

## 14 – 2 Chronicles: Davidic Dynasty Preserved, as Promised

(...but the Kingdom falls)

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> book of Chronicles includes information about Solomon’s reign of 40 years, about building the Temple and Solomon’s great glory and wealth, and then the history of the decline into exile, **focusing only on the southern kingdom of Judah**. After the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, there were 20 kings of Judah until they were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and deported to Babylon.
- 2 Chronicles continues the account begun in 1 Chronicles. It covers the same period of time as the books of the Kings, with certain emphases. The first 9 chapters are about **Solomon and the Temple**. Chapter 10 records the division of the Kingdom (*into the two kingdoms of Israel in the north and Judah in the south*), but after this the narrative contains information **ONLY** about the kingdom of Judah, and the continuance of the line of David.
- Special focus is given to 5 kings who were considered “good like their father, David” (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah.). During these reigns there was revival, renewal and reformation.
- Last verses of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles simply state the end of the divided nation of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah. 70 years passed between two of these verses, when we hear that Cyrus, king of Persia, has a decree from the Lord to build God a house in Jerusalem and restore His people to their land.



### Highlights (and lessons!)

- It is interesting to note names of the mothers of some of these kings are given. This is frequent throughout this book and is a bit unusual. This is especially true of the bad kings, and even more if this mother was a foreigner. Perhaps it is an indicator that God is holding both parents responsible for their son’s wickedness, and the foreign influence had been prohibited?
- Chapter 13 chronicles the reign of **Abijah**. It is interesting to note that in 1 Kings he is listed as a wicked king, yet **the only information recorded about him in 2 Chronicles is good**, in that he brings Judah to repentance and chastises the north for leaving God. Chronicles is uniquely God’s viewpoint about this time in Israel’s history. All of David’s sins are unrecorded except a few that are of long term importance. And here, Abijah’s apparently many sins are also not recorded.
- There is a wonderful verse in chapter 16, easily missed. King Asa, instead of consulting God, made a treaty with the Syrians. God had already defeated the Ethiopian army for Asa, but Asa chose instead to make a treaty instead of asking God for help. Because of this, God sent a seer (Hanani) to rebuke Asa. In this rebuke we find this jewel: **“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him...”** (16:9) What a wonderful statement about our God! He continues to do this, for those whose hearts are loyal to Him.
- An interesting incident is told in detail in chapter 17. Herein lies the entire difference between the northern kingdom and the good kings of the southern kingdom (the few that were good!), Good king Jehoshaphat of Judah aligned himself with king Ahab of the north against the Syrians at Ramoth Gilead. Jehoshaphat asked if a prophet would inquire of God. Ahab’s prophets were false prophets, so Jehoshaphat wanted a true man of God. Ahab complained about that prophet, Micaiah (“he never says anything good about me!”) and Micaiah came and predicted their defeat and Ahab’s death. Ahab was furious and told them to throw Micaiah in jail. That day they were defeated, and Ahab died in battle, just as Micaiah had said. **The kings of Judah who were considered “good” kings were the ones who consulted God on every detail. This is a powerful reminder to us that we must do the same. God is intimately interested and concerned about us and desires to be consulted, talked to, and included in our plans.** He has said He will bless those who do so abundantly, and these stories in Kings and Chronicles are evident of that fact. That is the biggest lesson for us today.

