reinforce inward attitudes and beliefs. Typically, kneeling symbolizes reverence, even fear, before the deity, while spreading out raised hands is an act of veneration (i.e., blessing and praise) of the deity (cf. **1 Tim. 2:8**).

B. (:13) Posture of Kneeling before the Assembly

“Now Solomon had made a bronze platform, five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven.”

I. (:14-17) PETITION FOR POSTERITY – FULFILMENT OF PROMISES REGARDING DAVIDIC DYNASTY

Frederick Mabie: Solomon again declares God as one who steadfastly keeps his Word (cf. **2Ch 6:4–11**), most particularly with respect to God's covenantal relationship with

Israel (a “covenant of love”—*habberîṭ wehaḥesed*) and God’s delegation of leadership through the Davidic covenant. Note that the statement of **v.16** is not found in the biblical texts typically associated with Yahweh’s (initial) declaration of the Davidic covenant (e.g., **2Sa 7:5–16**; **1Ch 17:4–14**), but the notion of David’s never failing to have a descendant sit on the throne of Israel is reflected in subsequent biblical passages (see esp. **Jer 33:17**) and must have been communicated to David in another setting not recorded in the biblical text.

A. (:14-15) Foundation for Making Requests of God

1. (:14) Praise for God’s Uniqueness in Displaying Covenant Love

“And he said, “O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no god like Thee in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Thy servants who walk before Thee with all their heart;”

Andrew Hill: The threefold repetition of God’s covenant name, “*LORD, God of Israel*” (**6:14, 16, 17**) addresses his majesty as Lord of creation (cf. **6:18**), while the emphasis on his covenant love speaks to his uniqueness and incomparability as the one true God (**6:14**). As **Wilcock** admonishes us, “before we ask God for anything we remind ourselves of his character.” Solomon’s prayer for the continuation of the Davidic dynasty is ultimately the Chronicler’s prayer as well. The stylized retelling of the temple dedication ceremony is a call to prayer to the postexilic Jewish community with the hope that God will keep his promise to David and Solomon and reestablish the throne of David in Israel.

2. (:15) Praise for God’s Past Faithfulness to His Promises to David

“who has kept with Thy servant David, my father, that which Thou hast promised him; indeed, Thou hast spoken with Thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with Thy hand, as it is this day.”

Martin Selman: As with so many prayers in Scripture, Solomon begins with praise (**vv. 14-15**) before making any requests (**vv. 16-17**). The praise concentrates on two aspects of God’s nature, that he is unique (*there is no God like you in heaven or on earth*, **v. 14a**), and that he is faithful to his *covenant of love* with his obedient people (**vv. 14b-15**). Mention of the Davidic covenant seems to inspire repeated praise about God’s incomparability (**1 Ch. 17:20**; cf. **1 Ch. 16:25-26**; **2 Ch. 2:5**). Such praise arises from hearts committed to God (*wholeheartedly*, JB, NIV, **v. 14**), a repeated emphasis in this chapter (**vv. 7, 8, 30**; cf. **1 Ch. 29:17-19**).

B. (:16-17) Future Faithful Performance of Covenant Promises Requested

1. (:16) Permanence of Davidic Dynasty

“Now therefore, O LORD, the God of Israel, keep with Thy servant David, my father, that which Thou hast promised him, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your sons take heed to their way, to walk in My law as you have walked before Me.’”

2. (:17) Performance of Davidic Covenant

“Now therefore, O LORD, the God of Israel, let Thy word be confirmed which Thou hast spoken to Thy servant David.”

II. (:18-21) PLEA FOR RESPONSIVENESS TO INTERCESSION FOR ISRAEL

Frederick Mabie: Solomon’s statement that even the highest heavens cannot hold the Creator God (v.18) underscores that although God will localize his presence and glory in the Solomonic temple, no man-made, finite structure can house the infinite God. Yet God’s ontological and epistemological accommodation to humankind in both the matter of the temple and even the matter of hearing Solomon’s prayer (v.19) emphatically showcases God’s grace and love toward his people.

A. (:18) Responsive Despite God’s Transcendence

*“But will God indeed dwell with mankind on the earth?
Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee;
how much less this house which I have built.”*

Don Fortner: The condescension of the eternal, almighty, holy, and sovereign God to dwell with men upon earth is an astonishing act of grace. He who came to dwell with men on the earth is...

1. The Infinite God.
2. The Incarnate God.
3. The Indwelling God.
4. The Immaculate God.

B. (:19-21) Responsive Both to the Prayers of God’s Servant (King Solomon) and God’s People (the nation Israel)

“Yet have regard to the prayer of Thy servant and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to listen to the cry and to the prayer which Thy servant prays before Thee; 20 that Thine eyes may be open toward this house day and night, toward the place of which Thou hast said that Thou wouldst put Thy name there, to listen to the prayer which Thy servant shall pray toward this place. 21 And listen to the supplications of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel, when they pray toward this place; hear Thou from Thy dwelling place, from heaven; hear Thou and forgive.”

III. (:22-39) PARTICULARS OF INTERCESSION REGARDING A VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANCES

A. (:22-23) Case Study #1 = Oaths in Interpersonal Conflicts

1. (:22a) Scenario

“If a man sins against his neighbor, and is made to take an oath,”

2. (:22b) Human Action Required

“and he comes and takes an oath before Thine altar in this house,”

3. (:23) Divine Response Requested

“then hear Thou from heaven and act and judge Thy servants, punishing the wicked by bringing his way on his own head and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.”

B. (:24-25) Case Study #2 = Defeated by an Enemy Due to Sin

1. (:24a) Scenario

“And if Thy people Israel are defeated before an enemy, because they have sinned against Thee,”

2. (:24b) Human Action Required

“and they return to Thee and confess Thy name, and pray and make supplication before Thee in this house,”

3. (:25) Divine Response Requested

“then hear Thou from heaven and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel, and bring them back to the land which Thou hast given to them and to their fathers.”

J.A. Thompson: While the main themes in Solomon's prayer were the Davidic dynasty, the temple, and prayer itself, two other themes also occur—**war (6:24–25; 34–37)** and **the land (6:25, 27–28, 31, 38)**. Defeat in battle is the result of sinning against God. The people are required to turn back to God, confess his name, pray, and make supplication before him in the temple. Solomon made the plea that God would hear their confession, forgive their sin, and bring them back to the land he had given to them and their fathers. War, of course, often involved **exile**.

C. (:26-27) Case Study #3 = Drought Due to Sin

1. Scenario

“When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against Thee,”

2. Human Action Required

“and they pray toward this place and confess Thy name, and turn from their sin when Thou dost afflict them,”

3. Divine Response Requested

“then hear Thou in heaven and forgive the sin of Thy servants and Thy people Israel, indeed, teach them the good way in which they should walk. And send rain on Thy land, which Thou hast given to Thy people for an inheritance.”

Raymond Dillard: Ancient Israel was an **agrarian society** with sufficient rainfall in most of the land that irrigation was not necessary. Agriculture was dependent on the regularity of the seasonal rains, particularly both the early rains to soften the ground for plowing in the fall, and the latter rains to swell the crop before harvest in the spring; adequate rainfall was a sign of divine blessing, and low rainfall of divine anger (**Lev 26:3–4; Deut 11:13–14; 28:23–24; Prov 16:15; Jer 3:3; 5:24; Hos 6:3; 10:1; Joel 2:23; Cant 2:11; Acts 14:17; Heb 6:7; Jas 5:17; Amos 4:6–8**). The divine response to Solomon’s prayer about drought is a promise of healing the land (**7:13–14**).

D. (:28-31) Case Study #4 = Disasters (Famine, Pestilence, Plague, etc.)

1. (:28) Scenario

“If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence, if there is blight or mildew, if there is locust or grasshopper, if their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities, whatever plague or whatever sickness there is,”

2. (:29) Human Action Required

“whatever prayer or supplication is made by any man or by all Thy people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own pain, and spreading his hands toward this house,”

3. (:30) Divine Response Requested

“then hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render to each according to all his ways, whose heart Thou knowest for Thou alone dost know the hearts of the sons of men,”

4. (:31) Human Reaction Expected

“that they may fear Thee, to walk in Thy ways as long as they live in the land which Thou hast given to our fathers.”

J.A. Thompson: Famine or plague, blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, and the ravages of war recurred from time to time. Famine in the ancient Near East derived from natural causes such as drought, disease, or insects (**Gen 12:10; 26:1; 41:1–57; Ruth 1:1; 2 Sam 21:1; 24:13; 1 Chr 21:12; 1 Kgs 18:1–2**); the ravages of warfare through the confiscation and burning of crops (**Judg 6:3–6; 15:3–5**); and through siege (**Lev 26:25–26; 2 Kgs 6:24–25; 2 Kgs 25:1–3; 2 Chr 32:11; Isa 31:19; Jer 14:11–18; 16:4; 21:7–9**). Plague or pestilence affected animals (**Exod 9:3; Ps 78:48–50**), men (**Lev 26:25–26; Num 14:12; 1 Chr 21:12**), and crops. Israel's special geographical location on the only land bridge between the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa brought a lot of commercial traffic through the area and made the land subject to the easy spread of disease and epidemics from neighboring lands.

An important theological principle is set out in **v. 30**. God is requested to *“deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart [for you alone know the hearts of men].”* God is a **God of justice** and deals with people as **individuals**. The prayer of the nation (the people Israel) is in the final analysis the prayer of the needy individual.

E. (:32-33) Case Study #5 = Foreigners Praying

1. (:32a) Scenario

“Also concerning the foreigner who is not from Thy people Israel,”

2. (:32b) Human Action Required

“when he comes from a far country for Thy great name's sake and Thy mighty hand and Thine outstretched arm, when they come and pray toward this house,”

3. (:33a) Divine Response Requested

“then hear Thou from heaven, from Thy dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to Thee,”

4. (:33b) Human Reaction Expected

“in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name, and fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Thy name.”

F. (:34-35) Case Study #6 = War

1. (:34a) Scenario

“When Thy people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way Thou shalt send them,”

2. (:34b) Human Action Required

“and they pray to Thee toward this city which Thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for Thy name,”

3. (:35) Divine Response Requested

“then hear Thou from heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.”

G. (:36-39) Case Study #7 = National Exile and Captivity Due to Sin

1. (:36) Scenario

“When they sin against Thee (for there is no man who does not sin) and Thou art angry with them and dost deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to a land far off or near,”

2. (:37-38) Human Action Required

“if they take thought in the land where they are taken captive, and repent and make supplication to Thee in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, and have acted wickedly'; 38 if they return to Thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been taken captive, and pray toward their land which Thou hast given to their fathers, and the city which

Thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for Thy name,”

3. (:39) Divine Response Requested

“then hear from heaven, from Thy dwelling place, their prayer and supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Thy people who have sinned against Thee.”

Iain Duguid: The final petition (vv. 36–39) is rephrased slightly in order to be relevant for the Chronicler’s hearers. No more is there any need to pray that the exiles (“*captives*”) might receive “*compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive*” (1 Kings 8:50b), for the Persians have already enabled the exiles to return. Similarly, after a brief mention of an “*enemy*” who carried them “*captive*” (2 Chron. 6:36), other references in Kings to “*enemies*” or “*captors*” are changed to the abstract “*captivity*” (vv. 37, 38). No longer are people who continue in the “*land of their captivity*” held there against their will, but it is still relevant to pray that they too would “*repent*” and “*pray toward their land . . . , the city . . . , and the house*” (v. 38). No matter where people are located, they are to pray toward the temple in Jerusalem and to look to God to “*maintain their cause and forgive*” them.

Mark Boda: The scenario makes it very clear that **God’s anger** had been the cause of the disaster, something that is not made clear in any of the other scenarios. Furthermore, while the second scenario mentions exile in the divine response, here the Exile is highlighted from the outset. The human action required in this scenario provides clear evidence that this scenario is the **climax** of the series. Not only are the human actions of repentance and prayer described twice (“*turn to you in repentance and pray . . . turn to you with their whole heart and soul in the land of their captivity and pray toward the land . . . city . . . Temple*”), but the actual content of the penitential prayer is offered to the reader, “*We have sinned, done evil, and acted wickedly.*” Here we find the three key words for sinful actions in Hebrew used together to accentuate the **depth of the wickedness** of the people but at the same time the **thoroughness of their confession**.

IV. (:40-42) PRESENCE OF GOD INVOKED

A. (:40) Be Attentive

*“Now, O my God, I pray Thee, let Thine eyes be open,
and Thine ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.”*

B. (:41a) Be Active

*“Now therefore arise, O LORD God, to Thy resting place,
Thou and the ark of Thy might;”*

J.A. Thompson: Verse 40 is reminiscent of 1 Kgs 8:52, although vv. 41–42 are based on Ps 132:8–10. In concluding his prayer, Solomon based his expectation of God’s favorable response on the divine promises to David. In the Kings account of Solomon’s

prayer, the **ground** for God's answer is his unique relationship to Israel deriving from the **exodus (1 Kgs 8:50–53)**. In place of a reference to the themes of election and redemption in the exodus, he finds an adequate basis of appeal to God in **Ps 132:1, 8–10**. God is called upon to arise and come to his resting place.

August Konkel: The prayer closes with a quotation of **Psalm 132:8–10**, calling attention to David's deep passion for the restoration of the ark to its proper function. "*Arise, O LORD*" is a military cry given in **Numbers 10:35–36** (NRSV). God arises to scatter the enemies when the people move, and returns as the Lord of Israel's myriads of thousands when they rest. The ark is the ultimate symbol of God's rest, his claim to the land that carries his name. David seeks a resting place for the ark, the place where the throne of God rises and he is worshiped by the hosts of Israel. The impact of **Psalm 132** is increased by two changes in this citation. In **2 Chronicles 6:42** the lines from **verse 10** of the psalm are reversed, placing an emphasis on the **faithfulness of God**. Second, part of the last line is drawn from **Isaiah 55:3**, which makes reference to the **mercies of David**. This phrase can be taken in two ways:

- (1) it may be the mercies David receives, or
- (2) it may be the mercies that God gives through David—which is meant in both Isaiah and Chronicles (NIV).

The mercies of David express loyalty to a commitment made. Loyalty to promises is the best way of showing mercy. God's loyalty through his promises to David has just been demonstrated, providing assurance that these mercies are available for Israel.

C. (:41b) Be Accommodating

*"let Thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation,
and let Thy godly ones rejoice in what is good."*

D. (:42) Be Accepting

1. Stated Negatively

"O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Thine anointed;"

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown: The words are equivalent in meaning to this: "Do not reject my present petitions; do not send me from thy throne of grace dejected in countenance and disappointed in heart."

2. Stated Positively

"remember Thy lovingkindness to Thy servant David."

J.A. Thompson: The phrase "*kindnesses promised to David*" makes use of the plural form of the important noun *hesed*, which stressed the faithfulness, loyalty, and loving-kindness of God. The task of temple building was completed, and the way was now clear for God to establish the eternal Davidic dynasty in accordance with his promise. While this is not a messianic promise in the full sense, it strongly suggests that there is an **abiding validity for the Davidic line**. The completion of the temple served to confirm such a hope. There was more to the promise to David than the mere building of a temple.

Mark Boda: These closing two verses emphasize three key issues for the Chronicler. There was an enduring desire for the manifest presence of God to be experienced in the second Temple of his day and for the restoration of the Davidic line to be the throne of an independent kingdom. Until then, the Chronicler with his Levitical sensibilities asked that both priests and people would experience the grace and goodness of God.

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How important should prayer be in addressing the wide variety of difficult circumstances we face in life?
- 2) What is the significance, if any, of our posture in prayer?
- 3) How does prayer teach us about the paradoxical relationship between God's transcendence and His immanence?
- 4) Do we take for granted the responsiveness of God to our intercessory prayers?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Frederick Mabie: vv. 22-39 -- This long section details a number of scenarios wherein individuals, the nation as a whole, and foreigners might seek God in the context of prayer and the temple. The supplicatory refrain present in each of these scenarios is that God might "*hear from heaven*" (cf. 6:23, 25, 27, 30, 33, 35, 39). The consequences anticipated in several of these scenarios reflect **covenantal judgments for unfaithfulness** articulated in legal texts, particularly **Deuteronomy 28** (e.g., defeat from enemies [v.25; cf. Dt 28:25, 48]; drought [v.24; cf. Dt 28:23-24]; famine, plague, blight, mildew, locusts [v.22; cf. Dt 28:21-22, 42], and captivity [v.36; cf. Dt 28:63-65]. Note that such divine chastening has a **didactic function** ("*teach them the right way to live,*" v.27) as well as a **sanctifying function** ("*so that they will fear you and walk in your ways,*" v.31).

In this section are two scenarios, unrelated to sin, in which Solomon asks God to hear from heaven: when a foreigner seeks God (vv.32-33) and when the nation goes out to war (vv.34-35). With respect to the foreigner seeking God (recall Isa 56:6-7), we are reminded that the temple is to be "*a house of prayer for all nations*" and that God's ultimate will is that all the peoples of the earth may know his name and fear him (v.33; cf. Ge 12:3). God's concern for all nations was a continuing message even within the disarray of the postexilic setting (cf. Zec 8:20-23). With respect to the nation going to

war, covenantal faithfulness will ensure that Israel's enemies will be defeated (cf. **Dt 28:7**).

Andrew Hill: To understand prayer is to acknowledge the paradoxical truth of God's simultaneous **transcendence** and **immanence**. Solomon recognizes that the vast expanse of the heavens cannot contain the unique "otherness" of the Creator, how much less a building like the temple (**6:18**; cf. **Isa. 57:15**). Yet somehow the Jerusalem shrine is the earthly interface of the Lord's divine presence and absolute holiness because it is at this place that God has chosen to set his Name (**2 Chron. 6:20**).

Solomon's temple becomes the symbolic focal point of God's interest in and care for humanity, for it is here that his "eyes" and "ears" are continually open to the supplications of both Israelite and foreigner alike (**6:21**; cf. **6:32–33**). It is these qualities that differentiate God from the false gods of the nations, gods who have eyes but cannot see and ears but cannot hear (cf. **Ps. 115:5**; **Isa. 44:18**). God possesses the will, the power, and the compassion to respond to prayer and intervene in human crises just because he sees and hears (cf. **Neh. 1:6, 11**; **Isa. 59:1**).

Martin Selman: Identifying the basic pattern for intercessory prayer in Solomon's plea:

- the idea that such prayer is characterized by sincerity and urgency (i.e., "*plea for mercy*," **6:19**); it includes confession and repentance (**6:26**) and a change of heart (**6:37**)
- an appeal to God to "*hear*" (**6:19**) with "*open eyes*" (**6:20**); that is, praying in faith that because God hears and sees, he answers prayer
- offering prayer toward the temple as the symbol of God's presence and authority, since praying in that manner is praying in the Name of the One to whom the temple belongs (**6:21**)
- the truth that God is accessible by anyone who acknowledges Yahweh as "*my God*" (**6:19, 22**)
- the purpose of such prayer, namely, the forgiveness of sins for the sake of restoration, healing, and blessing (**6:21**).

Thomas Crumb: Arise, O Lord!

- Solomon launches into a magnificent prayer of dedication for God's people and God's place (**2 Chronicles 6:13b-21**)
- Solomon understands that God is not confining Himself to a small space no matter how magnificent it is (**v. 18**)
 - the Temple is a meeting place at which
 - God communicates with His priests and His people
 - God promises to forgive His people's sin
 - the Temple does not put "God in a box"
 - it is a place for holy, consecrated, heartfelt, reverent God honoring worship

- it is not a place where people are supposed to come, "put in their time", go through the motions or give lip service to God
 - sadly, over time, that is what it became for a majority of Israel's people
- Solomon's prayer reflects all the hope, the joy, and the promise of having people come and meet with God in the way He longs to be approached and met with
 - Solomon's prayer has a repeated pattern: "*If [this bad thing happens], please hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your servants.*"
 - **v. 40**, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place
 - In **v. 41**, Solomon invokes the memory of Moses' prayer in **Numbers 10:35**
 - when Moses prayed *Arise, O Lord, and let your enemies be scattered*, Israel's enemies were primarily external.... other nations that wanted to harm her
 - Solomon realizes that now, Israel's enemies are internal
 - Israel will be brought down by her own sin of formalism and idolatry
 - Israel will be brought down by her failure to honor God as God
 - Glorify Yourself in this place by defeating the sin that so easily entangles us
 - make this a place of true worship
 - let our worship exalt You not for a holy place made with hands but for the holy place that lives inside and among us
 - cf. **1 Peter 2:9** and **2:5**
 - May the glory of the Lord fill our lives and fill this place!

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/111416720171.pdf>

Mark Boda: The focus of **6:18-40** is on the role of the Temple as a sanctuary of prayer. The section begins with a general plea for God to listen to the prayers Solomon and his people will direct toward the sanctuary (**6:18-21**), continues with a list of seven scenarios in which the people would pray toward the Temple for help from the Lord in heaven (**6:22-39**), and concludes with another general plea for God to listen to prayers made to him in the Temple (**6:40**).

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 7:1-22

TITLE: *TEMPLE DEDICATION CEREMONY*

BIG IDEA:

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEMPLE DERIVES FROM THE ABIDING GLORY OF THE LORD – REQUIRING COVENANT FAITHFULNESS

INTRODUCTION:

Andrew Hill: The circumstantial clause denoting the cause-and-effect relationship between Solomon’s prayer and God’s response clearly marks the beginning of a **new section** of the narrative. This portion of the Chronicler’s story of Solomon’s reign contains two major units: the dedication of the temple (7:1–10) and the report of the Lord’s appearance to Solomon (7:11–22). Each section in **chapter 7** begins with the name “*Solomon*” since he is credited as the builder of Yahweh’s temple (7:1, 5, 7, 8, 11). The **chiastic** structure of the narrative recounting Solomon’s reign (**chs. 1–9**) is further enhanced by the *inclusio* formed by the repetition of the hymn of thanksgiving (5:13 and 7:3).

Thomas Constable: This record of the dedication of the temple emphasizes both the importance of the temple and the character of Israel's God who indwelt it. Solomon reunited the ark, the symbol of God's grace, and the altar, the symbol of human sacrificial response to that grace. It was now possible for Israel to fulfill the purpose for which God had created her as never before in her history (cf. **Exod. 19:5-6**). The temple was the key to this possibility. That is one reason the temple was so important in the national life of Israel.

I. (:1-11) DRAMATIC RESPONSE TO SOLOMON’S PRAYER OF TEMPLE DEDICATION

A. (:1-3) Dramatic Response of Divine Approval of Temple Dedication

1. (:1-2) Manifestation of the Glory of the Lord in the Temple

a. (:1a) Offerings and Sacrifices Consumed by Fire from Heaven

“Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices;”

b. (:1b) Overwhelming Presence of God Filling the Temple

“and the glory of the LORD filled the house.”

Frederick Mabie: The appearance of fire from heaven at the completion of Solomon’s prayer visually showcases God’s power and signifies his approval of Solomon’s dedicatory prayer and offering. Similarly, fire came down from heaven following a number of important events, including David’s sacrifice at the threshing floor of Ornan (the future location of the Jerusalem temple; cf. **1Ch 21:26**), the inauguration of priestly

service at the Tent of Meeting at Mount Sinai (cf. **Lev 9:23–24**), and Elijah’s showdown with the prophets of Baal (cf. **1Ki 18:16–39**, esp. **38**).

Raymond Dillard: This second report of the appearance of the fire and glory of Yahweh parallels the earlier account (**5:13–14**) and probably refers to the same incident, narrated twice to achieve the literary balance of a chiasm. It should be compared with other appearances of fire from Yahweh showing approval of a sanctuary or sacrifice (**1 Chr 21 // 2 Sam 24; Exod 40:34–38; 1 Kgs 18; Judg 6:20–22**).

A second approach to the two passages construes them in **chronological sequence** rather than as a **duplicate account** for purposes of literary balance; in this case the initial appearance was confined to the priests inside (**5:13–14**), while the latter incident was visible to all the people (**7:3**).

Mark Boda: The final section of Solomon’s prayer (**6:41–42**) invites God to “*enter your resting place*,” a request that is fulfilled immediately at the outset of **chapter 7**. Just before the glorious presence of the Lord fills the Temple, however, the Chronicler records that God sent down fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifices that had been prepared.

- c. (:2) Occupation of the Temple Totally Filled by the Glory of God
“And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD’s house.”

2. (:3) Motivation of the People to Worship God for His Goodness and Lovingkindness

“And all the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the LORD upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the LORD, saying, ‘Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting.’”

Andrew Hill: The simultaneous events of fire from heaven falling on the bronze altar and the cloud of Yahweh’s glory filling the temple prompt a predictable reaction from the people—prostration in worship (**7:3**).

B. (:4-6) Dramatic Response of Celebratory Worship

1. (:4-5) Abundant Sacrifices

“Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before the LORD. 5 And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep. Thus the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.”

2. (:6) Accompanied by Musical Praise

“And the priests stood at their posts and the Levites, with the instruments of music to the LORD, which King David had made for giving praise to the LORD—‘for His lovingkindness is everlasting’-- whenever he gave

praise by their means, while the priests on the other side blew trumpets; and all Israel was standing.”

C. (:7-10) Dramatic Response of Dedicating the Altar and Celebrating the Festival of Booths

August Konkell: The third section provides details of the whole festal period (**2 Chron 7:7–11**). The two events of dedicating the altar and celebrating the Feast of Booths lasted for fifteen days (**7:9**), double the usual length of the fall festival.

The Festival of Booths began on the fifteenth day of the month and concluded on the twenty-second day (**Lev 23:34–36**). An eighth day, called (like the first day) a solemn assembly, concluded the celebration. The people were dismissed on the twenty-third day (**2 Chron 7:10**), after the conclusion of the eighth day. In the Chronicler’s version of events, the dedication of the altar had begun seven days before the commencement of the festival. The Chronicler never makes mention of the Day of Atonement, which occurs on the tenth day of the seventh month (**Lev 16:29–31**) and would have been during the first week of festivities. This was not a usual circumstance. It would not have been possible to observe a customary Day of Atonement since the ark itself was being dedicated in its new location.

The sacrifices served for the entire fifteen days of the two festivities. The large numbers correspond to the size of the assembly. Pilgrims to the festival came from the farthest reaches of the Davidic kingdom. . .

The main function of these offerings was to provide food for the table. These sacrifices were meant to be joyous occasions of celebration (**Milgrom 1991: 220–21**). Worshipers and priests share the peace offerings, providing a bonding of the community and a celebration of the covenant (**Lev 7:11–15, 30–36**). The blood, fat, and entrails of the peace offering are all devoted to God.

1. (:7) Volume of Sacrifices Required Consecrating the Middle of the Court

“Then Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD, for there he offered the burnt offerings and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar which Solomon had made was not able to contain the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the fat.”

Frederick Mabie: Solomon also consecrated the broader area of the temple complex with a great number of different types of offerings (fellowship, grain, and burnt; cf. **Lev 1–3**). The burning of the fat portion of the fellowship offering implies that the broader animal was used as part of the fifteen-day feast described in **vv.8–10** (cf. the stipulations in **Lev 3**).

J.A. Thompson: It was not possible to present all the offerings on the bronze altar that Solomon had made (**4:1**), so he consecrated the middle part of the courtyard in front of

the temple, and there he offered burnt offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings (traditionally peace offerings). The details of this arrangement are not given.

2. (:8-9) Dedication of the Altar Required Extended Duration of the Feast

“So Solomon observed the feast at that time for seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly, who came from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of Egypt. 9 And on the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, for the dedication of the altar they observed seven days, and the feast seven days.”

3. (:10) Overwhelming Joy Focused on God’s Goodness and Covenant Faithfulness

“Then on the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people to their tents, rejoicing and happy of heart because of the goodness that the LORD had shown to David and to Solomon and to His people Israel.”

Iain Duguid: David and Solomon are again joined together (**2 Chron. 7:10**), the Chronicler seeing their reigns as intertwined, with both kings being significant in the building of the temple and the settling of the ark in its place. While the Hebrew term *tobah* (“goodness”) often includes a sense of “prosperity” (as ESV), it is likely that for the Chronicler this is a fulfillment of God’s promise to David concerning both a son and the temple. After David received the Lord’s message through Nathan, he prayed, “*You have promised this good thing to your servant,*” referring specifically to the dynasty (**1 Chron. 17:26**), but for the Chronicler the most important task was the building of the temple. What was “good” to David has continued to be “good” to “Solomon and to Israel his people. A similar linking of God, king, people, and temple is seen in the later commendation of Jehoiada: “*He had done good in Israel, and toward God and his house*” (**2 Chron. 24:16**).

D. (:11) Closing Summary Celebrating the Completion of the Building Projects (both the Temple and the Palace)

“Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's palace, and successfully completed all that he had planned on doing in the house of the LORD and in his palace.”

Mark Boda: Having depicted the joyous closing to the festival in **7:10**, the Chronicler brings the building and dedication account to a close with a summary note in **7:11**, a technique that has been a regular feature in the Chronicler’s account of Solomon (**1:1; 2:1; 3:1-2; 5:1; 7:11; 8:1, 16**). This summary note joins with **5:1** to form a bracket around the entire dedication account of **5:1- 7:11**. A striking difference between this summary note and the one that began the section, however, is the reference to the completion of the Temple, as well as the royal palace, a feature that the Chronicler found in his source in **1 Kings 9:1** but repeated for emphasis in his rendition. Although the Chronicler left out the account of the construction of Solomon’s palace from **1 Kings 7:1-12**, it is interesting that in his recounting of the communication between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre in **chapter 2**, he inserted three extra references to the

building of a palace not found in his source in **1 Kings 5:1-8**, two concerning Solomon's palace (**2:1, 12**) and one concerning David's palace (**2:3b**). Although the focus of the Chronicler's attention is clearly on the Temple project, this may suggest that the Chronicler was concerned with the enduring role of the Davidic dynasty, the palace being representative of a minor interest in an enduring role for a royal court. The reference to the palace in **7:11**, thus, was important enough to retain from his source, as well as to repeat, because it appears in the transition from the dedication events to the concluding speech of the Lord to Solomon, which will focus on the endurance of both the Temple (**7:12-16**) and the dynasty (**7:17-22**).

II. (:12-22) DIVINE REVELATION TO SOLOMON OF COVENANT BLESSINGS ON THE NATION WHENEVER THEY SEEK GOD IN REPENTANCE AND OBEDIENCE

Andrew Hill: The Lord's speech to Solomon on the occasion of his second dream theophany may be outlined in three distinct parts:

- the Lord's acceptance of Solomon's prayer of dedication and his approval of the Jerusalem temple as the place for his Name to dwell (**7:12b**),
- the Lord's promise to Solomon and the people he shepherds (**7:13-18**), and
- the Lord's threat of punishment for disobedience (**7:19-22**).

A. (:12-16) Significance of the Temple to the Lord

"Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him,"

August Konkel: The second night vision at Gibeon occurs after Solomon completed all his building projects (**2 Chron 7:11**), which was twenty years after the previous assembly at Gibeon (**1:3**). The first vision was before the seven years of temple building (**1 Kings 6:37**) and another thirteen years of building projects (**7:1; 9:10**). If these building projects were in sequence, as seems to be the case in the Deuteronomistic presentation (cf. **9:10**), and if the ark installation took place immediately when the temple was completed, this vision is **thirteen years** after the festivities celebrating the ark.

1. (:12b) Chosen by God as a House of Sacrifice

*"I have heard your prayer,
and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice."*

2. (:13-14) Chastening for Sin Will Require Repentance for Healing to Maintain the Divine Presence

"If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, 14 and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Frederick Mabie: This statement is situated within covenantal particulars related to the Deuteronomic covenant (cf. **v.13**), matters of temple theology (and the interwoven Israelite sacrificial system; cf. **vv.15–16**), and the Davidic covenant (cf. **vv.17–22**). Note that all these features are directly applicable to the nation of Israel located within the specific geographical area of the Promised Land featuring a functioning temple in the city of Jerusalem and having a Davidic king on the throne. . .

Notable examples of leaders described as humbling themselves or leading a time of national repentance include Rehoboam (**12:6**), Hezekiah (**32:26**), and especially the dramatic example of Manasseh (**33:12**). Such instances of repentance and humbling frequently accompany times of prayer and an earnest seeking of God.

Andrew Hill: The activities of “*humbling, praying, seeking, and turning*” should be understood as four facets or aspects of the act (or even process) of **biblical repentance (7:14)**.

Each of these words is theologically charged. The word “*humble*” (*kn'*) means to subdue one’s pride and submit in self-denying loyalty to God and his will (cf. **Lev. 26:41**). “*Pray*” (*pll*) in this context is a shameless acknowledgment of personal sin and a plea for God’s mercy, much like that of David’s prayer of repentance (cf. **Ps. 51:1–2**). “*Seek*” (*bqš*) is often used in desperate situations in which God is the only possible hope for deliverance (cf. **Deut. 4:29–30**). “*Turn*” (*šwb*) is the Old Testament term for repentance and signifies a complete change of direction away from sin and toward God (or an “about-face” in military parlance; cf. **Ezek. 18:30, 32**).

Verse 14 is a theological digest of the rest of the Chronicler’s narrative. The history of the monarchy demonstrates how both the kings and the people “*humble*” themselves before God (e.g., Rehoboam, **12:6–7**), “*pray*” to God in repentance (e.g., Hezekiah, **32:20**), “*seek*” God’s face for restoration (e.g., Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah, **20:3–4**), and “*turn*” from sin to obey God’s commands (e.g., Asa and the people, **15:4**). Such behavior will ensure that God’s “*Name*” or presence will remain associated with the Jerusalem temple (**7:16a**).

Geoffrey Kirkland: What Does God Want?

1. To HUMBLE - to recognize sin and utter dependence on God; subdue pride; submit in self-denying loyalty to God!
2. To PRAY - a generic term that means calling on God for help in times of need; shameless acknowledgement of sin & desperation for God’s deliverance.
3. To SEEK - in relation to worship and pursuing God’s favor; to passionately, exclusively, resolutely, run after God with focus, tenacity, endurance & joy.
4. To TURN - a changed life, repentance // turning from sin; complete change U-turn in direction in life.

3. (:15-16) Consecrated as a House of Prayer Where God Dwells with His People

- a. (:15) Prayers Offered in the Temple Will be Accepted

“Now My eyes shall be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.”

b. (:16) Perpetuation of the Divine Presence

“For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.”

Andrew Hill: The reference to the “eyes” and the “heart” of Yahweh being connected to the temple (**7:16b**) is an unusual expression for the idea of the **divine presence** in the Old Testament. The eyes and heart of God symbolize his concerned watch-care for humanity in that he sees people in distress and has a compassionate heart for their plight, and he has the power to intervene and deliver his people. One cannot reflect on the association of the “eyes and heart” of God with the Jerusalem temple and not have inklings about the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Mark Boda: The reason why this Temple receives heightened attention from the Lord is because it is both “chosen” and “sacred” (NLT, “set apart . . . to be holy”). These two characteristics are essential to the Temple’s status. It must be a place that God has chosen, but in order for him to dwell there it must be consecrated for his use.

B. (:17-22) Stipulation of Blessings and Curses Associated with Covenant Faithfulness

1. (:17-18) Stipulation of Blessings

a. (:17) Based on Covenant Faithfulness

“And as for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked even to do according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances,”

b. (:18) Resulting in Perpetuating the Davidic Dynasty

“then I will establish your royal throne as I covenanted with your father David, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to be ruler in Israel.’”

Raymond Dillard: But how was the post-exilic community to view the eternality of the Davidic covenant when they were without a king and subject to foreign domination? The second modification the Chronicler has made at this point may address the needs of the post-exilic community: for the “you shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel” in **1 Kgs 9:5**, the Chronicler has substituted “you shall never fail to have a man to rule over Israel,” language parallel to **Mic 5:1 [2]**. The author gives expression to his messianic or royalist hopes: though the throne of Israel is vacant, the continuity of the Davidic dynasty remains. The dynastic promise has not lost its validity even with the loss of the throne.

2. (:19-22) Stipulation of Curses

J.A. Thompson: If they turned away and forsook God's laws to serve and worship other gods, there would be dire consequences. They would be separated from their land (exiled), the temple would be rejected, and they would become an object of ridicule among all peoples. The temple itself would become the object of taunting (**Deut 28:37; Jer 24:9**). This was to happen in the destruction brought about by Nebuchadnezzar. The Chronicler and the Israel of his day worshiped in a new temple. But though the temple had once been destroyed, God's choice of Jerusalem was still valid; and though no descendant of David sat on David's throne, the Davidic line had not failed (**7:18**).

Raymond Dillard: Having spoken to Solomon, God now speaks to the people; note the shift to 2d person plural in **7:19**. At the dedication of the temple in all its magnificence, there is the reminder of what it could and did become: an object of ridicule, the butt of a joke, the point of a proverb (**Deut 28:37; Jer 24:9**).

a. (:19) Based on Apostasy and Idolatry

“But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you and shall go and serve other gods and worship them,”

b. (:20) Resulting in Being Uprooted from the Land

“then I will uproot you from My land which I have given you, and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.”

David Guzik: Under the Old Covenant, God promised to use Israel to exalt Himself among the nations one way or another. If Israel obeyed, He would bless them so much that others had to recognize the hand of God upon Israel. If Israel disobeyed, He would chastise them so severely that the nations would **be astonished** at the judgment of God among His disobedient people, and they would know that the LORD **has brought all this calamity on them**.

c. (:21-22) Bringing Shocking Shame and Dishonor Among the Nations

“As for this house, which was exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’

22 And they will say, 'Because they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who brought them from the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them, therefore He has brought all this adversity on them.’”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Do we get numb to God's spectacular miracles such as sending fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifice on the altar?
- 2) In what way can the glory of the Lord fill us as the temple of God?
- 3) How has **verse 14** been misused or misapplied?
- 4) How can we tell which disasters are unleashed by the Lord as direct retribution for wickedness?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: King Solomon's construction and dedication of the Jerusalem temple highlight several important theological continuities between the Old and New Testaments: the appropriate understanding of God's holiness and the liturgical use of "sacred space," the role of sacred space in mediating God's immanence and transcendence, the centrality of prayer in worship, the significance of "pilgrimage" in the life of faith, the relationship between the sacred place and religious instruction, and the idea that sacred space (and worship) brings order out of chaos. **Second Chronicles 5:2–7:22**, recounting the dedication of the Jerusalem temple, points toward the contemporary significance of the larger literary unit (**chs. 1–9**) by emphasizing the priority of intercessory prayer. The account of the glory of God entering the temple furthers the topic of "sacred space" that mediates God's immanence and transcendence and ultimately foreshadows the incarnation of Jesus Christ (**John 1:14**).

Raymond Dillard: Solomon's prayer and God's response form the center of the author's Solomon narrative; the Chronicler will remain through the rest of his history concerned to show that God did indeed keep his promise to Solomon to answer with favor the prayers and repentance of his people. It is particularly in his addition of **7:13–15** to God's response that the Chronicler articulates most clearly the theological perspective supporting his historiographical goals. In his accounts of the reigns of the kings of Judah the Chronicler tirelessly exhibits the validity of his retributive convictions; he proceeds by taking details from the accounts as he found them in Kings, but by adding supporting and inciting incidents to provide the rationale for reward or punishment.

The basic theological questions of the restoration community revolved around its relationship to the Israel of the past—what validity did the promises of God regarding the temple and the house of David have for a community that had no king, was under foreign domination, and had only in recent history rebuilt the former temple that had been destroyed? Solomon's prayer presumably had liturgical use through much of the first temple period and was probably recited regularly in the liturgy of the post-exilic temple. The Chronicler was seeking to demonstrate the validity of those petitions and

God's response through history, and by implication for his own generation as well. Though the temple had once been destroyed, God's choice of Jerusalem was still valid; though no descendant of David sat on a throne, the Davidic line had not failed (7:18). One would yet come whose origins are of old, from ancient times, to be ruler over Israel (Mic 5:2).

Iain Duguid: The message of God's forgiveness and "*healing of the land*" is one of hope for a world in which the effects of human sin are all too evident. Here is encouragement to pray. For the Chronicler, "*the land*" referred to the area that "*I have given you [my people].*" In Christ, this can be extended to the whole earth, for indeed "*the whole creation has been groaning*" for his redemption (Rom. 8:22). The hardships in this passage that lead to prayer are all community wide, seen as God's punishment for sin by the people as a whole. While the Scriptures themselves warn against equating disasters with specific sins, personal or communal (e.g., Job; Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-7), there are countless ways in which even "natural disasters" are more horrendous in their results due to human wrongdoing (corruption and maladministration, greed and selfishness, war and civil strife, ethnic rivalry, effects of slavery and injustice, failure to share resources, environmental exploitation). This passage perhaps speaks particularly to the **individualism** of Western Christianity that so often overlooks the **corporate dimension of sin**. At the same time, communal response requires personal commitment. God's word to Solomon is "*If my people pray*"; Paul urges Christians to pray for "*all people, for kings and all who are in high positions . . . [because God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Tim. 2:2-4).

Martin Selman: Chapter 7 is not only central to the message of Chronicles, but it is also one of the most important chapters in the Old Testament. It offers hope to any who call on the name of the Lord, even if they have incurred God's wrath, because God's desire is for full reconciliation. The over-all theme is encapsulated in a passage most of which is unique to Chronicles (vv. 12-16), and which contains one of the best-known verses in Chronicles (v 14).

The chapter is in two parallel sections, both of which are about answered prayer. The genuineness of God's promise about forgiveness and healing (vv. 11-22) is confirmed and preceded by a very public and dramatic reply to Solomon's prayer (vv. 1-10; cf. 6:14-42). The wider context is also important, however, **Verses 12b-22** are in the form of a direct message from God which must be read alongside God's earlier promise about David's dynasty and the temple (1 Ch. 17:3-15). Together, they form the foundation for the Chronicler's entire work, with the earlier passage providing a secure basis for God's invitation here. The account of the Divided Monarchy which follows (chapter 10-36) then demonstrated by actual examples how God answered prayer on the principles of **verses 12-16** (e.g. 2 Ch. 20:1-30; 33:10-23).

The significance of such a message would have been easily understood in post-exile Israel. By presenting the temple as a place where right sacrifice and prayer could be accepted, an opening was being provided to exchange Israel's present bleak

circumstances for a more positive future. It offered an opportunity to change the course of Israel's history. Sadly, the story of the post-exilic and intertestamental periods shows that this opportunity was largely ignored, despite the few who continued to look for the consolation of Israel (**Lk. 2:25**).

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 8:1-16

TITLE: SOLOMON'S EXPANDING BUILDING ACTIVITY AND ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPLE SERVICE

BIG IDEA:

SOLOMON'S IDEALIZED KINGSHIP FOCUSED ON EXPANDING DOMINION AND ENHANCING WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION:

Martin Selman: The final section of Solomon's reign (**chs. 8-9**) concentrates on the theme of praise for all that God has done for Solomon (see especially **9:8**). This unit is clearly connected with the opening section about Solomon (**2 Ch. 1-2**), both of which deal with Solomon's achievements and reputation. The chief difference is that whereas the earlier chapters describe Solomon's preparations in response to God's revelation at Gibeon, now that work is fulfilled. The real subject of **chapters 8-9**, therefore, is what God achieved through Solomon, rather than Solomon's own achievements.

A. C. Gaebelein: The activities of the King included the fortification of certain cities. (See **1 Kings 9:0**.) First the cities are mentioned which Hiram restored to Solomon. These are the cities which Solomon had previously given to him for security. **1 Kings 9:10-14** explains this statement which otherwise would be obscure. All the strangers, the Canaanites, dwelling in the land were put into subjection and had to pay tribute to Solomon. They were the servants. "*But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but they were men of war, and chief of his captains and captains of his horsemen and chariots.*" it foreshadows the age in which all will be put in subjection under Him who will be King to rule in righteousness (**Isaiah 32:1 ; Hebrews 2:8**). Then His own people will serve Him, for they "*shall be willing in the day of His power*" (**Psalms 110:3**). The only mention made of the daughter of Pharaoh in Chronicles is in this chapter (**verse 11**). He married her in the beginning of the reign. Her removal to the house Solomon had built for her now took place. On the typical meaning of Pharaoh's daughter see **1 Kings 3:1**. The worship in the house was then carried on in a perfect way. At the appointed times all was done and all David, the man of God, had commanded was carried out (**verse 14**). There was no departure from the commandment of the king, so the house of the Lord was perfected. It foreshadows a perfect obedience and worship which the earth will see when the true King has come. Then, as it was in Solomon's day, the King's commandment will be the absolute rule for everything (**verse 15**).

Iain Kunkel: **Verses 1 and 16** are a frame suggesting both that
(a) the expanding rule and associated building works and administrative structures were blessings associated with obedience in building the temple, and that
(b) the central purpose of all was to support the building and ongoing maintaining of the "*house of the Lord*" and the worship there.

Mark Boda: The focus of the Chronicler's account largely shifts to Solomon's "secular" pursuits, that is, pursuits not directly related to the Temple and its services. For the Chronicler these pursuits are not provided for mere historical interest. Rather, it is essential to his portrayal of Solomon as the ideal royal figure whose obedience and faithfulness were divinely blessed by success: building projects, military prowess, economic achievement, international fame, and border expansion. The account of Solomon ends with the summary notice that is typical of the Chronicler's method.

J.A. Thompson: Chapters 8–9 describe four glorious aspects of Solomon's reign:

- his power,
- his worship of God,
- his wealth, and
- his wisdom.

I. (:1-10) EXPANDING DOMINION DEMONSTRATED IN CRITICAL BUILDING PROJECTS

A. (:1-6) Cities Built by Solomon

Iain Duguid: Since the northern border of Israelite land was commonly labeled as "Lebo-hamath" (2 Chron. 7:8) and David had previously controlled the city-states of Hamath and Zobah in northern Syria (1 Chron. 18:3–10), Solomon's action was possibly to reassert Israelite hegemony (as Jeroboam II did in 2 Kings 14:25). This gave Solomon control along the main trade route to Mesopotamia, while "Tadmor," 125 miles (200 km) northeast of Damascus, was a major oasis on the shorter desert route, later named Palmyra. The building of "store cities" supported the gathering of revenue (including grain, oil, wine, etc.; e.g., 2 Chron. 32:28; 1 Chron. 27:25–31), enabling the maintenance of governmental and defense forces.

Another strategic location was along the ridge of the Valley of Aijalon that led to the plateau of the northern approach to Jerusalem, forming the major route linking Jerusalem with the coast. The "fortified cities" of "Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon," approximately 10 and 11 miles (16 and 18 km) northwest of Jerusalem, had earlier been settled as pasturelands on the border between Benjamin and Ephraim (1 Chron. 6:68; 7:24; cf. Josh. 10:10–11; 16:5; 18:13–14). The location of "Baalath" is uncertain, contenders being near Gezer (Josh. 19:44) or, less likely, suggested by its association in 1 Kings 9:18 MT with the southeastern "Tamar," in the land allocated to Simeon in the southeast (Josh. 19:8), or equated with "Baalath," that is, Kiriath-jearim (1 Chron. 13:6).

1. (:1-2) Cities from Hiram

"Now it came about at the end of the twenty years in which Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his own house 2 that he built the cities which Hiram had given to him, and settled the sons of Israel there."

David Guzik: It took Solomon seven years to build the temple and 13 years to build his palace. At the end of these **twenty years** his kingdom was secure, stable, and blessed.

Thomas Constable: God blessed Solomon by giving him good relations with King Hiram (Hiram) of Tyre (**vv. 2, 18**). Hiram evidently returned the cities that Solomon had previously given (or mortgaged) to him (**v. 2**; cf. **1 Kings 9:10-14**). Then Solomon developed these towns. Solomon also captured more territory and fortified many cities (**vv. 3-6**).

"It seems safe to say that, following this action, Israel controlled more territory than at any other time in its history. In his day, Solomon was probably the most powerful and influential ruler in the Middle East." (**Leon Wood**)

Moreover, Solomon controlled the native Canaanite population (**v. 8**).

Matthew Henry: Though Solomon was a man of great learning and knowledge, yet he spent his days, not in contemplation, but in action, not in his study, but in his country, in building cities and fortifying them, in a time of peace preparing for a time of war, which is as much a man's business as it is in summer to provide food for winter.

Andrew Hill: it may be possible to harmonize the reports in one of two ways.

- (1) Perhaps Kings and Chronicles refer to two different occasions in which cities are exchanged as a part of agreements arranged between Hiram and Solomon.
- (2) Chronicles may be the sequel to the Kings' account in that Hiram held the twenty cities temporarily as collateral for the timber supplied to Solomon until such time as a "cash" payment (of gold) could be made.

2. (:3-6) Cities for Military and Economic Dominion

a. (:3) Hamath-zobah

"Then Solomon went to Hamath-zobah and captured it."

Frederick Mabie: Solomon's taking of Hamath Zobah and his subsequent building of storage cities (cf. **vv. 4-6**) indicate a significant expansion of Israelite political control and economic hegemony achieved through the control of trade routes and the receipt of tribute payments and tax revenue. Solomon's geographical hegemony extended north, deep into northern Syria, and bordered the west bank of the Euphrates River to the northeast. The name of this area (Hamath Zobah) suggests that Hamath had gained prominence over the Aramean (or perhaps Neo-Hittite) kingdom of Zobah. David's earlier conflict with Zobah is noted in **1 Chronicles 18:3-6 (2Sa 8:3-8)**.

b. (:4) Tadmor and Storage Cities in Hamath

*"And he built Tadmor in the wilderness
and all the storage cities which he had built in Hamath."*

c. (:5) Upper and Lower Beth-horon

“He also built upper Beth-horon and lower Beth-horon, fortified cities with walls, gates, and bars;”

August Konkell: Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon sit astride a ridge, which rises from the Valley of Ajalon and extends to the plateau north of Jerusalem. Fortifications were important to protect the route that connected Jerusalem to the major coastal trade route. Certain cities served for storage and for military cavalry. Large building complexes at Hazor, Beth Shemesh, and Megiddo consist of a long room, with two rows of pillars dividing it into three sections. They may have been used as stables and storehouses, or may have been barracks for a professional army. Baalath, originally assigned to the tribe of Dan (**Josh 15:9**), is probably the city also known as Kiriath Jearim, on the western boundary of Judah.

d. (:6) Baalath and Other Storage Cities

“and Baalath and all the storage cities that Solomon had, and all the cities for his chariots and cities for his horsemen, and all that it pleased Solomon to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land under his rule.”

Ron Daniel: How was this accomplished? Solomon exercised the proper priorities: **start locally, then expand**. This basic business and biblical principle is often ignored by new ministries and ministers. Wanting to take the world for Jesus Christ, they try to do everything at once. "We'll have a building project, a radio station, vacation Bible school, a jail ministry, community evangelism outreaches..." But because they do too much too soon, they don't have the finances, the resources, or the personnel to accomplish everything. They get spread too thin and quickly burn out.

J.A. Thompson: It is evident also that Solomon controlled the major trade routes to Mesopotamia—the main overland route via Hamath and the shorter desert route via Tadmor (possibly Palmyra). Control of these trade routes was important for Solomon's commercial endeavors and therefore his wealth. The mention of store cities (**v. 4**) would fit this picture of trade.

Iain Duguid: The summary statement portrays blessing, as there is not only a dynasty but a “dominion,” an area and people being ruled. David had been active with “building” in Jerusalem (**1 Chron. 11:8–9**); now Solomon was “building” throughout the “dominion.” The motif of “building” as a sign of blessing following obedient trust, sometimes after repentance, continues with subsequent kings (**2 Chron. 11:5–23; 17:12; 26:2–10; 27:2–4; 32:5; 33:13–15**).

Andrew Hill: The emphasis on store cities and chariot cities (**1 Chron. 8:6**) highlights the priority Solomon gives to the related activities of trade and military defense. The summary statement (**8:6c**) lauding Solomon's achievements indicates he has both the political power and the economic resources to build at will throughout his empire.

B. (:7-10) Labor Force Enlisted by Solomon

1. (:7-8) Forced Foreign Laborers

“All of the people who were left of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who were not of Israel, & namely, from their descendants who were left after them in the land whom the sons of Israel had not destroyed, them Solomon raised as forced laborers to this day.”

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: The descendants of the Canaanites who remained in the country were treated as war-prisoners, being obliged to “pay tribute, or to serve as galley-slaves” (**2 Chron. 2:18**), while the Israelites were employed in no works but such as were of an honorable character.

2. (:9-10) Leaders from the Sons of Israel

“But Solomon did not make slaves for his work from the sons of Israel; they were men of war, his chief captains, and commanders of his chariots and his horsemen. And these were the chief officers of King Solomon, two hundred and fifty who ruled over the people.”

David Guzik: Israelites were used for the work of building the temple and Solomon’s palace, but they were not forced labor (**1 Kings 5:13-14**). They were often used in the management of the forced labor (**who ruled over the people**).

Andrew Hill: This passage distinguishes clearly between Solomon’s treatment of his own countrymen and the subjugated non-Israelite people groups (**8:8**). Vanquished and disposed peoples were commonly used as slave labor for building projects in the ancient Near East. The writer emphasizes how Solomon puts fellow countrymen in positions of leadership (**2 Chron. 8:9–10**). The writer of Kings mentions that Solomon also conscripts Israelites as part of the forced labor levy (**1 Kings 5:13**). These workers are apparently considered another category of “civil servant” since they work only one month in three and are classified as “conscripted laborers” (*mas*), whereas non-Israelite laborers are classified as “state slaves” (*mas ‘obed*).

Peter Wallace: Pattern of Solomon’s kingdom expansion

Israel benefited greatly from the reign of Solomon.

- Their king built up the fortification for their defense.
- Their king provided store cities to guard against famine (a sort of social welfare program).
- Their king conscripted the idolaters among them for forced labor, but gave positions of power and influence to his fellow Israelites.

For centuries, this was viewed as the proper way for a king to function.

- The king protects his people from their enemies.
- The king provides for the poor, and prepares against the day of trouble.
- The king rewards his followers, but keeps potential enemies under his thumb.

(:11) ASIDE: COMPLEXITIES OF MORAL COMPROMISE

“Then Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the city of David to the house which he had built for her; for he said, ‘My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy where the ark of the LORD has entered.’”

J.A. Thompson: The Chronicler assumed his readers knew of Solomon's diplomatic marriage with pharaoh's daughter (**1 Kgs 9:16**), who lived with him in Jerusalem. Solomon built a palace for her lest her close proximity to the temple while living in the king's palace might somehow defile the temple and the ark.

Thomas Constable: Solomon probably should not have entered into a treaty with Pharaoh by marrying his daughter, in view of God's previous warnings about the negative spiritual influence of foreign wives. Building her a house of her own in Jerusalem seems to have been a compromise: having her yet keeping her at a distance.

"Compromise is pathetic in that it always witnesses a conviction of what is the high and the true, and attempts to ensure its realization while yielding to the low and the false. It is evil, for its invariable issue is that the low and the false ultimately gain the ascendance and the high and the true are abandoned. To build a house for Pharaoh's daughter outside the Holy City is to open its gates sooner or later to Pharaoh's gods."
(**G. Campbell Morgan**)

Iain Duguid: This is the sole mention in Chronicles of Solomon's having a foreign wife, and also the only reference to Pharaoh's daughter. While in Kings this marriage and others are a cause for criticism of Solomon, here it is an opportunity to affirm his piety.

J. Wolfendale: (quoted in **Biblical Illustrator**):
Consider Solomon's marriage with an Egyptian princess--

I. As a **matter of policy**. It sprang from--

1. A desire to counteract the influence of Hadad (**1 Kings 11:14-20**).
2. The wish to obtain support for his new dynasty and recognition from one of older fame and greater power.
3. Anxiety to strengthen himself by foreign alliances.

II. As a **source of moral perplexity**. What must be done with her? Solomon felt that a broad distinction must be made between the worship of Jehovah and idolatry.

III. As the **beginning of trouble**. The policy advantageous at first, but ultimately proved hollow and impolitic. The reign which began so gloriously ended in gross darkness and fetish worship.

Mark Boda: The final verse in this section (**8:11**) serves as a segue between the account of Solomon's foreign slaves (8:7-10) and that of his support of the Temple services (**8:12-16**). Here the Chronicler expands the short reference to Solomon's construction

of a house for his Egyptian wife (1 Kgs 9:24) by adding a statement by the king linking the project to his passion for the holiness of a site associated with the Ark (8:11). This is the only time the Chronicler links a foreign marriage to Solomon, a link that is key to the criticism of Solomon in his source in Kings (1 Kgs 3, 11), and ironically the Chronicler uses this link to present Solomon as a king passionate for ritual purity. This addition aids the transition between 8:2-11 and 8:12-16, where Solomon's passion for proper worship ritual will be emphasized further. The account in 1 Kings (1 Kgs 3:1-2; 9:16) reveals that Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh and was given the town of Gezer as a dowry. This marriage suggests an alliance between Egypt and Israel, a political dimension that is played down in the Chronicler's account.

II. (:12-15) ENHANCING WORSHIP VIA PROPER ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEMPLE SERVICE

A. (:12-13) Administration of Religious Rites -- Required Offerings and Feasts

“Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the LORD which he had built before the porch; 13 and did so according to the daily rule, offering them up according to the commandment of Moses, for the sabbaths, the new moons, and the three annual feasts-- the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths.”

Raymond Dillard: The author expands his source (1 Kgs 9:25) with emphasis on the detailed observance of the Mosaic commands (Lev 23:1-37; Num 28-29) and Davidic prescriptions (1 Chr 23-26); he specifies the three annual feasts mentioned in Kings and adds the observance of weekly sabbaths and the new moon. The text is ambiguous regarding the extent of the king's participation; it could cover any degree of involvement from simply decreeing the observances to personal officiation in the worship.

B. (:14-15) Administration Religious Personnel -- Priests and Levites

“Now according to the ordinance of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, and the Levites for their duties of praise and ministering before the priests according to the daily rule, and the gatekeepers by their divisions at every gate; for David the man of God had so commanded. 15 And they did not depart from the commandment of the king to the priests and Levites in any manner or concerning the storehouses.”

L. M. Grant: Priesthood has to do with worship, which is too often neglected amongst God's people while they use the word "worship" for any kind of Christian activity. But true worship is heart adoration of the Father and the Son and it is important that definite time should be taken for this most precious feature of Christian life. The Levites were servants, so this emphasizes the service of obedient activity as to the Lord. Christians too often make service more important than worship so that, worship becomes practically side-tracked. But both are of great value in their place. The gatekeeper's picture the genuine care that is so necessary in keeping out of the assembly what ought to be out and allowing in what ought to be in. This proper care has been ignored in the

great majority of churches today, so as to have believers and unbelievers mixed together, and sinful practices not only tolerated but justified. If one seeks to be a true gatekeeper, he is accused of being intolerant, legal minded and unloving. But God appreciates the genuine care that His saints show for the true welfare of the Church of God and for the honour of His name.

Andrew Hill: The report of the perpetual offerings made to Yahweh as part of the worship of the Jerusalem temple expands the reference to Solomon's observance of the pilgrimage festivals three times a year (cf. **1 Kings 9:25**). The Torah required a burnt offering morning and evening with incense (**Num. 28:1-8**). The burnt offering symbolized God's gift of atonement for sin and the consecration of Israel wholly to God. Burning incense represented the prayers of God's people (**Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8**). Solomon's obedience to the law of Moses legitimizes the Jerusalem temple and the new altar opposite its portico as the primary location for the worship of Yahweh (as was the case formerly for the altar in Gibeon, cf. **2 Chron. 1:3-5**).

(:16) SUMMARY -- ALL BUILDING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE PREEMINENCE OF THE TEMPLE

“Thus all the work of Solomon was carried out from the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD, and until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was completed.”

Mark Boda: The expansions in **8:12-16** (as with the one in **8:11**) are all related to the construction of the Temple and the institution of its services. Thus, even when the Chronicler finally does move out of the realm of the Temple project, as he does in **chapters 8-9**, he cannot help but mention the Temple and its services. This is a reflection of his agenda not only to highlight their importance in the life of Israel but also to remind his readers that all the success Solomon experienced in the “secular” realm is to be traced to his exhaustive and enduring attention to the “sacred” realm symbolized by the Temple and its services.

Andrew Hill: The emphasis of **2 Chronicles 8** is Solomon's faithfulness in following through on all of David's preparations and seeing the temple building project to completion (cf. **8:16**).

Matthew Henry: Solomon, though a wise and great man and the builder of the temple, did not attempt to amend, alter, or add to what the man of God had, in God's name, commanded, but closely adhered to that, and used his authority to have that duly observed; and then *none departed from the commandment of the king concerning any matter*, **2 Chron. 8:15**. He observed God's laws, and then all obeyed his orders. When the service of the temple was put into this good order, then it is said, *The house of the Lord was perfected*, **2 Chron. 8:16**. The work was the main matter, not the place; the temple was unfinished till all this was done.

Iain Duguid: This is the sole mention in Chronicles of Solomon's having a foreign wife, and also the only reference to Pharaoh's daughter. While in Kings this marriage and others are a cause for criticism of Solomon, here it is an opportunity to affirm his piety.

J.A. Thompson: This verse represents an important literary mark in the story of the Chronicler, concluding the long section that began at **2:1**. A similar phrase to "*so the temple of the Lord was finished*" occurs in **29:35**, as the Chronicler concluded his account of the restoration of the temple service under Hezekiah.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How does this political dominion and geographical expansion compare to the ultimate eschatological fulfillment of the ultimate borders of the Promised Land?
- 2) Why such a distinction in how Solomon treated subjugated foreigners and native Israelites when it came to employing them in various roles for his building projects?
- 3) Why does this account of Solomon's marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh appear in this context?
- 4) Why does the Chronicler gloss over some of the weaknesses and moral failures of Solomon?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

J. Parker: (Quoted in **Biblical Illustrator**) -- Solomon was great in burnt offerings. Do not men sometimes make up in burnt offerings what they lack in moral consistency? Is not an ostentatious religion sometimes the best proof of internal decay? It ought not to be so. The outward and inward should correspond. The action should be the incarnation of the thought. It is beautiful to look upon the Church engaged in much church-building and in strenuous endeavours against public sin; yet we must never forget that all this may possibly coexist with internal loss, decay, corruption. All action does not spring from life. Sometimes we try to make up by complex mechanism what is wanting in real vitality. It is often easier to offer burnt offering than to do some deed of moral heroism.

August Konkel: The petition of Solomon for Israel and all peoples makes the temple the place of prayer from which they call to the Creator of the universe. The dedication prayer expresses the condition under which prayer may be made efficacious. In seeking the face of God, it is necessary to be humble; earthly citizens are in every way subservient to the Creator. But petitions made with such an attitude of trust have an unfailing response: God will hear from heaven and will heal (**2 Chron 7:14**). The eyes

of the Lord are ever open to the place that makes confession of his dominion in all the earth.

Eugene Merrill: Solomon's spiritual devotion, evidenced by the many sacrifices he gave at the dedication of the temple (7:5), was typical of his religious commitment, in the view of the chronicler. True, **2 Chronicles** does not mention Solomon's introduction of pagan shrines and worship, a point stressed in **1 Kings 11:1-13**. But the chronicler, though he surely knew those things, did narrate what must have been Solomon's general practice of fulfilling Mosaic sacrificial requirements (**2 Chron. 8:12-13**). Solomon also maintained the priestly and Levitical divisions established by his father (vv. 14-15). Last but not least, Solomon had begun and had completed the temple, his highest religious achievement.

Andrew Reynolds: The Greatness of Solomon (8-9)

1. Political (**8:1-11**) -- Building cities
2. Religious (**8:12-16**) -- Sacrifices -- Temple personnel
3. Economic (**8:17-9:31**) -- Queen of Sheba

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 8:17 - 9:31

TITLE: SOLOMON'S WEALTH, WISDOM AND INTERNATIONAL FAME

BIG IDEA:

THE UNIQUENESS AND SUPREMACY OF SOLOMON'S BLESSED RULE WERE MARKED BY ABUNDANT WEALTH, WISDOM AND FAME

INTRODUCTION:

August Konkel: Two of Solomon's international contacts are described in great detail: Hiram to the north and the queen of Sheba to the south. Hiram had a treaty with Solomon that provided for long-term economic and political security. The Chronicler shows the extent of Solomon's empire by discussing his activities in the most northern and southern borders.

Andrew Hill: This entire chapter (**ch. 9**) balances the opening chapter (**ch. 1**) in that God has honored Solomon's obedience in giving the wealth accumulated by David to the building of the temple by restoring wealth to the monarchy through trade and gifts from other nations.

The story also illustrates the **key themes** of the larger literary unit (**chs. 1–9**), namely, Solomon's **wisdom, wealth, and fame**—all gifts from God. For example, Solomon petitioned God for wisdom and was blessed with promises of wealth and fame as well (**1:11–12**). As a result of her visit with King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba testifies of Solomon's unsurpassed wisdom (**9:5**) and contributes to Solomon's wealth with lavish gifts of gold, spices, and gemstones (**9:9**). Beyond this, the queen bears witness to the fact that Solomon's wisdom and wealth are the result of God's blessing on the king and his love for the nation of Israel (**9:8**).

Martin Selman: This section concludes the record of Solomon's achievements (**chs 8-9**) by concentrating on Solomon's international relationships, in contrast to the Israelite setting of the previous one. Two striking examples of Solomon's dealings with foreign rulers, one from the north and the other from the south, introduce a more general account of Solomon's reputation among the *kings of the earth* (cf. v. **23**).

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler's narrating of the reigns of David and Solomon has highlighted the **importance of the temple and its worship** as the foundation for God's people to enjoy security and prosperity. While the Kings account portrays some of the ambiguities of Solomon's reign, including his material prosperity (in keeping with an overall narrative that addresses reasons for the exile and the way forward), Chronicles provides a vision of what God intends for his people when they follow him wholeheartedly. It illustrates God's desire to bless, with lasting blessing inseparable from loyal worship. It foreshadows the words of Christ, who, after summarizing what *"the Gentiles ["nations"] seek"*—matters of food, drink, and clothing (and all that is

required to provide these)—proclaims, “*Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*” (**Matt. 6:31–33**; cf. **Luke 12:29–31**). Some believers may experience foretaste of material blessings in this present life (although NT passages more often warn of opposition and persecution), but the vision of the new creation is one of luxurious plenty, a place “*in which righteousness dwells*” (**Revelation 21–22**; **2 Pet. 3:13**).

I. (8:17-18) WEALTH OF SOLOMON FROM MARITIME TRADING

“Then Solomon went to Ezion-geber and to Eloth on the seashore in the land of Edom. 18 And Hiram by his servants sent him ships and servants who knew the sea; and they went with Solomon's servants to Ophir, and took from there four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to King Solomon.”

Albert Barnes: *Skillful sailors.* Solomon probably bore the expenses and his friend, the Tyrian king, furnished him with expert sailors; for the Jews, at no period of their history, had any skill in maritime affairs, their navigation being confined to the lakes of their own country, from which they could never acquire any nautical skill. The Tyrians, on the contrary, lived on and in the sea.

Andrew Hill: The Phoenicians were well known in the ancient world for their shipbuilding technology and seamanship, so Solomon’s alliance with Hiram of Tyre for the purpose of maritime trade is a natural one (cf. **Isa. 23:1–4**; **Ezek. 27:4, 8–9**). These joint Israelite-Phoenician maritime expeditions are three-year trading junkets; in addition to the gold, algumwood (ebony?), gemstones, silver, ivory, and exotic animals are among the goods returned to port at Ezion Geber (cf. **2 Chron. 9:10, 21**). It is unclear what Solomon’s merchants trade for the gold and other products, but cedar timber from Phoenicia was always in demand for royal building projects, and the Israelites probably traded surplus grain, olive oil, and other foodstuffs (since famine and crop failure has always been a part of the lifecycle on the fringes of the Mediterranean basin).

J.A. Thompson: Solomon and Hiram engaged in a joint maritime venture. Hiram provided ships and personnel although Solomon was the initiator of the venture. Even though Solomon had mastery over the land routes to the north, he apparently was able also to tap into the trade with Africa. The ships referred to in v. **18** sailed to Ophir and brought back four hundred and fifty talents of gold for Solomon's use. The **location of Ophir** is a subject of debate. It has been identified variously with India (**Josephus**, Ant. 8.164), Punt (Somaliland on the coast of Africa), and West or South Arabia. According to **9:21** and **1 Kgs 10:22**, the voyages took three years.

II. (9:1-12) RECOGNITION OF SOLOMON’S WISDOM BY THE VISITING QUEEN OF SHEBA

Raymond Dillard: The visit of the queen of Sheba is described as a **wisdom encounter** and emphasizes the admiration of a gentile ruler for the **wealth** and **wisdom** of Solomon. While a firsthand observation of Solomon's wisdom might have been worth the arduous and hazardous journey across 1,400 miles of desert from ancient Saba (roughly modern Yemen), commercial interests were probably the more basic motivation. The economy of ancient Saba was built on trade in frankincense and myrrh. Access to sea trade through Tyre (**Ezek 27:22–23**) to the Mediterranean world required passage through Solomon's monopoly on the overland routes; negotiations with him concerning the trade in these aromatic resins would have been worthy of the queen's attention. Solomon's own naval operations to the south, references to which bracket the narrative of the queen's visit (**8:17–18; 9:10–11**), may have prompted her trip; the joint maritime ventures of Solomon and Hiram may have been cutting into the queen's overland routes.

J.A. Thompson: The Chronicler probably wished to make the general point that as Solomon readily gave his resources to build the temple, so now he was rewarded abundantly with God's gifts to him as well as the esteem of the nations. Also just as David prospered because he established correct religious priorities, causing the nation Israel to prosper, so under Solomon with his building of the temple the whole nation prospered. By contrast Saul brought disaster on Israel because of his own carelessness in religious matters.

A. (:1-4) Checking Solomon Out

1. (:1) Purpose of Her Visit

a. Responding to Solomon's International Fame

“Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with difficult questions.”

Frederick Mabie: The visit and subsequent declarations of the Queen of Sheba showcase God's blessing on David's son, most notably in the areas of wisdom and wealth. The location of Sheba is identified with ancient Saba, a trading depot located in the vicinity of modern Yemen in the south of the Arabian peninsula, some 1,400 to 1,500 miles from Jerusalem. Sheba was famous for its wares, spice caravans, and trading skill. In addition, Sheba was noted in extrabiblical sources as having female rulers, as reflected here. The southern provinces of Arabia were noted for species of trees and shrubs whose aromatic resin was used to produce a number of spices, gums, and balms.

b. Initiating Commercial Relationship

“She had a very large retinue, with camels carrying spices, and a large amount of gold and precious stones;”

Andrew Hill: These aromatic resins (whether in the form of powder, solid sticks, or oil) were prized possessions and enjoyed wide use in the biblical world in cosmetics, embalming, religious offerings, and pharmacopeia. **Frankincense** was an ingredient in the mixture of spices burned on the altar of incense in worship (**Ex. 30:34**); it

accompanied the grain offerings (**Lev. 2:1–2, 15–16**) and was placed with the loaves on the table of the Presence as well (**Lev. 24:7**). **Myrrh** was an essential ingredient in the sacred anointing oil used to sanctify objects and persons in Hebrew worship (**Ex. 30:23**). The pleasant odor, high demand, and restricted sources of these perfumes made them expensive commodities in the ancient times. Myrrh was also used in burial (cf. **Mark 16:1; John 19:39**). The value of these ointments, often classified with gemstones and gold, made them appropriate gifts for royalty—including the infant Jesus (**Matt. 2:11**).

c. Examining Solomon’s Wisdom

*“and when she came to Solomon,
she spoke with him about all that was on her heart.”*

2. (:2) Pressing Solomon for Wise Answers

*“And Solomon answered all her questions;
nothing was hidden from Solomon which he did not explain to her.”*

3. (:3-4) Perceiving Uniqueness and Supremacy of Solomon’s Rule

*“And when the queen of Sheba had seen
the wisdom of Solomon,
the house which he had built,
& the food at his table,
the seating of his servants,
the attendance of his ministers and their attire,
his cupbearers and their attire,
and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD,
she was breathless.”*

B. (:5-9) Certifying Solomon’s Divine Blessing (cf. Deut. 4:6)

1. (:5-6) Seeing is Believing

“Then she said to the king, ‘It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 6 Nevertheless I did not believe their reports until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me. You surpass the report that I heard.’”

2. (:7-8) Blessing is Evident

“How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually and hear your wisdom.

Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you, setting you on His throne as king for the LORD your God; because your God loved Israel establishing them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness.”

Martin Selman: God had promised on that occasion to give Solomon not only the wisdom he asked for (1:11-12a) but wealth and fame for which he had not asked (1:12b). 2 Chronicles 9 shows that that promise was kept most faithfully. God himself is twice acknowledged as the source of Solomon's gifts, on both occasions through the impartial testimony of foreigners (vv. 8, 23). Though Solomon was obedient to God over the building of the temple praise is really due to God for his faithfulness and love (v. 8).

All three of God's gifts are dealt with in some detail, and an emphasis on God's generosity is repeatedly evident. Solomon's wisdom is recognized and tested by the Queen of Sheba (vv. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8) and sought by many rulers (vv. 22, 23). The king was also far more generously endowed with this gift than the queen anticipated: *you have far exceeded the report I heard* (v. 6). The gift of wealth is not only acknowledged, but increased by Hiram of Tyre (8:18; 9:10-11), the Queen of Sheba (vv. 3-4, 9, 12), and by many merchants and kings (vv. 13-28). The third gift of "honour" (v. 12), though not so frequently recognized, is equally prominent. The *report* of Solomon's fame (vv. 1, 5) is international in scope (especially vv. 22-24), and leads to expressions of Solomon's supremacy and uniqueness. He shows his supremacy in answering all the queen's questions (vv. 1-2), in giving her more than she had brought to him (v. 12), and in exercising sovereignty over many rulers (v. 26). His uniqueness is underlined in a series of phrases such as, *Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom* (v. 19; cf. vv. 9, 11). This incomparability had also been promised by God (2 Chr. 1:12; cf. 1 Chr. 29:25), and confirms that even Solomon's glory (cf. Matt. 6:29) was dependent on and far out-weighted by God's own glory (cf. 2 Chr. 7:1-3).

3. (:9) Gifts are Exceptional

"Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, and a very great amount of spices and precious stones; there had never been spice like that which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon."

C. (:10-11) Crafting Special Accessories to Enhance the Temple and Equip the Singers

"And the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon who brought gold from Ophir, also brought algum trees and precious stones. 11 And from the algum the king made steps for the house of the LORD and for the king's palace, and lyres and harps for the singers; and none like that was seen before in the land of Judah."

D. (:12) Completing the Queen's Visit with Generous Reciprocal Gifts

"And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire which she requested besides a return for what she had brought to the king. Then she turned and went to her own land with her servants."

Iain Duguid: Solomon's reciprocal giving of gifts (as would be expected in international relationships) concludes the account of the queen's visit. The wording gives no details beyond the fact that he "gave [her] all that she desired" (cf. the earlier similarly general

“answered all her questions”; **2 Chron. 9:2**). It is a much later tradition that speaks of a union resulting in the birth of Menelik I, the founder of the Ethiopian dynasty that persisted with some gaps into the twentieth century as the “house of Solomon.”

III. (9:13-28) SUMMARY OF SOLOMON’S EXCELLENCIES – HIS WEALTH, WISDOM AND INTERNATIONAL FAME

Iain Duguid: Solomon’s wealth is prodigious. “Gold” is mentioned 18 times (cf. 17 times in **chapters 2–5** for the temple), and other language is superlative: “nothing like it [the throne] was ever made for any kingdom” (**9:19**); “silver was not considered as anything” (**vv. 20, 27**); and “King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom” (**v. 22**; cf. **vv. 9b, 11b**). Hezekiah is the only other king for whom wealth details are given (**32:27–30**); again the temple is associated with wealth, as in Chronicles Hezekiah plays a major role in temple worship after the fall of the northern kingdom. The Chronicler likewise specifies David’s successful acquisitions that he contributed to temple construction and vessels (**1 Chron. 22:3–4, 14–16; 29:2–5**). The Chronicler associates prosperity with obedience concerning the ark and temple.

A. (:13-21) Solomon’s Splendor

1. (:13-16) Gold Ceremonial Weapons

“Now the weight of gold which came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, 14 besides that which the traders and merchants brought; and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon. 15 And King Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold, using 600 shekels of beaten gold on each large shield. 16 And he made 300 shields of beaten gold, using three hundred shekels of gold on each shield, and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.”

Frederick Mabie: These opulent ceremonial weapons were not intended for battle but instead provided tangible proof of a kingdom’s wealth and prestige. Numerous gold ceremonial weapons have been uncovered in archaeological digs, particularly in the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh King Tutankhamun.

2. (:17-21) Gaudy Display of Riches

a. (:17-19) Fancy Throne and Footstool

“Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with pure gold. 18 And there were six steps to the throne and a footstool in gold attached to the throne, and arms on each side of the seat, and two lions standing beside the arms. 19 And twelve lions were standing there on the six steps on the one side and on the other; nothing like it was made for any other kingdom.”

Andrew Hill: The **royal throne** is made of wood, inset with ivory plaques and overlaid with gold (**9:17**). Perhaps the twelve tribes of Israel are represented in the twelve lions

that flank the six steps on either side leading up to the throne platform (9:19). The lion is a universal symbol of kingship in the ancient world and may have been the symbol for the Davidic line of Israelite kingship, given David's reputation as a shepherd who rescued his sheep from the paws of the lion (cf. 1 Sam. 17:34–37).

b. (:20) Gold Drinking Vessels

“And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; silver was not considered valuable in the days of Solomon.”

c. (:21) Expensive Imported Goods via Maritime Commerce

“For the king had ships which went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram; once every three years the ships of Tarshish came bringing gold and silver, ivory and apes and peacocks.”

B. (:22-28) Solomon's Wisdom and Wealth

Andrew Hill: By way of literary structure, 9:22–28 completes the envelope construction introduced in 1:14–17. The two texts recite the symbols of Solomon's great wealth (silver and gold, cedar lumber, and horses and chariots), and in so doing frame the entire literary unit (chs. 1–9). The Chronicler reminds us, however, that these dividends of Solomon's riches result from the investment of his wisdom and wealth with building Yahweh's temple.

1. (:22-24) International Fame

a. (:22) Reputation of Solomon Regarding Wisdom and Wealth

“So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.”

b. (:23) Influence of Solomon

“And all the kings of the earth were seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.”

Frederick Mabie: The description of Solomon's wisdom noted in 1 Kings 4:32-33 is similar to the areas of knowledge and expertise gained by those in the intelligentsia of ancient biblical cultures, such as scribes, merchants, and royalty. As with that of his Egyptian and Mesopotamian counterparts, Solomon's wisdom involved understanding the world in areas such as botany, zoology, music, law, diplomacy, flora, fauna, literature, and other elements of the cultured life. In addition to such areas of knowledge, wisdom for a king had particular functionality in the important areas of temple building and governing. With respect to governing, note that Solomon's request for wisdom is connected with his ability to judge (govern) God's people and facilitate an ordered society.

c. (:24) Tribute Gifted to Solomon

“And they brought every man his gift, articles of silver and gold,

garments, weapons, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year.”

2. (:25-28) Summary of Solomon’s Expansive Kingdom

a. (:25) Multitude of Horse Stables and Horsemen

“Now Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots and 12,000 horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.”

b. (:26) Widespread Geographic Dominion

“And he was the ruler over all the kings from the Euphrates River even to the land of the Philistines, and as far as the border of Egypt.”

Frederick Mabie: This summary of Solomon’s royal revenue (excluding profits made from trade and other income per **v.14**) is impressive and reflects the economic clout ancient Israel was able to develop by exerting hegemony over neighboring countries and regions. This regional hegemony enabled Israel to control numerous trade routes and leverage Israel’s geographical position as a “land bridge” linking the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. These trade routes include those in the northern reaches of Syria (gateway to Mesopotamia), the Negev (gateway to trade with the Arabian states and access to maritime trade from Ezion Geber), the region of Transjordan (King’s Highway; gateway to Damascus) and the Coastal Highway (also known as the Great Trunk Route and the Via Maris; gateway to Egypt in the south and Phoenicia to the north).

Thomas Constable: **Verse 26** has led some Bible students to conclude that God's promise of land for Abrahams descendants was completely fulfilled in Solomon's day (cf. **Gen. 15:18**). However, this verse, and **1 Kings 4:21**, only say that Solomon ruled over all the kings who inhabited the territory between the Euphrates River and the border of Egypt. The Israelites did not occupy all of this territory. The complete fulfillment of God's promise of land for the Israelites has not yet been fulfilled.

c. (:27) Unprecedented Prosperity

“And the king made silver as common as stones in Jerusalem, and he made cedars as plentiful as sycamore trees that are in the lowland.”

d. (:28) Importing of Horses

“And they were bringing horses for Solomon from Egypt and from all countries.”

(:29-31) EPILOGUE – CONCLUSION OF SOLOMON’S IDEALIZED REIGN

Frederick Mabie: This is the common literary formula for summarizing royal reigns in Kings and Chronicles (see that of David in **1Ch 29:26-30**). These royal summaries provide basic regnal information, including the length of reign, name of successor, place of burial, and a reference to the source of the information and/or a reference to a source where more information about this king’s reign can be gleaned. Oftentimes, the source is attributed to a specific prophet as here (“the records of Nathan the prophet”), thus implying a close link between the prophetic office and regnal annotations in ancient Israel. Moreover, these summaries set up the narrative(s) to follow by providing royal succession information.

A. (:29) Recorded Deeds

“Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, from first to last, are they not written in the records of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat?”

B. (:30) Generational Reign over United Kingdom

“And Solomon reigned forty years in Jerusalem over all Israel.”

J.A. Thompson: Solomon reigned over “*all Israel*” for forty years. That was the **ideal** for the nation. After Solomon's death the ideal was shattered. For the Chronicler the past ideal was a vision for the future.

David Guzik: Many commentators believe that Solomon began his reign when he was about 20 years old. This means that Solomon did not live a particularly long life and the promise made in **1 Kings 3:14** was not fulfilled for Solomon, because of his disobedience.

C. (:31) Death, Burial and Succession

“And Solomon slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of his father David; and his son Rehoboam reigned in his place.”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why does the Chronicler gloss over the obvious weaknesses and sins of Solomon in his idealized description of his kingdom success?
- 2) How does this passage reinforce the faithfulness of God to His promises?
- 3) Why was it so significant that other nations see the abundant prosperity of Solomon’s kingdom?

4) How does the NT reference this account of the visit of the Queen of Sheba and apply lessons to us today?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

August Konkell: The Chronicler wanted to highlight the glory of Solomon's kingdom under God's grace in Israel. His goal was to present this era as the realization of an ideal in fulfillment of the promise to David. He has recast the narrative of Solomon as found in Kings to end with the splendor of Solomon's kingdom, a testimony to his divinely ordained wisdom and blessing. Three elements compromise Solomon's rule and result in disaster for his reign:

- (1) the importation of Egyptian horses and chariots,
- (2) intermarriage with Pharaoh's daughter (and other wives), and
- (3) the influence of Egyptian rule.

The Chronicler does take account of all three elements (**Jeon**: 241–69). The Chronicler mentions Pharaoh's daughter in **2 Chronicles 8:11** in the context of not compromising the sanctity of the temple and palace. The Chronicler's inclusion of this note is an indication that he and his readers are well aware of this compromise. The importation of horses and chariots is described in **2 Chronicles 1:16–17** as part of the description of Solomon's economic activities. Two important distinctions must be observed in the Chronicler's approach. The first is that Solomon's engagement with Egypt is made prominent immediately in the introduction of his reign. The second is the disclosure that intermarriage with Pharaoh's daughter was a problem for Solomon. Both of these items negatively qualify his reign.

The Deuteronomistic History presents these elements as affecting Solomon at the end of his reign [Deuteronomistic History, p. 465]. This must be regarded as a schematic presentation. The objective of the prior history was to show how covenant failure resulted in the disasters that followed. Events are construed so that the failure of the covenant is made evident to the reader. The reality is that Solomon's rule was **compromised from the beginning**. Intermarriage with Pharaoh's daughter and provision of a separate residence for her is already indicated in **1 Kings 3:1–3**, but it is glossed as not being a problem. Solomon loved the Lord following in all the regulations of David his father. The negative notation in the early part of Solomon's reign is that he allowed the high places to flourish, a constant concern in the Deuteronomistic History. But the high places do not figure in the description of the demise of Solomon's rule. Solomon is in conflict from the invasion of foreign powers and revolt within his own reign, led by Jeroboam. In Kings, these elements are presented at the end of Solomon's reign, depicting his failure to keep the covenant.

The Chronicler does not present a contrasting view of Solomon so much as he **shapes the story to emphasize the divine blessing**. Both he and his readers are well aware of the compromises and failures in the rule of Solomon, which are included within the Chronicler's account. But they are included as a part of the description of Solomon's

achievements. The message would seem to be that God may bless in spite of these compromises, though it will become clear that there are consequences. But the Chronicler does show one aspect of the rule of Solomon that is not to be forgotten: **God is faithful to his word, and the blessing of David has its effect.**

Geoffrey Kirkland: What About the Tragic Sins in Solomon's Life? Why does 2 Chronicles Omit All of It?

You remember Solomon's many abominable & willful sins in **1 Kings 11** (& his own testimony in **Ecclesiastes!**). In **1 Kings 11**...

- Solomon's polygamous & pagan & sinful marriages led him to idolatry (**vv1-6**)
- the idolatry was manifested in the building of pagan high places for wives/their gods! (**vv7-8**)
- this drew forth Yahweh's threat of judgment and loss of the united kingdom/monarchy (**vv9-13**)
- Yahweh raised up enemies against Solomon in his last years (external/internal!) (**vv14-25**)
- the last of these was Solomon's own appointed official, Jeroboam, whom Solomon tried in vain to assassinate (**vv26-40**)
- Why does the Chronicler omit this?

THE GOAL is not to present a full-fledged biography and every detail of the life of Solomon. BUT the Chronicler wants to promote and glorify the **dynasty of David** to show the **faithfulness of God**.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown: Solomon undoubtedly carried the Hebrew kingdom to its highest pitch of worldly glory, and his completion of the grand work, the centralizing of the national worship at Jerusalem where the natives went up three times a year, has given his name a prominent place in the history of the ancient church. But his reign had a disastrous influence upon the "special people," and the example of his deplorable idolatries, the connections he formed with foreign princes, the commercial speculations he entered into, and the luxuries introduced into the land seem in a great measure to have altered and deteriorated the Jewish character.

Andrew Hill: In the last chapter we learned that one of the Chronicler's concerns was to demonstrate the **continuity** between the reigns of King David and King Solomon. His purpose was not to celebrate human achievement in the building of the Jerusalem temple. Rather, he sought to glorify God by accenting both divine sovereignty and divine faithfulness in fulfilling promises made to David (cf. **1 Chron. 17:10-12**). This was an important reminder to a community that only a generation or two earlier had responded to Yahweh's prophets with skepticism and contempt (cf. **Mal. 1:1; 3:13-14**). Yet, the more cynical living in postexilic Jerusalem might be less than impressed with this rehearsal of united kingdom history—that was then. The more pertinent question for the Chronicler's audience may have been one along the lines of "**what about God's faithfulness to Israel—now?**"

For this reason, the Chronicler is keen to display the **theological continuity** between David and Solomon and his own time. It is one thing for God to prove himself faithful to the ancestors of a bygone era, but quite another for him to make good on “Davidic covenant” and “new covenant” promises that at best lay dormant in the rubble of prophetic rhetoric or at worst were rendered null and void by the Babylonian exile. Surely God appeared to David and Solomon. But the Chronicler’s challenge is to illustrate that **God’s faithfulness** spans the intervening five centuries from the “golden age” of Israel to his own “tarnished” era. Yet, in the second temple, God has accomplished that very feat!

The historical transition from the first temple to the second temple provides numerous theological touchstones for the Chronicler. Three specific examples will be examined: the idea of **sacred space**, the polarity of **divine immanence** and **divine transcendence**, and the ancient Near Eastern motif of **restoring order out of chaos by means of temple building**. We must not lose sight of the fact that the Chronicler is both a historian and a preacher. This means Chronicles is both report and sermon. There is virtue in retelling the history of Israelite kingship for the Chronicler primarily as a “historian” rather than a “preacher.” This permits him to accomplish his agenda as a “meddling preacher” much more subtly by simply describing selectively the “facts” about Israel’s past in his effort to instruct, exhort, and admonish postexilic Judah. Given the emphasis on “story” and narrative theology in postmodern thought, we do well to learn a lesson from the Chronicler with respect to effective pulpit communication in the twenty-first century.

Raymond Dillard: The concluding portions of the Solomon narrative in Kings and Chronicles are a study in **contrasts**. Where the one reports Solomon’s lack of wisdom shown in his apostasy with his gentile wives, the other ends with Solomon’s wisdom displayed before a gentile woman (**9:1–12**) and admired by the nations (**9:22–26**). Where the one reports the tokens of divine displeasure seen in the announcement of the division of the kingdom and in the disintegration of the empire through successful rebellions (**1 Kgs 11:9–40**), the other brings Solomon to his death in tranquility, enjoying the submission of his vassals, the honor of other nations, and ruling over his empire at its maximal extent (**9:22–26**). The compiler of Kings wrote a tract for exiles, answering to the “why” for the great exile and captivity, judgment to which even David and Solomon contributed; the Chronicler provided a description of the past in terms of his aspirations for the future.

Iain Duguid: Various literary features in Chronicles, some found also in Kings, serve to associate blessings of national prosperity with temple building and worship:

- (1) Hiram’s involvement with Solomon frames the temple narrative, aiding temple building (**ch. 2**) and enhancing prosperity through trade (**8:17–18; 9:10–11, 21**).
- (2) The weaving together of the queen of Sheba’s visit, details of trading assisted by Hiram, and wealth and recognition brought by others (**9:13–20, 22–24**) provides a

multifaceted picture of how God blessed Solomon, this time subsequent to temple building.

(3) Another element linking temple and prosperity is how the queen's words of praise (9:8) and those earlier from Hiram (2:11–12; not in Kings) both speak of the Lord's "love" for "his people/Israel." These are the only instances in Chronicles of the Hebrew term *'ahab* ("love") with God as subject (apart from description of Abraham as "your friend" [*'ohabka*]; 20:7). For both rulers God's "love" is evident through his making Solomon king. Hiram saw the purpose as to build the temple; the queen points to establishing Israel forever.

