**2 Chronicles Commentary**

**2 Chronicles Chapter 1**

2Ch 1:3

**“the Tent of Meeting of God.”** The Tent of Meeting of God is also called “the Tabernacle,” or “the Tent.” Moses’ Tabernacle, with the courtyard, bronze altar of sacrifice, and the Tabernacle tent itself with the menorah, table of the Bread of the Presence, and the golden altar of incense, was at Gibeon, so Solomon went there to sacrifice to God.

2Ch 1:4

**“because he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.”** David moved the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem instead of rejoining it with the Tabernacle (2 Sam. 6:17; 1 Chron. 16:1; see commentary on 1 Chron. 16:1).

2Ch 1:5

**“sought *Yahweh at* it.”** That is, Solomon and the people sought the altar at the Tabernacle of Moses at Gibeon. It was that altar of sacrifice built by Moses that people brought their burnt offerings and sought to be accepted by Yahweh.

2Ch 1:6

**“in the presence of Yahweh.”** The ark of the covenant was in the tent that David pitched for it in Jerusalem, but the Tabernacle tent itself, along with the altar of burnt offering, the table of the Bread of the Presence, the menorah, and the golden altar of incense, were at Gibeon. The presence of Yahweh was still at the Tabernacle; God still honored the work done by those godly men who lived at the time of Moses and who built the Tabernacle just as God told them to.

2Ch 1:7

**“In that night.”** This revelation occurred in a dream (1 Kings 3:15). God said He would speak in dreams (Num. 12:6), and He did to Solomon; God appeared to Solomon in a dream. God appears in human form, even in dreams (see commentary on Acts 7:55).

**“Ask what you would like me to give you.”** There is a sense in which God is testing Solomon here, to see what is in his heart. Solomon’s response, that he wanted wisdom so he could properly judge God’s people, was genuine, and it highlights the depths to which Solomon fell and how greatly his heart had changed when he later built temples for pagan gods and worshiped them (1 Kings 11:4-10).

2Ch 1:10

**“Now give me wisdom and knowledge.”** Solomon starts out very humble and godly. At the beginning of his reign he did not rule over people harshly or act as though he were better than everyone else. In a similar manner, Jesus Christ, though he was the Son of God, humbled himself and took on the form of a servant (Phil. 2:5-9). Sadly Solomon did not maintain his humble attitude for very long.

**“this great people.”** The people of Israel were “great” in many ways, for example, they were numerous, and had a strong army.

2Ch 1:13

**“from the Tent of Meeting.”** The Hebrew text is more idiomatic: “from before the Tent of Meeting.” That is, from the presence of the Tent of Meeting, from where the Tent was located.

2Ch 1:14

**“he had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen.”** This large number was in disobedience to Deuteronomy 17:16. It seems incongruous in the context of Solomon asking God for wisdom. This act of Solomon does not seem very wise.

2Ch 1:15

**“the Shephelah.”** The Shephelah is the area of rolling hills east of Israel’s coastal plain and between the coastal plain and the hill country (see commentary on Josh. 9:1).

2Ch 1:16

**“The horses that Solomon had were brought out of Egypt.”** Getting horses from Egypt was strictly forbidden in the Mosaic Law in Deuteronomy 17:16. Solomon was wise, but here we see that wisdom does not necessarily mean obedience to God. As we read more about Solomon, we see he ignored and disobeyed many of God’s laws, eventually doing evil in God’s sight (1 Kings 11:6-10).

**“Kue.”** Kue is generally thought to be in southern Turkey, perhaps in the area of Cilicia.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 2**

2Ch 2:1

**“Now Solomon gave orders.”** The Hebrew can mean that Solomon “decided” to build or that Solomon gave orders to build. In this context, “gave orders” seems better because it seems he decided to build earlier than this.

2Ch 2:3

**“a house to live in.”** The Hebrew text ends here. Most versions add something like, “so do with me,” but that is added for the English reader and is not in the text.

2Ch 2:4

**“build a house for the name of Yahweh my God.”** This is less direct than saying that the Temple is for Yahweh, it is for “the name of Yahweh,” which represents Yahweh.