- Another lesson for us is found in the amazing story of Jehosphaphat and the invading Syrians. Jehosphat asks all Judah to pray for deliverance. A Levite (Jahaziel) delivers a word from God ***“Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s...”*** (20:15) Once again, we have another indication that all battles belong to God, not to us. We saw this with Moses and the Egyptians, and in other places in scripture. God merely asks us to trust Him, and stand still (something we have a very hard time doing!) ***“You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you.”*** (20:17). And sure enough, true to His Word, God delivered Judah in an amazing way. How long does it take for us to understand that He does the same for us? Yet how we labor over carrying burdens that are not ours to carry, but His. There are many valuable lessons in this seemingly dry set of history books!
- There is a situation in chapter 29 that reminds us of things happening today. King Hezekiah decides it is time to restore worship to the God of Israel and celebrate the Passover again, which had not been done for many years. Hezekiah invited ALL of Israel, including what was left of the old now conquered northern kingdom of Israel, to participate with them (Judah) and come down to Jerusalem and humble themselves again before God. He sent messengers throughout the entire land. There is a passage that sums up the response: ***“So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but they laughed at them and mocked them. Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. Also the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, at the word of the LORD.”*** (29:10-12). People from only 4 (see later that Ephraim also responded in part) tribes responded, but some DID respond. They joined all of Judah in the renewal of this ordained feast before God. Many of us are in earnest prayer today for our own nation, that people humble themselves again before God. But we often get the same response: laughter, and derision. Yet, despite what we see as open hostility and mockery of our beliefs, some DO come. This is an important reminder for us. We keep praying, and we keep proclaiming God’s Word and His plan. SOME will come! It is also a humble reminder to see in this chapter that many from the northern kingdom were considered “unclean” when they celebrated the Passover with Judah, but Hezekiah prayed for them and God heard him! May God show each of us how we are to pray for those who need to return to the Lord.

SOLOMON’S REIGN 1-9	
1	Solomon becomes king, prays for wisdom. Solomon begins well, but wisdom doesn’t seem to extend to Solomon’s personal life.
2	Solomon prepares to build the temple, enlists a huge army of workmen, gets technical advice, and secures materials from the king of Tyre, David’s friend. Since the Israelites were more into agriculture, Solomon needs outside technical expertise to build this huge structure. Total workmen = 153,600!
3	Solomon begins construction of the temple on Mt. Moriah where Abraham had offered Isaac. The temple proper is twice the size of the tabernacle, and includes many surrounding buildings.
4	New articles of furniture built for Temple. Brazen altar 4 X as large as one in tabernacle, and there are 10 lavers in temple. Many other additions/changes. <i>Added elements tend to remove the simplicity of original tabernacle and easily recognized references to Jesus. Was the Tabernacle, not the Temple which was used in Hebrews to depict person and work of Jesus Christ. Temple became a source of pride for Israel, something God never intended. God allowed structure to be built, but not what He wanted.</i>
5	Original Ark of the Covenant brought into new temple from the city of David. An unnumbered multitude of animals are sacrificed for this occasion. The only things in the Ark were the stone tablets of the Law. The glory of the Lord fills the temple as it had previously filled the tabernacle (God’s stamp of approval).
6	Solomon’s prayer of dedication. Israel understands God does not dwell in a man-made house (a pagan idea) when heavens could not contain Him. Verses 21-42 give the place and plan of the temple in the future relationship of God and Israel. Final verses are prophetic of their eventual removal from the land.
7	God accepts sacrifices, and temple becomes alive with activity. God appears to Solomon and tells him the condition of blessing upon Israel in the land. Well-known verse 14 has direct reference to Israel.
8	More achievements of Solomon. Interesting note about Pharaoh’s daughter (Solomon apparently knew that his wife was not in God’s will!)
9	Queen of Sheba visits Solomon (see 1 Kings 10:1-13). The world came to worship at new Temple, indicating a partial success in Israel’s witness. Interesting note about 666 talents of gold for Solomon yearly. V 13-28 indicate that Solomon did not obey all God’s ordinances regarding kings. (riches, throne, 666 talents, 6 steps to throne, etc.) Some very rich symbolism here. <b><i>“The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones...”</i></b> indicates great wealth of his kingdom. Solomon’s death ends chapter.