(4) Following God's promise to Solomon (1:11–12), repeated details on "*chariots and horsemen/horses*" are both the first and the last evidence of securing the whole territory, so establishing the people in the land (1:14–17; 9:25–28). **Temple and national prosperity belong together.**

Mark Boda: The Chronicler interweaves Solomon's economic achievements and international fame, depicting both the centripetal and centrifugal force of these signs of success. That is, Solomon established contacts far beyond his own borders, and other nations began to take an interest in Israel in return. Solomon took the initiative to move beyond his borders (8:17–18; 9:10–11, 21) partnering with Hiram of Tyre to do business with other nations, bringing back precious metal (gold), wood (red sandalwood), stones (jewels), ivory, and exotic animals (apes, peacocks). . .

While Solomon moved out to the nations for trade, "*kings from every nation*" were coming to Solomon seeking wisdom (9:1–9, 12–14, 23–24), represented for the Chronicler by the Queen of Sheba and the kings of Arabia, depositing into the coffers of Israel precious metal (gold and silver), spices, stones (jewels), clothing, weapons, and animals (horses, mules). Sheba, traditional home of the Sabeans, was located in the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula. . .

The Chronicler granted the Queen of Sheba an elongated piece of dramatic narrative that draws considerable rhetorical weight (9:5–8). Her words focus not on the material wealth of the kingdom, but rather on the magnitude of Solomon's words and wisdom, noting in one breath that what seemed to be exaggerated reports of his wisdom had spread abroad, while in the next that these reports were clearly inadequate descriptions. She expressed the blessed state not only of those who served in his court but also of this nation over whom Solomon ruled and dispensed wise justice and righteousness. Her speech recognizes the divine source of Solomon's wisdom, blessing Yahweh for delighting in Solomon and setting him on the throne of a nation he had loved and established forever. Solomon's reign is inextricably linked to Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh. The appearance and speech of this foreign queen is a reminder of Israel's role among the nations. . .

The account highlights not only Solomon's interactions with those outside his borders but also his organization within his borders. Solomon built a strong military presence

throughout the land as well as around his royal city, Jerusalem (9:25, 28), and extended the borders of the land from the Euphrates River in the north to the land of the Philistines and the Egyptian border in the south (9:26). Solomon received resources from “*governors of the provinces*,” a sign of the efficient taxation within his kingdom. Furthermore, the account of the queen of Sheba shows that Solomon’s successes were to be traced to the advanced character of his royal court (9:4). . .

These descriptions showcase Solomon’s reign as one of unparalleled success, evidence of God’s blessing on this king who built the Temple and established its services.

David Guzik: Jesus used the queen of Sheba as an example of a seeker: *The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.* (Matthew 12:42) If the queen of Sheba sought Solomon and the splendor of his kingdom so diligently, *how much more* should people today seek Jesus and the glory of His Kingdom. She will certainly also rise up in judgment with this generation. . .

We also consider that Solomon gave an eloquent testimony to the vanity of riches as the preacher in the Book of **Ecclesiastes**. He powerfully showed that there was no ultimate satisfaction through materialism. We don’t have to be as rich as Solomon to learn the same lesson.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 10:1 – 11:4

TITLE: *DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM*

BIG IDEA:

FOOLISH INSISTENCE ON TYRANNICAL OPPRESSION CAUSES A DIVISION IN THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

INTRODUCTION:

Frederick Mabie: Chapters 10-36 of 2 Chronicles constitute the final major section of the Chronicler's work: the account of the kingdom of Judah following the division of the kingdom in the 930s B.C. This division created two political states, with Jeroboam as king of a new dynasty consisting of the northern tribes and Rehoboam as king of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. In subsequent biblical literature, the northern kingdom is typically called "Israel" whereas the southern kingdom is typically called "Judah," after the most prominent tribe. . .

The division of the Israelite kingdom also entailed a variety of social, religious, and economic repercussions. In the religious realm, Jeroboam established new religious shrines at Dan and Bethel (**1Ki 12:26-33; 2Ch 11:15**), while Jerusalem remained the religious capital of the southern kingdom. The golden calf shrines established by Jeroboam effectively nationalized covenantal unfaithfulness and pushed the northern tribes further from seeking God. Economically, both Israel and Judah were affected by a loss of tribute, trade revenue, and production in the aftermath of the division. These challenges were exacerbated by the frequent conflict between Israel and Judah, as noted at **12:15**: "*There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam*" (cf. **1Ki 14:30; 15:6, 16**).

Martin Selman: This chapter deals with the reasons for Israel's division after Solomon's death (cf. v. 19), setting the scene not only for the rest of Rehoboam's reign but for the rest of 2 Chronicles. The key phrase "*turn of events*" (v. 15; "*turn of affairs*," NRSV, RSV; "*to bring about*," GNB) translates a rare word in Hebrew which is to be interpreted alongside the related verb "*turn*" in **1 Chronicles 10:14** (cf. **12:23**). These two verses describe two great turning points, pivotal events which usher in new eras concerning the setting up and downfall of David's dynasty. The first era opens with the transfer of Saul's kingdom to David (**1 Ch. 10:14**) and results in the dynasty of David and Solomon (**1 Ch. 10 – 2 Ch. 9**). This incident introduces a much sadder story, beginning with the division of Solomon's kingdom and culminating in the collapse of Israel and its monarchy (**2 Ch. 10-36**).

Andrew Hill: The story of Rehoboam's foolish decision documents the shattering of the ideal of "*all Israel*" and concludes with the thought that the people of Israel now exist as a **house divided**. Sadly, this state of affairs will remain as such until both northern

and southern kingdoms are swallowed up by the ancient superpowers of Assyria and Babylonia respectively. . .

The historical story tends to demonstrate considerable literary sophistication, including the development of a **plot** (the continuation of the Davidic monarchy), **conflict** (the threat to the unity of Israel), characterization or **character development** (as seen in Rehoboam's interaction with the two groups of advisers), and even **subplots** (the intervention by prophets of God, e.g., Ahijah [10:15] and Shemaiah [11:1-4]).

At the risk of oversimplifying a complex sociopolitical situation, a combination of interrelated factors make taxation an issue. The loss of revenue from satellite states that regained their autonomy during the latter years of Solomon's decline deplete the royal treasuries (**1 Kings 11:14-25**). The support of the multilayered bureaucracy of Solomon's administration suck vast amounts of resources from the general populace (**4:20-28**). Finally, all this is compounded by the extravagance and waste characteristic of Solomon's social and economic policies (**10:14-22**).

Warren Wiersbe: Rehoboam represented the **third generation** of the Davidic dynasty, and so often it's the third generation that starts to tear down what the previous generations have built up. The people of Israel served the Lord during Joshua's days and during the days of the elders he had trained, but when the third generation came along, they turned to idols, and the nation fell apart (**Judg. 2:7-10**). I've seen this same phenomenon in businesses and local churches.

Mark Boda: **Second Chronicles 10** shatters the idyllic picture the Chronicler has created in his depiction of the united kingdom to this point (**1 Chr 10 – 2 Chr 9**). This negative information represents a significant shift in tone, which will continue for the remainder of the work (**chs 10 – 36**). While the Chronicler's narrative has highlighted the glorious foundation of the dynasty by David and Solomon and the positive benefits of obedience to the Lord, the remaining account will supplement this by recounting both the positive benefits of obedience to Yahweh as well as the negative consequences of disobedience. The striking difference can be discerned in terms of both the narrative flow and the theological analysis of the accounts.

Adam Clarke:

- The people apply to Rehoboam to ease them of their burdens, **1-4**.
- Rejecting the advice of the aged counsellors, and following that of the young men, he gives them an ungracious answer, **5-14**.
- The people are discouraged, and ten tribes revolt, **15-17**.
- They stone Hadoram, who went to collect the tribute; and Rehoboam but barely escapes, **18, 19**.
- Rehoboam raises an army, purposing to reduce the ten tribes; but is prevented by Shemaiah the prophet, **1-4**.

I. (10:1-5) REASONABLE RELIEF FROM HARSH SERVICE SOUGHT – NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN JEROBOAM AND REHOBOAM

A. (:1) Coronation of Rehoboam at Shechem Amidst Underlying Tensions

*“Then Rehoboam went to Shechem,
for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king.”*

David Guzik: Rehoboam was the only son of Solomon that we know by name. Solomon had 1000 wives and concubines, yet we read of one son he had to bear up his name, and he was a fool. This demonstrates that sin is a bad way of building up a family. . .

Shechem was also the geographical center of the northern tribes. All in all, it showed that Rehoboam was in a position of weakness, having to meet the ten northern tribes on *their* territory, instead of demanding that representatives come to Jerusalem.

Raymond Dillard: Strategically located at the eastern mouth of the pass between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, with an ample water supply and fertile plain, Shechem was a military, political, and religious center for ancient Israel from the time of the patriarchs. Abraham and Jacob both worshiped there (**Gen 12:6–7; 33:18–20**). Jacob’s sons Simeon and Levi attacked the city after the rape of their sister Dinah (**Gen 34**). Joseph searched there for his brothers (**Gen 37:12–14**), and his bones were eventually interred there (**Josh 24:26; Acts 7:16**). Shechem was a site of covenant renewal under Joshua (**Josh 24**), and it was one of the designated cities of refuge (**Josh 21:21**). The abortive kingdom of Abimelech failed there (**Judg 9**). The fate of the city during the invasions of the Assyrians and Babylonians is not mentioned; during the intertestamental period it became the religious center of the Samaritans (John 4). Rehoboam journeys to this ancient site of politics, worship, and covenanting; though no covenant is specifically mentioned, the procedure appears quite analogous to that followed with David (**2 Sam 3:6–21; 5:1–3; cf. 2 Chr 23:3**).

Iain Duguid: Rehoboam’s going to “*Shechem*” is a hint of **tensions**. David had been made king at Hebron (**1 Chron. 11:3**) and Solomon at Jerusalem (**1 Chron. 29:22**), but Shechem was an ancient center, associated with the ancestor Jacob/Israel (**Gen. 33:18–20; 35:10**) and the covenant renewal ceremony under Joshua (**Joshua 24**). Identity as “*Israel*” was deeper than allegiance to a Davidic king in Jerusalem.

B. (:2-5) Critical Demand Jeroboam Makes of Rehoboam to Resolve Tensions

1. (:2) Return of Jeroboam

*“And it came about when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it
(for he was in Egypt where he had fled from the presence of King
Solomon), that Jeroboam returned from Egypt.”*

2. (:3-4) Role of Jeroboam in Negotiating with Rehoboam

*“So they sent and summoned him. When Jeroboam and all Israel came,
they spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4 ‘Your father made our yoke hard;
now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke
which he put on us, and we will serve you.’”*

John Mayer: Because Jeroboam was a man of great note among the people—having been made a prince over them by Solomon in the past—the people sent for him as the most capable man to speak on their behalf to Rehoboam concerning their grievance. For he made it clear that he and the people would revolt if no redress of errors was promised, and that he would be set up as the king of the people. And it is to be assumed that the people had heard of the prophecy given to Jeroboam by Ahijah, who was of the same tribe. That is, the people were aware of God’s purpose in advancing Jeroboam, which is why the people sought his help above others. And that’s how Jeroboam came to be the spokesman for the people.

Raymond Dillard: The issues were heavy taxation and forced labor, and the delegates from the Northern tribes were negotiating reductions as a condition of recognizing Rehoboam’s sovereignty. . . Both Kings and Chronicles avow that forced labor was not imposed on the Israelites by Solomon (**2:17–18; 8:7–10; 1 Kgs 9:15, 20–22**), yet both record what appear to be instances of the practice. The hatred of the corvée (**10:4**) and the dispatch of Hadoram (**10:18**) both presume its application to Israelites. The practice continued under subsequent kings and was denounced (**1 Kgs 15:22 // 2 Chr 16:6; Jer 22:13–14**).

Andrew Hill: God had built the release of debt and servitude into the calendar through his law (the sabbatical and Jubilee years, cf. **Lev. 25**). Curiously, however, the number of years decreed for the “Sabbath rest” of the land suggests that neither of these were ever practiced by the kings of Israel or Judah (cf. **2 Chron. 36:21**; i.e., the seventy years of Hebrew exile from the land of covenant promise implies that sabbatical year had not been kept for nearly five centuries—coinciding roughly with the beginning of the monarchy in Israel).

Peter Wallace: Notice that Jeroboam is placed at the head of the petitioners in **verse 3** and again in **verse 12**. This is a very **defiant** move on the part of the people. They have called the one person whom Rehoboam most hates as their spokesman. And they are saying to the crown prince, “*Lighten our yoke or else we will not serve you.*” This is plainly not a group of people who believe in the Divine Right of Kings. You may be the son of David, but remember that we didn’t always follow David! What makes you think that we will follow you! Give us the wrong answer – and we’ll follow Jeroboam!

3. (:5) Cooling Off Period to Allow for Deliberation

*“And he said to them, ‘Return to me again in three days.’
So the people departed.”*

Andrew Hill: The northern tribes demand some modification of the king’s forced labor requirements and a reduction in taxes as a condition for fealty to the Davidic monarchy. The conditional nature of the proposal from the tribal representatives indicates they are looking for more than words—they seek a diplomatic solution resulting in a pact. The three-day delay (**10:5**) buys time for Rehoboam to consider his options and provides a “cooling off” period for the party bringing the grievance.

II. (10:6-11) CONTRASTING COUNSEL – WISE ELDERS VS. FOOLISH CONTEMPORARIES

A. (:6-7) **Wise Counsel of the Elders**

1. (:6) The Value of Experience

“Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, ‘How do you counsel me to answer this people?’”

J.A. Thompson: The elders were important in Israel's earlier patriarchal and tribal society (2 Sam 3:17; 5:3; 17:4, 15; 1 Kgs 20:7–8; 1 Chr 11:3). It would have been a wise and gracious decision by Rehoboam to follow the elders' advice.

John Schultz: The first thing that strikes us in this section is the existence of a generational gap that resembles a modern day mentality in which younger people hold the older generation as unreliable and blame them for all the evils in the world. The famous expression “Don’t trust anyone over thirty!” is, evidently, an age-old phenomenon.

2. (:7) The Virtue of Kindness

“And they spoke to him, saying, ‘If you will be kind to this people and please them and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.’”

John Mayer: A Gentle Response Turns Away Wrath.

The book of Proverbs says: “A fool gives vent to his spirit.” Yet in this case the people had already become exasperated with the new king. But it certainly would have aided Rehoboam to have been lenient and to have **replied gently** at this time. For this is a general principle among kings: By no means should they show rigor in the beginning of their reign. Rather they should seek to win the hearts of the subjects of their kingdom.

Peter Wallace: The old men understood the situation. They knew that if Rehoboam humbles himself, the people will follow him. But the young men think that humility is a sign of weakness. They confuse servant leadership with wimpiness. Humility is not wimpiness! It takes courage and strength to be humble.

B. (:8-11) **Foolish Counsel of Rehoboam’s Contemporaries**

1. (:8) Danger of Advice-Shopping

“But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him.”

Raymond Dillard: Rehoboam was forty-one at the time of his accession (12:13; 1 Kgs 14:21); neither he nor those who had grown up with him were “striplings,” though they were short of the status and wisdom of the elders.

J.A. Thompson: They may have been royal princes, half-brothers of Rehoboam, or civil servants. They had grown up with him and were contemporaries.

David Guzik: This is a common phenomenon today – what some call “**advice shopping**.” The idea is that you keep asking different people for advice until you find someone who will tell you what you want to hear. This is an unwise and ungodly way to get counsel. It is better to have a few trusted counselors you will listen to – even when they tell you what you don’t want to hear.

2. (:9) Deceitfulness of Reinforcing Your Own Foolish Preferences

“So he said to them, ‘What counsel do you give that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?’”

3. (:10-11) Despotism of Abuse of Power

“And the young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the people who spoke to you, saying, Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter for us. Thus you shall say to them, My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins! 11 Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.’”

Raymond Dillard: It is at least possible that “*my little thing*,” is euphemistic for the penis, a sense which would add rash vulgarity to the charge of foolishness against the young men.

III. (10:12-15) DIVINE DISCIPLINE IN DIVIDING THE KINGDOM

A. (:12) Regathering the People

“So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as the king had directed, saying, ‘Return to me on the third day.’”

B. (:13-14) Rendering the Verdict

“And the king answered them harshly, and King Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the elders. 14 And he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, ‘My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.’”

Andrew Hill: Nothing in **chapter 10** suggests that he is especially malicious or cruel—only foolish. Whether out of fear that he may appear weak or for the sake of pragmatism, given the need to keep the machinery of the bureaucracy humming, he rejects the good advice of the elders and follows the bad advice (**10:14**). Thus, he answers his northern kinsmen harshly (**10:13**). The yoke, a symbol of servitude, will be made heavier (**10:14a**); the scourge or whip, a goad for lazy animals and a symbol of punishment for stubbornness and rebellion, will inflict even greater pain (**10:14b**). The representatives of the northern tribes need to hear no more.

C. (:15) Recognizing God’s Sovereign Control over Prophetic Discipline

“So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of events from God that the LORD might establish His word, which He spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.”

Andrew Hill: A key theological interpretation of developments resulting in the “meltdown” of the united monarchy is found in the Kings’ parallel and is repeated by the Chronicler. The biblical historians note that this “*turn of events was from God*” (10:15a; cf. 1 Kings 12:15). The Chronicler connects his commentary to Ahijah’s prophecy predicting the split of Solomon’s kingdom as punishment for his sin of idolatry—thus assuming his audience’s knowledge of the story (2 Chron. 10:15b; cf. 1 Kings 11:29–40). This approach fits a pattern in Chronicles that associates crucial moments in Israel’s history with what God has said through his prophets in an effort to demonstrate his absolute sovereignty as the Lord of history (cf. 1 Chron. 11:2; 17:13–15; 2 Chron. 36:22–23).

In light of theological review provided by the biblical historian, we can rightly conclude that the northern tribes are not reprehensible in their role in splitting the united monarchy. Rather, they become odious to God and the biblical historians because of their subsequent sin—idol worship. In view of Ahijah’s prophecy to Jeroboam, the division of Solomon’s kingdom may be inevitable, but it is certainly not irreversible—the rival kingdom is designed to punish the house of David only temporarily (cf. 1 Kings 11:39).

Spurgeon: Notice also, dear friends, that God is in events which are produced by the sin and the stupidity of men. This breaking up of the kingdom of Solomon into two parts was the result of Solomon’s sin and Rehoboam’s folly; yet God was in it: “*This thing is from me, saith the Lord.*” God had nothing to do with the sin or the folly, but in some way which we can never explain, in a mysterious way in which we are to believe without hesitation, God was in it all.

IV. (10:16-19) REBELLIOUS REJECTION OF REHOBOAM’S LEADERSHIP

Iain Duguid: The people’s response expressed rejection of the whole house of David: each was to worry about his own family (cf. 1 Sam. 20:1; contrast 1 Chron. 12:18). Rehoboam made an attempt to show his strength in sending the “*taskmaster*” but had to escape himself to Jerusalem in fear. The lasting effect of the whole interaction was that the northern kingdom continued “*in rebellion against the house of David.*”

A. (:16) Fracturing of the Unified Kingdom

“And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them the people answered the king, saying, ‘What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to your tents, O Israel; Now look after your own house, David.’ So all Israel departed to their tents.”

Andrew Hill: The clause “*so all the Israelites went home*” signifies both the rejection of Rehoboam in the act of dismissal and also the finality of the decision—the negotiations are over (**10:16d**). The identification of both the northern and the southern tribes as “*Israelites*” is significant (**10:16–17**). They are all still the “*one people*” of God despite the rift between the “*house of David*” and the “*house of Israel*” (i.e., the northern tribes). This fact is important to the Chronicler’s message of hope for God’s restoration of postexilic Judah because it is dependent on the unity of all the Israelites living in the land.

J.A. Thompson: The **rejection formula** is a poetic statement, the antithesis of the acceptance formula declared by “*all Israel*” when they accepted David as king. Israel’s response to David in **1 Chr 12:19** was:

*We are yours, O David!
We are with you, O son of Jesse!*

The rejection formula used by the northern tribes in this verse is:

*What share do we have in David,
What part in Jesse’s Son?*

B. (:17) Followers of Rehoboam Limited to Southern Tribes (Judah)

*“But as for the sons of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah,
Rehoboam reigned over them.”*

C. (:18) Futile Last Ditch Effort to Maintain Control

*“Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was over the forced labor,
and the sons of Israel stoned him to death.
And King Rehoboam made haste to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem.”*

Martin Selman: Rehoboam makes one pathetic effort to restore unity, perfectly illustrating the poverty of his policy. Knowing that the people’s tolerance had been exhausted by their experience of the forced labor system, it seems inconceivable that the sending of “Hadoram” (also known as Adoram, **1 Ki. 12:18**; cf. JB; Adoniram, **1 Ki. 4:6; 5:14**; cf. NIV, GNB) one of Jeroboam successors, could end in anything but disaster. In the end, Rehoboam himself only just managed to escape, in ironic contrast to Jeroboam’s flight from Solomon (v. 2).

D. (:19) Final Summary of Ongoing Division

“So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.”

V. (11:1-4) CIVIL WAR AVERTED BY REHOBOAM’S SUBMISSION TO THE WORD OF THE LORD

Pulpit Commentary: The first four verses of this chapter would have been better placed as the conclusion of the previous chapter. They correspond with . . . **1 Kings 12:21-24**; and they tell how Rehoboam was restrained from making bad worse, in a hopeless attempt to recover the seceding ten tribes, by war that would have been as bloody as foredoomed to failure.

A. (:1) Revengeful Reaction of Rehoboam

“Now when Rehoboam had come to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 chosen men who were warriors, to fight against Israel to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.”

B. (:2-4a) Prophetic Restraint Based on Divine Discipline

“But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 3 ‘Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 4 Thus says the LORD, You shall not go up or fight against your relatives; return every man to his house, for this thing is from Me.’”

Andrew Hill: This time Rehoboam heeds the advice offered, without asking for a “second opinion.” It is unclear what motivates his receptivity to the prophetic message—whether the ominous threat of Egyptian invasion prompting his fortification of strategic cities in Judah (**11:5**), the pang of conscience in the admonition not to wage war against “brothers” (**11:4**; cf. **28:11**), or, most likely, the realization that the split of the united monarchy is the Lord’s “doing” (**11:4**; cf. **10:15**). The kingdom is God’s to grant to whom he wills, not Rehoboam’s to regain by force. Clearly God’s will for the divided kingdom is peace because the northern tribes are as capable of repentance as the southern tribes are of apostasy.

Rehoboam’s impetuous response to muster troops and wage war to counter Jeroboam’s coup calls to mind nuggets of Solomonic wisdom. Earlier Rehoboam sought advice but listened to foolish counsel (**10:5–11**). Here Rehoboam seeks no advice but plans his own course—only to have the Lord “*determine his steps*” (**Prov. 16:9**). But in heeding Shemaiah’s word, Rehoboam begins to act wisely by listening to advice and accepting instruction (**Prov. 12:15; 19:20**).

C. (:4b) Peaceful Submission to the Word of the Lord

“So they listened to the words of the LORD and returned from going against Jeroboam.”

Spurgeon: Here is one Shemaiah, – some of you never heard of him before, perhaps you will never hear of him again; he appears once in this history, and then he vanishes; he comes, and he goes, – only fancy this one man constraining to peace a hundred and eighty thousand chosen men, warriors ready to fight against the house of Israel, by giving to them in very plain, unpolished words, the simple command of God. . . . Why have we not such power? Peradventure, brethren, we do not always speak in the name

of the Lord, or speak God's Word as God's Word. If we are simply tellers out of our own thoughts, why should men mind us?

Iain Duguid: Rulers commonly seek to exercise control through military might, and this was the path adopted by Rehoboam, seeking to put into action his boastful words (10:14). The people may have stoned his taskmaster to death (10:18), but a show of armed force would surely end the rebellion, or so Rehoboam thought. This was not, however, to be God's way: they were not to fight against "your relatives" ("brothers" and wider family members; common in Deuteronomy for fellow Israelites). Such kinship is important for the Chronicler and his major concern for "all Israel"; it appears again as the northern kingdom is nearing its end, then reminding the people of the north that the people of Judah are "their/your relatives" (28:8, 11). The political division may be "from [God]," but this does not mean family division; there is opportunity for any to come willingly to Jerusalem (as in 11:13–14, 15). Unexpectedly, given Rehoboam's behavior thus far, king and people "listened to the word of the Lord." Was this because the word was spoken by Shemaiah, recognized and respected as a "man of God"? He appears again in 12:5–8, and his "chronicles" are included in the official records (12:15).

The disastrous confrontation led to division, but the tension ended in hope as there was willingness to "listen" to God, accept the new situation as "of God," and move ahead. The people, whether in the north or in Judah and Benjamin, remained "all Israel."

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Is the Chronicler more favorable towards Jeroboam or Rehoboam in this account?
- 2) How powerful is the Word of the Lord communicate here via Shemaiah, the man of God?
- 3) How can we avoid the danger of evaluating counsel from the worldly perspective of personal preference and foolish impulsiveness?
- 4) Why does the Lord want to make it clear that this division ultimately falls under His initiative and divine sovereign control? (e.g. "this thing is from Me")

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

August Konkell: Under Solomon, Jeroboam had become a very capable leader. He was made supervisor over the compulsory state service, but conflict later forced him to flee to Egypt (1 Kings 11:40). Jeroboam was affirmed by the prophet Ahijah, who declared

him to be a true successor of David (v. 38). The promise of dynasty applied to Jeroboam as it had to David, but it was not promised in perpetuity. In Chronicles, Jeroboam appears as a leader of the revolting northern tribes without introduction. When the rebellion broke out, he returned from Egypt as a champion of relief from the hated levy. In response, Rehoboam dispatched Adoniram, the senior officer in charge of the hated corvée, to force the recalcitrant subjects back into line (**2 Chron 10:18**). The rebels had come to respect Jeroboam as an able administrator. Even if those serving in the levy were resident aliens, their overseers in the lower and higher echelons were Israelites. They were very capable of assessing the labor regulations and operations. Adoniram may have been an excellent civil servant, but he represented a bureau of the government that could hardly have had respect of Israelite citizens. It was as if the new young king was seeking to reduce the entire population to corvée status (Rainey 1970: 202). It is small wonder that the Israelite notables stoned hapless Adoniram to death.

The Chronicler reports all this as he finds it in Kings. He has considerable sympathy with the sentiments of the northern tribes. Theirs was not an enviable situation; it could not be expected that they would accept this tyranny without resistance.

John Goldingay: How to Win People's Allegiance

Jeroboam had gained great standing in Jerusalem as a member of Solomon's staff and had rebelled against Solomon—presumably by challenging his position as king, as Absalom had David's. . . . On this occasion God had encouraged Jeroboam by sending a prophet to promise him that he was going to become king over most of the Israelite clans. God intended to tear sovereignty away from Solomon because he encouraged the worship of other deities in Jerusalem through his diplomatic marriages with women from the peoples around. Jeroboam was an Ephraimite, and Ahijah, the prophet from Shiloh, was an Ephraimite in the broader sense. Politically one can imagine that their moves interrelated with ongoing tension between Judah and the rest of the clans. Further, the reference to Solomon's oppressive treatment of Ephraim suggests that the dynamics of political life in Israel matched a pattern that often recurs: the capital and its environs do well, but the provinces suffer.

God's word did not come true in Solomon's lifetime; Solomon was, of course, a man of great insight, so it is not very surprising that he managed to defeat the coup. Thus Jeroboam had to flee for his life. Another aspect of the way God's word gets fulfilled is that human actions may frustrate God's purpose yet do so only for a while. Rehoboam's going to Shechem in Ephraim to be recognized there would encourage the northern clans to associate themselves with him, but in responding to their demands Rehoboam shows that he lacks his father's insight, and God can use this fact to get that prophetic word fulfilled. The Ephraimite clans, the vast bulk of the people as a whole, want to have nothing to do with David. There is no point trying to negotiate with David's and Solomon's successor. "*We're going home,*" they say ("*tents*" is an archaic expression for "*homes*"). You have to sympathize with them. They are cutting themselves off from God's promise to David, but who could blame them?

Raymond Dillard: Any historical event is ordinarily the product of a complex of factors such that a single explanation is not sufficient; the schism was such an event. The biblical text alludes to the sociopolitical ills that attended the splendor of the Solomonic empire; the hated *corvée* and heavy taxation are undoubted factors that fanned the dissatisfaction in the North. Not so apparent as a factor is the kingdom typology itself: the united monarchy was a personal union around the persons of Saul, David, and Solomon of two distinct entities. The Northern ten tribes and the Southern two were heirs of a long history of independent action and self-perception reaching back to the conquest period. Israel and Judah remained identifiable entities under Saul (**1 Sam 11:8**), David (**2 Sam 2:4–8; 3:10; 5:5; 24:9**), and Solomon (**1 Kgs 1:35**). It should not come as a surprise then that these two entities should separate after a period of social/political turmoil and during a time of dynastic crisis; Ahijah's prophecy of a division into ten and two was quite probable (**1 Kgs 11:29–33**).

The Bible does not come to us as socioeconomic or geopolitical history, however. The biblical authors were concerned to record a divine, moral judgment about the kingdom of Yahweh. But even here no simple answer is given; rather, answers are offered that show an awareness of the multiplicity of factors. For the author of Kings, the schism is above all the product of the sinfulness of Solomon, particularly his involvement with the idol worship of his numerous wives who led him astray (**1 Kgs 11:1–13**); judgment for wrongdoing was the cause par excellence. A subsidiary theme in Kings is the fulfillment of prophecy: the compiler's concern with the efficacy of the prophetic word is shown in his recounting the realization of Ahijah's utterances (**1 Kgs 11:19–39; 12:15**). Rehoboam's folly is an attendant factor.

For the Chronicler, however, things must be a bit different. He had presented the reign of Solomon as blameless, a rule enjoying the undivided support and allegiance of the people. Certainly the chapter shows an awareness of the social and political ills left from Solomon's reign, but where does the blame go for the schism if the Chronicler will not tarnish Solomon? His answer was twofold:

- (1) Jeroboam's lust for power, and
- (2) Rehoboam's folly.

While **13:7** is pivotal in deciding the relative weight of these two factors, neither can be excised. In Kings Jeroboam appears more the beneficiary of divine prophecy; but in Chronicles the omission of the prophecy of Ahijah puts Jeroboam's actions more to the fore as leader and instigator. The note of prophetic fulfillment is present, but in a more subdued fashion (**10:15**). In the absence of direct accusation toward Solomon's conduct, the folly of Rehoboam ("*young and indecisive*," **13:7**) is the more prominent.

Isaiah had bemoaned the day when, as judgment on Judah and Jerusalem, Yahweh would make "*boys their officials, mere children to govern them*," when "*the young would rise against the old, the base against the honorable*" (**Isa 3:4–5**). Israel had already experienced this at least once by Isaiah's day. But Isaiah was also the one who spoke of Israel's hope as "*a child born to us . . . and the government shall be upon his shoulders*." For that child there would be none of the folly of Rehoboam, but he "*will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the*

increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever" (Isa 9:6–7). The yoke of Solomon had been burdensome, and in haughty arrogance Rehoboam would make it yet heavier; what a contrast to another son of David, one who was gentle and humble, and invited the weary and burdened to "take my yoke upon you and learn of me . . . for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt 11:28–29). . .

Though the history of research in Chronicles has been characterized by vigorous debate surrounding the author's theology, date, and purpose, on one theme of his historiography there is a near consensus. The Chronicler's adherence to a **'theology of immediate retribution'** provides his dominant compositional technique, particularly formative in his approach to the history of Judah after the schism. 'Retribution theology' refers to the author's apparent conviction that reward and punishment are not deferred, but rather follow immediately on the heels of the precipitating events. For the Chronicler sin always brings judgment and disaster, while obedience and righteousness yield the fruit of peace and prosperity. Even a cursory reading of the text reveals the contours of the writer's convictions; they are both (1) specifically articulated [cf. **1 Chron. 28:8b-9; 2 Chron. 7:14; 12:5; 20:20**] and (2) demonstrated in his reshaping of narratives.

J.A. Thompson: Rehoboam's folly and its consequences illustrate the point that the Chronicler was no narrow Davidic nationalist who believed that in order to prosper Israel only needed a true son of David on the throne. Rehoboam, though in every sense the legitimate Davidic king, did considerable damage to the kingdom. Pedigree is not enough. In fact, it is of no value without the wisdom that comes from the fear of the Lord.

On the other hand, the Chronicler's portrait of the schism lays more blame on Jeroboam than Rehoboam. While Rehoboam is not exonerated, the total picture of this monarch is not altogether negative, and the text speaks of him more as young and foolish than as wicked (**2 Chr 13:7**). The point is that the Chronicler never regarded the northern monarchy as anything but illegitimate and a rebellion against God's chosen dynasty. As far as he was concerned, all Israel had one and only one ruling family.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 11:5-23

TITLE: *MEASURES TO CONSOLIDATE THE KINGDOM OF REHOBOAM*

BIG IDEA:

THE KINGDOM OF GOD MUST ADDRESS ITS VULNERABILITIES BY TAKING APPROPRIATE MILITARY, RELIGIOUS, FAMILY AND ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTER MEASURES

INTRODUCTION:

Andrew Hill: The passage [vv. 5-17] divides neatly into two sections, a summary of Rehoboam's defensive measures against foreign invasion (11:5-12) and the support Rehoboam received from the northern tribes after the split of the united monarchy (11:13-17). The unit continues the emphasis on God's reward for faithfulness and introduces for the first time the religious apostasy of Jeroboam (perpetuated by all the rulers of the northern kingdom).

H. L. Ellison: As soon as Jeroboam could organize the north it was bound to be stronger than Judah both in its population and natural resources. Jeroboam was an ambitious man not likely to be content with what God had given him, and so Rehoboam did his best to strengthen his diminished kingdom.

I. (:5-12) MILITARY MEASURES

Frederick Mabie: Rehoboam's fortified cities address the strategic threats to the southern kingdom from not only the northern kingdom but also foes to the east (e.g., Moab, Ammon), west (e.g., Philistines), and south (e.g. Egypt). The list of fifteen towns (vv. 6-10) focuses on three main lines of fortification that are for the most part grouped accordingly: along the east/southeastern edge of the Judean hill country (e.g., Bethlehem); along the western edge of the Shephelah (e.g., Lachish); and along the southwestern edge of the Judean hill country (e.g., Hebron). In addition, Aijalon would protect from threats to the north via the Beth Horon Ridge (northern kingdom Aram). All told, the focal point of Rehoboam's fortifications is the defense of access points to the capital city of Jerusalem.

August Konkel: The blessing of the Lord on Rehoboam is demonstrated in his **building activities**. The fortified cities provided defense from east, south, and west. Valleys leading into the Judean hill country and important road junctions all appear to be covered. Fortifications to the north were not as necessary. Rehoboam's first task was to fortify a minimal but more securely defensible position. The northern towns available to Rehoboam did not meet this criterion. The defensive lines make strategic sense for protection against an Egyptian attack and likely began before the invasion of Shishak. The boundaries are conformable to Rehoboam's reign. Lachish formed the pivotal

southwestern corner of Rehoboam's fortifications. It was a junction for the road north to the other fortified cities. Lachish guarded the southern road to Egypt, connected with the coastal highway to the west, and the way eastward through Adoraim to Hebron. The watershed toward the east was protected by Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, and Ziph. North of Lachish the cities of Mareshah (Moresbeth), Gath, Azekah, Zorah, and Aijalon provided security from the west. Socoh and Adoraim monitored internal movement. The Levitical cities and some key centers were previously fortified.

Mark Boda: The initial period of success is characterized by Rehoboam's fortification of the structures, deploying defense personnel, and providing food reserves and weaponry.

A. (:5-10) Built Fortified Cities for Defense

"Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built cities for defense in Judah. 6 Thus he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7 Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, 8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10 Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are fortified cities in Judah and in Benjamin."

Raymond Dillard: At first glance it is striking how **small a territory** was embraced by Rehoboam's defensive perimeter. The line of cities suggests that Rehoboam was confident of holding only the Shephelah and the Judean hills, and that he virtually conceded his inability to maintain sovereignty in the Negev and gulf regions as well as over the coastal plain and its important highway. Shishak's own account of his invasion shows that he did move up along the coastal highway while protecting his flanks with raids through the Negev. Vassals commonly rebelled at times of dynastic crisis; Edom had already sought to escape Solomon's yoke with the collusion of the Pharaoh (**1 Kgs 11:14–22, 25**) and may have been able to make incursions into Israel's contiguous territory with the encouragement of Egypt in the crisis following Solomon's death.

B. (:11) Strengthened, Staffed and Supplied the Fortresses

1. Strengthened

"He also strengthened the fortresses"

2. Staffed

"and put officers in them"

3. Supplied

"and stores of food, oil and wine."

C. (:12a) Provided Weapons for Every City

"And he put shields and spears in every city and strengthened them greatly."

D. (:12b) Summary: Success of Defensive Preparation

"So he held Judah and Benjamin."

II. (:13-17) RELIGIOUS MEASURES

Raymond Dillard: As an additional sign of divine blessing, the faithful priests and Levites of the Northern tribes abandon their common lands and private property (**1 Chr 6:54–60; Num 35:1–5; Lev 25:32–34**), prompting a similar defection following their example on the part of citizenry whose loyalty to Yahweh and his temple transcended their identification with tribal homelands. Jeroboam’s fear that loyalty to the temple would reunite the kingdom (**1 Kgs 12:26–27**) apparently had some basis in fact; allegiance to Jerusalem for many, according to the Chronicler, was at great personal expense.

The Chronicler’s own hand in shaping this pericope is seen in the use of the theme of “**seeking God**,” a theme basic to retribution theology, and in his concern with the Levites.

A. (:13-14) Displaced Priests and Levites from the North Migrated to Jerusalem

“Moreover, the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel stood with him from all their districts. For the Levites left their pasture lands and their property and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had excluded them from serving as priests to the LORD.”

Frederick Mabie: In the aftermath of the division, priests and Levites found themselves separated from the Jerusalem temple and rejected by the new northern dynasty. Some even opted to sacrifice personal security of land and possessions in order to gain proximity to the place where God caused his Name to dwell and show their allegiance to the Davidic dynasty that God had established.

J.A. Thompson: Evidently the faithful priests and Levites of the northern tribes abandoned their pasturelands and property and came to Judah and Jerusalem. Jeroboam had rejected them as priests of the Lord (**1 Kgs 12:25–33**). His sons probably held positions of authority like other royal sons (**2 Sam 15:1–6; 1 Kgs 1:9**). The verb translated “*sided with*” (from *yāṣab*) means to “*take a stand*” (cf. **Ps 94:16**). It is not clear that these northerners took up permanent residence with Rehoboam though this is not excluded (cf. v. **16**). But it is clear that there was a good deal of sympathy in the north with Rehoboam.

Matthew Henry: Where should God’s priests and Levites be, but where his altar was? Thither they came because it was their business to attend at the times appointed.

(1.) It was a mercy to them that they had a place of refuge to flee to, and that when Jeroboam cast them off there were those so near that would entertain them, and bid them welcome, and they were not forced into the lands of the heathen.

(2.) It was an evidence that they loved their work better than their maintenance, in that they left their suburbs and possessions in the country (where they might have lived at

ease upon their own), because they were restrained from serving God there, and cast themselves upon God's providence and the charity of their brethren in coming to a place where they might have the free enjoyment of God's ordinances, according to his institution. Poverty in the way of duty is to be chosen rather than plenty in the way of sin. Better live upon alms, or die in a prison, with a good conscience, than roll in wealth and pleasure with a prostituted one.

(3.) It was the wisdom and praise of Rehoboam and his people that they bade them welcome, though they crowded themselves perhaps to make room for them. Conscientious refugees will bring a blessing along with them to the countries that entertain them, as they leave a curse behind them with those that expel them. Open the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth truth, may enter in; it will be good policy. See **Isa. 26:1, 2**.

B. (:15) Replacement False Priests Set Up by Jeroboam in Support of Idolatrous Practices

*“And he set up priests of his own
for the high places, for the satyrs, and for the calves which he had made.”*

Frederick Mabie: In the northern kingdom, the division of the kingdom necessitated the development of political centers for the north (Shechem and Penuel) and alternative religious centers. Jeroboam's concern for the fidelity of his new subjects leads to his establishment of the infamous golden calf shrines in the northern region of the northern kingdom (the city of Dan) and at the southern region of the northern kingdom (the city of Bethel) . . .

Jeroboam's choice of calf (bull) idols reflects the fact that bovines were commonly associated with divinity across the ancient Near East, given the bull's association with strength, power, and fertility. Thus Jeroboam's calves (like those of Aaron in **Ex 32**) may reflect syncretism with prevailing notions of expressing deity (namely, via bovines) in neighboring cultures. In any case, Jeroboam's idols may be primarily a violation of the second commandment (attempting to make an image of God).

J.A. Thompson: There were several indications of the apostasy of Jeroboam. He appointed his own priests for the high places, which were not acceptable to official Yahweh worshipers. At these places there were goat and calf idols in violation of **Lev 17:7**. These “goats,” or “hairy ones,” were demons or satyrs, idols of some kind. The calf idols are reminiscent of the golden calf of the exodus period (**Exod 32:1–10; Deut 9:11**; cf. **Hos 8:5–6**).

Andrew Hill: The **goat idols** are probably demons or satyrs in the form of male goats; such worship was expressly forbidden in the law of Moses (**Lev. 17:7**; cf. **Deut. 32:16–17**).

H. L. Ellison: *Satyrs* are the demons or jinn believed to inhabit desert and waste places; they were looked on as hairy, or of animal shape; hence RV “*he-goats*” (cf. **Lv. 17:7**).

The return to nature worship meant a return to old superstitions.

Matthew Henry: Jeroboam cast them off, that is, he set up such a way of worship as he knew they could not in conscience comply with, which obliged them to withdraw from his altar, and at the same time he would not allow them to go up to Jerusalem to worship at the altar there; so that he totally cast them off from executing the priest's office, **2 Chron. 11:14**. And very willing he was that they should turn themselves out of their places, that room might be made for those mean and scandalous persons whom he ordained priests for the high places, **2 Chron. 11:15**. Compare **1 Kgs. 12:31**. No marvel if he that cast off God cast off his ministers; they were not for his purpose, would not do whatever he might bid them do, would not serve his gods, nor worship the golden image which he had set up.

C. (:16) Popular Pilgrimages of the Faithful to Jerusalem for the Purpose of Sacrifice

“And those from all the tribes of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the LORD God of Israel, followed them to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers.”

Geoffrey Kirkland: In Chronicles, **to seek God** marries 3 elements together:

1. Earnestness (with your passion/desiring/hungry/passionate)
2. Constancy (at all times)
3. Genuinely (from the heart)

Andrew Hill: The phrase “*the God of their fathers*” (**11:16**) is suggestive, almost an implicit censure of Jeroboam's gods because they have no standing in Israel's history. The influx of loyal priests and Levites and faithful Israelites from the northern tribal districts strengthens Rehoboam's rule and bolsters morale in Judah (11:17a).

D. (:17) Popular Support for Rehoboam Shown by Temporary Covenant Loyalty

“And they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam the son of Solomon for three years, for they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.”

Frederick Mabie: In comparison with the apostasy and syncretism of Jeroboam in the northern kingdom (see **11:13-15** above), the influx of the God-seeking people, priests, and Levites seems to stimulate a time of political strength and spiritual fervor in the southern kingdom. Unfortunately, this time of righteousness lasts only three years. . . the political strength attained in the southern kingdom facilitated the perilous step away from complete dependency on God and obedience to his ways (cf. **1Co 10:12**).

J.A. Thompson: For three years after his accession Rehoboam remained true to the faith of Israel, walking in the ways of David and Solomon. In his fourth year he abandoned the law of God (cf. **12:1-2**). The invasion of Pharaoh Shishak followed. The period when divine blessing accompanied obedience gave way to a period of sin and

consequent punishment, thus illustrating the Chronicler's doctrine of **divine retribution**.

Iain Duguid: Previously Rehoboam had “*made the fortresses strong*” (11:11, 12), but now it is “*they*,” faithful people, who “*strengthened the kingdom of Judah*” (v. 17). Security was to be based not on military preparedness but on walking “*in the way of David and Solomon*” concerning the worship of “*the Lord, the God of their fathers*.” Sadly this lasted for only three years.

Raymond Dillard: “*Ways of David and Solomon*.” This phrase is symptomatic of the Chronicler’s **idealization of Solomon**; considering the portrait of Solomon in Kings, one would not expect that author to make such a statement. Contrast his evaluation that Solomon’s “*heart was not fully devoted to Yahweh his God as the heart of David his father had been*” (1 Kgs 11:4) with the Chronicler’s favorable assessment of Rehoboam’s “*walking in the ways of David and Solomon*.”

III. (:18-23) FAMILY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

August Konkel: A large family was the third sign of divine blessing. The number of wives and children of Rehoboam are probably the total of his reign rather than those accumulated by his fifth year. The genealogy may explain why the eldest son did not receive the kingdom. It was a violation to transfer the privilege of firstborn because of a greater love for one wife (Deut 21:15–17), but rights of primogeniture were not always followed. The appointment of Abijah may have been as coregent to provide for orderly succession. Rehoboam’s dispersal of the royal princes extended control of the royal family into the outlying districts and provided for a smooth transition of power. It made the chance of a revolt or attempted coup less likely.

A. (:18-21) Family Measures

1. (:18-19) Children from Marriage to Mahalath

“Then Rehoboam took as a wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David and of Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse, 19 and she bore him sons: Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham.”

J. Barton Payne: Abihail was the wife of Jerimoth and mother of Mahalath, not a second wife of Rehoboam (cf. ASV). Manchah (Michaiah, 13:2) must have been Absalom’s grand-daughter, through his daughter Tamar, the wife of Uriel (13:2; cf. II Sam 14:27; 18:18).

2. (:20) Children from Marriage to Maacah

“And after her he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom, and she bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith.”

3. (:21a) Preference for Maacah among All His Wives and Concubines

“And Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom more than all

his other wives and concubines.”

4. (:21b) Children from His Many Wives and Concubines

“For he had taken eighteen wives and sixty concubines and fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.”

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler reports the practice of **polygamy** in the Davidic dynasty as a matter of fact—apparently accepting the cultural convention (despite the Mosaic prohibition against kings taking many wives, **Deut. 17:17**). Thompson appropriately reminds us of the tragic aspect of polygamy in the inevitable favoritism shown to a particular wife in the harem. Typically in such marriages in the Old Testament, favoritism bred jealousy, jealousy hatred, and hatred too often resulted in destructive behavior patterns.

It should be noted, in addition to his own eighteen wives and sixty concubines (**11:21**), Rehoboam is responsible for supporting his father Solomon’s harem (since royal women were “property” of the state in perpetuity). This obligation may have had something to do with his decision to levy a tax hike on his subjects.

B. (:22-23) Administrative Measures

1. (:22) Elevation of Abijah

“And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah as head and leader among his brothers, for he intended to make him king.”

Iain Duguid: Again a striking contrast with Jeroboam is seen: while Rehoboam is able to appoint his son “*Abijah*” as his successor (cf. **2 Chron. 12:16**), Jeroboam’s favorite son, also “*Abijah*,” dies as evidence that God is bringing Jeroboam’s line to an end (**1 Kings 14:1–17**). The Chronicler’s addition of this chapter has pointedly illustrated what can happen when king and people follow God faithfully. The mention, however, of “*three years*” (**2 Chron. 11:17**) is ominous; present behavior is no guarantee of the future.

Martin Selman: Rehoboam’s growing family is the final symbol of blessing (cf. **1 Ch. 26:5**; cf. **25:5**) and of strength (**2 Ch. 13:21**). Again, however, there are signs that this was not an unmixed blessing. While Rehoboam’s father’s wives had led him astray (**1 Ki. 11:3**), his own preference for a later wife, Maacah (**vv. 20-21**); note “*After her*,” **v. 20**, NRSV, RSV, JB; *then*, NIV), and the promotion of her son Abijah as his successor (**vv. 22**), directly contravened the Deuteronomic law (**Dt. 21:15-17**).

2. (:23) Establishment of His Sons as Leaders in Various Fortified Cities

“And he acted wisely and distributed some of his sons through all the territories of Judah and Benjamin to all the fortified cities, and he gave them food in abundance. And he sought many wives for them.”

Andrew Hill: The concluding verse of the regnal résumé lauds Rehoboam’s wisdom in “*dispersing some of his sons throughout the districts of Judah*” (**11:23**). Rehoboam

apparently imitates his father's practice of delegation of royal authority by means of district governors (cf. **1 Kings 4:7–19**), but he makes those appointments from princes within the royal household rather than from tribal leaders. The policy yields practical benefits: preventing the infighting experienced in David's royal household by prospective successors to the throne, solidifying the king's position, guarding against disloyalty in the form of an Absalom-like coup, ensuring an heir for the continuation of the dynasty (since housing the royal family in one location makes it easier for a usurper to execute all rivals), and extending the influence of the royal family to outlying districts.

J. Barton Payne: *He dealt wisely* by delegating to his sons authority in the national defense, and by providing them with substance and with wives (ASV); but also by dispersing them, to insure the undisputed succession of Abijah, the designated heir (v. 22).

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What type of attacks did Rehoboam fear that caused him to put such an emphasis on strengthening his defenses around the territory of Judah and Benjamin?
- 2) What type of financial sacrifices are we prepared to make to hold fast to our biblical convictions?
- 3) Why did the passion for following in the covenant ways of David and Solomon start to dissipate after only three years?
- 4) Why doesn't the OT speak out more forcefully against polygamy?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: Goldingay (BTB 5 [1975] 102–4) suggests that the Chronicler's account of Rehoboam was structured around the narratives concerning Jeroboam in **1 Kgs 12:25–14:20** such that each section in the deuteronomic account has an equivalent in Chronicles:

1. Jeroboam fortifies cities (**12:25**);
so does Rehoboam (**11:5–12**).
2. Jeroboam seeks strength through religious policies (**12:26–33**);
Rehoboam finds strength through Jeroboam's religious policies (**11:13–17**).

- a. Jeroboam fears loss of people (12:26–27);
Rehoboam gains people (11:16–17a).
 - b. Jeroboam founds sinful cult (12:28–30);
Rehoboam practices correct cult (11:17b).
 - c. Jeroboam ignores priests and Levites (12:31–33);
Rehoboam gains priests and Levites (11:13–15).
3. The consequences of Jeroboam’s actions are trouble for him (13:1–32),
whereas Rehoboam’s actions produce blessing (11:18–21).
 4. Jeroboam’s son Abijah is prevented from succeeding him (13:33—14:20),
but Rehoboam’s son Abijah is prepared for succession (11:22–23).

Not all of the parallels **Goldingay** suggests are that obvious (e.g., **1 Kgs 12:28–30 // 11:17b**), nor are the passages in the same sequence. However, at a rhetorical level Rehoboam’s early reign is in **sharp contrast** to the events in the North.

Mark Boda: [The **key to success** shown in **11:13-17**]

Rather than connecting the success directly to Rehoboam, the Chronicler links it to both the infusion of priests and Levites from the north who had been rejected by Jeroboam’s new cult at Bethel and Dan (**1 Kgs 12:25-33**), as well as to the people from all the northern tribes who “*sincerely wanted to worship the Lord, the God of Israel,*” here using terminology typical of the Chronicler. Not surprisingly the Chronicler highlights the faithfulness of the sacred personnel, who have played a significant role in his narrative to this point, as well as to the impact that such faithfulness could have on the people as a whole. The standard of faithfulness continues to be David and Solomon, an allusion to the portrait of these kings in **1 Chronicles 10 – 2 Chronicles 9**. The role also that northern Israelites play in this scene is a careful reminder that members of these tribes still had a role to play in the remnant of Israel, even if it suggests a wariness about worship practices in the northern territories, possibly even in the Chronicler’s day. In this the Chronicler shows that the values of David and Solomon can endure through the orders they sponsored (priests and Levites) and the community they created, even without the royal house.

Michael Stark: Making the Pagans Happy (for a While)

Summary: Godliness exalts a nation. Ungodliness condemns a nation. A study of the migration of godly people from a nation turning from righteousness and the impact their leaving had on that nation and the nation to which the immigrated.

Spiritual leaders from the Northern Kingdom, together with many individuals who wanted to honour the Living God, migrated to the Southern Kingdom. There, their presence “*strengthened the kingdom of Judah.*” I find it fascinating to note that the Word of God states that their exodus from Israel made Rehoboam “*secure.*” Migration from the northern kingdom made the southern kingdom secure. I suppose it would have

been easy to complain that it was a gentle revolution and that such an influx would threaten the culture. However, the Bible saw matters differently. It is essential that we recognise that this was not an invasion that would alter the culture of Judah; those moving into the kingdom would adopt the culture of their new nation rather than insisting that Judah adapt to them.

You may recall that Jeroboam had compromised the Faith and led the people into gross idolatry. It wasn't that he meant to dishonour God, but he couldn't trust God to secure his kingdom, so he took matters into his own hands and made representations of the God of Heaven so that people wouldn't seek God in His Temple in Jerusalem. The result was that Jeroboam so compromised the Faith that people of conscience could not tolerate what Israel had become.

However, let's go back to the beginning. God promoted Jeroboam to reign over the northern tribes, tearing those tribes from Solomon's son because of compromise, Jeroboam was not willing to trust God to keep him on the throne. The Word pointedly states that God exalted this man Jeroboam, elevating him to the throne of what would become the northern kingdom. We read the account in **1 Kings 11:26-32**.

Think this through; God chose Jeroboam and promoted him to a position of authority. God did this because of the sin of Solomon. In this same passage, we see God saying of Solomon and of what would become the land of Israel, **1 Kings 11:33-38**. . .

Jeroboam chose to dishonour God, pursuing his own religion. However, his actions brought about was an impact he had not anticipated. As result of Jeroboam's choice, the Levites, God's chosen servants for duties in the Temple, were presented with their own choice—they could have a secure job in the new religion, or they could honour God. They could not do both! The text before us this day makes it apparent that at considerable cost to themselves and their families, the Levites—en masse— chose to honour the LORD God. They chose to leave their homes, leave the Levitical cities that God had given their families and migrate to the Southern Kingdom; and all who longed to honour God followed these godly Levites in their migration.

The sudden influx of so many godly people **strengthened Judah**. The Bible says that immediately, Rehoboam was made secure through their exodus. This was because the newcomers chose God over comfort. You see, the presence of the godly is a threat to the wicked. It is not that the godly would ever attack the wicked, but the godly cannot simply “go along to get along.” The godly answer to God, and not to man. The godly are less concerned about the feelings of the wicked than they are concerned to honour Him who redeemed them.

<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/making-the-pagans-happy-for-a-while-michael-stark-sermon-on-christian-life-229880?page=2&wc=800>

Geoffrey Kirkland: The Corrupt Leadership of King Rehoboam

I. THE DOMINATION OF REHOBOAM (:1-4)

The point here is: domineering leadership

II. THE DEVOTION OF REHOBOAM (:5-12)

The point here is: distracted devotion

III. THE DEFILEMENT OF REHOBOAM (:13-17)

The point here is: defiled worship

IV. THE DISOBEDIENCE OF REHOBOAM (:18-23)

The point here is: deliberate disobedience

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 12:1-16

TITLE: *INVASION OF SHISHAK – TARNISHING THE KINGDOM FROM GOLD TO BRONZE*

BIG IDEA:

THE LEADERSHIP FAILURE OF REHOBOAM RESULTS IN THE JUDGMENT OF SHISHAK'S INVASION WHICH IS MITIGATED BY HUMBLE REPENTANCE BUT STILL PAINFUL IN ITS OUTCOME

INTRODUCTION:

Andrew Hill: Pharaoh Shishak or Sheshonq I was the founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty, and he reunified Upper and Lower Egypt. He ruled from 945–924 B.C., and his campaign into Palestine takes place during the fifth year of Rehoboam (925 B.C.). His own account of the campaign is inscribed on the walls of the temple of Karnak, according to which he sweeps through Judah and Israel as far north as the Valley of Jezreel and Megiddo, capturing more than 150 towns and villages along the way.

The Chronicler understands Shishak's invasion of Judah as punishment for sin, in that Rehoboam and all Israel have "*abandoned the law of the LORD*" (12:1). By "*all Israel*" the Chronicler means all the Israelites living in Judah (the "true" Israel), whether from northern or southern Hebrew tribal stock. The Chronicler assigns this breach of Judah's faithfulness to Yahweh and the Egyptian raid into Palestine a cause-and-effect relationship, a clear indication of his acknowledgment of the God of the Hebrews as the sovereign Lord of history (12:2).

J.A. Thompson: The invasion of Shishak was, in the eyes of the Chronicler, retribution for Rehoboam's sin (11:14–16). Against such a foe Rehoboam's defenses were only a partial match. The account here in 2 Chronicles 12 is parallel to 1 Kings 14:21–28 but owes something to a source that preserved some details of Shishak's invasion and the prophecy of Shemaiah (vv. 3–8, 12). It shows a concern for Judah's abandonment of the law of the Lord. The passage makes use of terms that are characteristic of the Chronicler's theology of divine retribution, namely, "*forsake*" or "*abandon*" (vv. 1, 5), "*be unfaithful*" (v. 2), and "*humble oneself*" (vv. 6–7, 12). The Shishak incident provided a model of the sort of thing that could happen again.

Martin Selman: Rehoboam's unfaithfulness has two interesting analogies elsewhere in Chronicles. Firstly, the combination of his unfaithfulness (v. 2) with a failure to obey God's word (v. 1) or to seek God's will (v. 14), effectively makes him a second Saul (cf. 1 Ch. 10:13-14). Secondly, his pride in his own strength anticipates Uzziah's downfall (2 Ch. 26:16). Both parallels strengthen the typical nature of Rehoboam's sins.

Mark Boda: To his Persian-period audience, this story would have had heightened relevance. On the one hand, it encouraged repentance; on the other hand, it explained the purpose behind the despoiling and domination they had experienced by foreign rulers. The prophet's statement revealed that foreign domination was not an eternal condition but has didactic purposes to teach Israel the advantage of serving their gracious God.

Geoffrey Kirkland: We'll see 3 most essential reminders for us in our lives as we walk with God as learn about Rehoboam's Sin, God's Holiness, Sin's Consequences, and God's Abundant Mercy.

1. Humbly Cling to Scripture (**vv1**)
2. Frequently Consider Sin's Consequences (**vv2-12**)
3. Vigilantly Guard Your Heart (**vv13-16**)

I. (:1-4) APOSTASY UNDER REHOBOAM RESULTED IN SHISHAK'S FORCEFUL INVASION AS DIVINE JUDGMENT

A. (:1) Apostasy Can Develop in Times of Security and Complacency – The Environment for Shishak's Invasion

“It took place when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established and strong that he and all Israel with him forsook the law of the LORD.”

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler's hand in reshaping the account in Kings is transparent here. Kings makes no judgment regarding the reasons for Shishak's attack, but for the Chronicler defeat and humiliation in warfare are the consequence of divine judgment. “*Abandon, forsake*” and “*be rebellious*” are key vehicles for the Chronicler's theology of retribution. The author does not spell out the precise nature of this abandoning and infidelity; presumably the transgressions are those described in **1 Kgs 14:22–24**; cf. **12:14**. The Chronicler will later suggest an additional reason for Rehoboam's political failures, his youth and immaturity (**13:7**). . .

Here (**12:1**) “*all Israel*” refers to the Southern Kingdom, but also as including citizenry from the other tribes (**11:13–17**). The “*law of Yahweh*” implies a canonical corpus, at least equivalent to the Pentateuch by the Chronicler's own time; cf. **17:9**; **6:16**.

Andrew Hill: The reason for the lapse in Judah's loyalty to Yahweh after three years of walking faithfully in the ways of David and Solomon is unclear (cf. **11:17**). The phrase “*he had become strong*” (**12:1**) suggests that pride and self-reliance have replaced Rehoboam's dependence on God. Perhaps Rehoboam has taken his initiatives to fortify the cities guarding Jerusalem too seriously (cf. **11:5–12**), trusting in his own defensive measures rather than on God.

Iain Duguid: A Hebrew phrase using the noun *khezqah* (“*strength, being strong*”) occurs in Chronicles only here and concerning Uzziah (**2 Chron. 26:16**), and tragically in both instances “*strong*” is followed by “*unfaithful to the Lord.*” It appears that Rehoboam had come to rely on his “*strong*” fortresses (**11:11–12**), and he and the

people forgot that the “*strength*” of a supporting population was in their faithful worship at the temple (11:17; cf. 1 Kings 14:23–24).

J.A. Thompson: The verb “*abandon*” (*‘āzab*) is theologically significant. Externally Rehoboam and his nation suffered defeat at the hands of Shishak, a foreign enemy (cf. 7:19–22; 21:10; 24:24; 28:6; 29:6, 8–9; 34:25). But the real punishment was that God had abandoned Rehoboam. Abandoning God is the exact opposite of “*seeking*” God.

**B. (:2-3) Apostasy Makes a People Vulnerable to Powerful Enemies –
The Explanation for Shishak’s Invasion and the Enumeration of His Forces**

“And it came about in King Rehoboam’s fifth year, because they had been unfaithful to the LORD, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem 3 with 1,200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen. And the people who came with him from Egypt were without number: the Lubim, the Sukkiim, and the Ethiopians.”

John MacArthur: Ca. 926 B.C. Presumably, Rehoboam’s 3 years of blessing preceded a fourth year of spiritual rebellion, which God judged in his fifth year with judgment at the hand of the Egyptians.

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler’s inclusion of the “*Sukkites*” among the allies of Shishak attests to the antiquity of the sources for the report of Shishak’s campaign, since these Libyan warriors from the oases of the western desert are known primarily from Egyptian records of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries B.C.

Matthew Henry: God quickly brought troubles upon them, to awaken them, and recover them to repentance, before their hearts were hardened. It was but in the fourth year of Rehoboam that they began to corrupt themselves, and in the fifth year the king of Egypt came up against them with a vast army, took the fenced cities of Judah, and came against Jerusalem, 2 Chron. 12:2, 3, 4. This great calamity coming upon them so soon after they began to desert the worship of God, by a hand they had little reason to suspect (having had a great deal of friendly correspondence with Egypt in the last reign), and coming with so much violence that all the fenced cities of Judah, which Rehoboam had lately fortified and garrisoned and on which he relied much for the safety of his kingdom, fell immediately into the hands of the enemy, without making any resistance, plainly showed that it was from the Lord, because they had transgressed against him.

**C. (:4) Apostasy Leaves Us Defenseless –
The Extent of Shishak’s Invasion**

1. Inroads: Captured the Fortified Cities of Judah
“And he captured the fortified cities of Judah”

Human attempts at defense and fortification proved futile in the face of God’s agency for judgment

2. Terminus: Came as far as Jerusalem
“and came as far as Jerusalem.”

Limited only by Divine Providence in protecting God's holy city from utter devastation.

II. (:5-8) ACCEPTANCE OF HUMBLE REPENTANCE ONLY MITIGATES BUT DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

A. (:5) Prophetic Indictment Justifying God's Judgment

"Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and he said to them, 'Thus says the LORD, You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you to Shishak.'"

Raymond Dillard: The formula "you have abandoned me; I have abandoned you" or an approximate equivalent appears in similar speech materials in **1 Chr 28:9; 2 Chr 15:2; 24:20** and demonstrates the hand of the author in the presentation of speeches. The outworking of the programmatic statement that "*if my people . . . will humble themselves . . .*" (**7:14**) is vividly portrayed in this narrative; Yahweh does take account of the humility and penitence of king and people and lessens the consequences of Shishak's attack.

Peter Wallace: It would be wrong to say: "If you feel like God has abandoned you then God has abandoned you!" Your feelings do not provide sufficient evidence to explain what God is doing! But one possibility for your feeling that God has abandoned you is that you have abandoned God.

B. (:6) Humble Confession of Sin and of God's Righteous Judgment

"So the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, 'The LORD is righteous.'"

Andrew Hill: Shemaiah the prophet (**12:5**) is known as a "man of God" (**11:2**) and earlier warned Rehoboam not to wage war against the northern tribes of Israel after the split of Solomon's kingdom (**11:4**). He now brings a message of both judgment (**12:5**) and mercy to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah (**12:7-8**). The principle that God "abandons" those who "abandon" him is candidly presented and basic to the Chronicler's theology (cf. **1 Chron. 28:9, 20; 2 Chron. 15:2; 24:20**). The response by Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah that "*the LORD is just*" (**2 Chron. 12:6**) is essentially a confession of sin—an acknowledgment that God is in the right (cf. **Dan. 9:14**). God accepts this confession as an act of "humbling oneself" (**2 Chron. 12:6-7**), a form of repentance that brings the sinner back to God.

C. (:7-8) Divine Mitigation of the Extent of Judgment

"And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, 'They have humbled themselves so I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some measure of deliverance, and My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by means of Shishak. 8 But they will become his slaves so that they may learn the difference between My service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.'"

Andrew Hill: God mercifully decrees that Judah will experience a “qualified” deliverance from Shishak (**12:7b**), but they will not escape the consequences of their disobedience—they will “*become subject to him [i.e., Shishak]*” for a time (**12:8**). The so-called “school of hard knocks” is a trying way to learn that it is better to serve the Lord than to be subjects of a foreign king (**12:8**). At times God uses whatever means are necessary to teach his people important lessons about the nature of his covenant relationship with them (in this case “*fearing*” God and not Shishak, **12:5**).

John MacArthur: A fitting punishment arose to remind the Jews of their heritage in relationship to Egypt. This was the first major military encounter with Egypt since the Exodus had ended hundreds of years of slavery there. A taste of being enslaved again to a people from whom God had given liberation was bitter. The message was crystal clear – if the Jews would forsake the true worship of God, they would also lose His protective hand of blessing. It was much better to serve God than to have to serve “*kingdoms of the countries.*”

Iain Duguid: Instead of expected destruction, the taking of Jerusalem, we see gracious mitigation in “*some deliverance [“a little escape”]*” (cf. **12:12**); they will, however, continue to serve Shishak. The reality that “*they [will] know my service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries [“lands”]*” makes the immediate situation an example of others to come, particularly after the exile, when the people are secure in Jerusalem with its temple but remain as “*servants*” of the Persian Empire. That service, however, does not lessen their responsibility in the larger, overarching “*service*” of God. The wording points to God’s using foreign rulers as means through which the people learn more what it means to serve God (cf. **Ezra 9:8–9**).

Frederick Mabie: In the aftermath of this covenantal unfaithfulness and God’s judgment, the covenant functionary role of the prophet is reflected in Shemaiah’s proclamation of the sin of the people and the resulting divine judgment (v. **5**; cf. **Johnstone**, 2:41-43). The king and the leaders of Israel respond to the prophet’s indictment in a way anticipated in Solomon’s temple-dedication prayer in **6:24-25** (**12:6**; also cf. v. **12**). While Jerusalem is not destroyed (v. **7**), the temple and palace treasuries are ravaged (see v. **9**) and the southern kingdom will now be under the hegemony of Egypt as a continuation of the consequence of abandoning God and his Word.

Peter Wallace: vv. **6-8** -- If You Will Humble Yourself, You Will Be Delivered from Destruction (not necessarily from the consequences of sin).

What does it mean to **humble yourself**? There may be outward signs of humility (fasting, tearing clothes, sackcloth and ashes – are all outward signs) – but the Chronicler isn’t interested in that. He wants to focus on the one thing that is essential to humility: what you say to him. The princes and the king say, “*The LORD is righteous.*” They are not merely stating a general theological truth (although it is always true!). (Yahweh is always righteous!) They are saying that in this case, the LORD is righteous.

They are acknowledging that God is just – and that he has passed just judgment in this case.

III. (:9-12) APPEASEMENT OF GOD'S WRATH BY HUMBLY SUBMITTING TO THE PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

A. (:9) Plundering of Jerusalem's Treasures

“So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's palace. He took everything; he even took the golden shields which Solomon had made.”

Andrew Hill: The report of the “*treasures*” of the Jerusalem temple and royal palace “*carried off*” by Shishak suggests the loot is given as tribute to “buy off” Shishak rather than taken as booty through war (12:9–11). It is even possible that an unhealthy fixation on these “*treasures*” may have been connected to Rehoboam’s unfaithfulness (since Israel’s kings were not to accumulate large amounts of silver and gold, cf. **Deut 17:17**). Beyond the fact that Judah is a **diminished nation** politically and economically after Shishak’s invasion, the reference to the confiscation of Solomon’s gold shields, subsequently replaced by bronze replicas, emphasizes the loss of Israel’s splendor (cf. **1 Kings 10:16–17; 2 Chron. 9:15–16**).

Peter Wallace: vv. 9-12 -- Rehoboam and the Age of Bronze.

The Chronicler has emphasized the wealth and splendor of Solomon’s day – a golden age, where silver was as common as stone. Now, all of that is gone. The service of God was golden. But now Egypt plunders Israel. When Israel came up out of Egypt, they had plundered the Egyptians taking much gold and silver, because after the ten plagues, the Egyptians were willing to pay anything to get rid of the Israelites! Now, several hundred years later, Egypt plunders Israel – taking back (with interest!) what they had given. The basic principle here is that while repentance may deliver you from destruction, it does not necessarily deliver you from the consequences of your sin.

B. (:10-11) Positioning of Replacement Bronze Shields

“Then King Rehoboam made shields of bronze in their place, and committed them to the care of the commanders of the guard who guarded the door of the king's house. 11 And it happened as often as the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards came and carried them and then brought them back into the guards' room.”

August Konkel: The gold shields served a ritual function. They were carried by the guard accompanying the king when he moved from the palace to the temple. Royal processions lost much of their splendor with the bronze shields, but these were safely stored in the huge armory Solomon had built.

J. Barton Payne: They wished to emphasize how far Rehoboam fell in a mere few years. He had inherited an empire; five years later, master of a small state, he could protect his

capital itself only by denuding his palace of its treasures. Solomon's court had despised silver; his son's court had to be content with bronze!

G. Campbell Morgan: The picture of Rehoboam's substitution of brass for gold is unutterably pathetic. Yet how often do the people of Jehovah masquerade amid imitations because they have lost the things of pure gold through unfaithfulness and sin.

C. (:12) Petitioning the Mercy of God to Mitigate the Judgment

“And when he humbled himself, the anger of the LORD turned away from him, so as not to destroy him completely; and also conditions were good in Judah.”

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler reiterates his conclusion that it was by humbling himself before the Lord that Rehoboam escaped (**12:7**), but he also adds the note that there was “*some good*” in Judah. The good is left undefined—it may have been the very acts of contrition themselves, the many faithful in the kingdom, the residual benefit of God's promises to David, or simply the favor shown to his people Israel.

Andrew Hill: The ambiguous phrase “*there was some good in Judah*” seems to look back to those three years when Rehoboam and Judah imitated the faithfulness of David and Solomon (esp. **11:13–17**). . .

The word “*humbled himself*” (Niphal of *kn'*, **12:12**) means to forsake one's pride and yield in self-denying loyalty to God. This action appeases God's wrath and spares Rehoboam and Judah from total destruction. God delivers on his promise to respond with forgiveness and healing to those who humble themselves before him in prayer (**7:14**). The message of “*humbling oneself*” before God and receiving forgiveness and healing remains pertinent for the Chronicler and his audience. This will become the gist of John the Baptist's preaching (cf. **Luke 3:2–9**).

IV. (:13-16) SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF REHOBOAM'S REIGN

A. (:13a) Completion of Rehoboam's Reign

“So King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned.”

B. (:13b) Age and Duration of Rehoboam's Reign

“Now Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen from all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there.”

Martin Selman: The statement that God had chosen Jerusalem (cf. **1 Kgs 14:21**), and mention of God's Name are linked by the temple (cf. **2 Chr. 6:5-6, 34, 38; 7:12, 16; 33:7**). They may also provide a backcloth to Rehoboam's humility, for the temple existed to encourage humble repentance (cf. **2 Chr. 7:14**).

C. (:13c) Mother of Rehoboam

“And his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess.”

D. (:14) Moral Characterization of Rehoboam's Reign

“And he did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the LORD.”

Geoffrey Kirkland: We learn 4 things from v.14:

1. the REVIEW — he did evil...
2. the REASON — because...
3. the ROOT — he did not set his heart...
4. the RESOLVE — to seek the LORD

J.A. Thompson: The evil associated with his reign is explained in the parallel account in **1 Kgs 14:22–24** to be idolatry, but there it is attributed to the whole nation of Judah. The Chronicler focuses only on the sins of Rehoboam. He had not set his heart on seeking the Lord. Despite his early good impression (**11:5–23**) he finally was judged in unfavorable terms (see **13:5–7**).

Frederick Mabie: As anticipated in Solomon's temple-dedication prayer, God abounds in mercy and forgiveness when his people seek him in humility and contrition. This is a theme stressed over and over again by the Chronicler, no doubt for the instruction and encouragement of the postexilic community still reeling from the sting of drastic divine judgment. Although there is some “good” to be found in Judah (cf. **11:2-4, 16-17; 12:5-7**), Rehoboam is nonetheless described at the beginning of **chapter 12** as abandoning God's covenantal law (cf. v. **1**), and he is summarized at the end of the chapter as doing evil because he did not set his heart on the Lord (v. **14**).

Peter Wallace: There is only one thing that God requires of us. You can say it a lot of different ways – but it is really just one thing. Set your heart to **seek the LORD**. (the idea of “*set your heart*” has to do with “*firmly establishing*” your heart; this is the word used to describe how God has firmly established the heavens and the earth). The point here is that this must be your **fixed and determined purpose**. This is not something that you can “try” for a few weeks to see if it works. It must be your **settled conviction** – the one thing that drives you in everything else – **To seek the LORD**.

E. (:15a) Recorded Deeds of Rehoboam's Reign

“Now the acts of Rehoboam, from first to last, are they not written in the records of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer, according to genealogical enrollment?”

F. (:15b) Defining Characteristic of Rehoboam's Reign

“And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.”

G. (:16a) Death and Burial of Rehoboam

“And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David;”

H. (:16b) Succession by Rehoboam's Son Abijah

“and his son Abijah became king in his place.”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How can we keep our faith strong and fervent during times of prosperity and security?
- 2) How can we continually humble ourselves before the Lord and acknowledge our sin and His righteous rule in our lives?
- 3) How does the repeating theme of God's mercy towards His rebellious chosen people encourage us to forsake sin and seek God despite the desperate nature of our circumstances?
- 4) What privileges did Rehoboam enjoy that should have prepared him to be a godly leader – making his failure even sadder?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

J. Barton Payne: The Rulers of Judah – 12:1 – 36:16

The nineteen men and one woman who occupied David's throne from 930 to 586 B.C. ranged in character from the strongest and best to the weakest and worst. The fate of any nation is determined in large part by the caliber of its leadership, and this was markedly so in Israel, where God's intervening hand was more clearly manifest than elsewhere. The chronicler thus encourages the men of his day to consecration by demonstrating from God's miraculous past deliverances of Judah how "*faith is the victory*" that can overcome the world (**II Chr 20:20**). Yet at the same time, and from the same historical data, he admonished them against compromise with the world, against indifference to the Law, and against deviation from the Lord. For the fundamental pattern of Judah's history is one of religious deterioration. Sin becomes so ingrained that even a Josiah cannot reverse the downward trend. "*The wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy*" (**36:16**). God can cast off his people whom he foreknew! At points, **II Chr 12:1 – 36:16** corresponds closely to **1 Kgs 14:22 – II Kgs 24:20**. Much of the content of Kings, however, is omitted, e.g., the lives of the prophets, and indeed, the whole history of northern Israel. But for Judah, the chronicler supplies thrilling examples of faith and of deliverance that are without parallel in the more summary account of Kings.

Geoffrey Kirkland: Historical Information on Shishak, King of Egypt:

- Before Shishak, the kingdom of Egypt didn't really seem to be a big factor in the history of Israel once they were settled in Israel
- Shishak was hugely important in biblical history.

- He was able to bring UNITY and STRUCTURE and PURPOSE to the Egyptian nation.
- Shishak was Libyan, not a native Egyptian, THOUGH THIS HELPED HIM create a multinational army. And Shishak unified his army when Rehoboam SPLIT his nation apart
- In a king's victory report, he even provided us with an inventory of all the towns he conquered during this operation.
- The INSCRIPTION in which Shishak tells the world of all his accomplishments in this Palestinian campaign, he listed 150! cities that he crushed.
- Even though he defeated many towns and cities, he acknowledged THAT HE DID NOT conquer — Jerusalem. This harmonizes perfectly with the biblical record. He plundered but didn't destroy Jerusalem.

Raymond Dillard: Shishak (945–924 B.C.) was the founder of the twenty-second dynasty and achieved the reunification of a divided Egypt, a goal that had eluded his predecessors. As long as Israel remained militarily powerful under Solomon in its position along Egypt's northern and eastern borders, Shishak could do little more than harbor rebels (**1 Kgs 11:26–40**) and foster rebellion among Solomon's vassals (**1 Kgs 11:14–22**). After Solomon's death and the disintegration of his empire, and with a client of Egypt on the throne of the Northern Kingdom, Shishak's forces could sweep through and around Israel and Judah at will. So great is the concern of the biblical authors with Jerusalem that were the Bible our only source regarding this campaign, it would seem that Shishak attacked Judah alone, primarily for the prize of Solomon's golden shields in Jerusalem. However, in Shishak's own record of the campaign written on the walls of a temple at Karnak, more than 150 towns are named, but Jerusalem is not mentioned. From Shishak's topographical list it emerges that the kingdom of Israel and the Negev of Judah were in fact the main objectives of the expedition. . .

The reign of Rehoboam is the author's first opportunity to demonstrate how he will treat the reigns of kings after the schism; it provides a virtual paradigm for the program announced in the divine response to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (**7:14**). Almost all the changes the Chronicler has made in his Vorlage have served the purpose of highlighting the fact that God responds with blessings for obedience and with punishment for transgression. Though Kings reports the obedience of Rehoboam to Shemaiah's first speech (**1 Kgs 12:21–24**), the Chronicler goes on to show how this obedience issued in prosperity and power (**11:5–12**), popular support (**11:13–17**), and progeny (**11:18–23**). Though Kings reports the invasion of Shishak and the loss of Solomon's shields (**1 Kgs 14:25–28**), that author makes no theological judgment regarding those events; contrast the Chronicler, however, who provides the theological rationale for both the attack and the narrow escape of Judah. All the key terms ("*seek, humble, abandon/forsake, rebel*") the Chronicler uses to convey his theology of immediate retribution occur in these chapters.

Rehoboam's reign marks the first time Jerusalem suffers military humiliation since it became the City of David; it had never experienced in Israelite hands "*servitude to the kingdoms of other lands*" (**12:8**, a passage unique to Chronicles). Penitence and fidelity

in Rehoboam's day had opened a way to escape disaster, just as a penitent community had enjoyed restoration to their land and temple in the days preceding the Chronicler's own times. The author's message to the post-exilic community, now living in servitude under the Persian empire, could not be missed: the path to freedom and to the amelioration of Judah's difficulties lay in seeking God and in humbling oneself before him, while turning from that path could bring only disaster. The passage is a warning against presumptuous transgression, for "*the soul who sins is the one who will die*" (**Ezek 18:4, 20, 24**).

Andrew Hill: The split of Solomon's kingdom signals the end of Israel's "golden age" both figuratively and literally. The harsh consequences of divine retribution for disobedience to Yahweh's covenant is no doubt meant as a "wake-up" call to both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The Shishak episode illustrates what can (and sadly does) happen again in Israelite history. The message has currency for the Chronicler's audience as well since God is still the sovereign Lord of history, and postexilic Israel is still bound to him in covenant relationship.

Iain Duguid: Warnings of how being "*strong*" can turn to the arrogance of self-sufficiency and a turning away from God, who has enabled the blessing, and to other gods are seen elsewhere in Scripture. In the preaching of Deuteronomy, the people are warned that, once they have settled in the land where God has given so much, they must "*beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day*" (**Deut. 8:17–18**). Such "*wealth*" can be extended to matters such as abilities, family background, physical beauty, knowledge, or spiritual experience. The prophets proclaim God's anguish as people ascribe and give to other gods what he has given (**Ezek. 16:1–22; Hos. 2:1–13**). Later, Jesus warns of the self-confidence of the builder of "*larger barns*," leading to the alternative of seeking God's kingdom, for "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (**Luke 12:13–34**).

Beyond the warnings, however, is **hope**. The account of Rehoboam is a reminder that even when there has been a turning from trust and humble service of God, often with grave consequences, the grace of God is seen as we "*humble ourselves*." Consequences of the wrongdoing may remain and be mitigated, but the relationship is restored, and we look forward to the new heavens and new earth when all will be put right (**Rom. 8:18–25; 2 Pet. 3:13**).

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 13:1-22

TITLE: *THE FUTILITY OF FIGHTING GOD – TRUST IN THE LORD FOR VICTORY*

BIG IDEA:

WHEN GOD CHOOSES SIDES IT IS FOOLISH TO OPPOSE HIM – ABIJAH TRIES UNSUCCESSFULLY TO GET JEROBOAM TO STAND DOWN FROM CIVIL WAR

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: Where Kings describes a sinful king not wholly devoted to God, a king maintained only because of God's fidelity to David, the Chronicler presents instead a victorious leader and preacher of righteousness. . .

Overlaying the entire passage are the motifs of **holy war**. Battles displaying the power of Israel's God are commonly fought against much larger armies (**13:3; Deut 20:2; 2 Chr 14:8-9; 20:2**); a pre-battle speech by a priest, prophet, or king assures that God is with Israel's army and will give victory (**13:5-13; Deut 20:1-4; 2 Chr 20:5-17**). An offer of peace may be tendered to the opposing forces (**13:5-13; Deut 20:10**). Cultic purity for the combatants is a prerequisite (**13:10-11; 1 Sam 21:4-5; Josh 5:1-8; 7:13; 2 Chr 20:3-4**); victory follows the blowing of the trumpets by the priests and the battle cry from the army (**13:12-15; Num 10:8-9; 31:6; Josh 6; 2 Chr 20:18-22**).

August Konkel: Spiritual opportunity is not always self-evident. Sometimes conflict is opportunity in disguise. If conflict cannot be resolved but conflicted parties can come to realize their own failures, there is spiritual progress. The Chronicler's presentation of Abijah contrasts sharply with the censure of **1 Kings 15:1-8**, where the Judean king is condemned for following in the idolatry of Rehoboam. In Kings, Abijah's reign of faithlessness serves only to exemplify the mercy of God in preserving the Davidic dynasty. The lamp of Israel continued to shine in Jerusalem (**2 Sam 21:17**). The Chronicler provides an account of a war with Jeroboam in which Abijah wins a decisive victory. In addition, Abijah gives what has been termed a Levitical sermon (**von Rad 1966**). Such a speech consists of doctrine, application, and exhortation, with an appeal to earlier biblical texts (**2 Chron 13:4-12**). The reign of Abijah becomes the critical turning point in the Chronicler's assessment of relationships with the northern tribes.

Victory over Jeroboam's superior forces was a divine judgment against the north and an affirmation of Judah's faithfulness. It provides a spiritual opportunity for the northern tribes. The Chronicler absolves the northern tribes of their apostasy during the time of Rehoboam. They were guilty of driving out the priests and replacing them with others who worshiped at the high places. They set up calves and created satyrs (**2 Chron 11:13-15**). With the death of Jeroboam, there is a possibility of turning to God in faithfulness. There was no benefit to the northern tribes in associating with Rehoboam,

who forsook the law of the Lord (**12:1**), but there is renewed opportunity with a new king in Judah. Those who followed Jeroboam should join in the company of those who serve the God of their fathers. Abijah's speech is not a negative polemic but an urgent plea to reconcile the division that has come about.

Martin Selman: Abijah concludes with an appeal, *Do not fight against the Lord . . . for you will not succeed*. It is the focal point of Abijah's argument, and resembles a sermon test, as in other speeches where the text often comes at the end. It contains two important themes, both of which are developed in **2 Chronicles 20:1-30**, the centerpiece of the Divided Monarchy.

- The first, which has its origin in Exodus, is that it is futile to oppose God, for he fights his own battles (cf. **1 Ch. 5:22; 2 Ch. 11:4; 20:27; 32:8**; cf. **Ex. 14:14; Dt. 20:4; Acts 5:39**).
- The second is that one can succeed only with God's help as illustrated positively (e.g. **1 Ch 29:23; 2 Ch. 14:6; 20:20**; and negatively (e.g. **2 Ch. 24:20**).

John Schultz: The missing point in Abijah's speech is that fact that the division had been God-ordained and was a punishment for the sins of his grandfather Solomon and his father Rehoboam.

Jeroboam had received the kingdom, consisting of the ten northern tribes from God, just as much as Abijah had received the southern tribes by divine authority. But it was, obviously, never God's intent that this division would lead to a civil war.

Andrew Hill: The genre of the story of Abijah's "**holy war**" is identified as report, and the contents of the story may be outlined as follows:

- prelude to war (**13:2b-3**),
- Abijah's speech (**13:4-12**), and
- the battle report (**13:13-21**).

The story is framed by opening and closing regnal résumés (**13:1-2a; 13:22-14:1**).

(:1-2b) PROLOGUE – INTRODUCTION TO ABIJAH'S REIGN

A. (:1) Timeline

"In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah."

Frederick Mabie: Following Rehoboam's death, his son Abijah assumes the throne in Judah. Abijah reigns over the southern kingdom from ca. 913-11 BC and may have had a brief coregency with his father Rehoboam. Earlier, Rehoboam had appointed Abijah as chief prince, presumably to facilitate a stable regnal changeover (see **11:22**). Meanwhile, Jeroboam is in his eighteenth year of rule in the northern kingdom.

B. (:2a) Duration

"He reigned three years in Jerusalem;"

C. (:2b) Mother

“and his mother's name was Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.”

Andrew Hill: The most likely reconstruction, then, identifies Maacah as the granddaughter of Absalom (Abishalom in **1 Kings 15:2**) by his daughter Tamar and her husband Uriel of Gibeah (**2 Chron. 13:2**; cf. **2 Sam. 14:27**). This means that Maacah is King Asa's grandmother.

I. (:2c-3) PRELUDE TO CIVIL WAR BETWEEN ABIJAH AND JEROBOAM

A. (:2c) Reporting the Conflict

“And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.”

B. (:3) Numbering the Forces

1. Forces of Abijah

*“And Abijah began the battle with an army of valiant warriors,
400,000 chosen men,”*

Iain Duguid: The account of the battle itself highlights God's provision: he is present and leading, as it is his battle (also in **2 Chron. 20:15**). Victory depended not on a greater army (in numbers or resources) but on his action. This was important for the postexilic community in their apparent weakness in relation to the Persian Empire.

McConville: It is hard to avoid the thought that, in biblical theology, weakness is a positive advantage, because it is a prerequisite of reliance (cf. **2 Cor. 12:10**).

2. Doubled Forces of Jeroboam

*“while Jeroboam drew up in battle formation against him
with 800,000 chosen men who were valiant warriors.”*

Andrew Hill: There is no direct indication as to which party has declared war, although according to **Selman** Jeroboam is likely the aggressor in an attempt to reunite the twelve tribes under a single monarch. He bases his conjecture on the defensive posture of Abijah's speech (esp. **2 Chron. 13:8**) and Jeroboam's military strategy relying on the surprise attack of an ambush (**13:13–14**).

The Chronicler's report of the size of the two opposing armies proves troublesome for some commentators. Various interpretive approaches have been suggested:

- taking the numbers at face value since the writer seems to intend them as literal,
- understanding the numbers as somehow symbolic or a form of hyperbole, or
- assigning a more technical meaning to the word “*thousand*” (*'elep*; e.g., “chieftain” or a military “cohort” of an unspecified number of soldiers).

However one chooses to understand the numbers, the basic meaning of the tallies is clear—the troops of Israel outnumber the troops of Judah two to one.

Peter Wallace: The other option is that the Chronicler is using **exaggeration** to make a point. He knows that no one will think that Judah could muster an army of 400,000 men – much less, an army of 400,000 valiant men of war! – (these are farmers and villagers, after all!)

II. (:4-7) LEARN LESSONS FROM HISTORY – STAND DOWN BECAUSE THIS WAR DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

A. (:4) Abijah Appeals to Jeroboam and Israel to Back Off – Abijah's Sermon on the Mount

“Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, and said, ‘Listen to me, Jeroboam and all Israel:’”

B. (:5) God Has Placed His Permanent Stamp of Approval on the Davidic Dynasty

“Do you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?”

Raymond Dillard: The context implies that a “*covenant of salt*” is an eternal and efficacious covenant, though the precise social or religious character of such a covenant is not known. The “salt of the covenant” was necessary for a sacrifice to be efficacious (**Lev 2:13**); **W. Robertson Smith** (Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, 2d ed. [1894] 270) related the reference to the sacredness of the bond acknowledged among Arabs between persons who have “eaten salt” together. The covenant made with David was as permanent as the covenant made with Israel in the wilderness (**Num 18:19**; **Coggins**, 195).

David Guzik: This promise God made to David was called a **covenant of salt**, which meant a *serious* covenant because it was sealed by sacrifice (sacrifices always included salt, **Leviticus 2:13**). A **covenant of salt** also had the following associations:

- A *pure* covenant (salt stays pure as a chemical compound).
- An *enduring* covenant (salt makes things preserve and endure).
- A *valuable* covenant (salt was expensive).

C. (:6-7) Both Sides Bear Blame for the Kingdom Division

1. (:6) Blame Falls to Jeroboam for His Rebellion

“Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his master,”

2. (:7) Blame Falls to Rehoboam for Weak Leadership

“and worthless men gathered about him, scoundrels, who proved too strong for Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when he was young and timid and could not hold his own against them.”

Raymond Dillard: vv. 4-12 -- The speech of Abijah has two foci: the legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty and the legitimacy of the Jerusalem cult. The kingdom of David is in reality the kingdom of Yahweh; Jeroboam is a rebel surrounded by worthless scoundrels. The cultic personnel and apparatus of the South are divinely ordained, while those of the North serve “no-gods.”

Iain Duguid: The identity of the king around whom the “*scoundrels gathered*” (2 Chron. 13:7) is unclear. Most commentators see the men as accompanying Jeroboam. **Josephus** (Antiquities 8.277), however, understood the statement as referring to the young men who gathered around Rehoboam and “*prevailed over, persuaded*” (rather than “*defied*”) him (cf. 10:10; this interpretation fits normal Hb. patterns in which “*him*” would be the last person mentioned—Jeroboam’s “*lord*,” Rehoboam).

August Konkel: The *sons of Belial* that prevailed over Rehoboam can be none other than the rash young advisers who demanded more conscripted labor from the north.