**“regular arrangement *of Bread of the Presence.*”** 2 Chron. 13:11 uses the same Hebrew vocabulary when it says that the Bread of the Presence was set in order, linking the identification of the “regular arrangement” with the “Bread of the Presence,” which needs to be supplied by an ellipsis. The Bread of the Presence was large cakes of bread that were in the Tabernacle and Temple (see commentary on Exod. 25:30).

2Ch 2:5

**“for our God is greater than all gods.”** This is an interesting statement. For one thing, Solomon is speaking to Hiram, king of Tyre, who had different gods than Solomon, and could have been insulted by Solomon’s statement. But beyond that, Solomon is recognizing the existence of pagan gods here, but may think of them as under Yahweh, and that may in time play out in his bringing wives with other gods into his harem; he may have thought that they are there, but they are under Yahweh so they are no problem. But over time his wives turned his heart to follow those gods (1 Kings 11:4).

2Ch 2:6

**“But who is able.”** The Hebrew is a strange idiom: “Who can stop strength,” but it means, “Who can,” or “Who is able.”

2Ch 2:7

**“skillful.”** The Hebrew word is often translated as “wise,” but here it means “skillful.”

2Ch 2:8

**“algum trees.”** The exact type of wood is not known. Many scholars think it is a variety of sandalwood.

2Ch 2:9

**“great.”** The idea is generally “large,” but here it means more than just large.

2Ch 2:10

**“I will give for your servants.”** The wheat, barley, wine, etc., are not being given directly “to” the workers, but to Hiram “for” his sending the workers. The workers will get paid whatever Hiram decides to give them since they are working in Lebanon. Eventually, the workers will be paid (cf. 2 Chron. 2:15).

**2 Chronicles Chapter 3**

2Ch 3:1

**“Mount Moriah.”** This is the area where Abraham bound Isaac (Gen. 22:2). Genesis does not say exactly which mountain Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac on, only that it was in “the land of Moriah” (Gen. 22:2). But Solomon built the Temple on Mount Moriah itself. It is quite possible that Genesis does not say that Abraham started to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah because that was not where Abraham was when he started to sacrifice Isaac. The Temple was on Mount Moriah, but Jesus Christ was not crucified in the Temple, but likely on the Mount of Olives. If that is the case, then it is likely that Abraham tied up Isaac on the Mount of Olives also, across the Kidron Valley from Mount Moriah, but still in “the land of Moriah.”

**“where Yahweh appeared.”** In 2 Samuel 24:17, David saw an angel who appeared to him, who was the agent of Yahweh, which is why it says here that Yahweh appeared to him (cf. 1 Chron. 21:15-16).

2Ch 3:2

**“He began to build.”** This was 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt (1 Kings 6:1).

**“on the second day.”** The first day of the month was the new moon, and it had special sacrifices and offerings (Num. 10:10). This may have been why Solomon waited until the second day of the month to start building.

2Ch 3:3

**“according to the old standard.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “by the former measure,” and it refers to a standard that was used in earlier times. But scholars do not know which standard that is, since both the short cubit and the long cubit were used in earlier times. Furthermore, it is possible that there was a short, medium, and long cubit, which was the case in Egypt, and most scholars believe that because of Israel’s time in Egypt, they started with the Egyptian cubit. So the “cubit” measurement is debated and made difficult for two reasons: we do not know which of the cubits was used, the long cubit or the short cubit, and also we are not completely sure of the exact length of either cubit, or even if the ancients were able to maintain such tight control over measurements that there was an “exact” cubit. For example, two of the suggested lengths for the long cubit are 20.4 inches or 20.74 inches, while a couple of the suggested measurements for the short cubit are 17.4 and 17:72 inches.[[1]](#footnote-27499) So even if we were sure that Solomon used the long or short cubit, we still would not know exactly how long that cubit was. The REV uses 18 inches for the short cubit and 21 inches for the long cubit (see commentary on Ezek. 40:5).