<b>DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM AND HISTORY OF JUDAH: 10-36</b> (southern kingdom not recorded)	
10	Foolishness and pride of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, leads to the division of the kingdom. Jeroboam leads the 10 northern tribes of Israel into rebellion.
11	Early reign of <b>Rehoboam</b> in contrast to Jeroboam's (north) refusal to worship God in Jerusalem.
12	<b>Rehoboam</b> departs from the law of God; Shishak, king of Egypt, invades the land and carries off the temple treasure. Rehoboam dies.
13	Reign of <b>Abijah</b> , battles with Jeroboam, Jeroboam dies.
14	<b>Asa</b> , son of Abijah is a good king, and his reign gets 3 chapters here. He tore down the altars and high places of worship, fought the king of Ethiopia and won battles by crying out to the Lord for help.
15	Listened to God, brought people back into covenant relationship with God. Asa even removed his own mother from being queen since she had built an altar to a pagan god. High places remained in Israel (north) but removed from southern kingdom. Instead of relying on God, however, he made a treaty with the king of Syria which angered God. God sent a seer to rebuke him, instead Asa threw him in prison, and we read that in his last days he sought the advice of men, not God's advice or help. Died after a disease in his feet.
16	
17	Asa's son <b>Jehoshaphat</b> reigned, " <i>And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD;</i> " (17:6) sent teachers and priests of God among the people, God blessed the nation of Judah, armies around them did not war with them; Jehoshaphat became wealthy and powerful. Jehoshaphat aligns with Ahab in the north against Ramoth Gilead. Jehoshaphat asks for prophet to inquire of the Lord, Ahab complains about Micaiah who predicts their defeat. Ahab dies in battle. Jehoshaphat is chastised by Jehu for his alliance with the "wicked" (Ahab and the northern kingdom) Jehoshaphat instituted reforms, set up judges in the land. Syrians come to attack again, Jehoshaphat seeks God, asks all Judah to pray (they do), God delivers. Chapter 20 details how God killed the enemies and Judah didn't even have to fight. But Jehoshaphat makes the mistake of aligning himself with Israel again (the wicked in God's eyes) and God destroyed the ships they were to sail to Tarshish in.
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21	Jehoshaphat dies, <b>Jehoram</b> (son) reigns. Bad guy, killed his family, wicked like kings of north, married Ahab's daughter, God judged him (through Elijah the prophet) and brought disease of the intestines into his family, also stirred up his enemies against him. He died 2 years later of this disease. There is an interesting epithet here for him: " <i>he... to no one's sorrow, departed.</i> " (21:20) Good riddance!
22	<b>Reign of Ahaziah</b> , God kills him for his wickedness, no one to rule in his place. Mother, Athaliah, reigns as queen. She killed all other heirs, Joash secretly saved, hidden in house of God 6 years.
23	<b>Jehoiada</b> (priest) declares that son of David will reign, not this wicked queen. <b>Joash</b> is crowned king of Judah, and Athaliah is killed. Jehoiada reinstates worship. <b>Joash and Jehoiada</b> restore temple. Jehoiada dies, Joash turns away from God, kills Jehoiada's son the priest for condemning him and people who turned away from God. Joash wounded in battle, own servants kill him.
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25	<b>Amaziah's</b> reign. " <i>Did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not with a loyal heart.</i> " (v.2) Heeds God sometimes, then brings foreign pagan gods in to worship. Prophecy against him. Taunts Israel into battle and loses. More temple treasure plundered. Amaziah killed by own people.
26	<b>Uzziah</b> reigns 52 yrs. Did right, was strengthened, but then filled with pride. Goes into temple to light his own incense (forbidden by God, only priests allowed to do this). Priests confront him, he breaks out with leprosy, leper until death. Isolated from Judah, son <b>Jotham</b> judges the land.
27	<b>Reign of Jotham</b> . He did right, but people corrupt. " <i>So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.</i> " (v.6)
28	<b>Ahaz</b> (son of Jotham) evil, Israel defeats them takes many Judah captives, but prophet in Israel warns them to return the captives to Judah, and they do. Trouble with Syrians, Edomites, no help. Ahaz worships other gods, closes temple and cuts up furnishings, establishes high places and goes spiritually berserk! He dies, son Hezekiah rules.
29	<b>Reign of Hezekiah</b> . Re-opens, repairs and cleanses the temple. Restores full temple worship. People rejoice. Hezekiah reinstates celebration of Passover, open invitation to all Israel. Huge event, more joyful than anything since days of Solomon. Continued with reforms, restoring the Temple treasury and offerings, and he prospered. Sennacherib king of Assyria invades Judah, writes nasty notes blaspheming God, threatening Judah. Camped out around Jerusalem, threatening city. Hezekiah and Isaiah pray, God sends one angel to slay all the army, and Sennacherib returns home shamed, and is killed by his own family. Quick mention of Hezekiah's illness and pride, then repentance so wrath is not poured out on him and Judah. Hezekiah's great riches and honor in the land. Hezekiah dies.
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33	<b>Reign of Manasseh</b> "...abominations in the land..." taken away in chains to Babylon, repents and is restored to his throne by God. He knows the LORD is truly God. Restores worship of God. Dies. Son <b>Amon</b> reigns, does evil in God's sight, more and more, servants kill him. Son <b>Josiah</b> takes throne.