III. (:8-12) EVALUATE YOUR CHANCES -- STAND DOWN BECAUSE GOD IS ON OUR SIDE

A. (:8) You Are Basing Your Chances of Success on Worldly Power = Faulty Thinking

1. Fallacy of Trying to Resist the Kingdom of God

“So now you intend to resist the kingdom of the LORD through the sons of David,”

2. Fallacy of Trusting in the Power of Superior Numbers

“being a great multitude”

3. Fallacy of Trusting in the Power of Man-Made Gods

“and having with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made for gods for you.”

Raymond Dillard: vv. 8-9 -- For the Chronicler the kingdom of David was the kingdom of God; that kingdom was forever to be in the hands of David’s descendants. For the post-exilic audience to which he wrote, an audience living without a Davidic king, this speech must have expressed their hopes and aspirations. The speech argues from the two foci of legitimate king and legitimate cult; in the Chronicler’s own day legitimate cult was a reality with the second temple, and aspirations for political freedom fired hopes for the reestablishment of the Davidic dynasty. Israel as the kingdom of Yahweh is one of the Chronicler’s favorite themes (1 Chr 17:14; 28:5; 29:11, 23; 2 Chr 9:8).

B. (:9) You Have Substituted Man-Made Counterfeit Religion for True Worship

“Have you not driven out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron and the Levites, and made for yourselves priests like the peoples of other lands? Whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams, even he may become a priest of what are no gods.”

C. (:10-11) God is On Our Side – You Have Forsaken Him; We Have Remained Faithful

“But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the sons of Aaron are ministering to the LORD as priests, and the Levites attend to their work. 11 And every morning and evening they burn to the LORD burnt offerings and fragrant incense, and the showbread is set on the clean table, and the golden lampstand with its lamps is ready to light every evening; for we keep the charge of the LORD our God, but you have forsaken Him.”

D. (:12) You Have No Chance of Success Because God is Our Commander In Chief

“Now behold, God is with us at our head and His priests with the signal trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O sons of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you will not succeed.”

Iain Duguid: Thus the final appeal to the “sons of Israel” to cease their rebellion speaks of the Lord as the “God of your fathers.” They may have rebelled, but they are still part of “Israel,” over whom God had placed “sons of David” to rule and whose worship was centered in the temple, with the Aaronic priesthood assisted by other Levites. Returning to the Lord, whom “your fathers” worshiped, is the only way to “succeed.”

Peter Wallace: Behind the sermon of Abijah, you need to hear the sermon of the Chronicler! You may not see how God will provide for you. You may face overwhelming odds. But you need to rely on the LORD, the God of your fathers. He will not leave you or forsake you.

IV. (:13-19) BATTLE REPORT

Andrew Hill: The battle report is presented in four stages:

- Jeroboam’s tactic of an ambush (13:13–14a),
- Judah’s prayers for divine help (13:14b–15a),
- God’s granting victory to Judah (13:15b–16), and
- details concerning the outcome of the battle (13:17–19).

The realization that Jeroboam’s troops catch Judah in ambush, resulting in a pincers-type attack that force the action at the front and the rear of Abijah’s army, causes them to cry out to God for divine intervention. This battle shout is “an act of faith” that God’s swift and dramatic involvement will ensue (reminiscent of the battle shout that brought down Jericho, **Josh. 6:20**).

A. (:13-14a) Ambush Tactics of Jeroboam Looked Promising

“But Jeroboam had set an ambush to come from the rear, so that Israel was in front of Judah, and the ambush was behind them. 14 When Judah turned around, behold, they were attacked both front and rear;”

B. (:14b) Judah Called on the Lord for Deliverance

“so they cried to the LORD, and the priests blew the trumpets.”

C. (:15-17) Divine Rout Accomplished by Abijah and His Troops

“Then the men of Judah raised a war cry, and when the men of Judah raised the war cry, then it was that God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16 And when the sons of Israel fled before Judah, God gave them into their hand. 17 And Abijah and his people defeated them with a great slaughter, so that 500,000 chosen men of Israel fell slain.”

J.A. Thompson: Abijah and his men inflicted heavy losses on Israel. The outcome of the battle was defeat and humiliation for Jeroboam and victory for Abijah and the men of Judah because they relied on the Lord, the God of their fathers. The verb translated “relied on” (*sa’an*) appears also at **14:11** and **16:7-8**. It is used of leaning upon something (cf. **2 Sam 1:6**; **2 Kgs 5:18**; **7:2, 17**; **Ezek 29:7**; figuratively in **Prov 3:5**). By contrast, when Judah turned aside to wickedness, they might well have lost a battle (cf. **28:19**).

D. (:18) Key to Victory = Trusting in the Lord

“Thus the sons of Israel were subdued at that time, and the sons of Judah conquered because they trusted in the LORD, the God of their fathers.”

E. (:19) Pursuit of Jeroboam Resulted in Capturing Key Cities

“And Abijah pursued Jeroboam, and captured from him several cities, Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and Ephron with its villages.”

Martin Selman: *Bethel’s* capture is an ironic comment on the golden calves’ inability to defend their own sanctuary (cf. **1 Kings 12:28-33**).

(:20-22) EPILOGUE – CONCLUSION OF REIGN OF ABIJAH

A. (:20) Death of Abijah

“And Jeroboam did not again recover strength in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck him and he died.”

Andrew Hill: The heavy losses sustained by Jeroboam at the battle of Mount Zemaraim cripple his capacities for further aggression against the southern kingdom. In that sense, Jeroboam does “*not regain power*” (**13:20a**) during Abijah’s reign (remember that Abijah only rules for three years). The report of Jeroboam’s death (**13:20b**) is telescoped for the sake of the Chronicler’s theological emphasis, since Jeroboam actually outlives Abijah (cf. **1 Kings 15:9**). The Chronicler understands Jeroboam’s eventual death as an act of divine judgment (“*the LORD struck him down,*” **2 Chron. 13:20b**).

B. (:21) Family of Abijah

“But Abijah became powerful, and took fourteen wives to himself; and became the father of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.”

Iain Duguid: The account of Abijah’s reign ends by comparing Jeroboam’s weakening position, which climaxes in *“The Lord struck him down [nagap, as in v. 15],”* with Abijah’s large family, a sign of blessing.

C. (:22) Recorded Deeds of Abijah

“Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways and his words are written in the treatise of the prophet Iddo.”

David Guzik: Yet from our more complete understanding of Abijah’s life, we can learn another lesson: *that one great spiritual victory does not make an entire life before God.* One should never trust in a past spiritual accomplishment or season of victory.

Matthew Henry: Result: The death of both of the conquered and of the conqueror, not long after.

1. Jeroboam never looked up after this defeat, though he survived it two or three years. He could not recover strength again, **2 Chron. 13:20**. The Lord struck him either with some bodily disease, of which he languished, or with melancholy and trouble of mind; his heart was broken, and vexation at his loss brought his head, probably by this time a hoary head, with sorrow to the grave. He escaped the sword of Abijah, but God struck him: and there is no escaping his sword.

2. Abijah waxed mighty upon it. What number of wives and children he had before does not appear; but now he multiplied his wives to fourteen in all, by whom he had thirty-eight children, **2 Chron. 13:21**. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of those arrows. It seems, he had ways peculiar to himself, and sayings of his own, which were recorded with his acts in the history of those times, **2 Chron. 13:22**. But the number of his months was cut off in the midst, and, soon after his triumphs, death conquered the conqueror. Perhaps he was too much lifted up with his victories, and therefore God would not let him live long to enjoy the honour of them.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) When do we try to fight against God or against His kingdom agenda?
- 2) When are we tempted to put our trust in numbers or tempted to lean on our own understanding rather than fully trusting the Lord for victory?
- 3) How painful are internal conflicts within the church?

4) Do we really consider the Lord's promises regarding our future to be a **covenant of salt**?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: The import of Abijah's sermon was not likely lost on the post-exilic community for which the Chronicler wrote. The theocracy stood on twin pillars: the Davidic covenant and the temple cult, both the foci of Abijah's condemnation of the North. The post-exilic community had enjoyed the reinstatement of the temple cult; the revitalization of Israel awaited the reestablishment of political freedom under Davidic rule. The Chronicler is so often treated as if he offered no eschatological expectation and was an advocate of the status quo; that reading of Chronicles, however, cannot grapple adequately with the forcefulness with which the Chronicler reiterates the eternity of God's promises to the house of David (**1 Chr 17; 22:10; 28:6-7; 2 Chr 6:16; 7:17-18; 13:4, 8**). The post-exilic community might be under foreign domination, but the kingdom remains secure: God always was the real king of Israel (**13:8**), even when no descendant of David sat on a throne.

The Chronicler will later draw on his account of the reign of Abijah to show that the South could sink to the same level of apostasy as had the North

Andrew Hill: The location of this mountain is uncertain, but presumably it is situated somewhere in the hill country of Ephraim on the northern border of Benjaminite territory—perhaps near Bethel (cf. **Josh. 18:22**). Abijah's speech is **propagandistic**, given the military context of the address; "psychological warfare" is not a modern development. His address is also **sermonic** in that it is hortatory in nature. Indirectly, the king appeals to the northern tribes to reunify under Davidic rule because the kingdom of the Lord has been given to David and his descendants (**13:5, 8a**). Abijah also directly challenges the Israelite army to give up the fight because God's covenant of kingship with the house of David is a perpetual one, as signified by the reference to "*a covenant of salt*" (**13:5**; cf. **Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19** on the connotations of **eternity** associated with the "*covenant of salt*").

The speech contrasts the faithfulness and loyalty of Abijah with the rebellion and disloyalty of Jeroboam in two issues: the Davidic covenant (**13:4-8a**) and God's temple in Jerusalem (**13:8b-12**). In order to create dissension and separate Jeroboam from his troops, Abijah refers to his northern counterpart in the third person and characterizes his leadership as "*rebellion*" against Solomon (**13:6**), since he was formerly a court official under David's successor (**1 Kings 11:26**). Implicitly, Jeroboam has rebelled against God since God has given the kingdom to David and his descendants (**2 Chron. 13:5**).

Abijah goes on to defend his father's role in the split of the monarchy, acknowledging he was "*young and indecisive*" at the time (**13:7**). Meanwhile, Jeroboam has surrounded

himself with “*scoundrels*,” who aided and abetted him as the mastermind of the coup (13:7). . .

The second half of Abijah’s speech contrasts Jeroboam’s forsaking of the Lord’s temple and his banishment of the Levitical priesthood with Abijah’s compliance with the Mosaic law related to the proper worship of God (13:8b–12). Like the first half of the address, this segment includes a rhetorical question based on the conviction that Israel ought to know they are the party in the wrong (13:9). The installment of a pseudo-priesthood aside (13:9b), the most damning indictment against the northern tribes are “*the golden calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods*” (13:8b).

The punch line of Abijah’s oration is eminently theological and decidedly practical: “*God is with us*” (13:12a). What kind of folly is it to “*fight against the LORD*” (13:12b)? Allen has penetrated to the heart of Abijah’s appeal in his insight that the king’s speech is ultimately all about “self-determination.” **Israel can choose not to fight against the Lord.** The Chronicler holds out that same option for his own audience. They too can bury the tribal schisms of the past and in self-determination pursue an agenda of reconciliation and unity for the good of all the Israelites in postexilic Judah. This is the only way the “restoration” of Israel will succeed.

Iain Duguid: In telling this story the Chronicler affirms that past rebellion is not final; the prodigal is always welcomed as a full member of the family (cf. **Luke 15:11–32**). While past history always shapes life in the present, with patterns of behavior becoming more set (as grooves become ruts!), each generation is nevertheless responsible for its own decisions. This was argued at length at the time of the exile, in **Ezekiel 18** (also **Jer. 31:29–30**; the only Mosaic law explicitly quoted in Kings [**2 Kings 14:6**; **Deut. 24:16**] is one rejecting intergenerational liability). Abijah’s call was not a matter of political affiliation but an appeal based on the “*kingdom of the Lord*.” Centuries later, Jesus, the Son of David, proclaimed: “*The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel*” (**Mark 1:15**). The call to allegiance extends not only to “*all Israel*” but to “*all nations*” (**Matt. 28:19–20**).

Abijah’s appeal, based on God’s past actions and his welcome as people “*seek*” him, points to God’s grace, as does God’s action when the people “*relied*” on him. The people of the north, part of “*all Israel*,” may have rebelled because of the weakness and faults of the Davidic kings—one might compare failings by church leaders—but that did not negate God’s plan for the Davidic king and his people. For all the faults of God’s people, it is among and through his people that God is still fulfilling his purposes (**Eph. 1:15–23**). Centuries later, Gamaliel warned of the folly of “*opposing God*” (**Acts 5:38–39**).

J.A. Thompson: For the Chronicler the high point of Abijah’s reign was his sermon to the northern tribes, in which he upheld the ideal of the Davidic king as God’s anointed ruler for his people and the Solomonic temple as God’s chosen place for worship. To be sure, he did not deny that the Davidic king could behave with weakness and folly, but the truth still remains that this is the only chosen line. To abandon it is to turn away

from God's kingdom. Abijah's message speaks to our day as well. Many people have grievances against the church and feel that this legitimizes their rejection of it. To be sure, the church has many faults, just as the house of David had many faults. Yet both are at the heart of God's plan. In the end the kingdom of God will triumph, and those who oppose or reject his institutions will suffer for it.

August Konkler: The speech of Abijah introduces the implications of the division for the Davidic dynasty and the purity of worship at Jerusalem. The northerners now have an opportunity to support a good king. Kings says nothing of such devotion by Abijah and condemns him for following in the idolatry of Rehoboam. His dominion was preserved only because the Lord desired to keep the lamp for David preserved in Jerusalem (**1 Kings 15:3-4**). The Chronicler in turn sees the positive possibility of turning to God after the weakness of Rehoboam and the rebellion of Jeroboam against him had caused the disruption of the kingdom.

Caleb Nelson:

I. The Background: Abijah's Conflict with Jeroboam, **13:13**

II. Abijah Proves that Judah Is the Kingdom of God, **13:4-12**

A. First Argument: The History of the Covenant, **13:5-9**

Compare **2 Chronicles 9:8; 1 Chronicles 29:23; Isaiah 9:7**

B. Second Argument: The Ongoing Practice of Levitical Worship, **13:10-11**

C. Conclusion: To Fight Judah Is to Fight God Himself, **13:12**

III. God Proves that Abijah Was Right, **13:13-14:1b**

A. God Defeats Israel, **13:13-19**

B. God Smites Jeroboam, **13:20**

C. God Blesses Abijah, **13:21-14:1b**

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/829161246491.pdf>

Matthew Henry: Abijah had right on his side, a *jus divinum*—**a divine right**: “*You know, or ought to know, that God gave the kingdom to David and his sons for ever*” (**2 Chron. 13:5**), not by common providence, his usual way of disposing of kingdoms, but by a covenant of salt, a lasting covenant, a covenant made by sacrifice, which was always salted; so bishop Patrick. All Israel had owned that David was a king of God's making, and that God had entailed the crown upon his family; so that Jeroboam's taking the crown of Israel at first was not justifiable: yet it is not certain that Abijah referred chiefly to that, for he knew that Jeroboam had a grant from God of the ten tribes. His attempt, however, to disturb the peace and possession of the king of Judah was by no means excusable; for when the ten tribes were given to him two were reserved for the house of David. Abijah shows,

(1.) That there was a great deal of dishonesty and disingenuousness in Jeroboam's first setting himself up: He rebelled against his lord (**2 Chron. 13:6**) who had preferred him (**1 Kgs. 11:28**), and basely took advantage of Rehoboam's weakness in a critical juncture, when, in gratitude to his old master and in justice to his title, he ought rather to

have stood by him, and helped to secure the people in their allegiance to him, than to head a party against him and make a prey of him, which was unworthily done and what he could not expect to prosper in. Those that supported him are here called vain men (a character perhaps borrowed from **Jdg. 11:3**), men that did not act from any steady principle, but were given to change, and men of Belial, that were for shaking off the yoke of government and setting those over them that would do just as they would have them do.

(2.) That there was a great deal of impiety in his present attempt; for, in fighting against the house of David, **he fought against the kingdom of the Lord**. Those who oppose right oppose the righteous God who sits in the throne judging right, and cannot promise themselves success in so doing. Right may indeed go by the worst for a time, but it will prevail at last.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 14:1 – 16:14

TITLE: REIGN OF ASA – RELIGIOUS REFORMER WITH LATE LIFE LAPSES

BIG IDEA:
**SPIRITUAL FAITHFULNESS MUST BE SUSTAINED –
IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST START OUT STRONG**

INTRODUCTION:

We see many examples in Scriptures and in life where somebody starts out strong – trusting the Lord alone in times of pressure – but finishes poorly. New challenges to our faith require sustaining spiritual faithfulness. As the financial commercials clearly state: “Past performance is no guarantee of future success.” Yet Asa must be given his due credit for his many reforms.

August Konkel: There is never a time when learning to be faithful is complete. Faithfulness is an attitude that must be practiced; it is learned again in each new circumstance. Failures in faithfulness strike without warning. The consequences of such failures are not limited to the individual who sins. Like all sins, unfaithfulness affects all those around, and its effects continue far into the future. Asa is an example of such a disastrous failure, both at the individual level as well on the institutional scene. Leaders of institutions, whether denominations or congregations, therefore carry a particular responsibility to learn to trust God in every situation and to recognize that success at one time does not make future success more likely.

Andrew Hill: In summary, King Asa is a religious reformer (14:3–5) and a builder of fortifications for the defense of Judah’s perimeter (14:7). The repetition of “*seeking the LORD*” in 14:4, 7 (2×)—an expression that occurs nine times in the three chapters recounting Asa’s kingship (see also 15:2, 4, 12, 13, 15; 16:12)—sets the theme for the entire section. The “*rest*” (14:5, 6, 7) or peace that Judah enjoys under Asa is due in part to Abijah’s victory over Jeroboam (13:19–20) but is also a reward for Asa’s faithfulness to God (14:7). This accords well with the Chronicler’s emphasis on the retribution principle in Israelite history; that is, obedience to God’s commands results in reward whereas disobedience brings punishment. “*Rest*” in the land is the fulfillment of God’s covenant promise to give Canaan to the Israelites as their “*inheritance*” (Deut. 12:8–10).

Iain Duguid: The story of Asa’s long reign is an example of growth in obedience as one “*seeks the Lord*.” The life of faith is not static. The prophetic word, with its promises, warning, and encouragement, came after initial reforms and enjoyment of blessing over some years, and after a victory over attackers that resulted from “*relying*” on God. The unreserved commitment (“*covenant*”) came after deliverance; repentance (15:8: further “*put[ting] away*”; cf. 14:3–5) came after God’s gracious acts. . .

In the Chronicler's narration, the last six years of Asa's reign are quite different from the first thirty-five. The concise side comment in **1 Kings 15:23** that "*In his old age he was diseased in his feet*" required explanation in light of the positive reforms during his reign. The Chronicler sees examples of judgment that followed Asa's failure to "rely" on God and his subsequent angry rejection of the prophet's word; they are outworkings of the second alternative in **2 Chronicles 15:2**, "*If you forsake him, he will forsake you.*" The theological perspective of **retribution** shapes his narrative and explains the additions.

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler notes that after Asa's accession, the land was quiet for ten years, a statement that contrasts with **1 Kgs 15:16** which describes warfare between Asa and Baasha throughout their reigns. The Chronicler proceeds to elaborate on Asa's reform, essentially interpolating between **1 Kgs 15:12** and **13** a large block of material unique to his account (**2 Chr 14:4—15:15**). This material is rich in the concepts of **retribution theology**: it elaborates on Asa's building programs, his trust in God and the subsequent victory over the much more numerous forces of Zerah, and his responsiveness to the word of God through Azariah. . .

The writer accepts the basic evaluation of his reign from Kings (**14:1 [2] // 1 Kgs 15:10**). He takes details from the Kings account (details of the reform, the wars with Baasha, the death from a foot disease) and elaborates upon them in light of his convictions about retribution. Each detail is provided with its cause or results: reforms issue in victory, peace, prosperity, and the loyalty of the populace (**chaps. 14–15**); war and disease follow infidelity (**chap. 16**). The reign is divided into two periods, and apostasy is confined to the last few years.

The Chronicler commonly uses speech materials to announce themes important to him; the speech materials often seem to have direct homiletical relevance for the post-exilic period. Building, prosperity, and the possession of the land depend on seeking God (**14:6 [7]**); even though facing numerically insurmountable opposition, no one can prevail against God (**14:10 [11]**). In spite of the ferment and tumult of the past, there is reward for labor (**15:2–7**); do not rely on political alliances but on God (**16:7–9**).

Frederick Mabie: Asa is the first of the post-divided kingdom Judean kings to be described as doing what is right in God's eyes. Moreover, Asa is the first Judean king of this era to inaugurate significant reforms designed to eradicate syncretism and revitalize covenantal fidelity within the community (cf. **15:8-18**). Thus the reign and reforms of Asa function as a sort of precursor to the later reformer kings in Judah, most notably Hezekiah and Josiah. Note that Asa, like Hezekiah (**30:6-11**), invites those situated within the northern kingdom to assemble in Jerusalem and publicly declare their loyalty to God's ways (cf. **15:9-15**). By contrast, the final six or so years of Asa's reign (compare **15:19; 16:1, 13**) are punctuated with compromise and ungodly behavior.

De Vries: The **lesson of Asa** is clear: when formidable enemies attack God's people, their trust in Yahweh will assure them the victory. But when they use force and intrigue

on their own initiative, ignoring their special calling as his people, they bring ineluctable [inescapable] ruin on themselves and their posterity.

I. (14:1-15) THE EARLY YEARS – ASA SEEKS GOD AND IS PROSPERED

A. (:1-7) Seeking God Brings Manifold Blessing of Peace and Prosperity

Phil Winfield: Early Rule: He did right in times of peace and prosperity (**2 Chronicles 14.1- 8**). I have said many times people get spiritual in a crisis. Notice that:

- Asa did right by using the peace time to remove the foreign altars, high places, asherim (**v.3&5**)
- Asa did right by motivating the people to seek God and to obey his law (**v.4**).
- He did right by building up his cities and their defenses while they were at peace. It is foolish to wait for a battle to get ready for war. (**v.6-8**).
- God rewarded them with rest and they were undisturbed on every side.

Amen. Peace comes from a position of strength not weakness as far as nations are concerned.

Martin Selman: The first part of Asa’s reign exemplifies faithfulness, expansion, and security. In the evaluation, *good* has been added to *right* (**v. 1**; cf. **1 Kgs 15:11**), apparently as a parallel with Hezekiah (the phrase recurs only in **2 Chr. 31:20**). The reform has three main features: worship (**vv. 3-5**), buildings and fortifications (**vv. 6-7**), and the army (**v. 8**).

1. (:1a) Transition from Abijah to Asa

a. Death and Burial of Abijah

*“So Abijah slept with his fathers,
and they buried him in the city of David,”*

b. Succession

“and his son Asa became king in his place.”

2. (:1b-2) Blessing of Peace Associated with Righteousness

a. (:1b) Rare Rest

*“The land was **undisturbed** for ten years during his days.”*

b. (:2) Righteous Reign

“And Asa did good and right in the sight of the LORD his God,”

Iain Duguid: Asa’s doing “*good and right in the eyes of the Lord*” (**v. 2**; said also of Hezekiah, **31:20**) and his command to Judah “*to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers [cf. 15:12], and to keep the law and the commandment*” (**14:4**) led to peace: “*The kingdom had rest under him . . . for the Lord gave him peace*” (**vv. 5–6**). Here, after reform, is return to the “rest” from attacks that was a feature of the reign of Solomon (**1 Chron. 22:9**). This follows the pattern of the period of the judges, in which there was

always “rest” for some years after God delivered the people, until they again “*did what was evil in the sight of the Lord*” (e.g., **Judg. 3:11–12; 3:30–4:1**); an intentional parallel here with Judges is likely, given the later reminder of the turmoil of that time (**2 Chron. 15:3–6**).

3. (:3-5a) Essentials for Seeking God

a. (:3) Attack Idolatry Aggressively

*“for he removed the foreign altars and high places,
tore down the sacred pillars,
cut down the Asherim,”*

b. (:4) Obey God’s Commands Diligently

*“and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers
and to observe the law and the commandment.”*

J.A. Thompson: There are nine references to seeking the Lord in the three chapters devoted to Asa (**14:3, 7** [twice]; **15:2, 4, 12, 13, 15; 16:12**). The phrase was a summary description of how one was to respond to God and thus defined one who was a member of the believing community. It involved more than a specific act of seeking God’s help and guidance but stood for one’s whole duty toward God (cf. **v. 7; 15:2, 12-13**). According to **1 Chr 28:9** it is equivalent to knowing God and serving him “*with wholehearted devotion*.” Part of that attitude was the keeping of God’s laws and commands. **S. Wagner** notes that the concept is “so complex that very important consequences are causally connected with it”: success (**2 Chr 17:5**), peace (**2 Chr 14:5-6**), and life (**1 Chr 10:13-14; 2 Chr 15:13**). He also explains that it denotes “the Chronicler’s typical ideal of piety.”

c. (:5a) Purify Worship Boldly

*“He also removed the high places and the incense altars
from all the cities of Judah.”*

Iain Duguid: The removal of the “*high places*” appears to contradict **1 Kings 15:14** (“*but the high places were not taken away*”), but the Chronicler notes that the removal was from “*all the cities of Judah*” (**2 Chron. 14:5**) but not “*out of Israel*” (**15:17**). “*Pillars*” were standing stones representing Baal, and “*Asherim*” were wooden poles representing the goddess Asherah (cf. **Deut. 7:5**); the “*incense altars*” (**2 Chron. 14:5; 34:4, 7; Lev. 26:30; Isa. 17:8**) were perhaps small shrines.

Frederick Mabie: In addition to Asa’s efforts to facilitate Godwardness and adherence to divine truth (orthodoxy) summarized in **v.4**, Asa takes specific steps to remove places associated with syncretism (heterodoxy). The result of these efforts in covenantal obedience is God-given peace and stability within the southern kingdom.

4. (:5b-7) Blessing of Peace and Prosperity Leveraged in Building up Defenses

a. (:5b) Peace

*“And the kingdom was **undisturbed** under him.”*

- b. (:6a) Fortifications
“And he built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years,”
- c. (:6b-7a) Rest Due to Seeking God
“because the LORD had given him rest. 7 For he said to Judah, ‘Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side.’”
- d. (:7b) Prosperity
“So they built and prospered.”

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler commonly reports on the **building projects** of godly kings; he makes no mention of such projects in his account of the reigns of kings under divine censure. These two verses are a fairly direct articulation of his historiographical concepts: obedience brings peace (*“no wars . . . for Yahweh had given him rest”*; *“we sought him and he has given us rest”*) and the prosperity to build (*“they built and prospered”*).

B. (:8-15) Seeking God Brings Overwhelming Victory over Powerful Foes

(:8) Transition – Formidable Military Force of Asa

“Now Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah, bearing large shields and spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin, bearing shields and wielding bows; all of them were valiant warriors.”

1. (:9-11) Overwhelming Force of the Attacking Enemy

a. (:9-10) Crisis Confrontation – Test Ordained by God

1) (:9) Superior Forces of Zerah

“Now Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and he came to Mareshah.”

Martin Selman: Normally in the Bible **Cush** is the area south of Egypt, i.e. Sudan (cf. GNB; rather than modern Ethiopia, cf. NRSV, RSV). Mention of Gerar (vv. **13-14**), however, just across the Judean-Philistine border, may indicate a more local bedouin conflict, perhaps supported by the parallel between “Cushan” and Midian (**Hab. 3:7**). The African interpretation is more likely, however, for the following reasons. The Cushites are associated with the Libyans (**2 Ch. 16:8**, cf. **12:3**), local bedouin tribes are unlikely to have owned 300 chariots when Judah had none (v. **9**), and precise geographical conclusions should not be drawn on the basis of a single example of prophetic poetry, especially as Gerar is west of Judah and Midian is to the south.

2) (:10) Staging for Battle

“So Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up in battle formation in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.”

J. Barton Payne: This was one of the cities Rehoboam had fortified in anticipation of just such an attack (11:9).

b. (:11) Calling on the Lord for Deliverance

“Then Asa called to the LORD his God, and said, ‘LORD, there is no one besides Thee to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in Thee, and in Thy name have come against this multitude. O LORD, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee.’”

Andrew Hill: As in the report of Abijah’s war with Jeroboam (ch. 13), Yahweh-war motifs flavor this story: the overwhelming numbers of the enemy army (14:9; cf. 13:3), a pre-battle speech or prayer invoking God to be a warrior for Israel (14:11–12; cf. 13:5–11), Yahweh’s striking down the enemy for the king of Judah (14:12–13; cf. 13:15–16), and the fear of Yahweh falling on the enemy (14:13; cf. 13:16).

The Chronicler includes this story of Judah’s victory over Zerah and the Cushites as evidence of the king’s faithfulness and reliance on God. Despite Asa’s defensive strategy and military resources (14:7–8), he acknowledges powerlessness before the foe and pleads for divine deliverance (14:11). **McConville** observes that events like this one are recorded in the Bible “precisely to encourage faith that can hold in the face of such (overwhelming) odds.” **Allen** goes further, first by outlining the beautiful structure of Asa’s prayer, “beginning and ending with appeals to God and setting human faith in the middle, surrounded by the protective power of the covenant God,” and second by noting that “God’s help is triggered by prayer, prayer which admits to human helplessness and lays claim to God’s patronage.” Such prayer is exemplary, whether for the Chronicler’s time or our own!

J.A. Thompson: Asa’s prayer is appropriate for the occasion and in keeping with Solomon’s advice. The Lord is called upon as the one who could help the powerless against the mighty. The literal Hebrew reads, *“It is not with you to help between the great and him that has no strength.”* The meaning is that the strong as well as the weak need the Lord’s assistance to gain victory. In this situation the appeal is to the Lord to help the weak. Asa’s appeal was that as he relied on the Lord and in the Lord’s name had come against the vast army of the Cushites, so may the Lord not allow people to prevail against him (the Lord). This is the standard theological approach of the Chronicler. The war was a holy war, and the victory must have been assured when the Lord’s people relied on him however small Israel’s forces may have been.

2. (:12-15) Overwhelming Victory -- God Utterly Vanquishes His Enemies

When God goes up against His enemies, there are no buzzer beaters, no close calls, no tight skirmishes. He utterly vanquishes those who oppose Him. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord! There's Victory in Jesus!

a. (:12-13a) Routing the Enemy

“So the LORD routed the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 13 And Asa and the people who were with him pursued them as far as Gerar; and so many Ethiopians fell that they could not recover, for they were shattered before the LORD, and before His army.”

b. (:13b-14) Plundering the Enemy

“And they carried away very much plunder. 14 And they destroyed all the cities around Gerar, for the dread of the LORD had fallen on them; and they despoiled all the cities, for there was much plunder in them.”

c. (:15) Devastating the Enemy

“They also struck down those who owned livestock, and they carried away large numbers of sheep and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.”

Iain Duguid: “*Then they returned to Jerusalem*” could be simply a matter-of-fact statement, but Chronicles’ focus on Jerusalem and the temple points greater significance. The phrase functions as **transition** to the next stage, centering on the temple. Immediately following is an account of further reform and a gathering of all the people in worship, with sacrifices from the “spoil” (**14:13; 15:11**) and a “covenant” ceremony that concluded with “rejoicing” and a recognition that “*the Lord gave them rest all around*” (**15:15**).

Mark Boda: In the Chronicler’s account, the attack of an enemy is usually a sign of God’s discipline awakening the people to their need for renewal. In the Chronicler’s pattern the repentance of the people leads to God’s miraculous deliverance of his people. In this case, however, God’s deliverance was provided without any reference to repentance and was followed by a prophetic call to renewal. Thus, deliverance rather than discipline served as a motivation for renewal. This may be linked in the present case to the absence of a clear link between sin and the attack of the enemy or to the exemplary character of Asa’s cry to the Lord in **14:11**, which was enough to secure deliverance in the moment of crisis. However, it is possible that the Chronicler’s program was multidimensional, in this case providing a model for repentance that followed the gracious intervention of God rather than preceded it. Such a model would have resonated with the Persian-period community, which had experienced the grace of God and was being called to an even deeper level of purity and commitment.

II. (15:1-19) THE EXEMPLARY YEARS – ASA IMPLEMENTS RELIGIOUS REFORMS

Raymond Dillard: The post-exilic community probably saw the speech as quite applicable to its own life. The exile could have been regarded as a period without a proper cultic establishment in place and operational, a time when God had abandoned the people (15:3); the adversity and strife faced by the restoration community mirrored the unsafe commerce (cf. Zech 7:14; Ezra 8:31), turmoil, and harassment of which Azariah spoke (15:4–6). The promises of his speech, that God could be found and would reward their labor, would have immediate homiletical relevance; for the Chronicler the desired response may have been similar to that of Azariah’s hearers (15:8–15).

A. (:1-7) Religious Reforms Motivated by Prophetic Exhortation of Azariah

Frederick Mabie: Whether seen from a past or future orientation, the Chronicler’s postexilic audience would not doubt appreciate the parallel to their own situation in the light of Judah’s seventy years of captivity and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and thus be likewise exhorted to return and seek God.

(:1-2a) Introduction to the Message of Azariah

a. (:1) Initiative of the Spirit of God

“Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded,”

b. (:2a) Interchange with Asa

“and he went out to meet Asa and said to him,”

c. (:2b) Importance of Heeding the Message

“Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin:”

Andrew Hill: Azariah is unknown in the Old Testament apart from this one episode. The expression “*the Spirit of God came upon*” (15:1) is typically used in the Old Testament to signify divine empowerment for some specific task, often prophetic inspiration for delivering oracles from God (e.g., 20:14; 24:20). A direct commission of some sort usually accompanies the work of God’s Spirit; in this case Azariah is charged to go and find King Asa (15:2a). God’s prophet serves as the conscience of the divided monarchies, so it is appropriate that Azariah’s message is delivered to the king and the people of Judah and Benjamin (15:2b).

1. (:2b) Fundamental Principle – Lord is with You When You Seek Him

“the LORD is with you when you are with Him.

And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him;

but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.”

Martin Selman: The theme of seeking God continues from **chapter 14**, occupying a central role in both the prophecy (vv. 2, 4) and the covenant (vv. 12-13, 15). Two

elements are stressed, that the purpose of seeking God is to be found by him (vv. 2, 4, 15), and that this is an attitude affecting the whole of life. Seeking is not an end in itself, but a God-given means to be restored to a relationship with him. That relationship is seen to encompass internal and external worlds, attitudes as well as actions. Neither pietism nor restructuring is adequate by itself, and any authentic movement of spiritual renewal should show evidence of both.

2. (:3) Recipe for Spiritual Disaster

a. No Relationship with the True God

“And for many days Israel was without the true God”

J. Barton Payne: Probably referring to the chaotic days of the Judges.

b. No Spiritual Instruction from Qualified Leader

“and without a teaching priest”

c. No Divine Revelation of God’s Standards

“and without law.”

Andrew Hill: The prophet’s speech also has currency for the Chronicler’s audience, for it summarizes the three essentials for sustaining the faith of the restoration community in postexilic Judah: the true God, the teaching priest, and the law (15:3).

3. (:4) Key to Spiritual Reformation = Repentance and Seeking God

*“But in their distress they turned to the LORD God of Israel,
and they sought Him,
and He let them find Him.”*

4. (:5-6) Pressure from Divine Discipline

*“And in those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him
who came in,
for many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands.
6 And nation was crushed by nation, and city by city,
for God troubled them with every kind of distress.”*

5. (:7) Encouragement to Bravely Persevere in Implementing Reforms

*“But you, be strong and do not lose courage,
for there is reward for your work.”*

Frederick Mabie: The prophet’s admonition to Asa to “*be strong*” is a function of one’s **spiritual** – not physical – fortitude in times of challenge and uncertainty. This spiritual dimension of being strong is seen in Asa’s response (“*he took courage,*” v.8) as he embarks on leading the people in worship and spiritual renewal (vv.8b-15).

B. (:8-15) Asa’s Reforms and Covenant Renewal Ceremony

1. (:8-9) Asa’s Reforms

- a. (:8a) Removal of Abominable Idols
“Now when Asa heard these words and the prophecy which Azariah the son of Oded the prophet spoke, he took courage and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim.”
- b. (:8b) Restoration of the Altar of the Lord
“He then restored the altar of the LORD which was in front of the porch of the LORD.”

Frederick Mabie: Asa’s destruction of idols from the tribal territories of the southern kingdom and northern tribal areas (“the hills of Ephraim”) is balanced with his repairs on the altar of the Jerusalem temple. These repairs on the altar function as a tangible act evidencing his inward disposition toward faithfulness and fidelity to God. The destruction of objects of idolatry and syncretistic worship per Deuteronomic admonition (cf. **Dt 16:21-22**) is a cornerstone of Asa’s religious reforms and is likewise seen in the reforms of Hezekiah (cf. **2Ch 31:1**) and Josiah (cf. **34:3-7**).

- c. (:9) Rallying the People
“And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin and those from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who resided with them, for many defected to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.”

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler’s concern with “*all Israel*” is one of his most pervasive themes; from the vantage point of the post-exilic community, he has not simply written off the Northern tribes. Here Asa enjoys the loyalty of many Northerners, as had Rehoboam before him (**11:13–17**). The Chronicler speaks of actions in the North on the part of several of the kings of Judah. Asa’s son Jehoshaphat put garrisons in the cities of Ephraim captured by his father (**17:2**) and sent a teaching delegation into the North (**19:4**). Hezekiah invited Israelites from Beersheba to Dan to celebrate the Passover (**30:5, 11**); Josiah’s reform reached into “*Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon, and as far as Naphtali*” (**34:6**; cf. **34:21, 33**). Though there is the steady call for reform in the North and for the recognition of the Jerusalem cult, the Chronicler’s attitude to the North is not one of exclusivism (cf. **Ezra 6:17**).

2. (:10-15) Covenant Renewal Ceremony

- a. (:10) Assembled
“So they assembled at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign.”
- b. (:11) Sacrificed
“And they sacrificed to the LORD that day 700 oxen and 7,000 sheep from the spoil they had brought.”

Andrew Hill: The covenant ceremony may have been associated with the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, as the spring pilgrimage festival would have naturally necessitated the gathering of all Israel in Jerusalem at that time of year (15:10). It also appears that the victory over Zerah the Cushite (cf. 14:9–15) was incorporated into the festival since some of the animals taken as plunder from that battle are included in the sacrificial offerings to the Lord (15:11).

c. (:12-13) Covenanted

“And they entered into the covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and soul; 13 and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman.”

d. (:14) Made an Oath

“Moreover, they made an oath to the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting, with trumpets, and with horns.”

e. (:15) Rejoiced

“And all Judah rejoiced concerning the oath, for they had sworn with their whole heart and had sought Him earnestly, and He let them find Him. So the LORD gave them rest on every side.”

C. (:16-19) Additional Reform Measures

1. (:16) Removal of the Queen Mother Maacah

“And he also removed Maacah, the mother of King Asa, from the position of queen mother, because she had made a horrid image as an Asherah, and Asa cut down her horrid image, crushed it and burned it at the brook Kidron.”

Andrew Hill: The Asherah pole was a cultic symbol of the Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah in the form of a tree or tree trunk. The pole represented the tree of life in Canaanite religion, and the fertility cult associations of the symbol made the object “repulsive” or even “obscene” (NEB). It was among the objects of false worship under the ban of holy war for the Israelites at the time of the conquest of Canaan (Deut. 7:5). The raising of an Asherah pole is expressly forbidden in Mosaic law as an act that God hates (Deut. 16:21; cf. 2 Kings 23:6). Asa smashes this pole and burns it in the Kidron Valley southeast of Jerusalem, a garbage pit and refuse dump sometimes used for the disposal of such religious objects (cf. 2 Chron. 29:16; 30:14).

Frederick Mabie: The Kidron Valley is located to the east of the old city of Jerusalem and is the location of the famed Gihon Spring. This valley as a focal point in the destruction of heterodoxy and idolatry continues into the later reforms of Hezekiah (cf. 29:15-17; 30:14) and Josiah (cf. 2Ki 23:1-15).

2. (:17) No Removal of the High Places but Overall Integrity of Heart

“But the high places were not removed from Israel; nevertheless Asa's heart was blameless all his days.”

Andrew Hill: Nevertheless, Asa fails to remove the high places from Israel. Rather than see this as a contradiction to the record of the king's reforms (**15:17**; cf. **14:2**), it is probably better to assume that the writer distinguishes between the high places of Judah and Israel, or perhaps the two statements are but “evidence of the persistence of the indigenous cults over several years.”

3. (:18) Regathering of the Dedicated Things into the Temple

“And he brought into the house of God the dedicated things of his father and his own dedicated things: silver and gold and utensils.”

(:19) Result: Rest from War

“And there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.”

III. (16:1-10) THE EGOCENTRIC (EXPEDIENT) LATER YEARS – ASA FAILS TO TRUST GOD IN THE TIME OF CRISIS OR LISTEN TO GOD'S PROPHET

A. (:1-6) Failure to Trust God in Time of Crisis

Iain Duguid: Baasha's aggressive act so close to Jerusalem hinted at his military strength in comparison to Judah's and presented a much more serious threat than the previous occasional raiding parties. Asa's response was to seek help from Syria, which bordered Israel to the northeast.

Martin Selman: Asa's last five years, recounted in **chapter 16**, completely reverse the pattern of the rest of his life, a decline that is all the more unexpected in that it seems to have started from an act of unprovoked hostility (**v. 1**). From that point on, however, Asa seemed determined to go his own way, and he followed his initial rejection of God's help (**vv. 2-3**) by persecuting a prophet (**v. 10**), oppressing his people (**v. 10**), and neglecting God (**v. 12**). A pattern therefore developed, which, though it may have begun by accident, became a series of conscious decisions.

1. (:1-3) Expedient Solution to Aggression by Baasha of Israel

a. (:1) Aggressive Defensive Measures of Baasha

“In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent anyone from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah.”

Andrew Hill: After two decades of peace, conflict once again breaks out between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (**16:1**). King Baasha of Israel is the aggressor in that the defensive measures he takes to fortify Ramah also threaten the territory of Judah economically and militarily. The town of Ramah (or er-Ram, a site some five miles

north of Jerusalem) is strategically located on the major north-south ridge route that bypasses Jerusalem (cf. Judg. 19:10–13). According to **Dillard**, control of Ramah is also close enough to the Beth-Horon ridge to menace the east-west traffic traversing the central Benjamin plateau. From this choke point, Baasha can control traffic flow in and out of northern Judah—trade caravans, Israelite defectors heading south, or pious Hebrews journeying to the temple to celebrate the pilgrimage festivals.

Thomas Constable: There is a chronological problem in **verse 1**, which says: "*In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, Baasha king of Israel*" attacked Judah. But in **1 Kings 16:8** we read: "*In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel.*" **Keil** attributed the difference to a scribal error and concluded that the number in 1 Kings is correct.

b. (:2-3) Alliance Procured with Ben-hadad of Aram

"Then Asa brought out silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and sent them to Ben-hadad king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying, 3 'Let there be a treaty between you and me, as between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent you silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me.'"

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler's report of Baasha's activity at Ramah and Asa's response is based on **1 Kings 15:17–22**. Asa resorts to the oft-used political ploy of paying tribute to a third party for the purpose of engaging an aggressor nation on a second front (**2 Chron. 16:3–4**). The cost of contracting Ben-Hadad king of Aram to wage war against Israel is apparently steep, because Asa has to siphon monies from two treasuries (the temple and the palace, **15:6**) to seal the pact. This is probably due to the fact that Aram and Israel are already partners in an alliance, and Ben-Hadad will need a greater offer to break his treaty with Baasha (**16:3b**).

J.A. Thompson: Asa withdrew silver and gold from the treasuries of the Lord's temple and his own palace and sent it to Ben-Hadad, king of Aram-Damascus, to encourage him to break the treaty he had with Baasha. The Arameans were implacable foes of the Northern Kingdom, and the drawing of Damascus into a hostile attitude to Judah would provide conflict for Baasha on a second front and ease pressure on Judah. By this political maneuver Asa's enlistment of Ben-Hadad's aid outmaneuvered Baasha. But however shrewd this scheme was politically, it displayed a lack of trust in the Lord and merited divine retribution.

Mark Boda: For the Chronicler, that Asa entered into a foreign alliance was bad enough; using the treasuries protected by the Levites at the Temple (**1 Chr 9:26; 26:20, 22**) was far worse.

2. (:4-6) Execution of Asa's Diversionary Plan by Ben-hadad

a. (:4) Beh-hadad Attacks Israel

“So Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim, and all the store cities of Naphtali.”

- b. (:5) Baasha Diverted from Fortifying Ramah
“And it came about when Baasha heard of it that he ceased fortifying Ramah and stopped his work.”
- c. (:6) Ramah Plundered by Asa to Fortify Geba and Mizpah
“Then King Asa brought all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber with which Baasha had been building, and with them he fortified Geba and Mizpah.”

Andrew Hill: The Arameans were irrepressible foes of Israel throughout the history of the northern kingdom, so there is doubtless little reservation about renegeing on a treaty with Baasha as long as the price is right. The Arameans invade Israelite cities along the northeastern border between the two nations (**16:4**). When Baasha hears the news that several important cities have fallen to Ben-Hadad, he has to abandon his plan to fortify Ramah and divert his attention to the war with Aram in the northern extremities of his territory (**16:5**). After Baasha withdraws from Ramah, Judah destroys the fortifications under construction and reuses the stones and timber to fortify Geba (modern day Jeba, a town of Benjamin some six miles northeast of Jerusalem) and Mizpah, thus extending Judah’s defensive perimeter north of Ramah (**16:6**, assuming this is the Mizpah of Benjamin or Tell en-Nasbeh, nearly eight miles northeast of Jerusalem; cf. **Josh 18:24, 26**).

B. (:7-10) Failure to Listen to God’s Prophet

1. (:7-9) Indictment by Hanani

- a. (:7) Failure to Trust the Lord
“At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, ‘Because you have relied on the king of Aram and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of your hand.’”

Frederick Mabie: The arrival of Hanani is the second recorded prophetic visit to Asa (the first from Azariah is recorded at **15:1-7**). While the prophet Azariah’s visit to Asa was full of the possibilities and blessings of seeking God and exercising covenantal obedience, this visit is full of rebuke and critique in the light of the lack of faith implied in Asa’s request for help from the Arameans. Instead of relying on God, Asa has sought protection by pursuing a more tangible means to military aid – namely, by paying the Arameans a bounty pillaged from the temple treasury and royal treasury (cf. **16:2-3**). Ultimately, as the prophet notes, to place trust in humankind or human institutions rather than completely in God is foolishness that reaps broad consequences (**v.9**).

- b. (:8) Failure to Learn the Lessons from Covenant History
“Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim an immense army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand.”
- c. (:9a) Fundamental Principle: The Lord Supports Covenant Loyalty
“For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.”
- d. (:9b) Foolishness Resulting in Unending Wars
*“You have acted foolishly in this.
 Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars.”*

J. A. Thompson: The two periods of Asa’s life are here contrasted. Early in his reign when he relied on the Lord, a great army (Cushites and Libyans) with many chariots and horsemen were delivered into his hand (**14:9-15**). Now in the latter period of his reign, despite appearances, he was a defeated man. He had done a foolish thing, and henceforth war would plague him (cf. **1 Sam 13:13**).

God knows what is happening in the hearts of all people. He supports those who are wholeheartedly committed to him, but he will not support those who carelessly reject his sovereignty and lean on another.

2. (:10) Indignation of Asa

- a. Imprisonment of the Prophet
“Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him for this.”
- b. Oppression of the People
“And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time.”

(16:11-14) CLOSING SUMMARY

A. (:11) Recorded Deeds

“And now, the acts of Asa from first to last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.”

B. (:12) Severe Disease

“And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians.”

Iain Duguid: Asa’s failure to seek God in his disease does not necessarily negate the value of physicians in general but rather judges his reliance on them alone and his failure to see that God ultimately is the source of all healing. A comparison can be seen

in the earlier recounting of military defensive preparedness within an overall life of seeking and relying on God (**2 Chronicles 14**). Elsewhere, Scripture includes both frequent references to God as the one who “heals” (**Gen. 20:17; Ex. 15:26; Deut. 32:39; Pss. 6:2; 30:2**; etc.) and positive instances of help from physicians (e.g., **Isa. 38:21; Jer. 8:22; Col. 4:14**). Further, illness may have a spiritual cause (**1 Cor. 11:30**), and, increasingly, modern medicine is becoming aware of spiritual factors in health and healing. The account of Asa points to the God who calls for people to “seek” and “rely on” him in all of life.

Jamieson: The physicians that Asa sought (v. 12) were most probably Egyptian physicians, who were anciently in high repute at foreign courts, and who pretended to expel diseases by charms, incantations, and mystic arts. Asa's fault consisted in his trusting to such physicians, while he neglected to supplicate the aid and blessing of God.

C. (:13) Death

“So Asa slept with his fathers, having died in the forty-first year of his reign.”

D. (:14) Burial

“And they buried him in his own tomb which he had cut out for himself in the city of David, and they laid him in the resting place which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by the perfumers' art; and they made a very great fire for him.”

Raymond Dillard: The **fire** accompanying his burial was not cremation, but rather a memorial and honorific rite customarily attending the death of kings (**21:19; Jer 34:5**).

Iain Duguid: Here have been recounted, in quick succession, three examples of Asa's not “relying on” or “seeking” the Lord, which led to judgment:

- (1) seeking aid from Ben-hadad, resulting in failure to defeat Ben-hadad and in continuing “wars” instead;
- (2) anger at the prophet's message, leading to disease; and
- (3) failure “even in his disease [to] seek the Lord,” leading to death.

The ending, however, is positive, as the Chronicler adds details of burial rites that give him “honor.” In fact, he is the only king for whom such memorial “fire” and spices are specifically mentioned (generic mention in **21:19** and **Jer. 34:5**). It seems that Asa's experience of God's grace had diminished but not been destroyed.

Frederick Mabie: A funeral pyre would be a statement of respect and honor for the deceased and was typically only available for those of high stature (cf. **Jer 34:4-5**). The withholding of honor is clearly connected to the absence of a funerary pyre for Jehoram (cf. **2Ch 21:19**). Such fires were accompanied by spices and ointments as noted here and could also be seen as an aspect of purification of the dead, as reflected in the death customs of Egypt and Assyria. The notation that Asa had “*cut out for himself*” a tomb is unique in terms of regnal death notices in Chronicles.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What caused such a dramatic reversal in Asa's reign?
- 2) What are some of the lessons about leadership from these three chapters?
- 3) How do we go about daily seeking the Lord?
- 4) When we turn for help to physicians, how can we make sure that we are still relying ultimately on the Lord?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: The Chronicles are all about the relevance of earlier Israelite history for the writer's generation. That relevance is demonstrated by the example of God's people of a bygone era and includes especially the relevance of obedience to God's Word, the relevance of prayer to the God of heaven, and the relevance of proper worship at Yahweh's temple. For the Chronicler, the applicability of earlier Israelite history for postexilic Judah includes the currency of the prophetic voice for the spiritual and moral well-being of God's people, despite the fact that the voice of God's prophets and prophetesses has not been heard for perhaps a century or more by the time the Chronicler retells the story of Israel's kingship. **Second Chronicles 14:2 – 16:14**, summarizing the reign of Asa, points toward the contemporary significance of the larger literary unit (10:1 – 21:3) by underscoring the perpetual relevance of seeking help from the Lord (**20:4**).

Mark Boda: To explain these negative elements, the Chronicler expanded his account and introduced a carefully articulated **chronological framework**. This framework, which validates the Chronicler's retribution, describes a land at peace for the first decade (**14:1**), a covenant renewal in the 15th year (**15:10-12**), and no war until the 35th year (**15:19**). Only in **chapter 16** does the Chronicler finally introduce the negative elements in Asa's reign, a turn precipitated by the conflict with Baasha, which began in Asa's 36th year. As **Dillard** (1987:123) concludes, "The Chronicler has reshaped the account he found in Kings by elaborating and reinforcing the divine favor enjoyed by an obedient king and by making explicit the nature of the transgressions that led to his disease and death."

Phil Winfield: What can we learn about **proper leadership**?

- A good leader has a good sense of right and wrong.
- A good leader inspires people by example to do right.
- A good leader does not waste times of peace and prosperity. He prepares to protect his people.

- A good leader knows that he alone cannot lead the nation in war or peace times.
- A good leader stays vigilant about the rise of evil among his people
- A good leader does not make exceptions for family.
- A good leader doesn't become proud and self-confident.
- A good leader doesn't attack the bearer of bad news.
- A good leader doesn't forget where they came from.
- A good leader finishes well.

August Konkel: The Chronicler inserts a number of chronological notes into his account of Asa. They are designed to divide his reign into periods that show the consequences of his decisions (cf. **2 Chron 14:1; 15:10; 16:1, 12, 13**). The Chronicler discounts the earlier battles with the north as having no consequence for the renewal of **15:8–19**, though he makes mention of the cities taken from Ephraim (v. **8**). The first years of Asa's reign were characterized by divine favor enjoyed by an obedient king. . .

Asa is the first example of efforts to bring about an extensive reform for worship at the temple in Jerusalem, efforts that extended into the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh (**2 Chron 15:8-9**). Many in Israel became loyal to Asa. Just a few verses later, his engagement in war with Baasha is reported (**15:19 – 16:1**). This passage, parallel to **1 Kings 16:17**, comes like a bolt from the blue (**Rainey 1997: 45**). There is no obvious rationale for Baasha to fortify the border to control traffic to Judah. However, Baasha's fortification of Ramah makes a lot of sense alongside the Chronicler's information about the impact of Asa's reform activities in the north. Baasha had usurped the throne in the north, and to secure it he systematically exterminated the remaining members of the house of Jeroboam (**1 Kings 15:27-29**). This would have created considerable unrest in the Northern Kingdom, which gave Asa opportunity to extend his reforms into that area. Further, military conflict with the Philistines who were centered at Gibbethon when Baasha came to power (**1 Kings 15:27**), apparently continued: that territory seems to have remained unsettled until the end of Baasha's reign. Asa's victory over Zerah in Philistine territory and his successes in his border war with Baasha surely earned him a lot of respect with many in the north.

Martin Selman: Two themes provide the framework for Asa's reign.

- The first is “**relying**” on God, indicated by the occurrence of the Hebrew verb *sa'an* five times in **chapters 13-16** but nowhere else in Chronicles. Both Abijah and Asa offer examples for others to imitate (**13:18; 14:11; 16:8**), though unfortunately Asa did not end as he began (**16:7**).
- The second theme, that of **seeking God**, is central to Asa's reign (the verb “*to seek*” occurs nine times). King and people both live out the principle of **15:2 (14:4, 7; 15:4)**, committing themselves to God by a covenant (**15:12, 15**). Again, however, Asa falls away from his previous good practice (**16:12**), potentially putting himself under the curse of his own covenant (**15:13**).

A variety of other themes also bind the reign of Asa together. One of the most persistent is *war and peace* (or *rest*). Where humankind seems bent on making war (**14:9-10; 15:5-6; 16:1, 4**) God gives deliverance and peace (**14:1, 5-7, 12-15; 15:15**,

19) to those who put their trust in him, though he may send war as a punishment to those who look elsewhere for help (16:9). A related theme is that of **strengthening the kingdom**, both through fortifications (14:6-7; 16:6) and through inner strength (15:7-8; 16:9). Trust in God is also expressed through **faithfulness to Yahwism**, especially in a concern for the temple (15:8, 18) and an intolerance of the paraphernalia of Canaanite religion (14:2-5; 15:8, 16-18). A key feature is **respect for the authority of the prophetic word**. Two prophecies are prominent, one to which Asa responds with enthusiasm (15:1-8) and one which causes him great anger (16:7-10). The centerpiece of Asa's faithfulness, however, is undoubtedly the covenant made at a special assembly (15:10-15). This highpoint of Judah's national life so far is entered into by the whole people with heart and soul, and was accompanied by much sacrificial worship and rejoicing. There is, though, a reverse side to this in a covenant or treaty made between Asa and Ben-Hadad of Syria (16:2-3), whose unhappy consequences (16:7-12) replaced the blessings of the first covenant.

Thomas Constable: J. Vernon McGee wrote that there are three bridges that must be crossed on the road to revival, and we see these in the record of Asa in 2 Chronicles. These are:

- knowledge of the Word of God (14:4; 15:3),
- scriptural separation (14:3, 5; 15:8, 13, 16), and
- faith in God (14:11; 15:4, 12). . .

Asa's heart was right in that he consistently loved God. Nevertheless, like David, his **obedience lapsed**. He trusted in a foreign alliance and later in physicians more than in Yahweh. This resulted in his defeat and death.

"Asa, then, has done a complete volte-face [about-face, change of policy] from his earlier faithfulness. It is as if we meet two altogether different Asas. He appeared first in the strength of God-reliance, now in the weakness of self-reliance." [McConville]

Rather than confessing his guilt, Asa became angry and oppressed his own kingdom. It may have looked for a while as if Asa was the Son of David who would perfectly trust and obey God. Unfortunately he did not remain faithful.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 17:1 - 21:3

TITLE: REIGN OF JEHOSHAPHAT – RELIGIOUS REFORMER WITH UNHOLY ALLIANCES

BIG IDEA:

UNHOLY ALLIANCES COMPROMISE A SINCERE HEART FOR THE LORD BUT SALVATION CAN STILL COME AS WE SEEK HIM

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: Of all the accounts of the kings after Solomon, the account of Jehoshaphat's reign is second in length only to Hezekiah's (2 Chronicles 29–32), and only he, Hezekiah, and Josiah are likened to David (17:3; 29:2; 34:2). Jehoshaphat is presented as a prominent example of good leadership throughout the land, leading to prosperity and peace, but alongside this narrative is prophetic criticism of his alliance with the “wicked” northern kingdom. While he exhibits parallels with the reign of his father, Asa, Jehoshaphat's reforms are greater, involving arrangements for teaching the “Law of the Lord” and for a justice system throughout the land (17:7–9; 19:5–11). His failings receive less censure because he “set [his] heart to seek God” (19:3; cf. 17:4; 20:32; 22:9).

Andrew Hill: Jehoshaphat is portrayed favorably as a man of faith and prayer and a religious reformer. The narrative in Chronicles is apparently intentionally shaped to demonstrate the parallels between the reigns of Jehoshaphat and his father Asa. His rule is not without problems, however, and like all the kings of Judah he receives a “mixed” theological review from the biblical historian (cf. 17:3-4, 6; 19:3; 20:33). Although the narrative summarizing Jehoshaphat's kingship lacks a rigid chronological framework, the dates for his twenty-five-year reign are between 872 and 848 B.C. On the basis of comparative analysis of the date formulas for Jehoshaphat's length of reign, it is generally understood he rules for three years as a coregent with his father prior to his own twenty-two-year tenure on the throne (from 869-848 B.C.; cf. 2 Kings 3:1; 8:16; 2 Chron. 20:31).

J.A. Thompson: The story of Jehoshaphat is presented in four phases:

- (1) character and organization (17:1-19),
- (2) alliance with the Northern Kingdom (18:1-34),
- (3) God's rebuke and Jehoshaphat's reformation (19:1-11), and
- (4) Jehoshaphat's piety rewarded (20:1-37; 21:1).

I. (17:1-19) SINCERE HEART FOR THE LORD REFLECTED IN POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS SUCCESSES

Iain Duguid: The opening chapter has provided a comprehensive picture of success and strength, a combination of seeking God evidenced in religious reforms and a nationwide teaching strategy, strong defenses, and peace with surrounding peoples, all evidence that “*the Lord was with Jehoshaphat.*” This becomes the literary background for the surprising alliance with the northern kingdom that follows.

Deuteronomy warns of the danger of forgetting God when he has blessed (cf. **Deut. 6:10–15**); the tendency to pride, even arrogance, is only too common. Jehoshaphat provides a positive example of one whose “*seeking the Lord*” persisted after he received “*riches and honor.*” The “high” of God’s ways to which he set his “heart” is paralleled later by Paul’s exhortation, “*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above*” (Col. 3:1–2).

Jehoshaphat’s organizing of teaching that went to where the people lived recognized that following God, worshiping him alone, is a matter not only of religious activity (sacrifices and corporate gatherings) but of **all of life**, how and where one “*walks*” (**2 Chron. 17:3–4**; **John 8:12**; **Rom. 6:4**; **Eph. 4:1–3**).

Raymond Dillard: The chapter is structured by further explicit elaborations on the general statements introduced in **17:1–6** (**Williamson**, 280):

- Jehoshaphat’s army and fortifications (**17:2**) are developed in **17:12b–19**;
- his wealth and honor (**17:5**) are described in **17:10–12a**;
- aspects of his religious devotion (**17:3, 6**) are elaborated in **17:7–9**.

The Chronicler begins his account of Jehoshaphat by presenting him in an entirely **favorable light**. The chapter should be read with an eye to the author’s efforts to effect a parallel between Asa and Jehoshaphat. The Chronicler reminds his post-exilic audience once again that God never fails to reward fidelity. He calls attention to the importance of the public teaching of the law; the path to honor among the nations is found in obedience to it.

August Konkel: The last years of Asa’s reign were characterized by internal uprising and oppression. Jehoshaphat needed to consolidate his power within Judah to restore it to peace and stability. Israel had been an enemy during the days of Asa, but Jehoshaphat soon entered into alliance with Ahab (**18:1–2**). He established control over Israel (**17:2**), which included territory in Ephraim that Asa had taken over.

Jehoshaphat’s international status, building enterprises, and army characterized the greatness of his rule. Archaeological excavations have revealed extensive fortification in rural Judah. A line of highway forts in the Jordan Valley near the Dead Sea date to the time of Jehoshaphat (**Mazar**: 416-17; **Japhet** 1993: 751).

Geoffrey Kirkland: Thesis — What are proper priorities for a godly leader?
Jehoshaphat models 3 for us:

- I. HE PRIORITIZED THE PROTECTION OF GOD’S PEOPLE (1-2, 10-19)
- II. HE PRIORITIZED THE PURSUIT OF GOD’S GLORY (3-6)
- III. HE PRIORITIZED THE PREACHING OF GOD’S WORD (7-9)

A. (:1-6) Political and Religious Mission --

Character and Rule of Jehoshaphat Modeled after His Godly Father

1. (:1-2) Political Mission -- Strengthening the Kingdom Via Wise Measures

- a. (:1) Establishing His Rule
“Jehoshaphat his son then became king in his place, and made his position over Israel firm.”
- b. (:2) Expanding His Defenses
“He placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had captured.”

Frederick Mabie: While Jehoshaphat’s military efforts in the tribal area of Ephraim might be seen as provocative, the relationship between the northern kingdom and southern kingdom is characterized as one of peace solidified via a political marriage alliance.

2. (:3-6) Religious Mission -- Succeeding Via Divine Blessing

- a. (:3-4) Divine Blessing Because of His Sincere Heart for the Lord
“And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, 4 but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did.”
- b. (:5) Divine Blessing Reflected in Power, Influence and Riches
“So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor.”

Raymond Dillard: Wealth, honor, and fame are part of the repertoire of themes which show divine favor in Chronicles. Not only do David and Solomon enjoy these tokens of God’s pleasure (1 Chr 29:2–5, 28; 2 Chr 9:13–27), but so do Jehoshaphat (17:5; 18:1), Uzziah (26:8, 15), and Hezekiah (32:27).

- c. (:6) Sincere Heart for the Lord Reflected in Attack on Idolatry
“And he took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.”

Iain Duguid: The interplay of human and divine action is seen in the statement that *“The Lord established the kingdom in his hand”* (2 Chron. 17:5), balancing the opening statement that Jehoshaphat *“strengthened himself”* (v. 1). It is God’s *“kingdom,”* and the Lord placed it *“in the hand of the sons of David”* (13:8)—until God later gave it *“into*

[the] hand” of the “king of the Chaldeans” (36:17). The statement that “*His heart was courageous*” (lit., “*His heart was high*”) elsewhere describes negatively the pride and arrogance of Uzziah and Hezekiah after they had become strong and enjoyed benefits (26:16; 32:25, 26; cf. Ps. 131:1; Prov. 16:5). What stands out uniquely regarding Jehoshaphat is that after he received “*great riches and honor*,” his “*pride*” was “*in the ways of the Lord*” as he removed the “*high places*”.

B. (:7-9) Priority Mission = National Indoctrination in the Law of God

“Then in the third year of his reign he sent his officials, Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah; 8 and with them the Levites, Shemaiah, Nathaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests. 9 And they taught in Judah, having the book of the law of the LORD with them; and they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught among the people.”

Iain Duguid: Early in his reign, Jehoshaphat initiated a broad program of teaching, involving lay officials (who would represent royal authority), Levites, and priests in an itinerant task “*through all the cities of Judah*.”

Adam Clarke: We may presume that the princes instructed the people in the nature of the civil law and constitution of the kingdom; the Levites instructed them in everything that appertained to the temple service, and ritual law; and the priest instructed them in the nature and design of the religion they professed. Thus the nation became thoroughly instructed in their duty to God, to the king, and to each other. They became, therefore, as one man; and against a people thus united, on such principles, no enemy could be successful.

Andrew Hill: The curriculum consists of the “Book of the Law,” presumably some form of the Pentateuch – perhaps more specifically the Covenant Code (Ex. 19-24) or even what we now know as the book of Deuteronomy. . . . The verb “*to teach*” (*lmd*; 2 Chron. 17:8, 9) is a common word for instruction in the Old Testament (cf. Deut. 4:10; 5:1). It implies that education is a process of assimilation, not the dumping of information. The teacher stimulates the learner to imitate the desired action or behavioral response by word and example. The program appears to have been one of unrestricted access to religious education, as the “people” of Judah are the target audience of this “tuition-free” instruction (2 Chron. 17:9).

Geoffrey Kirkland: The priorities in the teaching:

1. Instruct the MIND — teach/instruct/impart/preach/proclaim
2. Engage the PEOPLE — all the cities, in Judah, of Judah
3. Know the WORD — had the Law WITH THEM**
4. Teach the WORD — they taught... they taught... they were teaching...
5. Keep the MISSION — they *went* throughout ALL the cities
6. Maintain the PRIORITY — they were teaching the people (didn’t get sidetracked or distracted)

Frederick Mabie: It is noteworthy that these individuals go out to teach God's Word (in analogy to the *going forth* built into the Great Commission; cf. **Mt 28:19-20**), rather than expecting the people to come to them.

C. (:10-11) Political Influence -- Motivated and Manifested

1. (:10) Motivated by Divine Dread that Restrained Aggression

“Now the dread of the LORD was on all the kingdoms of the lands which were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.”

2. (:11) Manifested in Generous Gifts from Surrounding Kingdoms

“And some of the Philistines brought gifts and silver as tribute to Jehoshaphat; the Arabians also brought him flocks, 7,700 rams and 7,700 male goats.”

Iain Duguid: A sign of blessing is the response of the “*kingdoms of the lands that were around*” (cf. **1 Chron. 29:30**). When others see physical signs that God is with his people, the “*fear of the Lord*” is often the response. While commonly following military victory (**2 Chron. 14:14; 20:29; 1 Chron. 14:17**; cf. **Josh. 2:8–11**), such response may also flow from blessings that accompany walking in God's commandments (**2 Chron. 7:4**; cf. **Deut. 4:5–8; Matt. 5:16**). Here “*tribute*” is brought that reflects the life of the peoples: “*presents and silver*” from the coastal Philistines and “*rams and goats*” from the Arabian herdsmen to the south (cf. **2 Chron. 26:6–8**; contrast **21:16–17**). Like David (**1 Chron. 11:9**), Jehoshaphat grows in prominence.

Frederick Mabie: The tribute brought from Philistines and Arabs, together with statements of military fortifications, implies that the southern kingdom now has hegemony over the caravan routes across the Arabah and Negev to the Coastal highway.

This control provides a lucrative source of tax and tribute income for the southern kingdom during Jehoshaphat's administration. This economic and political stability in turn allows for further military strengthening, building projects, and governmental expansion (see **17:12-19**). The Arabs noted here are likely seminomadic tribes in the desert regions to the south of the Judean Negev and portions of the Sinaitic and (perhaps) Arabian Peninsulas.

D. (:12-19) Military Might

1. (:12a) Expanding Power and Prestige

“So Jehoshaphat grew greater and greater,”

2. (:12b) Fortified Cities

“and he built fortresses and store cities in Judah.”

3. (:13) Large Supplies and Valiant Warriors

“And he had large supplies in the cities of Judah, and warriors, valiant men, in Jerusalem.”

4. (:14-19) Impressive Roster of Leaders and Troops

“And this was their muster according to their fathers' households: of Judah, commanders of thousands, Adnah was the commander, and with him 300,000 valiant warriors; 15 and next to him was Johanan the commander, and with him 280,000; 16 and next to him Amasiah the son of Zichri, who volunteered for the LORD, and with him 200,000 valiant warriors; 17 and of Benjamin, Eliada a valiant warrior, and with him 200,000 armed with bow and shield; 18 and next to him Jehozabad, and with him 180,000 equipped for war. 19 These are they who served the king, apart from those whom the king put in the fortified cities through all Judah.”

II. (18:1 – 19:3) UNHOLY ALLIANCE WITH AHAB PUTS PRESSURE ON GOD’S PROPHET AND UNLEASHES DIVINE WRATH

Raymond Dillard: The narrative is structured primarily by its series of **repartee paragraphs** which constitute one of the longest dialogues in the OT; these paragraphs can be classified by their respective types:

- proposal/response (**18:4–5, 12–13, 15–22, 28–29**),
- question/answer (**3, 6–7, 14, 23–24**),
- command/execution (**8, 25–27, 30–32**).

Avoiding **foreign alliances** was for the Chronicler one aspect of the central demand of the covenant that Israel show exclusive loyalty to Yahweh her God. The Chronicler’s frequent introduction of this theme into his history must have had rhetorical relevance for the post-exilic community: though facing opposition and afforded many opportunities to trust in foreign powers or alliances, Judah in the restoration period was urged to trust in her God alone.

Iain Duguid: Throughout Chronicles the people of God are always more than Judah, but here is a warning to postexilic hearers against **alliances that compromise their distinctive identity as God’s people**. The wider unity of Israel is to be based on common allegiance to the Lord. Prosperity and peace are to be found through trusting in him, not in political (or later, trading; **20:35–37**) partnerships. Jeroboam’s alliance in battle continues as a salutary example of a man seeking to be loyal to God but getting drawn into actions one knows are contrary to God’s revealed Word. Such is the grace of God, however, that even there he delivers as one cries to him.

J.A. Thompson: This chapter describes Jehoshaphat’s **failed policy** toward the Northern Kingdom and in so doing underscores a significant theological theme for the Chronicler. Jehoshaphat apparently could not bring himself to recognize the depth of the Northern Kingdom’s apostasy. Perhaps he harbored ideas that since they were all Israelites then they ought to get along well and be in an alliance together. He may even

have supposed that this could bring about the reunification of the nation. Therefore he not only went to war alongside the northern forces but he also entered into a commercial alliance with them (20:35-37) and even married his son Jehoram to Athaliah, daughter of Ahab. Disaster came from all three efforts, and yet Jehoshaphat never seemed to realize how dangerous it was to say, *“I am as you are, and my people as your people”* (18:3). The point for the Chronicler was that there could be only one king and one temple for the people of God. The point for us is that flirtation with those in apostasy is flirtation with catastrophe. The requirement to show Christian affability and fellowship must be balanced with discernment and fidelity to God’s truth.

A. (18:1-7) Unholy Alliance Pursued in Multiple Spheres

1. (:1) Sphere of Marriage

“Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor; and he allied himself by marriage with Ahab.”

Iain Duguid: **Ahab**, son of Omri, was an influential king in the northern kingdom, well known for his military exploits to the northeast and even more, through his marriage to the Tyrian Jezebel, for the explosion of Baal worship in the north and subsequent influence in Judah that marked his reign.

Andrew Hill: His reshaping of this introduction implicitly indicts Jehoshaphat on three counts:

- his marriage alliance with the northern kingdom of Israel,
- his pride (incited by the lavish reception he receives in Samaria), which clouds his sensibilities for decision-making, and
- his agreement to participate in a military campaign with King Aha.

This introduction anticipates the prophetic condemnations of Jehoshaphat for his foolishness in allying himself with the apostate Ahab (cf. 19:1-3).

Geoffrey Kirkland: Profile of the Apostate & Wicked King Ahab:

- a liar/deceiver
- a flatterer/manipulator
- an idolater
- an apostate (God-hater)
- a hater (of God’s Word/Truth)
- a self-lover/self-worshiper (had 400 yes-men//prophets who only spoke well of the king)
- an unbeliever (rejected the prophetic Words)
- a harsh man (feed the prophet sparingly)
- a persecutor (put him in jail/prison)
- under God’s wrath (18:33-34)
- a wicked man (19:2)

2. (:2-3) Sphere of Military Alliance

“And some years later he went down to visit Ahab at Samaria. And Ahab slaughtered many sheep and oxen for him and the people who were with

him, and induced him to go up against Ramoth-gilead. 3 And Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, 'Will you go with me against Ramoth-gilead?' And he said to him, 'I am as you are, and my people as your people, and we will be with you in the battle.' ”

August Konkel: Ramoth Gilead was a fortress city in the eastern portion of the tribal territory of Gad (**Josh 20:8**). This was one of the cities of refuge for inadvertent homicide and an important administrative center in Solomon’s kingdom (**1 Kings 4:13**). It was an important fortress, protecting the eastern trade routes. Following the great battle at Qarqar, where Ahab had allied with the Arameans in successfully stopping the advance of the Assyrians under Shalmanezar III (853 BCE), the Arameans tried to regain control of an important trade route to the south, the King’s Highway. Ahab needed an ally against the superior Aramean forces to regain control of a city critical to his kingdom.

3. (:4-7) Sphere of Religious Guidance

a. (:4) Godly Goal – Seeking Divine Guidance

“Moreover, Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, 'Please inquire first for the word of the LORD.' ”

b. (:5) Ungodly Counsel of 400 False Prophets

“Then the king of Israel assembled the prophets, four hundred men, and said to them, 'Shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?' And they said, 'Go up, for God will give it into the hand of the king.' ”

c. (:6-7) Discerning Skepticism

“But Jehoshaphat said, 'Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?' 7 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me but always evil. He is Micaiah, son of Imla.' But Jehoshaphat said, 'Let not the king say so.' ”

B. (18:8-17) Unholy Alliance Puts Pressure on God’s Prophet

1. (:8-11) False Prophets Create Toxic Environment

a. (:8) Call for God’s Prophet Micaiah

“Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, 'Bring quickly Micaiah, Imla's son.' ”

b. (:9-11) Counsel of False Prophets Favorable to Israel

1) (:9-10) Favorable Counsel of Zedekiah

“Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, and they were sitting at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets

were prophesying before them. 10 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made horns of iron for himself and said, 'Thus says the LORD, With these you shall gore the Arameans, until they are consumed.'"

Frederick Mabie: The kings gather at a threshing floor to hear the counsel of the prophets (v. 9). The open flat area of threshing floors facilitated their use as a meeting place for ancient communities, in an analogous way to how a city gate functioned on a larger scale.

- 2) (:11) Favorable Counsel of All the False Prophets
"And all the prophets were prophesying thus, saying, 'Go up to Ramoth-gilead and succeed, for the LORD will give it into the hand of the king.'"

2. (:12-17) Faithful Prophet Resists the Pressure of Coercion

a. (:12-13) Coercion of Peer Pressure Met with Conviction of God's Prophet

- 1) (:12) Coercion of Peer Pressure
"Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him saying, 'Behold, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. So please let your word be like one of them and speak favorably.'"
- 2) (:13) Conviction of God's Prophet
"But Micaiah said, 'As the LORD lives, what my God says, that I will speak.'"

b. (:14) Sarcastic Response of Micaiah

"And when he came to the king, the king said to him, 'Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?' He said, 'Go up and succeed, for they will be given into your hand.'"

c. (:15-17) Faithful Response of Micaiah

- 1) (:15) Demand for the Truth by the King of Israel
"Then the king said to him, 'How many times must I adjure you to speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?'"
- 2) (:16) Description of Israel's Defeat
"So he said, 'I saw all Israel Scattered on the mountains, Like sheep which have no shepherd; And the LORD said, These have no master. Let each of them return to his house in peace.'"
- 3) (:17) Dejection and Despair of the King of Israel

“Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, ‘Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?’”

C. (18:18-27) Unholy Alliance Subjects God’s Prophet to Persecution

1. (:18-22) Exposure of False Prophets

“And Micaiah said, ‘Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right and on His left. 19 And the LORD said, Who will entice Ahab king of Israel to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said this while another said that. 20 Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said to him, How? 21 And he said, I will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. Then He said, You are to entice him and prevail also. Go and do so. 22 Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of these your prophets; for the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you.’”

Iain Duguid: God’s sending a “*lying spirit*” (v. 21) may seem contrary to God’s character and yet is consistent with actions elsewhere toward those who persist in rejecting a clear word, whether in the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 7:3–5, 13–14, 22, etc.) or in his rejection of the prophets in Ezekiel 14:7–10. Paul speaks of “*those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” (2 Thess. 2:10–12). Micaiah’s words were Ahab’s last chance to avoid judgment. Ahab had complained that Micaiah’s words to him in the past were always “*evil*” (Hb. *ra ‘ah*; 2 Chron. 18:7, 17), and now, tragically, that was repeated: the message was one of “*disaster*” (again *ra ‘ah*; v. 22).

2. (:23-27) Expulsion of True Prophet

“Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, ‘How did the Spirit of the LORD pass from me to speak to you?’ 24 And Micaiah said, ‘Behold, you shall see on that day, when you enter an inner room to hide yourself.’ 25 Then the king of Israel said, ‘Take Micaiah and return him to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king’s son; 26 and say, Thus says the king, Put this man in prison, and feed him sparingly with bread and water until I return safely.’ 27 And Micaiah said, ‘If you indeed return safely, the LORD has not spoken by me.’ And he said, ‘Listen, all you people.’”

D. (18:28 – 19:3) Unholy Alliance Releases Divine Wrath

1. (18:28-34) Perfidy of Ahab Overtaken by Divine Providence

“So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up against Ramoth-gilead. 29 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, ‘I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you put on your robes.’ So the

king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle. 30 Now the king of Aram had commanded the captains of his chariots, saying, 'Do not fight with small or great, but with the king of Israel alone.' 31 So it came about when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, 'It is the king of Israel,' and they turned aside to fight against him. But Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him. 32 Then it happened when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 33 And a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. So he said to the driver of the chariot, 'Turn around, and take me out of the fight; for I am severely wounded.' 34 And the battle raged that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot in front of the Arameans until the evening; and at sunset he died."

Iain Duguid: Ahab was a picture of **delusion**. He knew that Micaiah's oracle was probably true (v. 16), yet he brazenly expected to "*return in peace*" (v. 26) and sought to avoid the message of death by a stratagem of disguise. Instead, an action that was humanly "at random" led to his death. The stratagem almost led to Jehoshaphat's death, but in his first stated initiative since insisting on a prophet of the Lord, he "*cried out*"—the Chronicler adds "*and the Lord helped him; God drew them away from him*" (v. 31).

August Konkel: Ahab's defiance of God is further revealed in his careful preparations for self-protection (2 Chron 18:28-34). His immediate concern was the Aramean army, though he knew he had violated God's will and was therefore subject to the consequences. This is a further indication of his disregard for the God of Israel, believing that he could defy divine judgment against him. His error was fatal for him. The Chronicler here adds his own note to indicate the divine protection of Jehoshaphat (v. 31), which is not found in his *Vorlage* [*Vorlage*, p. 68]. The Lord helped Jehoshaphat by luring the Aramean soldiers away from the king. This is a reference back to **verse 2**, where Ahab had lured Jehoshaphat into battle in the first instance. The enticement of Ahab proved to be fatal for him; in turn, the Lord reversed this deception in providing deliverance to Jehoshaphat.

2. (19:1-3) Prophecy Explaining Basis for God's Wrath

Raymond Dillard: These verses represent the key to the Chronicler's use of the Micaiah narrative; the story provided him with a further parallel between Asa and Jehoshaphat and the opportunity to underscore the evil of foreign alliances and the failure to trust Yahweh.

- a. (:1) Deliverance of Jehoshaphat
"Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned in safety to his house in Jerusalem."
- b. (:2) Justification for God's Wrath

“And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, ‘Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD and so bring wrath on yourself from the LORD?’”

c. (:3) Mitigation Due to Godly Actions

*“But there is some good in you,
for you have removed the Asheroth from the land
and you have set your heart to seek God.”*

McConville: A Christian's attachment to God is necessarily expressed in the kind of atmosphere in which he prefers to live and move and have his being. Company, pursuits, ambitions will all bear upon them the mark of a love of God. This is by no means to put an embargo upon normal social intercourse with those who are not basically like-minded. It has to do with the sort of life pattern which one chooses to construct. The task of construction is no easy one, and the temptation is to model oneself upon the 'architects' about us. This was Jehoshaphat's fault, and his error calls us to consistency in exhibiting the characteristics which are truly Christian. (See further **Rom. 12:1f.; Gal. 5:16-26.**)

(19:4) TRANSITION -- REVIVAL LED BY JEHOShAPHAT

“So Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem and went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brought them back to the LORD, the God of their fathers.”

Frederick Mabie: The city of Beersheba, located in the Negev, was the administrative seat of the southern region. Beersheba was also the common designation used to refer to the southern extent of Judah, as implied here. Notice that Jehoshaphat's itinerant ministry also includes those situated in part of the northern tribal area of Ephraim.

III. (19:5-11) JUDICIAL REFORMS SEEK TO ELIMINATE CORRUPTION

Raymond Dillard: Some **centralization of judicial authority** must be presumed during Israel's transition from a tribal confederacy to a centralized monarchy. The practices described could have antedated Jehoshaphat in the ancient Near East by many centuries; there is no compelling reason to deny the historicity of the account. It should also be noted, however, that the judicial reform of Jehoshaphat may not have instituted new or heretofore unseen practices in Israel—transition to a centralized judiciary could well have preceded him—but could be understood simply as a reform to eliminate corruption in judicial practice.

The Chronicler may well have been seeking to cite a precedent or to otherwise legitimate practices in his own day, but this does not automatically undercut his use of historically reliable information.

Iain Duguid: The reform was structured in two similar blocks:

- (a) appointment of “*judges*” in the “*fortified cities of Judah*” (19:5), followed by exhortation (vv. 6–7); and
- (b) appointment of people to “*give judgment*” in Jerusalem (vv. 8, 11a), again with exhortation (vv. 9–10, 11b).

August Konkel: The description of judicial reform is composed of two symmetrical paragraphs (vv. 5-7 and 8-11), patterned with an action and admonition. In the second paragraph, some of the reform measures are included in the exhortation, providing balance to the accounts. Local court officials were appointed in the fortified cities, and a central court was established in Jerusalem. The reform is a realization of the law of Deuteronomy (16:18 – 17:13), but in this context only judges are appointed and only in fortified towns. Every citizen had obligations toward the king and toward God; this dual loyalty was fully consistent with covenant obligation. There may have been a lower and higher court in Jerusalem, one that served as the ordinary jurisdiction for citizens, and an appeals court for all the lower courts. Priests and Levites had some judicial role in the Jerusalem court, but no such role is mentioned for them in the local courts.

A. (:5-7) Appointment of Judges in Fortified Cities

1. (:5) Appointment – Locally in Each Fortified City

*“And he appointed judges in the land
in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city.”*

2. (:6) Motivation – Judge for the Lord

*“And he said to the judges, ‘Consider what you are doing,
for you do not judge for man but for the LORD
who is with you when you render judgment.’”*

3. (:7) Charge – Avoid Corruption

*“Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you;
be very careful what you do,
for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness, or
partiality, or the taking of a bribe.”*

Raymond Dillard: Judicial authority in Israel was not the prerogative of autonomous power; rather it depended upon and expressed the rule of Yahweh and was to reflect his own attributes of righteousness, justice, and fairness. Judges acted in behalf of kings or other men only in a derivative sense—in reality they were the agents of Yahweh who was present at their decisions. Yahweh loves and is known by his justice (Ps 9:16; 11:7). The frequent biblical injunctions against bribery attest to the extent and persistence of the practice; the poor who could not afford the bribe were in this way the prey of the rich (Exod 23:6–8; Deut 1:17; 16:18–20; 1 Sam 8:3; Ps 15:5; Prov 17:23; Isa 1:21–23; 5:22–23; Mic 3:11; 7:3; Zech 7:9–10).

B. (:8-11) Appointment of Levites and Heads of Households for Judgment in Jerusalem

1. (:8) Appointment

“And in Jerusalem also Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the heads of the fathers' households of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD and to judge disputes among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

2. (:9-10) Motivation

a. (:9) All-In Commitment Grounded in the Fear of the Lord

“Then he charged them saying, ‘Thus you shall do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and wholeheartedly.’”

Andrew Hill: In addition to hearing cases and rendering fair verdicts, the judge must also warn (or instruct) the citizenry who come before the bench not to commit further sin against the Lord, lest the “*wrath*” of God come against them and their family (**19:9-10**). This “*fear of the Lord*” is understood as a deterrent to further criminal activity (**19:9**); it permits all the citizens of Judah to enjoy the protection afforded by the law. In addition, the just application of the law to everyday life will lead to an equitable society – the ideal social dynamic of the covenant community.

b. (:10a) Address All Grievances to Avoid Divine Wrath

“And whenever any dispute comes to you from your brethren who live in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and ordinances, you shall warn them that they may not be guilty before the LORD, and wrath may not come on you and your brethren.”

c. (:10b) Avoid Culpability

“Thus you shall do and you will not be guilty.”

Raymond Dillard: The speeches of Jehoshaphat as recorded in Chronicles reflect a large body of biblical teaching regarding the concern of God with **justice**. Justice will always be subject to perversion, until he who is the Just is also the Judge (**Rev 20:11–15; 1 Pet 2:23**).

3. (:11a) Support and Oversight

a. Role of Amariah

“And behold, Amariah the chief priest will be over you in all that pertains to the LORD;”

b. Role of Zebadiah

“and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, in all that pertains to the king.”

c. Role of Levites

“Also the Levites shall be officers before you.”

Frederick Mabie: The particular appointment of Amariah and Zebadiah implies differing areas of responsibility pertaining to the executive branch (matters concerning the king) and the judicial-legal branch (matters concerning the Lord). The Levites function in a more generic role, perhaps akin to judicial clerks.

4. (:11b) Charge

“Act resolutely, and the LORD be with the upright.”

IV. (20:1-30) SALVATION FROM INVADING ENEMIES COMES BY SEEKING THE LORD

Iain Duguid: The importance of this narrative is enhanced by the way each aspect is intensified: the enemy was a “*great multitude/horde*” (20:2, 12, 15, 24); “*all Judah*” was involved, including “*their little ones, their wives, and their children*” (vv. 4, 13); praise was “*with a very loud voice*” (v. 19); afterward, “*none [of the enemy] had escaped*” (v. 24) and the bounty was such that “*they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much*” (v. 25); and, finally, “*Fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries*” (v. 29). God-given victory is emphatically linked with piety, centered in trusting praise.

Frederick Mabie: The Meunites were an Arabian tribe living in the southern region of Transjordan and parts of the Sinai, a tribe of people who were able to control some of the trade routes stemming from the southern portion of the King’s highway. . . . There is alarm in Judah when it is reported that the eastern coalition has reached En Gedi (only twenty-five miles southeast of Jerusalem). Nonetheless, this rebellion is thwarted by infighting prompted by Yahweh, who subsequently gives Jehoshaphat rest all around (vv. 22-30).

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- The Steadfast Petition (5-13) (PETITION)
- The Spirit-Given Assurance (14-19) (REVELATION)
- The Sure Victory (20-34) (CONSECRATION)
- The Sinful Alliance (35-37) (CAUTION!)

A. (:1-4) Invasion by a Powerful Eastern Coalition Spurs Judah to Seek the Lord

1. (:1) Invasion by a Powerful Coalition

“Now it came about after this that the sons of Moab and the sons of Ammon, together with some of the Meunites, came to make war against Jehoshaphat.”

Iain Duguid: The Moabites probably initiated the attack, joined by their northern neighbors on the Transjordanian plateau, the Ammonites. The third group accompanying them are commonly read as “*Meunites*,” following the Septuagint rather than the Masoretic Text’s repetition of “Ammonites.” They were possibly associated with Ma’an, which was south of Petra and so loosely matching “*Mount Seir*” (vv. 10, 23), a general description of the region of Edom and the southern borders of Judah (cf. 26:7; 1 Chron. 4:41). Later it was this third group on which the others turned (2 Chron. 20:23). The attacking armies came from the southeast.

2. (:2) Urgency of the Danger Reported

*“Then some came and reported to Jehoshaphat, saying,
‘A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea,
out of Aram and behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar (that is Engedi).”*

3. (:3) Response of Jehoshaphat

a. Natural Response

“And Jehoshaphat was afraid”

b. Spiritual Response

“and turned his attention to seek the LORD;”

c. Physical Response

“and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.”

4. (:4) Response of the People

*“So Judah gathered together to seek help from the LORD;
they even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD.”*

B. (:5-12) Invoking the Help of God via Prayer and Faith

August Konkel: In this instance, Jehoshaphat followed the petitions of Solomon’s prayer (2 Chron 20:3-13; cf. 6:34-35). In time of war, he gathered the people together to seek deliverance from God. The prayer of Jehoshaphat does not appeal to compassion or divine favor; it was a petition that God would keep his promises against the attack of his adversaries. Powerful and treacherous invaders had taken advantage of a powerless and righteous people. The prayer has typical elements of lament; it includes a lengthy invocation, a confession, a statement of assurance, and the petition itself.

(:5) Audience with Lord at the Temple before the People

*“Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem,
in the house of the LORD before the new court,”*

1. (:6) Praise for God’s Sovereign Power

*“and he said, ‘O LORD, the God of our fathers,
art Thou not God in the heavens?”*

*And art Thou not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations?
Power and might are in Thy hand so that no one can stand against
Thee.”*

2. (:7-9) Praise for the Promised Land and Temple

“Didst Thou not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and give it to the descendants of Abraham Thy friend forever? 8” And they lived in it, and have built Thee a sanctuary there for Thy name, saying, 9 ‘Should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before Thee (for Thy name is in this house) and cry to Thee in our distress, and Thou wilt hear and deliver us.”

3. (:10-11) Perplexity of Unjust Attack

“And now behold, the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom Thou didst not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt (they turned aside from them and did not destroy them), 11 behold how they are rewarding us, by coming to drive us out from Thy possession which Thou hast given us as an inheritance.”