There is some logic in using the shorter cubit for Solomon’s Temple and Moses’ Tabernacle. The true dwelling places of God become more exalted as one goes through history. Solomon’s Temple was twice as big as Moses’ Tabernacle and more glorious, and Ezekiel’s Millennial Temple (if Solomon used the short cubit) is bigger than Solomon’s Temple because the cubits it was measured with were certainly the longer cubit, which was a cubit and a handbreadth (Ezek. 40:5. Ezekiel’s Temple is detailed in Ezek. 40-44), and then in the Eternal Kingdom (Rev. 21-22) there is no temple at all but God lives personally among His people (Rev. 21:22).

2Ch 3:4

**“and the height 120.”** In 1 Kings 6:2, the height of the Temple was 30 cubits, 45 feet, which is very reasonable. The Masoretic text of Chronicles says the height of the vestibule was 120 cubits (180 feet) which is unreasonable. However, the 120 cubit reading in Chronicles has not been satisfactorily explained by scholars, although there are several possibilities.

2Ch 3:5

**“greater house.”** This is what Kings refers to as “the Holy Place,” the room with the menorahs, etc. In 2 Chronicles 3:5-7 it is called the “house.”

2Ch 3:8

**“600 talents.”** A “talent” weighed roughly 75 pounds (34 kg), so 600 talents amounted to roughly 45,000 pounds (20,411 kg) of gold, a huge amount of gold, worth billions of dollars today. That explains in part why other nations wanted to conquer Judah.

2Ch 3:9

**“50 shekels.”** Fifty shekels is roughly 1.25 pounds (567 grams). A shekel was roughly .4 ounces (11 or 11.5 grams). See commentary on Genesis 24:22, “shekel.” The nails were of gold, which is very heavy, so it is not unusual that each nail would weigh over a pound.

2Ch 3:10

**“cherubim.”** See commentary on Exodus 25:20 and Ezekiel 1:5.

2Ch 3:11

**“The wings of the cherubim totaled 20 cubits long.”** This describes the entire wingspan of both cherubim. Each cherub had two wings, and each wing was 5 cubits, 7.5 feet, so the four wings spanned 20 cubits, the entire width of the Holy of Holies. The outer wing of each cherub reached the wall of the Holy of Holies, and the inner wings, which spread out over the ark of the covenant, touched each other over the ark.

**“reaching to the wall of the house.”** That is, reaching to the outer wall of the Holy of Holies in the Temple, the “house.”

2Ch 3:13

**“and their faces were toward the *main* room.”** These cherubim in the Holy of Holies faced east, toward the Holy Place, and spread their wings to the north and south, touching the walls of the Holy of Holies.

2Ch 3:14

**“the veil.”** The “veil” is the veil of fine linen that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The description of the veil that was in the Tabernacle is in Exodus 26:31-35. The veil in Solomon’s Temple seems to be similar. Yahweh came to Israel between the cherubim that were on the Atonement Cover, which was the cover over the Ark of the Covenant (Exod. 25:22; Lev. 16:2).

**“purple.”** Purple cloth was rare and extremely valuable in biblical times. The ancients discovered how to make purple dye from the murex snails, an ocean snail found mainly off the coast of Phoenicia, and the color was so rich and vibrant it was referred to as “royal purple.” In January 2021, researchers at the site of Timna in the southern Negev in Israel, where it is very dry, discovered wool fabric fibers died purple—the first time in history ancient purple fibers have been discovered in the southern Levant (Israel, southern Syria, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and northern Egypt). The color was intact, and the fibers were radiocarbon dated to the tenth century BC, the time of David and Solomon. Purple dye was very difficult to make and thus in the Bible the color purple is usually only associated with the High Priest, the Tabernacle and Temple, and royalty. The color of the fibers found is truly a deep purple.

**“embroidered.”** The Hebrew is literally “worked,” but to “work” on cloth seems to be to embroider.

2Ch 3:15

**“He also made two pillars 35 cubits high.”** If 35 cubits is correct, then the pillars were roughly 52.5 feet (16 meters) high. The pillars are covered in more detail in 1 Kings 7:15-22, but the height of the pillars is given as 18 cubits (27 feet; 8.2 meters) in 1 Kings 7. The five cubit height of the capitals is also in 1 Kings 7:16. Jeremiah 52:21 is a bit of an enigma because the Masoretic text gives the height of the pillars as 18 cubits, like Kings does, but the Septuagint of Jeremiah gives the height as 35 cubits as Chronicles does.