34	<p><b>Reign of Josiah</b>, only 8 yrs old, yet sought God, began instituting reforms, broke down pagan altars, even in land of Israel. Hilkiah (priest) finds Books of Moses (Law) brings to Josiah who tears his clothes (mourns) over the fact they have not obeyed God for so long. Inquire of Huldah the prophetess. God says he will bring calamity on the land, but because of Josiah's "tender heart" and grief before God, he will be spared from this and will die in peace. Books of Law read to the people, Josiah restores true worship and makes people comply as well, removed abominations from all the land. Josiah keeps the Passover, providing lambs from his own flock for the people's sacrifices. Note that Passover had not been kept in the land like that since time of Samuel. Pharaoh Necho of Egypt came to fight against Carchemish, Josiah goes to oppose him, God spoke to Josiah through Necho, told him not to get involved, but Josiah didn't listen (this battle between Babylon and Egypt, not Judah). Josiah disguised himself, but was shot by an arrow, returned to Jerusalem and died.</p>
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36	<p>Very quick notes about last 4 kings of Judah: <b>Jehoahaz</b> (3 mos), <b>Jehoiakim</b> (11 yrs), <b>Jehoiachin</b> (&lt;4 mos), <b>Zedekiah</b> (11 yrs). King of Egypt deposed Jehoahaz and put brother Eliakim on throne, changed his name to Jehoiakim. He and other remaining kings evil. End of this chapter, the end of Chronicles is certainly "understated" but gives explanation of why God did what He did (some chilling words!): <i>"And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers (Jeremiah, etc.), rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans (Babylonians), who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand. And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon. Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions (this final destruction was 586-87 BC). And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.</i> (there is a 70-year gap between these 2 verses!)</p> <p><i>Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up! (36:15-23)</i></p>

### Some Observations and Applications:

1. These kings are told repeatedly by God that He would bless them if they stayed with Him and obeyed Him. He would bring their enemies against them and curse them if they didn't. This is known to them, yet they continued to depart from God and suffered terrible consequences. This is a lesson for all seasons, all nations, and all people. God works on the same principles today that He did thousands of years ago.
2. *Children* of "good" kings don't usually make good kings. The story of Hezekiah's son Manasseh is classic. When good, devout parents don't train up their children "in the way they should go," their children have no standards and generally no faith. Time after time we see the sons of good kings become evil rulers. (this was also true in other books from the Exodus down through the Kings.
3. God will forgive a truly repentant heart, no matter what the repentant person has done before this time. (again, the story of Manasseh is classic here). There is no evil so great that it cannot be forgiven when the heart is right.