4. (:12) Plea for Deliverance

“O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on Thee.”

Iain Duguid: The current situation, however, was one of **injustice**: the Israelites had obeyed God and not invaded the territories of Moab, Ammon, and Edom (**Deut. 2:1–19; Judg. 11:15–18**), but now these peoples were seeking to “*drive us out*,” the language again focusing on what God had said and done in the past. This prayer in an emergency is not penitential but exudes **confidence in God**, appealing to him to “*execute judgment*.” The pairings are explicit: at one level a “*great horde*” was facing a “*powerless*” people, but the prayer affirms the reality that treacherous invaders had come against a just God who “*rules over all the kingdoms of the nations*.” There was thus expectancy: “*our eyes are on you*” to see what God would do.

C. (:13-19) Instructions on Receiving God’s Salvation

1. (:13-17) Revelation of Promised Salvation

J.A. Thompson: Having laid their concerns before the Lord, the people waited humbly on him. The expression to “*stand before the Lord*” is found frequently in Scripture (cf. **Gen 19:27; Lev 9:5; Deut 4:10; 2 Chr 18:20**). The divine response to Jehoshaphat’s prayer came by way of Jahaziel, a Levite with an unusually long genealogy reaching back to Asaph in the days of David. He addressed King Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah and Jerusalem with an oracle of salvation containing three main components:

- the addressees,
- a “*fear not*” element at the beginning and again at the end (cf. v. **3**), and

- the substantiation (“*the battle is not yours, but God’s*”; cf. **1 Sam 17:47**; **1 Chr 5:22**).

Here was the perspective of the “holy war” and the speech of the priest before battle (**Deut 20:2-4**). The literary forms of the salvation oracle and the holy war are woven together in one speech. Even if there was a disparity in the forces, with the Lord fighting for Israel they were assured of success. The substance of the oracle is restated in v. 17 with a quotation from **Exod 14:13**. The God who had parted the Red Sea had not changed in hundreds of years, and he is still the same today (cf. **Isa 52:10**; **Zech 9:9**). The assurance of God’s presence was more than a theological statement; it was to be a source of strength.

- a. (:13) Standing before the Lord Awaiting His Revelation
“And all Judah was standing before the LORD, with their infants, their wives, and their children.”
- b. (:14) Spirit Filled Prophet Delivers God’s Word
“Then in the midst of the assembly the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite of the sons of Asaph;”
- c. (:15-17) Salvation Comes from the Lord
“and he said, ‘Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the LORD is with you.’”

2. (:18-19) Response to Promised Salvation = Worship and Praise

- a. (:18a) Response of Jehoshaphat
And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground,”
- b. (:18b) Response of the People
“and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD.”
- c. (:19) Response of the Levites
“And the Levites, from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel, with a very loud voice.”

D. (:20-30) Improbable Victory

1. (:20-23) Keys to Victory

a. (:20) Trust in the Lord and in His Revelation

“And they rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, ‘Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the LORD your God, and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed.’”

b. (:21) Give Thanks to the Lord in Praise and Worship

“And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the LORD and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, ‘Give thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.’”

Raymond Dillard: The modern historian may be tempted “to poke fun at Jehoshaphat in Chronicles for sending out the temple choir to meet an invading army; it is still funnier when the choir puts the foe to flight and causes great slaughter with a few well-directed psalms” (**W. Stinespring**, JBL 80 [1961] 209). Though the role of the musicians may be enlarged or enhanced in the eyes of a modern historian, one must not forget the **role of music in warfare** ancient and modern; armies through the millennia have gone into battle to musical cadence. Particularly within Israel’s tradition of holy war music has been assigned an important function (**13:11–12; Josh 6:4–20; Judg 7:18–20; Job 39:24–25**); music accompanies the appearance of the divine warrior to execute judgment (**Ps 47; 96; 98**). Yahweh marches at the head of the armies of heaven and Israel (**Deut 33:2–5, 26–29; Josh 5:13–15; Judg 5; Ps 68:8–13; 2 Kgs 6:15–19; 7:6; Isa 13:1–13; 4:9–12; Hab 3**); his appearance on the Day of Yahweh is marked by a trumpet blast (**Exod 19:16, 19; Isa 18:3; 27:13; Amos 2; 2; Zeph 1:14–16; Zech 9:14; Matt 24:31; 1 Cor 15:52; Rev 8–9; 10:7; 11:15**).

August Konkel: It is not normally good military strategy to meet a mighty foe with a choir, yet this is the appropriate method of divine warfare. In this case the prophets were the Levitical musicians, such as Jahaziel; musical praise for the battle march was itself prophetic. Through the millennia music has had a vital role in warfare, but in the context of divine warfare, it was a declaration that God was at the head of the army. As at Jericho, the battle belonged to the Lord; the task of the human army was simply to stand still and wait for the outcome of the battle. The battle cry was replaced by a chorale. The Lord set ambushes against the enemy. The Chronicler is saying that the heavenly army confused the enemy armies so they turned on each other in the rough terrain. The army of Jehoshaphat returned to the temple, confirming the answer to prayer; they ended where they began.

c. (:22-23) Stand Still and See the Salvation of the Lord

“And when they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed. 23 For the

sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying them completely, and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.”

2. (:24-25) Plundering the Slaughtered Enemy

a. (:24) Complete Slaughter

“When Judah came to the lookout of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and behold, they were corpses lying on the ground, and no one had escaped.”

b. (:25) Captured Spoil

“And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found much among them, including goods, garments, and valuable things which they took for themselves, more than they could carry. And they were three days taking the spoil because there was so much.”

3. (:26-28) Rejoicing in God-Granted Victory

“Then on the fourth day they assembled in the valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the LORD. Therefore they have named that place ‘The Valley of Beracah’ until today. 27 And every man of Judah and Jerusalem returned with Jehoshaphat at their head, returning to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies. 28 And they came to Jerusalem with harps, lyres, and trumpets to the house of the LORD.”

Frederick Mabie: Without any action on the part of Jehoshaphat’s army, the eastern coalition is destroyed. The plundering of enemies is one of the ways in which God showed his sovereignty over the nations and favor for his people (cf. **Ex 12:35-36; Hag 2:22**). It is likely that the location of the valley where the army assembled to praise God for his blessings was renamed *Valley of Beracah* (= Valley of Blessing) in the light of the victory given by God.

4. (:29-30) Rest and Peace from Enemies

“And the dread of God was on all the kingdoms of the lands when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. 30 So the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God gave him rest on all sides.”

Raymond Dillard: The rhetorical question of Jehoshaphat’s prayer had been answered (**20:6**)—Yahweh does rule over the kingdoms of the nations. Two tokens of divine blessing in the Chronicler’s theology are prominent in these verses.

(1) The righteous king enjoys victory over the nations, is held in awe by them, and receives their tribute (**1 Chr 14:17; 18:2, 6; 2 Chr 9:22–23; 17:10; 32:23**).

(2) Rest from enemies and times of peace are rewards for righteousness (14:4, 6 [5, 7]; 15:15; 1 Chr 22:9).

(20:31 – 21:3) CONCLUSION OF JEHOSHAPHAT’S REIGN

A. (20:31-34) Summary of Jehoshaphat’s Reign

1. (:31a) Age and Duration of Reign

“Now Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years.”

2. (:31b) Mother

“And his mother’s name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.”

3. (:32-33) Moral Evaluation

“And he walked in the way of his father Asa and did not depart from it, doing right in the sight of the LORD. 33 The high places, however, were not removed; the people had not yet directed their hearts to the God of their fathers.”

4. (:34) Recorded Deeds

“Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first to last, behold, they are written in the annals of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel.”

B. (20:35-37) Disastrous Maritime Venture Highlights Ongoing Danger of Unholy Alliances

J.A. Thompson: Ahaziah, king of Israel, offered help in a joint venture, which Jehoshaphat at first refused (1 Kgs 22:48-49). Yet once again Jehoshaphat was drawn into an alliance with the king of Israel. He sought a human ally and not God. There is no mention of the Lord’s help. Jehoshaphat agreed on an alliance to make ships to go to Tarshish (a fleet of trading ships). Jehoshaphat’s devout life did not sanctify this venture; rather, Ahaziah’s corrupt life defiled it.

1. (:35-36) Ship Building Venture = Another Unholy Alliance

“And after this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel. He acted wickedly in so doing. 36 So he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion-geber.”

2. (:37-38) Shipwrecked Venture

“Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying, ‘Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works.’ So the ships were broken and could not go to Tarshish.”

Frederick Mabie: Previous lucrative maritime trade from this port during the time of Solomon no doubt prompted Jehoshaphat's ill-fated attempt to restart maritime trade from this port through yet another ill-advised alliance with an ungodly northern kingdom king.

In short, this episode amounts to another example of faith compromise on the part of Jehoshaphat that reveals a heart not fully aligned with the ways of God. This prompts a prophetic rebuke from an otherwise unknown prophet (Eliezer), who announces God's coming judgment on this upstart maritime alliance. The connection with the time of Ahaziah of Israel places this maritime project in ca. 853 or 852 BC (cf. **Thiele**, 98-99).

C. (21:1-3) Final Conclusion to Reign of Jehoshaphat

Andrew Hill: The addendum to the succession formula (**21:1**) naming the seven sons of Jehoshaphat (**21:2**) and providing rationale for the succession of Jehoram as the firstborn son (**21:3**) serves both as a prelude to the report of King Jehoram's reign and as a memorial to those sons murdered by their brother Jehoram (**21:4**).

1. (:1a) Death and Burial of Jehoshaphat

*“Then Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers
and was buried with his fathers in the city of David.”*

2. (:1b) Succession = Jehoram His Son

“and Jehoram his son became king in his place.”

3. (:2) Brothers of Jehoram

*“And he had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel,
Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah. All these were the sons
of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.”*

4. (:3) Distribution of Inheritance

*“And their father gave them many gifts of silver, gold and precious
things, with fortified cities in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram
because he was the first-born.”*

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why are we so easily tempted to align ourselves in unholy alliances?
- 2) Why would Jehoshaphat have agreed to go into battle wearing his royal robes and thus making him a target while Ahab disguised himself?

3) What distinctions do you see in this text between true and false prophets?

4) What improbably victories or deliverances has the Lord accomplished for you?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: The OT appeals to a variety of criteria for **distinguishing true from false prophecy**. These criteria can be gathered under three heads as criteria focusing

- (1) on the revelatory means,
- (2) on the message, and
- (3) on the man himself.

All three come into play to a greater or lesser extent in the Micaiah narrative.

(1) A variety of revelatory means are sanctioned or forbidden in the OT (e.g., **Num 12:6; Deut 13:1; 18:9–13**). Preeminently the prophet was to be a man possessed by the spirit (**Num 11:16–30; 24:2; 1 Sam 10:5–13; 19:17–24; 2 Kgs 2:7–14; Mic 3:8; Zech 7:12; 2 Chr 20:14**, et al.); his message derived from his access to the heavenly council to hear the words of God (**Num 12:8; Isa 6; Ezek 1–2; Jer 1:4–10; 23:18–22; Zech 3:7**). Both the possession of the spirit (**18:23–24**) and the heavenly council (**18:18–21**) figure in the debate over true prophecy in the Micaiah narrative.

(2) The prophet's message was not to be in the name of other gods (**Deut 13:1–5**) or to contradict previous revelation (**1 Kgs 13**). The true prophet is recognized because his words come to pass (**Deut 18:14–22; 2 Chr 18:16, 25–27**); he stands against the tide and the *vox populi*.

(3) The canonical prophets appeal also to a **moral criterion** to invalidate the claims of their opponents to have the true word of God (**Jer 14:14; 23:10–14; 29:21–23; Ezek 13:21–22; Mic 2:11**; cf. **Matt 7:15–20; 2 Tim 3:6**). Though there are a number of examples of violence on the part of prophets in the OT, the NT invokes the moral criteria for the man of God (**1 Tim 3:1–13; Titus 1:6–9; James 3:13–18**) in saying that he is not to be violent, “*a striker*” (KJV—**Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:3**). His conduct should contrast to that of Zedekiah (**18:23**).

While the passage abounds in criteria distinguishing true from false prophecy, it also enigmatically affirms divine responsibility for false prophecy (**Deut 13:3; 2 Chr 18:18–22**).

The passage speaks eloquently of the sovereignty of God. It was not Ahab who ruled over Israel, seated on his throne surrounded by his flattering prophets, but Yahweh sitting on his throne surrounded by the host of heaven.

Geoffrey Kirkland: The Portrait of Micaiah, the true man of God, the spokesman for God (**chap. 18**).

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAITHFUL PROPHET/PREACHER OF GOD'S TRUTH??

- a prophet of the LORD (v6)
- hated by wicked men (v7b)
- preaches evil (hard truths) to unbelievers (v7b)
- unknown, unpopular, undesired man (v8b)
- he was available and ready to preach (v12)
- he would speak exactly what GOD SAYS (v13)
- he courageously, unflinchingly spoke Truth (v15-16)
- he used biblical phraseology and metaphors (shepherd) (v.16)
- he ignored trivial arguments and didn't self-defend but only spoke God's Word (v.18)
- saw God as the Sovereign one on his heavenly throne — a big view of God (v.18)
- he exposed and unmasked the hypocritical false prophets (v.22)
- he said the LORD proclaims disaster for evildoers (v.22b)
- he received opposition and persecution (beating) from a fellow 'prophet' (v.23a)
- he was locked up in prison and fed sparingly by the king for his faithful message (v.26)
- he provided one final word of GOD's truth that came from his mouth (v.27)
- he called ALL PEOPLE to listen to him (v.27b)

Iain Duguid: Jehoshaphat's story is an example of godly leadership, while also serving as warning of the dangers of "joining with" those who do not share a common commitment to God. Paul challenged the Corinthians concerning being "*unequally yoked*" (2 Cor. 6:14–7:1). Throughout history, varied examples have been debated; however, Jehoshaphat's decisions suggest the basic criterion: does the "joining" lead to actions contrary to allegiance to God and his Word?

Raymond Dillard: The persistence of **holy war themes** in a work addressed to the small restoration community is striking. They were a politically subservient nation existing by the grace of their Persian overlords. The Chronicler reiterated through his appeal to holy war motifs that numbers and power do not count when Yahweh fights for Israel. These holy war motifs in Chronicles make little sense if the community was content with the status quo, ready to live as a hierocracy under foreign rule. To the contrary, the Chronicler's inclusion of holy war narratives bespeaks the presence of an eschatological hope, a longing for the Day of Yahweh, when the divine warrior would conquer in behalf of his people as he had done so often so long ago. The Chronicler, as an advocate of the temple and its personnel, could nevertheless have an eschatological program; hierocracy in the status quo is not necessarily opposed to eschatology and apocalypticism, but can exist in the same individuals without being assigned to separate sociological support groups. Ultimately the divine warrior does definitively fight for his people and frees them from alien domination (Rev 19:11–21; cf. T. Longman III, "The Divine Warrior: The New Testament Use of an Old Testament Motif," WTJ 44 [1982] 290–307). . .

Raymond Dillard: Several ways that **Jehoshaphat's reign paralleled that of Asa:**

- (1) Both kings' reigns follow similar patterns of reform, victory in battle, and transgression.
- (2) Both kings are said to have suppressed (**14:2-5; 17:6**) and to have failed to suppress (**15:17; 20:33**) the high places.
- (3) Both enjoyed prosperity, great building programs, and victory as a result of their obedience.
- (4) Both were involved in foreign alliances.
- (5) The two kings are linked together as the standard of piety to which Jehoram failed to attain.

Steven Cole: When Christians Compromise with the World

Big Idea: Compromise with the world brings disastrous consequences to God's people.

The outward damage may not be apparent for a while. But just as driving your car on salted roads in the winter brings inevitable, although not immediate, damage to your car, so compromise with the world brings inevitable corruption into your life and into the church. Four observations from the story of Jehoshaphat:

1. Compromise with the world is a danger for even the most godly of believers.
2. Compromise with the world is a danger because of its subtlety.
3. Compromise with the world sucks you in through wrong relationships.
 - (1) Wrong marriage relationships
 - (2) Wrong social relationships
 - (3) Wrong spiritual relationships
 - (4) Wrong political relationships
 - (5) Wrong business relationships
4. Compromise with the world brings disastrous results.

Conclusion

One of the most significant books I read last year was **David Wells' *No Place for Truth (Or "Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?")*** [Eerdmans]. He argues convincingly that the evangelical church in America has lost its theological foundation, its God-centeredness. Instead of being "truth brokers" who help their flocks come to know and live in submission to the holy God, pastors have become business managers who market the church and psychologists who help people find personal fulfillment and good feelings. He points out how if the Apostle Paul were looking for a pastorate today, he might be hard pressed because few would warm to his personality and, "... most pastors stand or fall today by their personalities rather than their character" (p. 290). He argues that the church has blended in with "modernity," promoting God and the gospel as just another self-help method.

Peter Wallace: Should You Love Those Who Hate the LORD?

Some people struggle with this, because they think about how we are supposed to love even our enemies! But I hope that you can see that there is a distinction. You are supposed to love all people – because they are created in the image of God – and because they may be restored to that image! But that does not mean that you are to help them attain what they desire!

Ahab wants to squash the true worship of Yahweh throughout Israel. Should you help him? Should you form an alliance with him that will encourage and further his goals?

“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4) Friendship in the biblical sense of the term refers to a relationship that has a common end – a common goal – a common direction that you pursue together. You cannot be friends with the world. If your closest relationships – if the relationships that define your existence – are hostile to God – then you will be hostile to him as well!

You cannot love those who hate God. If they hate that which you most love, then you cannot possibly ally with them in any ultimately meaningful way. You can love them for what they were created to be. You can love them for what they may yet become.

Jehoshaphat was trying to bring peace between Israel and Judah. He was a reforming king—a good king— who had good intentions for reuniting Israel and Judah. But in his good intentions for reuniting the church, he overlooked the problem of idolatry. Indeed, Jehoshaphat’s alliance with Ahab will nearly result in the end of the house of David, because one fruit of his alliance is that his son, Jehoram will marry Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab. He may have thought that this was a good way to try to bring Israel back into the fold, but you do not bring about reformation by intermarrying with idolaters!

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 21:4-20

TITLE: REIGN OF JEHORAM – LEADING JUDAH ASTRAY

BIG IDEA:

EVIL LEADERSHIP PUTS THE KINGDOM IN JEOPARDY BUT DOES NOT NULLIFY GOD’S COMMITMENT TO THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler presents Jehoram’s reign as a complete aberration, the reversal of the reigns of kings before him.

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler presents Jehoram’s reign as the unraveling of the accomplishments of Asa and Jehoshaphat. His handling of this king is a paradigm for his theology of **immediate retribution**. Each aspect of wrongdoing brought its inevitable consequence in loss of family, territory, and health. Though the writer of the Kings account would mention only that Jehoram died, the Chronicler elaborates at some length on the terrible death he endured as the result of his wickedness.

Irony permeates the account of Jehoram’s reign. Rather than enlarging the scope of his power through seizing his brothers’ cities, he loses control over Libnah and Edom; rather than securing the succession of his own children by slaughtering his brothers, he sees them suffer a similar fate; rather than securing life and happiness for himself, he suffers an agonizing and premature death; rather than gaining the devotion of his subjects, he dies unmourned and without the customary honors attending a royal funeral (**McConville**, 198). So it is for those who forget that the kingdom is God’s (**1 Chr 10:14; 17:14; 28:5; 29:11; 2 Chr 13:8**).

Andrew Hill: Jehoram is the first king to receive an entirely negative review by the Chronicler. As **Japhet** has observed, this is especially noticeable in the dark tone set for his reign by an emphasis on his fratricide at the onset of his rule (**21:4**) and his fatal illness cutting short his tenure on Judah’s throne (**21:19**). Two recurring themes are dominant in this entire unit:

- Judah’s affiliation with Baal because of the alliance with the “*house of Ahab*” (**21:6; 22:3, 4, 7, 8**), and
- The threat to the survival of the royal line of King David (**21:7; 22:10**).

Martin Selman: The kingdom of Judah suddenly enters a very dark phase (**chs. 21-23**). The reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah (**chs. 21-22**) and their sequel in Athaliah’s overthrow and death (**ch. 23**), brought the nation to the brink of internal destruction. The chief cause was the insidious influence of *the house of Ahab* (**21:6; 33:4, 5, 7, 8**), which was known in contemporary non-Israelite documents as “*the house of Omri*” (cf. **22:2**). Ironically, that dynasty had been introduced into Judah’s affairs by the godly Jehoshaphat (cf. **22:9**), but the latter’s faith and courage were unfortunately no

guarantee of his wisdom. The disastrous nature of his alliance with Ahab has been mentioned already (cf. **18:1-2**; **19:1-3**; cf. **20:35-37**), but now its consequences begin to unfold. The wider story of the house of Ahab's commitment to Baal worship and conflict with the prophets Elijah and Elisha is assumed to be known to the reader (**1 Ki. 17 – 2 Ki. 11**), leaving Chronicles to concentrate on their relationship with Judah.

Mark Boda: The Chronicler's account of Jehoram reveals the discipline that awaits the king who disobeys Yahweh. Jehoram's paranoid eradication of the royal house at the outset of his reign came back on his own head; by the end of this story his own court was left with only one heir to the throne. Elijah's prophetic letter reveals that Jehoram was really a northern king within the Davidic dynasty, and the sickness he experienced revealed God's deep displeasure with him. Yet, in spite of this, the Chronicler does not abandon the promise of an enduring dynasty for David, citing the promise of a lamp to burn forever (**21:7**). It is important that the Chronicler notes this during the reign of Jehoram, for the following chapters will describe the descent of the dynasty into its greatest crisis yet.

I. (:4-7) RUTHLESSNESS OF JEHORAM'S REIGN MITIGATED BY GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS COVENANT PROMISES

Iain Duguid: Jehoram's first action was **ominous**. The phrase translated "ascended" is commonly used in contexts of animosity, meaning "rise against" (e.g., **Judg. 9:18**; **1 Sam. 17:35**), and so here the meaning is probably that he "rose against the kingdom of his father," action to be repeated by Athaliah (**2 Chron. 22:10**). The **killing of potential rivals** was not uncommon (cf. Abimelech, **Judg. 9:56**; Solomon, **1 Kings 2**) but was a foretaste of his doing "evil in the sight of the Lord": he adopted the "way of the kings of Israel," emphasized by the double mention of "Ahab." The Chronicler's hearers would have been familiar with the account in **1 Kings 17–2 Kings 10** of the house of Omri, with Omri's son Ahab being the most notorious. The alliance with Tyre had led to militant expansion of the worship of Baal in the north, and the "daughter of Ahab" was representative of that pattern. The current ruler of the "house of David" had become no different from the "house of Ahab."

A. (:4) Savage Tactics by Jehoram to Secure His Kingdom

1. Power of Assuming the Throne

"Now when Jehoram had taken over the kingdom of his father"

2. Priority of Securing His Kingdom

"and made himself secure,"

Frederick Mabie: As with Solomon (cf. **1:1**), Jehoram "established himself firmly" over the kingdom. However, in the case of Solomon this description is tied to God's presence and blessing, while in Jehoram's case it is tied to his killing of all of his brothers (and/or half brothers).

3. Purging of All Potential Rivals

*“he killed all his brothers with the sword,
and some of the rulers of Israel also.”*

B. (:5) Age and Duration of Reign of Jehoram

1. Age

“Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king,”

2. Duration of Reign

“and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.”

C. (:6) Moral Evaluation of Reign of Jehoram

1. Corrupted by Evil Influence of the House of Ahab

*“And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel,
just as the house of Ahab did (for Ahab's daughter was his wife),”*

2. Characterized as Evil

“and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.”

Frederick Mabie: Jehoram’s wickedness was enhanced and inspired by his close association with the apostate northern kingdom (the “*house of Ahab*”). Jehoram’s wife (Athaliah) was the daughter of the infamous Ahab and Jezebel of the northern kingdom (cf. **22:2**; thus Athaliah was the granddaughter of Omri, founder of the Omride dynasty). The marriage of Jehoram and Athaliah was part of the political marriage treaty orchestrated by Jehoram’s father, Jehoshaphat. As noted above, such alliances show trust in human beings and political structures rather than complete trust in God and his ways. Moreover, such acts of spiritual compromise can have unexpected waves of consequences, as seen in the events of this chapter and the next. Athaliah, like her husband Jehoram (v. 4), will kill Davidic heirs to the throne (cf. **22:10**).

D. (:7) Faithfulness of the Lord to the Davidic Covenant

1. Patient Forbearance

“Yet the LORD was not willing to destroy the house of David”

2. Promised Dynasty

a. Enacted Covenant

“because of the covenant which He had made with David,”

Raymond Dillard: Perhaps because of his entirely negative assessment of Jehoram as a Davidic successor, the Chronicler appears to be placing greater emphasis on the unconditionality of the promises to David and his successors. The analogies with his own historical moment are instructive: though Judah had been restored in the post-exilic period, under Persian rule there would appear no prospect of the restoration of the Davidic dynasty; it is precisely when things look at a low ebb that hope is directed to future generations (cf. **Williamson**, 305). . .

Jehoram is the first king in the Davidic succession of whom the Chronicler's judgment is totally negative (Williamson, 303). Yet it is precisely at this nadir of religious fidelity that the Chronicler reiterates and elaborates on God's promises to David (21:7). The Chronicler's treatment of the validity of the Davidic covenant in the past no doubt spoke also to the dynastic aspirations of his post-exilic audience; it is hard to believe that the author would invoke God's fidelity to this promise to David for the past unless hope of a dynastic restoration was also a feature of his own faith.

b. Enduring Promise

“and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever.”

J.A. Thompson: David's "lamp" is a reference to **1 Kgs 11:36**. A burning lamp in the home would indicate its occupancy by a resident. To have a lamp suggests that life would continue and the home would be occupied. The promise was that the Davidic line would not be extinguished until the time of the Messiah, who would occupy the throne forever.

II. (:8-11) UNRULY UPRISINGS AND ABOMINABLE APOSTASY OF JEHORAM'S REIGN PUT JUDAH IN JEOPARDY

Frederick Mabie: The perceived weakness of Jehoshaphat's successor Jehoram (Joram) prompts Edom in the southeast and Libnah in the west to rebel against Judah (cf. **2Ki 8:20-22**). Libnah (perhaps Tel Zayit or Tel Bornat) was located in the Shephelah about midway between Azekah and Lachish, near the border with Philistia. The Chronicler notes similar hostility from the Philistines to the west and the Arabians to the south (see vv. **16-17**). Regardless of perceived weakness on the part of Judah, the ultimate theological reason for this upheaval is that *“Jehoram had forsaken the Lord”* (v. **10**).

J.A. Thompson: Edom had been subservient to Judah. David had subdued Edom (**2 Sam 8:13-14; 1 Kgs 11:15-17**), but rebellion was brewing before Solomon's death (**1 Kgs 11:14-22**). Under Asa and Jehoshaphat, Judah regained control. In the time of Jehoshaphat, Edom had been ruled by a royal deputy (**1 Kgs 22:47**; but see **2 Kgs 3:9**). Then under Jehoram, Edom rebelled again and set up its own king. Jehoram responded by invading Edom with his officers and chariots but was not able to bring the Edomites under his control. On the contrary, Edomite forces surrounded Jehoram's forces, although he broke out of the trap and escaped, a sign of God's grace and faithfulness to David. There is no evidence that Edom was subdued by Jehoram again. Edom remained in rebellion “to this day.”

Libnah, possibly to be identified with Tell es-Safi to the west of Judah at the western end of the Valley of Elah, rebelled next, and Jehoram had revolts on two fronts. By Hezekiah's time the city was regained (**2 Kgs 19:8**).

A. (:8-10) Unruly Uprisings

1. (:8-10a) Revolt of Edom

a. (:8) Initiation of Edom's Revolt

"In his days Edom revolted against the rule of Judah, and set up a king over themselves."

b. (:9) Impotent Response to Edom's Revolt

1) Military Campaign

"Then Jehoram crossed over with his commanders and all his chariots with him."

2) Merciful Escape from Desperate Situation

"And it came about that he arose by night and struck down the Edomites who were surrounding him and the commanders of the chariots."

c. (:10a) Perpetuation of Edom's Revolt

"So Edom revolted against Judah to this day."

2. (:10b) Revolt of Libnah

"Then Libnah revolted at the same time against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers."

B. (:11) Abominable Apostasy

1. High Places

"Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah,"

Iain Duguid: Previous kings had sought to remove high places (**14:3, 5; 17:6**; cf. **20:33**), but Jehoram was the first in Judah to "[make] high places." The people worshiped there because he "led" them, he "made Judah go astray" (the condemnation in **21:10** had similarly been that "he had forsaken"). While previously the people had continued to worship at high places (**20:33**), here responsibility is laid on the king as he incited them to "whoredom" (the image of prostitution, being unfaithful in marriage, is a common OT description of idolatry; e.g., **Jer. 3:1-5; Ezek. 16:15-43**).

2. Harlotry

"and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot"

3. Hijacking

"and led Judah astray."

III. (:12-20) DECREED DEMISE OF JEHOAM'S REIGN CONSISTENT WITH HIS SHAMEFUL LEGACY

A. (:12-15) Calamitous Prophecy of Elijah of Coming Judgment

"Then a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet saying, 'Thus says the LORD God of your father David,'"

Frederick Mabie: It should be noted that this is the only appearance of Elijah in Chronicles, whose ministry efforts noted in Kings are directed against the wicked ways of the northern kingdom's Omride dynasty, particularly Ahab. However, Elijah's prophetic activity in the northern kingdom does not preclude his engagement with Judean kings, particularly if a king's actions (as here, cf. vv. 6, 13) mimic that of the northern kings. Elijah likely spent some time in the southern kingdom during his flight to Mount Horeb (**1Ki 19:3**).

August Konkel: Elijah was witness to the sins of Jehoram though not personally present in Judah. The letter recounts the sins of Jehoram: he walked in the ways of Israel, led Judah into unfaithfulness, and killed his brothers who were better than him. The indictment of the letter follows the theology of the Chronicler. Jehoram will lose his family and possessions and will personally die of a painful disease. The letter recounts the sins of Jehoram in the first part of the narrative and pronounces the judgment that unfolds against Jehoram in the second part of the account.

Thomas Constable: It is significant that the prophet whom God sent to announce judgment on Jehoram was Elijah (v. 12), who was still alive at this time. Elijah's ministry was to condemn Baalism in Israel, but God sent him to Jehoram because Jehoram shared the same guilt as the kings of Ahab's house. This is the only record we have of a prophet from the Northern Kingdom rebuking a king of the Southern Kingdom. All the other prophets whom God sent to the Davidic kings were from Judah. This is also the only reference to a letter that either Elijah or Elisha wrote.

1. (:12-13) Reason for God's Judgment

a. (:12b) Failed to Do Good

"Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father and the ways of Asa king of Judah,"

b. (:13) Fermented Evil

1) Patterned Your Life after Wicked Kings

"but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel,"

2) Promoted Spiritual Harlotry

"and have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot as the house of Ahab played the harlot,"

3) Purged Your Family of Rivals to the Throne

"and you have also killed your brothers, your own family, who were better than you,"

2. (:14-15) Revelation of God's Judgment

a. (:14) Curse on Family and Possessions

"behold, the LORD is going to strike your people, your sons, your wives, and all your possessions with a great calamity;"

b. (:15) Curse on Personal Health

“and you will suffer severe sickness, a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the sickness, day by day.”

Andrew Hill: According to Elijah’s letter, God’s judgment will reach as far as Jehoram’s sin, impacting in reverse order the royal family and the people of Judah (**2 Chron. 21:14**). The king’s punishment, a hideous and lingering disease (**21:15**), strikes at the heart of Jehoram’s sin – his failure to recognize that kingship belongs to God and not to any human being. The humiliating malady exposes his mortality and mocks his dignity as royalty, calling to mind the admonition of the psalmist: *“Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save”* (**Ps. 146:3**).

John MacArthur: This event undoubtedly occurred in the early years of Jehoram’s coregency with his father Jehoshaphat and shortly before Elijah’s departure to heaven, ca. 848 B.C. (cf. **2Ki 2:11, 12**).

J.A. Thompson: The two consequences of Jehoram’s two sins are introduced by the climactic *“so now,”* Hebrew *hinne*, sometimes translated *“behold.”* The consequences are given in reverse order of the sins. As a result of Jehoram’s having murdered his own brothers, the Lord would strike down his sons, his family, and his possessions. The phrase *“everything that is yours”* is literally *“and all your possessions,”* employing a word (*rekus*) translated *“equipment”* in **20:25**. There it refers to the plunder of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites God gave to Jehoshaphat in response to his faith. Here it refers to the *“goods”* (*rekus*) that the Philistines and Arabs would plunder from Jehoram (v. 17) in response to his wickedness. Jehoram himself would die with a disease of the bowels that would last (literally) *“days upon days”* until his bowels came out. As with most illnesses mentioned in the Old Testament, we are left to conjecture about the clinically imprecise vocabulary. Ulcers, colitis, chronic diarrhea, and dysentery have been proposed.

B. (:16-17) Campaign Waged against Jehoram by Philistine-Arab Alliance

1. (:16) Divine Judgment Using Pagan Nations

“Then the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who bordered the Ethiopians;”

2. (:17) Devastation and Despoiling

“and they came against Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions found in the king's house together with his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.”

Raymond Dillard: For the Chronicler, if progeny is a measure of divine favor, their loss shows divine anger; see above, vv 2–3, 12–15.

J.A. Thompson: Jehoram’s inability to prevent the initial rebellions in these areas

encouraged other rebellions. These renewed attacks reached as far as the king's palace, from which the attackers carried off booty and took captive his sons and wives.

C. (:18-20) Conclusion of Jehoram's Reign

1. (:18) Judged with Terminal Sickness

“So after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable sickness.”

Iain Duguid: His bowel sickness was humiliating and fatal (the exact illness is not specified).

2. (:19) Ignominious Passing

a. Painful Death

“Now it came about in the course of time, at the end of two years, that his bowels came out because of his sickness and he died in great pain.”

b. Paltry Memorial

“And his people made no fire for him like the fire for his fathers.”

3. (:20a) Age and Duration of Reign

a. Age

“He was thirty-two years old when he became king,”

b. Duration of Reign

“and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years;”

4. (:20b) No Respect at His Death and Burial

a. No Respect at His Death – Good Riddance

“and he departed with no one's regret,”

b. No Respect in His Burial

“and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.”

Raymond Dillard: Perhaps it is the measure of the Chronicler's contempt for Jehoram that for the first time he makes no mention of other sources the reader might consult for additional details regarding his reign.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown: A series of overwhelming calamities befell this wicked king; because, in addition to the revolts already mentioned, two neighboring tribes (see **2 Chron. 17:11**) made hostile incursions on the southern and western portions of his kingdom; his country was ravaged, his capital taken, his palace plundered, his wives carried off, all his children slain except the youngest, himself was seized with a chronic and incurable dysentery, which, after subjecting him to the most painful suffering for the unusual period of two years, carried him off, a monument of the divine judgment;

and, to complete his degradation, his death was unlamented, his burial unhonored, by his subjects. This usage, similar to what obtained in Egypt, seems to have crept in among the Hebrews, of giving funereal honors to their kings, or withholding them, according to the good or bad characters of their reign.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How evil is a ruler who slaughters his brothers just to protect his own kingship from competition?
- 2) How close does Israel come to having the Davidic dynasty completely wiped out?
- 3) Why did Edom and Libnah revolt at this point in time?
- 4) How miserable must Jehoram have been during the last two years of his life?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: The author may have intended to group his narrative in a palistrophe as follows:

- A Chronology (5)
- B Wrongdoing (royal sons) (4, 6–7)
- C Rebellion of Edom and Libnah (8–11)
- D Letter from Elijah (royal sons) (12–15)
- C' Rebellion of Philistines and Arabs (16–17)
- B' Punishment for wrongdoing (royal sons) (17–19)
- A' Chronology (20)

August Konkel: Baal religion was a fertility cult. It was a form of materialism under the guise of religious piety. Worship of Baal, the rider of the clouds, ostensibly brought rain that made crops grow. The pedestal of Baal was a calf; his stela depicts him with a club in one hand for thunder and a sprig or lightning bolt in the other. In the days of Ahab, through the aggressive efforts of Jezebel, Phoenician religion permeated Israel to the point that Elijah would feel that he was the only prophet left. The Chronicler says nothing of this influence, other than the observation that Judah came directly under Baal influence through Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel, wife of Jehoram and mother of his son Ahaziah. Materialism has been a destructive force in much of human history, well illustrated in the reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah.

Iain Duguid: This passage juxtaposes two realities. All too evident throughout human

history are violence, despotic actions, battles between different ethnic groups, and threats to what is God-honoring and to God's people. At the same time, working out his purposes is the God who keeps his promises. Before the exile, Isaiah had promised that "light" would come, associated with the Davidic king (**Isa. 9:1–7**). Now, after the exile, the Chronicler reassures his hearers—who are still under foreign rule and without a Davidic king. In the midst of darkness, they are to remember what God did during the dark reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah; they can persevere in hopeful faithfulness because God will keep his covenant and promise concerning a "lamp."

Andrew Hill: The Old Testament historians have equated the "two paths" of the wisdom tradition [cf. **Ps. 1; Prov. 4, 12**] with the dynasties of the divided monarchies. Thus, the "way of the house of David" is contrasted with the ways of "the house of Ahab" (**2 Chron. 21:6**; cf. **2 Kings 8:27; 22:2; 2 Chron. 11:17; 22:3**). The house of David is characterized as a good way, marked by loyalty to God, obedience to his Word, and righteousness in royal rule (cf. **1 Kings 3:6; 1 Chron. 29:18-19**). Conversely, the house of Ahab is characterized as an evil way, given to economic oppression, social injustice, idolatry, and witchcraft (cf. **1 Kings 16:30; 21:19; 2 Kings 9:22**).

All this confirms the fact that true wisdom is not so much about knowledge and intellect as it is about character and behavior (cf. **Prov. 1:3; 2:9**). In the end, only one house will survive – for the Lord's curse rests on the house of the wicked, but his blessing rests on the home of the righteous (**3:33**). The Chronicler "spoils" the story of the near annihilation of the Davidic family for his audience by disclosing the resolution of the plot's conflict at the very beginning of his narrative: "*The Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David. He had promised to maintain a lamp for him*" (**2 Chron. 21:7**). The outcome of the rival house is equally assured, as we learn that God had anointed Jehu "*to destroy the house of Ahab*" (**22:7**). . .

According to the Chronicler's theology of immediate retribution, there is direct correspondence between a king's political power and his faithfulness to the tenets of Yahweh's covenant. Jehoram's political weakness is attested by his failure to control former Judean satellite states and cities. The author's theological commentary on the two revolts against Jehoram places blame directly on the king's sin of idolatry, implied in the references to the "high places" and the activity of the people in "prostituting themselves" (**21:10b-11**). By way of personal example and public policy, Jehoram is held responsible for leading God's people astray in their worship.

Thus, the rebellion of Jehoram becomes another example in the history of the Davidic monarchy of a successor undoing the work of his predecessor. In this case, the internal decay associated with Jehoram's apostasy not only nullifies the reforms of his father, Jehoshaphat, but also leads to the loss of gains made in foreign policy by both Asa and Jehoshaphat.

Mark Boda: This concern of dynastic extinction serves as a consistent leitmotif in the

Chronicler's account throughout these two chapters; it sets the tone for and contributes significantly to the darkness of the narrative. This leitmotif, which **De Vries** (1989:335) calls "the schema of Dynastic Endangerment," is introduced in the description of the early phase of Jehoram's reign, as the new king purges the royal house of all his brothers (**21:4**), an act that prompts divine judgment in the letter from Elijah (**21:13**). The motif is reintroduced in the following:

- (1) the attack of the philistine-Arab coalition, who carried away all of Jehoram's sons except one (**21:17**);
- (2) the reminder of this event in the accession note of Ahaziah (**22:1**);
- (3) Jehu's assassination of Ahaziah and the sons of his brothers (**22:8-9**); and
- (4) Athaliah's purge of the rest of the Judean royal family save one (**22:10-12**).

In an ironic twist, this trend of purging proves positive for the Davidic line since it leads to the removal from the Davidic dynasty of the stain and influence of the Omrides introduced by Athaliah.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 22:1-9

TITLE: REIGN OF AHAZIAH – KINGDOM FLAME ALMOST EXTINGUISHED

BIG IDEA:

EVIL COUNSEL AND ECUMENICAL ALLIANCES ALMOST WIPE OUT THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: The future of the Davidic throne seemed **precarious**: the crisis that had brought Ahaziah to the throne is highlighted by repetition of the circumstances that led to only the “*youngest son*” surviving (**2 Chron. 22:1**). Further, his reign was brief (**v. 2**), and the Chronicler emphasizes that “*he also*” followed the “*ways of the house of Ahab*” (**v. 3**). Policies leading to disaster continued. By the end of the chapter a glimmer of hope is expressed in the contrast between a very young royal child “*hidden in the house of God*” and a cruel, idolatrous daughter of Ahab, Athaliah, “*reign[ing] over the land*” (**v. 12**). Human plans and actions are evident throughout, but central in the chapter are references to **God’s activity** (**v. 7**).

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler hurries to tell the story of Jehoram’s son Ahaziah. His version abridges the fifty-six verses of **2 Kings 8:25 – 10:14** in just nine verses. The broad relationship of the two accounts may be represented as follows:

2 Chron. 22:1-6	=	2 Kings 8:25-29
2 Chron. 22:7	=	2 Kings 9:21
2 Chron. 22:8	=	2 Kings 10:13-14
2 Chron. 22:9	=	2 Kings 9:28

The account of King Ahaziah’s reign consists of three brief reports:

- The regnal resume and theological review (**22:1-4**),
- The alliance with Joram of Israel (**22:5-6a**), and
- The death report (**22:6b-9**).

The one-year reign of Ahaziah is dated anywhere from 845-841 B.C., depending on the source. His brief tenure in the royal office is best placed in 842 or 841 B.C.

Even as Davidic hopes were not doused by Ahaziah’s sin or Athaliah’s reign of terror, so too the Davidic hope remains alive in the postexilic period despite all appearances to the contrary.

August Konkel: The decimation of the royal household of Jehoram left Judah and Jerusalem in the precarious situation of disorderly succession. It left the territory in substantial control of the queen mother. She held the position of sovereign, an exalted ceremonial position with considerable influence on matters of state. Athaliah was the mirror image of Jezebel, wife of Ahab. Athaliah is said to be a daughter of Omri in the MT of **2 Kings 8:26** and **2 Chronicles 22:2**, though she is a daughter of Ahab

according to **2 Kings 8:18** and **2 Chronicles 21:6**. The apparent discrepancy is easily resolved if she was the granddaughter of Omri: the Hebrew term for “*daughter*” can also mean “*granddaughter*.”

The inhabitants of Jerusalem installed the remaining son of the royal family as king. These may be the equivalent of the *people of the land* who participated in the installation of a king in times of dynastic crisis (**2 Chron 23:20-21; 26:21; 33:25; 36:1**). They must be associated with landed aristocracy or officials within civil service. Perhaps in the immediate crisis the decision was made by leaders in Jerusalem without further consultation.

J. Barton Payne: These verses furnish a historical demonstration of how, in God’s providence, the results of a sin may bring about that very sin’s punishment. In the case of Ahaziah it was the evil alliance of Judah with Israel that brought about the king’s death (**vv. 4, 7**), after a reign of only a few months.

I. (:1-4) EVIL COUNSEL COMPROMISED A YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED KING

A. (:1) Impromptu Crowning of Ahaziah as King of Judah

“Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his youngest son, king in his place, for the band of men who came with the Arabs to the camp had slain all the older sons. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign.”

Raymond Dillard: The “*marauders who had come with the Arabs*” would have included the Philistines (**21:16–17**). The Chronicler’s mention of their attack reiterates his convictions regarding retributive justice: Jehoram, the king who had slain all his brothers, lived to witness the death of his own sons (**21:4, 13, 16–17**).

J.A. Thompson: The raiders who came with the Arabs into the camp represented an invasion that may not have been great and probably included the Philistines (**21:16-17**). This raid was for the Chronicler further evidence of God’s retributive justice. Jehoram, who killed all his brother, lived to witness the death of his own sons (**21:4, 13, 16-17**).

B. (:2a) Immaturity and Inexperience -- Young Age and Short Duration of Reign

“Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem.”

Matthew Henry: We have here an account of the reign of Ahaziah, a short reign (of one year only), yet long enough, unless it had been better. He was called *Jeho-ahaz* (**2 Chron. 21:17**); here he is called *Ahaz-iah*, which is the same name and of the same signification, only the words of which it is compounded are transposed. He is here said to be forty-two years old when he began to reign (**2 Chron. 22:2**), which could not be, for his father, his immediate predecessor, was but forty when he died, and it is said (**2 Kgs. 8:26**) that he was twenty-two years old when he began to reign. Some make this forty-two to be the age of his mother Athaliah, for in the original it is, *he was the son of*

forty-two years, that is, the son of a mother that was of that age; and justly is her age put for his, in reproach to him, because she managed him, and did what she would—she, in effect, reigned, and he had little more than the title of king. Many good expositors are ready to allow that this, with some few more such difficulties, arise from the mistake of some transcriber, who put forty-two for twenty-two, and the copies by which the error should have been corrected might be lost. Many ancient translations read it here twenty-two. Few books are now printed without some errata, yet the authors do not therefore disown them, nor are the errors of the press imputed to the author, but the candid reader amends them by the sense, or by comparing them with some other part of the work, as we may easily do this.

C. (:2b) Mother of Ahaziah from the Corrupt Family of Ahab

“And his mother's name was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri.”

Iain Duguid: The role of queen mother was significant, although ill-defined. In this case she acted as “*counselor*” alongside others from the northern house, a major function in the court (cf. Ahithophel; **1 Chron. 27:33**). Ahaziah was surrounded by people who would ensure that he followed the “*ways of the house of Ahab*” and that he supported his uncle Jehoram, son of Ahab, in seeking to regain a key city.

D. (:3-4) Moral Evaluation of Reign of Ahaziah

1. (:3) Pursued Wickedness Due to the Counsel of His Mother

“He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly.”

Mark Boda: The concern expressed over inappropriate northern religious practices may be a reminder to the Chronicler’s audience that although members of the northern tribes are truly part of “*all Israel*,” there will be **no compromises** in religious purity.

2. (:4) Pursued Evil Due to the Counsel of the House of Ahab

“And he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab, for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction.”

Mark Boda: The account of this evil is dominated by references to the intrusion of the northern kingdom, an intrusion emphasized by the Chronicler’s threefold use of the Hebrew root *counsel* appearing in **22:3** (“*his mother encouraged him in doing wrong*”), **22:4** (“*they even became his advisers . . . and they led him to ruin*”), and **22:5** (“*following their evil advice*”). . . The Chronicler’s account thus casts Ahaziah “as a victim rather than as an instigator” (Japhet 1993:821). The seeds planted when Jehoshaphat made alliances with the Omride dynasty had now germinated and grown as weeds about to choke out the dynastic promise given to David.

II. (:5-6) ECUMENICAL ALLIANCE OF JUDAH WITH ISRAEL LED TO AHAZIAH’S DESTRUCTION

A. (:5a) Lack of Discernment Led to Battle Alliance with Jehoram

1. Following Bad Counsel

“He also walked according to their counsel,”

2. Fighting Bad Wars

“and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to wage war against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth-gilead.”

Frederick Mabie: Ahaziah’s reliance on the counsel of the ungodly (cf. vv. 3-4) leads to his agreement to help the northern kingdom in battle alliance against Aram at the Transjordanian city of Ramoth Gilead, in similar manner to his grandfather Jehoshaphat (cf. 18:2-34). Ramoth Gilead (likely Tell Ramith) was situated along the King’s Highway about thirty miles east of the Jordan River. Control over Ramoth Gilead meant control over the lucrative north-south trade caravans that passed through it.

B. (:5b-6) Lack of Discernment Led to Visiting the Wounded Jehoram

1. (:5b) Joram Wounded in Battle

“But the Arameans wounded Joram.”

2. (:6a) Joram Retreated to Jezreel to Recover

“So he returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which they had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Aram.”

3. (:6b) Joram Visited by Ahaziah

“And Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.”

III. (:7-9) EXTINCTION OF DAVIDIC DYNASTY A VERY REAL DANGER

A. (:7) **Divine Discipline for Culpability of Ahaziah**

1. Culpable for Alliance with Joram

“Now the destruction of Ahaziah was from God, in that he went to Joram.”

Raymond Dillard: In Kings the death of Ahaziah appears to result more from the excessive zeal of Jehu’s coup—perhaps it is precisely this excess in murdering the Judean king and members of the royal household that prompted Hosea’s oracle about God’s avenging the “*blood of Jezreel*” (**Hos 1:4**). For the Chronicler, however, the death of Ahaziah was the result of divine will, the inevitable outcome of his following in the ways of the house of Ahab.

Martin Selman: Ahaziah is probably not condemned for participating in the war as such. Rather, by failing to separate himself from Jehoram, he made himself liable to suffer the same punishment that God had previously announced against Ahab’s house and which he had chosen Hazael and Jehu to carry out (cf. **1 Kgs 19:15-17**; **2 Kgs 8:11-13**). This

lack of discernment shows itself in several attendant ironies.

- Firstly, though Israel and Judah had been reunited, it was on the basis of self-interest and idolatry rather than the covenant.
- Secondly, joint action against the Syrians at Ramoth Gilead had already led to one disaster (**ch. 18**).
- Thirdly, Jehoram's attempt to recover (**v. 6**, NIV, REB, NEB, etc.), literally "*be healed*" (NRSV, RSV) at Jezreel is probably a tacit rejection of the Lord's offer of healing through repentance (cf. **2 Chr. 7:14; 30:20**). His action may also have been compounded by further idolatry if family tradition is an adequate guide (cf. **2 Kgs 1:2-6, 15-17**).

2. Culpable for Fighting against God's Appointed Instrument of Judgment

"For when he came, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab."

Iain Duguid: The following section (**vv. 7–9**) shows awareness of details in **2 Kings 9:1–10:36** but deals very briefly with Jehu's purge of the house of Ahab. The Chronicler simply summarizes how it came about that "*the house of Ahaziah had no one able to rule the kingdom*" (his addition). This outcome was due not merely to human scheming or folly: "*It was ordained by God [lit., "It was from God"] that the downfall of Ahaziah should come about. . . . [For] the Lord had anointed [Jehu] to destroy the house of Ahab*" (cf. **2 Kings 9:1–13**).

B. (:8) Collateral Damage on the Princes of Judah and Ahaziah's Close Relatives

"And it came about when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, he found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers, ministering to Ahaziah, and slew them."

C. (:9a) Death and Burial of Ahaziah

1. Death – No Escaping God's Judgment

"He also sought Ahaziah, and they caught him while he was hiding in Samaria; they brought him to Jehu, put him to death,"

2. Burial – Mercy Shown Due to Godliness of Jehoshaphat

"and buried him. For they said, 'He is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart.'"

Eugene Merrill: The chronicler seems to have implied that Ahaziah died at Jezreel (**2 Chron. 22:9**), while the author of Kings wrote that Ahaziah died at Megiddo (**2 Kings 9:27**). Probably the two accounts are supplementary. Ahaziah fled to Samaria and was captured there by Jehu's men, who brought him back to Jehu. Meanwhile Jehu left Jezreel and met Ahaziah as he was being returned. Jehu's men wounded him and Ahaziah escaped to Megiddo where he died.

D. (:9b) Leadership Crisis for the Davidic Dynasty

"So there was no one of the house of Ahaziah

to retain the power of the kingdom.”

Raymond Dillard: The infidelity of Jehoram and Ahaziah had brought the Davidic succession to the same point as that of Saul—no one left who could assume power over the kingdom (**22:9**; **1 Chr 10**; cf. **Mosis**, Untersuchungen, 179). . .

The Chronicler spoke of a time in the past when there was no one left of the Davidic line “*who could assume power over the kingdom*” (**22:9**). Surely the lesson was not lost on his post-exilic audience: even in adversity the royal line was preserved and would eventually regain the kingdom. Davidic hopes did not die at the time of Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash; they should not die in the post-exilic period. The flame from the promise of God that David would never lack a descendant to rule Israel (**1 Chr 17:11–14**; **2 Chr 21:7**) may have become little more than a smoldering wick—but it could not be extinguished.

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler’s concluding addition (**2 Chron. 22:9b**) illustrates the striking reversal: just seven years after Jehoshaphat’s godly reign, his grandson died and there is no descendant “*able to rule the kingdom.*” The omission, as for Jehoram, of the usual details of sources and resting with his fathers, as well as the absence of a successor, indicates that Ahaziah’s reign is also an **aberration**.

J.A. Thompson: It was in God’s purpose to destroy the house of Ahab, and Jehu had been “*anointed*” (*masah*) to carry out God’s intention. If Ahaziah placed himself at risk by foolishly visiting the king of Israel, it was almost inevitable that events would turn out as they did. The Chronicler was thus able to provide one more expression of his theology of immediate retribution.

The comment in **v. 9** gives us the reflections of the Chronicler. Whatever his defects, Ahaziah was a descendant of Jehoshaphat. As a descendant of one who sought the Lord with all his heart, his corpse could hardly be left exposed. Respect for the godliness of Jehoshaphat extended even to his unworthy descendants.

With the death of Ahaziah the promise of God that David would never lack a descendant to rule over Israel (**1 Chr 17:11-14**; **2 Chr 21:7**) seemed to be failing. The lamp God had given David (**21:7**) was now only a flickering wick. But God would not allow that, faint as it was, to be extinguished. He had Joash, only a child, waiting to be crowned (**22:10 – 24:27**).

Mark Boda: Whereas at the end of the reign of each of the previous kings of the southern kingdom there has been an heir waiting in the wings, this time there is none, a reality that deepens the crisis in Judah, creating a parallel to the crisis at the end of the reign of Saul (see **1 Chr 10:6, 13-14**) and providing a segue to Athaliah’s reign of terror (**22:10-12**).

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How can family connections lead to poor spiritual counsel?
- 2) How can we develop our discernment so we are not easily led astray by poor counsel?
- 3) Why do ecumenical alliances seem so innocent and expedient, yet prove to be so dangerous?
- 4) When circumstances look the darkest, what gives us encouragement that God is still in control and orchestrating His kingdom agenda?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: The differences between the two histories on the events surrounding Ahaziah's demise represent one of the most difficult historical questions in the OT. The differences in the two accounts are in three areas (**Williamson**, 311; C-M, 421).

- (1) Chronology: in **2 Kgs 10:12–14** the slaughter of the princes and officers of Judah is reported after the murder of Ahaziah, but in Chronicles, before.
- (2) Place of death: in **2 Kgs 9:27** Ahaziah is said to have fled wounded toward Ibleam and dies near Megiddo; in Chronicles he is found hiding in Samaria, brought to Jehu at an unnamed place and put to death.
- (3) Place of burial: in **2 Kgs 9:28** his body is taken to Jerusalem for burial in the City of David; Chronicles seems to imply that he was buried at the place of his death.

Some effort to ease the tension between the two texts should not be dismissed too quickly.

- (1) The Chronicler may have chronologically dislocated the death of Ahaziah's relatives and servants in order to end his account on the note of the death of Ahaziah—no chronological point may be made by the narrative. Perhaps in an effort to draw parallels with Saul, the death of the family was reported before the death of the king himself (**1 Chr 10:1–7**; cf. **Mosis**, Untersuchungen, 179).
- (2) Similarly, the specification of the place of burial may be assumed from the Kings account, in which case it would be wrong to infer that the Chronicler thought Ahaziah was buried in the North. The appeal to the righteousness of Jehoshaphat as a reason for the decent burial of Ahaziah would seem more natural if "*they buried him*" in Jerusalem (**22:9**).

It is difficult, however, to provide a plausible scenario for the itinerary of Ahaziah's flight before his death. The Chronicler's handling of Ahaziah's death should be compared with the account of Jehoiakim's reign. Three of the last four kings of Judah

died in exile, and the Chronicler may have deliberately left the impression that this was also the fate of Jehoiakim; it suited his narrative purpose to do so, though both he and his post-exilic readers would have been familiar with the death of Jehoiakim in Jerusalem (**2 Kgs 24:5–6**).

Geoffrey Kirkland: The Catastrophe of Corrupt Counselors: The Kingship of the Wicked King Ahaziah:

- I. DEPRAVED GUIDANCE (**1-4**)
- II. DISOBEDIENT ALLIANCE (**5-6**)
- III. DESTRUCTIVE RECOMPENSE (**7-9**)
- IV. DIVINE PROVIDENCE (**10-12**)

Iain Duguid: From a human perspective the future of the house of David was in the hands of **two royal women**. Athaliah, as a daughter of Ahab, either was fiercely angry and revengeful or saw her own life at risk (or both), and acted decisively and brutally. We can only guess at the level of support for her policies (cf. **2 Chron. 22:9b**; and the uprising seven years later), but she ruthlessly sought to ensure there would be no potential claimants to the Davidic throne, and so the Chronicler plainly states, “*Athaliah reigned over the land.*” The absence of the usual regnal formula (cf. **21:1, 5; 22:1**) points to the illegitimate hiatus.

In the middle of the account, however, we read of how Jehoshabeath (**2 Kings 11:2**: Jehosheba), “*daughter of King Jehoram,*” by stealth took Joash, a baby “*son of Ahaziah,*” and with his wet nurse hid him in a bedroom. As the wife of the high priest and brother of Ahaziah, she knew well the intricacies of the temple and palace buildings. She took risks not for her own sake (she was not Joash’s mother; **2 Chron. 24:1**) but for the future of Davidic kingship, and we might assume for worship of the Lord and not of Baal. Hope is found in the statement, “*So [Athaliah] did not put him to death.*” The mention of “*six years*” linked with Joash (and not with Athaliah’s reign) prepares for the next chapter, which begins “*But in the seventh year*” (**23:1**).

Frederick Mabie: In addition to Jehu’s killing Ahaziah and Joram, the Aramean official Hazael assassinated Ben-Hadad in Damascus and seized control of Aram. The Tel Dan Inscription indicates that King Hazael takes credit for the deaths of Joram and Ahaziah, implying that Jehu may have acted in collusion with Hazael/Aram.

Matthew Henry: Those that counsel us to do wickedly counsel us to our destruction; while they fawn, and flatter, and pretend friendship, they are really our worst enemies. Those that debauch young men destroy them. It was bad enough that they exposed him to the sword of the Syrians, drawing him in to join with Joram king of Israel in an expedition to Ramoth-Gilead, where Joram was wounded, an expedition that was not for his honour. Those that give us bad counsel in the affairs of religion, if regarded by us, may justly be made of God our counsellors to do foolishly in our own affairs. But that was not all: by engaging him in an intimacy with Joram king of Israel, they involved him in the common ruin of the house of Ahab. He came on a visit to Joram (**2**

Chron. 22:6) just at the time that Jehu was executing the judgment of God upon that idolatrous family, and so was cut off with them, **2 Chron. 22:7-9**.

Here,

1. See and dread the **mischief of bad company**—of joining in with sinners. If not the infection, yet let the destruction be feared. Come out from Babylon, that falling house, **Rev. 18:4**.

2. See and acknowledge the **justice of God**. His providence brought Ahaziah, just at this fatal juncture, to see Joram, that he might fall with him and be taken as in a snare. This we had an account of before, **2 Kgs. 9:27, 28**.

Andrew Hill: The Chroniclers' theological commentary bluntly states that God "*brought about Ahaziah's downfall*" (**22:7**). **Wilcock** notes three reasons for Ahaziah's downfall:

- foreign influence in the form of false religion,
- family inheritance (with respect to the alliance by marriage of Judah and Israel), and
- personal responsibility (because neither true spirituality nor impiety is hereditary).

Jehu son of Nimshi becomes God's agent of justice in punishing the evil of both Joram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah (**22:7-8**; cf. **2 Kings 9:24-29**). While **2 Kings 9** related the parallel destruction of "*two houses*" (Judah and Israel), the focus of Chronicles is exclusively on the "*house of Judah*." The message of the passage is alarmingly clear: God repays evil for evil almost immediately on those who fail to emulate David's example of righteous rule.

August Konkel: The Chronicler assumes that his readers are familiar with the details of why Ahaziah would go to see Jehoram in Jezreel, which led to his fate in the purge of Jehu. For the Chronicler, this decision was a divine initiative (**2 Chron 22:7**). The death of Ahaziah is a punishment for allying with the king of Israel. This was an ironic justice; the king who lived by the counsel of the Omrides shared their fate. He had taken advice from Samaria, but found no refuge there at the time of his death. The Chronicler leaves Ahaziah in exile, as he does with Jehoiakim and the three last kings of Judah (**Dillard 1987:175**). The much-longer account of Kings explains that Ahaziah was buried in Jerusalem. The details of Kings cannot be reconciled with the impression left by the Chronicler without a measure of credulity. In Kings, Ahaziah flees south toward Samaria but is overtaken at Beth Haggan; he is shot and wounded at Gur, near Ibleam. Knowing that he cannot count on the speed of his chariot in the hills, he turns west toward Megiddo, seeking refuge. There he dies from his wounds and is brought back to Jerusalem. Apparently the Chronicler gives a rather schematic version of the events that leave Ahaziah in exile. He closes with the note that Ahaziah was given a proper burial as a son of righteous Jehoshaphat.

Martin Selman: The real subject of **chapter 22** is the *house of Ahab* (**vv. 3, 7, 8**) rather than the rulers of Judah, Ahaziah (**vv. 1-9**) and Athaliah (**vv. 10-12**). The influence of Ahab's house was felt during Ahaziah's brief reign through Athaliah's role as queen mother (**v. 2**) and through various advisers (**vv. 4-5**). External pressure was brought to bear by Jehoram king of Israel (also called Joram), who in one case is given the full title of son of Ahab king of Israel (**v. 5**; cf. **vv. 6, 7, 8**). Ahaziah was little more than a puppet, and, after his death, Athaliah ruled Judah while there was no effective control of Judah. The unity of Judah and Israel is eloquently symbolized by the names of their kings. No other Israelite king was called Jehoram or Ahaziah, yet both names are used of successive contemporary rulers in Judah and Israel.

Ahaziah and Athaliah represent two further stages in the subversion of Judah by Ahab's dynasty before the denouement in **chapter 23**. While Jehoram of Judah is merely open to its influence (**ch 21**), Ahaziah is fully co-operative. When Ahaziah dies, however, the situation becomes even more desperate. No male in David's house can assume kingship (**v. 9**), and remnants of hope are dashed by Athaliah's violent purge of what was left of the royal family (**vv. 10-12**). The overwhelming threat is no more evident than in the repeated group murders which affect the Davidic house four times within two generations (**21:4; 22:1, 8, 10**). It is true that one baby escapes Athaliah's cruelty (**vv. 11-12**), but what could one baby do against such a tyrant? In all this, God's own integrity is increasingly under question, for he seems to have failed to keep his promises, and to have left his people utterly defenseless. . .

Assurance of God's sovereign control was just as appropriate in the troubles of the post-exilic period when the Davidic house had become no more than a memory (cf. **Ezra 9:6-7; Neh. 9:36-37**). It is equally applicable to suffering believers of every generation who feel that God seems to have relinquished effective control over their situation. Such an assurance brought comfort too to the apostles (cf. **2 Cor. 1:3-11; 6:3-10; 1 Pet. 2:20-25**), and the biblical witness as a whole encourages believers to look to the unseen hand of God even when the darkness is at its thickest.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 22:10 - 23:21

TITLE: PRESERVING THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY BY REPLACING QUEEN ATHALIAH WITH YOUNG JOASH

BIG IDEA:

THE THREAT ATHALIAH POSED TO THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY REQUIRED PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION TO ELEVATE JOASH TO THE THRONE

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: Athaliah represented the one break in the dynastic continuity of the descendants of David. Though the queen mother played an important role in the monarchies of the ancient Near East, Athaliah was the only queen of Judah ever to rule in her own name. The “prophetic revolution” that swept away her family in the North had its counterpart in the “priestly revolution” that swept her away in the South. Just as the promise of God to David (**1 Chr 17:14, 23–27**) would not falter before her, so also, the Chronicler was reminding his readers, it would not falter before other kingdoms, even in the post-exilic period. The Davidic lamp would not be snuffed out; it still glowed in the hopes of the restoration community.

J.A. Thompson: Neither the Chronicler nor the writer of Kings provides the usual regnal formulae giving the monarch’s age, length of reign, and so forth in Athaliah’s case (842-837 B.C.). She was not regarded as a legitimate ruler, so the usual introductory and concluding notices about her reign are omitted. She was, in fact, an illegitimate usurper of royal power. Only three verses are given to her six-year reign (**22:10-12**). The material is drawn from **2 Kgs 11:1-3**. With **chap. 23** we embark on the account of Joash’s reign.

Adam Clarke: Nothing but the miraculous intervention of the divine providence could have saved the line of David at this time, and preserved the prophecy relative to the Messiah. The whole truth of that prophecy, and the salvation of the world, appeared to be now suspended on the brittle thread of the life of an infant of a year old, (see **2 Chron 24:1**) to destroy whom was the interest of the reigning power! But God can save by few as well as by many. He had purposed, and vain were the counter-exertions of earth and hell.

Martin Selman: The differences between Chronicles and the parallel in 1 Kings permit three themes submerged in that earlier text to become central in the later version.

- (1) The temple is a sacred place. It is the visible projection of the character of God and must be kept holy and clean (**2 Chron. 23:6, 19**).
- (2) God is faithful in fulfilling his promise made to maintain “*a lamp*” for the house of David (**23:7**; cf. **21:7**).
- (3) “*All the people*” play an important role in installing Joash as king and in renewing Yahweh’s covenant.

Andrew Hill: This section includes five reports:

- The asylum of Joash with Jehosheba's help (**22:10-12**);
- The accession of Joash with Jehoaida's help (**23:1-11**);
- The execution of Athaliah (**23:12-15**);
- Covenant renewal in Judah (**23:16-19**);
- The installation of King Joash (**23:20-21**).

I. (22:10-12) PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION OF JOASH

A. (:10) Attempt to Exterminate the Davidic Dynasty (All Rivals to the Throne)

“Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring of the house of Judah.”

Andrew Hill: Athaliah tyrannizes Judah for six years . . . She attempts to do what God himself will not do – completely destroy the house of David (**22:10**; cf. **21:7**). The term “destroy” (Piel of dbr) has the sense “obliterate” or “exterminate” here. Whatever her motivation, Athaliah seeks to eliminate all rivals to the throne of David. According to **Gray**, much like Jehoram she seeks to quell any nationalist uprising under a prince from the royal family by massacring the Davidic line.

Frederick Mabie: Athaliah takes the killing of her son Ahaziah by Jehu (cf. **22:7-9**) as an opportunity to expand her power beyond her position as Queen Mother. In the aftermath of the chaos and instability within the southern kingdom, she proceeds to eliminate all Davidic claimants to the Judean throne (with the unintentional exception of Joash; cf. vv. **11-12**) and rules for about six years (ca. 841-36 BC). The six/seven-year reign of Athaliah is the only time ancient Judah or Israel is ruled by a queen.

Athaliah's ability to engineer this anti-Davidic coup and reign for about six years in Judah implies a considerable amount of preexisting power, authority, and influence. This dark episode in Judah's history provides the Judahites with a taste of exile without actually leaving the land.

McConville: The story of Athaliah, like that of Jehoram and Ahaziah, is a testimony to the ephemeral and ultimately illusory character of brute power exercised in a self-serving way.

B. (:11) Hiding of Infant Joash by Jehoshabeath

“But Jehoshabeath the king's daughter took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom.

So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she would not put him to death.”

Iain Duguid: The future of the Davidic kingdom being centered in a baby, rescued from a murderous ruler by a young woman, finds an echo in the young Son of David being rescued by his parents from the paranoid King Herod, a time at which several innocent children were killed (**Matt. 2:13–18**).

Raymond Dillard: The fact that royal infants may regularly have been put into the care of wet nurses or foster mothers becomes the key to Josheba's frustrating Athaliah's plans; the suckling child was overlooked and could have escaped detection as he grew by mingling with other priests' children or perhaps as a temple devotee like the young Samuel (**Gray**, 570; **1 Sam 1:21–28; 3:1**).

Andrew Hill: The name Jehosheba (Chronicles actually uses Jehoshabeath, a variant form of the name) means “*Yahweh vows*.” Fittingly, God uses this faithful woman to keep his oath to maintain the lamp of David (cf. **21:7**). No matter how gloomy the prospects, the destiny of the nation is secure in God's hands. The Chronicler's audience needs that reminder too?

C. (:12) Preservation During Six Year Interregnum of Athaliah

“And he was hidden with them in the house of God six years while Athaliah reigned over the land.”

II. (23:1-10) JEHOIDA'S COUP TO REPLACE ATHALIAH WITH JOASH

Andrew Hill: Jehoiada the priest is a clever strategist, planning his coup in three stages:

- first assembling a coalition of conspirators (**23:1-3a**),
- then strategically deploying armed guards to ensure the safety of the king (**23:3b-7**), and
- finally presenting Joash for public installation as king of Judah (**23:8-11**).

A. (:1-3) Preparation for the Coup

1. (:1) Enlisting Military Conspirators

“Now in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Johanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, and they entered into a covenant with him.”

2. (:2) Enlisting Levites and Heads of Families

“And they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the heads of the fathers' households of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.”

Raymond Dillard: Though in Kings the emphasis is on the role played by the **military** in the coup (**2 Kgs 11:4**, “*the captains of hundreds, the Carites, and the guard*”), the Chronicler has underscored instead the role of the priests and Levites. The Levites had a traditional quasi-military role; in the absence of a military establishment in the post-

exilic period, it is not surprising that the Chronicler should emphasize the role of cultic personnel in the coup, not to mention his own concerns with the sacrosanctity of the temple precincts. One of the difficulties in the chapter, however, is determining who did participate in the coup according to the Chronicler's account. Did he so emphasize the role of the priests and Levites as not to mention the participation of other elements in society?

The broadening circle of the conspiracy may have incorporated elements from all three sectors of society: the royal/military, cultic, and private. The leaders of the ancestral families play a role in numerous crucial moments (**1 Chr 29:6; 2 Chr 1; 2; 5:2; 19:8; 35:10; cf. Ezr 8:29**).

3. (:3) Entering into a Covenant with King Joash under Divine Authority

“Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And Jehoiada said to them, ‘Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has spoken concerning the sons of David.’”

Raymond Dillard: The initial agreement made among the original conspirators is broadened by concluding a covenant between the king and the entire assembly. This covenant probably included the arrangements under which Joash would rule; it likely included some concessions of royal prerogatives in relationship to the temple and would have specified the regency of Jehoiada for the young king. It was probably a copy of this arrangement that was placed in the king's hands.

B. (:4b-9) Instructions for Executing the Coup

“This is the thing which you shall do.”

1. (:4b-7) Roles and Responsibilities Defined

a. (:4b-5) Stationing of Participants Defined

“one third of you, of the priests and Levites who come in on the sabbath, shall be gatekeepers, 5 and one third shall be at the king's house, and a third at the Gate of the Foundation; and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD.”

J.A. Thompson: The arrangement for carrying out the crowning of Joash and the removal of Athaliah centered on the change in the shifts of temple personnel. There would be the maximum number of armed personnel for the coup as well as a large number of persons moving about in the temple so as not to arouse any suspicion in the mind of Athaliah, who would see these changes taking place daily. However, neither the details here nor in **2 Kgs 11:5-8** are clear, no doubt due to our ignorance about their procedures.

b. (:6) Sanctity of Temple Preserved

“But let no one enter the house of the LORD except the priests and the ministering Levites; they may enter, for they are holy. And let all the people keep the charge of the LORD.”

c. (:7) Safety of King Ensured

“And the Levites will surround the king, each man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever enters the house, let him be killed. Thus be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out.”

2. (:8) Execution of Roles and Responsibilities

“So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each one of them took his men who were to come in on the sabbath, with those who were to go out on the sabbath, for Jehoiada the priest did not dismiss any of the divisions.”

C. (:9-10) Security Forces Equipped and Positioned to Protect the King

1. (:9) Significant Weaponry

“Then Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which had been King David’s, which were in the house of God.”

Raymond Dillard: It was appropriate that the weapons used to restore rule to a descendant of David had belonged to David.

2. (:10) Strategic Positioning

“And he stationed all the people, each man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, by the altar and by the house, around the king.”

III. (23:1-10) CORONATION OF JOASH

A. Crowning the King

“Then they brought out the king’s son and put the crown on him,”

August Konkel: The coronation affirms the commitment of the king to lead the people according to the book of the covenant, which was to be kept at his side. This commitment obligates the people be loyal to the new king. . .

The covenant had three aspects: a vow between God and the king, God and the people, and the king with the people. The Chronicler expresses this as a vow between priest, king, and people, together they vow to be the people of the Lord. The first vow included the eradication of Baal worship. The institution of temple worship according to the arrangements made by David is a way of emphasizing the restoration of the Davidic rule.

B. Authenticating Him as King

“and gave him the testimony, and made him king.”

Raymond Dillard: The copy of the covenant given to Jehoiada was probably the arrangement agreed to in **23:3**; alternatively it could be a copy of the law, received from the hands of a priest, as envisioned in **Deut 17:18**. If it represented a document somewhat curbing royal authority in favor of the temple, it may have set the stage for the disagreement between Joash and Jehoiada in **24:4–12**.

Frederick Mabie: While it is unclear whether this is a copy of the law (cf. **Dt 17:18-20**) or another significant document or symbol of the (Davidic or Mosaic) covenant, the emphasis is that the enthronement of Joash is meant to be in accord with God's Word and that his subsequent reign should likewise be faithful to covenantal stipulations.

C. Anointing Him King

“And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him”

D. Proclaiming Him King

“and said, ‘Long live the king!’”

Mark Boda: The rituals associated with the installation of a king appear to have included:

- (1) gathering at a significant place;
- (2) assembling leading royal, sacred, military, and secular officials as well as the populace;
- (3) anointing the royal figure with oil;
- (4) blowing the trumpet; and
- (5) people declaring, *“Long live the king.”*

The liturgy used for such occasions is never provided, but many have suggested that **Psalms 2** and **110** may preserve parts of this liturgy. According to **2 Kings 11:14**, the Temple had become the customary place for the coronation of the king in Israel, and since this location was under Jehoiada's control, he could easily manipulate the situation.

IV. (23:12-15) THE REACTION OF ATHALIAH AND HER EXECUTION

Iain Duguid: The coronation was met with two contrasting responses. *“All the people of the land”* and *“the captains and the trumpeters and the singers”* were exuberant. As elsewhere, the Chronicler adds details of *“singers . . . leading in the celebration”* (or *“hymns”*). Athaliah, however, shouted out, *“Treason! Treason!”* (The word is used later of other acts of “conspiring” that led to a killing; **24:21, 25–26; 25:27; 33:24–25**.) She *“tore her clothes,”* an action linked elsewhere with mourning, submission and repentance, and despair; here it was possibly an expression of powerlessness. Her death followed, after Jehoiada made sure it did not violate the sacred temple precincts.

A. (:12-13) The Reaction of Athaliah

1. (:12) Investigation of the Tumult

“When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came into the house of the LORD to the people.”

2. (:13a) Images of Successful Insurrection

“And she looked, and behold,”

J.A. Thompson: Athaliah went to the temple to investigate. This was to her undoing (**2 Chr 23:15**). There she saw the legitimate boy-king standing by *“his pillar,”* the customary place for a king to stand when making a public proclamation. The place was *“at the entrance,”* that is, the entrance from the court of the city to the inner court.

a. Position and Activity of King Joash

“the king was standing by his pillar at the entrance,”

b. Position and Activity of the Captains and Trumpeters

“and the captains and the trumpeters were beside the king.”

c. Position and Activity of All the People

“And all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets,”

d. Position and Activity of the Singers/Musicians

“the singers with their musical instruments leading the praise.”

3. (:13b) Ironic Invective

“Then Athaliah tore her clothes and said, ‘Treason! Treason!’”

J.A. Thompson: Athaliah could not help being taken aback and cried aloud, *“Treason!”* Such a cry from the mouth of Athaliah was full of irony. Athaliah’s very presence there was an act of treason in itself because she had usurped the legitimate authority of the boy-king Joash.

B. (:14-15) The Execution of Athaliah

1. (:14) Death Sentence Pronounced

“And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were appointed over the army, and said to them, ‘Bring her out between the ranks; and whoever follows her, put to death with the sword.’ For the priest said, ‘Let her not be put to death in the house of the LORD.’”

2. (:15) Death Sentence Executed

“So they seized her, and when she arrived at the entrance of the Horse Gate of the king’s house, they put her to death there.”

Frederick Mabie: The Horse Gate was associated with death and judgment (cf. **Jer 31:40**).

G. Campbell Morgan: Her own treason against the true and abiding King of the nation was defeated. Thus, sooner or later, and in ways equally dramatic, the moment arrives when those who plot and plan against Heaven and righteousness, find themselves looking at the evidences of the triumph of God and of goodness over all their wickedness.

V. (23:16-21) THE REFORMATION AND PUBLIC ENTHRONEMENT

Andrew Hill: The coronation of Joash climaxes with a covenant-renewal ceremony led by Jehoiada the priest (**23:16**). Two distinct but related covenants are enacted in the aftermath of the coup against Athaliah. The first covenant is ratified by the king and the people of Jerusalem, reestablishing the authority of Davidic kingship in Judah (**23:3, 11**; cf. **2 Kings 11:17b**). The second pact is a covenant-renewal ceremony binding king and people in obedience to the law of Moses (**2 Chron. 23:16**; cf. **2 Kings 11:17a**).

The covenant renewal with Yahweh prompts the reform of religious practice in Judah. False worship is purged from the land by destroying the temple of Baal in Jerusalem and executing the priest of Baal, Mattan (**23:17**; cf. **Deut. 13:5-10**). Little is known about the temple of Baal in Jerusalem, but it may have been built as part of a marriage contract between Jehoram and Athaliah (cf. **2 Kings 11:1-8**). The first covenant rids the land of Athaliah, the illegitimate usurper of the Davidic throne, and reinstates Davidic kingship in Judah. The second covenant renews Yahweh's relationship with Judah as God's people and reorganizes temple worship according to the law of Moses. The destruction of the Baal temple in Jerusalem and the purification of temple worship mirrors similar reforms taking place in the northern kingdom at the same time under the leadership of Jehu (cf. **2 Kings 9**). For the Chronicler, the restoration of proper temple worship is no less important than the reestablishment of Davidic kingship in Judah.

A. (:16-19) Reformation

1. (:16) Commitment to the Lord

“Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king, that they should be the LORD's people.”

Martin Selman: The covenant is different from that in **verse 11**, since this one is made between the people and God rather than the people and the king. The follow-up confirms this distinction, since **verses 17-21** are concerned more with religious matters in general than with the specific issue in verses 4-15 of who should be the rightful king. The aim of this covenant was to put current wrongs right. As often in Chronicles, it resulted in a purge of pagan worship (v. 17; cf. **2 Ch. 15:12-16; 34:31-33**) in obedience to the Deuteronomic law (cf. **Dt. 4:23; 7:6**). It also led to the reinstatement of the twin pillars of the Davidic covenant, reorganized temple worship according to God's law (vv. 17-19) and setting the Davidic king on the rightful throne (v. 20-21).

2. (:17) Cleansing from Idolatry

“And all the people went to the house of Baal, and tore it down,

*and they broke in pieces his altars and his images,
and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.”*

J. Barton Payne: They didn't stop at destroying the building itself; they went on to destroy both the sacred objects dedicated to Baal and to kill Mattan the priest of Baal. The execution of "*Mattan the priest of Baal*" carried out the requirement of God's Word directed against those who should lead others into false religion (**Deuteronomy 13:5-10**).

3. (:18-19) Careful Administration of Divinely Ordained System of Worship

- a. (:18a) Worship under the Direction of Levitical Priests
“Moreover, Jehoiada placed the offices of the house of the LORD under the authority of the Levitical priests, whom David had assigned over the house of the LORD,”
- b. (:18b) Worship Offered via Appropriate Sacrifices
“to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses—“
- c. (:18c) Worship Accompanied by Rejoicing and Singing
“with rejoicing and singing according to the order of David.”
- d. (:19) Worship Secured by Gatekeepers to Protect against Defilement
“And he stationed the gatekeepers of the house of the LORD, so that no one should enter who was in any way unclean.”

B. (:20) Palatial Enthronement

1. Procession from the Temple to the Palace

“And he took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and came through the upper gate to the king's house.”

Andrew Hill: The processional leading Joash from the temple to the palace is symbolic, because in one sense Yahweh is returning to the throne of Judah along with the Davidic descendant.

2. Placement on the Royal Throne

“And they placed the king upon the royal throne.”

Frederick Mabie: As the final step of the king's investiture ceremony and celebration, the whole community participates in a procession to restore the new king on the throne of David in the royal palace. The full gamut of participants in this event (military, noblemen, governors, citizenry, priests) reflects the widespread support for the reforms enacted by the priest Jehoiada, culminating in the reign of Joash.

C. (:21) Rejoicing

1. Due to the Blessing of the Lord

“So all of the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet.”

Peter Wallace: Verse 21 brings to fulfillment the Sabbath-theme of the chapter. . . There is joy and rest and peace, now that Athaliah is gone. A **sabbath-rest** comes to the people of God, because the foul seed of Ahab is no more.

2. Due to the Judgment of the Lord

“For they had put Athaliah to death with the sword.”

J.A. Thompson: Athaliah’s interregnum was now over. In a sense there never was an interruption of Davidic kingship because Joash was living throughout that sad period even if formally another, a usurper, was on the throne.

Andrew Hill: Typically, the Chronicler employs the expression the people “*rejoiced*” (*smh*) to signify the fact that the will of God is now being observed (23:21; cf. 1 Chron. 29:9; 2 Chron. 15:15; 29:36). A second idiom using the word “*quiet*” (*sqt*) is often found in Chronicles to denote divine blessing on those who are obedient to God’s word (cf. 1 Chron. 4:40; 22:9; 2 Chron. 13:22; 14:4-5). The biblical adages hold true: The violence of the wicked returns to them (Ps. 7:15-16; Prov. 26:27; Eccl. 10:8), and the judgment of the Lord leads to “*quietness*” in the land (Ps. 76:8).

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why does the Chronicler place so much focus on the role of the Temple and the Levitical priests?
- 2) How could Joash have avoided detection for a six year period?
- 3) What are the lessons from seeing how wicked rulers like Athaliah feel so secure in their position and yet actually are so vulnerable to God’s imminent judgment?
- 4) Are we supposed to rejoice at the execution of the judgment of the Lord?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: The economic and power structures in societies in the ancient Near East revolved around three foci: the **governmental**, **religious**, and **private** sectors. Behind the details of Jehoiada’s coup in both Kings and Chronicles, it is possible to

speculate regarding the tensions between these three power centers in Israel. The installation of a monarchy owing its existence to the cult and under the regency of the high priest may reflect the consolidation of political power in the hands of the temple; in the Chronicler's account, the temple officers along with tribal leaders from outside Jerusalem appear to have cooperated not only in a religious reform but also in curtailing the power of the monarchy. The tension between temple and monarchy may also underlie some of the events recorded in **2 Chr 24**.

August Konkel: The Levites and the people are given a much more significant role in the coup of Jehoiada than in the parallel account in Kings. Jehoiada made a covenant with key military officers. These officers solicited broad popular support among the Levites and tribal leaders, so the people were essential partners in the coup. The initial agreement was then extended to the entire assembly. The content of that covenant was expressed in Jehoiada's declaration *The king's son shall reign* (**2 Chron 23:3**). The Levites were required to assist the military officers, who were not permitted to enter the temple where much of the action took place (vv. 6-7). Levites themselves served as armed guards.

Matthew Henry: The instrument and chief manager of the restoration is **Jehoiada**, who appears to have been,

1. A man of great prudence, who reserved the young prince for so many years till he was fit to appear in public, and till the nation had grown weary of the usurper, who prepared his work beforehand, and then effected it with admirable secrecy and expedition. When God has work to do he will qualify and animate men for it.

2. A man of great interest. The captains joined with him, **2 Chron. 23:1**. The Levites and the chief of the fathers of Israel came at his call to Jerusalem (**2 Chron. 23:2**) and were there ready to receive his orders. See what a command wisdom and virtue will give men. The Levites and all Judah did as Jehoiada commanded (**2 Chron. 23:8**), and, which is strange, all that were entrusted with the secret kept their own counsel till it was executed. Thus the words of the wise are heard in quiet, **Eccl. 9:17**.

3. A man of great faith. It was not only common equity (much less his wife's relation to the royal family) that put him upon this undertaking, but a regard to the word of God, and the divine entail of the crown (**2 Chron. 23:3**): The king's son shall reign, must reign, as the Lord hath said. His eye to the promise, and dependence upon that, added a great deal of glory to this undertaking.

4. A man of great religion. This matter was to be done in the temple, which might occasion some breach of rule, and the necessity of the case might be thought to excuse it; but he gave special order that none of the people should come into the house of the Lord, but the priests and Levites only, who were holy, upon pain of death, **2 Chron. 23:6, 7**. Never let sacred things be profaned, no, not for the support of civil rights.

5. A man of great resolution. When he had undertaken this business he went through with it, brought out the king, crowned him, and gave him the testimony, **2 Chron. 23:11**. He ventured his head, but it was in a good cause, and therefore he went on boldly. It is here said that his sons joined with him in anointing the young king. One of them, it is likely, was that Zechariah whom Joash afterwards put to death for reproving him (**2 Chron. 24:20**), which was so much the more ungrateful because he bore a willing part in anointing him.

Mark Boda: The Temple, that house of worship built by the house of David, now plays a key role in preserving the Davidic dynasty from destruction. Jehoiada the chief priest and his royal wife Jehosheba hide the young Davidide Joash in the “*house of God*.” Six years later Jehoiada finally makes his move, crowning Joash, executing Athaliah, and instituting key religious reforms. Even when Joash was finally crowned, he ruled under the protective care of what is deemed the positive influence of the priest Jehoiada. It was when Jehoiada died that Joash went astray, committing acts of unfaithfulness, which explain Joash’s subsequent defeat and death at the hands of the Arameans.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 24:1-27

TITLE: REIGN OF JOASH – EARLY SUCCESS CONTRASTED WITH LATER FAILURE

BIG IDEA:
PROMISE AND PRIVILEGE CAN QUICKLY DEGENERATE INTO APOSTASY WHEN WE REJECT GOD’S WORD AND FOLLOW WORLDLY COUNSEL

INTRODUCTION:

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler features the reigns of three kings following the execution of the usurper Athaliah: the child-king Joash, his son and successor Amaziah, and son and successor Uzziah (also known as Azariah, **2 Kings 15:1**). The narrative continues a pattern introduced with King Jehoram, that of framing each royal record with an opening and closing regnal resume. Typically, the opening resume consists of formulaic expressions containing basic information: the accession age, the length and place of reign, the identification of the queen mother, and a theological review. Likewise, the closing resume usually includes a citation of source formula, a succession formula, and a notice of death and burial formula. . .

Theme and structure are intertwined in this section. The pattern of **early success** contrasted with **later failure** ties the records of Joash, Amaziah, and Uzziah as a literary unit. This is in keeping with the Chronicler’s keen interest in the theology of divine retribution, especially the immediate impact of reward and punishment in the king’s reign. Thus, each royal record consists of two parts: **a rehearsal of blessing and prosperity** as a result of the king’s obedience to God, followed by a report of his **apostasy** and its detrimental religious and political consequences. This motif is not new, as the same literary pattern characterized Rehoboam (**chs. 11-12**) and Asa (**chs. 14-16**). But sadly, something has changed in these royal reports, as **Selman** carefully observes: “Positive balancing factors at the end of these reigns are no longer to be found.”

Iain Duguid: How did a **temple restorer** become a **prophet killer**? Kings introduces Joash’s reign by stating, “*He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all his days, because Jehoiada the priest instructed him,*” but immediately modifies the positive assessment by stating that high places continued (**2 Kings 12:2–3**). Kings tells of temple restoration but concludes with details of submission to Syria and assassination. The Chronicler seeks to clarify by omitting **2 Kings 12:3** and by recounting Joash’s actions centering on the renewal of the temple and its utensils “*all the days of Jehoiada the priest*” (**2 Chron. 24:1–16**); he then provides a theological rationale for the reversals as being “*after the death of Jehoiada,*” when the king and the “*princes of Judah . . . abandoned the house of the Lord,*” rejecting prophetic warnings—with disastrous consequences (**vv. 17–27**).

A clear contrast is seen between the period when Joash was under Jehoiada's mature, faithful oversight, with its temple restoration, and his later listening to "*the princes of Judah,*" resulting in their serving "*the Asherim and the idols*" (v. 18). Only after persistent rejection of "*prophets,*" culminating in the killing of Zechariah, was retributive judgment evident. . .

The two halves of the chapter are tied together by the **contrasting burials** of Jehoiada the priest and of Joash the king (vv. 15–16, 25). The priest was honored like a king because he had done what the king ultimately failed to do: "*He had done good in Israel, and toward God and his house*" (v. 16).

(:1-3) PROLOGUE – OPENING SUMMARY OF REIGN OF JOASH

A. (:1a) Age and Duration of His Reign

“Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem;”

B. (:1b) Identification of His Mother

“and his mother's name was Zibiah from Beersheba.”

C. (:2) Moral Evaluation

“And Joash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.”

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler has divided the reign of Joash into two distinct periods: the **good years** while Jehoiada influenced the king, and the **bad years** after Jehoiada's death; this is a characteristic feature in the Chronicler's accounts of the individual kings. This division is already implicit in the wording of **2 Kgs 12:3 [2]**, that Joash did the right “for all his days while Jehoiada instructed him” (though for a contrary reading, see **Williamson**, 319; **Gray**, 583). The Chronicler omits the mention in Kings that Joash did not remove the high places (**2 Kgs 12:4 [3]**); since this would be out of character with his presentation of the early years of Joash, the matter of the high places is delayed to **24:18**.

D. (:3) Wives and Children

“And Jehoiada took two wives for him, and he became the father of sons and daughters.”

Raymond Dillard: Jehoiada's securing wives for Joash addressed the dynastic threat that had brought him to the throne. Through the subsequent children the Davidic dynasty would begin to rebuild and broaden after the murders of members of the royal house during the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah. **V 3** is unique to Chronicles: beyond the concern with rebuilding the Davidic household, for the Chronicler numerous progeny were a token of divine blessing (**1 Chr 14:2–7; 25:4–5; 26:4–5; 2 Chr 11:18–**

23; 13:21). The additional material the Chronicler inserted regarding the wives and children of Joash was apparently drawn from the source he cites (24:27).