2Ch 3:16

**“encircling chains.”** The evidence is that the Masoretic text here was miscopied. The reference is to the chains, not to the Holy of Holies and the words are very similar (cf. Gen. 41:42). The pillars outside the Temple are being described, not the Holy of Holies. Comparing Kings and Chronicles, Kings described latticework (1 Kings 7:17), while Chronicles describes chains.

2Ch 3:17

**“Temple.”** In Kings, the Hebrew word refers to the Holy Place, whereas in Chronicles it refers to the entire Temple. These pillars are also named in 1 Kings 7:21.

**“one on the right hand.”** The Temple faced east, and God resided in the Holy of Holies over the ark, so the viewpoint is His viewpoint, so the pillar on the right is the pillar on the south side of the vestibule of the Temple.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 4**

2Ch 4:1

**“Then he made an altar of bronze.”** Interestingly, this bronze altar that Solomon made to replace the smaller one made by Moses is not described in 1 Kings 7, when the articles of the Temple are being discussed, but it is mentioned in 1 Kings 8:22 when Solomon dedicates the Temple.

**“20 cubits.”** The dimensions of this altar are not mentioned in the book of Kings. This huge altar had the same dimensions as the Holy of Holies (2 Chron. 3:8).

Most scholars think this is the standard cubit of 18 inches, which would make the bronze altar 30 feet by 30 feet (9 x 9 meters), and 15 feet (4.6 m) high. Although it was said to be made of bronze, it is unclear how much of it was bronze. The priests ministered in bare feet, so it seems clear that the top of it that had the perpetual fire could not have been bronze or the priests could not have walked there. Similarly, the ramp up to the top would not have been bronze, or in the summer, the Judean sun would have made the ramp too hot to walk on.

2Ch 4:2

**“a sea of cast metal.”** Solomon’s bronze laver was so large it was referred to as the “sea.” It was in the southeast part (perhaps the southeast corner) of the Temple (1 Kings 7:39), and was 45 feet in circumference (14 meters), 15 feet (4.6 m) from brim to brim, and 7 ½ feet (2.3 m) high. It was mounted on a base of 12 bronze oxen, but there is no explanation for why the sea was put on oxen, although there is no shortage of theories about what they represented. How much water the sea held is problematic because 1 Kings 7:26 says “2,000 baths” (roughly 11,000 gallons, 41,600 liters) and 2 Chronicles 4:5 says “3,000 baths.” It is possible that the 3,000 was the full capacity but the 2,000 was what was normally kept in it, but there may have also been a copyist’s error as to the capacity of the sea (a “bath” was a liquid measure roughly equivalent to but a little less than six gallons (about 22 liters). So if 2,000 baths was normal capacity, the sea held about 12,000 gallons (or 132,000 liters).

2Ch 4:3

**“gourds.”** The Masoretic text reads “oxen,” but 1 Kings 7:24 says “gourds.” It seems that “gourds” was likely original. The gourds were in two rows, but the oxen, of which there were 12, were in four sets of three (2 Chron. 4:4). Also, it is possible to have two rows of gourds with ten little decorative gourds to a cubit, but it would be very hard to have ten bas-relief oxen every 18 inches (see commentary on 1 Kings 7:24).

In Hebrew the words “gourds” and “oxen” are very close and so at some point, it seems the text was miscopied.

2Ch 4:4

**“and all their hindquarters were inward.”** See 1 Kings 7:25.

2Ch 4:5

**“it could hold 3,000 baths.”** See commentary on 1 Kings 7:26.

2Ch 4:6

**“five on the right hand and five on the left.”** This verse would be in the normal perspective of looking east, so the right hand is the south side, and the left hand is the north side.

**“They rinsed the items used for burnt sacrifices.”** Not the sacrifices themselves, but the items used for sacrifices, such as knives.