I. (:4-16) THE GOOD YEARS OF KING JOASH – MENTORSHIP OF JEHOIADA AND RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE

A. (:4-7) Initial Failed Attempt to Fund the Restoration of the Temple

Raymond Dillard: Royal initiative was crucial to the building of the temple at the time of David and Solomon; here royal initiative leads to its restoration. However, royal initiative and precedent would also have led the priests and Levites to expect the royal treasury to bear much of the expense. The king instead seeks to finance the restoration work by reallocating some of the temple income used for the maintenance of the cultic staff to the building project. The priests respond with inaction.

1. (:4) Decision to Restore the Temple

“Now it came about after this that Joash decided to restore the house of the LORD.”

Frederick Mabie: Joash’s repair and restoration of the temple are similar to the later efforts of Hezekiah (29:3-36) and Josiah (34:8-13). Such refurbishing provided a tangible way for the ruler to show his devotion to God. As such, emphasis is placed on the involvement of many sectors of the community (cf. vv. 9-12) as well as the skill and carefulness of those involved in the process of restoration (cf. v. 13).

2. (:5) Delinquent Response of the Levites to Collection Instructions

a. Collection Instructions

“And he gathered the priests and Levites, and said to them, ‘Go out to the cities of Judah, and collect money from all Israel to repair the house of your God annually, and you shall do the matter quickly.’”

b. Delinquent Response of the Levites

“But the Levites did not act quickly.”

Iain Duguid: Details in 2 Kings 11:6–8 suggest that Jehoiada regarded his first priority to be the support of priests, with little attention given to the building (a question of budget allocations!).

August Konkel: There is no indication when Joash first tried to refurbish the temple. After the first failure to raise funds, Joash summoned Jehoiada a second time, in his twenty-third year (2 Kings 12:6). Failure to collect the temple tax might have been the result of the king’s intervention in what was regarded as a priestly jurisdiction. Over time disagreement had arisen between crown and priesthood over funding the restoration work; priests looked to the royal treasury, but the king wanted to reallocate

temple money. The king censured Jehoiada for his failure to act and proposed a plan of action that put the offering on a more voluntary basis.

3. (:6-7) Desperate Need for Funds to Restore the Temple

a. (:6) Calling Jehoiada on the Carpet

“So the king summoned Jehoiada the chief priest and said to him, ‘Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and from Jerusalem the levy fixed by Moses the servant of the LORD on the congregation of Israel for the tent of the testimony?’”

b. (:7) Calling Out the Desecration of the Sanctuary

“For the sons of the wicked Athaliah had broken into the house of God and even used the holy things of the house of the LORD for the Baals.”

Andrew Hill: The favorable report concerning Joash’s reign centers on the dual themes of the renovation of Yahweh’s temple and the figure of Jehoiada as the ideal high priest. The temple of Solomon has apparently fallen into a general state of disrepair. In addition, Athaliah not only usurped the Davidic throne but also seized the temple and implemented Baal worship there. The desecration of the sanctuary included structural damage as well (24:7). The reference to the “*sons of . . . Athaliah*” (24:7) is puzzling, since she had them murdered. Perhaps the expression is used figuratively to denote her followers or adherents, or perhaps her sons conspired in the desecration of the temple before their deaths.

J.A. Thompson: Some commentators suggest that the term “*son*” is flexible in meaning and could refer to “*adherents*” (NEB). Yet others, by a very slight emendation, read “*her builders*” (*boneyha*), suggesting that the temple materials as well as its “*dedicated things*” had been used in building temples for the Baals.

B. (:8-14) Revised Successful Plan to Collect Funds for the Restoration Project

1. (:8-11) Generous Donations Deposited Daily at the Temple

Raymond Dillard: Donations to the first temple were not brought in the form of coins—that would be an anachronism. Judging from the analogies with Mesopotamian temples prior to the use of coinage, offerings of precious metals would have come in the form of ingots, ores, and amalgams of various grades. Some temple personnel served primarily as goldsmiths or assayers; these would refine, hammer, and cast the offerings into the desired shapes for temple paraphernalia, make ingots for storage in the temple treasury, and make repairs to damaged implements. Foundries were commonly associated with Mesopotamian temples, and one can infer that the temple in Jerusalem probably had a similar operation.

a. (:8) Establishing a Chest at the Temple Gate for Donations

“So the king commanded, and they made a chest and set it

outside by the gate of the house of the LORD.”

- b. (:9) Entreating the People to Bring Donations Per Law of Moses
“And they made a proclamation in Judah and Jerusalem to bring to the LORD the levy fixed by Moses the servant of God on Israel in the wilderness.”
- c. (:10) Enthusiastic Response of All the Officers and All the People
“And all the officers and all the people rejoiced and brought in their levies and dropped them into the chest until they had finished.”
- d. (:11) Emptying of Chest on Regular Basis as Donations Abounded
“And it came about whenever the chest was brought in to the king's officer by the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, then the king's scribe and the chief priest's officer would come, empty the chest, take it, and return it to its place. Thus they did daily and collected much money.”

Andrew Hill: Joash brokers a compromise with the priests to the effect that the people will bring their taxes and offerings to the temple rather than contribute to Levitical “collection agents” (**2 Kings 12:6-8; 2 Chron. 24:8-11**). In addition, laborers are contracted to do the repair work instead of using the Levites as construction workers. . .

A chest or collection box is stationed near the altar (in the courtyard) outside the gate of the temple building (**2 Kings 12:9; 2 Chron. 24:8**). Joint oversight of the funds deposited in the chest is provided by a royal and priestly official (**2 Kings 12:10; 2 Chron. 24:11**).

Workers, including carpenters, masons, and smiths, are hired and paid directly from the funds deposited in the temple collection box (**2 Kings 12:10-12; 2 Chron. 24:12-13**). Presumably these funds include the three types of revenues specified by Joash: the annual tax, personal vows, and freewill offerings (**2 Kings 12:4**).

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler frequently draws parallels between the tabernacle and the first temple. The joyous, unfettered giving of the wilderness community (**Exod 36:4-7**) was repeated in the history of the first temple (**1 Chr 29:1-9; 2 Chr 24:9-10**); for the Chronicler this spirit of joyous giving was of homiletical relevance to encourage a similar attitude toward the second temple in his own day.

2. (:12-14) Governing Diligence in Administering the Funds and Overseeing the Work

- a. (:12) Compensating Skilled Workers
“And the king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the work of the service of the house of the LORD; and they hired masons and

carpenters to restore the house of the LORD, and also workers in iron and bronze to repair the house of the LORD.”

- b. (:13) Completing the Restoration per Divine Specifications
“So the workmen labored, and the repair work progressed in their hands, and they restored the house of God according to its specifications, and strengthened it.”

J.A. Thompson: The “*original design*” came from God (1 Chr 28:11-19), and the reformers did not want to try to improve on it. The diligence of the workers further reveals the celebratory atmosphere of this revival.

- c. (:14a) Committing the Excess Funds to Utensils for Temple Service
“And when they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; and it was made into utensils for the house of the LORD, utensils for the service and the burnt offering, and pans and utensils of gold and silver.”

J.A. Thompson: The workers’ integrity was such that they could be relied on to use only what was needed for the job. As the Chronicler informs us, they finished their work considerably under budget. The reference to the regular burnt offerings is intended as an indication that there was full cultic faithfulness throughout Jehoiada’s lifetime.

- d. (:14b) Continually Offering Burnt Offerings
“And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.”

Raymond Dillard: “*As long as Jehoiada lived*” (v 14). These words form an inclusio with 24:2. They reflect the regular practice of the Chronicler to use chronological notes to divide the accounts of individual reigns into **good** and **bad** periods; the transition to the record of Joash’s apostasy begins with the similar notice at the beginning of v 15.

C. (:15-16) Death and Burial of Jehoiada

1. (:15) Death

“Now when Jehoiada reached a ripe old age he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old at his death.”

August Konkel: The priest Jehoiada lived to the extraordinary age of 130 years (2 Chron 24:15), longer than great figures such as Moses. Living to such and advanced age was a sign of blessing.

2. (:16) Burial

“And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done well in Israel and to God and His house.”

Raymond Dillard: By virtue of his regency over his young ward Joash, Jehoiada was somewhat a priest/king, and he is given a royal burial among the graves of the kings, a sharp contrast to the burial of Joash (24:25). The role played by Jehoiada may reflect also the growing influence of the high priest in the absence of a monarchy during the post-exilic period.

Frederick Mabie: Jehoiada's death notice (vv. 15-16) reads more like a Judean regnal summary than a death notice for a priest. This final summary of his life reflects a number of subtle editorial strokes that work to portray Jehoiada's actions in a kinglike manner, including

- the phraseology that Jehoiada "*showed his strength*" (cf. 23:1),
- his leading in national covenant ratification (23:1, 3),
- his oversight of reforms to ensure adherence to Mosaic and Davidic instructions (cf. 23:18-19),
- his selection of wives for Joash (24:3), and
- his burial in the royal cemetery (v. 16, an honor not given to Joash himself, cf. v. 25).

Thus, it can be argued that Jehoiada to an extent functioned as a surrogate king in a manner similar to Samuel during the reign of Saul (note that both were king-makers with extensive national authority). Obviously, Joash's young age at his enthronement would have necessitated a significant degree of assistance with his royal responsibilities at the beginning of his reign.

II. (:17-24) THE BAD YEARS OF KING JOASH – POOR COUNSEL, APOSTASY AND REJECTION OF PROPHETIC WARNINGS

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler informs us that the king is led astray by the counsel of the officials of Judah (24:17). The expression "*paid homage*" (*hw*; lit., "*do obeisance*") may suggest that the leaders of the clans of Judah exploit a character weakness in Joash through flattery. The elders prefer to return to the policies of Joash's father, Ahaziah, for unspecified reasons. Perhaps the "*old ways*" are now custom in Judah, or such religious policy is advantageous socially and economically. For the Chronicler, however, to abandon the temple is to abandon God (24:18).

August Konkil: Materialism is exceedingly deceptive and pervasive. Upon the passing of the priest, it immediately began to assert its ugly influence in Judah. The influence of Athaliah had been subdued, but its impulses were ever present, and at the first opportunity the king was pressured to make changes. The wealth of the Phoenicians and their trading empire was constantly alluring. One of the ways to realize those benefits more readily was with the revival of their religion. The impression given is that the change effected by Jehoiada was more a coercive force than a real change of life and values. Another generation had arisen in the decades following the coronation of Joash, and the dramatic transformation of those events had faded. The king himself succumbed to the demands for change. . .

Power, greed and materialism invariably breed violent conflict. The king, incapacitated by the wounds of war, became particularly vulnerable to conspiracy. The mothers of the conspirators who killed Joash were both foreign women, perhaps a reminder of the danger of turning to foreign worship. Materialism and greed leave a terrible legacy. Jehoiada, the faithful priest, was buried as a king; Joash, the privileged king, was buried in disgrace.

A. (:17-19) Apostasy of Joash

“But after the death of Jehoiada”

Key indicator that divides the two periods of the reign of Joash. Jehoiada had been the godly influence. With him out of the picture, Joash quickly became spiritually compromised.

1. (:17b) Wayward Counsel Followed

“the officials of Judah came and bowed down to the king, and the king listened to them.”

2. (:18a) Worship of True God Abandoned in Favor of Idolatry

“And they abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols;”

J.A. Thompson: It is evident that despite Jehoiada’s restraining influence, the Asherah poles and idols continued to be served. A common story in Israel and elsewhere is that despite religious reforms directed from the top by a leader or leaders, popular forms of religion linger on and break out again when restraints are lifted.

3. (:18b) Wrath of God Unleashed

“so wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guilt.”

4. (:19) Warnings from the Prophets Ignored

“Yet He sent prophets to them to bring them back to the LORD; though they testified against them, they would not listen.”

Frederick Mabie: Despite his anger at the rapid abandonment of covenantal faithfulness by Joash and the Judeans, God emphatically demonstrated his love, patience, and grace for his covenantal people by repeatedly sending prophets to proclaim his word to urge the people to return to God in obedience. The summary of God’s (unsuccessful) efforts to bring his people back to himself is reminiscent of the closing verses of Chronicles reflecting on the tragedy of the exile:

“The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his

prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.” (2Ch 36:15-18)

Raymond Dillard: Though the Chronicler demonstrates the coherence of action and effect by showing judgment for wrongdoing, sanctions are ordinarily imposed only after a prophet offers hope of escape through repentance and forgiveness (**Williamson**, 323). Many prophets confronted Joash (**24:19, 27**), but the writer elaborates only on the death of Zechariah (**24:20–22**).

B. (:20-22) Attack against Zechariah

1. (:20) Divine Indictment Delivered by Zechariah = Son of the Priest

“Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, ‘Thus God has said, Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.’”

Iain Duguid: The tragedy is expressed: Joash “*did not remember*” (from Hb. *zakar*), a play on the name “*Zechar-iah*” (“*The Lord has remembered*”); to “*remember*” involves acting on the basis of what is called to memory. A further **wordplay** is evident as Zechariah called for the Lord to “*avenge*” (Hb. *darash*, “*seek*” [cf. ESV mg.]); since the king did not “*seek*” God, the Lord was to “*seek*” the king, leading to judgment.

2. (:21) Death of the Prophet by Stoning in Temple Courtyard

“So they conspired against him and at the command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD.”

Raymond Dillard: There is great **irony** in the passage: Zechariah, the son of the priest who had saved the throne for Joash, is murdered in the place where Joash was protected during the coup; Jehoiada, who had preserved the sanctity of the temple from bloodshed, installed the king who would murder his own son there. Joash falls to treason (**24:25**), just as Athaliah (**23:13**) had before him.

J.A. Thompson: **Matthew 23:35** and **Luke 11:51** may refer to this incident. If that is the case, then Jesus was referring to all the martyrs from the beginning of the canon (Abel, in Genesis) to its end (Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, in Chronicles). This probably indicates that Chronicles stood last in the Hebrew canon in Jesus’ time, as it does today. A difficulty is that Matthew’s version mentions “*Zechariah the son of Berachiah*,” that is, not the Zechariah of this text but the author of the Book of Zechariah. But as far as we know, the son of Berachiah was not martyred in the temple courtyard, and it seems apparent that Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, is intended.

Frederick Mabie: Amazingly, the king and the people plot the murder of Zechariah, and the prophet is stoned to death (the punishment for a false prophet; cf. **Dt 13:5; 18:20**). What is especially striking about this low moment in the history of the Judean monarchy is that Zechariah had been like a brother to Joash, as Jehoiada (Zechariah’s

father) had been a father figure to Joash from his days as an infant rescued from the murderous rampage of Athaliah (**2Ch 22:10-12**).

3. (:22) Dastardly Betrayal by Joash

a. Betrayal of Kindness Shown by Jehoiada

“Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which his father Jehoiada had shown him, but he murdered his son.”

J.A. Thompson: This was a dastardly act. Joash had “forgotten” the kindness shown to him by Jehoiada. In short, he had no sense of loyalty or gratitude. The verb used for “killed” (*harag*) is used also of the execution of the idolatrous priest Mattan in **23:17** and of the death of Joash in **v. 25**.

b. Dying Appeal of Zechariah to Divine Vengeance

“And as he died he said, ‘May the LORD see and avenge!’”

C. (:23-24) Aramean Invasion Constituted Divine Judgment

1. (:23) Devastating Defeat

“Now it came about at the turn of the year that the army of the Arameans came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, destroyed all the officials of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus.”

2. (:24a) Divinely Enabled

“Indeed the army of the Arameans came with a small number of men; yet the LORD delivered a very great army into their hands, because they had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers.”

3. (:24b) Defined as Disciplinary

“Thus they executed judgment on Joash.”

Raymond Dillard: The “turn of the year” was in the spring, at the beginning of the dry season and a period of reduced agricultural activity after harvest; it was “*the time when kings go off to war*” (**1 Chr 20:1; 2 Sam 11:1; 1 Kgs 20:26**). The coup of Jehu had left both the Northern and Southern kingdoms in a condition of great military weakness; Hazael was quick to exploit the advantage, reducing the army of Jehoahaz in the North to no more than needed for a good parade (**2 Kgs 13:7**), and taking tribute from Joash in the South.

In the holy war ideology of Israel, Yahweh fought for his people so that a small force could overcome a larger (**13:3–18; 14:8–15; 1 Kgs 20:27; 1 Sam 14:6; Judg 7**; cf. **25:7–8**); here the reverse happened: due to the infidelity of Joash, with Yahweh’s aid a smaller enemy force overturned the army of Judah.

(:25-27) EPILOGUE – CLOSING SUMMARY OF REIGN OF JOASH

A. (:25-26) Conspiracy to Murder Joash

1. (:25) Murder and Burial of Joash

a. Murder

“And when they had departed from him (for they left him very sick), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the son of Jehoiada the priest, and murdered him on his bed. So he died,”

b. Burial

“and they buried him in the city of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.”

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler commonly uses burial notices to exhibit a theme important to him: righteous kings are buried in honor, while the ignominy of the unrighteous extends even to their interment (**16:14; 21:19–20; 26:23; 28:27**). In this context the refusal to bury the unrighteous Joash in the tombs of the kings contrasts sharply to the burial of the righteous priest Jehoiada there (**24:16**).

2. (:26) Conspirators

*“Now these are those who conspired against him:
Zabad the son of Shimeath the Ammonitess,
and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith the Moabitess.”*

Andrew Hill: According to the Chronicler, Joash’s officials conspire against him in retaliation for the murder of Zechariah (**24:25b**). Interestingly, the writer is careful to note that prominent among the conspirators are Zabad and Jehozabad – both sons of non-Hebrew women (**24:26**). It is as if the Chronicler seeks to emphasize the irony of the situation since these “mixed-blood” Israelites have a greater sense of justice than the king and citizens of Judah.

B. (:27a) Record of Deeds of Joash

“As to his sons and the many oracles against him and the rebuilding of the house of God, behold, they are written in the treatise of the Book of the Kings.”

C. (:27b) Succession

“Then Amaziah his son became king in his place.”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) How could a leader degenerate so quickly from a privileged disciple of a godly priest to a treacherous apostate killer of God’s prophet?

- 2) Are we sensitive today to the warnings provided to us by the Holy Spirit?
- 3) How can we make sure that our Christian giving is voluntary and not coercive?
- 4) What are some of the points of irony that you see in this passage?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Iain Duguid: To whom do we look for advice? The first part of Joash's reign illustrates the positive value of good mentors, whose experience and knowledge of God's Word provide guidance without taking control. Paul has this stance as he writes to the younger Timothy, concerned for his well-being and that of the church he serves (cf. **1 Tim. 1:2, 18–19; 2 Tim. 1:2–7**). This contrasts with Joash's later acceptance of the counsel of the "*princes*," perhaps his own peers. Here we see an example of the all-too-common looking for advice and teaching from those who will tell us what we want to hear (cf. **Jer. 5:31; Mic. 2:6, 11; 2 Tim. 4:3–4**). The lack of interest in being challenged is reflected in Joash's angry response to Zechariah's message. The drastic command to kill seems disproportionate to the general nature of the message and is an example of heated reaction when a criticism hits home or a wrongdoing is exposed that threatens the hearer's self-perception, position, practices, or reputation. The message is publicly and vehemently denied (whether its truth is recognized internally or not) and the messenger derided and penalized. It is a clear sign of folly and self-deception to believe that, if the messenger is removed, the message can be forgotten. We see something similar in the angry response of the Nazareth congregation to Jesus' use of Scripture (**Luke 4:16–30**), or of the leaders who instigated the crucifixion. Wise is the person who seeks and listens to friends and mentors who are lovingly honest (**Prov. 27:6, 9**).

August Konkel: The Chronicler has cast the life of Joash into two periods that serve to explain why his life would end in Syrian domination and his own assassination. The whole is linked to the loss of the good counsel of Jehoiada. But the punishment does not come without the **warnings of the prophets** urging him to repent. The account as a whole serves as an alert to the Chronicler's readers; it reminds them that judgment will not overtake them without warning. Disaster can be avoided by accepting responsibility and turning in repentance.

August Konkel: Teaching Moral Values:

It is very important for Christians to be mindful that the essence of moral behavior is **internal motivation** and not external control or influence. Joash becomes one of the most negative examples of **turning opportunity into disaster**. Faithfulness comes from an internal disposition; influence can help maintain a commitment, but it can never be a replacement for **personal choice**. The guidance and instruction of Jehoiada apparently did not transform the young king he tutored. Once the priest was no longer present, the forces of power and greed quickly took control. This is not to suggest that

the efforts of Jehoiada proved of no value. They did preserve the dynasty of David and changed the course of political events. However, they did not have the effect that the priest desired; **no amount of influence has the power to convert**. Faith and choice of life values are a personal matter. Only by the **grace of God** can instruction and perseverance transform individuals to do what is right and good. Believers need to be faithful in doing and teaching what is right, but one must never presume that these have the power to bring others to do the same.

Christians must remember these limitations in seeking to be a positive influence in their world. There is a tendency to change laws to coerce behavior deemed to be moral. Law does not have the power to create a moral society any more than the priest Jehoiada had in his time. The first priority for Christians is not the creation of law. . . The highest priority then must be instruction and a change of thinking. . .

Such instruction will often be frustrated, just as that of the priest Jehoiada. But it still must be undertaken, with the knowledge that it will not be without results. The immediate outcome for Jehoiada and his family was tragic; but his story is not the end of the Chronicler's story. In the story of the Chronicler, the work of Jehoiada was the means God provided for the continuity of the dynasty and the kingdom. The same will be true for those who are faithful in the work of God's kingdom. Christians must pursue the work of a kingdom that is not of this world.

Phil Winfield: Joash – The Boy King and Figurehead

Reforms:

- Joash decided to repair the house of God (v.1).
- Joash decreed that the census taxes must resume (v.4-5).
- Joash decried the delay in the temple repairing process (v.5b-7).
- Joash devised an alternative plan for receiving the offerings (v:8-14).
 - It is was visible and encouraging (v.8-11).
 - It was diligently counted and administered (v.12-14).

Reversals:

- Joash was indiscriminate in his choice of counsellor (v.17).
- Joash revealed that his heart was not loyal to God (v.18).
- Joash and his new counsellors rejected the merciful warnings of the prophets sent to him (v.19).
- Joash was filled with murderous rage at God's messenger (v.20-21).
- Joash was disloyal to the God and to Jehoida who put him on the throne (v.22).
- Joash reaped what he sowed (v.23-27).

What can we learn about leadership from Joash?

- A leader can borrow brains; he can even borrow wisdom.
- A leader can never borrow character
- A leader can never borrow conviction.
- A leader will be revealed by the counsellors he chooses. Once again show me how a man's associates and friends are and I will tell you who he is.

- A leader that can't be corrected shouldn't be selected.
- A leader that will not be accountable is a leader that is destined to fall.
- A leader who has shifting loyalties will fall prey to disloyalty.
- A leader who has no principle other than doing what is necessary to stay in power is not a leader he/she is a figurehead, a puppet being controlled by winds of opinion.

Geoffrey Kirkland: What's the downward spiral of Joash's life?

What are the steps that led to his doom?

1. Alone (isolation) — lack of accountability, oversight, leadership, care, shepherding

2. Pride — people bowed down to him, praised him, revered/honored him >> and he LISTENED to them [their flattery fooled him!]

3. Indifferent (toward worship) — he abandoned the Temple, forsook Yahweh & His worship.

4. Idolatrous (wandering heart) — began to serve the Asherim & the Idols >> even w/ God's discipline/wrath/ punishment

5. Stubborn/Brazen/Callous — God (!) sent prophets to them to bring them back (=repent).

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 25:1-28

TITLE: REIGN OF AMAZIAH – SUCCESS COMPROMISED BY PRIDE AND IDOLATRY

BIG IDEA:
SUCCESS FOSTERS PRIDE WHICH OFTEN LEADS TO IDOLATRY AND STUBBORNNESS WHICH THEN RESULT IN JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: On the whole the record of Amaziah's reign is a negative one. Apart from the brief, but clouded, victory over Edom as a reward for his obedience to the prophetic warning, the passage does not record any of the usual repertoire of indications of divine favor; rather, it is a **study in opposites**. Instead of royal building programs, the walls of Jerusalem are destroyed; instead of wealth from the people and surrounding nations, the king is plundered; instead of a large family, there are hostages; instead of peace, war; instead of victory, defeat; instead of loyalty from the populace and long life, there is conspiracy and regicide. The Chronicler's message for the restoration community was clear—to those rebuilding Jerusalem and restoring its walls, the Chronicler sounded again the central demand of exclusive loyalty in Israel's covenant with its Lord.

Iain Duguid: The narrative provides yet another example of disaster and decline that follows failure to continue serving the Lord wholeheartedly: his father's reign had begun with the joyful refurbishment of the temple, but Amaziah's was to be marked by the seizing of "*all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God*" (v. 24).

Martin Selman: That Amaziah did what was right . . . but not wholeheartedly (v. 2) aptly summarizes a reign vitiated by compromise. Though he could respect the Mosaic law (v. 4) and respond to prophecy (vv. 9-10), it is all tinged with mixed motives, and it is no surprise that in the end he turned away from following the Lord (v. 27). His reign is difficult to classify, and commentators have disagreed as to whether it should be divided into favourable and unfavourable parts (**Williamson, Allen, Becker**, etc.) or whether he is fundamentally half-hearted and double-minded (e.g. **Coggins, McConville**). In favour of the former, Amaziah's emphatic if violent victory against the Edomites (v. 12) is an apparent turning-point, since any good features that do exist are limited to **verses 1-12**. On the other hand, Amaziah's weaknesses are distributed throughout the chapter, even though they gather momentum from **verse 14** onwards. Over all, while his reign does fit the periodization scheme of **chapters 24-26**, he declines from bad to worse rather than from good to bad!

Mark Boda: The Chronicler organizes his account of Amaziah into two phases, one highlighting positive aspects of his reign (**25:5-12**) and the other negative (**25:13-24**). . .

Each phase is structured according to this pattern:

- (1) The action of Amaziah that arouses God's anger (25:5-6, 14-15a);
- (2) the prophetic voice that confronts Amaziah (25:7-8, 15b);
- (3) the question of Amaziah (25:9a, 16a);
- (4) the response of the prophetic voice (25:9b, 16b);
- (5) the obedience/disobedience of Amaziah (25:10, 17-20);
- (6) success/failure in battle (25:11-12, 21-24).

(:1-4) PROLOGUE -- OPENING SUMMARY OF HIS REIGN -- CONSOLIDATION OF POWER

A. (:1a) Age and Duration of Reign

“Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem.”

Iain Duguid: Although Amaziah “reigned twenty-nine years,” it is likely that his son Uzziah (also called Azariah) was **co-regent** from the fifth year (15:1). This probably came about when Amaziah was captured by Joash, king of Israel (25:23), and held hostage in Samaria until at least Joash's death ten years later (v. 25). Thereafter, power might have been shared, but tensions were evident, culminating in his assassination (v. 27).

Frederick Mabie: During Amaziah's reign, the Assyrian Empire begins to decline, which facilitates a time of peace and prosperity for Judah and Israel.

B. (:1b) Identification of His Mother

“And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.”

C. (:2) Moral Evaluation

“And he did right in the sight of the LORD, yet not with a whole heart.”

Raymond Dillard: While the Chronicler often divides an individual reign into distinct periods of obedience and disobedience, here he depicts Amaziah as fundamentally half-hearted and mediocre from the beginning (McConville, 214).

G. Campbell Morgan: The root idea of the Hebrew word translated “perfect” [*loyal* in the NKJV] is being whole, complete. Imperfection of heart consists in incomplete surrender. Some chamber of the temple is retained for selfish purposes. What it was in the case of Amaziah we are not told, but the fact remains that notwithstanding the general direction of his life...the whole heart was not set on doing the will of God.

D. (:3-4) Purging of Conspirators

“Now it came about as soon as the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, that he killed his servants who had slain his father the king. 4 However, he did not put their children to death, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses,

which the LORD commanded, saying, 'Fathers shall not be put to death for sons, nor sons be put to death for fathers, but each shall be put to death for his own sin.'"

Raymond Dillard: Amaziah may have been motivated to avenge the death of his father when he executed the assassins; however, his own consolidation of power and elimination of potential rivals may also have been a factor.

Andrew Hill: Amaziah obeys the law of Moses selectively, bringing just punishment against the conspirators responsible for his father's murder (and solidifying his own rule in the process) but ignoring the injunctions against false worship in the Canaanite high places (cf. **Deut. 7:5; 12:2**).

I. (:5-10) COUNSEL OF THE PROPHET REDIRECTED AMAZIAH TO TRUST IN THE LORD RATHER THAN IN MILITARY MIGHT

A. (:5) Preparing Troops for Battle

1. (:5a) Appointing Commanders

"Moreover, Amaziah assembled Judah and appointed them according to their fathers' households under commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds throughout Judah and Benjamin;"

2. (:5b) Accounting of the Numbers

"and he took a census of those from twenty years old and upward, and found them to be 300,000 choice men, able to go to war and handle spear and shield."

Raymond Dillard: Twenty years old was the traditional age of enrollment (**Exod 30:14; 38:26; Lev 27:3-5; Num 1; 1 Chr 27:23; 23:24; 2 Chr 31:17**). The fact that **Benjamin** is included suggests that Judah continued to exercise hegemony in that region.

August Konkel: Amaziah's interest in Edom was to gain control of the trade routes in Transjordan. Edom had gained its independence in the days of Joash (**2 Chron 21:8-10**). Amaziah mustered his forces and appointed his commanders according to the ancestral clans, the typical way of gathering an army. The inclusion of Benjamin in the muster indicates that it was part of the territory of Judah at that time. Amaziah's force was smaller than that of Asa (580,000) or Jehoshaphat (1,160,000), which may explain his desire to hire additional troops. The fee for the mercenaries amounted to three shekels for each soldier, slightly more than an ounce of silver (a talent is 3,000 shekels). Hiring mercenaries amounted to a foreign alliance instead of relying on the Lord. . .

There were two main centers in Edom. Petra was in the south, and Bozrah (Buseirah) was in the north, between Sela and Punon. The initial conquests were in the north, with the aim of dominating the southern portion of the King's Highway, on the east side of the Arabah, the rift valley of the Jordan, which extends south from the Dead Sea. . .

Uzziah was able to complete the task begun by Azariah: regaining control over the trade routes of the King's Highway, and providing a port city on the Gulf of Aqaba. With the death of Jehoash and Amaziah, the royal houses of Samaria and Jerusalem come to a new level of cooperation, providing a temporary advantage over the Edomites.

B. (:6-10) Perverting Faith in the Lord by Hiring Mercenaries from Israel

1. (:6) Decision of Amaziah to Supplement Judah's Forces

"He hired also 100,000 valiant warriors out of Israel for one hundred talents of silver."

John Schultz: Amaziah thought in terms of **numbers** in order to determine power and chances of victory. He must not have taken God into his calculations. He did not evince any of the faith of Jonathan, the son of King Saul, who attacked the Philistines single-handedly, and who said to his armor-bearer: *"Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few."*

Faith in the God of Israel played no role in Amaziah's strategic planning; he wanted to be sure his numbers were up.

2. (:7-9) Directive Issued by God's Prophet to Warn Amaziah

a. (:7-8) Forsake Any Alliance with Israel or God Will Defeat You

"But a man of God came to him saying, 'O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel nor with any of the sons of Ephraim. 8 'But if you do go, do it, be strong for the battle; yet God will bring you down before the enemy, for God has power to help and to bring down.'"

Raymond Dillard: A central theme in the Chronicler's theology is the necessity of trusting God; all foreign alliances are repudiated as an implicit failure to rely on Yahweh alone (**16:2-9; 19:1-3; 20:15-17; 20:35-37; 32:7-8**). Commonly associated with this rejection of alliances and reliance on Yahweh is the holy war theme of Yahweh's fighting for the few against the many (**13:3-18; 14:8-15; 1 Kgs 20:27; 1 Sam 14:6; Judg 7**); Amaziah need not fear losing a fourth of his army in sending the Ephraimite mercenaries home, for Yahweh *"has the power to help."*

Andrew Hill: The expression *"man of God"* (**25:7**) is often a title for a prophetic figure (e.g., **1 Kings 13:1; 17:18; 2 Kings 1:9**). This unnamed individual is one of two anonymous prophets who approach King Amaziah with a message from God. He heeds the instruction of the first but rejects the counsel of the second to his own demise (cf. **2 Chron. 25:15-16**). At times God's prophets remain unnamed so as to highlight the message rather than the messenger. The first prophet advises the king to reject the help of mercenaries from the kingdom of Israel because *"the Lord is not with Israel"* (**25:7**). God's abandonment of the kingdom of Israel for the persistent sin of idolatry related to

the calf-cult of King Jeroboam I assures military failure. In other words, Judah's association with Israel means that God will side with the Edomites against Amaziah.

b. (:9) Forget about the Sunk Costs

“And Amaziah said to the man of God, ‘But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?’ And the man of God answered, ‘The LORD has much more to give you than this.’”

David Guzik: Amaziah heard and understood the word of God from His messenger. Yet his question was familiar: “How much will it cost me to be obedient?” This is not necessarily a bad question to ask if we are willing to be persuaded by the LORD's answer. “*The LORD is able to give you much more than this*” -- The prophet wisely answered Amaziah. Whatever obedience costs, it is always ultimately cheaper than disobedience.

3. (:10) Dismissal of the Mercenary Troops from Ephraim

*“Then Amaziah dismissed them,
the troops which came to him from Ephraim, to go home;
so their anger burned against Judah
and they returned home in fierce anger.”*

II. (:11-16) CONQUERING OF THE EDMITES CAUSED AMAZIAH TO RESPOND IN PRIDE AND IDOLATRY AND STUBBORNNESS

A. (:11-13) Victory over the Edomites Mitigated by the Plundering of Judah by the Dismissed Mercenary Troops

1. (:11-12) Victory over the Edomites

a. (:11) Initial Killing of 10,000 in Battle

“Now Amaziah strengthened himself, and led his people forth, and went to the Valley of Salt, and struck down 10,000 of the sons of Seir.”

b. (:12) Subsequent Slaughtering of Additional 10,000 Captives

“The sons of Judah also captured 10,000 alive and brought them to the top of the cliff, and threw them down from the top of the cliff so that they were all dashed to pieces.”

Frederick Mabie: Amaziah's victory over the Edomites (“*men of Seir*”; cf. **Ge 32:3; 36:8; Eze 35:15**) takes place in the Valley of Salt (Wadi el-Milh), located within the Arabah to the south of the Dead (Salt) Sea. Later, Uzziah will build on Amaziah's victory over Edom by restoring Judean control over the port city of Elath, adjacent to Ezion Geber (cf. 26:2). Like the subsequent worship of the Edomite gods (v. 14), the heinous act against the prisoners of war should be seen as repulsive.

2. (:13) Plundering of Judah by the Dismissed Mercenary Troops

“But the troops whom Amaziah sent back from going with him to battle, raided the cities of Judah, from Samaria to Beth-horon, and struck down 3,000 of them, and plundered much spoil.”

Raymond Dillard: No reason is offered for the anger and attack of the dismissed mercenaries. Presumably they had received at least a portion of the sum agreed upon (25:6, 9). Perhaps the fact that they would not share in any spoil from the battle is the implicit reason.

August Konkel: Samaria was a vastly superior power to the state of Judah. This is of no consequence in the thinking of the Chronicler, for the single criterion of success is faithfulness to God. However, when God is not fighting the battle, the outcome will depend on the power of the combatants. Amaziah utterly failed to appreciate his own weaknesses in this regard, particularly in the border that he shared with the north (2 Chron 25:13). He suffered the plundering of his border towns after he had paid the mercenaries their due. This is not presented by the Chronicler as a theological judgment. It is more an evidence of Amaziah’s failure to recognize his vulnerability in the shadow of his much more powerful neighbor.

Mark Boda: Amaziah’s move against the northern kingdom appears to be an act of revenge for the violent actions of the northern mercenaries (25:13).

B. (:14-16) Victory Fostered Response of Pride and Idolatry and Stubborn Rejection of God’s Merciful Warnings

1. (:14) Repurposing of the Edomite Gods as Idols to Worship

“Now it came about after Amaziah came from slaughtering the Edomites that he brought the gods of the sons of Seir, set them up as his gods, bowed down before them, and burned incense to them.”

Iain Duguid: While this situation is unique in the OT (contrast David; 1 Chron. 14:12), elsewhere in the ancient Near East conquerors sometimes worshiped the gods of defeated nations, regarding them as having abandoned their opponents to fight on the victor’s side (cf. the Lord’s abandoning his people; e.g., Isa. 10:5–6).

John Schultz: There must have been demonic influence in Amaziah’s behavior which made him take the gods of the Edomites and worship them. Our first impression would be that this was an act of stupidity. If the idols of Edom were not strong enough to protect that people who worshipped them, what value would they have for Amaziah? Amaziah may have thought that they had been so favorable to him that they gave him their territory. Instead of attributing his victory to the Lord, he accredited it to the Edomite idols! That sounds like the kind of lie Satan would whisper in someone’s ear.

Martin Selman: Amaziah’s achievement seems to bring out the worst in him. Whereas he had previously made some response to God, now he turns to idolatry (vv. 14-15), persecution (v. 16), revenge (v. 17), intransigence (vv. 16, 20), pride (v. 19), and

apostasy (v. 27). The decisive factor is Amaziah's worship of Edomite gods (v. 14). This is the only explicit reference to Edomite worship in the Bible, even though there was a persistent sense of brotherhood between Israel and Edom (cf. **Dt. 23:7; Am. 1:11**). The Edomites did worship a deity by the name Qos, though the earliest evidence comes from a few decades later than Amaziah.

2. (:15-16) Rebuke by the Prophet of God

a. (:15) Elevating These Failed Edomite Gods Makes No Sense

"Then the anger of the LORD burned against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, 'Why have you sought the gods of the people who have not delivered their own people from your hand?'"

Andrew Hill: A second nameless prophet is commissioned by God to rebuke Amaziah (**25:15**). His worship of the Edomite gods is utter folly on two counts.

(1) These gods have failed to deliver their own people in a time of crisis – the essential test of any deity.

(2) The Mosaic injunction against idolatry has been firmly in place for centuries (**Ex. 20:4-5**). The expression "*the anger of the Lord burned*" (**2 Chron. 25:15a**) is typically found in contexts where God's jealousy has been provoked by idolatry on the part of the Israelites (e.g., **Deut. 7:4; Judg. 3:8; 2 Kings 13:3**). According to the sanctions of the Davidic covenant, idolatry by the royal family puts the whole nation at risk of being exiled from the land (**2 Chron. 7:19-22**).

b. (:16a) Exasperation of Amaziah at the Prophetic Rebuke

"And it came about as he was talking with him that the king said to him, 'Have we appointed you a royal counselor? Stop! Why should you be struck down?'"

Andrew Hill: The petulant Amaziah interrupts the prophet mid-sentence and commands him to desist in his indictment, upon threat of death (**25:16**). The prophet obeys the edict as a subject of the king and stops his denouncement. No doubt the earlier murder of Zechariah by Joash under similar circumstances is still fresh in the memory of Judah (cf. **24:22**). Although the prophet stops his oracle, God's message cannot be stopped – to reject the counsel of God's prophet is to reject God himself. Amaziah is doomed to destruction by a righteous God. Not to be overlooked is the clever play of the writer on the word "*counsel*" (**25:16, 17**). The course of events will soon demonstrate that Amaziah can ignore the prophet's counsel – but not God's!

Trapp: This was a **rejection of God's mercy** to Amaziah. God was kind to send him a correcting prophet -- When he might have sent him to hell with a thunderbolt; as the patientest man upon earth would have done likely, had he been in God's place and power.

c. (:16b) Eradication of Amaziah Prophecied as Divine Judgment

"Then the prophet stopped and said, 'I know that God has

planned to destroy you, because you have done this, and have not listened to my counsel.”

III. (:17-24) CRUSHING DEFEAT BY ISRAEL DUE TO THE PRIDE AND IDOLATRY OF AMAZIAH

A. (:17-19) Foolish Battle Initiated Between Judah and Israel

1. (:17) Initiative of Amaziah to Confront Joash

“Then Amaziah king of Judah took counsel and sent to Joash the son of Jehoahaz the son of Jehu, the king of Israel, saying, ‘Come, let us face each other.’”

Iain Duguid: The foolhardy arrogance of Amaziah continued as he sought confrontation with Joash of Israel.

David Guzik: He had reason to believe he would be successful. He had recently assembled a 300,000 man army that killed 20,000 men in a victory over Edom (**2 Chronicles 25:5, 11-12**). King Joash (Jehoahaz) of Israel seemed very weak, having only 50 horsemen, 10 chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers after being defeated by the Syrians (**2 Kings 13:7**).

2. (:18-19) Inadvisable Folly of Amaziah Exposed by Joash

a. (:18) Exposed by Relating a Parable of Contrasting Powers

“And Joash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, ‘The thorn bush which was in Lebanon sent to the cedar which was in Lebanon, saying, Give your daughter to my son in marriage. But there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trampled the thorn bush.’”

Perhaps **vs. 17** suggests a meeting between the two kings to arrange some type of alliance via a marriage contract. But Amaziah ended up getting trampled instead.

Dillard: The thistle, imagining himself to be equal with the cedar, presumptuously suggested a marriage alliance between them. The difference between the two was made obvious when a wild beast passed through and crushed the thistle underfoot. Of course the beast was powerless to injure the cedar.

b. (:19) Exposed by Rebuking Amaziah’s Pride and Self-Deception

*“You said, ‘Behold, you have defeated Edom.’ And your heart has become **proud** in boasting. Now stay at home; for why should you provoke trouble that you, even you, should fall and Judah with you?”*

J.A. Thompson: Jehoash’s fable about the arrogant thistle is similar to Jotham’s allegory about the thornbush in **Judg 9:7-15**. The Chronicler viewed pride as a grievous sin and can be heard speaking through Jehoash. To have supposed that a

victory over Edom was a warrant for attacking Jehoash and a guarantee of another victory was arrogant and foolish. Amaziah would be wiser to remain at home. His action would bring about his own downfall and that of his nation Judah as well (cf. **26:16**).

David Guzik: Amaziah should have listened to this word from Jehoash, but he didn't. He provoked a fight he should have avoided, and did not consider either the likelihood of success or the effect his defeat would have on the whole kingdom of Judah.

B. (:20-24) Foreordained Defeat of Amaziah Executed

1. (:20) Stubbornness of Amaziah Led to Judgment for Idolatry

“But Amaziah would not listen, for it was from God, that He might deliver them into the hand of Joash because they had sought the gods of Edom.”

J.A. Thompson: Behind the human affairs of this world is the overruling hand of God. Indeed, God guided even Amaziah's own pride in such a way that it brought about his downfall. In judgment for his apostasy God made Amaziah blind to the truth and deaf to wisdom (cf. **1 Kgs 12:15**).

2. (:21-22) Self-Sufficiency of Amaziah Crushed in Battle

“So Joash king of Israel went up, and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced each other at Beth-shemesh, which belonged to Judah. 22 And Judah was defeated by Israel, and they fled each to his tent.”

Knapp: His [Amaziah's] name means “*strength of Jah*”; but we read, “he strengthened *himself*” (**2 Chronicles 25:11**); his character of self-sufficiency thus belying his name – a thing not uncommon in our day.

3. (:23-24) Success of Joash

a. (:23a) Captured Amaziah

“Then Joash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem,”

b. (:23b-24a) Destroyed and Despoiled Jerusalem

“and tore down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate, 400 cubits. 24 And he took all the gold and silver, and all the utensils which were found in the house of God with Obed-edom, and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also,”

Thomas Constable: Amaziah disobeyed God by attacking Israel late in his reign (vv. **17- 24**). This was due, from the divine perspective, to the king's idolatry (v. **20**) and, from the human perspective, to his pride (v. **18**). The consequences were that Judah's

enemy destroyed a portion of the wall around Jerusalem, thus weakening its defense (v. 23), and stripped the temple, thus diminishing its glory (v. 24). . .

Idolatry was a serious matter because it struck at the heart of God's relationship with His people. God blessed Israel with the opportunity to have an intimate personal relationship with the living sovereign LORD as no other people in the world then. To turn from this privilege to pursue dead idols was the height of insolence (cf. **Exod. 20:5**).

c. (:24b) Returned to Samaria as the Victor
“and returned to Samaria.”

(:25-28) EPILOGUE – CLOSING SUMMARY OF HIS REIGN

A. (:25) Later Years

“And Amaziah, the son of Joash king of Judah,
lived fifteen years after the death of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel.”

Frederick Mabie: This final paragraph covers Amaziah’s final twenty-four years when his son Uzziah is (presumably) acting as his coregent. For nine of these years Amaziah is likely a prisoner of the northern king Jehoash.

B. (:26) Record of His Deeds

“Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, from first to last,
behold, are they not written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel?”

C. (:27-28) Death and Burial

1. (:27) Death

“And from the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD
they conspired against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish;
but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there.”

Andrew Hill: It is likely that Amaziah’s false worship is the catalyst that bonds a group of conspirators from Judah to plot Amaziah’s assassination for some fifteen years. It is unclear as to who these men of Judah are, but most likely it is a coalition of priests along with civil and military leaders similar to the one that elevated Joash to the throne of Judah.

Knapp: Lachish was the first of the cities of Judah to adopt the idolatries of the kingdom of Israel (‘*the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion: for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee,*’ **Micah 1:13**), and it was natural for the idolatrous Amaziah to seek an asylum there.

Clarke: He no doubt became very unpopular after having lost the battle with the Israelites; the consequence of which was the dismantling of Jerusalem, and the seizure of the royal treasures, with several other evils. It is likely that the last *fifteen* years of his

reign were greatly embittered: so that, finding the royal city to be no place of *safety*, he endeavoured to secure himself at Lachish; but all in vain, for thither his murderers pursued him; and he who forsook the Lord was forsaken by every friend, perished in his gainsaying, and came to an untimely end.

Mark Boda: The conspiracy broke out within the court in Jerusalem, the center of his power, so he was forced to flee to one of his fortified cities guarding one of the key valleys between the coastal plain and Jerusalem. But there would be no fleeing the prophetic word, or he was killed there.

2. (:28) Burial

*“Then they brought him on horses
and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.”*

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) In times of financial pressure, how can we be confident that the Lord has sufficient resources to sustain us?
- 2) What is involved in being fully committed to the Lord instead of being content with just half-hearted loyalty?
- 3) What is the relationship between pride and idolatry?
- 4) How do we respond to God’s revelatory word of correction in our lives?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Martin Selman: Though it is a little depressing to read about yet another wayward king, the possible value of a story such as this is worth considering before turning quickly to the next chapter (which is equally depressing though perhaps more colourful!).

- Firstly, repeated stories about sinful rulers testify to God’s patience.
- Secondly, people who turn away from God after receiving his grace are also found in the Christian church (e.g. **1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; Rev. 2:4-6, 20-25**).
- Thirdly, such incidents are exemplary warnings to others not to fall into the same temptations (**1 Cor. 10:11-13**; cf. **Rom. 15:4**).
- Fourthly, merely to belong to God’s people or being part of their traditions is insufficient before God. No-one is immune from pride and complacency (**1 Cor. 10:12; 1 John 1:8, 10**), but God’s forgiveness to anyone who falls is always lose at hand (cf. **Ps. 51:7-15; 2 Chr. 7:13-16; 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2**).

Iain Duguid: Parallels between **2 Chronicles 25:5–12** and **25:14–24**

Amaziah's action	vv. 5–6	vv. 14–15a
leads to a prophet confronting him.	vv. 7–8	v. 15b
Amaziah asks a question	v. 9a	v. 16a
to which the prophet responds.	v. 9b	v. 16b
The king's obedience/disobedience	v. 10	vv. 17–20
is followed by success/failure in battle.	vv. 11–12	vv. 21–24

Again a reign began well in following the Lord but ended with failure; the implied warning to hearers not to follow that example is repeated. The prior account of Joash's reign had juxtaposed the positive "good" of joyful, faithful worship of "*the Lord, the God of the fathers*" with the consequences of turning away, and now Amaziah had begun with willingness to listen to a prophet but soon turned to apostasy and arrogant pride, rejecting a prophet's message. Between these two accounts, a Mosaic law is cited that affirms generational responsibility. As Ezekiel was to say at the time of the exile, "*When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and . . . does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live?*" (**Ezek. 18:24**; cf. **Heb. 6:4–12**; **10:26–31**), but that passage also affirms that when a "*wicked person turns away from all his sins . . . he shall surely live*" (**Ezek. 18:21**). The gracious reality is that "*I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live*" (**Ezek. 18:32**). Thus in the reigns of both kings a **prophetic warning** became an opportunity, sadly refused, to turn. This message echoes through the centuries, as God sent his prophets and then his Son, calling for all to turn to him (cf. **Matt. 21:33–41**; **23:37–39**), now continued by the Spirit-empowered witness of Christ's followers (**Luke 24:46–49**; **Acts 17:29–31**).

Steven Cole: **Half-hearted commitment results in inevitable ruin.**

The parallel account (**2 Kings 14:3**) gives us a clue to his character: "*And he did right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father; he did according to all that Joash his father had done.*" You remember his father Joash, the good boy who went bad. The central aspect of Joash's faith was that it wasn't his own. He rode on the coat tails of Jehoiada, but as soon as Jehoiada died, Joash went astray. He himself never walked in reality with God.

His son Amaziah learned to follow in his dad's steps. He did some good things and he did some bad things. But his life was not fully committed to the Lord. He never confronted the sin in his life. He never got serious about God.

A Portrait of Half-Hearted Commitment

Let's get a thumbnail sketch of Amaziah, a half-hearted, blah believer. I see here seven strands of half-heartedness we need to avoid:

1. Half-heartedness means a little bit of obedience.
2. Half-heartedness means being ambitious for yourself, but not for the Lord.
3. Half-heartedness means following human wisdom, not God's wisdom.
4. Half-heartedness means concern for expedience over obedience.
5. Half-heartedness means being susceptible to the evils you campaign against.
6. Half-heartedness means rejecting the counsel of God in favor of the counsel of men.
7. Half-hearted commitment means falling prey to pride.

A Portrait of the Resulting Ruin

Some of Amaziah's ruin was immediate, but some took a while. God's judgments don't always follow swiftly by our reckoning. But they do follow inevitably. It may take a while for the seeds sown to the flesh to spring up and produce corruption, but the crop never fails.

1. Immediate Results: God's people were defeated and defenseless.
2. Long-Range Results: Wasted years and a pointless death for Amaziah.

August Konkol: Pride is rightly regarded as the most insidious of human sins. Perhaps it seems to be the worst of deadly sins because it is so deceptive as well as destructive. No all pride is bad; there are things to be proud of, but most often pride has a negative and destructive effect. The story of Amaziah is exemplary in its depiction of a complete blindness to hubris.

The reign of Amaziah is compromised, like that of the reign of Joash, his father, This is immediately signaled by the Chronicler by saying that Amaziah *did what was right* but did not have complete integrity (**2 Chron 25:2**). As with Joash, there are prophets to affirm, encourage, and give warnings. In a section unique to the Chronicler in Amaziah's records, a man of God appears to warn him against allying with Israel through hiring mercenaries (**25:5-10**). Amaziah does the right thing in dismissing the Israelite troops; without their help he is successful in his battle with Edom. He suffers the retaliation of the troops raiding border towns for their loss of opportunity to retrieve booty (**v. 13**). However, the failure of Amaziah was his plunder of Edomite idols. This earns a sharp rebuke from another unnamed prophet.

The king's sarcastic response brings the announcement that divine judgment has already been determined (**vv. 15-16**). Ahaziah rashly undertook a war with Jehoash of Israel, and his army was routed. The Israelite troops broke down part of the wall of Jerusalem, plundered the temple, and brought the loot to Samaria. For the Chronicler, the cause was a spiritual problem. The victory at Edom had resulted in pride (**v. 19**); ironically, this damning condemnation comes from the Israelite king. That might seem

a less convincing source than the earlier warning of the prophet, but the king of Israel makes his point. **Pride and idolatry often come as a pair.** The price for Amaziah is like that of his father; he dies in a conspiracy after a futile attempt to escape. . .

The story of Amaziah follows patterns that are familiar. A king with potential to do much good rejects the warnings of the prophets and brings loss upon his people and ultimately himself. It is very difficult to accept words of correction. The preaching of Isaiah was met with deafness and blindness (**Isa 6:9-10**). Jesus would use these very words to describe his own ministry (**Matt 13:14-15**). The repeating themes of the accounts of the kings of Judah must remind God's children of all times that two things will always be true: they should expect that their message may be rejected, and yet their message must be preached. The preaching itself becomes a judgment on those who refuse to hear, just as Amaziah's refusal to hear the scornful rebuke of Jehoash was an indication of the divine judgment that was already determined (**2 Chron 25:20**). Pride casts a blinding veil that prevents the perception of the obvious.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 26:1-23

TITLE: REIGN OF UZZIAH – SUCCESS COMPROMISED BY PRIDE AND SELF-EXALTATION

BIG IDEA:

SUCCESS FOSTERS PRIDE WHICH OFTEN LEADS TO SELF-EXALTATION WHICH THEN RESULTS IN JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: The earlier history [2 Kings] had reported that Uzziah did “*right*” and enjoyed one of the longest reigns of the Judean kings. The Chronicler elaborates by demonstrating the tokens of divine blessing that Uzziah enjoyed; divine help, victory in warfare, a large army, wealth, fame, and building programs (26:5–15) are all items in the author’s usual repertoire for portraying the blessings that accrue to fidelity. For the Chronicler, however, such a righteous king should not have suffered a debilitating and disgraceful disease. Where the earlier history had reported Uzziah’s leprosy without comment (2 Kgs 15:5), the Chronicler explains the anomaly by reporting Uzziah’s pride and his cultic sin as the inciting reason for his disease.

Iain Duguid: Military successes, agricultural development, and defense buildup flowed from Uzziah’s decision to “*seek God*” (using *darash*; 26:5 [2x]), following instruction “*in the fear of God*” from an otherwise unknown Zechariah (vv. 5–15). At that time, “*God helped him*” (vv. 7, 15), matching his alternative name, **Azariah** (“*the Lord helped*”), so he became “*strong*” (vv. 8, 15).

The contrast is blunt: “*But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God*” (v. 16). His actions denied his name, Uzziah (“*the Lord is my strength*”). Then follows an occasion in which “*the Lord struck him*,” leading to a skin disease (vv. 16–21; cf. 2 Kings 15:5, which gives no reason). When he was rebuked for usurping a priestly function in the temple, he was “*angry*” (*za’ap*, “*rage*”; 2 Chron. 26:19). As with his father and grandfather, past faithfulness and success did not guarantee continuing humility before God. God’s word was rejected.

Frederick Mabie: The forty-year overlap between the reigns of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel indicate a time of significant peace and prosperity for both kingdoms, aided by geopolitical realities such as weakness in Aram and regional distractions in Assyria. In addition to the prosperity of this period, the geographical extent of both Israel and Judah expanded considerably during the long reigns of these kings. In the northern kingdom, Jeroboam II extended the northern border of Israel to Lebo Hamath (including taking Damascus) and recaptured previously lost territory in Transjordan (cf. 2Ki 14:25, 28). In the southern kingdom, Uzziah was able to prevail over several Philistine cities in the west (including Gath and Ashdod), the Ammonites in the east, and Arabians and Meunites in the south. The Chronicler notes that these victories caused Uzziah’s fame to spread “*as far as the border of Egypt*” (26:8).

Uzziah also rebuilt the Judean maritime port at Elath (**26:2**; cf. **2Ki 14:22**) and fortified the southern Negev and wilderness regions (**2Ch 26:10**). As a result of these territorial gains by Israel and Judah, the combined geographical extent of the northern and southern kingdoms approximated the extent seen at the height of the united monarchy under David and Solomon. Moreover, the resulting control of trade routes enhanced the prosperity of both Israel and Judah.

Martin Selman: This is the last of **three successive reigns** which concludes with a period of disobedience and disaster, and it seems that nothing is able to prevent Judah and their kings sliding into sin and judgment. Idolatry, rejection of the prophets, violence, and pride repeat themselves with devastating regularity.

(:1-5) PROLOGUE – OPENING SUMMARY OF THE REIGN OF UZZIAH

A. (:1) Coronation by the People

“And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah.”

August Konkel: *Uzziah* (2 Chron 26:1, etc.) is also known as *Azariah*. The names seem to be interchangeable. . . The difference may not have had significance, because both words from which the names are derived (‘*zr* and ‘*zz*) can mean “*victory*” or “*strength*.” The short form of Yahweh at the end of his name indicates it is the strength of God. . . The name of his mother (*Jekoliah*) similarly means the Lord (*Yah*) is able (*ykl*).

Martin Selman: Some difficulty is usually implied when the people (**26:1**) are involved in putting a new king on the throne (cf. **22:11**; **33:25**; **36:1**), perhaps connected here with Amaziah’s defeat (cf. **25:21-24**). However, the idea that the king could be chosen by the will of the people was never entirely lost in Judah.

B. (:2) Prosperity

“He built Eloth and restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers.”

Martin Selman: “*Eloth*” was an important port at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba, very close to Ezion-Geber where Solomon and Jehoshaphat had kept ships (**2 Chr. 8:17-18**; **20:35-37**). Uzziah’s reclaiming it for Judah signified two things.

- It brought Amaziah’s unfinished Edomite business to an end (**2 Chr. 21:8-10**; **25:11-12**), and
- symbolized the beginning of a prosperity unparalleled in Judah since the days of Solomon.

C. (:3a) Age and Long Duration of Reign

“Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem;”

D. (:3b) Identification of His Mother

“and his mother's name was Jehiliah of Jerusalem.”

E. (:4-5) Positive Moral Evaluation

1. (:4) Overall Positive Evaluation

“And he did right in the sight of the LORD according to all that his father Amaziah had done.”

2. (:5a) Dependent on a Godly Counselor = Zechariah

“And he continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God;”

Raymond Dillard: Uzziah, like Joash before him (24:2), had one particular adviser who helped him to remain faithful to Yahweh. Nothing more is known of this individual, unless he is identified with the Zechariah who served as a witness for Isaiah (Isa 8:2); however, the statement that Uzziah sought Yahweh “*during the days*” of Zechariah is best understood as implying that he had died during the reign of Uzziah.

3. (:5b) Connection between Covenant Loyalty and Divine Prosperity

“and as long as he sought the LORD, God prospered him.”

Martin Selman: We read that, under Zechariah’s influence, the Lord gave Uzziah success. The Hebrew text reads literally: “*the Lord God made him prosper.*” The Hebrew verb used is *tsalach*, which literally means “*to break out.*” In some contexts the verb is related to the working of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life, as in the case of Samson, about whom we read: “*The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power.*”

I. (:6-15) THE IMPRESSIVE PROSPERITY OF UZZIAH

Iain Duguid: This section’s key theme is seen in the repetition of words from **verses 7–8** in **verse 15b**:

- “*fame*” (Hb. *shem*, “*name*”),
- God’s “*help*” (‘*azar*), and
- “*strong*” (*khazaq*).

Andrew Hill: The report of Uzziah’s prosperity (26:6–15) has no parallel in 2 Kings. The litany of achievements attesting divine favor include military victory over Judah’s archenemies (26:6–8), extensive building activity and agricultural bounty (26:9–10), and the marshalling of a large, well-trained, and well-equipped army (26:11–15). The unit is framed by a formula of prosperity that highlights Uzziah’s “*fame*” and “**power**” (26:8, 15). In combination these two epithets are a recipe for pride and eventual self-destruction, since a proud heart tends to “*forget the LORD*” (Deut. 8:14).

A. (:6-8) Impressive Foreign Campaigns – Assisted by God

Raymond Dillard: These verses summarize Uzziah's **foreign policy**. His conquests were oriented to the west, south, and southeast, a fact that fits well with the rule of a powerful Jeroboam II to the north. Uzziah's conquest of Jabneh suggests that he regained control of the area through which Jehoash of Israel had attacked his father Amaziah (**25:21**). Jabneh is probably to be equated with Jabneel (**Josh 15:11**); the site would later be called "*Jamnia*" and would become a leading center of Jewish learning and religious life after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Uzziah's campaigns against the Philistines not only represented the on-going conflict of traditional enemies; no doubt Uzziah had the important strategic purpose of reasserting some control over the international coastal highway ("*Via Maris*"). A similar strategic goal to control a major artery of international commerce influenced the campaign against Elat (**26:1-2**).

Andrew Hill: It appears that **economic concerns** motivate King Uzziah's imperialistic agenda. Wresting control of the coastal highway from the Philistines and the recapture of Elath (**26:1-2**) have significant implications for Judah's role in international commerce.

J.A. Thompson: Significant conquests of Uzziah directed against Philistines and Arabs on his southwestern borders are not taken up. His conquests in these areas were strengthened by the construction of fortresses in conquered territory. The whole paragraph was intended to demonstrate how Uzziah prospered in foreign affairs. Military activity to the north was not possible because Jeroboam II was too strong for Uzziah.

1. (:6-7a) Campaigns against the Philistines

*"Now he went out and warred against the Philistines,
and broke down the wall of Gath
and the wall of Jabneh
and the wall of Ashdod;
and he built cities in the area of Ashdod and among the Philistines.
And God helped him against the Philistines,"*

2. (:7-8a) Campaigns against the Arabians, the Meunites and the Ammonites

*"and against the Arabians who lived in Gur-baal,
and the Meunites.
8 The Ammonites also gave tribute to Uzziah,"*

3. (:8b) Two Benefits to Uzziah

a. Fame

"and his fame extended to the border of Egypt,"

b. Power

"for he became very strong."

Martin Selman: Two benefits accrue to Uzziah. The first is *fame* (vv. **8, 15**), which associates him especially with David (cf. **1 Chr. 14:17; 17:8**), and the second is that he

became very powerful (vv. 8, 15). The latter often characterized the first part of a reign (cf. 2 Chr. 12:1; 17:1; 27:6), and may be a play here on Uzziah's name (it means, "Yahweh is strong").

B. (:9-10) Impressive Domestic Accomplishments – Building Projects and Agricultural Focus

1. (:9) Building Projects

*“Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem
at the Corner Gate
and at the Valley Gate
and at the corner buttress
and fortified them.”*

Andrew Hill: It also seems likely that some of the building activity is related to the restoration of destruction caused by the well-known earthquake during Uzziah's reign (cf. Amos 1:1; Zech. 14:5).

2. (:10) Agricultural Focus

a. Livestock

*“And he built towers in the wilderness and hewed many cisterns,
for he had much livestock, both in the lowland and in the plain.”*

Raymond Dillard: The **towers** provided defensive positions, but may also have served as storehouses and as refuge for workers tending fields or livestock (1 Chr 27:25–31).

b. Crops

*“He also had plowmen and vinedressers in the hill country
and the fertile fields, for he loved the soil.”*

Raymond Dillard: Because of his love of the soil (v 10), Uzziah could with justice be considered the **patron saint of farming**. After the rise of the monarchy in Israel, in addition to the landed property of free Israelites, there developed extensive crown lands through purchase, take over, or other means (1 Sam 8:12–14; 22:7; 1 Kgs 21; 2 Kgs 8:3–6; 1 Chr 27:25–31). These crown lands would have provided a source of supplies and trade commodities for the court, employment for those without other means, and could be granted as fiefs in reward for faithful service. Ordinarily only the poorest of the land served as vinedressers and laborers on royal estates (2 Kgs 24:14; 25:12; Jer 52:16; Jer 40:9–10; see **Graham**, BA 47 [1985] 55–58; and **Rainey**, BASOR 245 [1982]) 55–58).

J.A. Thompson: Many cisterns have been discovered that were in use in Uzziah's time, judging from the debris found in them. A cistern was dug into the limestone and sealed with lime plaster to provide a continuing supply of water (Jer 2:13; 38:6) caught during rainstorms. There evidently was a sizeable group of workers tending Uzziah's fields and pastures. The “fertile lands” (*karmel*) may be a place, Carmel (not to be confused with Mount Carmel in the north) south of Hebron (cf. 1 Sam 25). This verse gives an

excellent summary of the agricultural zones and the agricultural activities in Judah, whose royal property (1 Sam 8:12-14; 22:7; 1 Kgs 21; 2 Kgs 8:3-6; 1 Chr 27:25-31) supported the king and provided rewards for faithful service.

C. (:11-15) Impressive Military Might

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler regards the maintenance of a large army by the king of Judah as a sign of God's blessing. In addition to the militia levied by tribe and led by tribal chieftain or clan elder, Uzziah's army includes another layer of leadership in the royal officials who function like chiefs of staff in today's military parlance (2 Chron. 26:11). The organization of the militia into "*divisions*" (26:11) represents a new development in Israel's military structure. The same is true for the armaments provided for the soldiers (26:14), since in earlier times the conscript was required to provide his own weapons (cf. Judg. 20:16-17; 1 Chron. 12:2, 8, 24). Thus, the reign of Uzziah witnesses the increasing sophistication of warfare as practiced by the Israelites.

1. (:11) Battle-Ready Organized Troops

"Moreover, Uzziah had an army ready for battle, which entered combat by divisions, according to the number of their muster, prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the official, under the direction of Hananiah, one of the king's officers."

2. (:12-13) Large Number of Valiant Leaders and Elite Troops with Powerful Capabilities

a. (:12) Valiant Leaders

"The total number of the heads of the households, of valiant warriors, was 2,600."

b. (:13a) Elite Troops

"And under their direction was an elite army of 307,500,"

c. (:13b) Powerful Capabilities

"who could wage war with great power, to help the king against the enemy."

Martin Selman: The expression "*to help the king*" (v. 13, NRSV, RSV) is a deliberate echo of God's help (vv. 7, 15), and is paralleled by similar assistance for David (1 Chr. 12:1, 18, 21-22), Solomon (1 Chr. 22:17), and Hezekiah (2 Chr. 32:3).

3. (:14-15a) Equipped with State of the Art Weaponry

a. (:14) Traditional Weapons

"Moreover, Uzziah prepared for all the army shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows and sling stones."

b. (:15a) Innovative War Machines

*“And in Jerusalem he made engines of war
invented by skillful men to be on the towers and on the corners,
for the purpose of shooting arrows and great stones.”*

Iain Duguid: The “*machines*” may refer to structures or apparatuses on “*the towers and the corners*” (cf. v. 9) that protected archers and throwers.

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler suggests that Uzziah is an inventor of sorts, designing “*machines*” (26:15; or “*inventions*,” from the Heb. *hsb*, “*to think*”) for use in combat. The immediate context suggests that this new offensive weapon is a type of **catapult**.

4. (:15b) Two Benefits to Uzziah

a. Fame

“Hence his fame spread afar,”

b. Power – Assisted by God

“for he was marvelously helped until he was strong.”

Martin Selman: Verse 15 forms an inclusion with verses 7-8 by repeating the three key terms, *fame*, *helped*, and *powerful/strong* (v. 15), which characterize the section. The adverb “*marvelously*” (NRSV, RSV) or “*wonderfully*” (REB, NEB) always implies that God is the subject, cf. GNB, “*the help he received from God*” (cf. Isa. 28:29; 29:14; Joel 2:26; Ps. 31:21).

II. (:16-21) THE INCURABLE PRIDE OF UZZIAH LEADING TO SELF-EXALTATION AND JUDGMENT OF LEPROSY

A. (:16-18) Confronted over His Pride and Self-Exaltation

1. (:16) Root Problem of Pride and
Manifesting Transgression of Burning Incense

“But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.”

G. Campbell Morgan: The history of men affords persistent witness to the subtle perils which are created by **prosperity**. More men are blasted by it than by adversity.... Prosperity always puts the soul in danger of pride, of the heart lifted up; and pride ever goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Thomas Constable: Unfortunately, Uzziah took **personal credit** for what God had given him (v. 16). The writer noted several times that Uzziah was strong (vv. 8, 15, 16). His pride led to **self-exaltation**; he put himself above God.

Iain Duguid: Unlike Hezekiah, who subsequently “*humbled himself*” (32:25, 26), or Jehoshaphat, whose “*heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord*” (17:6), Uzziah

demonstrated an arrogant angry disregard for God's requirements in worship, and there is no mention of any repentance despite his "*destruction*" (a form of *shakhat*, "spoil, mar, ruin").

August Konkell: **Incense** was widely used in ancient worship. In the temple, incense symbolized the appeasement of divine wrath; it expressed the presence of the holy within the common and protected the worshiper from the divine presence. Offering incense was one of the daily rituals of temple confession.

J.A. Thompson: The word translated "*became powerful*" provides the link to the previous section. It also gives an insight regarding the character of Uzziah and of all strong leaders. He had always been a strong leader, and this had enabled him to do great works. He had not been one of the weak kings of Judah who was easily swayed by others (like Jehoshaphat) or too open and accommodating with the leaders in the north. But as is often the case with strong leaders, this virtue gave way to a headstrong, I-can-do-no-wrong attitude. It was precisely his strength that blinded him to the effrontery of his action. Uzziah's pride was expressed in usurping the role of the priest. The verb translated "*was unfaithful*" (*ma'al*) is used frequently in Chronicles (**1 Chr 2:7; 5:25; 28:19-25; 29:6; 36:14**) for various serious violations of covenant loyalty and responsibilities. Only the priests were to burn incense (**Exod 30:1-10; Num 16:40; 18:1-7**).

2. (:17-18) Rebuke by the Company of Priests and Commanded to Depart the Temple

"Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men. 18 And they opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, 'It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful, and will have no honor from the LORD God.'"

Frederick Mabie: Although potentially risking their lives, a group of eighty priests confront Uzziah with the covenantal requirements concerning incense and declare that his unfaithfulness will jeopardize God's blessing on his rule. Uzziah's lack of a godly response to the rebuke from the priests will lead to his inability to discharge fully his regal responsibilities (cf. vv. **19-21**).

Martin Selman: Uzziah's problem was that he was not content with the authority God had given him and wanted to add more priestly functions to his royal power. Absolute power, however, has no place in God's kingdom, for at least two reasons. Effective biblical leadership is always aware that it is a gift rather than a possession, and it always involves some kind of partnership or team dimension. For these and other reason, Jesus' own leadership was chiefly characterized by obedient servanthood. Unfortunately, Uzziah's prosperity made him blind as to how generous God had been, and, when he tried to take a leadership gift that was not his, even what he had was taken away (cf. **Luke 19:25**).

B. (:19-20) Cursed by God with Incurable Leprosy

1. (:19a) Angry Response to the Rebuke

“But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged;”

2. (:19b) Outbreak of Leprosy

“and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense.”

Raymond Dillard: Uzziah’s sin was a cultic transgression and brings immediate retribution in the appearance of a skin disease; Uzziah’s pride brought him to usurp the honor or glory of the priest’s role, but he would receive no honor (v **18**) from the Lord. Just as a cultic sin produced a plague in the wilderness (**Num 16:46–50**), so also Uzziah was punished with a disease. It was the offering of incense that formed the climax of the condemnation of Jeroboam (**1 Kgs 12:33**; **Williamson**, 339). The Chronicler has similarly shown disease as a consequence of transgression in the cases of Asa and Jehoram (**16:12–13**; **21:12–19**).

3. (:20a) Visible Curse Marking Him as Unclean

“And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead;”

4. (:20b) Urgent Exit from the Holy Temple

“and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him.”

Iain Duguid: his forehead revealed an infectious skin disease that made him unclean, necessitating his rapid removal from the temple. It seems Uzziah himself was terrified as “he himself hurried to go out,” realizing the dangers of his breaking first the “holy-profane” and now “clean-unclean” distinctions (cf. **Lev. 10:10–11**). He lived the rest of his life quarantined “*in a separate house*,” relieved of royal duties. In his royal “*pride*” he sought to take on the special access of a priestly role, but instead he was now “*excluded from the house of the Lord*.”

Frederick Mabie: Ironically, while Uzziah refuses to leave the temple when confronted by the priests, he becomes “eager to leave” in the light of God’s judgment through a skin disease.

C. (:21) Cut Off from the Temple and from the Throne

1. Isolated

“And King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper,

for he was cut off from the house of the LORD.”

2. Replaced

“And Jotham his son was over the king's house judging the people of the land.”

(:22-23) EPILOGUE – CLOSING SUMMARY OF REIGN OF UZZIAH

A. (:22) Record of His Deeds

“Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first to last, the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, has written.”

B. (:23a) Death and Burial

1. Death

“So Uzziah slept with his fathers,”

2. Burial

“and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the grave which belonged to the kings, for they said, ‘He is a leper.’”

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler still mentions that Uzziah was “buried with his fathers” but adds that it was in a “burial field,” probably adjacent to the royal tombs themselves. His final description expresses **isolation**: “*He is a leper.*” The proverb that summarizes Uzziah’s reign is succinct: “*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*” (**Prov. 16:18**).

C. (:23b) Succession

“And Jotham his son became king in his place.”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What is the essence of biblical humility?
- 2) Why does extreme power lead to a lust for more power and self-exaltation?
- 3) How do we receive God’s word of correction and rebuke?
- 4) How much courage did it take for the company of priests to confront the king?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: Uzziah was a great king: during his reign Judah reclaimed in the South much of the territorial extent of the Solomonic empire; the kingdom prospered through conquest, the control of strategic trade routes, and the receipt of tribute. Yet isn't it ironic that Uzziah is now largely remembered only because of his disease and the fact that it was the year of his death in which Isaiah received his call? In spite of the wealth, success, power, and conquests of Uzziah, Isaiah could see that the day was not far off when cities would lie deserted, uninhabited, ruined, and ravaged (**Isa 6:11–12**).

Uzziah for the Chronicler was one more example of how even legitimate power could be corrupted; with Rehoboam, Amaziah, and Joash before him, Uzziah too would succumb to wrongdoing and suffer the immediate consequence of divine retribution.

Andrew Hill: Azariah identifies the key issue in the conflict with Uzziah by appealing to the special divine anointing or consecration of the priesthood for the specific task of offering such sacrifices (**26:18**; cf. **Ps. 133**). Even as the Davidic king is anointed to shepherd the Israelite nation, so the Aaronic priest is anointed to serve God and the people through the ministry of ritual sacrifice. This divinely ordained division of labor and service is also designed to separate political power from religious authority in Israelite society in order to prevent abuse of one office by the other. Azariah's threat to Uzziah is cast generally as a censure of divine honor for the king (**2 Chron. 26:18**).

The king does not have to wait long before the priestly threat becomes a divine curse. Enraged at the priests for intercepting him in the temple and thwarting his attempt to burn incense on the altar, Uzziah is afflicted by God (**26:20**). It is important to notice that God's anger breaks out against Uzziah only after he has vented his anger against the priests (**26:19**). The king was warned to leave, but he ignored that warning. His disregard for the Lord's priests and the Lord's sanctuary implicitly signals a disregard for God himself. God will not stand idly by when his holiness has been violated by ritual impropriety (cf. Aaron's sons, **Lev. 10:1-2**; the men of Korah, **Num. 16:35**).

Matthew Henry: (1) Pride was at the bottom of his transgression, and thus God humbled him and put dishonor upon him. (2) He invaded the office of the priests in contempt of them, and God struck him with a disease which in a particular manner made him subject to the inspection and sentence of the priests; for to them pertained the judgment of the leprosy, **Deut. xxiv. 8**. (3) He thrust himself into the temple of God, whither the priests only had admission, and for that was thrust out of the very courts of the temple, into which the meanest of his subjects that was ceremonially clean had free access.

Mark Boda: The **fear of God** is an important motif in the Old Testament and represents the human covenantal response to the awesome presence of the holy God. The initial reaction of the people to the presence of God on Sinai is one of abject fear (**Deut 5:5**), a reaction that leads to the people's commissioning Moses as their mediator (**Deut 5:22-27**). God's response is his desire that they would indeed "*fear*" him, which means to

keep all his commands (**Deut 5:29**). Such a “*fear*” is listed alongside instructions to keep his statutes, to listen, to obey, and even to love the Lord with one’s whole being and keep God’s commands on one’s heart (**Deut 6:1-6**). The fear of the Lord is, thus, the human covenantal response to Yahweh’s gracious initiative and will be considered as foundational to a life of wisdom (**Prov 1:7**).

Richard Rohlin: The Rise and Fall of Uzziah

I. The Rise of Uzziah

God blessed Uzziah in a number of ways:

- Spiritually – Uzziah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord... As his father had done.
- Militarily – Uzziah defeated all of his enemies, built up his cities, and increased the size of his army. Most importantly, he built up the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down in his grandfather’s time. Uzziah’s might was such that under him Judah became a major world power, and his fame spread all the way to Pharaoh's court.
- Economically – Uzziah “*loved the soil.*” He was gifted with an understanding of farming and husbandry, and the land flourished under his reign.
- Creatively – Uzziah was a true “renaissance man”, and devised and built all manner of “*machines... to shoot arrows and great stones.*”

All of the blessings in Uzziah’s life came for this simple reason: **That the Lord helped him.**

- He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper. (**2Ch 26:5**)
- ...And his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. (**2Ch 26:15**)

II. The Fall of Uzziah = Pride

1) The cause of pride

- Uzziah’s pride is innate within himself. Pride is the essence of the Sin Nature. Success does not cause pride, but both success and failure can provide the environment in which pride can grow.
- Many people make the mistake of thinking that because success/wealth can make way for pride, that success in and of itself is somehow wrong.

2) The claims of pride

- Uzziah’s pride asserts itself over things for which he could take no credit:
 - Victory in battle (**Proverbs 21:31**)
 - Inventive genius (**Exodus 35:31-32**)
 - Economic growth and success (**Deuteronomy 8:18**)
 - Spiritual fervor (**Ephesians 2:8-10**)

3) The crimes of pride

- But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. (**2Ch 26:16**)

- Uzziah was unfaithful – to the God who had proved to be so faithful to him.
- If God made Uzziah to prosper so long as he sought Him, the moment Uzziah became unfaithful, God’s hand of blessing was removed.
- This is not to say that God’s hand of love – toward David or toward David’s house – was removed.
- God had made an eternal covenant with the house of David, and even though Uzziah might be unfaithful, God is never so.
- But one of the most loving things that God can do for us sometimes is to remove his hand of blessing (**Heb 12:6-8**)
- Although Uzziah’s unfaithfulness to the Lord was a matter of the heart, it manifested in a very specific sin: Uzziah entered the temple of the Lord in order to burn incense on the altar of incense.
- The Altar of Incense was the altar located in the Holy Place.
- Only the priests were allowed to offer incense on the Altar of Incense.
- The incense had to be of a specific formula, only accessible to the priests.
- When the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, attempted to offer “strange” or “common” incense, the Lord struck them dead (**Leviticus 10**).
- In many ways, Uzziah’s sin is similar to that of Saul (**1 Samuel 13**).
- God ordained three positions of authority in ancient Israel: Those of prophet, priest, and king.
- Each of these roles would be eventually fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is our Prophet, our Priest, and our King.
- Both Saul and Uzziah sought to enhance their authority, their prestige, or their military prowess by usurping the God-given roles of those around them.
- This is one of the ways in which pride often rears its head in the church.
- This was a sin for two reasons:
 - 1) Uzziah sought to take upon himself a role that God did not intend for him to have. This is one of the many ways that pride manifests itself in our lives – we seek a position, whether of authority, ministry, or influence that God did not intend for us to have, but we seek it because of the prideful way in which we view ourselves.
 - 2) Uzziah’s worship was not acceptable worship – i.e., his incense was not the right incense and it was not offered in the right way. – This is one of the defining characteristics of pride – it prevents us from being able to worship God with a whole heart

4) The conclusion of pride

- It is worth noting how Azariah the priest chooses to withstand Uzziah.
- The temple was Azariah’s jurisdiction – not Uzziah’s, and this episode is merely the latest in the conflict between the palace and the temple that stretches back to Joash’s time.
- Though confronting him with the force necessary to back up his words, Azariah does not resort to personal recriminations.
- Uzziah’s anger leads to destruction – Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of

the LORD, by the altar of incense. (2Ch 26:19)

- Up until now, the judgment of God had not fallen. But now, Uzziah was about to follow in the generational sin of his father and grandfather.
- Joash, when confronted with the reproving words of Zechariah the priest, his own foster-brother, has him executed.
- Amaziah, when confronted with the rebuke of a prophet, threatens to strike the prophet down.
- In each instance, it is the rejection of the man of God that marks the downfall of the king.
- Now, Uzziah is experiencing his own anger with the Priests of God and repeating their folly.
- Anger and pride are generational sins – they are attitudes, dispositions, and predispositions that can be passed on from one generation to the next.
- Uzziah is struck down with leprosy – with *tzaraat* – at the very moment he becomes angry with Azariah and the priests of God.
- This form of leprosy was an extremely painful, often fatal, and highly-contagious fungus, that would literally eat away at the victim’s skin.
- In Jewish culture, to have leprosy was considered to be one of the “walking dead.” Leprosy made you ceremonially unclean and unfit for worship.
- But contemporary historical accounts give us an additional perspective on what happened that day:
- In the mean time a great earthquake shook the ground and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the king's face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately. (Josephus Flavius, Antiquities IX 10:4)
- This earthquake is the same one referenced in the beginning of the book of **Amos 1:1**
- Uzziah’s pride thus had two results:
 - First, it made him unfit to worship God.
 - Second, it eventually destroyed everything he had built. – Joash destroyed the only family he had ever had. – Amaziah was conquered by the very things he sought to conquer. – Uzziah destroyed the very things that had become his source of pride.

*What attitude do you bring into the House of God?
I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection*

*Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart His
wounds have paid my ransom.*

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/7112142367.pdf>

Steven Cole: The Seduction of Success

The seductive danger of success is pride.

Uzziah's success is described in **26:1-15**; his downfall in **26:16-23**. We'll follow that outline to glean some lessons from each section.

1. Success is a great good if it comes from the Lord and is used for the Lord and His purposes (26:1-15).

A. SUCCESS (IN THE TRUE SENSE) COMES ONLY FROM THE LORD.

Uzziah was a hard-working, visionary king. But **verse 5** makes it clear that the source of his success was not his effort or genius, but the Lord: "*And he continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him.*" Uzziah's success was due to **seeking God and His Word**. The Hebrew word "*seek*" is the same word we have met in earlier studies which meant, literally, "*to trample under foot.*" The idea was that when you frequent a place, you beat a path underfoot. To seek the Lord means going to Him for His wisdom and help so often that you wear a path to God.

We must be careful to seek after true success that comes from seeking God through His Word and through prayer. Then, if God grants a measure of success, realize that ...

B. SUCCESS CAN BE USED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LORD AND OTHERS.

Uzziah's success and strength led to his downfall.

2. Success is a great danger if we don't guard against pride (26:16-23).

Someone has said that the human being is the only animal that you can pat on the back and his head swells up. Uzziah started believing his own press clippings and his pride led to a fall. In one hour he ruined a prosperous lifetime as a successful king. When Uzziah became strong, his heart was lifted up, and that led him to enter the holy place in the temple to offer incense to the Lord. But the Law of Moses restricted that duty to the priests, and Uzziah was not a priest (**Num. 18:1-7**). Only the Messiah Jesus would combine the offices of Priest and King.

Perhaps Uzziah rationalized, "Yes, I know the Law of Moses, but let's not be legalistic! I've done well leading my people politically, but they also need strong religious leadership. Not being able to offer incense weakens my ability to lead and damages my public image. Besides, it's for a spiritual cause, to enhance our worship. And, all the foreign kings do it that way." It wasn't gross immorality or idolatry. The only problem was, God had forbidden it.

A. PRIDE IS AT THE HEART OF ALL SIN.

B. PRIDE IS REVEALED BY AN ANGRY RESPONSE TO GODLY CORRECTION.

C. UNJUDGED PRIDE RESULTS IN GOD'S DISCIPLINE.

<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-8-seduction-success-2-chronicles-26>

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 27:1-9

TITLE: *REIGN OF RIGHTEOUS JOTHAM – A GOOD KING BUT STILL CORRUPT PEOPLE*

BIG IDEA:

DESPITE THE POSITIVE REIGN OF JOTHAM AND DIVINE BLESSING OF BUILDING PROJECTS AND INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS, THE PEOPLE FAIL TO REFORM

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: This wholly **positive** account of Jotham represents a break in the Chronicler's practice seen in the preceding three reigns of dividing his accounts of individual kings into alternating periods of good and bad; he will follow the practice of presenting a single consistent judgment through his account of Hezekiah (**Williamson**, 341).

Geoffrey Kirkland: **Background & Bigger Context** of the Ancient Near Eastern World:

- Jotham reigned in a period when the Assyrians were on the rise -- powerfully, globally, increasingly, fearfully, and violently! And the contemporary prophets were Hosea, Micah, Amos and Isaiah. (this gives us a clue as to the society/culture of life in Judah during Jotham's reign).
- See **Isaiah 1:1; 7:1; Hosea 1:1; Micah 1:1** [all speak of the reign of "*Jotham*" during these prophetic times]
- This speaks of a corrupt, unjust, idolatrous, pagan, deceitful, greedy, arrogant time in Judah & Israel!

Frederick Mabie: The summary evaluation of Jotham is similar to that of Uzziah (cf. **26:4**). As with Uzziah (recall their long coregency; cf. **v. 1**), Jotham "*grew powerful*" (**v. 6**), enjoyed success in battle (**v. 5**), and received tribute from foreign nations (**v. 5**). Unlike Uzziah, however, Jotham did not grow proud and challenge Yahweh's covenantal bounds regarding temple service, but instead "*walked steadfastly*" (or better, "*caused his ways to be ordered*") before the Lord (**v. 6**). Unfortunately, the people under Jotham's rule were not similarly inspired to pursue covenantal faithfulness.

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler's review of Jotham's reign applauds achievements on three fronts: his building program, his military success, and his consolidation of political power (**27:3-6**).

L.M. Grant: Jotham's reign was comparatively short, just 16 years, and he died at 41 years. He did what was right as his father had done, though he did not follow his father's bad example of entering the temple of the Lord. Yet in spite of his reign being better than most of the kings, the people still acted corruptly. This evil included their

sacrificing in high places (**2 Kings 15:35**). Thus, though Jotham was personally faithful to the Lord, he did not have the spiritual energy to banish the false worship from Judah. But his good work of building the upper gate of the temple and on the wall of Ophel, and his building cities in the mountains and fortresses and towers in the forests, is commendable (**vv.3-4**).

Jotham also by warfare brought the Ammonites into subjection, so that they paid him tribute of 100 talents of silver, 10,000 cors; of wheat and 10,000 of barley for three years in succession (**v.5**). The Ammonites picture the doctrine of demons, which, though not destroyed, were allowed no liberty during Jotham's reign. Thus we are told, "*Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God*" (**v.6**). His short reign of 16 years, he died and was buried in Jerusalem. Then his son Ahaz became king.

(:1-2) PROLOGUE – OPENING SUMMARY OF HIS REIGN

A. (:1a) Age and Duration of Reign

“Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.”

Raymond Dillard: Jotham’s sixteen years included a ten-year coregency due to the illness of his father Uzziah (750–740/39 B.C.); however, the sixteen-year figure did not include a three-to-four-year overlap of his reign with that of his own son and successor Ahaz (735–732/31 B.C.), a fact that would allow for the synchronism with Jotham’s twentieth year (**2 Kgs 15:30**).

B. (:1b) Identification of His Mother

“And his mother's name was Jerushah the daughter of Zadok.”

C. (:2) Moral Evaluation

1. Positive Reign in Following the General Pattern of His Father

“And he did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done;”

Knapp: Jotham is the only one of all the Hebrew kings, from Saul down, against whom God has nothing bad to record. In this his character is in beautiful accord with his name, *Jehovah-perfect*.

2. Avoided the Major Sin of His Father

“however he did not enter the temple of the LORD.”

Thomas Constable: However, Jotham appears to have failed to lead his people in righteousness. There was no reformation of abuses or revival during his reign, as far as we know. Evidently the reference to Jotham not entering the temple (**v. 2**) means that he did not inappropriately violate the holy place, like his father had done (**26:16**). Another

view is that he did not want to have anything to do with the temple, since God had judged his father when Uzziah entered it and offered incense inappropriately.

Ron Daniel: I don't believe this is saying that he was afraid to go TO the temple, for in the very next verse, we will see that he built the upper gate of the temple (**2Chron. 27:3**).

No, I believe that the Chronicler is saying that "he did what dad did, but not the bad stuff."

3. Unable to Reform the People

"But the people continued acting corruptly."

Matthew Henry: It certainly reflects a great deal of blame upon the people, that they did not do what they might have done to improve the advantages of so good a reign: they had good instructions given them and a good example set before them, but they would not be reformed; so that even in the reign of their good kings, as well as in that of the bad ones, they were treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath; for they still did corruptly, and the founder melted in vain.

Peter Wallace: The Chronicler's point seems to be that in spite of Jotham's faithfulness the people followed corrupt practices.

I. (:3-4) EXTENSIVE BUILDING PROJECTS

*"He built the upper gate of the house of the LORD,
and he built extensively the wall of Ophel.
4 Moreover, he built cities in the hill country of Judah,
and he built fortresses and towers on the wooded hills."*

Mark Boda: Interestingly, if the "upper gate" referred to here was that gate that linked the royal palace to the Temple courts (cf. **23:20**), Jotham's reconstruction work may signal a desire to protect the Temple courts from royal intrusion.

Jerry Thrower: One of the first things he did had to do with repairing the Temple of the LORD. He served the LORD first! He went to work for the LORD and did something for HIM! He didn't enter the Temple like his father did in pride and try to do what he was never called to do, "he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD", he used his reign to serve the LORD! He showed that by repairing the Temple!

J. Parker: *Ophel* means "the mount." Where was the mount? On the southern slope. Why did the king build so much on Ophel? Because it was most accessible to the enemy. Like a wise commander he remembered that no man is stronger than his weakest point, and that no fortification is stronger than its frailest part; so the king built much where the wall was weakest, or where the access of the enemy was most open; and in doing so he gathered up and represented the wisdom and experience of the ages,

and anticipated what we and all the sons of time ought to do. What is your weakest point in life? Build much there.

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler has already compared Jotham with Uzziah (27:2), and he appears to be deliberately perfecting the parallel. Uzziah rebuilt Corner Gate and Valley Gate (26:9), and Jotham works on the Upper Gate of the temple. Uzziah built towers in the desert and in Jerusalem (26:10), and Jotham builds towers in forested areas.

August Konkel: Jotham's enterprises are a sequel to those of his father. The work of restoration begun by Uzziah was continued in sections that had not been completed. His forts and towers were in the forests, providing a network of lookouts and highway defenses, both on the frontier and within the kingdom.

Ron Daniel: He is building protection for the house of God. That is very interesting to me. You see, it seems that every time the enemy breaks into Jerusalem, they invade the temple and steal the valuable things which are sanctified for the Lord. This is the way our enemy still works. The enemy's primary goal is to invade the house of God and steal that which is sanctified for God: us.

II. (:5) ENDURING SUBJUGATION OF THE AMMONITES

A. Forced the Ammonites to Pay Valuable Tribute

“He fought also with the king of the Ammonites and prevailed over them so that the Ammonites gave him during that year one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat and ten thousand of barley.”

B. Forced the Ammonites to Pay Annual Tribute

“The Ammonites also paid him this amount in the second and in the third year.”

J.A. Thompson: While Uzziah's main success in battle was against the Philistines (26:6-7) and the Ammonites paid him tribute (26:8), Jotham fought only the Ammonites (war against the Ammonites is recorded only here). Apparently they had stopped paying the tribute. This tribute seems to us to be very large. A hundred talents of silver is about 3.4 metric tons, and 10,000 cors of barley probably is about 62,000 bushels. The tribute apparently ceased again after three years, perhaps due to the rising power of Aram-Damascus in the area.

III. (:6) EMPOWERED BY HIS GODLY ORIENTATION

“So Jotham became mighty because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God.”

Andrew Hill: The reference to Jotham's becoming “powerful” is instructive. The same expression was used to characterize Uzziah's earlier reign (Heb. *hzzq*; cf. 26:16). But unlike his father, Jotham does not fall prey to the temptation of pride and turn away

from God. His success is attributed directly to the fact that he “*walked steadfastly before the Lord*” (27:6). This unique expression is generally understood to be synonymous with the phrase “*to set one’s heart on God*” (cf. 1 Chron. 22:19; 28:9; 2 Chron. 30:19).

Mark Boda: Here the Hebrew is literally, “*He made firm his ways before Yahweh his God,*” an expression that refers to doing something without flinching or wavering (see Prov 21:29 for the same phrase).

F.B. Meyer: I do not remember ever meeting one who really walked with God who did not make **orderliness** one of the first principles of life... They are the habits of the soul that walks before God, and which is accustomed to think of Him as seeing in secret, and considering all our ways.

English translations:

NIV - he walked **steadfastly** before the LORD his God
NLT - he was **careful** to live in obedience to the LORD his God
NASB & ESV - he **ordered** his ways before the LORD his God
HCSB - he did **not waver** in obeying the LORD his God
NET - he was **determined** to please the LORD his God
KJV - he **prepared** his ways before the LORD His God

(:7-9) EPILOGUE -- CLOSING SUMMARY OF HIS REIGN

A. (:7) Recorded Deeds

“Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, even all his wars and his acts, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.”

B. (:8) Repetition of Age and Duration of Reign

“He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.”

C. (:9a) Death and Burial

1. Death

“And Jotham slept with his fathers,”

2. Burial

“and they buried him in the city of David;”

J.A. Thompson: The Chronicler omits any reference to difficulties with Rezin and Pekah (2 Kgs 15:37), perhaps because he did not understand it as judgment on Jotham but on Judah generally and especially on Jotham’s successor, Ahaz. The account of Jotham is clearly a truncated one. Details of his death are not given, but he was buried

with his fathers in the City of David, a burial that befitted his life and character (cp. **26:23**).

D. (:9b) Succession

“and Ahaz his son became king in his place.”

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why do godly people sometimes fail to have a reforming influence on those under their authority (whether in the home or in society)?
- 2) Why did he only reign for sixteen years if he was such a godly king?
- 3) How do these building projects reflect the blessing of the Lord in granting him prosperity and security?
- 4) How careful and steadfast are we in our commitment to fully obey the Lord?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: Selman has suggested that this three-generation sequence of a faithful father followed by a wicked son and a faithful grandson is based on the situation described by Ezekiel in his oracle on individual responsibility before God (**Ezek. 18:1-20**). The stories of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah carry an important message for the Chronicler’s audience – each person and every generation is responsible to God for their behavior. The reigns of Jotham and Hezekiah are instrumental in demonstrating that a new generation need not be held hostage to the ungodliness they inherit from their predecessors.

The combined tenure of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah on the throne of Judah extend from about 750 to 686 B.C. This means all three kings rule under the mighty shadow cast by the New-Assyrian empire (ca. 750-650 B.C.). The brutal grip of Assyria on Israel and Judah was first felt during the second western campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III (734-732 B.C.), when Pekah was replaced by Hoshea on the throne of the northern kingdom of Israel as an Assyrian puppet king (cf. **2 Kings 15:29-30**). For all practical purposes Israel was annexed into the Assyrian Empire, and it is at this time that King Ahaz of Judah becomes an Assyrian vassal king (**2 Kings 16:8**).

Not long thereafter, Shalmaneser V (and his successor Sargon II, who completed the campaign) invades Israel in order to punish the rebellion of Hoshea (cf. **2 Kings 17:1-6**). After a three-year siege, the city of Samaria was destroyed, survivors were

deported to Assyria, and the entire northern kingdom was formally annexed into the Assyrian Empire (722 B.C.). Sometime later, during the reign of Hezekiah, the Assyrian overlord Sennacherib launches a western campaign (701 B.C.). The Assyrians subdue the coastal plain of Syria-Palestine from Phoenicia to Philistia and then turn full attention to Judah. They pillage the outlying regions of Judah but are thwarted in their siege of Jerusalem by a disastrous plague attributed to divine intervention as a result of prayers offered by Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah (**2 Kings 18:17 – 19:36**). The Assyrian annals do not report the outcome of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem.

John McNeill: This is the key-note of Jotham's biography: "*He prepared his ways before the Lord his God.*" This may be applied like a key put into the lock of each of these verses of the record of his life.

I. He went right where his father went wrong (2 Chronicles 27:2). Even on the pinnacle of success and popularity, his head was cool, and his heart was clear, and his nerves were steady, for he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.

II. He covered the country with fortifications (2 Chronicles 27:3-4). The man who is spiritual to the core will not be a weakling in the city, and he will not be easily turned aside. This disposes of the idea that to be a praying man and to be a business man do not go together.

III. He prevailed against his enemies (2 Chronicles 27:5). Because, before he fought he prayed.

IV. His wealth increased (2 Chronicles 27:5). Prayer to God brought him his fortune.

V. His humility exalted him (2 Chronicles 27:6). Conclusion: What was Jotham after all but a dim, distant, foreshadowing of Jesus Christ? If ever the text was true of any one, it was true of Him.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 28:1-27

TITLE: REIGN OF WICKED AHAZ – HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

BIG IDEA:

DESPERATION DRIVES THE WICKED TO TRUST IN FALSE SOURCES OF POWER AND DELIVERANCE

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: The dramatic developments affecting Judah that eventuated during Ahaz's sixteen-year reign (**ch. 28**) are for the Chronicler the result of Ahaz's unfaithfulness (**28:1–5, 19**). An attack by the alliance of Syria and Israel brought some devastation to Judah (**28:5–8**), and a weakened Judah was then attacked by Philistines and Edomites; Ahaz sought help from Assyria, which demanded tribute (**28:16–21**). Ahaz's apostasy increased, even to shutting the doors of the temple (**28:22–27**).

August Konkel: The reign of Ahaz was a disaster both politically and in regard to covenant faithfulness. The Chronicler essentially shares the views of the other prophets regarding Ahaz. Isaiah, through the names of children, had exhorted Ahaz to be faithful in the fear of the Lord. His warning was unequivocal: "*If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all*" (**Isa 7:9b**). Isaiah offered the king a sign, but it was refused as if it would be tempting God (**7:12**). Ahaz had already made his own plans when confronted by Isaiah and his son; he would turn to the Assyrians for help against his enemies (**2 Chron 28:16**). But Ahaz could not escape God; the promise of the sign was that God would be with him (Immanuel). God was indeed with him. The Assyrians would flood through his land like the overflow of the Euphrates and then he would know that God was with him (**Isa 8:7-8**). The Chronicler speaks of Ahaz's losses to the Edomites and Philistines (**2 Chron 28:17-18**). The decimation of Judah had begun.

Frederick Mabie: In a rapid departure from his father Jotham (cf. 2Ch 27:6), Ahaz becomes one of the most ungodly kings in the history of Judah's monarchy (note v. 19), thus underscoring how quickly one generation can abandon the values of the previous generation.

J.A. Thompson: King Ahaz (735-715 B.C.) probably is most familiar to Bible students as the faithless king to whom the prophet Isaiah delivered the prophecy of Immanuel in **Isa 7:14**. But the biblical historians, especially the Chronicler, furnish much more information about him. He was king at a critical time in Judah's history, which saw a corrupt Israel fall to a revived Assyrian Empire, thus ending the divided monarchy. Any hopes on the part of the faithful that Judah might learn from this event and return to the Lord were dashed by the reign of Ahaz, who patterned himself after everyone but his righteous predecessors.

Mark Boda: While in the book of Kings, Manasseh represents the lowest point in the history, in the book of Chronicles Ahaz plays this role (**Smelik** 1992:182-183; 1998: 164, 181). Hezekiah will soon appear on the scene and usher in a new ideal period of renewal for Judah, inviting faithful northerners to join him in worship at Jerusalem. But before Hezekiah arrives, it is Ahaz who creates the conditions of nothing short of “exile” as he first desecrates the land with inappropriate worship practices, sees a foreign emperor take control of his kingdom, then closes the Temple (cf. **Dillard** 1987:261; **Mosis** 1973:41-43, 186-188).

(:1-4) PROLOGUE – OPENING SUMMARY OF HIS APOSTATE REIGN – WALKED IN THE WAYS OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

A. (:1a) Age and Duration of Reign

“Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem;”

B. (:1b-4) Moral Evaluation

1. (:1b-2a) General Evaluation

a. (:1b) Did Not Follow the Righteous Example of David

“and he did not do right in the sight of the LORD as David his father had done.”

b. (:2a) Followed the Wicked Example of the Kings of Israel

“But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel;”

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler’s account of Ahaz’s reign is the **most negative** of any king in the book. Unlike with other rulers, Ahaz’s description is negative throughout, beginning with the admission that *“he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord”* and ending with the statement that he was *“provoking to anger the Lord, the God of his fathers”* (**2 Chron. 28:1, 25**); further, Ahaz is buried separately from the *“tombs of the kings of Israel [i.e., Judah]”* (v. 27; cf. **21:20; 24:25**). While other kings had been *“unfaithful”* (**12:2; 26:16, 18; 1 Chron. 10:13**), Ahaz was *“very unfaithful”* and became *“yet more faithless”* (**2 Chron. 28:19, 22**).

2. (:2b-4) Specific Areas of Apostasy = Abominable Idolatry

a. (:2b) Casting Molten Images

“he also made molten images for the Baals.”

b. (:3a) Burning Incense

“Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom,”

Frederick Mabie: A key attraction to Baal-Hadad was his presumed dominion over storms (i.e., rain), while a key attraction point for Asherah was her presumed dominion over fertility – both of which were key areas of concern for ancient societies such as Judah and Israel. But acts of spiritual compromise can have unexpected waves of consequences, as seen in the subsequent events of this chapter. . .

The Valley of Ben Hinnom was located south of the Temple Mount and came to symbolize grave apostasy (**Jer 32:35**). During the reforms of Josiah this area was purged of its ignominious usage (cf. **2Ki 23:4-14**). Ultimately the area became a city dump used for refuse and even the bodies of criminals; it was marked by constant fires and dreadful sights and smells. In the light of this imagery, the Hebrew expression for this valley (approximately “*Gehenna*”) came to be used of hell itself (cf. **Mt 10:28; Mk 9:43, 47**).

c. (:3b) Child Sacrifice

*“and burned his sons in fire,
according to the abominations of the nations
whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel.”*

J.A. Thompson: Even worse than imitating the apostasy of the Northern Kingdom, Ahaz is condemned for behaving as the cursed Canaanites, whose culture was so vile that God had ordered its elimination (**Lev 18:28; 20:23; Deut 7:22-26; 12:2-4; 18:9-14**). Little wonder that Yahweh visited Ahaz with judgment in the form of an Aramean attack.

John Schultz: Evidently, in the worship of Molech, babies and young children were thrown alive in the mouth of the idol in which a fire was burning.

When Israel was on her way to Canaan, God warned them about the atrocious practices of the people of the land. We read: *“Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.”* And: *“You must not worship the Lord your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.”*

d. (:4) Worshiping at Idolatrous Locations

*“And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places,
on the hills, and under every green tree.”*

I. (:5-8) DIVINELY ORDERED DEFEAT BY THE KINGS OF BOTH ARAM AND ISRAEL (WITH SEVERE CONSEQUENCES)

A. (:5a) Defeat by the King of Aram

1. Divine Ordination of Defeat

*“Wherefore, the LORD his God delivered him
into the hand of the king of Aram;”*

2. Historical Fact of Defeat

“and they defeated him”

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler repeatedly shows how the **chaos** was the Lord’s judgment on Ahaz’s “*faithlessness*” (2 Chron. 28:5 [“*therefore*”], 9, 19, 22–23, 25). Ahaz’s rejection of worship of the Lord and his active embracing of other gods (a sign of desperation?) was characteristic of his entire reign.

3. Severe Consequences of Defeat

*and carried away from him a great number of captives,
and brought them to Damascus.”*

Iain Duguid: One group of captives was taken 140 miles (225 km) north to Damascus, the capital of a key Syrian kingdom. Here is the first instance in the Chronicles narrative of people’s being taken captive to a far land, foreshadowed in Solomon’s prayer (6:36–38) and serving as a foretaste of the later greater exile to Babylon, when Judah was again given into the hand of the attackers (36:17–20).

B. (:5b-8) Defeat by the King of Israel

1. (:5b) Divine Ordination of Defeat

“And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel,

2. (:5c-7) Historical Fact of Defeat

“who inflicted him with heavy casualties.”

3. (:6-7) Severe Consequences of Defeat

a. (:6) Defeat at Hand of Pekah

*“For Pekah the son of Remaliah
slew in Judah 120,000 in one day, all valiant men,
because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.”*

b. (:7) Defeat at Hand of Zichri

*“And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim,
slew Maaseiah the king’s son,
and Azrikam the ruler of the house
and Elkanah the second to the king.”*

Andrew Hill: Beyond the sheer totals, the devastating losses to Judah are compounded by the deaths of key officials, namely, “*the king’s son,*” the overseer of the palace, and the leader who is “*second to the king*” (28:7). The expression “*the king’s son*” may be a title for a high-ranking officer, or the person named Maaseiah may be one of the royal princes. The title “*second to the king*” occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament only in **Esther 10:3**, where context suggests it is the office held by the senior political adviser. In any case, the deaths of three members of Ahaz’s “cabinet” would have had a crippling effect in the administration of political and military affairs in Judah.

4. (:8) Captivity and Despoiling of Judah

“And the sons of Israel carried away captive of their brethren 200,000

women, sons, and daughters; and took also a great deal of spoil from them, and they brought the spoil to Samaria.”

II. (:9-15) DIVINELY COMMANDED MERCY SHOWN BY ISRAEL TO THEIR CAPTIVES FROM JUDAH

A. (:9-11) Prophecy of Oded Rebukes Israel for their Overreach

1. (:9a) Confrontation with Returning Army

“But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out to meet the army which came to Samaria and said to them,”

2. (:9b) Culpability Due to Angry Overreach

“Behold, because the LORD, the God of your fathers, was angry with Judah, He has delivered them into your hand, and you have slain them in a rage which has even reached heaven.”

3. (:10) Caution against Further Transgression

a. Impropriety of Making Fellow Jews Your Slaves

“And now you are proposing to subjugate for yourselves the people of Judah and Jerusalem for male and female slaves.”

b. Hypocrisy of Overlooking Your Own Sins

“Surely, do you not have transgressions of your own against the LORD your God?”

J.A. Thompson: Any intention to make the people of Judah slaves was a breach of the law that forbade the enslaving of fellow Israelites (**Lev 25:39-55**). Short-term slavery of one Israelite to another was allowable, but ruling over one’s brothers “ruthlessly” (**Lev 25:43**) was forbidden. Israel itself was only a hairsbreadth from judgment. Repentance toward God and magnanimity toward their brethren was called for. They had taken prisoners. These should be sent back. Repentance required some display of appropriate action.

4. (:11) Charge to Return the Captives and Escape God’s Judgment

“Now therefore, listen to me and return the captives whom you captured from your brothers, for the burning anger of the LORD is against you.”

August Konkel: The response of the Israelites to the appeal of Obed the prophet is further evidence of the unity that God intends for his people. It is testimony to the firm belief of the Chronicler that this is one nation. The political realities that have come about must not give a false impression of that underlying reality. It is seen in the way the words of the prophet can subvert political and material ambitions with spiritual victory and community concord. In the darkest time of a virtual exile for Judah, there is at the same time the evidence of the light the darkness cannot overcome.

Martin Selman: 3 Reasons given by the prophet to return the captives:

- 1) the Israelites had reacted with excessive rage (v. 9),
- 2) their plan to subject the Judean prisoners of war to the usual fate of slavery was unacceptable (v. 10a), and
- 3) they had “committed sins” (v. 10b).

B. (:12-15) Patriarchal Leadership of Ephraim Directs Israel to Repent and Show Mercy to the Captives

1. (:12-13) Confrontation with the Victorious Warriors

“Then some of the heads of the sons of Ephraim-- Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai-- arose against those who were coming from the battle, 13 and said to them, ‘You must not bring the captives in here, for you are proposing to bring upon us guilt against the LORD adding to our sins and our guilt; for our guilt is great so that His burning anger is against Israel.’”

Andrew Hill: Unlike King Ahaz and their Judean counterparts, the leadership of Israel responds to the word of God through the prophet Oded and repents of their actions (**28:12-13**).

2. (:14) Change of Malicious Intent

“So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the officers and all the assembly.”

3. (:15) Compassionate Care toward the Captives

“Then the men who were designated by name arose, took the captives, and they clothed all their naked ones from the spoil; and they gave them clothes and sandals, fed them and gave them drink, anointed them with oil, led all their feeble ones on donkeys, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brothers; then they returned to Samaria.”

Iain Duguid: At a time when Israel was about to end as a nation due to her apostasy, experiencing the Lord’s “*fierce wrath*,” the Chronicler tells of the Ephraimites’ confession of “*great guilt*” and actions that demonstrated some repentance. The positive treatment of the captives is given in much detail; they could not have done more! Political reunion may not have been possible at that chaotic time (“*they returned to Samaria*”), but the compassionate righting of all the damage involved in taking captives is commended.

Martin Selman: The Chronicler’s message, which must have been clear to his contemporaries, is that God’s mercy was freely available even to captives. The story is in fact so striking that Jesus used it twice in his teaching. Anointing of the prisoners’ wounds, the mention of donkeys and of Jericho make this an important source of the parable of the Good Samaritan (**Luke 10:25-37**), while the provision of food and clothing to brothers who are naked and hungry prisoners clearly lied behind **Matthew**

25:34-46. No-one's situation is too hopeless for God to redeem, and he reserves the right to show mercy through the most unexpected people, even one's traditional enemies (cf. **Jon. 1-4; Acts 10:1 – 11:18**).

III. (:16-21) DEPENDING ON THE KING OF ASSYRIA FOR HELP

Andrew Hill: This dangerous diplomacy of playing one ancient superpower (i.e., Assyria) against another (i.e., Egypt) as an ally in petty border wars with neighboring nations was a ploy of the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II – a tactic soundly condemned by Hosea the prophet (**Hos. 7:11**).

A. (:16) Placing Confidence in Foreign Power

“At that time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria for help.”

J.A. Thompson: Ahaz was in dire straits. His predecessors who had been faithful to the Lord had seen God subdue such enemies many times. But Ahaz did not trust in the Lord (cf. **Isa 7:10-16**). With Philistines and Edomites in the south and the Syro-Ephraimite invasion in the north (vv. **5-8**), he faced a two-front war. The verb “*help*” is important to the Chronicler. God was ever available to “help” faithful kings (**1 Chr 5:20; 2 Chr 14:11; 18:31; 25:8; 26:7, 15; 32:8**). Such “help” (*azar*) was not available from other sources (vv. **21, 23**). Ahaz had turned to human – indeed foreign – help instead of to the God of Israel.

B. (:17-18) Pressure from Foreign Attacks

1. (:17) Attacks by the Edomites

“For again the Edomites had come and attacked Judah, and carried away captives.”

Frederick Mabie: In addition to the pressure on Judah from Aram and Israel to the north (vv. **5-8**), Ahaz also faces pressure in the south as the Edomites launch offensives into Judah (v. **17**). In addition, the Philistines seize several key Judean cities in the Shephelah, including Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Soco, and Timnah (v. **18**). Note that most of these cities were located on the major passes (roads) leading into the central hill country.

2. (:18) Attacks by the Philistines

“The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the Negev of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, and Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages, and they settled there.”

Raymond Dillard: The inciting incident in Ahaz's seeking the help of Tiglath-pileser III was the attack of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition according to **2 Kgs 16:7**; here instead it is attacks from the Edomites and Philistines. These two nations were natural allies against Judah and could have been seeking to forge overland trading routes free of

Judean influence linking the strategic gulf trade through Elath with the coastal highway to the west; Uzziah had extended Judean control into the region (26:7–8). Pressure from the North (28:5) would have encouraged opportunism on Judah’s southern and western flanks. The attacks from Edom may have been incited by the Arameans to further the interests of the coalition against Judah or the Aram of 2 Kgs 16:6 may have derived from misreading Edom. The cities captured by the Philistines (with the exception of Gimzo) were all along the Ayyalon, Sorek, and Elah valleys in the buffer zone of the Shephelah between the two nations or in the Negev (Arad).

C. (:19) Process of Divine Discipline

1. Reality of Discipline

“For the LORD humbled Judah”

2. Reasons for Discipline

“because of Ahaz king of Israel,”

a. Unrestrained -- Lack of Restraint in Conduct

“for he had brought about a lack of restraint in Judah”

b. Unfaithful -- Lack of Loyalty to the Lord

“and was very unfaithful to the LORD.”

D. (:20-21) Payoff Attempted by Ahaz

1. (:20) Assyria Hurting Instead of Helping

“So Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him.”

2. (:21) Ahaz Unsuccessfully Attempting to Buy Assistance

“Although Ahaz took a portion out of the house of the LORD and out of the palace of the king and of the princes, and gave it to the king of Assyria, it did not help him.”

IV. (:22-25) DEGENERATING INTO COMPOUNDED APOSTASY

A. (:22-23) Promoting False Worship

1. (:22) Wrong Response to Pressure

“Now in the time of his distress this same King Ahaz became yet more unfaithful to the LORD.”

Instead of repenting, he doubled down on his unfaithfulness.

Frederick Mabie: This is one of the saddest verses in all of Chronicles. As noted above (vv. 9, 19), the judgment of God via the incursions of the surrounding nations is a direct result of the unfaithfulness of Ahaz (and Judah) to obey and trust the Lord fully. While such covenantal consequences are intended to drive God’s people back to him in repentance, Ahaz instead becomes *“even more unfaithful”* and pursues greater levels of

wickedness by raiding the temple and palace treasuries, worshiping additional deities associated with the Arameans, and looting the temple for the furnishings of his many high places (cf. vv. 21-25). By so doing Ahaz spurns the forgiving nature of the God, who abounds in mercy and forgiveness when his people seek him in humility and contrition.

2. (:23a) Worship of False Gods

“For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, and said, ‘Because the gods of the kings of Aram helped them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me.’”

3. (:23b) Wreaking Havoc on Ahaz and Israel

“But they became the downfall of him and all Israel.”

J.A. Thompson: A list of his **apostasies** is given. He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus whom he regarded as his conquerors, obviously blind to the truth that it was the Lord who was responsible for his defeat. It was a case of extreme apostasy, for it involved repudiation of the religious regulations the Lord gave Israel through Moses and David, although Ahaz probably worshiped the Lord along with the gods of Aram. Certainly Ahaz seems to have turned in all directions for help – the Assyrians, the gods of the kings of Aram – everywhere except to the Lord, the God of Israel, the source of the “help” he needed. These others served only to ruin Ahaz and all Israel.

B. (:24-25a) Perverting True Worship

1. (:24a) Cutting up the Temple Utensils

“Moreover, when Ahaz gathered together the utensils of the house of God, he cut the utensils of the house of God in pieces;”

2. (:24b) Closing the Doors of the Temple

“and he closed the doors of the house of the LORD, and made altars for himself in every corner of Jerusalem.”

3. (:25a) Creating High Places for Idolatrous Worship

“And in every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods,”

C. (:25b) Provoking the Lord to Anger

“and provoked the LORD, the God of his fathers, to anger.”

Iain Duguid: Ahaz’s attitude to the worship of the Lord became even more antagonistic. He not only wantonly destroyed some of the temple items but also ended temple worship (cf. **2 Chron. 29:7**). Instead of worshiping the Lord according to the Mosaic law in one temple, Ahaz multiplied worship of “*other gods*,” the extent highlighted by repetition of “*every*” for both “*corner of Jerusalem*” and “*city of Judah*” (cf. **Jer. 2:28**). Here is the first instance in Chronicles of the Lord’s being “*provoked to anger*” (Hb. form of *ka’as*), to be used later of Manasseh (**2 Chron. 33:6**) and the people (**34:25**),

another example of a foretaste of the Babylonian exile due to persistent failure to be faithful in worshiping the Lord alone.

(:26-27) -- EPILOGUE – CLOSING SUMMARY OF HIS REIGN

A. (:26) Record of His Deeds

“Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.”

B. (:27a) Death and Burial

1. Death

“So Ahaz slept with his fathers,”

2. Burial

“and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem, for they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel;”

Raymond Dillard: He is the third king about whom the author reports the loss of this honor at death (Jehoram, **21:20**; Joash, **24:25**; Uzziah, **26:23**; cf. **33:20**).

C. (:27b) Succession

“and Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.”

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) To whom do you turn for help in times of crisis?
- 2) How do you respond to divine discipline when God is in the process of humbling you?
- 3) What are some false sources of power and deliverance that people turn to today instead of seeking help from the Lord?
- 4) How does apostasy escalate and end up causing such collateral damage?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Eugene Merrill: Historical Background

Since the early 9th century, Assyria had becoming increasingly powerful and more and more inclined to look to the west for its riches and its ready access to the Mediterranean Sea. Assyria’s first significant contact with western principalities, including Israel under

Ahab, was in 853 BC and by King Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC — the Battle of Qarqar). No territories were acquired but large bribes and booty were extracted. A series of weaker monarchs followed, with only occasional references to their engagement with the west, particularly with Israel and Judah. Then came the next great figure in Neo-Assyrian history, namely, Tiglath Pileser III (745-727 BC).

His tenure is elaborately documented by numerous texts that are of particular relevance to the Bible. The first reference to him is by the secondary name Pulu of the Dynasty of Shashi. It is of interest to note that he is known by name (Hebrew: “*Pul*”) in both **2 Kings 15:19** and **1 Chronicles 5:26**, and he is also called Tiglath Pilneser (**2 Chron 28:20**). The issue here is primarily neither historical nor textual confusion but the inherent problem in linguistics of transliteration (accounting for the different spellings and variants of the name of this Assyrian King).

Tiglath Pileser’s first recorded foray against the west is attested to on a building inscription from early in his reign in which he speaks of receiving tribute from Jehoahaz of Judah. Years later, Tiglath Pileser recounts that he rendered Rezon of Damascus and Menahem of Samaria tributary states in addition to Hiram of Tyre. A date critical for both Damascus and Samaria is 732 BC, the year that Tiglath-Pileser defeated both capitals, slew Rezon, and placed on King Menahem of Israel a heavy tribute. A short time later, the Assyrian returned and established the man Hoshea (732-722 BC) as king of Israel in place of Pekah (752-732) who had been assassinated by his own inner circles.

While Assyria was exercising its might, intrigue amongst the smaller states of the littoral was in full bloom. This is hinted at by the Chronicler who explains why Tiglath-Pileser was involved in the affairs of the west to begin with. Though the Assyrian’s own texts say nothing about his motives in westward expansion, the Chronicler indicates that King Ahaz had pleaded with him to come to deliver him from the vicious attacks of the Edomites and the Philistines (**2 Chron 28:16-18**). However, the Chronicler is completely silent about the Aram-Israel alliance that may be the primary reason for Ahaz’s frantic appeals for help in the first place.

Another amazing witness to these same times is the prophet Isaiah who devotes considerable attention to the matter (**Isaiah 7:1-9**). Isaiah’s public ministry commenced in the year that King Uzziah died (**Isa 6:1**; about 740 BC). Five years later, then, he spoke to his own historical situation. He summoned King Ahaz to a vantage point where he could look to the north, toward the enemy nations, and predicted that the plot against Ahaz and Judah could NOT stand if only Ahaz would trust in Yahweh.

This leads to the far more transcendent promise that even if Ahaz could NOT believe, Yahweh would give him a sign about a hitherto barren young woman who would conceive, bear a son, and call his name Immanuel (**Isa 7:14**). Christian theology identifies this son as Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary (**Matt 1:23**).

To return to the **2 Chronicles 28** text, the narrator, having spoken of the loss of Eloth

(the southernmost city of Israel on the northern tip of the Red Sea) to the Edomites, lists the places in the foothills and Negev (desert) seized by the Philistines: Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco, Timnah, and Gizmo. These were all border posts guarding the Judean hill country and the capital from Philistine forces so their loss to the Philistines would in fact be disastrous.

Raymond Dillard: H. Williamson (343–49; IBC, 114–18) has shown how the Chronicler has reworked his account of Ahaz from that found in **2 Kgs 16** in order to effect an almost complete reversal of the relationship of North and South as found in **2 Chr 13**.

(a) Like Jeroboam at the time of the schism, Ahaz too makes molten images for worship (28:2). He also worships the gods of Damascus (28:10–16, 23), reflecting the charge of Abijah that Israel was worshipping the golden calves and “*them that are no gods*” (13:8–9).

(b) Ahaz shut the doors of the temple (28:24), put out the lamps and stopped the offerings of incense and sacrifices (29:7), and neglected the shewbread (29:18). These additions to the Chronicler’s account amount to the negation of Abijah’s boast of orthodoxy before Jeroboam (13:11). These changes show that apostasy in the South had reached the same depths as that in the North at the time of the schism.

(c) At the time of the schism, the righteous left the North to join Judah (11:13–17), but during the reign of Ahaz, righteousness was found in the North (28:9–15). Whereas at the time of the schism, Judah was obedient to the word of a prophet regarding attacking the sister kingdom (11:1–4), here it is Israel that heeds the admonition of a prophet (28:9).

(d) The military fortunes of the two kingdoms are also reversed. Contrast the fortunes of Jeroboam (“*God delivered them into their hand, and Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter,*” 13:16–17) with those of Ahaz (“*he was delivered into the hand of the king of Israel who smote him with a great slaughter,*” 28:5). At the time of Abijah it was Israel that was subjugated (13:18), whereas at the time of Ahaz, it was Judah (28:19). Ahaz is the only king of Judah for whom the Chronicler does not mention at least some redeeming feature; Ahaz is the antithesis of Abijah and the shadow of Jeroboam.

August Konkel: The example of Ahaz may be uncomfortably close to the practice of faith by affluent Christians. There is a tendency to trust ourselves, our resources, and to be most concerned about whatever is immediate. Modern and postmodern Christians manifest deistic tendencies. It is hard to conceive of God as active and present in maintaining life in his world. Everything can be understood as cause and effect; it can all be brought under human control. It is not a disbelief in God, but rather a belief that does not affirm the presence of God in our daily affairs. There is a tendency to cultural conformity without consideration of the ways in which this may be a sin against God. The greatest dangers are perceived to be tangible ones, observed forces that may threaten our well-being. There is no sense that the greatest danger may be less tangible,

an implicit faith in ourselves for the needs of life rather than a genuine knowledge that life is a divine gift.

Exclusive trust in God is very difficult in times of power and affluence. God has given the means of life to use and trust, but they must all be recognized for what they are: gifts from God. In a modern or postmodern society, there is a tendency to feel entitled, to believe that government and investments bring security. These are the sorts of compromises of which Ahaz was guilty. It is always a good practice to give thanks for every meal. Life and everything that sustains it must continually be acknowledged as divine gifts. Failure to make this confession readily leads to the unfaithfulness of which Ahaz was guilty.

Martin Selman: The Chronicler's history reaches another low point with the reign of Ahaz.

- To start with, Ahaz *did not do what was right* before God (v. 1), in contrast to his immediate predecessor Jotham (27:2).
- Secondly, the totally negative assessment of Ahaz puts him on a par with the rulers of Ahab's house (2 Chr. 21-23) and with the kings whose reigns led directly to the exile (2 Chr. 36; cf. also 2 Chr. 33:21-25).
- Thirdly, Chronicles has made Kings' descriptions of Ahaz' failings much more explicit. Additional interpretative comments explain that Judah was being punished because he had *forsaken* God (v. 6) and because Ahaz had been *most unfaithful* (v. 19), in sharp contrast with the merciful attitudes shown by the inhabitants of Israel (vv. 12-15). . .

Ahaz's real failure, however, was to seek human rather than divine help. One of the Chronicler's principles is that "*God has the power to help or to overthrow*" (2 Ch. 25:8; cf. 32:8), and that he helps those who put their trust in him (cf. 1 Ch. 5:20; 14; 10; 18:31). Ahaz' turning to Assyria was therefore a sign of his unbelief (cf. Is. 7:9-12). Ahaz also "*behaved without restraint*" (v. 19, NRSV) and was *most unfaithful*. The former expression really means to favor license rather than true liberty, while the latter is a typical term in Chronicles for failing to give God his due. Therefore God *humbled* Judah as had Israel under Jeroboam (2 Ch. 13:18), but with even more disastrous results.

Steven Cole: Forsaking Sin or God --

Thesis: Either we forsake God to go after sin or we forsake sin to go after God.

King Ahaz forsook the Lord for sin. He did so in spite of many advantages. His grandfather was King Uzziah who, although he later became proud and was struck with leprosy, was yet a mighty king who sought the Lord. Ahaz's father was King Jotham, a godly man who further strengthened the kingdom (see 2 Chronicles 27:6). Furthermore Ahaz was a descendant of King David, and thus he came under the blessings of the covenant God had enacted between David and his progeny. And if that were not enough, Ahaz lived during the ministry of the prophet Isaiah, who encouraged Ahaz to trust in the Lord. But he forsook the Lord.

Forsaking God to go after sin.

1. FORSAKING GOD TO GO AFTER SIN BEGINS BY ADDING WORLDLY IDEAS TO GOD'S WORD (28:2-4).

Ahaz didn't begin his reign by closing the doors of the Temple and replacing the worship of God with the worship of idols. Eventually it came to that (28:24). But he didn't start there. He started by adding idol worship to the worship of the Lord. . .

Forsaking the Lord often begins by replacing a few things in the Bible that you don't like with a few worldly ideas that you prefer. Let's face it: There are some hard truths in the Bible that confront our culture and our sinful, selfish preferences.

2. FORSAKING GOD TO GO AFTER SIN MEANS DOING WHAT I THINK WILL BE GOOD FOR ME, EVEN IF IT'S HARMFUL TO OTHERS (28:3).

Ahaz burned some of his sons in the fire as an offering to the god Molech. In some cases this involved slaughtering the child and offering him up as a burnt sacrifice; at other times it meant passing the child through the fire without killing him. At the heart of that sort of abomination was self, because the parent was seeking to placate the gods so that it would go well with him. Never mind that it wasn't going too well with the child! The main thing is my well being, even if it means my child's pain or death. But it was detestable in God's sight (Jer. 32:35). . .

Did you know that 95-97 percent of the abortions in our land are performed strictly for convenience? It would inconvenience the lifestyle of the mother or couple to take on the responsibility of caring for a child, so instead they slaughter that little life that is no different than you or I, except that it's younger than we are.

3. FORSAKING GOD TO GO AFTER SIN MEANS TURNING TO THE WORLD FOR HELP (28:16, 22-23).

A. THE WORLD ALWAYS EXACTS A HIGH PRICE FOR ITS HELP (28:21).

B. THE WORLD NEVER DELIVERS WHAT IT PROMISES (28:20, 21, 23).

C. THE WORLD COMES IN AS A FRIEND BUT TAKES OVER AS MASTER.

4. FORSAKING GOD TO GO AFTER SIN MEANS INCURRING HIS DISCIPLINE (28:5, 19).

Thankfully, there is an alternative to forsaking God to go after sin. Ahaz never did it, but some others in this chapter did:

Forsaking Sin To Go After God:

1. REPENTANCE MEANS LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD (28:9-11).
2. REPENTANCE MEANS ACKNOWLEDGING OUR OWN SIN, NOT COMPARING OURSELVES WITH OTHERS (28:10).
3. REPENTANCE MEANS TURNING FROM SIN AND DOING WHAT IS RIGHT IN THE LORD'S SIGHT (28:14-15).
<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-9-forsaking-sin-or-god-2-chronicles-28>

Geoffrey Kirkland: A Drama of Depraved Disasters — Politically, Nationally & Religiously!

We can observe the absolute tragedy of Ahaz's reign under 4 words...

1. Corruption (1-4) -- Key word = Depravity
2. Conquest (5-15) -- Key word = Discipline
3. Compromise (16-21) -- Key word = Disfunction
4. Condemnation (22-27) -- Key word = Downfall

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 29:1-36

TITLE: REIGN OF RIGHTEOUS HEZEKIAH – THE RESTORATION OF WORSHIP

BIG IDEA:

**SPIRITUAL REVIVAL REQUIRES CONVICTED REPENTANCE,
CLEANSING OF GOD’S TEMPLE AND COMMITMENT TO JOYFULLY
WORSHIP WHOLEHEARTEDLY**

INTRODUCTION:

J.A. Thompson: The Chronicler had a deep interest in Hezekiah. He devoted more space to his account of Hezekiah’s reign than he did to any king of Judah other than David and Solomon (**chaps. 29-32**). But his interest is different from that of **2 Kings 18-20**. The Book of Kings devotes only a single verse to Hezekiah’s religious reform, concentrating rather on political and military affairs. Here the account of the reform occupies three chapters (**29-31**) that deal with the rehabilitation of the temple (**chap. 29**), the celebration of the Passover by “*all Israel*” (**chap. 30**), and the renewal of regular worship (**chap. 31**). The remaining chapter on Hezekiah’s reign refers to the deliverance of Hezekiah from Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and Hezekiah’s sickness, pride, success, and death. Hezekiah is presented as the king most like David and Solomon (**29:2, 11-14; 30:18-20, 26**). The Chronicler had great hopes of a united Israel once again under a Davidic king and united around the temple of the Lord, other unauthorized places of worship being abandoned.

Iain Duguid: Hezekiah acted early in his reign to restore the temple and its worship. In a context of major external change, his priority was the worship of God. . . The process involved four steps:

- (1) after opening the doors (cf. **28:24**), Hezekiah charged the priests and Levites to “*consecrate [ritually cleanse] yourselves, and consecrate the house of the Lord*” (**29:3-11**);
- (2) in willing obedience they completed the twofold consecration (**vv. 12-19**);
- (3) Hezekiah and city officials brought animals that were sacrificed, “*making atonement for all Israel*” (**vv. 20-24**), accompanied by the restored Levitical music as burnt offerings were made (**vv. 25-30**); and finally,
- (4) with the consecration of the Levites completed, “*the assembly*” participated in the offerings (**vv. 31-35a**).

In this way “*the service of the house of the Lord was restored,*” and all “*rejoiced*” (**vv. 35b-36**). All steps were necessary: personnel, building, and cleansed utensils were the prelude to the worship’s functioning as intended. The dramatic restoration happened “*suddenly,*” due to God’s grace (**v. 36**).

John Schultz: It is a most amazing fact that Hezekiah, who grew up in the polluted atmosphere of Ahaz’ palace, developed such an intimate fellowship with God.

Raymond Dillard: Hezekiah's reinstatement of legitimate temple worship early during his reign is described in four steps:

- (1) the instruction and ritual purification of the priests and Levites (29:3–15);
- (2) the purification of the temple and its precincts (29:16–19);
- (3) the rededication of the temple (29:20–30);
- (4) the participation of the populace (29:31–36).

August Konkel: Outline:

Summary of Hezekiah's Reign	29:1-2
Exhortation to Restoration	29:3-11
Restoration of the Sanctuary	29:12-19
Rededication of the Temple	29:20-30
Sacrifices of Praise	29:31-36

(:1-2) PROLOGUE – OPENING SUMMARY OF HIS REIGN

A. (:1a) Age and Duration of Reign

“Hezekiah became king when he was twenty-five years old; and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem.”

Pulpit Commentary: [Regarding Hezekiah's age at time of his ascension] --

We have been told (2Ch. 28:1) that Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years. So that, if these numbers be correct, and the numbers of our verse correct, Hezekiah must have been born when his father was only *eleven* years old. Of which all that can be said is . . . that such a thing was not impossible and not unknown. It is far more probably, however, that one of the determining figures is wrong, but we have nothing to guide us to say which.

B. (:1b) Identification of His Mother

“And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.”

C. (:2) Moral Evaluation

“And he did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.”

I. (:3-11) CALL TO CONSECRATION

Andrew Hill: Hezekiah's invitation to purify the temple (29:3-11) is dominated by a royal speech (29:5-11) directed to the priests and Levites (29:4). Like King Solomon (cf. 2:1), the proper worship of Yahweh is an immediate priority for Hezekiah as he initiates the cleansing of the temple in his first month of rule and celebrates the religious festivals in his second (cf. 30:2). The act of reopening the temple doors shut up by King Ahaz (28:24) and repairing them is a symbolic gesture indicating the temple is once again serviceable for worship (29:3). Hezekiah assembles the priests and

Levites outside the still defiled sanctuary in a square to the east of the temple precinct (29:4) – perhaps the square adjacent the Water Gate (cf. Neh. 8:1).

The king’s speech to the priests and Levites contains two injunctions: a call to the religious leadership to “consecrate” themselves and an instruction to them to “remove all defilement from the sanctuary” (29:5). The term “consecrate” (*qds*) means to make holy by setting apart someone or something exclusively for the service of God (cf. Ex. 28:41; 29:1; 30:30). The word “defilement” (*niddah*) is used generally of ritual impurity, although here the writer probably has the pollution of idol worship in mind.

August Konkel: The speech of Hezekiah uses the vocabulary of exile to describe the failure of the nation. The people have abandoned the Lord as in the days of the separation under Rehoboam (2 Chron 12:1; cf. 13:10). The wrath of God had come upon Judah and Jerusalem, putting them in the same situation as the people in the north. It is the desire of Hezekiah to reverse this situation, but he is dependent on the religious leaders to make it possible. Renewal of the covenant requires the revitalization of the temple as the central symbol of the divine rule. Only the Levites can care for the temple, and only the priests can enter it to burn incense.

A. (:3-4) Priority of Worship

1. (:3) Access to Worship at the Temple

“In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them.”

2. (:4) Assembling the Worship Leaders

“And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them into the square on the east.”

Iain Duguid: Door opening and repairing was a powerful expression of Hezekiah’s leadership in desiring to serve the Lord, but as king he could not enter. The work now had to be done by “the priests and Levites,” directed by the king.

B. (:5-11) Preparation for Worship

Iain Duguid: The rationale includes three points (vv. 6–10), each introduced by a marker:

- (1) “For our fathers have been unfaithful” (*ma’al*; cf. 28:19, 22), leading to God’s “wrath” (29:6–8; as it had for the north, 28:13);
- (2) “For behold,” the results are before “your own eyes” in the deaths and captives (29:8, 9); and
- (3) “Now” Hezekiah himself pledges loyalty to the Lord so that “his fierce anger may turn away” (v. 10).

Frederick Mabie: Hezekiah’s speech also functions as a rallying call to faithfulness in the light of the disastrous (albeit covenantal) consequences of unfaithfulness. (Recall that speeches are a key facet of the Chronicler’s means of expressing theological points

of emphasis [cf. **13:4-12**].) Hezekiah's focused commitment to restore Judah to faithfulness and nullify God's righteous anger against his people rises to the level of a covenant (v. **10**). Later, Hezekiah will convene an assembly of Judean officials (cf. **vv. 20-31**) and finally the whole community (cf. **30:1-27**) for worship and dedication at the Jerusalem temple.

1. (:5) Consecration of People and Place

"Then he said to them, 'Listen to me, O Levites."

a. Consecrate Yourselves

"Consecrate yourselves now,"

b. Consecrate the House of God

*"and consecrate the house of the LORD,
the God of your fathers,"*

c. Clean Out the Holy Place

"and carry the uncleanness out from the holy place. "

2. (:6-7) Confession of National Culpability = Convicted Repentance

"For our fathers have been unfaithful and have done evil in the sight of the LORD our God, and have forsaken Him and turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and have turned their backs. 7 They have also shut the doors of the porch and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel."

David Guzik: Poole suggests that the idea of **turning the back to God** could also be understood literally, because according to **2 Kings 16**, in the days of Ahaz the altar was moved and its replacement was directed to the east, in the manner of pagan altars instead of toward the west as God commanded. The idea was therefore that under this dangerous innovation, one had to literally turn his back to the temple and the ark of God to stand before the altar.

Andrew Hill: The rest of the royal address rehearses the neglect of the temple by Hezekiah's predecessors (**29:6-8**). The depth of Judah's apostasy under Ahaz is underscored in the fivefold emphasis on their wicked deeds:

- faithlessness,
- doing evil,
- forsaking God,
- turning their faces away from the temple, and
- turning their backs on Yahweh (**29:6**).

It is for this reason that Yahweh's wrath fell on Judah, resulting in costly losses in battle and the exile of many citizens of Judah (**29:9**; cf. **28:5-8**).

J.A. Thompson: Hezekiah did not excuse himself or his generation when he described the sins of their fathers. Rather, he asserted that the nation must acknowledge its corporate guilt and take steps to rectify what had been done. Admitting that one's nation and cultural heritage have turned away from God is not easy, but true repentance must place the glory of God above national and family pride.

3. (:8-9) Captivity Justified

“Therefore the wrath of the LORD was against Judah and Jerusalem, and He has made them an object of terror, of horror, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes. 9 "For behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.”

4. (:10) Covenant Required

“Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that His burning anger may turn away from us.”

5. (:11) Calling to Temple Service = a Privilege

“My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to minister to Him, and to be His ministers and burn incense.”

II. (:12-19) COMPLETION OF CONSECRATION

A. (:12-14) List of Worship Leaders

“Then the Levites arose.”

Andrew Hill: The name list serves both to memorialize the contributions of key leaders in Israelite history and to remind the present audience that God's work is accomplished through the cooperative efforts of faithful individuals.

David Guzik: These were men who *had* been complicit in the neglect and disgrace of the temple. Yet the Chronicler rightly noted these men by name, because when they were exhorted by King Hezekiah to do what was right in cleansing and restoring the temple, *they did it*.

1. (:12a) Sons of Kohathites

“Mahath, the son of Amasai and Joel the son of Azariah, from the sons of the Kohathites;”

2. (:12b) Sons of Merari

“and from the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi and Azariah the son of Jehallelel;”

3. (:12c) Sons of Gershonites

*“and from the Gershonites,
Joah the son of Zimmah and Eden the son of Joah;”*

4. (:13a) Sons of Elizaphan

“and from the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel;”

5. (:13b) Sons of Asaph

“and from the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah;”

6. (:14a) Sons of Heman

“and from the sons of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei;”

7. (:14b) Sons of Jeduthun

“and from the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.”

Raymond Dillard: The list of fourteen Levites is composed of (1) two representatives from each of the three Levitical families—Kohath, Merari, and Gershon; (2) two representatives from the great Kohathite family of Elizaphan; and (3) two representatives from each division of the singer—Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. When compared with the list in **1 Chr 15:5–10**, the Levitical singers have replaced Hebron and Uzziel, perhaps reflecting a growing influence on the part of the musical families (**Petersen**, Prophecy, 81). The family of Elizaphan had achieved sufficient importance as to be virtually a fourth Levitical clan, though in fact a subclan of Kohath (**Num 3:30; 1 Chr 15:8**).

Iain Duguid: The naming of seven groups may signify **wholeness**, all groups responding to Hezekiah’s charge, *“Do not now be negligent”* (**2 Chron. 29:11**; cf. *“seven”* four times in v. 21).

B. (:15) Performance of Consecration

1. Consecration of People

“And they assembled their brothers, consecrated themselves,”

2. Consecration of Place

“and went in to cleanse the house of the LORD,”

3. Commandment of God Communicated by the King

*“according to the commandment of the king
by the words of the LORD.”*

C. (:16-17) Purification of the Temple = Cleansing of God’s Temple

Raymond Dillard: The purification of the temple required two weeks, one week in the outer courts and another in the building itself. The term interior () may broadly refer to the interior of the temple (cf. 29:18) or more narrowly to the Most Holy Place (cf. 4:22;

1 Chr 28:11; 1 Kgs 6:27, 7:12, 50). It is not altogether clear in this case which is intended. The Levites were responsible for the inventory of the temple implements being taken in or out of the building (1 Chr 9:28), implying that they did not ordinarily enter the interior of the sanctuary; on the other hand, the Chronicler may be seeking to illustrate careful observance of the laws restricting access to the Most Holy Place to priests (5:4–11).

John Schultz: This is one of the most impressive descriptions of a **national spiritual revival** in the Old Testament. It was, first of all, brought about by the king's personal initiative, which worked inspirational upon the priests and Levites who were to do the actual work. Ultimately, it affected the relationship with God of the whole nation.

Before anything positive could be done, the **old system had to be destroyed**. Ahaz had defiled the temple by his idol worship. The **temple must be purified** before it could be restored to its proper service.

1. (:16) Purification Process

“So the priests went in to the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse it, and every unclean thing which they found in the temple of the LORD they brought out to the court of the house of the LORD. Then the Levites received it to carry out to the Kidron valley.”

2. (:17) Purification Timeline

“Now they began the consecration on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they entered the porch of the LORD. Then they consecrated the house of the LORD in eight days, and finished on the sixteenth day of the first month.”

Frederick Mabie: The process of the cleansing of the temple and its altar and related items (cf. vv. 18–19) takes two sets of eight days. Cleansing begins from the outside and progressively works toward areas of increasing holiness. The time required for the purification of the temple complex and the purification of sufficient priests necessitates a delay in the subsequent Passover celebration organized by Hezekiah (cf. 30:2–3, 15).

D. (:18–19) Preparation Work Completed

“Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said, ‘We have cleansed the whole house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering with all of its utensils, and the table of showbread with all of its utensils. 19 Moreover, all the utensils which King Ahaz had discarded during his reign in his unfaithfulness, we have prepared and consecrated; and behold, they are before the altar of the LORD.’”

Iain Duguid: Finally (vv. 18–19) the Levites spoke of **completion** as they reported to the king. *“We have cleansed all the house of the Lord. . . . All the utensils . . . we have made ready and consecrated.”* The scene is set for the “*altar of the Lord*” to be used again for offerings.

III. (:20-30) CEREMONY OF TEMPLE SACRIFICES REINSTITUTED

Andrew Hill: The ceremony for the consecration of the temple is a multifaceted event.

- (1) The initial phase addresses the issues of sin and purification in the community (**29:20-24**).
- (2) The next phase features burnt offerings signifying the dedication of the religious and civic leaders and the sanctuary to the service of God (**29:25-30**). The burnt-offering ritual is accompanied by instrumental and choral music from the Levitical musicians and concludes with prostration in reverent worship (**29:29-30**). There is some question as to whether the sin offering and burnt offering are sequential or simultaneous events.
- (3) The final stage includes participation by the assembly of people from Jerusalem and Judah (representing “*all Israel*”) through additional burnt offerings and thank offerings (**29:31-36**).

A. (:20-24) Applying the Blood of Sacrifice to Purify the Altar

“Then King Hezekiah arose early and assembled the princes of the city and went up to the house of the LORD. 21 And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, the sanctuary, and Judah. And he ordered the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the LORD. 22 So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests took the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. They also slaughtered the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar; they slaughtered the lambs also and sprinkled the blood on the altar. 23 Then they brought the male goats of the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them. 24 And the priests slaughtered them and purged the altar with their blood to atone for all Israel, for the king ordered the burnt offering and the sin offering for all Israel.”

Frederick Mabie: All together, these elements of the Israelite sacrificial system portray the forgiveness of sin, reconciliation, and atonement made available by God. Note that the sacrificial offerings are accompanied by (and followed by) singing and music (cf. **vv. 25-30**). The final movement of Hezekiah’s temple rededication ceremony (cf. **vv. 31-35**) includes additional burnt offerings (**vv. 31-32, 35**), thank offerings (**v. 31**), peace/fellowship offerings (**v. 35**), and drink offerings (**v. 35**).

August Konkel: The animals divide into two groups: the bulls, rams, and sheep are for the **burnt offering**, and the male goats are for the **purification offering**. It is a linguistic error to call the latter a “*sin offering*” (**Milgrom** 1983: 67-68). Rather, this is a *purification offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah* (**v. 21 NIV mg.**; also in **vv. 23-24**). The purification appears to include temple artifacts, such as the utensils laid before the altar (cf. **vv. 18-19**). The king is distinguished from the people in the purification offering, a distinction followed consistently by the Chronicler. The king represents the royal house, and the *assembly* represents the people of Judah (**v. 23**). The temple personnel are a third group purified by the offerings. Later the Chronicler will specify that the purification offering is *for all Israel* (**v. 24**). *All Israel* cannot be

the equivalent of Judah (Williamson 1977a: 126-27). The emphatic repetition of the king's command indicates that a wider group of people must be included than that originally envisioned by the priests (v. 21). The Chronicler is emphasizing the inclusion of the total population, without regard for the former divisions.

Keil: “*All Israel*” [v. 24] are probably not only all the inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah, but Israelites in general (the twelve tribes), for whom the temple in Jerusalem was the only lawful sanctuary.

B. (:25-30) Accompanying the Burnt Offering with Musical Celebration = Commitment to Joyfully Worship Wholeheartedly

“He then stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with harps, and with lyres, according to the command of David and of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for the command was from the LORD through His prophets. 26 And the Levites stood with the musical instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. 27 Then Hezekiah gave the order to offer the burnt offering on the altar. When the burnt offering began, the song to the LORD also began with the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of David, king of Israel. 28 While the whole assembly worshiped, the singers also sang and the trumpets sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. 29 Now at the completion of the burnt offerings, the king and all who were present with him bowed down and worshiped. 30 Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David and Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with joy, and bowed down and worshiped.”

IV. (:31-35A) COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE ABUNDANT OFFERINGS

A. (:31-33) Abundance of Offerings

“Then Hezekiah answered and said, ‘Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the LORD.’ And the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all those who were willing brought burnt offerings. And the number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. 33 And the consecrated things were 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep.”

B. (:34) Shortage of Priests

“But the priests were too few, so that they were unable to skin all the burnt offerings; therefore their brothers the Levites helped them until the work was completed, and until the other priests had consecrated themselves. For the Levites were more conscientious to consecrate themselves than the priests.”

C. (:35a) Abundance of Offerings

“And there were also many burnt offerings

*with the fat of the peace offerings
and with the libations for the burnt offerings.”*

J.A. Thompson: Now that the “*whole assembly*” had dedicated themselves to the Lord verbally, it was time for them to express their faith by bringing sacrifices. The Hebrew idiom for “*dedicated yourselves*” is “*you have filled your hand.*” It is ordinarily used for priestly investiture (**13:9**), but here it applies to the whole assembly and not just to the priests. The same idiom is used in this wider sense in **1 Chr 29:5**. The word for “*sacrifices*” here (*zebahim*) probably refers to fellowship offerings in general (**v. 35**) of which thank offerings form a subgroup (**Lev 7:11-18**). The responsiveness of the people recalls events at the time of Moses, David, and Solomon (**Exod 36:6-7; 1 Chr 29:1, 5-9; 2 Chr 7:7**). Here was a pattern to be followed by the Chronicler’s postexilic audience.

August Konkel: This celebration has a character distinct from the prior ritual, as expressed by the different kinds of sacrifices. Instead of burnt offerings and purification offerings, the people are asked to offer sacrifices and praise offerings (**v. 31**), offerings that are eaten by their owners as part of a thanksgiving meal. These are often qualified as peace offerings or offerings of well-being. The Chronicler goes out of his way to show surprise and delight at the spontaneity of the great number of devoted praise offerings consumed as part of the thanksgiving festivities (**vs. 33**).

(:35b-36) EPILOGUE – RESTORATION OF WORSHIP COMPLETED

A. (:35b) Report of Restoration of Worship

“Thus the service of the house of the LORD was established again.”

B. (:36) Response to Restoration of Worship

“Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced over what God had prepared for the people, because the thing came about suddenly.”

Iain Duguid: The **speed of restoration** was evidence that, while the king had given the lead and the people, Levites, and priests had responded, this was all God’s enabling provision. The solid basis for “*rejoicing*” (cf. **29:30**: “*gladness*”) is not human willingness but the grace of God that enables all.

Frederick Mabie: In the afterglow of the ceremony culminating in a consecrated and functioning temple for God’s people (**v. 35**), there is a deep-seated atmosphere of gratefulness. As reflected at the beginning of the account (**v. 3**), the quickness in which the temple is reopened, consecrated, and dedicated is an added measure of great joy celebrated by the king and the community as a whole.

Martin Selman: Two consequences followed from these offerings. The first was to acknowledge that only God had made it all possible (**2 Chronicles 29:36**; cf. **1 Corinthians 12:3; Ephesians 2:18**). The second was that everyone *rejoiced* (**2 Chronicles 29:36**), in complete contrast with the situation with which they had begun.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How can we deal with spiritual apathy when it comes to either our individual worship or participation in corporate worship?
- 2) Do we take for granted our privilege of direct access to the Lord in worship?
- 3) What steps can we take to make sure that our participation in worship is preceded by purification and consecration?
- 4) Does our worship celebration reflect the joy of corporate praise?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: **Historical questions** tend to dominate the discussion. Foremost among these is the issue of whether Sennacherib campaigned against Hezekiah once or twice, and how to resolve the apparent tension between Hezekiah's submission to the Assyrians (**2 Kgs 18:13–16**) and his resistance and miraculous deliverance (**2 Kgs 18:17—19:37 // Isa 36:1—37:38**). . .

Alongside these historical questions there are issues of **theology** and **tradition history**.

- (1) The reign of Hezekiah was a crucible for the developing ideology of the inviolability of Zion (**Clements**).
- (2) The narratives about Hezekiah in Isaiah, Kings, and Chronicles were all shaped by the concerns of their respective compilers, and each makes a distinctive use of the material while also presenting distinctive portraits of the king. . .

A number of the Chronicler's distinctive emphases intersect in his portrayal.

- (1) Hezekiah reunifies Israel, reflecting the Chronicler's concern with "*all Israel*."
- (2) Hezekiah is portrayed as a second David and Solomon.
- (3) Hezekiah also exemplifies the operation of the Chronicler's **retribution theology**.

Andrew Hill: **McConville** has noted that the closing chapters of Chronicles are not so much an end as they are an arrival – the conclusion of a long preamble that brings the audience to their own day under the rule of the Persian Empire. The Chronicler holds out hope for a united Israel under a Davidic king overseeing the true worship of God in the Jerusalem temple. For him Hezekiah and Josiah are the prototypes of such kingship, hence their elevation as parade examples of "worshiping kings" at the end of

the book. **Dillard** has observed that this lesson is not lost on the Chronicler's audience since "the path to the reunification of Israel and the fulfillment of prophetic hopes was the path of cultic fidelity."

August Konkel: Ahaz had closed the temple to the worship of the Lord so that it was like that of the other nations. The gods of other nations were not separate from creation, as was the Holy One of Israel. The gods of the other nations originated out of the substance of the same matter that constituted the rest of creation. They were also subordinate to superior powers that they themselves could not control. The temple was a symbolic confession of the rule of God over creation, declaring his holiness. God is holy, separate from the common of creation. His holy throne room was absolutely set apart from other spaces by its heavy veil. Hezekiah immediately determined to restore the temple so it could function to represent the God of the covenant. This was a first essential act in renewing a relationship with the God of redemption. Confession of faith must have a tangible form so that it may be observed by witnesses. Faith is expressed in ritual as well as in word and deed.

It is also possible for ritual to be rigorously maintained but to be completely empty of a genuine faith confession. In the time of Jesus, scrupulous attention was given to the purity of the temple, but not in terms of what the temple was to represent. Immediately upon his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus went to the temple and evicted those who were selling sacrifices there, accusing them of turning it into a den of thieves (**Matt 21:12-13**). The temple was in a pristine state of ritual purity, at least in the view of the priesthood that controlled it, but some had polluted it with their self-righteousness and greed. The temple was to be a place of prayer for all peoples, as the prophets had said (**Isa 56:7**). The temple was not to be exclusive to one nation or group, but available to all those who made confession of the covenant (**vv. 4-7**), whatever their social status or ethnic background. The keepers of the temple had turned it into the very opposite of what it was meant to be. They had made it ethnically exclusive; they had turned its rituals into an opportunity to make profit. Ritual is important, but it must also be protected so that it truly makes confession of the faith relationship.

The Chronicler manifests this attitude toward the temple. The temple was the eminent confession of the faith of Israel to all nations. No king desiring to observe the covenant could ignore its most central physical expression. The faith of Hezekiah is unequivocally stated in **2 Kings 18:5-6**. There it is manifested in his trust in the God of the temple during the siege of Sennacherib, when he goes before the Lord with the threatening letters of the invading king (**2 Kings 19:14-15**; cf. **2 Chron 32:20**). The Chronicler demonstrates the faith of Hezekiah in his purification of the temple, an action no less significant and one that explains the trust of the king in the time of crisis. From the very start Hezekiah was a man of faith; hence he could do nothing other than express it in restoration of the covenant and its celebrations. This he put into action immediately upon coming to the throne.

Peter Wallace: Reformation of Worship

The **eighth day** is the day of the **new creation**. In the OT, the seventh day is the day of rest – the day of fulfillment. But the problem with the 7th day is that man has sinned. Every seventh day reminds us that we are stuck in a never-ending cycle of 7s. There needs to be a day beyond the seventh day. . .

Now, Hezekiah leads Israel in the **restoration of the temple** – a restoration that is portrayed as a new creation! . . . when you see what the new creation is all about, as the OT tells the stories of these “new starts” – these “new covenants” – these “eighth days” pointing forwards **to Christ**, then you can see that what we do in our worship is a participation in this new creation! So, the basic point is that Israel’s worship was pointing them towards the new creation. And of course, Israel’s worship was all about the **sacrifices**.

In **verses 20-24** you have the **burnt offering** and the **sin offering**. The normal pattern was burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering – but when the altar has been defiled – and the temple has been desecrated – you need to cleanse the temple and the altar, so that they are holy – so that burnt offerings and peace offerings can be offered once again. . .

Hezekiah looks at the law of Moses, and he doesn’t see a specific provision for what to do in his case. But he sees the general principles in **Leviticus 4**. If a priest sins, he is supposed to offer a bull from the herd. If the whole assembly sins, they are supposed to offer a bull from the herd. If a leader sins, he is supposed to bring a goat, a male without blemish. So what do you do when the whole assembly, and all its leaders, and all its priests have sinned? And they’ve kept doing it – over and over and over again! Is there any hope for Israel? After all, it would be hard to say that all this was “unintentional”! So Hezekiah turns to the number of **completeness**. Seven bulls, seven rams, and seven lambs are offered as the burnt offering, and then seven male goats as the sin offering. Not just Judah and Jerusalem – but all Israel is included in this atonement. . .

And so having **atoned for their sins**, and having **consecrated the altar**, now the priests are prepared to offer the regular burnt offerings once again. In **verses 25-30** we hear about the **resumption of the burnt offering**.

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/108122127587.pdf>

Paul Archbald: Worship Re-established

First Point: The Re-Opening of the Temple

1) The Sins of the Fathers: Ahaz was a wicked king who profaned and shut down the Temple and encouraged idolatry in Judah. Many priests and people followed his lead.

2) The Young Reformer: However, God gave Ahaz’ son, Hezekiah, a heart for the Lord and zeal for reformation. The reforms began as soon as Hezekiah took the throne, aged 25. He re-opened and repaired the Temple. He also called on the priests and Levites to resume their service to the Lord and His people. This was only possible because of the

Lord Jesus, who was more than a reformer; He is the “*Author and Perfecter of faith*” (Heb. 12:2).

Second Point: The Re-Consecration of the Temple and Its Servants

1) Cleansed Ceremonially: The evils Ahaz encouraged had made the Temple and its utensils “*unclean*.” Before the Temple service could be re-instituted, the uncleanness had to be dealt with. Unclean things had to be removed. The priests and Levites themselves had to be consecrated (v. 3). Then the Temple and its contents had to be physically and ceremonially cleansed. See Lev. 8.

2) Cleansed by Sacrifices Pointing to Christ: The priests, Levites and people of Judah also needed to have their sins dealt with. Vss. 20f describe the sin-offerings that point to the true ground of atonement, the sacrifice of Christ. All of this was part of a “covenant-renewal” (v. 10). Today we do not need ceremonies and animal sacrifices before we can worship God. We have the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ covering all our sins. But we should approach the worship of God conscious that we come as forgiven sinners, coming to serve God as “priests” in Christ.

Third Point: The Reformation of Worship in the Temple

1) Only After the Sin Was Dealt With: Once the sin was dealt with, the people could gather to worship with joy – rejoicing in God’s mercy and full of thanks and praise to Him for it (vss. 25f). As God’s people, we need to be aware of our sin and God’s grace in Christ, in order to rejoice and express our thanks.

2) A Davidic Reformation of Worship: The Lord established the pattern of public worship through David, via the instructions of the prophets. Hezekiah sought to model his reform on David’s pattern (vss. 2, 26-27, 30). This included the worship music, using the Levitical singers and musicians, singing the Psalms. In doing so, he reminded God’s people that the Son of David defines our worship and makes it possible. When Christ came, He changed some elements of this – the involvement of the Temple, the priests and the Levitical musicians. Now the whole congregation sings. But the emphasis on loud and joyful praise and thanks, responding to the grace of God in Christ, remains (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16). This is the chief reason why we should rejoice when we assemble again for public worship.

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/51020109152162.pdf>

Steven Cole: How Spiritual Renewal Comes

We can see three important factors of spiritual renewal in the revival that happened under the good king Hezekiah

1. Spiritual renewal comes through commitment to the Lord (29:1-11).

Hezekiah’s first priority in the face of a national crisis was to call the nation and its leaders back to the proper commitment to God.

A. COMMITMENT TO GOD IS THE MOST PRESSING NEED IN A TIME OF PRESSING NEED.

When you face a crisis, the natural human response is to focus on the crisis. If you're a king facing a military threat, the thing to do is to strengthen your army. If you face a health crisis, the first thing to do is get medical attention. If you've lost your job, your first priority is to focus on finding another job. If your marriage is in trouble, focus on your marriage. If your teenager is rebellious, focus on dealing with your teenager.

Don't misunderstand: I'm not saying that we should ignore pressing problems. They demand our attention and we would be negligent not to attend to them. But I am arguing that Hezekiah's example shows us that the most pressing need in a time of need is to **renew our commitment to the Lord**. Only after we have done that are we free to seek His mind on how to deal with the pressing problem. Often the very reason God sends the problem is to get us to stop and get our priorities back in line. Once we've done that, He often deals with the problem in ways we never could have, even if we had put all our efforts into solving it.

B. COMMITMENT TO GOD BRINGS HOPE INTO THE DARKEST OF SITUATIONS.

Hezekiah could have looked around and thought, "Things are grim. My father shut down the temple. Idolatry is rampant. He lost a lot of our territory to other nations. And we're under the thumb of Tiglath-Pileser. Why try?" He could have grown very depressed and have been paralyzed into doing nothing. But instead he committed himself to follow the Lord. He rallied the priests to re-open the temple for worship. He called the nation back to God. And as soon as God breaks into any situation, the darkness is dispelled by the light of His presence. . .

Down through history, God has broken into the worst of situations to bring hope and light when, humanly speaking, things are hopeless.

C. COMMITMENT TO GOD ALWAYS INVOLVES A RADICAL COMMITMENT TO HIS WORD.

By a radical commitment to God's Word, I mean a commitment that goes against tradition and current custom, if need be; that goes against the way we were raised, if need be; and goes back to complete obedience to what God's Word teaches about how we are to live. Undergirding Hezekiah's reforms is an understanding of what the Law of Moses prescribed and a commitment to follow that completely. He knew what was clean and unclean (29:5). He knew what the proper incense offerings and burnt offerings were that had been neglected (29:7). He had gained this understanding from God's Word (29:15). Spiritual renewal is always centered on a **renewal of the authority of God's Word**.

Renewed commitment to God and His Word always reveals areas of our lives that have been displeasing to God. Thus the second element in spiritual renewal is **cleansing**.

2. Spiritual renewal comes through cleansing in accordance with God's Word (29:12-24).

Note that reform or renewal always starts with the person and moves outward to the church (29:5, "*consecrate yourselves and consecrate the house of the Lord*"). Many of these priests had fallen into unfaithfulness and idolatry, so they had to deal with their own sin before they could begin the process of cleansing the temple. God can't use you to impact others for Christ until you cleanse yourself from defilement. These priests had a lot of crud to deal with--it took them 16 days to haul out all the idols and other junk from the temple (29:17)! But, thank God, if we're willing to clean up our lives, even if it takes a while to shovel it all out, He will restore us and use us again for His purpose! In Hezekiah's revival, as soon as the temple was cleansed, they gathered in worship and offered three kinds of sacrifices:

- **Sin offerings (29:21);**
- **burnt offerings (23:27);** and
- **thank offerings (29:31).**

These three offerings typify the kind of cleansing and consecration we need as worshipers of God.

The **sin offering** pictured **substitution**. God's holiness and justice demand that the penalty for our sin is death. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness (Heb. 9:22). The slaughter of these animals and the sprinkling of their blood on the altar pictured the perfect sacrifice for our sins that would be accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. For the person to be cleansed, he had to lay his hands on the head of the animal as the priest slit its throat, thus identifying himself with that shedding of blood on his behalf. His sins were "transferred" to the animal which died in his place. Even so, there is no cleansing from sin unless you have by faith identified yourself with Jesus Christ in His death on your behalf.

The **burnt offering** pictured **consecration**. It was offered up totally to the Lord (the worshiper did not eat any of it) and represents the surrender and holiness demanded of those who have received God's forgiveness. Our response to His mercy in becoming our sin offering should be to give ourselves completely to Him: "*I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship*" (Rom. 12:1).

The **thank offering** pictured **devotion**. These were voluntary offerings expressing love and gratitude for God's many blessings. The author to the Hebrews refers to this when he writes, "*Through (Christ) then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased*" (Heb. 13:15-16). Christians are to be "*overflowing with gratitude*" (Col. 2:7).

The burnt offerings and thank offerings move into the third area of renewal, **celebration**, or **corporate worship**. But the point is, we can't experience spiritual renewal, whether individually or corporately, unless we appropriate God's cleansing through the blood of Christ, confessing our sins and cleaning the offensive, idolatrous

crud out of our lives, even as they cleansed themselves and God's temple. Spiritual renewal starts with commitment; continues with cleansing; and culminates in celebration:

3. Spiritual renewal expresses itself in celebration with God's people (29:25-36).

Note **29:30**, "*they sang praises with joy.*" Do you sing that way? If not, maybe you need **revival!** When you realize that God has moved in your heart to reveal Christ as the perfect sacrifice for all your sins, how can you mumble through a song with no joy? An outsider coming into our midst should be able to tell by our worship that we are **overflowing with joy** because of what God has done in cleansing us from sin. They were joyous, but they were also **reverent**. We read (**29:30**) that "*they bowed down and worshiped.*" They had a sense of **awe** in the presence of God. By bowing down they showed their **submission** to Him.

<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-10-how-spiritual-renewal-comes-2-chronicles-29>

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 30:1-27

TITLE: HEZEKIAH'S UNIFIED PASSOVER CELEBRATION

BIG IDEA:

REPENTANCE, HUMILITY AND CONSECRATION PROMOTE AN INCLUSIVE SPIRIT OF UNIFIED CORPORATE WORSHIP THAT ISSUES IN GREAT JOY

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: The end of the northern kingdom resulted in both the rapid increase in Judah's population due to the influx of refugees and also the opportunity to call those in the north back to worship at the Jerusalem temple. Thus far, temple cleansing and restoration had involved those in Jerusalem: king, priests and Levites, and "*officials of the city.*" But the "*sin offering with their blood*" was to "*make atonement for all Israel*" (2 Chron. 29:24). Now Hezekiah made arrangements for a Passover celebration involving "*all Israel and Judah*" (30:1). He continued to provide leadership, but again communal involvement in decision making and implementation was to the fore (Hb. *qahal* ["assembly"] occurs thirteen times in chs. 29–30: 29:23, 28, 31, 32; 30:2, 4, 13, 17, 23, 24 [2x], 25 [2x]).

David Whitcomb: Hezekiah began to reign when he was 25 years old (2 Chronicles 29:1). From the scant evidence we have, it appears that Hezekiah began a co-regency with his father Ahaz in 729 B.C. That would have coincided with the third year of the reign of King Hoshea in Israel. Seven years later (722 B.C.), God finally sent Assyria to destroy Israel and scatter many of the people to distant lands. The seven years after that intervention by God, (715 B.C.) Ahaz died and Hezekiah was the sole king of Judah.

Andrew Hill: Hezekiah's festival may be outlined in three broad movements:

- the assembling of large numbers of Israelites making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (30:13, 17-18),
- the cleansing and consecration rituals (30:14-16, 19), and
- the "*sacrifice*" of joyful praise extended over a two-week period (30:21-27).

The reference to the size of the crowd gathered in Jerusalem for the festival is significant not so much for the sake of the sheer numbers as its composition of people from all over Judah and Israel (30:13). The inclusion of worshipers from the northern tribes speaks to the theme of "reunification" under King Hezekiah (cf. 30:18).

J.A. Thompson: With the restoration of the temple now achieved, Hezekiah undertook strenuous efforts to reunite "*all Israel,*" both south and north, in national worship, which the Chronicle centered on the observance of the Passover. It is the dominant theme of the early part of the chapter (vv. 1-13) and is prominent in the latter section of chap. 30 (note specially 30:25; 31:1) but is present also in the central section of the

chapter, which deals with the celebration itself. Hezekiah is portrayed here as a second Solomon (v. 26), and the celebration of the Passover is a watershed between the disruption of Israel after Solomon's death and a return to the spiritual conditions that existed in Solomon's day.

I. (:1-9) CORPORATE WORSHIP SHOULD BE INCLUSIVE OF ALL WHO REPENT AND SEEK GOD – THE INVITATION TO CELEBRATE THE PASSOVER EXTENDED TO THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

A. (:1) Gracious Invitation to Celebrate the Passover

“Now Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel.”

Raymond Dillard: This verse is a summary statement introducing the entire narrative (Rudolph, 299). The oral proclamation was accompanied by letters (cf. **Esth 1:22**).

Mark Boda: The **Passover** is understood merely as the introduction to the subsequent **Festival of Unleavened Bread**, which ran for the following seven days (see **Exod 12-13; 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Lev 23; Deut 16:1-17**). In Torah legislation the Passover lamb is chosen on the 10th day of the first month, sacrificed on the 14th day, and eaten in an evening meal as the 15th day of the month began. The Festival of Unleavened Bread then ran from the 15th to the 21st day of the first month.

B. (:2-5) Game Planning the Passover Invitation

Raymond Dillard: The law allowed for a **delayed observance** of Passover in the second month for those who had become unclean through contact with a corpse or for those who had been on a journey (**Num 9:9-11**). The actions of Hezekiah appear to depend on an interpretive extension of these provisions to cover those ritually unclean for any reason (*“the priests had not sanctified themselves,”* **30:3**) and those journeying from the Northern Kingdom or who had not made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (*“the people had not assembled themselves,”* **30:3**; cf. **30:17-18**); exceptional provisos for individuals have been generalized to apply to the entire nation. The celebration of Passover at the time of Hezekiah thus provides a good example of intrabiblical legal interpretation. The apostasy under Ahaz presumably had left the priesthood in disarray, perhaps almost nonfunctioning, but at least in a ceremonially unacceptable state.

Mark Boda: Before revealing the process for the proclamation of the festival (**30:5-10a**), the Chronicler describes the process that led to the reinstatement of the festival (**30:2-4**). The decision was reached between Hezekiah, his officials, and *“all the community of Jerusalem”*. The latter evidences not only the democratizing tone of the Chronicler's account but also his emphasis on Jerusalem's leadership role in the worship of Judah. The reason a decision had to be made, according to the Chronicler, was because the first month – the time when the festivals were required to be celebrated

– had already passed. The Chronicler explained this anomaly by appealing to the lack of qualified priests to carry on the services (29:34) and the lack of people to form an assembly. It was decided to celebrate Passover one month later than usual, in the second month, a provision that appears dependent on the legislation in **Numbers 9:1-14**. **Second Chronicles 30:4** again emphasizes the unanimity of both king and “*all the people*” on this issue.

1. (:2-3) Exceptional Circumstances Dictated Unusual Timing

“For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month, 3 since they could not celebrate it at that time, because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers, nor had the people been gathered to Jerusalem.”

2. (:4) Executive Decision Supported by the People

“Thus the thing was right in the sight of the king and all the assembly.”

3. (:5) Expansive Communication Logistics

“So they established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem. For they had not celebrated it in great numbers as it was prescribed.”

C. (:6-9) Gracious Call to Return to their Gracious and Compassionate God

“And the couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying,”

Andrew Hill: The actual text of Hezekiah’s letter is summarized in the second section of the unit (30:6-9). Curiously, the letter is summarized in the second section of the unit (30:6-9). Curiously, the letter itself does not mention the Passover celebration – although this is the theme of the entire pericope. The so-called “Passover letter” is sent “*throughout Israel and Judah*” as Hezekiah seeks to reunite the tribes in the aftermath of the Assyrian conquest and annexation of the northern kingdom. The reference to “*Ephraim and Manasseh*” (a word pair often used for the northern kingdom of Israel, cf. 34:9) is inserted almost as a point of clarification or special emphasis.

James Barker: The Revival Under King Hezekiah

1. TURN FROM YOUR BACKSLIDING (vs. 6)
2. TURN FROM YOUR TRESPASSES (vs. 7)
3. TURN FROM YOUR STUBBORNNESS (vs. 8)

1. (:6b) Welcoming -- Offer of Restoration of God’s Favor

- a. If You Return to God – Who is the God of the Patriarchs

“O sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,”

- b. God Will Return to You – Who Are the Escaped Remnant
*“that He may return to those of you
who escaped and are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria.”*

Raymond Dillard: In referring to the “*kings*” of Assyria, the author probably intends more than the destruction in 722 B.C. at the hands of Shalmaneser V and Sargon II, but also all other Assyrian intrusions against the Northern Kingdom, at least from the time of Tiglath-pileser III (28:16–21; 1 Chr 5:26), and perhaps even as far back as Shalmaneser III.

J.A. Thompson: The designation “*you who are left, who have escaped*” would have conveyed simultaneously a sense of fear often experienced by those who have just had a narrow escape and also a sense of gratitude that God had delivered them. They should have identified easily with those escapees from Egypt who first celebrated the Passover, as should the Chronicler’s own audience of postexilic Judah.

Mark Boda: The Chronicler identifies repentance in worship practice as essential to the experience of the presence of Yahweh, as well as to the safe return of ore exiles from captivity. This raise the profile of the Temple and its worship in the Chronicler’s day, placing the lives of the exiles at stake.

2. (:7) Warning -- Object Lesson of Past Judgment for Apostasy

“And do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD God of their fathers, so that He made them a horror, as you see.”

Andrew Hill: In addition to calling the people to repentance, Hezekiah’s letter admonishes the Israelites to cease being “*unfaithful*” (30:7) and “*stiff-necked*” (30:8) like their ancestors. The time to break with the past is long overdue. Hezekiah’s letter holds out hope to those who have escaped the wrath of God meted out through Assyrian kings by offering them the possibility of reunion with those exiled in Mesopotamia to return to the worship of God in the Jerusalem sanctuary (30:9). The appeal to the Lord, who “*is gracious and compassionate*” (30:9), seems to allude once again to Solomon’s dedicatory prayer, beseeching God to induce Israel’s conquerors to show mercy on his people should they sin and be overtaken by their enemies (cf. 1 Kings 8:50).

3. (:8) Warning -- Opposition to God Brings His Wrath

“Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the LORD and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you.”

4. (:9) Welcoming -- Opportunity to Experience God’s Gracious Compassion

- a. Based on the Condition of Returning to the Lord

“For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your sons

*will find compassion before those who led them captive,
and will return to this land.”*

b. Based on the Character of the Lord

*“For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate,
and will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him.”*

David Whitcomb: This is the heart of a person who truly loves God, trusts God, and desires to worship God. He knows that the so-called people of God had abandoned God in favor of the little, make-believe gods of their world. His heart aches for professing flowers of Jesus to worship Him as His perfect character requires. He challenges people to come clean of their sin, restore fellowship with God, and worship Him.

II. (:10-12) CORPORATE WORSHIP THAT IS INCLUSIVE REQUIRES HEARTS OF HUMILITY AND HEARTS OF SOLIDARITY/SUBMISSION – THE MIXED RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN WORSHIP AT THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

Andrew Hill: Predictably, Hezekiah’s invitation to renew festival worship in the reopened Jerusalem temple receives a mixed response (**30:10-12**). The scornful reception given to his couriers may have been life-threatening, perhaps explaining why the heralds to not traverse the entire northern kingdom with their message (cf. **30:5**). The majority of Israelites in the regions of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun spurn the invitation, while others from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humble themselves before the Lord and make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (**30:10-11**). The overwhelming response of those in the kingdom of Judah to obey the king is a remarkable demonstration of solidarity and is attributed to the “*hand of God*” on the people (**30:12**).

A. (:10a) Message from Judah Communicated to Israel

*“So the couriers passed from city to city
through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun,”*

B. (:10b-11) Mixed Response by Israel

1. (:10b) Negative = Mocking

“but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.”

David Guzik: We note there was no rational argument against the invitation; it was all opposed with simple laughter and mocking. For the frivolous and simple-minded, these replace serious thought.

2. (:11) Positive = Hearts of Humility

*“Nevertheless some men of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun
humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.”*

C. (:12) Motivated Response of Hearts of Solidarity and Submission by Judah

“The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.”

III. (:13-22) CORPORATE WORSHIP REQUIRES PURIFICATION AND PROPITIATION (APPROACHING GOD ON THE BASIS OF THE FORGIVENESS AND ACCESS ONLY HE CAN PROVIDE) -- THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER AND FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

August Konkel: Among the challenges facing Hezekiah in observing the Passover was the problem of the impurity of the city. The first task of the assembled multitude was to remove all the foreign cult objects, which were properly disposed of in the Kidron Valley, where they could be burned (v. 14). A second problem was the failure of the priestly leaders to be properly prepared for the great number of people who had come (v. 15). The problem may have been the consecration of those officials who had come from outside the city and had not been a part of the earlier purification (29:15, 34). Once again the response of the people had outstripped that of the professional clerics, to the great shame of the latter. The priests and Levites had to offer the appropriate burnt offerings before they could take their place in the ceremony. The biggest problem was the impurity of the large number of pilgrims who had traveled great distances from foreign lands and did not have an opportunity to receive the proper purification ceremonies (30:13, 17). This rendered them unfit to perform the sacrifice that they had come to observe. The normal practice was that each person would slaughter his own sacrifice; manipulation of the blood was handled by the priests (vv. 15-16). The ritually unclean state of the pilgrims rendered them unfit to participate in the ceremony for which they had come, a point made very clear in the Passover provisions. This was a perpetual problem in observing the festivals in the Second Temple period.

A. (:13-19) Purification from Idolatry and Sin

1. (:13) People Gathered together for the Feast

“Now many people were gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month, a very large assembly.”

Raymond Dillard: The nation is to “celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread” (30:12, 13); earlier they were to “celebrate the Passover” (30:1, 2, 5). As elsewhere in both the OT and NT, the two festivals were so closely associated that the entire celebration could be denominated by either designation.

2. (:14) Purification from Idolatry

“And they arose and removed the altars which were in Jerusalem; they also removed all the incense altars and cast them into the brook Kidron.”

Iain Duguid: Removal of all signs of pagan worship in Jerusalem was required; “turning” to the Lord involved “turning” from all that was “faithless” (vv. 6–8). The

priests and Levites had cleansed the temple and its precincts of all signs of Ahaz's "faithless" activity (29:16, 18-19), and now the "many people" did the same for the city (cf. 28:24).

Frederick Mabie: In parallel with the earlier actions taken by the assembly of priests and Levites (cf. 29:15-17), the assembly of Judeans and Israelites takes tangible steps in their return to God by removing and destroying items of idolatry and syncretism throughout Jerusalem, most of which had been built by Ahaz (cf. 28:24-25). The destruction of such elements during Hezekiah's reign is similar to purges directed by Asa (cf. 14:3; 15:16), Joash (cf. 23:17), and Josiah (cf. 34:3-7) in Judah as well as Jehu in the northern kingdom (cf. 2Ki 10:18-28).

3. (:15a) Passover Lambs Slaughtered

"Then they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth of the second month."

Andrew Hill: The rituals associated with the Passover are the focus of the Chronicler's report in 30:15-20. The Passover animals are killed by the worshipers in keeping with the prescriptions for the feast in Exodus, except for those who are ritually impure and hence unfit to perform the task (30:15, 17; cf. Ex. 12:21). The zeal coupled with the appropriate actions of the people in observing the Passover shame the priests and Levites. The religious leaders in charge of instructing the people in the law of Moses and in mediating the sacrificial worship of Israel are outdone by a righteous laity (who presumably have not been taught the Torah for some time by a negligent and corrupt priesthood under King Ahaz). Shortly thereafter the priests and the Levites are consecrated, so they too are careful to follow the prescriptions of the Mosaic law in discharging their duties as mediators of the Passover (2 Chron. 30:16).

4. (:15b) Purification of the Priests and Levites

"And the priests and Levites were ashamed of themselves and consecrated themselves, and brought burnt offerings to the house of the LORD."

5. (:16-17) Priests Applying the Blood

"And they stood at their stations after their custom, according to the law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood which they received from the hand of the Levites. 17 For there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves; therefore, the Levites were over the slaughter of the Passover lambs for everyone who was unclean, in order to consecrate them to the LORD."

6. (:18-19) Pardon Requested Due to Unusual Circumstances

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler makes an important theological observation that intent of heart and acts of repentance, when combined with intercessory prayer, override the letter of the law when it comes to the worship of God (30:18-19; cf. Isa. 1:15-19; Mic. 6:8).

a. Some Participants Still Ritually Unclean

“For a multitude of the people, even many from Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than prescribed.”

b. Seeking God with the Heart Trumps Purification Rules

“For Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, ‘May the good LORD pardon 19 everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary.’”

Iain Duguid: The phrase “good Lord” occurs only here in the OT but probably alludes to the refrain found often in Psalms and cited when David established worship before the ark, when Solomon dedicated the temple, and again at the dedication of the second temple: *“Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever”* (1 Chron. 16:34; 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Pss. 106:1; 107:1; etc.).

J.A. Thompson: Most of the people from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Issachar were not ritually purified, due either to ignorance or lack of time. Although God’s law was binding, there also was some flexibility in extraordinary circumstances. Hezekiah offered a special prayer on their behalf, asking that God would pardon all those whose hearts were ready to seek God even if they were ritually unclean according to the ceremonial purification laws of the sanctuary. Prayer was effective in overriding purely ritual considerations according to the Chronicler. For all his concern with the cult and its personnel, the Chronicler was not content with a religion of mere external correctness but delighted in the one who *“sets his heart on seeking God.”* In hearing Hezekiah and healing the people, God was answering Solomon’s prayer as he promised in 7:14.

L.M. Grant: The ordinance of the Passover required that those who were defiled by a dead body could not eat of the Passover until they were sanctified from this (**Numbers 9:9**). Because of some being defiled at the time of the Passover in Numbers, God had made an allowance for them to keep the Passover in the second month (**Numbers 9:10-11**). However, since it was the second month that Hezekiah arranged the Passover, and there were large numbers from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun who had not been purified, yet they were allowed to eat the Passover, **though it was contrary to the Word of God**. This was a marked **exception**, and Hezekiah prayed for them, that the Lord would provide atonement for this infraction of the law. The Lord accepted this prayer and healed all the people (**vv.19-20**). In explanation of this, would it not have been cruel to refuse their participation in the Passover after having invited them to come from so far for this purpose, and after these people had shown such faith as to come to God's centre in order to honour the Lord? This was the **exception of pure grace**.

B. (:20) Propitiation and Healing

“So the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.”

C. (:21) Praise Celebration

“And the sons of Israel present in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy, and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day after day with loud instruments to the LORD.”

D. (:22a) Pastoral Encouragement

“Then Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good insight in the things of the LORD.”

E. (:22b) Particulars of Participating in the Feast

1. Eating for the Appointed Seven Days

“So they ate for the appointed seven days,”

2. Sacrificing Offerings

“sacrificing peace offerings”

3. Giving Thanks

“and giving thanks to the LORD God of their fathers.”

IV. (:23-27) THE EXTENSION OF THE CELEBRATION ACCOMPANIED WITH GREAT JOY

A. (:23) Celebration Extended for Additional Seven Days

“Then the whole assembly decided to celebrate the feast another seven days, so they celebrated the seven days with joy.”

B. (:24) Consecration Commitment

1. Consecration Commitment from Hezekiah

“For Hezekiah king of Judah had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep,”

2. Consecration Commitment from the Princes

“and the princes had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep;”

3. Consecration Commitment from the Priests

“and a large number of priests consecrated themselves.”

C. (:25-26) Community Joy

1. (:25) Great Joy on the Part of All Participants

a. Participants from Judah – People and Religious Leaders

“And all the assembly of Judah rejoiced, with the priests and the Levites,”

b. Participants from Israel

“and all the assembly that came from Israel, both the sojourners who came from the land of Israel and those living in Judah.”

2. (:26) Great Joy Focused in Jerusalem

“So there was great joy in Jerusalem, because there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.”