2Ch 4:7

**“five on the right hand and five on the left.”** This verse would be in the normal perspective of looking east, so the right hand is the south side, and the left hand is the north side.

2Ch 4:8

**“he made ten tables.”** The tables are confusing because their purpose is not stated. Moses’ Tabernacle only had one table for the 12 loaves of the Bread of the Presence (Exod. 25:23-30, 37:10-16; 40:22-23). The table for the Bread of the Presence was on the north side of the Tabernacle (Exod. 26:35). The bread was placed in two stacks, with each stack containing 6 “loaves” (Lev. 24:5-9; Num. 4:7; but a “loaf” looked like a huge, thick pancake, not a “loaf” shaped like our modern loaves of bread. Also, 1 Kings 7:48 only mentioned one table in the Temple for the Bread of the Presence, as does 2 Chronicles 13:11 and 29:18. However, when David was preparing for the Temple to be built he prepared for the “tables” of the Bread of the Presence (1 Chron. 28:16), and 2 Chronicles 4:19 mentions “tables” as well. Another problem with trying to make the ten tables be tables for the Bread of the Presence is that there were 12 loaves of bread that made up the Bread of the Presence, and there is no way to equally divide them among ten tables. On balance, the evidence seems to best support that the Temple had one table for the Bread of the Presence just like the Tabernacle did. In light of that, it has been suggested that the ten menorahs in the Temple were each set on a table, but there is no way to prove that. It is also possible—although it seems unlikely—that these ten tables had a use in the Holy Place that is not described in the Bible.

**“five on the right hand and five on the left.”** This verse would be in the normal perspective of looking east, so the right hand is the south side, and the left hand is the north side.

2Ch 4:9

**“he made the courtyard of the priests, and *he made* the great court.”** This describes two courts. The inner court, the court of the priests, had the sea, the altar, and the tables to prepare the sacrifices. East of that court and through a gate was the court of Israel, the court for the people. The two words for “courtyard” and “court” are different. These two courts in 2 Chronicles 4:9 correspond to the two courts mentioned in Ezekiel 40, the outer court of Ezekiel 40:17-19 and the inner court of Ezekiel 40:44, and Herod’s Temple at the time of Christ also had these two courtyards but also a huge outer courtyard where all people, Jews and Gentiles, were allowed to go. The wall around the huge outer courtyard of Herod’s Temple enclosed about 37 acres of land.

The two courts were important for the function of the Temple, the inner court for the priests and all the work they did, and the outer court for the laypeople. In Ezekiel’s Temple, the inner court is 100 cubits square (175 feet square) and had the altar of sacrifice in it (Ezek. 40:47). That inner court is the same “court of the priests” as is mentioned here in 2 Chronicles 4:9, and is also the courtyard that is in front of the Temple (the “house”) in 2 Chronicles 7:7 and 1 Kings 8:64.

**“he overlaid their doors with bronze.”** That the doors are “their doors” suggests that both courts had bronze doors.

2Ch 4:10

**“right side.”** The orientation in the Bible was to the east, so the “right side” was the south side. “Toward the southeast” is more literally in the Hebrew text, “eastward, over against the south,” meaning toward the southeast. So the great sea basin was toward the southeast corner of the courtyard of the priests in the Temple area.

2Ch 4:11

**“finished doing the work.”** This is the same phrase as occurs in Genesis 2:1 when God finished the work of creation.

2Ch 4:14

**“He made the stands and he made the basins.”** The Temple had ten smaller basins for washing that were set on ten stands (see 2 Chron. 4:6; 1 Kings 7:27-39).

2Ch 4:15

**“one sea, and the 12 oxen under it.”** This was covered earlier in the chapter (2 Chron. 4:2-5).

2Ch 4:16

**“Huram-abi.”** He is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 2:13.

2Ch 4:17

**“The king cast them.”** This is an example of the author-agent idiom. Solomon did not cast the vessels, he had them cast. See commentary on 1 Kings 7:46.

**“between Sukkoth and Zeredah.”** The town is spelled differently in Kings, but it is undoubtedly the same town. See commentary on 1 Kings 7:46.