Mark Boda: The comparison in **30:26** to Solomon’s reign makes explicit what has been implicit throughout **chapters 29-30** – that is, that Hezekiah is the second Solomon, uniting the tribes both north and south around the Temple in Jerusalem. **Dillard** (1987:242-243) argues that in this chapter not only is Hezekiah linked to Solomon by being the first king to reunite the nation at the Temple since his forefather (**ch 7**), by holding an extended two-week celebration (**ch 7**), and by praying before the assembly (**ch 6**), but also throughout chapter 30 the vocabulary of God’s speech to Solomon in **7:14** is used, a speech that identified for the Chronicler the normative vocabulary of response by Israel and Yahweh:

“Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves. . .”

The Chronicler presented Hezekiah and his generation as an example of the kind of community that fulfills Yahweh’s agenda.

D. (:27) Consummated Blessing of the People

*“Then the Levitical priests arose and blessed the people;
and their voice was heard
and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.”*

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why is it sometimes necessary to be flexible in light of exceptional circumstances?
- 2) What steps did Hezekiah take to pursue the unity of all of God’s people?
- 3) Do we place enough importance on the priority of purification and consecration?
- 4) How does God show His gracious and compassionate character to those who seem far removed from His presence and favor?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: This chapter functions on a number of levels for the Chronicler as he seeks to address the needs of his contemporaries.

- (1) It raises once again the theme of exile and restoration. The path to a restored kingdom is the path of cultic fidelity. This message is pressed home through the observance of Passover, itself a commemoration of redemption and release from bondage to a foreign power.
- (2) The Chronicler never tires of portraying the validity of his theology of immediate retribution. Particularly in this chapter he seeks to show the efficacy and validity of Solomon's prayer and God's promise, an efficacy he understood as relevant for his own generation as well.
- (3) Hezekiah is presented as an embodiment of the ideal Davidic successor. He is another David/Solomon ruling over a united kingdom with the support of the populace. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the Chronicler held out this portrayal also in speaking of future possibilities and hopes for his own generation.

Andrew Konkel: The motif of spiritual preparedness through repentance is a development found in the postexilic prophets, in Zechariah in particular. The Chronicler cites couriers who, at the king's command, give a message throughout Israel and Judah employing the word *sub* (*turn*) successively, first in an appeal for a *return* to the Lord of the covenant (v. 6a), so that (second) the Lord might *return* to the remnant that had escaped from Assyria (v. 6b). Third, God will then *turn* away the anger of his judgment (v. 8b) if (fourth) they *return* to the Lord (v. 9a), because he is a compassionate God, who (fifth) will allow them to *return* to their land (9b), and (sixth) will not abandon them if they will *return* to him (v. 9c). The Chronicler is deliberately extending the words of **Zechariah 1:3**: "'Turn to me,' utterance of the Lord of hosts, 'and I will turn to you'" says the Lord of hosts" (AT). Zechariah continues with the exhortation not to be as their ancestors, who balked when the prophets appealed to them to *turn* (*sub*) from their evil ways (v. 4; cf. **2 Chron 30:7**). The fierce anger of God against the former generation was nothing other than the curse of the covenant (**Zech 1:5-6**; cf. **2 Chron 30:8**). They had no other recourse but to *repent* (*sub*), for God had acted exactly as he said he would (**Zech 1:6b**). The wordplay on *sub*, as adopted by the Chronicler to point the way toward restoration, continues a significant theological development.

Peter Wallace: I would suggest that there is a **transformation of the Passover** from the original event to the **celebration** of that event. Think of the Lord's Supper. We don't do exactly what Jesus did at the Last Supper. Rather, that Supper has taken on a ritual form, as Paul describes it in **1 Corinthians 11**. (In other words, within a generation, the ritual meal displaced the original) The same thing happened to the Passover 1400 years earlier! The people of Israel did not try to "replay" the original Passover – rather, following the clear teaching of Moses, they commemorated it. Likewise, we do not try to "replicate" the original "Last Supper," rather, following the clear teaching of the apostles, we commemorate it. Clearly, by Deuteronomy, the Passover is **no longer just**

a family celebration. Here in **2 Chronicles**, it goes a step further, and now it is the priests and Levites who slaughter the Passover lambs on behalf of the unclean (suggesting that those who were clean slaughtered their own lambs); in **Ezra 6:20**, after the exile, we hear that the priests and Levites slaughtered all of the Passover lambs.

Some people have been perplexed at the **variety of directions** given regarding Passover. Usually, they are the same people who tend to be “statute-oriented” and who think that God should always be very precise in saying exactly what we need to do, so that everything is cut and dried, and there is no ambiguity in our duty. So when they hear that at one time God commanded that you should not boil the lamb, and then later they hear a command to boil the lamb, they insist on translating the words differently.

When they hear that at one time the head of household was to slaughter the lamb, and then they hear that the priests slaughtered all the lambs, they insist that the priests were violating the law of God!

I would suggest that they are missing the point. The point is what the Reformed tradition has articulated as the “**Regulative Principle of Worship.**” The Regulative Principle says that we should only do in worship what God has said we should do. But the Regulative Principle also distinguishes between the “elements” of worship and the circumstances. The elements of worship are the basic things: the Word, sacraments, and prayer. The circumstances are pretty much everything else!

Even many of the detailed regulations in the OT were “circumstantial.” Think about our text here in **2 Chronicles 30**. Two of the basic actions of the Passover are very clear from the Pentateuch:

- the Passover lamb should be slaughtered on the 14th day of the first month; and
- only those who are both circumcised and ceremonially clean may partake of the Passover.

Neither of those basic rules are observed in this case!

Hezekiah and the priests were convinced that the fundamental principle of the Passover was the **celebration of God’s saving Israel from Egypt** – and that everyone who desired to remember that great salvation should be admitted to the Passover, regardless of ceremonial status. (Sure, in future years, you should make sure that you are ceremonially clean – but if we wait until we are clean before we do this, it’ll never happen!)

And notice God’s response: **20** *And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.*

In other words, the LORD entirely approved of Hezekiah’s distinction between the essential actions of the Passover, and the circumstantial regulations that were designed to promote the holiness of the Passover.

Chronicles is not saying that we can play fast and loose with God’s law – but Chronicles is saying what Jesus will say about the Sabbath: “*Passover was made for*

man, not man for the Passover.” If you are so strict in your adherence to the law that you destroy the point of the law, then you have not truly kept the law!

There is an important lesson here. Some have used this text to say that outward actions aren't that important: the heart is what really matters. But that's not the point at all. After all, if you think about what is happening here, the whole point of the story is that Israel (all Israel – not just Judah) is doing something outward together! It's true that they are setting aside certain regulations regarding clean/unclean. But they are setting aside the sanctuary's rules of cleanness – in other words, they are relaxing some of the purity laws **so that the heart can be properly expressed** in the outward actions of worship. . .

The rigid and heartless application of God's law leads to legalism and sterility. The loose and lax neglect of God's law leads to license and rebellion.

The equitable and prudent application of God's law leads to great joy and gladness – with Levites and priests singing with all their might, the King encouraging those who are skilled in the service of the LORD, and all the people rejoicing and giving thanks. <https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/112012211396.pdf>

F.B. Meyer: Pastor and theologian **John Stott** explained in *The Contemporary Christian*: “Protestants use a [certain] vocabulary to describe the continuously needed restoring and refreshing of the church. Our two favourite words are “**reform**”, indicating the kind of reformation of faith and life according to Scripture which took place in the sixteenth century, and “**revival**”, denoting an altogether supernatural visitation of a church or community by God, bringing conviction, repentance, confession, the conversion of sinners and the recovery of backsliders. “Reformation” usually stresses the power of the Word of God, and “revival” the power of the Spirit of God, in his work of restoring the church.”

Through Hezekiah, God brought both **reformation** and **revival** to Judah. In addition to renewing the temple, the king also renewed the celebration of the Passover. Setting aside recent strife in favor of a deeper **covenant unity**, he even invited people from what remained of northern Israel to come and join in. The letter he sent showed his heart: he wanted the entire nation to return to God, reunite in repentant worship centered around the temple, and be restored to the Lord's covenant favor. Though many mocked the messengers, some responded openly and humbly.

Hezekiah changed the date of Passover, mainly on practical grounds, since there was insufficient time to prepare the priests and gather the people. In fact, the Law was flexible on this point (see **Num. 9:10-11**). Despite the delay, many participants still had not purified themselves, but the king prayed for their forgiveness and God graciously “*healed the people*” (**30:20**). The entire occasion was a high point in post-Solomon Israelite history (**30:26**). This was no short-lived emotional rush, but a genuine recommitment followed by a zealous campaign to wipe out places and practices of

idolatry. Hezekiah did everything with careful attention to the Law, following David's and Solomon's worship examples.

David Guzik: Their pattern of preparing to receive the Passover is instructive for those who come to the communion table, especially those who feel unworthy to partake of communion.

- They forgot their differences and came together as one people.
- They removed their idols.
- They prepared their hearts.
- Their sins and ignorance were confessed.
- They prayed.

Geoffrey Kirkland: King Hezekiah's Invitation to Celebrate the Passover

I. THE INVITATION TO THE PASSOVER (1-12)

1. The letters (1-4)
2. The couriers (5-9)
3. The rejecters/mockers (10)
4. The worshipers (11-12)

II. THE REINSTITUTION OF THE PASSOVER (13-22)

1. The place (13)
2. The purification (14)
3. The Passover (15-16)
4. The prayer (17-19)

III. THE JUBILATION AT THE PASSOVER (23-27)

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/10111874702.pdf>

Steven Cole: The Joy of Obedience

Big Idea: Obedience from the heart to our gracious God results in great joy.

1. Obedience from the heart is founded on God's Word.
2. Obedience from the heart responds to God's character.
3. Obedience from the heart yields to God's person.
4. Obedience from the heart promotes unity among God's people.
5. Obedience from the heart results in the joy of God's blessing.

Conclusion:

Maybe you've always associated obedience with oppression. You've thought that obedience means a loss of freedom and fun. That's the devil's lie. Obedience from the heart to our gracious God results in great joy. As the Apostle John put it, "*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome*" (1 John 5:3).

<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-11-joy-obedience-2-chronicles-30>

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 31:1-21

TITLE: HEZEKIAH'S DIRECTIVES FOR FAITHFUL FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

BIG IDEA:

ADMINISTRATION OF SPIRITUAL WORSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR LEADERS REQUIRES FAITHFUL FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

INTRODUCTION:

John Gill: This chapter begins with the destruction of idolatrous worship, the appointment of the courses of the priests and Levites, and the royal bounty for sacrifices, **2 Chronicles 31:1**, next follows the order Hezekiah gave, that the people at Jerusalem, and throughout the land, should make the proper provision for the priests and Levites, as the law directed; and which was cheerfully complied with, and the firstfruits and tithes were brought in, in great abundance, insomuch that there was enough, and plenty left, **2 Chronicles 31:4**, wherefore chambers were prepared in the temple to lay it up in, and persons appointed to be the overseers of it, and to distribute it faithfully to their brethren and their families, to small and great, **2 Chronicles 31:11**, and the chapter is closed in praise of the works of Hezekiah, and the success that attended him, **2 Chronicles 31:20**.

Iain Duguid: Focus throughout is on well-supported and managed continuing temple ministry. The account is clearly an example for the postexilic community to emulate, especially if the laxity evident in postexilic accounts continued (**Neh. 13:10–13** [contrast prior commitment; **10:32–39**]; **Mal. 1:8, 14; 3:8–9**). The conclusion to **2 Chronicles 29–31 (31:20–21)** reinforces the message that seeking the Lord and acting according to the law lead to prospering.

Andrew Hill: The cleansing and reopening of the temple brings about the restoration of the temple liturgy. This means, in turn, that the sacrificial and musical guilds of the priests and Levites must be reorganized so they can adequately service the temple liturgy. Naturally, this calls for the reinstatement of the regular tithes and offerings prescribed by the law of Moses in order to support the temple personnel. This section of the Chronicler's report of Hezekiah's reign addresses the reordering of Levitical corps (**31:2-3**) and the reestablishment of the Mosaic tithes and offerings (**31:4-19**).

Martin Selman: Hezekiah's cleansing of the temple (**ch. 29**) and celebration of the Passover (**ch. 30**) enabled him to re-establish regular worship. This involved two further tasks, reorganizing the priests and Levites (**v. 2**) and establishing proper financial support for temple personnel and the system of offerings (**vv. 4-19**). The dominant emphasis of **chapter 31** falls on the practical giving of the people, however. Though the king's leadership provided an important stimulus, an effective system of worship was not possible without full popular involvement.

The apparently routine character of this chapter is deceptive, for it deals with two principles of first importance.

- The first is that worship cannot be left to the “professionals”.
- The second principle is the care needed to ensure that Israel’s worship is carried out “*decently and in order*”: (cf. 1 **Cor. 14:40**). Good planning and the implementation of adequate supporting structure provide a framework in which wholehearted and meaningful worship can take place.

Matthew Henry: We have here an account of what was done after the Passover. What was wanting in the solemnities of preparation for it before was made up in that which is better, a due improvement of it after. When the religious exercises of a Lord’s Day or a communion are finished we must not think that then the work is done. No, then the hardest part of our work begins, which is to exemplify the impressions of the ordinance upon our minds in all the instances of a holy conversation. So it was here; when all this was finished there was more to be done.

(:1) TRANSITION – SPIRITUAL WORSHIP CANNOT COEXIST WITH IDOLATRY – FURTHER REFORMATION ACTIVITIES

A. Rooting Out All Vestiges of Idolatry

“Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah, broke the pillars in pieces, cut down the Asherim, and pulled down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all.”

Raymond Dillard: Hezekiah’s reform proceeded in concentric circles from the temple (**29:3–36**), through the city (**30:13–14**), and into the surrounding territory, including portions of the North (**31:1**).

Peter Wallace: In the past, we have heard about how a good king destroys high places, pillars, and Asherim. Now we hear that all Israel broke down pillars, Asherim, and high places. For once, we have a faithful generation that seeks the LORD with a whole heart!

L.M. Grant: When Hezekiah had taken positive action to give God His true place of authority in the Passover feast, he rightly followed this up with the negative work of destroying the idolatrous pillars, images, high places and altars that had been introduced by earlier kings. The many people who had been present for the Passover carded out this destruction in the Cities of Judah, but also in Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh (**v.1**) before returning to their own property.

J. Parker: Mark the word “*utterly*.” It is for want of that word that so many men have failed. Many men have cut off the heads of weeds. Any man can do that. **The weed is in the root**, and the root is not straight down in the earth, so that it can be taken out easily; after a certain depth it ramifies, and care must be taken that we get out every fibre and filament, and having got it out, turn it upside down, and let the sun do the rest. A man has undertaken to abstain from some evil pursuit for a month: he has clipped off

the top of the weed and looks just as well as anybody else, but he is not; he has still the root in him, and that must be taken out, though he be half murdered in the process.

B. Return to Home Base

“Then all the sons of Israel returned to their cities, each to his possession.”

I. (:1-10) COLLECTION OF OFFERINGS TO SUPPORT THE ADMINISTRATION OF SPIRITUAL WORSHIP

A. (:2-4) 3 Key Directives to Support the Administration of Spiritual Worship

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler continues to liken Hezekiah to Solomon by showing his oversight of cultic personnel (2 Chr 8:14; cf. 1 Chr 23–26). Just as David and Solomon provided from their own wealth for the temple (), so also Hezekiah provides from his property. The Chronicler is 1 Chr 29:1–5; 2 Chr 9:10–11 fond of showing that faithful and generous kings prompt similar generosity in the population (31:5–10; 24:8–14; 1 Chr 29:6–9).

1. (:2) Directive #1 – Organize the Leaders and Define their Worship Function

“And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites by their divisions, each according to his service, both the priests and the Levites, for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister and to give thanks and to praise in the gates of the camp of the LORD.”

Iain Duguid: Restoring the “*service of the house of the Lord*” (29:35) meant resuming the arrangement of “*divisions*” of priests and Levites, each with its own responsibilities for offerings and praise. The unusual phrase “*the gates of the camp of the Lord*” recalls the tabernacle, thus serving as a reminder of continuity with the wilderness tradition (Num. 2:17; cf. 1 Chron. 9:18–19).

Payne: The Hebrew for Hezekiah’s assigning the priests to divisions is definite: he “*appointed THE divisions of the priests.*” He reestablished the twenty-four rotating courses that had been set up by David (1 Chronicles 25) to insure orderly worship.

2. (:3) Directive #2 – Set the Example for Financial Support

“He also appointed the king's portion of his goods for the burnt offerings, namely, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths and for the new moons and for the fixed festivals, as it is written in the law of the LORD.”

Mark Boda: Vs. 3 lists the many worship services that needed to be supported. Although not explicit in the Hebrew text, the list is organized by frequency of practice from daily (morning and evening burnt offerings), to weekly (Sabbath festivals), to monthly (new moon festivals), to annual (festivals) events. This list provides insight into the complex and demanding character of worship in Judah and is an essential

foundation for understanding why priestly and Levitical orders needed to “*devote themselves fully to the Law of the Lord*” (31:4).

3. (:4) Directive #3 – Charge the People with their Responsibility to Give
“*Also he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the law of the LORD.*”

Raymond Dillard: Hezekiah restores the system of offerings used for the maintenance of the priests and Levites (31:4; Lev 6:14—7:36; Num 18:8–32; Deut 14:27–29; 18:1–8; 26:1–15) which had presumably been interrupted during the apostasy of Ahaz. These offerings were readily neglected by the people (Mal 3:8–12; Neh 13:10–13) and occasionally abused by the priests (1 Sam 2:12–16). Rather than describing these offerings as freeing the priests and Levites for devotion to the service of the temple, the Chronicler describes them as freeing the cultic personnel for devotion to the “*law of Yahweh*”; though both ways of describing the intended effect of the offerings may refer to temple duties, the Chronicler’s phraseology could reflect the growing importance of the study of the law in the post-exilic period (Williamson, 374).

Peter Wallace: Hezekiah sees his gift as an **example** to the rest of the congregation. Having exemplified sacrificial giving himself, he calls the people to imitate him. He will provide all the special offerings. But he calls them to provide the regular provision for the priests and Levites, so that they can devote themselves to the Law of the LORD (in other words, their duties as commanded by the law).

B. (:5-10) Generous Giving Should be the Response of God’s People

1. (:5-7) Heaps of Tithes Collected by Voluntary, Enthusiastic Giving

a. (:5) Immediate Response from the Northern Kingdom

“*And as soon as the order spread, the sons of Israel provided in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of all.*”

Raymond Dillard: The firstfruits of grain, wine, and oil are specifically assigned to the priests (Num 18:12–13) and the tithe to the Levites (Num 18:21). Though “*honey*,” actually a syrup-like product from fruits, is excluded from burnt offerings, it was nevertheless suitable for the support of the priests and was brought as part of the firstfruits (Lev 2:11–12).

b. (:6) Similar Response from Those Living in Judah

“*And the sons of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah, also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of sacred gifts which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed them in heaps.*”

Iain Duguid: While king and chief priest took leadership (vv. 10, 13), priests, Levites, and “*Israel*” each were actively participating through their varied responsibilities.

Frederick Mabie: Hezekiah praises the people for obediently and abundantly responding to this call of God (vv. 6-7; cf. Dt 14:22-29). In the light of their obedience and generosity, Hezekiah blesses the people (v. 8), similar to David’s (cf. 1Ch 16:2) and Solomon’s (cf. 2Ch 6:3-11) blessings. Indeed, the storage and faithful disbursement of accumulated tithes (vv. 11-18; cf. Dt 14:28-29) act as a means of appropriating God’s blessing (“*so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands*”; Dt 14:29). Note that tithes have also been appointed for “*aliens, the fatherless, and the widows who live in your towns*” (Dt 14:29).

c. (:7) Rapid Conclusion of Giving Campaign
*“In the third month they began to make the heaps,
and finished them by the seventh month.”*

2. (:8) Praise for the Abundance Collected
*“And when Hezekiah and the rulers came and saw the heaps,
they blessed the LORD and His people Israel.”*

3. (:9-10) Financial Accounting to Make Sure All Needs Are Being Met
*“Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the
heaps. And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok said to him,
‘Since the contributions began to be brought into the house of the
LORD, we have had enough to eat with plenty left over, for the LORD
has blessed His people, and this great quantity is left over.’”*

Andrew Hill: The rest of the section (31:5-19) links the regular giving of the tithes and offerings to the vitality of temple worship. The response to the king’s command to bring the firstfruits of the produce of the field and tithe of the herds and flocks is overwhelming (31:5-8). No doubt, the Chronicler understands these actions as signifying the genuineness of the people’s repentance. The offerings of grain, wine, and oil are designated for the priests (cf. Num. 18:12-13), while the Levites receive the tithe (cf. Num. 18:21). The contributions come from all Israel, including the citizens of Jerusalem as well as the residents of Judah and the Israelites from the northern tribes who have emigrated to Judah (2 Chron. 31:4, 6). The ingathering of both food stuffs and animals (31:7) lasts from the grain harvest of the third month (the Feast of Pentecost [May/June]) to the fruit and vine harvests of the seventh month (the Feast of Tabernacles [Sept/Oct]).

II. (:11-19) FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP OF THE COLLECTED OFFERINGS

Raymond Dillard: The flow of thought and the precise significance of some of the details in this section are difficult. Hezekiah arranges for the storage and oversight of the offerings to be used to support the cultic personnel. Conaniah and Shimei are

assisted by ten others responsible for the storerooms in the temple, while Kore and six others arranged distribution in the outlying priests' towns (1 Chr 6:54–60). This distinction between those living in Jerusalem and those in the outlying towns is reiterated in 31:16, 19; a distinction is also made in the basis for distribution between the priests (genealogical records) and the Levites (courses and divisions; 31:17).

Peter Wallace: The point of verses 11-16 is that the “heaps” of provision were such that they needed a whole structure for oversight and distribution.

A. (:11-12a) Secure Storage of the Offerings

“Then Hezekiah commanded them to prepare rooms in the house of the LORD, and they prepared them. And they faithfully brought in the contributions and the tithes and the consecrated things;”

Frederick Mabie: In light of the “heaps” of provisions being set aside for the priests and Levites (vv. 4-8), Hezekiah orders the construction of storage areas in the temple complex. Hezekiah's efforts are either a revamping of existing side storage areas reflected in the tripartite design of Solomon's temple or the construction of additional storage capacity. In addition to foodstuffs as here, such storage rooms were used to store a wide variety of items needed by priests in their temple ministry. Such “side rooms” were under the charge of Levites (cf. 1Ch 23:28).

Iain Duguid: Three times the work is said to be done “faithfully” (vv. 12, 15, 18). The Hebrew term *'emunah* occurs in specific contexts in Chronicles, referring mainly to “trust (worthiness), honesty, conscientiousness” in matters of handling resources (also 34:12; 1 Chron. 9:22, 26, 31; cf. 2 Kings 12:15; 22:7; Neh. 13:13). Such a quality is an outworking of sincere, intentional commitment to God and so also is expressed in “keeping [oneself] holy” (2 Chron. 31:18). Elsewhere in Chronicles it describes Hezekiah's activity “before the Lord his God” (v. 20) and judicial decisions “in the fear of the Lord” (19:9).

B. (:12b-19) Faithful Oversight and Distribution of the Offerings

1. (:12b-13) Faithful Oversight

“and Conaniah the Levite was the officer in charge of them and his brother Shimei was second. 13 And Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were overseers under the authority of Conaniah and Shimei his brother by the appointment of King Hezekiah, and Azariah was the chief officer of the house of God.”

2. (:14-19) Faithful Distribution

“And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the eastern gate, was over the freewill offerings of God, to apportion the contributions for the LORD and the most holy things. 15 And under his authority were Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah in the cities of the priests, to distribute faithfully their portions to their brothers

by divisions, whether great or small, 16 without regard to their genealogical enrollment, to the males from thirty years old and upward-- everyone who entered the house of the LORD for his daily obligations-- for their work in their duties according to their divisions; 17 as well as the priests who were enrolled genealogically according to their fathers' households, and the Levites from twenty years old and upwards, by their duties and their divisions. 18 And the genealogical enrollment included all their little children, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, for the whole assembly, for they consecrated themselves faithfully in holiness. Also for the sons of Aaron the priests who were in the pasture lands of their cities, or in each and every city, there were men who were designated by name to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to everyone genealogically enrolled among the Levites.”

August Konkell: **Administration** is often perceived as tedious and thankless, but its importance and worth must not be minimized. An administrative list of the Levites appointed to the task of distribution describes how the contributions were to be apportioned (vv. 14-19). The system was **complex**. A great number of people were eligible for service, the majority of them living in provincial towns. Small groups of them came to Jerusalem in a rotation system for short terms of office. The division system was further complicated by the fact that all members of the tribe of Levi were entitled to portions, but there were differences between the priests and other Levites. Since all the contributions were collected in Jerusalem, the logistics of distribution were complicated, and standards of eligibility had to be clear. This required an accurate registration and clear rules of status between those who officiated and those who did not, and between those who lived in the provinces and those in Jerusalem.

John Gill: vs. 17 -- for though originally they were not admitted into the tabernacle till twenty five years of age, nor to officiate till thirty, but in David's time they were allowed at twenty years of age and upwards, **1 Chronicles 23:24**.

(:20-21) EPILOGUE – SUMMARY OF HEZEKIAH’S RIGHTEOUS REIGN

A. (:20) Performance: Did What Was Good

*“And thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah;
and he did what was good, right, and true before the LORD his God.”*

B. (:21a) Motivation: Sought God Wholeheartedly

“And every work which he began in the service of the house of God in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart”

Peter Wallace: Nowadays we seem to be divided between two horrible misunderstandings of this:

- one says that acting according to the law and the commandments means strict and precise observance of every jot and tittle;

- the other says that following the spirit of the law means that you can ignore the letter of the law entirely!

C. (:21b) Result: Prospered by God

“and prospered.”

J.A. Thompson: “*He succeeded in everything he undertook.*” Thus Hezekiah serves as prime example of the Chronicler’s “retribution theology.” We are reminded again of the parallel between Hezekiah and Solomon (7:11). Consequently he prospered in all that he did.

Ron Daniel: The key to prosperity is not in the "name it and claim it" teachings. It is in the "seek God with your whole heart, walk in the light, live righteously" teachings. That is where prosperity comes from.

Frederick Mabie: This remarkable summary statement of praise (namely, “*good and right and faithful . . . in everything . . . obedience . . . sought his God . . . worked wholeheartedly . . . prospered*”) closes out the Chronicler’s account of Hezekiah’s reforms and is similar to the opening statement about his reign (cf. 29:2). As such, these remarks “frame” the overwhelmingly positive events of Hezekiah’s reign (chs. 29-31) and create a literary separation between these positive events and the following narrative (ch. 32), in which Hezekiah’s imperfections surface. Hezekiah’s reign is especially marked by an intense and sustained focus on “*obedience to the laws and the commands*” of God (e.g., 29:15, 25; 30:12, 16; 31:3).

G. Campbell Morgan: These words reveal his purpose, his method, and the result; and form a revelation of abiding value to all who are called upon to perform Divine service in any form.

- His purpose was ‘*to seek his God*’; and the expression is exactly equivalent to that with which we are familiar: ‘*Seek ye first His kingdom.*’
- His method was that of complete devotion, ‘*with all his heart.*’
- The result was that of *prosperity*, that is, of success in the very work which was attempted.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Do we pay enough attention to orderly administration of the local church?
- 2) Are we reluctant to ask God’s people to be responsible in their giving?
- 3) Should we expect the type of generous and abundant provision for ministry that we see here?

4) How do the Law of God and the Word of God dominate this topic in **chap. 31**?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: For most modern Western readers of the Bible this chapter reads somewhat awkwardly; it is one more example of the Chronicler's punctilious concern with matters cultic, an interest at great chronological and cultural distance from his readers today. But for the Chronicler and his own contemporaries, rather than a distant and curious pericope, this section would have been full of the utmost practical relevance for godly living. Its reports of **generosity** and its focus on the correct worship of God through **giving and caring for his servants** were practical exhortations of what it meant to seek God and to obey his commandments. For the Chronicler it was a lesson from history that needed to be heard in his own day, for it remained the pathway to success and blessing (**31:21**). Providing for the servants of God to free them for more important matters (**31:4**) is likewise a concern of the NT (**Phil 2:25–30; 4:14–19; 2 Cor 8:10–9:15; Acts 6:1–4; 20:32–35**).

August Konkel: The provisions for the temple fall into two categories:

- those from the king, and
- those from the people (**2 Chron 31:3-4**).

The portion of the king indicates obligatory provisions rather than voluntary contributions. The contribution of the king *from his own possessions* was his responsibility for daily sacrifices and the festival sacrifices in their annual cycle. The people were responsible to give provisions for the clergy. The king's order was given to those *who lived in Jerusalem*, perhaps because they were in the closest proximity to the temple (**v. 4**). Word of the need for temple provisions spread abroad, and the response came from all Israel (**v. 5**). This included those who lived outside of Judah in the north. Two points emerge from this observation:

- Israel was united in its support of the temple, and
- the response became far more than anticipated or even required.

The purpose of the gifts of support was that the clergy might *devote themselves to the Law* (**v. 4**).

David Guzik: What the New Testament does speak with great clarity on is the principle of giving;

- that giving should be regular, planned, proportional, and private (**1 Corinthians 16:1-4**);
- that it must be generous, freely given, and cheerful (**2 Corinthians 9**).

Martin Selman: The **divine blessing** which forms the climax in this chapter has several distinguishing marks.

- Firstly, it is the result of Hezekiah's faithfulness to the principles established by David and Solomon. It was they who had originally organized the divisions of

priests and Levites (v. 2; cf. 1 Chr. 28:13, 21; 2 Chr. 8:14), established the pattern of regular sacrificial worship (vv. 2-3; 1 Chr. 23:31; 2 Chr. 2:4; 8:13), led the way in generosity (v. 3; 1 Chr. 29:2-5; 2 Chr. 7:5), and blessed the people (v. 8; 1 Chr. 16:2; 2 Chr. 6:3).

- Secondly, it is associated with Hezekiah's wholehearted commitment to God's law (vv. 3, 4, 21).
- Thirdly, God blesses his people through their own generosity (cf. 1 Chr. 29:14-16).
- Fourthly, God blesses beyond his people's normal expectation (cf. 1 Chr. 13:14; 17:27).

Mark Boda: For his community, this part of the Chronicler's account of Hezekiah would have served two purposes. First, it would have challenged them to **give generously** to the service of the Temple, especially focusing on tithing their harvests. Such gifts, according to the Chronicler, are essential so that the priests and Levites "*could devote themselves fully to the Law of the Lord*," that is, the stipulations for worship contained in the Torah. The ideal scenario is described by Azariah, the Zadokite high priest, in 31:10: "." This is explicitly tied to the generosity of the people *We have had enough to eat and plenty to spare* ("*Since the people began bringing their gifts to the Lord's Temple*"), which is a reflection of the blessing of the Lord upon them ("*The Lord has blessed his people, and all this is left over*"). The people of Jerusalem appear to have a role to play as examples to the rest of the community for this generosity (31:4), but the responsibility for the Temple and its personnel could not be borne by them alone. This was a task for all those living in the province of Judah.

Second, the account would have provided an **administrative system** for distributing the resources of the Temple to priestly and Levitical personnel throughout the province. This may suggest some conflict over this issue in the Chronicler's time, but it may also simply be an affirmation of a system that was working well.

Geoffrey Kirkland: Hezekiah's Great Reformation: The People's Faithful & Generous Provision for the Leaders to Be Devoted to Scripture!

After a mountaintop experience (like celebrating the nationwide Passover with Hezekiah, 2 Chron 30!), we need to take care as we return to the ROUTINE OF DAILY LIFE.

Background of 2 Chronicles 31: So what do you do when Hezekiah's reforms and Passover festival has ended and it's time to go home? How do you keep spiritual health up? What do you do? How do you find teaching and instruction from the Law of God?

Two big picture lessons from 2 Chronicles 31:

- #1- WORSHIP cannot be left to the 'PROFESSIONALS' alone
- #2- WORSHIP is to be carried out in DECENCY AND IN ORDER

THESIS — What happens when great Reformation comes? What are some marks?

Observing King Hezekiah's reformation brought a number of results.

Reforms Bring...

I. HOLY VIOLENCE TOWARD SIN! (1)

II. HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO GOD! (2)

III. PRECISE OBEDIENCE TO SCRIPTURE! (3)

- Note Hezekiah's commitment to the written Word
- Note Hezekiah's commitment to obedience

IV. GRACIOUS PROVISION TO TEACHERS! (4-19)

• The focus here in this chap is on the HEARTS OF GOD'S PEOPLE; they give generously! *summary verse is v. 10!*

1. GIVING for God's Work (Contribution of the gifts) (vv. 4-10) [**Deut 14.29; 18:5; 1 Cor 9.13-14; 1 Tim 5.18**]

2. SUPPORT for God's Servants (Distribution of the gifts) (vv. 11-19) The characteristic & main mark of all the distribution of the funds was "*Faithfulness*" (v. 12, 15, 18)

V. GODLY LEADERS OBEYING SCRIPTURE! (20-21)

Summary of Hezekiah's Leadership:

1. Hezekiah's LEADERSHIP (*he did*)
2. Hezekiah's CONSISTENCY (*throughout ALL Judah*)
3. Hezekiah's AMBITION (*he did before the LORD HIS GOD*)
4. Hezekiah's PRIORITY (*he served the Lord in the house of God*)
5. Hezekiah's AUTHORITY (the Law and in Commandment)
6. Hezekiah's PURSUIT (*he sought his God*)
7. Hezekiah's PASSION (*he did with all his heart*)
8. Hezekiah's BLESSING (*and he prospered!*)

Let us be faithful to give -- God supplies us, so let us give generously

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 32:1-33

TITLE: WHO WILL FIGHT YOUR BATTLES?
WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR DELIVERANCE?

BIG IDEA:

DESPITE FEET OF CLAY, HEZEKIAH ENCOURAGES LOOKING TO THE LORD FOR DELIVERANCE RATHER THAN TRUSTING THE ARM OF THE FLESH

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: Following his “*acts of faithfulness*” (as in **2 Chronicles 29–31**; cf. **31:20**), Hezekiah saw the death of the Assyrian emperor Sargon II (721–705 BC) as an opportunity to rebel, but in 701 Sargon’s successor, Sennacherib, moved against Judah (**32:1**; **2 Kings 18:7, 13**). Preparation for the Assyrian attack included some defensive works, but priority was given to the proper worship of God (**2 Chron. 32:2–8**). Hezekiah’s response to the threats of Sennacherib’s taunting messengers (vv. **9–20**) led dramatically to deliverance (v. **21**). The resulting gifts for both the Lord and Hezekiah recall the fame of Solomon (vv. **22–23**; cf. **9:23–24**). . .

Differences in details between Kings and Chronicles result from the Chronicler’s using information from Kings and Isaiah to highlight his own message of Hezekiah’s leadership in preparation and reliance on God, and also the results.

August Konkel: For the most part, Hezekiah is regarded as a noble and successful king, but it is never forgotten that he too had feet of clay. In contrast to Ahaz, he restored the worship of God, he asked for and received a sign of divine providence, and in his time the city was delivered. Yet he also was unfaithful: his fateful alliance with the Babylonians was the first step toward that nation accomplishing what the Assyrians could not do. Jerusalem would bear the punishment of faithlessness, and Hezekiah would be partly responsible for that catastrophe.

Hezekiah is a good example of how one person and one experience show many aspects of the profound calling to live by faith. In its whole account, the book of Kings emphasizes that Hezekiah demonstrated how to trust God in a manner that was unequalled (**2 Kings 18:5**). Yet it was this same king who fell into the trap of trusting in human alliances and dooming his city (**20:12-19**). Hezekiah was the man whose life was declared to be over in his prime (**Isa 38:9-20**), yet he became the example of how God can revive the dead. Faith is always a matter of faithfulness. The failure of faith brings consequences that are inescapable, but the presence of faith assures us of hope that nothing can destroy.

Andrew Hill: Along with the building of Solomon’s temple and the fall of Samaria, Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah is one of the most important events in the history of

southern kingdom. The Assyrian campaign is dated to 701 B.C., during the Fourteenth year of Hezekiah (**2 Kings 18:13**). The Chronicler assumes a thorough knowledge on the part of his audience of the earlier parallel accounts (**2 Kings 18-19; Isa. 36-37**). Further, he ignores the problems of harmonizing posed by the conflicting details of the invasion reported in the Kings version. As Selman notes, the Chronicler has edited the earlier sources in such a way that the conflict becomes largely a “war of words.”

Martin Selman: The key question is whether Yahweh can *save or deliver* his people. The underlying Hebrew word (*bassil*) is mentioned eight times (**vv. 10-17**), with the Assyrians constantly challenging any deity to counteract the apparently superior power of the Assyrian army. Yahweh is assumed to be a god just like any other, and the Assyrians attempt to undermine the Israelites’ confidence (**v. 10**) by casting doubt on his effectiveness. The turning-point comes when Judah’s leaders pray (**v. 20**). Yahweh listens to their desperate plea and saves his people (**v. 22**), with Hezekiah as no more than a spectator. It is therefore Yahweh who really rules in Israel, and the chapter aims to stimulate faith in Israel’s God rather than admiration for Israel’s king.

I. (:1-8) DESPERATE TIMES PRESENT A CRISIS OF FAITH

A. (:1) Siege by Sennacherib of Assyria

“After these acts of faithfulness Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself.”

Raymond Dillard: Here the introductory phrase “*after these faithful acts*” is also diagnostic of the author’s intent; it places the entire narrative that follows in the context of the author’s theology of **immediate retribution**: a righteous king should enjoy victory in warfare and rest from his enemies, and this is the moral of the story (**32:20–23**).

J.A. Thompson: In view of the Chronicler’s retribution theology, this verse is **striking** after such a glowing account of faithfulness. But the invasion of Sennacherib is reminiscent of the invasion of Zerah in Asa’s day (**14:9-15**), where trust in God led to victory. God does not promise that his faithful ones will not have trials but that he will not forsake them. The details supplied by the Chronicler are somewhat abbreviated by comparison with the accounts in **2 Kgs 18-19** and **Isa 36-37**. There is no mention here of the siege of Jerusalem, of Hezekiah paying tribute, or of Sennacherib’s capture of many towns in Judah. Only after Hezekiah had carried out so many faithful acts did the events of this chapter unfold. Faithful deeds are followed by divine help and deliverance.

August Konkel: Sometimes it seems that our efforts to serve God are rewarded with trouble and opposition. There can be no bargaining with God, no conditions for the sacrifices made to serve God’s kingdom. In the Chronicler’s presentation of Hezekiah, the most traumatic event of his kingdom comes after all that Hezekiah has so faithfully done (**2 Chron 32:1**). The attack of Sennacherib results in a blessing due to seeking the

Lord. A central point of the story is that Jerusalem tended to overshadow another reality: the captivity of all the other fortified cities of Judah (**2 Kings 18:13**).

Matthew Henry: Here is the formidable design of Sennacherib against Hezekiah's kingdom, and the vigorous attempt he made upon it. This Sennacherib was now, as Nebuchadnezzar was afterwards, the terror and scourge and great oppressor of that part of the world. He aimed to raise a boundless monarchy for himself upon the ruins of all his neighbours. His predecessor Shalmaneser had lately made himself master of the kingdom of Israel, and carried the ten tribes captives. Sennacherib thought, in like manner, to win Judah for himself. Pride and ambition put men upon grasping at universal dominion. It is observable that, just about this time, Rome, a city which afterwards came to reign more than any other had done over the kings of the earth, was built by Romulus. Sennacherib invaded Judah immediately after the reformation of it and the re-establishment of religion in it: After these things he entered into Judah, **2 Chron. 32:1**.

1. It was well ordered by the divine Providence that he did not give them this disturbance before the reformation was finished and established, as it might then have put a stop to it.
2. Perhaps he intended to chastise Hezekiah for destroying that idolatry to which he himself was devoted. He looked upon Hezekiah as profane in what he had done, and as having thrown himself out of the divine protection. He accordingly considered him as one who might easily be made a prey of.
3. God ordered it at this time that he might have an opportunity of showing himself strong on the behalf of this returning reforming people. He brought this trouble upon them that he might have the honour, and might put on them the honour, of their deliverance.

After these things, and the establishment thereof, one would have expected to hear of nothing but perfect peace, and that none durst meddle with a people thus qualified for the divine favour; yet the next news we hear is that a threatening destroying army enters the country, and is ready to lay all waste. We may be in the way of our duty and yet meet with trouble and danger. God orders it so for the trial of our confidence in him and the manifestation of his care concerning us. The little opposition which Sennacherib met with in entering Judah induced him to imagine that all was his own. He thought to win all the fenced cities (**2 Chron. 32:1**), and purposed to fight against Jerusalem, **2 Chron. 32:2**. See **2 Kgs. 18:7, 13**.

B. (:2-5) Strategic Defensive Measures

“Now when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem,”

1. (:3-4) Diverting the Water Supply

a. (:3) Cooperative Decision

“he decided with his officers and his warriors to cut off the supply of water from the springs which were outside the city, and they helped him.”

Iain Duguid: In both security and reforms Hezekiah consulted with others (**32:3; 30:2, 23**; cf. **1 Chron. 13:1**), and wide community involvement was evident (**2 Chron. 32:4; 30:13**). Resolute wise leadership embraced both worship of the Lord and security for the people and was possible through consultation and cooperation.

J.A. Thompson: It is no denial of one's trust in God if one makes certain precautionary preparations. "Pray to God and keep your powder dry" is a wise response in the face of danger at any time. Blocking off the water from the springs outside the city was a wise defensive measure because a plentiful water supply made the task of invaders easier.

b. (:4) Committed Implementation

"So many people assembled and stopped up all the springs and the stream which flowed through the region, saying, 'Why should the kings of Assyria come and find abundant water?'"

Raymond Dillard: Standard siege strategy calls for reducing a city through thirst by cutting off access to the water supply or by poisoning it; plentiful water only eases the task of the invading foe. Hezekiah's efforts at diverting and concealing the water sources in the area of Jerusalem anticipate the coming siege. Apart from the famous "Hezekiah's tunnel," the earlier Warren shaft, and an irrigation channel attributed to the Solomonic period (cf. **Eccl 2:6**; see **H. Shanks**, *The City of David* [Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeological Society, 1975]), comparatively little is known about the water supply of the City of David. Two springs are known to have been in the area, the famous Gihon (**32:30**) in the Kidron Valley east of the city and the spring at Enrogel, two miles south.

2. (:5) Directing Effective Countermeasures

"And he took courage and rebuilt all the wall that had been broken down, and erected towers on it, and built another outside wall, and strengthened the Millo in the city of David, and made weapons and shields in great number."

Raymond Dillard: Building projects such as these related to the water supply and the repair of the walls are not only prudent strategy; for the Chronicler they are tokens of divine blessing given to pious monarchs. It is striking that Isaiah took a different view (**Isa 22:9–11**) and warned about the danger of self-reliance and a tendency to forget Yahweh.

J.A. Thompson: The countermeasures taken by Hezekiah were threefold. He had to care for the water problem, both from a defensive and offensive point of view. Then he had to repair weak spots in the wall, erect towers, construct an outside wall, and build up the Millo, that is, "*the supporting terraces*" as David and Solomon once had done (**1 Chr 11:8; 1 Kgs 11:27**).

Frederick Mabie: Hezekiah fortified "*the Millo*" ("*supporting terraces*," **32:5**) and also expanded the confines of the city of Jerusalem by what is known as the Broad Wall,

described as “*another wall outside*” the original city wall (v. 5). This twenty-foot-thick wall expanded the walled portion of Jerusalem toward the western hill and allowed the city to accommodate the rising population as the Assyrian invasion drew near (see **M. Broshi**, “The Expansion of Jerusalem in the Reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh,” *IEJ* 24 [1974]: 21-26).

Hezekiah’s most impressive achievement, however, was the tapping into the upper outlet of the Gihon spring and channeling the water underground (via the Siloam Tunnel) to the western side of the City of David (vv. 3-4, 30). As a result, Jerusalem had ongoing access to fresh water that was out of the view (and access) of the Assyrian army (vv. 3-4; see additional details on this tunnel at vv. 27-30).

C. (:6-8) Strong Encouragement by Hezekiah

1. (:6) Appointment of Military Officers

“And he appointed military officers over the people, and gathered them to him in the square at the city gate, and spoke encouragingly to them, saying,”

2. (:7-8a) Charge to Courageously Trust the Lord

“Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude which is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him. 8 With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles.”

Iain Duguid: Trusting in fortifications and military preparedness was always a temptation (cf. **Isa. 22:8b–11**), but Hezekiah called the people to look not to “*an arm of flesh*” but to the presence of “*the Lord our God.*” While in **2 Kings 19:6–7** similar words are spoken later by Isaiah to Hezekiah, the Assyrian envoys’ earlier words in **2 Kings 18:29–36** point to Hezekiah’s having already encouraged **reliance on the Lord**.

3. (:8b) Positive Impact of Hezekiah’s Encouragement

“And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.”

Andrew Hill: Hezekiah organizes the citizens of Jerusalem into a militia of sorts with oversight by select military personnel (**32:6**). As “commander-in-chief” he encourages the people with a motivational speech patterned after the charge to Joshua as he succeeded Moses before the conquest of Canaan (**32:6b-8a**; cf. **Deut. 31:8**; **Josh. 1:9**). The king’s appeal to the people is a theological treatise, not a nationalistic or patriotic rally cry. Despite the overwhelming odds stacked against Hezekiah and Jerusalem numerically speaking, victory is assured because it is God himself who is fighting for Judah (**Ex. 14:14**; **Deut. 1:30**; **20:4**; cf. **Deut. 17:16**).

Martin Selman: Under Hezekiah’s leadership unity and faith both increased. They joined together as a “*great many people*” (v. 4, NRSV, RSV) to help the king (v. 3) before assembling for their encouragement in one of the city’s squares (v. 5; cf. **29:4**).

II. (:9-19) DEMAND FOR SURRENDER SUPPORTED BY PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

A. (:9-15) Attacking the Credibility of King Hezekiah

Raymond Dillard: It is a form of **psychological warfare**: the commander of a powerful army sends messengers to intimidate surrounding cities into capitulation in the face of a threatened siege or disaster. Cf. the messages sent to Samaria by Ben-hadad (**1 Kgs 20:2–12**). When his messengers went to Jerusalem, Sennacherib “*was besieging Lachish*.” It was literally a “monumental” campaign; Sennacherib commemorated the event with a mural over fifty feet long carved in stone in one of his palaces (**D. Ussishkin**, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* [Tel Aviv: University Institute of Archeology, 1982]). . .

The messenger’s speech is, of course, designed both to instill fear and to arouse discontent with Hezekiah. Hezekiah is charged with religious heresy, with abuse of power through forced labor, with deception, and with endangering the lives of his subjects. The “*forced labor*” (**32:11**) was presumably the conscripted assistance used for the water projects and repairing the walls and towers.

Ackroyd (193) sees in **v 16** echoes of **Ps 2:2**: speaking against Yahweh and Hezekiah was speaking “*against the Lord and his anointed*.” Hezekiah in Chronicles is **idealized** in the same way the author treated David and Solomon; he takes on **messianic overtones** that would be developed in the postbiblical literature of Judaism.

Iain Duguid: Sennacherib’s appeal to Jerusalem was audaciously arrogant, not simply boasting in his own might but also blasphemously placing the Lord on the same level as the impotent gods of other peoples.

1. (:9) Crafting the Psychological Message to be Delivered by His Commanders

“After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem while he was besieging Lachish with all his forces with him, against Hezekiah king of Judah and against all Judah who were at Jerusalem, saying,”

2. (:10) Calling into Question the Faith of Those Defending Jerusalem

*“Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria,
‘On what are you trusting that you are remaining in Jerusalem under siege?’”*

3. (:11-12) Charging Hezekiah with Deceit and Oppression

a. (:11) Braggadocious False Claims Leading to False Hope

*“Is not Hezekiah misleading you
to give yourselves over to die by hunger and by thirst, saying,*

'The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria'?"

b. (:12) Burdensome Religious Policies

"Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before one altar, and on it you shall burn incense'?"

4. (:13-14) Citing Historical Precedent of Assyrian Conquests to Prove the Inability of Foreign Gods

"Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the lands? Were the gods of the nations of the lands able at all to deliver their land from my hand? 14 'Who was there among all the gods of those nations which my fathers utterly destroyed who could deliver his people out of my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand?"

J.A. Thompson: Sennacherib's message was typical of those who place their faith in human power rather than in the invisible power of God. Like many such people, he considered faith in the living God to be the same as all "religion," and he mocked the reforms of Hezekiah as meaningless in the face the power of the sword he carried. There is great irony in these verses. Whereas Sennacherib is engaging in psychological warfare, he is doing so by quoting truths thinking they are lies. The phrase "*the Lord our God will save us from the King of Assyria*" is truth but Sennacherib quoted it as if it were an impossibility. Similarly, in v. 12 Hezekiah's reforms were not against the wishes of this "god" but were conducted in fear of the Lord. Sennacherib alluded to history in vv. 13-14 and the fact that no god had stopped them yet. The problem for Sennacherib was that he had never confronted the One true God, Yahweh, the God of Israel. When he did, he returned defeated and disgraced (v. 21).

Andrew Hill: The gist of the Assyrian message is a call to surrender the city of Jerusalem or die in the siege. King Sennacherib's emissaries offer two logical reasons for Judah's capitulation to the invading army.

- (1) The success of the Assyrian campaign in the outlying regions of Judah is interpreted as necessary retribution against Hezekiah because he has offended the gods in his purge of the "*high places*" (32:11-12).
- (2) Recent history has shown that none of the gods of the other nations was able to deliver their people from the Assyrian juggernaut (32:13-15).

5. (:15) Challenging the People to Reject Hezekiah's Leadership

"Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less shall your God deliver you from my hand?"

B. (:16-19) Attacking the Ability of the God of Jerusalem to Deliver

1. (:16) Talking Incessantly against the Lord and His Servant Hezekiah

“And his servants spoke further against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah.”

2. (:17) Taunting the God of Hezekiah with Insulting Letters

“He also wrote letters to insult the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, ‘As the gods of the nations of the lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah shall not deliver His people from my hand.’”

3. (:18-19) Tactics of Intimidation

a. (:18) Disheartening the People by Threats Delivered in Hebrew

“And they called this out with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten and terrify them, so that they might take the city.”

b. (:19) Denigrating the God of Jerusalem

“And they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as of the gods of the peoples of the earth, the work of men's hands.”

III. (:20-23) DIVINE DELIVERANCE – VINDICATING THEOLOGY OF IMMEDIATE RETRIBUTION

A. (:20) Prayer for Deliverance

“But King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed about this and cried out to heaven.”

B. (:21a) Angel of Destruction

“And the LORD sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior, commander and officer in the camp of the king of Assyria.”

Mark Boda: The Chronicler communicates the total devastation by referring to three levels in the military: mighty warrior, commander, and officer (**32:21**).

C. (:21b) Downfall of Sennacherib

1. Disgrace

“So he returned in shame to his own land.”

2. Death at the hands of His Own Children in His Pagan Temple

“And when he had entered the temple of his god, some of his own children killed him there with the sword.”

D. (:22) Protection of Hezekiah and the Jews in Jerusalem

1. Deliverance

“So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria,

and from the hand of all others,”

2. Guidance

“and guided them on every side.”

E. (:23) Elevation of Hezekiah

1. Gifts

“And many were bringing gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem and choice presents to Hezekiah king of Judah,”

Iain Duguid: Further, while Sennacherib had departed in “*shame*” (**2 Chron. 32:21**), Hezekiah received gifts and “*was exalted in the sight of all nations,*” another comparison with Solomon (**9:23–24**). The narrative that began with threat ends in honor to Hezekiah because he (and the people) had honored the Lord, who had heard their prayer.

2. Glory

“so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.”

IV. (:24-26) DEADLY DISEASE DUE TO PRIDE

A. (:24a) Affliction Leading to Prayer for Deliverance

“In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill; and he prayed to the LORD,”

J.A. Thompson: The words “*in those days*” suggest that the paragraphs that follow in v. 24 and following should be read in close connection with the preceding narrative. Hezekiah’s illness followed soon after Sennacherib’s visit to Jerusalem.

B. (:24b) Assurance of Recovery

“and the LORD spoke to him and gave him a sign.”

J.A. Thompson: The reference to Hezekiah’s illness is brief in Chronicles and assumes familiarity with the account in **2 Kgs 20:1-11**, which gives details of the miraculous sign (*mopet*). The Chronicler made use of the sign to link together the two separate accounts in Kings of Hezekiah’s illness and the visit of the Babylonian envoys. The healing God gave to Hezekiah became an occasion for pride. When Hezekiah, with the citizens of Jerusalem, humbled himself in respect to his pride, the wrath of God did not fall on the people in the days of Hezekiah.

Thomas Constable: Hezekiah became deathly ill, and in response to his prayers, God gave him a sign (the shadow on a stairway went backwards; **2 Kings 20:11**) that he would recover (v. 24). However, he did not respond to God appropriately for this blessing, because his heart had grown proud (v. 25). God’s judgment fell, consequently, on Judah and Jerusalem, but the king humbled himself, and God postponed the remaining judgment (v. 26). Hezekiah fell short of being the perfect Son of David, just

like all the rest of Judah's monarchs did.

C. (:25) Arrogance and Inappropriate Response go God's Grace

*"But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received,
because his heart was proud;
therefore wrath came on him and on Judah and Jerusalem."*

D. (:26a) Addressing Pride

*"However, Hezekiah humbled the pride of his heart,
both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,"*

E. (:26a) Avoidance of Divine Wrath During Days of Hezekiah

"so that the wrath of the LORD did not come on them in the days of Hezekiah."

Raymond Dillard: Illness in Chronicles ordinarily is the result of sin (16:7–12; 21:18–19; 26:19–21), though here the Chronicler does not provide any precipitating reason for Hezekiah's illness. Rather, his recovery and the sign he was given become the occasion for **pride**, from which Hezekiah must humble himself, recalling again the language of **Chr 7:14**, and contrasting to Uzziah (26:16).

V. (:27-31) DIVINE BLESSING OF RICHES AND REPUTATION

Raymond Dillard: Hezekiah's wealth once again reflects the concern of the author to effect parallels with David and Solomon. . . Riches and building programs are among the tokens of divine favor; Hezekiah's tunnel was a monumental undertaking, a task requiring the grace and favor of God; see 32:2–5.

August Konkel: The Chronicler is most interested in Hezekiah's achievement (vv. 27–30). He focuses on two matters: his wealth (vv. 27–29) and his water project (v. 30). The meticulous mention of the various items, with the repeated emphasis on quantity, is intended to suggest that the kingdom of Hezekiah was comparable to that of Solomon. The list of Hezekiah's wealth is constructed as one single sentence (in MT), including the building projects necessary to accommodate his possession:

- Hezekiah made treasuries for his wealth (v. 27),
- storehouses for all his produce (v. 28a),
- stalls for all his cattle and pens for his flocks (v. 28b), and
- cities (possibly meaning state-owned lands) for his vast herds of sheep and cattle (v. 29).

The whole is rounded off by emphasizing his exceedingly great possessions as a sign of God's blessing (v. 29b).

A. (:27-29) Summary of Prosperity

1. (:27a) Supremacy of Wealth and Reputation

"Now Hezekiah had immense riches and honor;"

2. (:27b-29) Storehouses of Wealth

a. (:27b) Abundance of Valuable Commodities

“and he made for himself treasuries for silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuable articles,”

b. (:28) Abundance of Produce and Livestock

“storehouses also for the produce of grain, wine and oil, pens for all kinds of cattle and sheepfolds for the flocks.”

c. (:29a) Accumulation of Cities

“And he made cities for himself,”

d. (:29b) Accumulation of Livestock

“and acquired flocks and herds in abundance;”

3. (:29c) Source of Wealth = Blessing of God

“for God had given him very great wealth.”

B. (:30a) Supreme Achievement

“It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David.”

C. (:30b-31) Summary of Prosperity

1. (:30b) Reflected in Divine Favor

“And Hezekiah prospered in all that he did.”

Raymond Dillard: “*succeed*” (32:30), is another term characteristic of the Chronicler’s theology of immediate retribution. In saying that Hezekiah succeeded in all that he did, the Chronicler is emphasizing only one part of the attitude taken to the Babylonian emissaries in the earlier two accounts (2 Kgs 20:17–19 // Isa 39:6–8). In the earlier accounts Hezekiah’s display was a harbinger of a day when the Babylonians would carry away Judah’s wealth and royal household, though Hezekiah would have peace and security during his reign. The Chronicler regards this testing as successful, focusing only on its **positive outcome**.

2. (:31) Reflected in Divine Testing

“And even in the matter of the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.”

J.A. Thompson: The Chronicler’s assertion that God “*left Hezekiah*” in order to “*test*” him has significant theological implications. God wants genuine character and faithfulness in his people, and he will expose them to trials in order to train and shape them. The path of sanctification is not an easy one (cf. **Gen 22:1**).

August Konkel: The visit of the Babylonian envoys is cast in terms of well-known eastern interest in astrology (v. 31). Kings accounts for the visit as an inquiry into Hezekiah's health (2 Kings 20:12). For the Chronicler, they came investigating a sign, no doubt a reference to the return of the shadow (2 Kings 20:8-11). This is presented as a test from God, the real cause for their appearance. God was not testing Hezekiah's actions but needed to know what was in his heart (the expression is derived from Deut 8:2). Though this is not presented as a test in Kings, the story there does show that Hezekiah responded positively to the prophet's warning and resigned himself to the divine will (2 Kings 20:12-19). The story in both versions ends on a positive note, indicating Hezekiah's devotion to the divine purpose whether the final outcome be good or bad.

Andrew Hill: Hezekiah's "success" (32:30) may be viewed as God's reward for overcoming the circumstances of God's testing in his life (32:31). Divine testing is a recurring Old Testament theme, not because God needs to know the intents of the human heart, but rather because the Lord tests the hearts of his servants so that they might respond to him in complete faith as a result of the discernment that emerges from this kind of self-knowledge (cf. Deut. 8:2-3).

(:32-33) EPILOGUE – CLOSING SUMMARY OF HEZEKIAH'S REIGN

A. (:32) Recorded Deeds

"Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his deeds of devotion, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel."

B. (:33a) Death and Burial

1. Death

"So Hezekiah slept with his fathers,"

2. Burial

"and they buried him in the upper section of the tombs of the sons of David;"

3. Honor Shown to Him

"and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death."

C. (:33b) Succession

"And his son Manasseh became king in his place."

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why doesn't obedience and faithfulness lead to an easy life of prosperity and favorable circumstances?
- 2) How do the taunts of Sennacherib and his forces compare to those of Goliath and the Philistines?
- 3) What does it look like for us to trust in the arm of the flesh?
- 4) In what ways can we humble ourselves before God?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Steven Cole: A Strange Reward for Obedience

Why does God allow us to go through trials? Our text suggests four reasons:

1. God allows trials to motivate us to strengthen our defenses against evil.

A. THE TIME TO GET READY FOR TRIALS IS BEFORE THEY HIT, NOT AFTER.

B. DON'T TRUST YOUR PREPARATIONS; TRUST THE LORD.

2. God allows trials to increase our trust in Him.

A. TRUST IN GOD MEANS SUBMITTING TO HIS SOVEREIGNTY OVER YOUR TRIALS.

B. TRUST IN GOD MEANS ACKNOWLEDGING GOD AS THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRENGTH.

C. TRUST IN GOD MEANS CASTING YOUR CARES ON HIM THROUGH PRAYER FOR HIS GLORY.

3. God allows trials to enrich our experience of His salvation.

4. God allows trials to humble us under His mighty hand.

Conclusion

So our text is telling us that ...

God allows trials to bless sinners who cast themselves on Him.

Trials motivate us to strengthen our defenses against evil. They increase our trust in God. They enrich our experience of His salvation. They humble us before Him, thus making us appreciate His abundant grace.

<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-12-strange-reward-obedience-2-chronicles-32>

Iain Duguid: Comparison of Account in 2 Chronicles vs. 2 Kings:

	2 Chronicles	2 Kings
Sennacherib's invasion	32:1	18:13
Hezekiah enhances Jerusalem's defenses	32:2-8	—
Tribute sent to Sennacherib at Lachish	—	18:14-16
Sennacherib sends messengers to Jerusalem	32:9-12	18:17-22
The messengers appeal to the people against Hezekiah	—	18:23-32
The messengers continue to blaspheme against the Lord	32:13-19	18:33-37
Hezekiah receives Isaiah's encouragement and Sennacherib makes plans	—	19:1-13
Hezekiah and Isaiah pray	32:20	19:14-34
The Lord delivers Jerusalem	32:21	19:35-37
Gifts for Jerusalem and fame for Hezekiah	32:22-23	—

	2 Chronicles	2 Kings
Hezekiah's illness and the Lord's sign	32:24	20:1–11
Hezekiah's pride and humbling himself	32:25–26	—
Hezekiah's wealth and prospering	32:27–30	—
Envoys from Babylon	32:31	20:12–19
Concluding details: records and his death	32:32–33	20:20–21

Andrew Hill: Hezekiah the Encourager – **Michael Wilcock** has compared Hezekiah with “the pastor coping with crisis” in his handling of the Assyrian invasion of Judah. He offers four principles for the Christian leader facing such crossroads in ministry:

- looking up to God (i.e., worship and obey God first of all),
- looking around at the church (i.e., focus on the needs of God's people as a whole),
- looking into the heart (i.e., emphasize the inward response of genuine devotion and true spirituality), and
- looking out at the enemy (i.e., fully trust God for deliverance). . .

Yet, striking in its absence from **Wilcock's** list is Hezekiah's role as an **encourager** – a key duty of the pastor or Christian leader. Three times the Chronicler conspicuously reports how Hezekiah speaks words of encouragement to the people, affirming their service to God and instilling confidence in them despite the dire circumstances portended by Sennacherib's invasion of the southern kingdom (cf. **30:22; 32:6-7, 8**). . .

There is a sense in which encouragement may be viewed as an extension of the virtue of **courage**. Courage is “a settled disposition to feel appropriate degrees of fear and confidence in challenging situations . . . It is also a settled disposition to stand one's ground, to advance or retreat as wisdom dictates”; more simply stated, courage is “acting bravely when we don't really feel brave.” The attributes of courage and encouragement are related in that a timid or fearful person is more susceptible to the encouragement of example than the rash or reckless person. The former may be inspired to act courageously while the latter's overconfidence may do more harm than good in a crisis situation.

To encourage, then, is to embolden another to overcome a paralyzing fear or deep-seated reluctance. To encourage is to inspire, to hearten, and to offer hope to another through word or deed. The New Testament values encouragement as a Christian virtue

because it serves to embolden the timid in the service of Christ (**1 Thess. 5:14**). The encourager also contributes to the righteous endurance of the Christian in that daily mutual encouragement prevents the heart from being hardened by sin's deceitfulness (**Heb. 3:13**; cf. **10:25**). The encourager thus helps build the kingdom of God because those who endure "*will . . . reign with him [i.e., Christ]*" (**2 Tim. 2:12**).

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler was much concerned with the themes of **exile** and **restoration**. Hezekiah is a model for avoiding exile or for enjoying restoration. He showed the path to recovery from the difficulties and foreign domination under Ahaz; his faithfulness avoided exile for Judah in his days (**32:26**). These were lessons for the post-exilic community.

The God of Israel will not brook hubris. Those who take their stand against him or his anointed are rebuked in his wrath (**Ps 2**). Taunts of an enemy delivered to those high on a city wall were answered by the power of a heaven-sent destroyer (**32:21**). Taunts delivered to one high on a cross were answered by resurrection from the dead, victory over that last and greatest enemy. The hubris of an Assyrian king was crushed by force; the hubris of mankind, by the foolishness of the cross. *Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord* (**1 Cor 1:31**).

Geoffrey Kirkland: Why does God bring trials?

- to HUMBLE us of our pride
- to EMPTY us of our self-confidence
- to MOLD us like the Man of Sorrows
- to WEAN us off the present world
- to USE us in evangelizing thru suffering
- to DRIVE us to persistent praying
- to MATURE us to greater strength & usefulness

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 33:1-20

TITLE: REIGN OF WICKED MANASSEH WHO FINALLY REPENTED

BIG IDEA:

EVEN THE WORST SINNER, IF HE HUMBLY REPENTS, IS NOT BEYOND THE MERCY OF GOD

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: Though the Chronicler was heavily dependent on Kings for his account of Manasseh (**33:1–10 // 2 Kgs 21:1–10**), the two accounts contrast sharply in their overall assessment of his reign. In the deuteronomic history Manasseh is the nadir of the kings of Judah and is the leading cause of a now irreversible exile, whereas in Chronicles he becomes repentant and a religious reformer. Though agreeing regarding his apostasy, the two historians come to **opposite moral judgments**.

Iain Duguid: Kings and Chronicles were written for different audiences, and their authors selected their material accordingly. In the Chronicler's Manasseh account, hearers are encouraged to find a foretaste of their own situation, as they have been in exile because of rejection of God's words through the prophets (**33:10–11a; 36:15–17**). Even in the darkest situation, as people "*humble themselves*" and cry to God in repentance, hope of full restoration (even including kingship; **33:13**) is still possible; building and security go together with "*serv[ing] the Lord the God of Israel*" (v. **16**).

Martin Selman: Manasseh's conversion helps to explain a longstanding problem in Kings, namely, why the exile did not fall in Manasseh's reign if his sins were really so serious. God's judgment had clearly been at least delayed, though if God's basic decision could not be overturned by Josiah's extensive reformation, Manasseh's more limited changes (cf. v. **17**) were not likely to be any more successful.

Matthew Henry: This foolish young prince, in contradiction to the good example and good education his father gave him, abandoned himself to all impiety, transcribed the abominations of the heathen (v. **2**), ruined the established religion, unraveled his father's glorious reformation (v. **3**), profaned the house of God with his idolatry (vv. **4, 5**), dedicated his children to Moloch, and made the devil's lying oracles his guides and his counsellors, v. **6**. In contempt of the choice God had made of Zion to be his rest for ever and Israel to be his covenant-people (v. **8**), and the fair terms he stood upon with God, he embraced other gods, profaned God's chosen temple, and debauched his chosen people. He made them to err, and do worse than the heathen (v. **9**); for, if the unclean spirit returns, he brings with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. That which aggravated the sin of Manasseh was that God spoke to him and his people by the prophets, but they would not hearken, v. **10**. We may here admire the grace of God in speaking to them, and their obstinacy in turning a deaf ear to him, that either their badness did not quite turn away his goodness, but still he waited to be gracious, or

that his goodness did not turn them from their badness, but still they hated to be reformed.

I. (:1-9) OPENING SUMMARY OF THE REIGN OF MANASSEH – RELAPSE INTO IDOLATRY – THE DEPTHS OF DEPRAVITY

A. (:1) Age and Duration of Reign

“Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.”

Raymond Dillard: Manasseh ruled longer than any other king of Judah. Many find in this fact the key to the Chronicler’s treatment of this king. In light of his theology of **immediate retribution**, Manasseh would have represented something of a problem: how is it that this king who represented the pinnacle of evil also enjoyed the divine blessing of long life? The Chronicler’s account of Manasseh’s punishment, repentance, and reform removes the narrative from being a problem and makes it instead a dramatic confirmation of the validity of retribution theology and the **efficacy of repentance**.

Iain Duguid: For all kings after Hezekiah he omits the queen mother.

B. (:2) Summary Moral Evaluation

*“And he did **evil** in the sight of the LORD according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.”*

Raymond Dillard: Note the three occurrences of the phrase reporting that Manasseh “*did evil*” early in the paragraphs beginning with **33:2, 6, 9**; repetition of such phrases is common on paragraph boundaries. . .

This verse is verbatim **2 Kgs 21:2**, but functions somewhat differently in the earlier narrative. In Kings Manasseh’s reign accounts for the exile; the abominations for which Yahweh drove the Canaanites from the land would eventually be the same reasons for which Israel was driven out (**Deut 18:12; 2 Kgs 17:8, 16–20**). This relationship between the deeds and exile of the Canaanites and the deeds and exile of Israel is somewhat muted in Chronicles and becomes the personal experience of the king rather than the nation.

C. (:3-8) Record of Idolatrous Practices

Andrew Hill: The specific catalog of abominations promoted by Manasseh as “alternative religion” for the kingdom of Judah invites comparison with the Mosaic prohibitions against false worship (**Deut. 16:21 – 17:7; 18:9-13**). Among the taboos borrowed wholesale from Canaanite culture are idolatry associated with the fertility cult deities Asherah and Baal, astral worship, infanticide, and the occult (**2 Chron. 33:3-6**).

According to **2 Kings 17:7-13, 16-20**, these are the very sins that incited God’s wrath against the northern kingdom of Israel and brought about the Assyrian exile. Note too

how centuries earlier the theocratic kingdom of Israel under Joshua's leadership waged war against the indigenous populations of Canaan as divine judgment for the same list of abominations (**Lev. 18:24-28**). The narrative in **2 Kings 24:3-4** ascribes blame directly to King Manasseh for the Babylonian exile of the southern kingdom. Like matter reaching an irreversible energy state of critical mass in the science of physics, the course charted by the political and religious policies of Manasseh lead irrevocably to the Exile.

1. (:3-5) **Worshiping False Gods**

“For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he also erected altars for the Baals and made Asherim, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. 4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD of which the LORD had said, ‘My name shall be in Jerusalem forever.’ 5 For he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.”

2. (:6a) **Passing His Sons Through the Fire**

“And he made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom;”

3. (:6b) **Diving into the Occult**

“and he practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery, and dealt with mediums and spiritists.”

4. (:6c) **Provoking God to Anger**

*“He did much **evil** in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger.”*

5. (:7-8) **Desecrating the Temple with a Prominent Idol**

“Then he put the carved image of the idol which he had made in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, ‘In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them according to all the law, the statutes, and the ordinances given through Moses.”

Raymond Dillard: The “carved image” (v 7) is specifically an image of Asherah in **2 Kgs 21:7**.

Andrew Hill: The king leads the people astray by breaking the first commandment (**2 Chron. 33:7**; cf. **Ex. 20:3-4**). The carved image he erects in God's temple symbolizes his rejection of God's rule at both the personal and the national level. King Manasseh's arrogance breeds the evil of idolatry and poisons his subjects with the sin of idolatry (**1 Sam. 15:23**; cf. **Ex. 20:3-4**).

D. (:9) Summary Moral Evaluation

*“Thus Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more **evil** than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel.”*

II. (:10-13) CAPTIVITY AND REPENTANCE – THE BREADTH OF GOD’S MERCY

A. (:10) Spurning God’s Prophetic Warnings

“And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention.”

B. (:11) Subjected to Capture and Degrading Bondage

“Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains, and took him to Babylon.”

C. (:12) Supplicating the Lord in Humility

“And when he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.”

D. (:13a) Saved by the Mercy of God

“When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom.”

E. (:13b) Settled in His Knowledge of God

“Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.”

Andrew Hill: The expression “*the Lord was moved*” (**33:13**) is unusual and marks a theological distinctive of the God of the Bible. Unlike the deaf Baals after which the Israelites continually strayed, the God of Israel is not only approachable, but he listens to prayer and is capable of responding with empathy toward those in dire need (**Ex. 22:27; 2 Chron. 30:9**; cf. **1 Kings 18:26; Isa. 44:18; Hab. 2:18**). The stark contrast between God who listens to the plea of Manasseh (**2 Chron. 33:13**) and the people who pay no attention to God (**33:10**) would not be lost on the Chronicler’s audience. The episode foreshadows the hallmark attribute of Jesus Christ as the great high priest, who is moved to grant mercy because he sympathizes with human weakness, having experienced it himself (**Heb. 4:14-16**).

Pool: He was convinced by his own experience of God’s power, justice, and goodness, that Jehovah alone was the true God, and not those idols which he had worshipped, by which he had received great hurt, and no good.

III. (:14-17) POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS REFORMS – THE FRUIT OF REPENTANCE

Raymond Dillard: **Building programs** and **large armies** are the lot of the righteous king in Chronicles, and the author's inclusion of this material relates no doubt to showing **divine blessing** following upon repentance. It is possible that such fortification was undertaken prior to his revolt against Assyria, and that it has been dischronologized to this point as part of the Chronicler's presentation; however, it is equally probable that the fortification was undertaken after his return from Babylon as part of the Assyrian efforts to buttress their southern borders against Egypt. Manasseh may have been repairing damage done to the city walls when he was taken captive. Cf. **32:5**.

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler has told of previous kings who had been faithful but subsequently failed in some way (e.g., Asa, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah), but Manasseh stands out as the only king who began his reign in unfaithfulness but repented and did good.

Andrew Hill: The next report emphasizes Manasseh's political and religious reforms. Usually this is construed as the "healing of the land," the natural aftermath of prayer and repentance according to God's promise in **7:14**. The Chronicler sees royal building projects as an indication of divine blessing for obedience. Manasseh's reforms are both political and religious in nature suggesting God's acceptance of the king's prayer of repentance. The rebuilding of the city wall of Jerusalem (**33:14**) may refer to repairs made necessary when Manasseh was taken captive by the Assyrians or to the continuation of the expansion of Jerusalem begun under Hezekiah (cf. **Isa. 22:10-11; 2 Chron. 32:5**). Strengthening the military presence in the fortified cities of Judah (**33:14**) is almost routine for kings ruling in Jerusalem, since these cities form a shield against foreign invaders (cf. **2 Kings 18:13; 2 Chron. 14:6; 17:2; 26:9**). Assuming Manasseh's renewed loyalty as an Assyrian vassal after his release from exile, both initiatives may have been encouraged by the Assyrians as defensive measures aimed at discouraging an Egyptian military campaign into Judah.

A. (:14a) Rebuilding the Walls Protecting Jerusalem

"Now after this he built the outer wall of the city of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance of the Fish Gate; and he encircled the Ophel with it and made it very high."

B. (:14b) Redeploying Military Commanders to Fortified Cities

"Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah."

C. (:15) Removing Foreign Gods

"He also removed the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, as well as all the altars which he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and he threw them outside the city."

Martin Selman: Manasseh's religious reforms represented a direct reversal of earlier policies (vv. 2-9), since each of the items removed in **verse 15** is mentioned in **verses 3, 7**. Some form of regular worship was recommenced (v. 16), though its range seems rather limited (cf. **1 Chr. 23:31; 2 Chr. 2:4; 8:13; 31:3**).

D. (:16a) Reestablishing the Altar in the Temple

*“And he set up the altar of the LORD
and sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it;”*

E. (:16b) Redirecting the People to Serve the Lord God

“and he ordered Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.”

F. (:17) Limitation of Manasseh’s Reforms

*“Nevertheless the people still sacrificed in the high places,
although only to the LORD their God.”*

David Guzik: This reminds us of the distinction between **two different kinds of high places**. Some were altars to pagan idols; others were unauthorized altars to the true God. Manasseh stopped all the pagan worship in Judah, but unauthorized (that is, outside the temple) worship of the God of Israel continued.

Andrew Hill: The impact of Manasseh’s religious reforms seems restricted to Jerusalem and its immediate environs, given the Chronicler’s reference to ongoing worship in the high places (**33:17**). The worship associated with the Canaanite high places proves a snare for the Israelites throughout the history of the monarchies.

Martin Selman: As with all previous attempts to eradicate the signs and symbols of Canaanite religion, in practice its undemanding morality and sensuous practices proved irresistible to the majority of the People (cf. **2 Chr. 14:3; 15:17; 17:6; 20:33**). Despite the formal changes, the people as a whole saw no need for a change of heart (cf. **Isa. 29:13; Jer. 3:10; 2 Tim. 3:5**).

J. Barton Payne: A half century of paganism could not be overcome by a half dozen years of reform.

(:18-20) EPILOGUE – CLOSING SUMMARY OF REIGN OF MANASSEH

A. (:18-19) Recorded Deeds

“Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh even his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are among the records of the kings of Israel. 19 His prayer also and how God was entreated by him, and all his sin, his unfaithfulness, and the sites on which he built high places and erected the Asherim and the carved images, before he humbled himself, behold, they are written in the records of the Hozai.”

Mark Boda: A comparison of the concluding summary note of Manasseh in **2 Kings 21:17-18** with the one in **33:18-20** reveals the differing nuances of each account. The book of Kings emphasizes “*the sins he committed*” while Chronicles highlights “*his prayer to God.*” The Chronicler mentions two sources for his account of Manasseh, one *The Book of the Kings of Israel*, and the other *The Record of the Seers*. The role of the

prophetic voice is emphasize in this closing note and this record of the seers is said to contain details on locations of idolatrous sites. Although penitent in life, Manasseh was denied the honor of burial with the kings of Judah in death.

B. (:20a) Death and Burial

1. Death

“So Manasseh slept with his fathers,”

2. Burial

“and they buried him in his own house.”

C. (:20b) Succession

“And Amon his son became king in his place.”

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What are some encouragements for parents and some cautions related to parental expectations from this account of Manasseh in light of his godly father?
- 2) Why is it so dangerous to even dabble around the edges of any type of occult activity?
- 3) How has God’s forgiveness of your sins not removed all of the negative consequences of your failures?
- 4) What would the current audience of the Chronicler find encouraging from this account?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Thomas Constable: **Japhet** saw the emphasis on Manasseh's repentance in Chronicles in the **chiastic structure** of this section:

- A Introduction: Manasseh's reign (v. 1)
 - B Manasseh's transgressions (vv. 2-8)
 - C Manasseh's punishment: exile to Assyria (vv. 10-11)
 - D Manasseh's repentance and deliverance (vv. 12-13)**
 - C' Manasseh's earthly enterprises (v. 14)
 - B' Manasseh's religious restoration (vv. 15-17)
 - A' Conclusion: Manasseh's death and burial (vv. 18-20)

Iain Duguid: While known Assyrian records refer to Manasseh only as a **loyal vassal**, various scenarios have been proposed for his taking an opportunity to revolt and subsequently being punished. The most plausible scenario is that he rebelled amid the unrest following the revolt of Shamash-shum-ukin of Babylon (652–648 BC) against his brother Assurbanipal. The Chronicler, however, is concerned not with such circumstances but with revolt against God’s words and its consequences (“*therefore*”). Manasseh’s being “*captured with hooks and bound with chains of bronze*” reflects known Assyrian practice (cf. **2 Kings 19:28; Ezek. 19:9**), a situation of “*distress*” (a form of Hb. *tsarar*, also describing Ahaz in **2 Chron. 28:20** [*“afflicted”*], **22**). Unlike Ahaz, who “*became yet more faithless,*” Manasseh “*humbled himself*” and “*prayed.*” Importantly, what followed is that God “*heard,*” an example of his keeping the promise of **7:14**.

The outworking of God’s hearing Manasseh’s prayer is relevant for hearers. While Manasseh remained an Assyrian vassal, God returned him not only geographically to Jerusalem but also “*into his kingdom.*” The Chronicler’s original hearers have similarly returned, but they do not yet have their own king, and so the past becomes a pointer to the future. Further, Manasseh’s coming to “*know the Lord was God*” as a result of his return from Babylon reminds hearers of the frequent message of Ezekiel that, as a result of the people’s exile and return, they too will “*know that I am the Lord*” (e.g., **Ezek. 36:11, 38; 37:6, 13, 14; 39:22, 28**).

Jerry Thrower: Manasseh’s Evil

A. MANASSEH Started Baal Worship Again! (**2 Kings 21:2-3; 2 Chronicles 33:2-3**)

We’re familiar with BAAL worship at this point in our studies! As the storm god and bringer of rain, BAAL was recognized as sustaining the fertility of crops, animals, and people. BAAL’S followers often believed that immoral sex acts performed in his temple would contribute to BAAL’S work in increasing fertility of crops, animals, and people and so that is what made it so attractive! It was driven by fleshly desires and lusts of people!

BAAL was a part of the religion of virtually every culture of the ancient Near East. BAAL, of course, had been a favorite of the NORTHERN KINGDOM of ISRAEL after AHAB married the heathen, JEZEBEL, whose father was priest of BAAL! In fact, BAAL was even brought into JUDAH initially by AHAB and JEZEBEL’S daughter, ATHELIAH, who married JEHORAM king of JUDAH. ATHELIAH reigned over JUDAH after the death of her husband and her son, AHAZIAH and established BAAL worship even more!

After JEHOIADA THE PRIEST had ATHELIAH slain and prior to JOASH’S reign, he and the people of JUDAH eradicated BAAL worship from JUDAH! But BAAL worship was then restored by king AHAZ, HEZEKIAH’S father only to be eradicated by HEZEKIAH once he began to reign! But now, we see MANASSEH bring BAAL worship back!

In addition he built again the HIGH PLACES of worship that his father HEZEKIAH tore down AND he made a GROVES! GROVES were where gods would be carved into trees or wooden poles that folks would worship. But we're about to see that was only the beginning of MANASSEH'S idolatry!

B. MANASSEH Worshiped All The Hosts Of Heaven! (2 Kings 21:3b; 2 Chronicles 33:3; Cf. Deuteronomy 4:14-20)

This was also a common heathen practice! Some of the heathen worshiped the SUN! (I read where Egypt actually had 5 sun gods) Some of the heathen worshiped the MOON! Some of the heathen worshiped the STARS and/or the CONSTELLATIONS made up of the STARS. Some worshiped the SKY itself! Hang on we're not done yet...

C. MANASSEH Defiled The TEMPLE Again With Worship Of His False Gods! (2 Kings 21:4-5, 7-9a; 2 Chronicles 33:4-5, 7-8; Cf. 1 Kings 8:27-30; Jeremiah 7:30)

Now, we've seen several others who defiled the TEMPLE! We've also seen others who defiled the TEMPLE by bringing idols into the TEMPLE! (e.g., In fact, we saw MANASSEH'S grandfather, King AHAZ send back plans from DAMASCUS for URIJAH the priest to duplicate a god that he saw when he met the ASSYRIAN king in DAMASCUS!)

(Then he had the audacity to take the sacrifices and offerings people were bringing for the LORD and have them offered on the altar of the false god in the TEMPLE of the LORD!) But that's still not all...

D. MANASSEH Sacrificed His Son (Children) To MOLECH! (2 Kings 21:6a; 2 Chronicles 33:6a)

Consider this, if it had not been for his grandmother rescuing his father from his grandfather's same shenanigans, he would never have been born! We're still not done...

E. MANASSEH Was Involved In The Occult! (2 Kings 21:6b; 2 Chronicles 33:6b; Cf. Deuteronomy 18:9ff)

1. He Observed Times – i.e. astrology
2. He Used Enchantments – i.e. charm; whisper. To seek or to give omens or foretell.
3. He Used Witchcraft – i.e. practice sorcery. (e.g. potions)
4. He Dealt With A Familiar Spirit– i.e. a person controlled by an evil spirit which professes to be a medium with the dead.
5. He Dealt With Wizards – i.e. one who deals in magic and sorcery in an attempt to pry into the secrets of the spirit world.

The only King I remember who was involved in any of this was King Saul who went to a witch to call up Samuel's spirit . Now we go literally off the charts of the wickedness of those kings before him!

F. MANASSEH Caused JUDAH To Do Worse Than The Heathen! (2 Kings 21:6f, 9; 2 Chronicles 33:9)

Now, there is no detail given us about what this entailed! Let's suffice it to say that if it was worse than the heathen, it had to be really, really bad!

G. MANASSEH FAILED TO HEED THE WARNING OF GOD! (2 Chronicles 33:10) No surprise there as everything he did up to this point was anti-God!

Martin Selman: The Bible consistently affirms that God's door remains open to anyone, even after what should have been closing time. If such an invitation could be extended to Manasseh, as it was to a guilt-ridden tax-collector, a thief on a cross, or the chief of sinners, on-one is excluded (**Luke 18:9-14; 23:40-43; 1 Tim. 1:15**). The condition of humble repentance remains unchanged, for "*everyone . . . who humbles himself will be exalted*" (**Luke 14:11; 18:14**).

Wilcock: Here was a son of godly parents who went into sin to the very limit and then came back to God. That should be an encouragement to parents who are reading this today. Maybe you have a son or a daughter who has gone the very limit, and you despair that your child will ever turn back to God. I would have given Manasseh up, but God didn't. God heard his prayer.

Mark Boda: One should not miss the relevance of this story of Manasseh to the community living in the wake of the Babylonian exile and Persian restoration. With its depiction of Manasseh's exile to Babylon, his subsequent humble prayer and restoration to his kingdom, **33:11-13** reflects a regular **typology** used by the Chronicler, that of exile and restoration. On one level the story is related to the agenda of the Chronicler to encourage continuing returns of people from Mesopotamian exile (cf. **30:6-9; 36:20-23**) and to identify the true ideals of the restoration, especially repentance. On another level, however, its single focus on a Davidic royal figure (without any mention of people accompanying him) suggests that Manasseh was to serve as a role model for the return of the Davidic house.

Phil Winfield: The Shocking Story of King Manasseh

If there was ever a study that debunks the idea that good parents always have good children then this study of the Kings in Judah certainly does that. It seems that really wicked kings sometimes had really virtuous sons and really good kings sometimes left their kingdom to extremely vile sons. Many times we are astounded by the way things turn out in families.

God Relents When Sinners Repent!

Steven Cole: None beyond Hope

Because God is merciful, there is hope for the worst of sinners who repent. If anyone could be beyond hope, it would have been the wicked King Manasseh.

1. Manasseh was the worst of sinners.

He came to the throne at age 12. Bible scholars believe that he shared a ten-year co-regency with his godly father, King Hezekiah, so he would have been 22 when his

father died. But in spite of his father's godly example, Manasseh quickly turned the kingdom from a spiritual high to a low described as more evil than the nations which Israel had dispossessed from the land (33:9).

Manasseh's sin was unusually bad because . . .

A. MANASSEH SINNED AGAINST GREAT LIGHT.

It was not as if he had never heard about God or had no models of godliness. His father was the most godly king after David. Although Hezekiah had fallen into pride during his later years, he humbled himself and walked with God. It is inconceivable that the godly Hezekiah had not spent time telling his son and heir to the throne about God and the great things God had accomplished during his reign. Besides Hezekiah there were Isaiah the prophet and other godly men in the kingdom. The priests and Levites were teaching people the law of God. Manasseh was born into a spiritual oasis, but he walked away from it.

B. MANASSEH SINNED BOLDLY.

While all unbelievers are the servants of sin, not all are bold sinners. Outwardly many are decent, law-abiding people. They have a sense of propriety and shame. They make sure that their sin remains within socially acceptable limits or behind closed doors. A New Yorker cartoon showed two clean-shaven, decent-looking, middle-aged men sitting in a jail cell. One says to the other, "All along I thought our level of corruption fell well within community standards!"

Manasseh's corruption exceeded community standards! He had no sense of shame. If there had been Geraldo or Oprah, Manasseh would have been on there, telling all the sordid details of his wicked life. His motto was, "If you've got it, flaunt it!" It's as if he was trying to be outrageous, to see if he could shock people with the extent of his wickedness. He sinned against great light; he sinned boldly.

C. MANASSEH LED OTHERS INTO SIN.

You would have thought that with all the godly people in the land after Hezekiah's revival, they would have opposed Manasseh and forced him from the throne. But people tend to be followers. While they will go along with a king who is bold for the Lord, they also will quickly turn aside and follow the next king who is bold to do evil.

D. MANASSEH LOVED HIMSELF AND HATED GOD.

2. Manasseh repented.

That's all that God was waiting for! Manasseh didn't have to vow to join a monastery and wear hair shirts. Nor did he need to work on building his self-esteem. We read (33:12) that "*he entreated the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers*" and God showed him mercy. If repentance is God's requirement for sinners to be reconciled to Him, then it's important to understand what it means.

A. REPENTANCE MEANS TURNING TO GOD FROM SIN AND PERFORMING DEEDS APPROPRIATE TO REPENTANCE.

B. REPENTANCE MEANS FORSAKING SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SUBMISSIVELY CASTING OURSELVES ON GOD'S UNDESERVED FAVOR.

3. Repentance results in God's undeserved blessings.

I'm not saying that there aren't consequences to our sin, even when we repent. "*The people still sacrificed in the high places*" (33:17). They were damaged by Manasseh's sin. His son Amon followed his father's sin, not his repentance, and was assassinated after two years on the throne. Manasseh's repentance did not restore to life Isaiah and the others Manasseh had murdered, including his sons. He had to live with those memories for the rest of his life. Sin always leaves scars. But even so, Manasseh enjoyed God's undeserved favor after he repented. His kingdom was restored. Even better, he came to know God and to be reconciled to Him. When he died, instead of incurring God's wrath which he deserved, he was welcomed into God's presence.

<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-13-none-beyond-hope-2-chronicles-331-20>

Geoffrey Kirkland: The story of Manasseh is the story of every saint!

1. UNSPEAKABLE SINFULNESS [we've sinned greatly!]
2. UNDESERVED GRACE & MERCY [God lavishes undeserved pity]
3. UNDETERRED HUMILITY & REPENTANCE [respond in humility, repentance]
4. UNDISTRACTED HOLINESS & PIETY [seek to live for God, obey Him!]

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 33:21-25

TITLE: REIGN OF WICKED AMON – SHORT AND CHAOTIC

BIG IDEA:

WITHOUT REPENTANCE LIFE ENDS IN TRAGEDY

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler's account of Amon follows rather closely that in **2 Kgs 21:19–26**. The most notable difference is that for the writer of Kings, Amon was “*just like*” his father Manasseh (**2 Kgs 21:20 // 33:22**), whereas in Chronicles Amon is contrasted to Manasseh because of his failure to repent (**33:23**). The Chronicler explicates “*walking in all the ways his father walked*” (**2 Kgs 21:21**) as “*offering sacrifices and worshipping all the idols his father Manasseh had made*” (33:22).

Thomas Constable: Amon represented the other alternative that the returned exiles could choose: no repentance. His fate would have been, and is, a warning to seek the LORD.

Martin Selman: Although the cloud of exile hangs over **chapters 28-36**, Manasseh and Amon in their contrasting ways show that a fatalistic attitude in the face of God's judgment is quite unjustified.

J. Barton Payne: Amon was the unhappy product of his father's pagan life, not of his pious death. This brief summary of his reign closely parallels **II Kgs 21:19-26** and notes the immediate relapse of Judah to the pre-conversion religion of Manasseh.

A.C. Gaebelien: The utter corruption of human nature is seen in the case of his son Amon. With the awful experience of his father before him, and no doubt exhorted by Manasseh to serve the LORD and be true to Him, he followed deliberately the bad example of his father's idolatry. He trespassed more and more and did not repent like his father Manasseh, but died in his sins. Under his reign the wickedness reached a higher mark than under any previous king.