2Ch 4:18

**“so the weight of the bronze was not measured.”** There was so much bronze it was not weighed. Although some versions say that the weight “could not” be discovered, that is not what the text is saying. The weight could have been been found out, but there was so much it was not worth the effort to do so.

2Ch 4:19

**“and the tables on which the Bread of the Presence was placed.”** (See commentary on 2 Chron. 4:8). The Bread of the Presence was large cakes of bread that were in the Tabernacle and Temple (see commentary on Exod. 25:30).

2Ch 4:22

**“the main hall of the Temple.”** This is the Holy Place.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 5**

2Ch 5:2

**“the city of David which is Zion.”** The Jebusite city that David conquered, called “the City of David,” was the original “Zion.” Later, the name Zion included all Jerusalem.

2Ch 5:3

**“the feast that was in the seventh month.”** This is the Feast of Tabernacles.

2Ch 5:5

**“the Tent of Meeting.”** This is most likely Moses’ Tabernacle, brought from Gibeon.

2Ch 5:9

**“and it is there to this day.”** So this document was written before the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

2Ch 5:10

**“There was nothing in the ark except.”** Hebrews 9:4 lists what was in the ark in Moses’ time, but what happened to the gold pot of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded is not known. They disappeared, but how and why is not known.

**“the two tablets.”** The same as 1 Kings 8:9.

**“Horeb.”** This is another name for Mount Sinai.

2Ch 5:11

**“the Holy *Place*.”** The large easternmost room in the Temple.

2Ch 5:14

**“because of the cloud, because the glory of Yahweh.”** The phrase “glory of Yahweh” almost always refers to the brilliant cloud of light that surrounds Yahweh. Here in 2 Chronicles 5:14, the brilliant light surrounding God is referred to as a cloud and also as His glory (see commentary on Ezek. 1:4 and Ezek. 1:28).

**“God’s house.”** God’s house is the Temple. Although there are specific words for “temple,” the most common designation is God’s “house.”

**2 Chronicles Chapter 6**

2Ch 6:1

**“Then Solomon said.”** 2 Chronicles 6:1 is the same wording as 1 Kings 8:12.

2Ch 6:11

**“the covenant of Yahweh.”** That is, the tablets of stone that had the Ten Commandments on them which were representative of the whole covenant and Law that God made with Moses and the people of Israel.

2Ch 6:13

**“platform.”** The Hebrew normally means “basin,” but there is a Sumerian cognate that means “platform.”

2Ch 6:22

**“If.”** Here in Chronicles, the Hebrew text is clearly “if,” while in 1 Kings the “if” is not as clear, which is why some versions use “when,” The Hebrew text is hard to understand because the pronouns are not clear as to who they refer to. But in any case, this seems to be a request for justice and for the guilty party to be punished and the innocent party to be vindicated (cf. 1 Kings 8:31).

2Ch 6:26

**“because.”** Here the people turn from their sin “because” God afflicts them. The people realized that what they were going through was no accident, but was due to their disobedience to God.

2Ch 6:35

**“do what is right *for* them.”** Israel was fighting its enemies; this is holy war, and Solomon prays that God will “do” justice for Israel, in this case by giving them victory.

2Ch 6:41

**“the ark of your strength.”** This phrase also occurs in Psalm 132:8. This phrase is likely due to the association with the ark being used in battle.

**“good *things*.”** This phrase is likely referring to all the good things that God blesses Israel with, including, food, good weather, families, peace in the nation, etc.

2Ch 6:42

**“do not reject the face of your anointed one.”** The “anointed” is the king, in this case, Solomon, although the prayer likely covers other kings whom God would anoint. The word “reject” is more literally “turn away,” being used for “reject.” Solomon is praying that God will not reject him.

[For more on anointed ones, see commentary on 1 Sam. 12:3.]

**“Remember the covenant faithfulness of David your servant.”** This seems to be the best way to render the Hebrew. David obeyed God and the blessing for his faithfulness should fall on Solomon (cf. CJB, CSB, JPS, KJV, NAB, NJB, YLT).