I. (:21-22a) OPENING SUMMARY OF REIGN OF AMON

A. (:21) Age and Duration of Reign

*“Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king,
and he reigned two years in Jerusalem.”*

Frederick Mabie: Amon's brief reign lasts from about 643-641 BC, a time of significant Assyrian power in the biblical world.

B. (:22a) Moral Evaluation

“And he did evil in the sight of the LORD as Manasseh his father had done,”

J.A. Thompson: Just as Manasseh could not go back and undo the damage he had done to his nation, even so he could not back and change the son he had raised to be a pagan. Amon followed in his father’s footsteps, but not the steps that Manasseh would have like him to follow.

II. (:22b-23) TWO MAIN AREAS OF CULPABILITY

A. (:22b) Idolatry

“and Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and he served them.”

J. Barton Payne: Either their removal had not involved their destruction (v. 15), or the concentration of Manasseh’s reformation in Jerusalem had left available his more scattered idolatries (cf. v. 17).

B. (:23) Impenitence

“Moreover, he did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done, but Amon multiplied guilt.”

Iain Duguid: The Chronicler uses Amon’s reign as a **contrast** to the positive action of Manasseh in *“humbling himself.”* That becomes the focus of attention in the two reigns, an example for hearers to heed.

Matthew Henry: He fell like him, but did not get up again like him. It is not so much sin as impenitence in sin that ruins men, not so much that they offend as that they do not humble themselves for their offences, not the disease, but the neglect of the remedy.

III. (:24-25) CLOSING SUMMARY OF REIGN OF AMON

A. (24) Assassination of Amon

“Finally his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his own house.”

Andrew Hill: The reason behind his assassination is unspecified (33:24). Clearly the general populace is not in sympathy with the coup since they execute those palace officials party to the conspiracy (33:25a).

J.A. Thompson: The reasons that Amon’s officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace are not given, but they may have had a political motivation in the international politics of the day. Amon was perhaps pro-Assyrian in his policies at a time when Assyria’s power was declining and many Israelites were looking toward Egypt for leadership. If so anti-Assyrian opponents of Amon’s foreign

policy lay behind the plot.

B. (:25a) Execution of Conspirators against Amon

“But the people of the land killed all the conspirators against King Amon,”

Raymond Dillard: Scholars have reached a variety of conclusions regarding the sociopolitical identity of the group designated by the phrase “*people of the land*”; some conclude they were

- (1) a privileged social class composed of free landowners;
- (2) a collective designation for free people, citizens;
- (3) a reference to the population of the provincial towns as distinguished from the population of Jerusalem;
- (4) a proletariat of the common folk;
- (5) a national council composed of elders.

Andrew Hill: The expression “*people of the land*” (**33:25a**) may be an idiom for a coalition of religious and political leadership centered in Jerusalem since they also function as “king makers” in other succession crises (cf. 22:1; 26:1; 36:1).

J.A. Thompson: Most commentators agree that these were the free landholders of Judah who always acted decisively in times of crisis to maintain the Davidic dynasty in the land.

C. (:25b) Succession

“and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place.”

Dillard: The only positive contribution Amon made to the history of Judah was to produce one of the best kings to reign on the throne of Jerusalem.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why do we see such dramatic shifts morally and religiously from one generation to the next?
- 2) What was the political background behind the motivation for this coup?
- 3) What does it mean that Amon *multiplied his guilt*?
- 4) Who are these “*people of the land*” who play such a significant role here?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

August Konkel: No details are given concerning the revolt that led to his assassination. It may have been an anti-Assyrian uprising in connection with the disturbances during the last years of Ashurbanipal's reign. In any case, the coup failed, and the conspirators were executed. Responsibility again fell on the civic leaders to install the new king, ensuring the continuity of the dynasty.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 34:1-33

TITLE: REIGN OF RIGHTEOUS JOSIAH – FINAL ATTEMPT AT REFORMATION

BIG IDEA:

THE RECOVERY OF THE WORD OF GOD MOTIVATES REFORMATION

INTRODUCTION:

Iain Duguid: Josiah is another example of faithfulness expressed in temple worship cleansed of idolatry and performed in accordance with the laws of Moses and the prescriptions of David (35:4, 6, 12, 15). He can be compared with Joash (24:1–27): both became king as a child, collected funds for temple renovations, and led in covenant renewal, but, unlike Joash, Josiah remained faithful “all his days” (34:33). A closer association is with Hezekiah (29:1–32:33): in Chronicles only these two kings are said to be like David in doing “*what was right in the eyes of the Lord*” (29:2; 34:2), with their reigns characterized by “*good deeds*” (32:32; 35:26; a form of Hb. *hesed*, “loyalty, kindness, steadfast love”); and both narratives focus on temple renovation leading to Passover celebration involving people from the whole land. Both kings showed some flaw late in their reign: Hezekiah’s led to his “*humbl[ing] himself*” and the averting of wrath (32:25–26), but Josiah’s led to his death, which through consequent Egyptian control was the beginning of the road to exile (35:20–24). For Kings, Josiah is the greatest king (2 Kings 23:25), while for Chronicles the Passover celebration is the pinnacle, “*kept by Josiah, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*” (2 Chron. 35:18).

August Konkel: In Chronicles, Josiah begins to seek the Lord in his eighth year, while still in his youth. His efforts to cleanse Jerusalem and Judah of idolatrous worship begin in his twelfth year, the earliest age at which he could officially carry out his duties as a king.

Frederick Mabie: The looming demise of Assyria created a power vacuum in the ancient Near East that Egypt and Babylon were eager to fill, particularly with respect to control of the land bridge known as Israel. Moreover, as a result of the weakening of the Assyrian Empire during the reign of Josiah, Judah began to experience what might be described as “pseudo-independence.” This newfound freedom likely played a significant role in the wide array of reforms enacted by Josiah in both Judah and the former territory of the northern kingdom (vv. 6-7). Josiah’s reforms took place in three periods: his eighth year (ca. 633 BC; v. 3), his twelfth year (ca. 629 BC; v. 3), and his eighteenth year (ca. 623 BC; v. 8). Note that the prophetic ministries of Zephaniah and Jeremiah likely supported the reforms enacted by Josiah.

J.A. Thompson: After a brief introduction (34:1-2) the Chronicler’s narrative is presented in five sections spread over chaps. 34-35:

- a) introduction (34:1-2);

- b) the removal of pagan cults form Jerusalem, Judah, and Israel (34:3-7);
- c) temple repairs and the discovery of the law book (34:8-28);
- d) covenant renewal (34:29-33);
- e) Josiah's Passover (35:1-19); and
- f) Josiah's death (35:20-27).

(:1-2) OPENING SUMMARY OF REIGN OF JOSIAH

A. (:1) Age and Duration of Reign

“Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem.”

James Barker: I read that at eight years of age, eighty percent of a person's character is formed. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”* (II Timothy 3:15).

B. (:2) Moral Evaluation

“And he did right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David and did not turn aside to the right or to the left.”

Raymond Dillard: Though a number of kings are said to have followed the precedent set by their father David, only of Josiah is it said that he did not *“deviate to the right or left.”*

I. (:3-7) PURGE OF IDOLATRY BY YOUNG JOSIAH – PRIORITY OF WAGING WAR AGAINST SIN

A. (:3a) Seeking the Lord at an Early Age

“For in the eighth year of his reign while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David;”

Steven Cole: **Seek the Lord early in life** if you can. Josiah was 16 when he began seeking the Lord. He was not from a godly home. He lived in an evil day. And yet he began seeking the Lord during his teen years and never turned away.

Many Christians have the erroneous notion that teenagers must go through a phase of rebellion. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, where Christian parents expect their teens to rebel! Some kids feel like they'll never be well-adjusted if they don't sow some wild oats. That's baloney!

I want every young person to hear this: Even if you come from a bad home and even though we live in an evil world, you can seek the Lord. You'll never regret avoiding drugs or drinking or sexual immorality, because sin always leaves scars. I thank God

that He graciously preserved me from rebelling against Him or against my parents. I think I'm fairly well-adjusted in spite of it!

B. (:3b-7) Stamping Out Idolatry Wherever It Was Found

1. (:3b-5) Beginning in Judah and Jerusalem

- a. (:3b) Destroying the Images of Idols
“and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images, and the molten images.”
- b. (:4a) Destroying the Altars of False Gods
“And they tore down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars that were high above them he chopped down;”
- c. (:4b) Desecrating the Graves of Idol Worshipers
“also the Asherim, the carved images, and the molten images he broke in pieces and ground to powder and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.”
- d. (:5) Desecrating the Bones of the Idolatrous Priests
“Then he burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and purged Judah and Jerusalem.”

J.A. Thompson: Though not explicitly stated, the Chronicler implied that Josiah executed the priests of Baal (cf. **2 Kgs 23:20**) following the precedent set by Jehu (**2 Kgs 10**) and Jehoiada (**23:17**). The punishment is fitted to the crime: the priests who burned sacrifices to Baal had their own bones burned on the same altar. According to **2 Kgs 23:16** the bones of priests who had died were removed from their graves and burned.

2. (:6-7) Continuing in Outlying Territories

“And in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, in their surrounding ruins, 7 he also tore down the altars and beat the Asherim and the carved images into powder, and chopped down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel.”

Raymond Dillard: The Assyrian empire was in an advanced stage of disintegration by Josiah's twelfth year (628 B.C.). Nineveh itself was under siege by Cyaxares and the Medes in 625 B.C. The Babylonians were newly independent, and mountain tribes from the north were raiding former Assyrian territory. During the death throes of the Assyrian empire the territories of the Northern Kingdom became a “no man's land” (**Soggin**, 245). It is intrinsically probable in these circumstances that Josiah would seek to extend his control and influence into Israel (**34:6**), even as far as the Upper Galilee (Naphtali).

3. (:7b) Returning to Jerusalem

“Then he returned to Jerusalem.”

**II. (:8-13) REPAIRS TO THE TEMPLE --
PRIORITY OF WORSHIP**

A. (:8-11) Administration of Funds for Temple Repairs

Raymond Dillard: In Chronicles the discovery of the law book in the temple was one incident in the course of a larger reform, whereas in Kings it was the precipitating incident and primary motivation for the entire reform.

Frederick Mabie: The Chronicler emphasizes the involvement of the whole community through the giving of funds by both Judeans and those from the prior northern kingdom tribal areas (v. 9), the skill and commitment (“*faithfulness*”) shown by those involved in the refurbishment process itself (cf. vv. 10-13; vv. 16-17; cf. 2Ki 22:7), and the oversight provided by the high priest and Levites (vv. 9, 12-13).

1. (:8) Directing Key Leaders to Head Up the Project

“Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah an official of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.”

John Schultz: It sounds amazing that it took so long before Josiah’s attention became fixed upon the place that should have been the center of Yahweh worship. It wasn’t until Josiah’s eighteenth year on the throne of Judah that the temple in Jerusalem came into focus. The extent of idol worship and the fact that the country had been littered by altars dedicated to various gods, must have taken most of the king’s attention up to this time.

2. (:9) Delivery of the Collected Funds to Hilkiah the High Priest

“And they came to Hilkiah the high priest and delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the doorkeepers, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel, and from all Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

3. (:10-11) Distribution of the Funds to the Workmen

“Then they gave it into the hands of the workmen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD used it to restore and repair the house. They in turn gave it to the carpenters and to the builders to buy quarried stone and timber for couplings and to make beams for the houses which the kings of Judah had let go to ruin.”

J.A. Thompson: The temple obviously needed more than a simple “cleansing.” It apparently had fallen into a state of disrepair, as indicated by the need for carpenters and stonemasons. Manasseh and Amon had seriously neglected the temple.

B. (:12-13) Administration of the Work of Temple Repairs

“And the men did the work faithfully with foremen over them to supervise: Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites of the sons of Merari, Zechariah and Meshullam of the sons of the Kohathites, and the Levites, all who were skillful with musical instruments. 13 They were also over the burden bearers, and supervised all the workmen from job to job; and some of the Levites were scribes and officials and gatekeepers.”

Raymond Dillard: A considerable interest in the Levites, and especially the Levitical musicians, is a hallmark of the Chronicler’s history; the note that musicians would be in charge of the construction work shows just how concerned the Chronicler was to stress that the entire work was done under Levitical supervision. The use of music during a construction project is well attested from the ancient Near East (**Rudolph**, 323); it set the pace for the various tasks much as the ubiquitous radios on a contemporary construction site. While the Levitical musicians may have accompanied the work, the Chronicler does not specifically mention this task; he describes instead a supervisory role.

III. (:14-21) RECOVERY OF THE LOST BOOK OF THE LAW – PRIORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

A. (:14-18) Communication of God’s Word

1. (:14) Finding the Book of the Law

“When they were bringing out the money which had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found the book of the law of the LORD given by Moses.”

Frederick Mabie: This episode often comes as a surprise to readers who cannot imagine a scroll of the OT being “lost” in the temple. However, the foundation and walls of temples in the biblical world were commonly used as repositories for dedicatory inscriptions, administrative documents, building plans, and religious texts. . .

Despite no shortage of speculation, the exact identification of this book is not possible to determine. Points of comparison can be drawn with Exodus (e.g., **Ex 20-24**), Leviticus (e.g., **Lev 26**), Numbers (e.g., **Nu 9-10**), and Deuteronomy (e.g., **Dt 28-31**). Given the content of the subsequent narrative, it is probably preferable simply to conclude that some or all of the Pentateuch was discovered at this time.

Martin Selman: It is traditionally identified with Deuteronomy, though probably not the whole book, since it was read twice in one day (**2 Kgs 22:8, 10**). . . One of the strongest links with Deuteronomy is its repeated references to a Book of the Law (**Deut. 28:61; 29:21; 30:10; 31:26**; cf. **Josh. 1:8; 8:31, 34; 23:6; 24:26**). Another is the phrase *all the curses written in* (v. 24; in place of “*everything written in*”, **2 Kgs 22:16**),

referring to the contents of the Book of the Law in **Deuteronomy 29:20, 21, 27; Josh. 8:34**. Further connections with Deuteronomy include the centralizing of worship (**vv. 3-7, 33**; cf. **Deut. 12**), the centralized Passover (**35:1-19**; cf. **Deut. 16:1-8**), and above all the covenant ceremony (**vv. 29-32**; cf. **Deut. 31:10-13**). Hilkiah's scroll was also recognized as having Moses' authority (**v. 14**), just like the Book of the Law in Joshua's day (**Josh. 8:31, 34; 23:6**), and there is little doubt that its antiquity increased its sense of authority.

David Guzik: According to **Jeremiah 1:1-2**, the prophet **Jeremiah** was the son of this particular priest Hilkiah. Jeremiah began his ministry during the reign of King Josiah.

2. (:15) Seeking Informed Interpretation of God's Word

*“And Hilkiah responded and said to Shaphan the scribe,
'I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.'
And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan.”*

3. (:16-18) Communicating God's Word to the King

*“Then Shaphan brought the book to the king and reported further word to the king, saying, 'Everything that was entrusted to your servants they are doing. 17 They have also emptied out the money which was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hands of the supervisors and the workmen. Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, 'Hilkiah the priest gave me a book.'
And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.”*

David Guzik: Throughout the history of God's people, when the word of God is recovered and spread, then spiritual revival follows. It can begin as simply as it did in the days of Josiah, with one man finding and reading and believing and spreading the Book. Another example of this in history is the story of Peter Waldo and his followers, sometimes known as Waldenses. Waldo was a rich merchant who gave up his business to radically follow Jesus. He hired two priests to translate the New Testament into the common language and using this, he began to teach others. He taught in the streets or wherever he could find someone to listen. Many common people came to hear him and started to radically follow Jesus Christ. He taught them the text of the New Testament in the common language and was rebuked by church officials for doing so. He ignored the rebuke and continued to teach, eventually sending his followers out two by two into villages and market places, to teach and explain the scriptures. The scriptures were memorized by the Waldenses, and it was not unusual for their ministers to memorize the entire New Testament and large sections of the Old Testament. The word of God – when found, read, believed, and spread – has this kind of transforming power.

B. (:19-21) Conviction of God's Word

1. (:19) Immediate Impact of the Revelation

“And it came about when the king heard the words of the law that he tore his clothes.”

Mark Boda: The response in **34:19** is **immediate** (“*When the king heard*”) and **passionate** (“*he tore his clothes in despair*”), displaying a response typical of lament and penitence. He immediately sprang into action, giving orders to inquire at the Temple for a word from Yahweh “*for me and for all the remnant of Israel and Judah*” (**34:21**).

Steven Cole: The evening before Thanksgiving I had an interesting conversation with **Jim Owen**, author of the excellent book, *Christian Psychology’s War on God’s Word* [East Gate]. He thinks that a major part of the problem in American Christianity is that we do not want to **submit to authority**, including the authority of Scripture that confronts our **self-centered, fulfill-my-needs mentality**. Thus we are abandoning the historical-grammatical-contextual approach to biblical interpretation and are accepting books in which popular authors subjectively read into the Bible the latest psychological “insights” and then claim that they are biblical. I think his analysis is correct.

2. (:20-21) Implications of the Revelation

“Then the king commanded Hilkiyah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king’s servant, saying, 21 ‘Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book which has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD which is poured out on us because our fathers have not observed the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book.’”

Frederick Mabie: Josiah’s words and actions reflect an implicit recognition of the divine nature and divine authority vested in the Book of the Law of the Lord, and hence the guilt and culpability of the people with respect to the covenant. As Paul notes, the knowledge of God’s law causes every mouth to be silenced and renders the whole world “*guilty before God*” (**Ro 3:19**) [KJV].

Andrew Hill: The king perceives that the message of the law scroll has profound implications for both him and his subjects (“*the remnant in Israel and Judah*” [**34:21**] is another instance of the Chronicler’s emphasis on the **unity of Israel**). This explains Josiah’s decision to appoint envoys to seek an interpretation of the scroll and to ask for counsel in addressing the disturbing news about God’s anger revealed in the law scroll. The theme of **God’s anger** incited by the disloyalty of the people of Israel is prominent in 2 Chronicles (e.g., **28:9; 29:8; 32:25**). The king’s reference to the sins of the “*fathers*” (**34:21**) implies some knowledge of the potential impact of the retribution principle across successive generations (cf. **Ex. 20:5**).

IV. (:22-28) REVELATION FROM THE PROPHETESS HULDAH – PRIORITY OF WRONGDOING DESERVING GOD’S JUDGMENT

A. (:22) Solicitation of the Prophetess

“So Hilkiyah and those whom the king had told went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, the keeper of the

wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her regarding this.”

J.A. Thompson: Hilkiyah, as was proper in such circumstances, consulted the prophetess Huldah, the wife of Shallum who was “*keeper of the wardrobe.*” Evidently his official role was as the temple functionary responsible for the production and maintenance of the priestly and Levitical vestments.

B. (:23-25) Severe Judgment Proclaimed

“And she said to them, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me, 24 thus says the LORD, Behold, I am bringing evil on this place and on its inhabitants, even all the curses written in the book which they have read in the presence of the king of Judah. 25 Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands, therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place, and it shall not be quenched.’”

G. Campbell Morgan: Josiah went on with the work of reformation, even when he knew that nationally it was foredoomed to failure.... She distinctly told him that there would be no true repentance on the part of the people, and therefore that judgment was inevitable. It was *then* that the heroic strength of Josiah manifested itself, in that he went on with his work.... No pathway of service is more difficult than that of bearing witness to God, in word and in work, in the midst of conditions which are unresponsive.

C. (:26-28a) Sparring of Josiah Due to His Humble Repentance

“But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus you will say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel regarding the words which you have heard,'”

1. Humbling of Josiah

“Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God, when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and because you humbled yourself before Me, tore your clothes, and wept before Me,”

2. Mercy of God

“I truly have heard you, declares the LORD. 28 Behold, I will gather you to your fathers and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, so your eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring on this place and on its inhabitants.”

J.A. Thompson: The promised reward was that God would spare Josiah from witnessing the disaster he would bring on Jerusalem and its people, and Josiah would be buried in peace. Huldah’s prophecy is reminiscent of **Jer 18:1-11** where the prophetic promise, whether hope or judgment, is contingent upon human response by either repentance to God or the forsaking of God. Although Josiah’s reign was one marked by religious

reform based on the law of Moses, he disobeyed God when he fought Neco of Egypt (**2 Chr 35:20-24**). Huldah's prophecy was fulfilled, since Judah did not suffer judgment from God, i.e., exile, until after the death of Josiah.

August Konkell: The prophetic word was that Josiah would die in peace and not experience the curse of judgment that would come upon Judah (**2 Chron 34:28**). Josiah himself did not die in peace but was killed by the Egyptian pharaoh. A false prophecy would not have been tolerated by the Chronicler. The second half of the verse must explain the first. *This place* (the city) would be at peace at the death of Josiah as a reward for his faithfulness. His repentant spirit had averted disaster in his time, but the ultimate judgment of the city could not be averted. The discovery of the Torah increased Josiah's zeal for the reform he had initiated (**2 Chron 34:33**). His demise at the hands of Necho was not a consequence of some failure in his life. This indicates that the Chronicler is not predictable in his assessment of retribution. Josiah dies in faithfulness and in battle, with the mercy that he does not endure the Babylonian siege.

Frederick Mabie: the remark in question relates to his **burial** ("*you will be buried in peace*") rather than his **means of death**.

D. (:28b) Report Back to the King

"And they brought back word to the king."

V. (:29-32) RESPONSE OF JOSIAH TO COMMIT TO REFORMATION -- PRIORITY OF WALKING IN THE WAYS OF THE LORD

A. (:29-30) Communication of God's Word to the Leaders and All the People

"Then the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the Levites, and all the people, from the greatest to the least; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD."

B. (:31-32) Commitment to Reformation by the Entire Community

1. (:31) Covenant Renewal by the King

"Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant written in this book."

2. (:32) Covenant Renewal by All the People

"Moreover, he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand with him. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers."

Andrew Hill: Covenant renewal for ancient Israel was repairing or restoring a relationship with God broken because of their willful violation of the stipulations

regulating the relationship. Repentance or humbling oneself is the first step in renewing a covenant relationship with God, as King David well knew (cf. **Ps. 51:17**).

Martin Selman: There are hints that the people needed some coercion. Josiah made them serve [i.e. “worship”] the Lord, which they did, but only *as long as he lived*. Nevertheless *all who were in Israel* complied, as exemplified above all by the ensuing Passover (**35:1-19**) to which representatives from north and south were presumably present (cf. **35:3**).

(:33) EPILOGUE – SUMMARY OF REFORMATION COMMITMENT

A. Purging of Idolatry

*“And Josiah removed all the abominations
from all the lands belonging to the sons of Israel,”*

B. Pursuit of Covenant Faithfulness

“and made all who were present in Israel to serve the LORD their God.”

C. Perseverance in Covenant Loyalty

“Throughout his lifetime they did not turn from following the LORD God of their fathers.”

Raymond Dillard: This verse is a summary statement and forms somewhat of an inclusio with **34:6–7**.

J.A. Thompson: This verse summarizes and concludes the events of **chap. 34**. The covenant renewal called for pure and unadulterated monotheism for the rest of his reign. The expression “*all the territories belonging to the Israelites*” draws attention to the Chronicler’s belief that Israel was now one and that all in Israel would serve the Lord their God as long as Josiah lived (640-609 B.C.).

Frederick Mabie: The statement that the people “*did not fail to follow the Lord*” **while Josiah was alive** foreshadows the rapid downfall that will happen in Judah following his death (see **ch. 36**; cf. **12:14**).

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How do people today obscure, ignore and lose contact with the Word of God?
- 2) What type of impact can godly young people have for the Lord?
- 3) How can we be more aggressive in attacking and combating sin in our lives?

4) How important is it for spiritual leaders to set the example for reformation?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Russel Dilday: Historical Background:

Momentous events were erupting around the biblical world in 638 BC when Josiah came to the throne in Jerusalem. As the powerful influence of Assyria was waning, the savage invasion of the Scythians (Nomadic Persians – ‘Iranians’) lasted until about 624 BC. In 612 BC the capital of Assyria (Nineveh) fell before a combined army of Scythians, Medes and Babylonians. That paved the way for the ominous rise to world power of Babylon, whose “innocent” envoys had visited the court of Josiah’s great grandfather Hezekiah (**2 Kings 20:12**). In 627 BC the articulate voice of Jeremiah, reinforced by the preaching of Zephaniah and Nahum, began to be heard in Judah. While not one of these events is mentioned in this historical account of Josiah’s reign, they must have had an enormous impact on the king, both during his formative years and during the active years of his national reforms.

Raymond Dillard: Many features of Josiah’s reign have parallels with the reign of Joash (**2 Chr 23–24**). Both came to the throne while children. Both were involved in collection of funds at the temple and in subsequent renovations. Both are reported to have stood in the temple precincts in the king’s place (**34:31; 24:13**); both led the nation in covenant renewal in the temple (**34:29–32; 23:16–17**). But here the parallels end. While Joash would remain faithful only so long as Jehoiada lived (**24:2, 15–18**), Josiah never turned from following the Lord to the right or left (**34:2**), and “*for the duration of his life they did not turn from following Yahweh*” (**34:33**). No foreign army would invade Judah in his day (**34:24–25, 28**; contrast **24:23–24**).

For the Chronicler’s audience the instruction regarding exile and restoration could not be missed. Josiah’s **faithfulness** forestalled the disaster that would come on Jerusalem (**34:28**). Faithfulness was ever the path to enjoying the blessing of God.

August Konkel: Covenant renewal was central to the message of Deuteronomy. It was required at Shechem when the people entered the land (**Deut 11:29–32; 27:1–8**), but it was to be repeated every seven years (**31:9–13**). Renewal of the covenant was the transforming event in the reformation of Josiah (**2 Chron 34:29–32**). The priests and the Levites had a prophetic role in carrying out the covenant renewal (v. **30**). The Chronicler names Levites instead of prophets as assisting in the renewal (**2 Kings 23:2**), since they were the ones to carry out this prophetic role. There is no indication of resistance to such a commitment, just as in the days of Asa (cf. **2 Chron 15:12–15**). Curses are a prominent feature in ancient covenants, and in Deuteronomy (e.g., **27:9–26; 28:15–68**), a feature prominent in the warning of the prophet Huldah (**2 Chron 34:24**).

Iain Duguid: Comparison of Account in 2 Chronicles 34-35 and 2 Kings

	2 Chronicles	2 Kings
Introduction: Josiah eight years old	34:1-2	22:1-2
Eighth year of reign: "began to seek God"	34:3a	—
Twelfth year: began to purge high places in Judah and Israel	34:3b-7	—
Eighteenth year: orders to repair temple; money supplied	34:8-11	22:3-7
Levites involved	34:12-13	—
Finding of 'Book of the Law' and reading to the king; sending to Huldah; her message	34:14-28	22:8-20
Covenant renewal ceremony	34:29-32	23:1-3
Removal of idols from Israel	34:33	23:4-20
Celebration of Passover in eighteenth year	35:1-19	23:21-23
Removal of mediums, etc.	—	23:24
Commendatory summary, yet judgment not averted	—	23:25-27
Death in battle (despite warning) and burial	35:20-24	23:29-30
Jeremiah's lament	35:25	—
Concluding formula	35:26-27	23:28

Frederick Mabie: The emphasis on obeying God with all one's heart and soul, central to Josiah's reforms (cf. Hiram's stress of love [2:11-12]), is an important theological principle of the spiritual life. Numerous texts in the Bible stress the necessity of obedience with respect to covenantal instructions and laws. Although often missed in Christian settings, love was a foundational element of OT law and was the basis for God's covenantal choice of Israel (see **Dt 7:6-9; Jer 31:3**). In fact, the key underlying ethic of Israel's law is arguably **love** – love of God and love of others. Thus Christ is able to summarize the Law and the Prophets as loving God *with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving one's neighbor as oneself*.

Martin Selman: It is especially interesting that he regards the written form of God's word as superior to inherited tradition and is willing to pay the cost of correcting his priorities. This is one of the clearer examples in the Old Testament of the underlying concept of an authoritative Scripture, which is equally at one with the spoken word of prophecy. Whatever form it takes, God's word is never entirely comfortable for those whose lives it confronts.

Richard Rohlin: Josiah's example:

- Josiah sought the Lord, like David sought the Lord.
- Josiah cleaned house.
- Josiah built up what was broken.
- Josiah rediscovered God's Word
- Josiah pleaded helplessly

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/927121022372.pdf>

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 35:1 – 36:1

TITLE: *JOSIAH'S PASSOVER CELEBRATION AND TRAGIC END – THE HEIGHTS AND DEPTHS OF THE REIGN OF JOSIAH*

BIG IDEA:

OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD ELEVATES WORSHIP CELEBRATION WHILE DISOBEDIENCE EXPOSES ONE TO HARM

INTRODUCTION:

Andrew Hill: The Passover is the preeminent religious festival for postexilic Judah and the apex of temple worship for the Chronicler. The reason for the prominence of this feast in the Jewish restoration community stems from the Passover observed after the completion of the second temple in 516 B.C. and the understanding that the return from Babylonian captivity is a “second exodus” for God’s people (cf. **Ezra 6:19-22**). The Passover, more than any other Hebrew religious festival, drew the nation of Israel back to her roots since it was at Mount Sinai that the former Hebrew slaves were constituted as the people of God.

Iain Duguid: In Chronicles the **climax of reforms** initiated by both Hezekiah and Josiah is national celebration of Passover (cf. **ch. 30**). The account of Hezekiah’s Passover focused on the people, recounting the invitation to participate sent throughout Judah and Israel and thus the welcoming of those from the newly terminated northern kingdom. The celebration prompted questions and ad hoc decisions regarding date and purification, and wide joyous participation ensued. In contrast, the focus in the account of Josiah’s Passover is on the organization and performance of the celebration itself (the “*people of Israel*” are the active subject of a verb only in **35:17**).

Attention in Chronicles centers on two areas:

- (1) the celebration was solidly grounded in the Lord’s past instructions, through Moses (**vv. 6b, 12–13**) and David and Solomon (**vv. 3, 4, 15**), and
- (2) further innovation was formalized by Josiah, as the Levites were prominent, with increased duties (**vv. 3–5, 10–15**) “*according to the king’s command*” (**vv. 10, 16**; cf. imperatives in **vv. 3–6**). The changes brought by David and Solomon flowed from the building of a temple and related to temple ministry as a whole, while Josiah’s instructions flowed from centralization “*in Jerusalem*” (**v. 1**).

Adam Clarke: Josiah celebrates a Passover, regulates the courses of the priests; assigns them, the Levites, and the people, their portions; and completes the greatest Passover ever celebrated since the days of Solomon, **2-19**.

McGee: We have seen in this book that although there was a general decline of the nation, there were five periods of revival, renewal, and reformation [under kings Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah] ... In each instance, return to the Word of

God led to the repentance of the people and the temporary reformation of the nation.

I. (:1-19) OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD ELEVATES WORSHIP CELEBRATION – THE PASSOVER AND FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Geoffrey Kirkland: **Looking Back – Prioritize the Lamb** – [following his outline]

1. Preparation (1-6)
2. Provision (7-9)
3. Procedure (10-15)
4. Praise & Preeminence of the Passover (16-19)

Peter Wallace: The book of Kings spent only three verses on Josiah's Passover – the Chronicler devotes 19 verses to it.

Martin Selman: Since this account follows immediately on the renewing of the covenant, it appears to be part of Josiah's movement of covenant renewal (34:29-32). The Passover in fact gives the reform a much more positive image than in Kings, which concentrates on a crusade against idolatry (2 Kgs 23:4-27). The Chronicler's concern is rather to encourage the right use of the *temple* (vv. 2, 3, 8, 20), its service (vv. 2, 10, 15, 16), and its *offerings* (vv. 7, 8, 9, 12-14, 16).

The Passover represents the zenith of temple worship in Chronicles (cf. 2 Chr. 30). This prominence is due partly to historical associations with the exodus (Exod. 12:1-13) and Israel's entry into the Promised Land (Josh. 5:10-11), and partly to its place in the worship of the second temple (Ezra 6:19-22; cf. also Ezek. 45:21). The Passover in post-exilic times particularly expressed many of the Chronicler's own emphases, such as the priority of temple worship, the reunification of the exiles, Israel's separation from the impurities of their neighbours, and a desire to seek the Lord (cf. Ezra 6:19-22).

Japhet: Hezekiah's Passover is portrayed as a spontaneous initiative, the main purpose of which was to provide a cultic-religious framework for the integration of the people of the North into the Jerusalem cult; the approach to these Israelites, and the effort to bring them to Jerusalem, consume the major part of ch. 30. ... Josiah's Passover is a different matter altogether. Josiah works to establish a **permanent institution**, built on solid administrative and organizational foundations, with a clear division of roles and an undisputed legal basis.

A. (:1-6) Preparation for Worship Celebration

1. (:1) Passover Summary

“Then Josiah celebrated the Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover animals on the fourteenth day of the first month.”

Raymond Dillard: Josiah's Passover was a **pilgrimage feast**: just as Israel had received its identity as a nation in the great assembly before Yahweh at Sinai, the law provided

that during the pilgrimage feasts the nation would assemble before his sanctuary at least in part as a visible reminder of a corporate national existence. In this way the individual Israelite learned afresh what it meant to be Israel: that Yahweh had chosen them as his own and that he dwelled in their midst. Centuries later Jesus' parents annually made this same pilgrimage; they discovered that though he was still a child, Jesus knew more about the meaning of Passover than they (**Luke 2:41–51**; **G. McConville**, 260–61).

David Guzik: The previous Passover of note was in the days of Hezekiah (**2 Chronicles 30:1-3**). That Passover had to be celebrated in the second month, but Josiah was able to keep this great Passover at the appointed time in the first month (**Numbers 9:1-5**).

2. (:2-6) Preparation Instructions

a. (:2) Organization and Encouragement

*“And he set the priests in their offices
and encouraged them in the service of the house of the LORD.”*

C. H. Spurgeon: Cheer up, my comrades

The first thing is to get every man into his proper place; the next thing is for every man to have a good spirit in his present place so as to occupy it worthily. At this time it shall not be my business to arrange you, but assuming that it is well for you to keep where you are, my object shall be to encourage you to do your work for the Lord without being cast down. I will speak--

I. To those who think they can do nothing.

II. To workers who are laid aside.

III. To those who are much discouraged because they have but small talent.

IV. To workers who are under great difficulties.

V. To those who are not appreciated.

VI. To those who are discouraged because they have had so little success.

b. (:3) Roles and Responsibilities

“He also said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were holy to the LORD, ‘Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel built; it will be a burden on your shoulders no longer. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel.’”

c. (:4-5) Appropriate Family Divisions

“And prepare yourselves by your fathers' households in your divisions, according to the writing of David king of Israel and according to the writing of his son Solomon. 5 Moreover, stand

in the holy place according to the sections of the fathers' households of your brethren the lay people, and according to the Levites, by division of a father's household."

- d. (:6) Commitment to Obeying the Word of God
"Now slaughter the Passover animals, sanctify yourselves, and prepare for your brethren to do according to the word of the LORD by Moses."

Raymond Dillard: Though the Passover animal was ordinarily slaughtered by the lay offerer (**Deut 16:5–6; Exod 12:3–6, 21**), the Chronicler understands that Josiah continued the practice of slaughter by the Levites as begun under Hezekiah (see Comment at **30:13–20**). Under Hezekiah this practice was explained as exigency due to the ritual impurity of some participants; the practice has either become normalized by the time of Josiah (**Rudolph**, 325; C-M, 513; **Myers**, 212), or we are invited to infer a further exigency, perhaps the sheer number of participants (**35:14, 18**).

B. (:7-9) Provision of Offerings for Worship Celebration

Frederick Mabie: The “voluntary” contributions of Passover offerings and more made by the king, royal officials, the high priest, temple administrators, and Levitical leaders reflect both the imagery of generosity as well as that of unity and fellowship enjoyed through the sharing of sacrificial meals and communion offerings. The massive amount of offerings and the efforts to account for a large number of those in Judah as well as Israel no doubt play into the summary remark that the Passover had not been celebrated like this before (v. **18**). These numbers are about double the offerings noted in conjunction with Hezekiah’s Passover celebration (cf. **30:24**), but they pale in comparison to Solomon’s temple-dedication offerings (cf. **7:5**).

1. (:7) Generous Example of King Josiah

"And Josiah contributed to the lay people, to all who were present, flocks of lambs and kids, all for the Passover offerings, numbering 30,000 plus 3,000 bulls; these were from the king's possessions."

Matthew Henry: The king and the princes, influenced by his example, gave liberally for the bearing of the charges of this Passover. The ceremonial services were expensive, which perhaps was one reason why they had been neglected. People had not zeal enough to be at the charge of them; nor were they now very fond of them, for that reason.

2. (:8-9) Generous Voluntary Contributions from Leading Officials

"His officers also contributed a freewill offering to the people, the priests, and the Levites. Hilkiyah and Zechariah and Jehiel, the officials of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover offerings 2,600 from the flocks and 300 bulls. 9 Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and

Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, the officers of the Levites, contributed to the Levites for the Passover offerings 5,000 from the flocks and 500 bulls.”

Raymond Dillard: The same names occur in **31:12–13** for Levites who were active during Hezekiah’s reign; these individuals having those names during Josiah’s reign (**35:9**) were probably the grandsons of those mentioned earlier, a fact providing evidence for the practice of papponymy in monarchic Israel.

Andrew Hill: The royal “*officials*” are probably members of Josiah’s “cabinet,” including princes and appointees to posts such as the recorder, secretary, chief of staff over the army, and advisers (cf. the list of David’s officials, **2 Sam. 8:15-18**). The temple administrators are senior priests in charge of the Levitical divisions and the musical and service guilds.

Peter Wallace: In the Law, it appears that each family was supposed to bring its own lamb, but by Josiah’s day, it is clear that the king and his officials are providing the sacrifices. The bulls would be for burnt offerings and peace offerings. The lambs, of course, would be for the Passover itself – one lamb per household (although small households could share). If Josiah contributed 30,000 lambs and young goats, and the officers and chiefs contributed 7,600, that would suggest that around 37,600 households were present for the Passover. Since “best guess” estimates for the whole population of Judah at this time would be around 300,000 – these numbers may well be exactly on target, since not everyone from the whole country would be there – and they would have some extras from around Israel.

C. (:10-15) Procedure for the Passover

Raymond Dillard: For a time the temple would have become a **slaughterhouse**, a stream of celebrants coming to receive animals for use in their observances. After the animals were slain and skinned, the Levites removed those portions used as burnt offerings and gave them to the family representatives who would present them to the priests for the burning. Details of this ritual are not prescribed in legislation pertaining to Passover; rather, the appeal to what was “*written in the book of Moses*” (35:12) probably pertains to provisions for fellowship offerings, the fat portions of which were burned on the altar (**Lev 3:6–16**); the burnt offerings and fat offerings (**35:14**) may refer to the same thing (**Keil**, 502; **Williamson**, 407).

1. (:10) Staging the Passover Service

“So the service was prepared, and the priests stood at their stations and the Levites by their divisions according to the king’s command.”

2. (:11a) Slaughtering the Sacrificial Animals

“And they slaughtered the Passover animals,”

3. (:11b) Sprinkling the Blood

“and while the priests sprinkled the blood received from their hand,”

4. (:11c) Skinning the Animals

“the Levites skinned them.”

5. (:12) Separating the Burnt Offerings to Be Presented to the Lord

“Then they removed the burnt offerings that they might give them to the sections of the fathers' households of the lay people to present to the LORD, as it is written in the book of Moses. They did this also with the bulls.”

6. (:13-15) Serving Up the Passover Feast to All Participants

“So they roasted the Passover animals on the fire according to the ordinance, and they boiled the holy things in pots, in kettles, in pans, and carried them speedily to all the lay people. 14 And afterwards they prepared for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were offering the burnt offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron. The singers, the sons of Asaph, were also at their stations according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the gatekeepers at each gate did not have to depart from their service, because the Levites their brethren prepared for them.”

Iain Duguid: most detail relates to the Levites, who acted on behalf of the people in the flaying, cooking, and distributing (**vv. 11c, 12–14a, 14c–15**). The two aspects of the ceremony can be seen in the sacrificing on the altar (**vv. 11–12, 16**) and the meal (**vv. 13–15**).

Andrew Hill: The term “roasted” (*bsl*, **35:13a**) is a general word for cooking food either by boiling or by roasting. The original Passover meal was cooked by roasting (**Ex. 12:8; Deut. 16:7**). Certain other types of offerings included in fellowship meals were boiled in clay pots (e.g., **Ex. 29:31; Lev. 6:28**). It seems the Passover celebration combined both types of cooked food offerings.

J.A. Thompson: There is a note of selflessness here. After all the people had been attended to, the Levites could provide for themselves and for the priests. The enormity of the task for the priests is demonstrated by the fact that they were sacrificing the burnt offerings and the fat portions till nightfall.

D. (:16-19) Perfection of Worship Celebration

1. (:16) Carrying Out the Commands of King Josiah

“So all the service of the LORD was prepared on that day to celebrate the Passover, and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD according to the command of King Josiah.”

2. (:17) Collective Community Participation

“Thus the sons of Israel who were present celebrated the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days.”

3. (:18) Characterization of This Passover as Remarkable

“And there had not been celebrated a Passover like it in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet; nor had any of the kings of Israel celebrated such a Passover as Josiah did with the priests, the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

David Guzik: This Passover was **remarkable** for several reasons.

- It was remarkable in the magnitude of its celebration, including even the remnant of the north who came to celebrate it in Jerusalem. *“All Judah and Israel”* includes people from north and south, implying a larger attendance than at Hezekiah’s Passover (*cf. 2 Chronicles 30:25*).” (**Selman**)
- It was remarkable in its strict obedience to the Law of Moses
- It was remarkable in the way it shined amidst these dark years in Judah’s history.

4. (:19) Culmination of Reign of King Josiah

“In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign this Passover was celebrated.”

II. (:20-25) DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD EXPOSES ONE TO HARM -- DEATH OF KING JOSIAH

A. (:20-22) Foolish Decision by King Josiah to Fight Neco King of Egypt

1. (:20) Foolish Support of the Assyrian Empire

“After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order, Neco king of Egypt came up to make war at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to engage him.”

G. Campbell Morgan: Josiah was in sin because his attack against Egypt was in support of the Assyrian Empire, and he had no business supporting the Assyrian Empire. The only reason for doing so must have been some supposed political advantage. Against that kind of action the prophets were constantly warning the kings. A word claiming to be from God, forbidding what was already forbidden, had a weight of moral appeal almost amounting to certainty.

2. (:21) Foolish Rejection of Neco’s Warning

“But Neco sent messengers to him, saying, ‘What have we to do with each other, O King of Judah? I am not coming against you today but against the house with which I am at war, and God has ordered me to hurry. Stop for your own sake from interfering with God who is with me, that He may not destroy you.’”

Andrew Hill: Pharaoh Neco indicates he has no quarrel with Josiah or Judah; he simply wants a right of way through Judah so he can show loyalty to his Assyrian ally (**35:21**).

The Megiddo pass lies on the international coastal highway, an ancient trade route connecting Egypt with Syria, northern Mesopotamia, and Anatolia. The site of Megiddo guards this bottleneck on the route through the Mount Carmel foothills. To meet up with the Assyrians at Carchemish, Neco must move his army through the Megiddo pass. It is at this strategic location that Josiah (foolishly) chooses to intercept Pharaoh Neco and the Egyptian army.

Mark Boda: Neco's speech signals a key shift in the Chronicler's account. After this point, foreign emperors would control the political agenda of Judah, and various foreign emperors (the Egyptian Neco, the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar, and the Persian Cyrus) will be identified as agents of Yahweh, either performing actions for Yahweh or speaking in his name. Josiah's death signals the death of the independent kingdom and the beginning of exile among the nations (**Johnstone** 1997:2.260).

3. (:22) Foolish Engagement with Neco

“However, Josiah would not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to make war with him; nor did he listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to make war on the plain of Megiddo.”

Iain Duguid: Neco claimed that his advance was because “*God has commanded me,*” and so Josiah's action would be “*opposing God.*” We are not told how, but we must assume that in some way through God's Spirit Josiah recognized that these words were “*from the mouth of God*”—but “*he did not listen*” (**2 Chron. 35:22b**). Ironically, his attempt to foil Neco (and God's word) by “*disguise*” and the manner of his resulting death match those of syncretistic Ahab of Israel (**18:29–34**). Nevertheless, he was buried with “*his fathers*” in Jerusalem, which was still at peace (cf. Huldah's word; **34:28**).

John MacArthur: The details of Josiah's tragic death are given. When compared with the account in **2Ki 23:28-30**, the events become clearer. Toward the end of Josiah's reign, the Egyptian Pharaoh Neco (ca. 609-594 B.C.) set out on a military expedition to aid the king of Assyria in a war at Carchemish, Assyria's latest capital, 250 mi. NE of Damascus on the bank of the Euphrates River. Fearing such an alliance would present future danger to Israel, Josiah decided to intercept Pharaoh Neco's army and fight to protect his nation. Coming from Egypt, likely by ship to Acco, a northern seaport in Israel, and by land up the coastal plain of Israel, the Egyptian army had landed and proceeded E to the plain of Megiddo (**v. 22**) i.e., Jezreel on the plain of Esdraelon. This was the most direct way to Carchemish. There Josiah met him for battle and was wounded by an arrow. He made it back to Jerusalem (60 mi. S), where he died.

B. (:23-24b) Tragic End of King Josiah

1. (:23) Fatal Wounding of King Josiah

“And the archers shot King Josiah, and the king said to his servants, ‘Take me away, for I am badly wounded.’”

2. (:24a) Return to Jerusalem

“So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in the second chariot which he had, and brought him to Jerusalem”

Adam Clarke: Perhaps this means no more than that they took Josiah out of his own chariot and put him into another, either for secrecy, or because his own had been disabled. The chariot into which he was put might have been that of the officer or aid-de-camp who attended his master to the war. **2 Kings 22:20.**

3. (:24b) Death and Burial

“where he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers.”

Raymond Dillard: For the Chronicler the death of Josiah presented a challenge to his theology of retribution; defeat in battle for him represented divine disfavor, whereas victory was a token of blessing. If Josiah was such a pious king, how is it that he suffered defeat and died in battle? The Chronicler demonstrates the validity of his retribution theology by modifying the Kings account to show that Josiah’s death resulted from his disobedience to a divine oracle.

Mark Boda: The Chronicler is careful to protect the veracity of Huldah’s prophetic word in **34:28**, where she promised that Josiah would be *“buried in peace,”* by clarifying that Josiah remained alive until he was safe in Jerusalem (the city of peace) where he died (cf. **2 Kgs 23:29-30**).

J.S. Wilkins: [Sermon points on the death of Josiah]

1. That the best of men may err in judgment and in act.
2. The danger of undertaking any work without asking counsel of the Lord.
3. How universal is the reign of death.
4. That we should be cautious how we attribute sudden and violent death to the vengeance of the Most High.
5. That it is not wrong to mourn for the dead.

C. (:24c-25) Mourning for Beloved Josiah

1. (:24c) By All Judah and Jerusalem

“And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.”

2. (:25a) By Jeremiah

“Then Jeremiah chanted a lament for Josiah.”

3. (:25b) By All the Male and Female Singers

“And all the male and female singers speak about Josiah in their lamentations to this day. And they made them an ordinance in Israel; behold, they are also written in the Lamentations.”

J.A. Thompson: “The Laments” is another lost collection. These are not to be confused with the Book of Lamentations, although in purpose they may have been similar. It must be remembered however that not only did Jeremiah lament over Josiah’s death,

but so did “*all the men and women singers,*” signifying that this was a dark day in Israel’s history.

(35:26 – 36:1) EPILOGUE – CLOSING SUMMARY OF REIGN OF JOSIAH

A. (:26-27) Recorded Deeds of Josiah

“Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his deeds of devotion as written in the law of the LORD, 27 and his acts, first to last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.”

Iain Duguid: Despite Josiah’s fatal disobedience, the conclusion to his reign focuses on “*his good deeds,*” which are defined as being “*according to what is written in the Law of the Lord*” (2 Chron. 35:26). Sadly, such would be said of no further king of Israel and Judah until there came the Son of David who was “obedient to the point of death” (Phil. 2:8).

Frederick Mabie: The most praiseworthy summary given of Josiah’s reign over Judah is the mention of his “acts of devotion, according to what is written in the Law of the Lord.” This statement captures what was directly and indirectly seen during the different phases of Josiah’s reign – namely, a reverence for God’s revealed will and a commitment to do what is pleasing in God’s sight.

B. (36:1) Succession

“Then the people of the land took Joahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in place of his father in Jerusalem.”

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why must our worship conform to the Word of God?
- 2) How does worship combine both sober reflection and joyful celebration?
- 3) How messy was this bloody Passover ceremony?
- 4) What motivated King Josiah to engage in battle with Neco of Egypt?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Andrew Hill: This section of Chronicles highlights certain character traits of God, especially his compassion and mercy in responding to those who humble themselves and offer prayer seeking God’s forgiveness (i.e., Manasseh, 33:12-19; Josiah, 34:27).

God is portrayed as one who listens and is moved to benevolent action on behalf of the penitent (**33:13**). Conversely, God's righteousness in not acquitting the guilty is demonstrated in his response to Amon, who "*increased his guilt*" before God by refusing to humble himself (**33:23**).

Ron Daniel: The ark of the covenant had been through quite the adventure since the days of Samuel the prophet. The Jews, who were losing the war with the Philistines, decided to take the ark into battle with them, believing that they would win (**1Sam 4:3**). But the Jews were defeated and the ark was captured by the Philistines (**1Sam. 4:11**). After God brought many curses upon the Philistine cities in which the ark was being kept, they returned it to Israel.

The people of Beth-shemesh were the first to get the ark, but after more than 50,000 of them were killed for looking into the ark (**1Sam. 6:19**), the city of Kiriath-jearim was contacted and asked, "*Would you like to have the ark?*" (**1Sam. 6:21**).

The ark was almost taken into battle again by King Saul (**1Sam. 14:18**) but he changed his mind and it ended up back at Kiriath-jearim (**1Chr. 13:5**). Once King David had established Jerusalem as Israel's capitol, he decided that the ark should be in Jerusalem. But when he tried to have it moved, he didn't do it in accordance with the Law of God, and a man died (**2Sam. 6:7**). So the ark remained at the house of Obed-edom for three months (**2Sam. 6:11**) while David read the Scriptures and figured out how it should be moved.

King David was successful at bringing the ark to Jerusalem, where it remained in a tent (**2Sam. 6:17**). It was a short time later that David had the idea to build a permanent temple for the Lord, but God didn't allow it.

When David's son Absalom rebelled and took over the kingdom, the priests took the ark of the covenant with them as they left the city with David (**2Sam. 15:24**). But David told them to go put it back (**2Sam. 15:25**). Years later, David's son, King Solomon, built the temple and the ark was placed in its permanent home (**1Kings 8:6**).

But now, King Josiah is having to tell the Levites to put the ark BACK into the temple. When was it removed? At this, we can only speculate that in the same way the priests had removed the ark when Absalom took power in the days of David, that during the reign of either Manasseh or his son Amon, they must have removed it again. After all, it was King Manasseh's who built altars in the house of the Lord (**2Chr. 33:4**). Now, Manasseh did repent, and remove these altars (**2Chr. 33:15**), but his son Amon, King Josiah's father, never repented of the idolatry with which he caused the nation to be permeated.

Apparently, the priests had been carrying it from place to place, probably to keep it in hiding. Now, it would not be a burden on their shoulders anymore. It would be returned to the Holy of Holies in the temple.

Frederick Mabie: The ramifications of Josiah's decision to involve Judah in this conflict were enormous. After a long period of Assyrian vassalage, Judah had begun to experience independence (or at least pseudo-independence) during the reign of Josiah in light of the contraction of the Assyrian Empire. However, in the aftermath of Judah's battle with Neco at Megiddo, Josiah was killed in battle (vv. 23-24) and Judah became an Egyptian vassal. Only a few years later (ca. 605 BC) Judah would become a Babylonian vassal. Thus in the span of about two decades Judah shifted from Assyrian vassalage to (pseudo-) independence to Egyptian vassalage to Babylonian vassalage.

Moreover, the final three kings of Judah after Jehoahaz (Eliakim/Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Mattaniah/Zedekiah) were placed on the throne by Egypt or Babylonia. Judah's subsequent rebellions against vassalage would ultimately lead to the destruction and deportation of Judah.

Peter Wallace: Neco was allied with the Assyrians, and was on his way to join Ashur-uballit II against an upstart Babylonian general, the crown prince of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar.

Carchemish is a city on the Euphrates River (on the border between modern Syria and modern Turkey).

Nebuchadnezzar was pushing the Assyrians back up the Euphrates, and Neco was in a hurry trying to rescue the Assyrians (the Egyptians had frequently quarreled with the Assyrians, but they feared the Babylonians more). Neco's expedition would fail, and Nebuchadnezzar would shortly rise to the throne of Babylon.

But while on the way up the coast of Philistia and Lebanon, Neco had to pass through the valley of Jezreel – and the plain of Megiddo. This is the bottle neck of northern Israel. The heights of Mt Carmel rise up to the west, blocking the coastal route and forcing the army to march inland. The hill country of Ephraim gives way to an opening leading eastward from the coastal plain into the valley of Jezreel, which turns north up towards Syria, (OR southeast towards the Jordan River and Jerusalem!) If you control the plain of Megiddo and the valley of Jezreel, then you control the military and economic destiny of the region. The city of Megiddo rises out of the plain at this point, perhaps providing a place for Josiah to ambush the Egyptians, as they approached the valley of Jezreel.

Josiah plainly thinks that his liturgical reforms have guaranteed his military success. He looks back at David and Solomon – Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah – and says, hey, good kings who worshiped the LORD and restored the temple wound up winning great battles. What is more, Huldah the prophetess had said, “*you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place and its inhabitants.*” (34:28)

Josiah may have taken Huldah's prophecy as a blank check. “*You shall be gathered to your grave in peace*” needs to be understood in context.

- First – the reason: “*because you have humbled yourself before me*” if you cease to be humble, then you will bring some other judgment upon yourself!
- Second – the promise itself is of narrow scope: Josiah will be spared the “*disaster*” – the exile and catastrophic judgment that God has planned for Jerusalem.

There is nothing in Huldah’s prophecy that gives Josiah a blank check to do whatever he wants.

And Neco warns him: “*I am not coming against you this day... And God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you.*” Of course, Hezekiah had heard similar words from the Assyrians – so why should Josiah have listened to Pharaoh? Well, how does going to battle against Egypt demonstrate love for God?

Sure, it’s true that from a political standpoint, Josiah thinks that a Babylonian empire would be more desirable than an Assyrian empire. But the problem is that the Son of David in Jerusalem should not be throwing his weight behind the empires of the world. Josiah is forgetting that in the end it doesn’t matter whether Assyria or Babylon is in control – he needs to worship and serve the LORD, and trust that God will exalt him.

Habakkuk prophesied during these days– the last days of the Assyrian empire and the rise of the neo-Babylonian empire. Perhaps he was thinking of the death of Josiah when he said, *So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. (1:4)*

Josiah goes forth in a perverted attempt to wield the authority of the Son of God.

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/122212930251.pdf>

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown: Josiah most probably calculated that the restoration of the divine worship, with the revival of vital religion in the land, would lead, according to God’s promise, and the uniform experience of the Hebrew people, to a period of settled peace and increased prosperity. His hopes were disappointed. The bright interval of tranquility that followed his re-establishment of the true religion was brief. But it must be observed that this interruption did not proceed from any unfaithfulness in the divine promise, but from the state into which the kingdom of Judah had brought itself by the national apostasy, which was drawing down upon it the long-threatened, but long-deferred judgments of God.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 36:2-21

TITLE: *FINAL FOUR KINGS AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM*

BIG IDEA:

STUBBORN REJECTION OF GOD LEADS INEVITABLY TO EXILE AND TEMPLE PLUNDERING AS JUDGMENT FALLS ON JERUSALEM

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: The Chronicler has arranged the accounts to portray two themes (cf. **Williamson**, 412):

- (1) the **common fate** of the last four kings, each ending in **exile**, and
- (2) the **tribute** paid by each, largely through **spoliation of the temple**.

This has the effect of drawing a parallel between the fate of the Davidic dynasty and the temple: both destined for exile, but with hope of restoration.

Matthew Henry: The destruction of Judah and Jerusalem is here coming on by degrees. God so ordered it to show that he has no pleasure in the ruin of sinners, but had rather they would turn and live, and therefore gives them both time and inducement to repent and waits to be gracious.

August Konkel: Every society has a propensity to disintegration. Historically, all great civilizations have ended, usually under the weight of their own dysfunction and capitulation to opposing powers. It would be unwise to think that present societies will be the exception to that pattern. For people of faith, it is not only history but also the revelation of Scripture that provides the warning. The nation Israel fell to political forces aided by its own intrigue and corruption. Theologically, it was because of their unfaithfulness to God. But the theology of divine judgment is also the reason for hope since God is a God of mercy.

Andrew Hill: The Babylonians sacked the city of Nineveh in 612 B.C. and then deposed the remnants of the Assyrian political establishment from Haran in 610 B.C. Thus Assyria's reign of terror in the ancient Near East came to an end. This colossal event, one the prophet Jonah longed to see and the prophet Nahum eventually witnessed, did not really bring peace to the peoples of Syria and Palestine. The resulting vacuum of political power in the Levant was quickly filled, as Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt marched to Carchemish on the Euphrates River. He intended to join with the Assyrian ruler Asshur-uballit in a last-ditch attempt to repulse the Babylonians and help restore Assyrian control in the western sector of the disintegrating empire. King Josiah's ill-fated attempt to intercept Neco at Megiddo only delayed the defeat the Egyptians experienced at Carchemish. Although the Egypto-Assyrian alliance failed to save the Assyrian Empire, Neco's campaign did result in Egyptian control of Syria-Palestine. It is unclear whether King Josiah was obligated to oppose Pharaoh Neco II as a vassal of Babylonia or if he acted independently. In either case, his death meant the end of

political autonomy for Judah. His successor, Jehoahaz, was dethroned by Neco and deported to Egypt. Neco placed Eliakim (or Jehoiakim), the brother of Jehoahaz, on the throne, and Judah became a vassal state to the pharaoh. Judah remained under Egyptian control until 605 B.C. . .

This final section of the Chronicler's history is driven by both a documentary impulse (i.e., telling *what* happened) and the literary impulse (i.e., telling *how* it happened). The references to Jeremiah the prophet (**36:12, 21**) may indicate the Chronicler's dependence on the book of Jeremiah as a source for this portion of his history. In any event, the repetition of the twin themes of the exile of the last Judahite kings and the repeated plundering of the Lord's temple explains *what* happens to the kingdom of Judah (**36:4, 6-7, 10, 18, 20**). The descriptions of King Zedekiah (who does not humble himself and will not turn to the Lord, **36:12-13**; cf. **7:14**) and the priests and all the people (who are unfaithful, **36:14**; cf. **30:8**) illustrate *how* all this happens to Judah.

Martin Selman: The fact that this is the only section of **2 Chronicles 10-36** where Chronicles has dealt more briefly than Kings with the same subject clearly indicates a special purpose. That purpose is revealed in three distinctive emphases.

- The first is that responsibility for the exile did not belong to any individual or generation, but implicated the whole nation. The sense of corporate guilt is very strong and is made explicit in **verses 15-16**.
- The second is that the exile is remarkably comprehensive, both in its character and its effects. For the land, the monarchy, and the temple **there was no remedy (v. 16)**, and only a **remnant** is left (**v. 20**). The only basis for future hope is that the Lord remains in charge throughout.
- The third and most surprising emphasis is that despite everything, an alternative still exists. The gathering clouds of judgment have never entirely obscured the brightness of God's grace, though now it shines through the exile rather than instead of it (**vv. 22-23**; cf. **28:14-15; 30:9; 33:12-13**).

The book ends, therefore, on a definite note of **hope**, which neither persistent sin nor the reality of judgment is able to overcome. However, one should not be misled into thinking that this implies that final judgment will never come (e.g. **Mk. 13:24-31; 1 Thes. 5:1-7**; cf. **Heb. 1:10-12**). Though the exile provides further evidence that God is always gracious and compassionate (cf. **2 Ch. 30:9**), the opportunity to call on his mercy will not always exist. It is therefore wise to take God's invitation seriously (**v. 23**).

I. (:2-4) EXILE OF JEHOAHAZ TO EGYPT

Thomas Constable: In these few verses, the will of the king of Egypt contrasts with the will of Judah's people. Whereas the people still held out hope that a descendant of David would lead them to the great glories predicted for David's greatest Son (e.g., **Ps. 2**), such was not to be the case any time soon. Other superpowers now dominated Judah's affairs. God had given His people over into their hands for discipline (cf. **Deut.**

28:32-57). Jehoahaz (Joahaz), rather than lifting the Davidic dynasty to its greatest glories, ended his life as a prisoner in Egypt, the original prison-house of Israel. Jehoahaz reigned only three months. Then Pharaoh Neco replaced him, fined the Judahites, and set up Jehoahaz's brother on Judah's throne.

A. (:2) Age and Duration of Reign

“Joahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.”

Raymond Dillard: In the latter half of 609 B.C. Judah underwent great political turmoil and experienced three successive changes of monarch. Josiah's death was followed by the three month rule of Jehoahaz who was in turn succeeded by Jehoiakim.

Jehoahaz, also known as Shallum, was not Josiah's firstborn; he had at least two older brothers (**1 Chr 3:15**). Nothing is known of the fate of Josiah's firstborn Johanan; he may have died before Josiah's own death. Jehoahaz came to the throne at age twenty-three and was succeeded three months later by Jehoiakim, who was twenty-five. The people of the land made Jehoahaz king, setting aside the right of primogeniture (**21:3**) probably in an effort to continue the anti-Egyptian or pro-Babylonian policies of Josiah. The same anti-Egyptian posture may explain Nebuchadnezzar's later choice of Zedekiah, Jehoahaz's younger brother by the same mother, Hamutal (**2 Kgs 23:31; 24:18**).

The Chronicler makes no overt moral judgment on Jehoahaz's reign, content to present the themes of exile and tribute that characterize his treatment of the last four kings of Judah. The deuteronomic historian does provide a brief, formulaic moral judgment (**2 Kgs 23:32**). Jeremiah provides more information regarding the actual character of his reign; it is an indictment for self-aggrandizement and injustice (**Jer 22:11-17**).

B. (:3) Subjugation by King of Egypt

“Then the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem, and imposed on the land a fine of one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold.”

Andrew Hill: Curiously, the Chronicler fails to report the death formulas for the last kings of Judah as recorded in the kings account (e.g., *“and there he [Jehoahaz] died,”* **2 Kings 23:34**; and *“Jehoiakim rested with his fathers,”* **24:6**; etc.). Kingship just fades into oblivion, as if the Chronicler seeks to represent the stories of the four kings as simply “different manifestations of the same phenomenon.” In so doing, the Chronicler offers his audience hope because he leaves open the possibility for the restoration of Israelite kingship as predicted by Jeremiah (**Jer. 33:15-16**) and Ezekiel (**Ezek. 34:23**).

C. (:4a) Succession

“And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim.”

Frederick Mabie: In the ancient Near East the act of changing a name reflects a change of destiny – a destiny now being shaped by the one powerful enough to effect the name change – and carries with it the expectation of loyalty. This idea of a change of destiny enabled by the name changer and symbolized by the new name may shed light on passages such as **Isaiah 62:2** and **Revelation 2:17**. The names given to Judean rulers by Pharaoh Neco and Nebuchadnezzar retain theophoric elements consistent with Israelite faith rather than incorporating foreign religious elements (cf. **Da 1:6-7**). For example, Eliakim and Jehoiakim are largely the same name, with a substitution of one theophoric element (“*El[i]*,” God) with another (“*Jeho*,” Yahweh).

D. (:4b) Captivity in Egypt

“But Neco took Joahaz his brother and brought him to Egypt.”

II. (:5-8) EXILE OF WICKED JEHOIAKIM TO BABYLON

Thomas Constable: Jehoiakim's conduct did nothing to retard the inevitable conquest of Jerusalem. Judah's captivity was one step closer when Babylon replaced Egypt as the controller of God's people. Jehoiakim was not able to establish a dynasty of kings to follow him, as Jeremiah had prophesied (**Jer. 22:30**)

A. (:5a) Age and Duration of Reign

“Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem;”

B. (:5b) Moral Evaluation

“and he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God.”

C. (:6-7) Subjugation by Nebuchadnezzar

1. (:6) Bondage of Jehoiakim in Babylon

“Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him and bound him with bronze chains to take him to Babylon.”

2. (:7) Booty Carried Off to Babylonian Temple

“Nebuchadnezzar also brought some of the articles of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his temple at Babylon.”

J.A. Thompson: Taking temple objects was common in times such as this, as it represented the complete military and religious conquest of a city (cf. **Dan 1:1-2; Ezra 1:7**).

D. (:8a) Recorded Deeds

“Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.”

Iain Duguid: To the standard concluding statement of sources, the Chronicler has added “*abominations . . . and what was found against him,*” an evaluation warranted by the consistent negative oracles in Jeremiah, including those concerning Jehoiakim’s arrogant, dismissive attitude to Jeremiah’s prophetic word (**Jer. 19:3–15; 22:13–23; 26:20–23; 36:1–32**).

E. (:8b) Succession

“And Jehoiachin his son became king in his place.”

III. (:9-10) EXILE OF WICKED JEHOIACHIN TO BABYLON

A. (:9a) Age and Duration of Reign

“Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem,”

B. (:9b) Moral Evaluation

“and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.”

C. (:10a) Subjugation by Nebuchadnezzar

1. Bondage of Jehoiachin in Babylon

“And at the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon”

2. Booty Carried Off to Babylon

“with the valuable articles of the house of the LORD,”

D. (:10b) Succession

“and he made his kinsman Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.”

John Mayer: The cause of Nebuchadnezzar’s taking of Jehoiachin is not stated. However, **Josephus** said that fearing the young king would seek to revenge his father’s capture and ignominious casting out of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, he thought it unsafe to allow Jehoiachin to reign. Therefore he came against him, carried him away to Babylon and set up another king in his stead: Zedekiah. Others think that Nebuchadnezzar, having first made Jehoiachin king, soon repented and returned thus again. . . . But on God’s part, the cause of Nebuchadnezzar’s being sent against Jehoiachin was due to the latter’s wickedness.

IV. (:11-14) REBELLION OF WICKED ZEDEKIAH

A. (:11) Age and Duration of Reign

“Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.”

David Guzik: **2 Kings 24:17** tells us that the name of Zedekiah was originally *Mattaniah*. The name Zedekiah means, *The Lord is Righteous*. The righteous judgment

of God would soon be seen against Judah.

B. (:12a) Moral Evaluation

“And he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God;”

C. (:12b-13) Stubborn Rejection of God by King Zedekiah

1. (:12b) Resisted God’s Prophetic Warnings

“he did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the LORD.”

2. (:13a) Rebelled against God’s Appointed Political Leader

“And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had made him swear allegiance by God.”

3. (:13b) Rejected God Stubbornly and Ultimately

“But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel.”

J.A. Thompson: Zedekiah’s rebellion was no doubt encouraged by some of his political advisers in this respect. The oath of allegiance that he swore to Nebuchadnezzar in the name of his God was normal in political treaties, but his breaking of the oath only serves to reinforce the portrait of him as an apostate (cf. **Ezek 17:11-21**). Not only did Zedekiah display disloyal and unfaithful attitudes and responses, but all the leaders of the priests and the people behaved in the same way (**v. 14**). In Zedekiah the people had the kind of king they deserved.

D. (:14) Corresponding Unfaithfulness of the Priests and the People

1. Depravity Paralleling Pagan Nations

“Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations;”

Frederick Mabie: Sadly, the depth of unfaithfulness is not limited to the ungodly reign of Zedekiah (cf. **vv. 12-13**) but is likewise seen in the hearts of both people and priests. The inclusion of priestly leaders is especially egregious, since a key covenantal responsibility of priests was to *“teach the Israelites all the decrees the Lord has given them”* (**Lev 10:11**; cf. **Dt 33:8-11**). This dereliction of duty on the part of priests is also an issue during the Chronicler’s own time, as reflected in the divine message against priests delivered via the postexilic prophet Malachi (**2:1-9**).

2. Defiling the Temple

“and they defiled the house of the LORD which He had sanctified in Jerusalem.”

Iain Duguid: From Nebuchadnezzar’s perspective, it was Zedekiah’s rebellion that led to the final attack when Jerusalem was sacked, the temple destroyed, and kingship in Jerusalem brought to an end. For the biblical writers, however, the reason was the

Lord's "wrath" because of the **persistent rejection of his word**. Kings simply states this fact (**2 Kings 24:20**), but Chronicles expands on the rejection (**2 Chron. 36:12–16**).

V. (:15-21) DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE OF GOD

Raymond Dillard: The prophets and messengers spoken of in vv 15–16 probably refer to more than those who were active only in the last decades before the exile; the author appears to be speaking of the entire prophetic succession, though this is not unambiguously clear. The role of the prophets in Chronicles is primarily that of guardians of the theocracy; they are the bearers of the word of God to kings, who are in turn blessed or judged within a short time in terms of their response. Here, however, the Chronicler describes the guilt of Israel as **cumulative**: rather than each generation or king experiencing weal or woe in terms of its own actions, there is a cumulative weight of guilt which ultimately irretrievably provokes the wrath of God and brings the great exile.

Derek Cooper – the English Annotations: Four Causes of God's Wrath

God's wrath is not easily incensed. Yet here we see four causes: first, there was a conspiracy among the people against the Lord; second, there was a multiplication of transgressions; third, there were monstrous abominations; and fourth, there were great profanities and contempt for God's messengers. By all these and by many other things the people of Judah provoked the wrath of the Lord. And the last means that is ordinarily used to reclaim people is God's messengers, to tell the people of their sins to their faces and to pronounce judgment against them. If this does not prevail, nothing remains but an expectation of God's judgment and wrath.

Thomas Constable: The last verses of this section are very sermonic (vv. 14-21). Yet the Chronicler did not set them off as a sermon but caused them to flow out of what he had said about Zedekiah. The writer gave reasons for the conquest of Jerusalem and the exile of the Israelites:

1. Zedekiah "*did evil in the sight of the LORD his God*" (v. 12).
2. "*He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the LORD*" (v. 12).
3. He "*rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar,*" to whom he had sworn allegiance in the name of Yahweh (v. 13).
4. He "*stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD*" (v. 13).
5. Israel's "*officials,*" "*priests,*" and "*people*" followed all "*the abominations of the nations*" around them (v. 14).
6. The Israelites "*defiled the house of the LORD*" (v. 14).

7. They "mocked," despised," and "scoffed at" God's "words" and His "messengers," the prophets (v. 16).

A. (:15-16) Stubborn Rejection Leads to Certain Wrath

1. (:15) Compassionate Entreaties by the Lord

*“And the LORD, the God of their fathers,
sent word to them again and again by His messengers,
because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place;”*

Meyer: What a touching and graphic phrase! How did God yearn over that sinful and rebellious city! Like a man who has had a sleepless night of anxiety for his friend or child, and rises with the dawn to send a servant on a message of inquiry, or a message of love. How eager is God for men’s salvation.

2. (:16a) Three Fatal Charges of Stubborn Rejection

*“but they continually mocked the messengers of God,
despised His words
and scoffed at His prophets,”*

Martin Selman: Three complaints are made in particular, that they were unfaithful, defiled the temple, and laughed at the prophets. All three are frequent themes throughout Chronicles, and it is as if the entire message of Chronicles were being summed up.

3. (:16b) No Remedy for the Deserved Wrath of God

*“until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people,
until there was no remedy.”*

August Konkel: The offense of *ma'al*, a favorite word of the Chronicler, is oath violation or a violation of the sacred space of the temple (**26:16-18**). These violations are equivalent because both are directly offenses against God. Zedekiah’s refusal to submit to Babylonian rule led him to oath violation and brought all of the people to increasing their unfaithfulness. Destruction and exile on a national scale follow in the wake of the *ma'al* of oath violation (**Lev 26:14-17**). On this basis, Ezekiel can pronounce exile for the entire nation (**Ezek 17:19-21**). The Chronicler’s view is that *ma'al* trespasses on the divine realm by breaking the covenant oath. It is a lethal sin that destroys both the offender and his community.

B. (:17-20) Severe Destruction of God’s People, Temple and City

1. (:17) Severe Destruction of God’s People

*“Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who
slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and
had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave
them all into his hand.”*

Martin Selman: The end comes remarkably swiftly, like a bird of prey suddenly swooping down after circling repeatedly over its victim.... The final collapse under Zedekiah is therefore merely the final stage in a process that has long been inevitable.

2. (:18) Severe Plundering of God's Temple

*“And all the articles of the house of God, great and small,
and the treasures of the house of the LORD,
and the treasures of the king and of his officers,
he brought them all to Babylon.”*

3. (:19) Severe Destruction of God's Temple and City

*“Then they burned the house of God,
and broke down the wall of Jerusalem
and burned all its fortified buildings with fire,
and destroyed all its valuable articles.”*

Dilday: The Talmud declares that when the Babylonians entered the temple, they held a two-day feast there to desecrate it; then, on the third day, they set fire to the building. The Talmud adds that the fire burned throughout that day and the next.

Martin Selman: The over-all impression is of **unrelieved destruction**. ‘All, every’ is used fivefold in **verses 17-19**, which together with *young* and *old*, *large* and *small*, and finally (literally), ‘to destruction’ confirms that there was no respite, no escape.

4. (:20) Subjugation in Babylon

*“And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to
Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of
the kingdom of Persia,”*

Andrew Hill: Essentially the Chronicler offers his generation a twofold rationale for Judah's expulsion from the land of the promise.

(1) Both king and people have rejected God's word spoken by his prophetic messengers (**36:16**).

(2) The people of Judah have failed to keep the covenant stipulation of giving the land “*its sabbath rest*” (**36:21**; cf. **Lev. 25:1-7**).

Here again the compiler assumes his audience has a working knowledge of the Torah and the Prophets in the intertwining of the covenant curse (**Lev. 26:34**) and the word of Jeremiah (**Jer. 29:10**).

Dilday: The fall of Jerusalem didn't come about in one cataclysmic battle; it occurred in stages.

- Nebuchadnezzar's initial subjugation of the city about 605 B.C.
- The destruction by Nebuchadnezzar's marauding bands, 601 to 598 B.C.
- The siege and fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar's main army on 16 March, 597 B.C.

- Nebuchadnezzar’s return to completely destroy and depopulate Jerusalem in the summer of 586 B.C.

C. (:21) Sabbath Rests Required for the Land

“to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths.

All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.”

Frederick Mabie: The beginning point and ending point of this seventy-year period (**Jer 25:8-11; 29:10**) is not exactly specified within the biblical material. The most likely possibility is that the destruction of the temple in 586 BC started the seventy-year period, which comes to a close with the dedication of the Second Temple (ca. 516 BC). Another possibility is that the end of the seventy-year period is connected with the Decree of Cyrus (539 BC; cf. **2Ch 36:22**), which would imply a beginning point around the death of Josiah (609 BC), after which Judah became a pawn to the geopolitical interests of Egypt and Babylonia.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why did the Chronicler dispatch these four kings with such abbreviated reporting?
- 2) How does the persistent stubborn rebellion of God’s elect nation highlight God’s longsuffering patience and faithfulness to His covenant promises?
- 3) How has God demonstrated His patience and compassion in your life?
- 4) How would this account of God’s justification for the seventy year Babylonian Captivity impact the current generation of exiles as they return to rebuild the temple?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Raymond Dillard: After his account of the reign of Josiah the Chronicler moves quickly through the reigns of the last four kings. Each king anticipates the fate of the nation through his own experience of exile; the temple too is successively plundered, anticipating its ultimate destruction. But this is not the end of the story: as nation and temple were inextricably bound in destruction, so they are also linked in restoration and renewal. A prepared and purged people return to a prepared land to build again the temple of God.

Andrew Hill: Zedekiah was a weak king, unable to control the resurgent nationalism in Judah and apparently easily manipulated by the nobles and advisers around him. After

a series of political missteps, Zedekiah finally rebelled against the king of Babylon in 589 B.C. The Babylonian response was swift and thorough. King Nebuchadnezzar lay siege to Jerusalem early in 588 B.C. The end came in July of 587 B.C., with the carnage so appalling and the devastation so sweeping that survivors could only sit aghast in silence as they mourned “the Daughter of Zion” (see the book of Lamentations).

Iain Duguid: Comparison of 2 Chronicles 36 and 2 Kings

	2 Chronicles	2 Kings
Reign of Jehoahaz	36:1–4	23:30b–34
Reign of Jehoiakim	36:5–8	23:35–24:7
Reign of Jehoiachin	36:9–10	24:8–17
Reign of Zedekiah	36:11–16	24:18–20
Fall of Jerusalem and exile	36:17–21	25:1–26

In addressing his audience, the Chronicler reminds them that disobedience was widespread, involving “*all the officers of the priests and the people.*” He piles up **strong words**, with everything coming to an explosive climax. He speaks of worship and the temple (**2 Chron. 36:14**) and of the rejection of prophets (vv. **15–16**). Sins and attitudes that may have been individual or short-term are now systemic and persistent; what was previously described as “*unfaithful(ness)*” is now described as “*exceedingly unfaithful*” (an emphatic phrase using the verb “*make many*” and *ma’al* twice. The people were following the “*abominations of the nations*” whom the Lord had driven out of the land (**28:3; 33:2; 34:33**), and they had “*polluted*” (“*made unclean*”; contrast **23:19**) the house that God had “*made holy*” (**7:16, 20**; “*I consecrated*”). This language is common throughout Ezekiel in condemning the extent of the pollution of the temple (e.g., **Ezek. 5:9, 11; 8:6–18; 20:30; 22:26**).

The description and depth of feeling evident in **2 Chronicles 36:15–16** is probably influenced by (and so alluding to) Jeremiah and Ezekiel. God had been earnest and persistent in sending warnings. . .

John Goldingay: It’s obvious now that Judah’s story had to end with the fall of Jerusalem in 587, but it would not have been obvious in Josiah’s day, or even in that of his sons Jehoahaz (Joahaz is an alternative spelling) or Eliakim or Zedekiah, or of Eliakim’s son Jehoiachin. At least, it would not have been obvious to these successive kings themselves. There is a sense in which it was self-evident to some of the prophets who were nevertheless striving to give the story a different ending—prophets such as Jeremiah, whom Chronicles mentions. Reflecting on the way the story has unfolded

over the centuries, however, Judah's reaction to these prophets was all of a piece with its reaction to the prophets Yahweh had sent over the centuries.

Chronicles calls them **God's aides**. It is the only time it uses this word to describe prophets; the word more commonly denotes the aides of a human king or the supernatural aides of the heavenly King. It draws attention to the frightening fact that prophets are more than messenger boys (and girls). They are people through whom God's decisions are put into effect. They can be a means of blessing, but they are more often the means of God's warnings being both announced and (when they are not heeded) implemented. Chronicles uses a vivid expression to describe God's sending of these aides. For the phrase "*sending persistently*," the Revised Version and the American Standard Version of the Bible has the more literal translation "*rising up early and sending*." Yahweh is like a president who rises at 5 a.m. to meet with his staff and send them off on the tasks that need doing. This is how committed Yahweh is to getting the message out to Judah in order that the people may find mercy and escape judgment. Chronicles' way of making the point illustrates the Old Testament's standard way of picturing God: you could say that God is desperately anxious to show mercy to the people, but all to no avail. By the end of the story, three of Judah's last four kings have been deposed by the Egyptians or the Babylonians as these two vie for control of the area where Judah lives. (Chaldeans in effect means the same thing as Babylonians—the Chaldeans were a people who came to rule Babylon.) Each of these kings earns the disapproval of the imperial powers or of God or of both. God keeps delaying the moment when the ax must fall, but eventually it has to do so.

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 36:22-23

TITLE: *EDICT OF CYRUS TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM*

BIG IDEA:
THE END BECOMES THE NEW BEGINNING

INTRODUCTION:

Raymond Dillard: Concluding the narrative with these two verses highlights the hopefulness already intimated in **36:20–21** and directs the reader to the continuation of the narrative in Ezra. The book ends with a **new exodus** at hand: not because God forced the hand of a reluctant Pharaoh, but because he moved the heart of a Persian king. The people of God will again go free and build a sanctuary.

J.A. Thompson: The Lord had appointed Cyrus to build a temple for him in Jerusalem. In fact, the tabernacle and the first and second temples were all built in part with funds provided by Gentile nations. Cyrus' authorization for the rebuilding of the temple included not only the building but also the return of the implements taken from the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar and the funding of the project from the Persian treasury (**Ezra 6:4-5**).

The book thus ends with the possibility of a new exodus. As God had once forced the hand of a reluctant pharaoh, now he moved the heart of a Persian king. The Book of Chronicles thus ends with the promise that the people of God would again go free to build a sanctuary where they could worship him in the land he had promised to their ancestors.

Matthew Henry: These last two verses of this book have a double aspect.

1. They look back to the prophecy of Jeremiah, and show how that was accomplished, **2 Chron. 36:22**. God had, by him, promised the restoring of the captives and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, at the end of seventy years; and that time to favour Sion, that set time, came at last. After a long and dark night the day-spring from on high visited them. God will be found true to every word he has spoken.
2. They look forward to the history of Ezra, which begins with the repetition of **2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1-3**.

They are there the introduction to a pleasant story; here they are the conclusion of a very melancholy one; and so we learn from them that, though God's church be cast down, it is not cast off, though his people be corrected, they are not abandoned, though thrown into the furnace, yet not lost there, nor left there any longer than till the dross be separated. Though God contend long, he will not contend always. The Israel of God shall be fetched out of Babylon in due time, and even the dry bones made to live. It may be long first; but the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak and not lie; therefore, though it tarry, wait for it.

Thomas Constable: These two verses reflect the whole mood of Chronicles. Rather than ending with the failure of people, the writer concluded by focusing attention on the **faithfulness of God** (cf. Lam. 3:22-23). God was in control of the Persian king as He had controlled the kings of Babylon, Egypt, and Israel. God had promised Israel a future as a nation. His people would experience this future under the rule of a perfect Davidic Son. Yahweh was moving now—after 70 years of captivity—to bring that future to pass (cf. **Isa. 9:7**). Even though the Babylonian army had burned Yahweh's temple to the ground (v. 19), it would rise again (v. 23).

I. (:22a) TIMING OF THE EDICT OF CYRUS

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia—“

II. (:22b) PROPHETIC BACKGROUND TO THE EDICT OF CYRUS

“in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah—“

III. (:22c) DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE EDICT OF CYRUS

“the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,”

IV. (:23) SUBSTANCE OF THE EDICT OF CYRUS

“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia,”

A. Position of Worldly Dominion

“The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth,”

B. Privilege of Divine Commissioning to Build God’s Temple in Jerusalem

“and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.”

Martin Selman: “To build him a house” is a deliberate echo of the central promise of the Davidic covenant (cf. **1 Chronicles 17:11-12; 22:10; 28:6; 2 Chronicles 6:9-10**). Cyrus of course is thinking only of the house in *Jerusalem*, but in the Chronicler’s thought this phrase is inevitably connected with both houses of the Davidic covenant, the dynasty as well as the temple.

C. Proclamation Encouraging the Jewish Exiles to Return and Build

“Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!”

J. Sidlow Baxter: Most of all, may that central message of the Chronicles grip our minds, namely, that **response to God** is the really decisive factor. It is true both nationally and individually. It was true of old: it is true today. The first duty and the only true safety of the throne lies in its relation toward the temple. Our national leaders of today might well ponder that fact. When God is honoured, government is good and the nation prospers. But when God is dishonoured, the cleverest statesmanship cannot avert eventual disaster. The call to our nation today, as clearly as in the Edict of Cyrus quoted at the end of 2 Chronicles, is to “*go up*” and REBUILD THE TEMPLE.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Are we confident that God is sovereignly directing current world leaders to fulfil His kingdom agenda today?
- 2) How should we use fulfilled prophecy today as a strong Christian apologetic?
- 3) Why is the temple so central in God’s kingdom agenda?
- 4) How is it possible for such a gloomy book of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah (with the repeated rebellion and failure of king after king) to end on such a positive note of hope?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Iain Duguid: Chronicles began with all-embracing genealogies and has told of kings and people and their various involvements (or non-involvement) in faithful worship centered in the temple. Following the genealogies and the account of Saul’s death due to his “*breach of faith*” (*ma’al*; **1 Chron. 10:13**), which set the scene for the following history, the anointing of David as king was “*according to the word of the Lord by Samuel*” (**1 Chron. 11:3**), and the story continued to be accompanied by the Lord’s “*word*” (e.g., **1 Chron. 17:3; 22:8; 2 Chron. 6:17; 10:15; 11:2; 12:7; 18:18; 30:12**). Now the storytelling ends, not with destruction and exile due to the people’s being “*exceedingly unfaithful*” (**2 Chron. 36:14**), but in an open-ended manner as God fulfills his word through another prophet, Jeremiah (**2 Chron. 36:22**). There is **hope** for the future because God keeps his word concerning “*all his people*.” On that solid basis, the book ends with an open call for “*you*” to “*go up*.”

August Konkel: The Chronicler’s goal involves the greatest contrast with the previous history. In the conclusion of Kings, the restoration of the exiled king Jehoiachin leaves the people in a kind of exile and lacks any mention of the promise of restoration found in the prophets (**2 Kings 25:27-30**). In Chronicles, exile is countered by a new era, introduced as the fulfillment of a prophecy of Jeremiah (**2 Chron 36:21**) and the actions

of Cyrus. In **Isaiah 45:1**, Cyrus the Great is identified as one whom the Lord anointed. In Hebrew, he is *masiah*, the same term used for the ruler in Zion in **Psalms 2:2**, the biblical basis for Jesus being called “*the Messiah*” (as in **Matt 1:1**). The conclusion of Chronicles shows that humility and repentance will bring healing from exile. Manasseh is a compelling example of restoration rather than being the villain causing exile. However severe his sins, his legacy is presented as a king of restoration. Manasseh prayed, his prayer was heard, and he returned to Jerusalem. The same hope is extended to all who feel that they live with the burden of exile.

Frederick Mabie: In addition to allowing exiled people groups to return to their homeland, Cyrus also sought to placate the gods of the conquered nations by allowing freedom of worship, as reflected in his respect of Marduk and his reverential words acknowledging Yahweh’s sovereignty (v. 23). Regardless of the sincerity of Cyrus, Yahweh is clearly using him to advance the divine plan (v. 22; cf. **Isa 44:28; 45:13**), which included not only the return of the Judean people from exile, but also the return of the consecrated items from the temple from exile, and even the Persian funding of the rebuilding of Yahweh’s temple (cf. **Ezr 1:2-8; 6:1-2**).

Peter Wallace: The Eschatology of Jerusalem – the End as Beginning

The Chronicler has been concerned with kings and priests – with the **temple** and the **throne** – both are now destroyed. Dillard points out that the Chronicler weaves together the language of throne and temple in such a way that you might begin to think that even as they fall together, so also will they rise together. The events of **2 Chronicles 36:1-21** take 23 years – from the death of Josiah in 609 to the destruction of the temple in 586. Josiah was only 39 years old when he died – cut down in the prime of his manhood. No doubt the people of Judah had hoped that he would reign for decades more – but in the span of 23 years, Jerusalem went from the pinnacle of hope to utter obliteration. . .

The Babylonian invasion is the last war – the war to end all wars! It is an eschatological war. It brings an end to the temple of Solomon, the house of David, and the city of Jerusalem. It also removes the people of God from the Promised Land. Those who escaped the sword became exiles – servants to Nebuchadnezzar and his sons. . .

The Chronicler says that the land rested for 70 years – until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. Moses had said that Israel was supposed to take a sabbatical year every 7th year. They were to leave the land fallow, and eat whatever the land produced. Apparently Israel didn’t do this. Because there were 70 years of sabbaticals backed up (which would mean that Israel had failed to practice the sabbatical year for around 490 years – since 1077 BC, right around the birth of king Saul).

The “70 years” of the exile have at least two different fulfillments. In Chronicles like in **Jeremiah 25** or **Daniel 9** – the decree to rebuild is taken to be the end of the 70 years. The decree took place in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia – in 539 BC, which would mean that the beginning of the exile is reckoned from the first deportation in the days of Jehoiakim (605) [the year of Jeremiah’s prophecy of the 70 years in **Jeremiah 25**]. Of course, in **Zechariah 1**, it appears that the 70 years run from the destruction of

the temple in 586 to the dedication of the second temple in 516. . .

But, with the 70 years of sabbaticals repaid, and with the judgment of God against Jerusalem fulfilled, the Chronicler reminds his hearers that God is still **faithful** to his promises.

Because in spite of the judgment upon Jerusalem, there are three things that remain:

- First, the **word of the LORD** endures. God had spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah (v20) and God's word came to pass. The people were enslaved and the land was left desolate. As **Willcock** puts it, "nothing of what has happened is outside the plan of God. Indeed, none of it is outside his declared plan." (286) The people of God may rest secure in knowing that God's word continues to govern all things.

- Second (in **verse 20**), "*those who had escaped from the sword*" – there is a **remnant** that will always survive. After all, if God has promised – and God is faithful to his word – then you may be sure that he will triumph in the end. While David's throne and Solomon's temple may no longer stand, the things that they stood for will always endure.

- Third, the **land** is still there. Yes, it lay desolate for 70 years – one year for every seven since the beginning of the monarchy. But this is still the place where God spoke – the land that he promised to Abraham, the land that Moses saw, the land that Joshua caused Israel to possess – and where David reigned, and Solomon built the temple.

J. Barton Payne: Unlike the Book of Kings, with its central message of stern moral judgments ... Chronicles exists essentially as a **book of hope**, grounded on the grace of our sovereign Lord.

Geoffrey Kirkland: The Return – All by God's Grace

- The MAN God used (Cyrus king of Persia)
- The MOMENT God appointed (in the first year...to fulfill)
- The MOUTHPIECE God equipped (Jeremiah)
- The MESSAGE God gave (let the Jews return and go up to Jerusalem)
- The MAJESTY God has (the Lord of heaven & earth)
- The MERCY God offers (let him go up; still waiting for more; a new 'ending')

SOME CONCLUDING LESSONS from the book of 2 CHRONICLES:

- God has a plan [and it can surprise us at times!]
- God's is immutable (his character doesn't change)
- God isn't swayed by evil; he uses it
- God has the victory (he's guaranteed it)
- God's people will triumph

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