**2 Chronicles Chapter 7**

2Ch 7:1

**“and the glory of Yahweh filled the house.”** At the dedication of Solomon’s Temple, the “glory of Yahweh” filled the Temple. God was surrounded by a brilliant light that is described in different ways. Chronicles speaks of God’s personal presence as His “glory” because God often appeared surrounded by brilliant light that both expressed His greatness and veiled people from seeing His form. In the description of the dedication of the Temple in 1 Kings 8:10-11, the text uses the phrase, the “glory of Yahweh,” and also refers to the glory as a “cloud.” A brilliant cloud that is difficult to look at is an apt description of the cloud of glorious light that surrounds God. At the dedication of the Temple, and in other places in Scripture, the brilliant light that surrounded Yahweh was sometimes described as a “cloud” and sometimes as God’s “glory” (cf. 1 Kings 8:10-11 with 2 Chron. 7:1-3).

[For more on the “glory of Yahweh” and the cloud of light surrounding Him, see commentary on Ezek. 1:4 and Ezek. 1:28.]

2Ch 7:3

**“All the children of Israel looked on.”** That is, all the Israelites who were there looked on. “All” the Israelites were not there that day.

**“kneeled down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped.”** The word for “worshiped” is to bow down, and in this context, it means to bow down in worship. The kneeling (or bending over) and then bowing down were blended as a single act of worship. The Hebrew word for “kneel” here is different from the word in 1 Chron. 29:20, but they can both mean “kneel” (see commentary on 1 Chron. 29:20).

2Ch 7:5

**“the house of God.”** This is referred to as “the house of Yahweh” in 1 Kings 8:63. This is one of the places that shows that in the mind of the Israelites, “God” was “Yahweh.”

[For more information on Jesus not being God or part of the “Godhead,” see Appendix 6: “Jesus is the Son of God, Not God the Son.”]

2Ch 7:6

**“through them.”** The Hebrew is literally, “their hand,” meaning “them.”

2Ch 7:7

**“the middle of the court that was in front of the house.”** This was the inner courtyard, the court of the priests (see commentary on 2 Chron. 4:9).

**“the bronze altar that Solomon had made was not able to contain the burnt offerings and the grain offerings.”** As large as Solomon’s altar was, it was not able to hold all the offerings that were made at this time, so they were burned in the middle of the courtyard, likely on some temporary structure that was made for that purpose.

2Ch 7:8

**“the feast.”** This is the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. 2 Chron. 7:10).

**“from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt.”** This is a reference to the borders of the Promised Land, and a fulfillment of God’s promise about the land. Lebo-hamath is at the northern end and the Brook of Egypt is at the southern end of Israel (cf. 1 Kings 8:65).

2Ch 7:9

**“the dedication of the altar for seven days.”** There was a special dedication of the altar of sacrifice in the Temple that was the seven days before the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles (cf. 1 Kings 8:65).

2Ch 7:10

**“On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away.”** The twenty-third day of the month is exactly correct. The Feast of Tabernacles started in the evening on the 15th day of the month and technically lasted seven days, or until the 21st day of the month. Then the “eighth day” was added, which was the 22nd day of the month. and then the feasts were over and Solomon sent the people home on the 23rd day of the seventh month.

**“away to their tents.”** Although Israel had been in the Promised Land for hundreds of years by this point and most people lived in towns or villages, there were still a large number of people who lived in tents, and the historical background of Israel was living in tents, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did, and Israel did when they left Egypt. So going “to their tents” became a way of saying that people went home (cf. 1 Kings 12:16).

2Ch 7:12

**“Yahweh appeared to Solomon at night.”** What Yahweh said to Solomon is recorded in 1 Kings 9:2-9 and 2 Chronicles 7:12-22, and there is more information in Chronicles than in Kings. This is the second time Yahweh appeared to Solomon. God personally appeared to Solomon on two different occasions (1 Kings 3:5; 9:2; 11:9; and see commentary on 1 Kings 11:9).

[For more on God appearing to people, see commentary on Acts 7:55.]

2Ch 7:13

**“If I shut up the heavens.”** 2 Chronicles 7:13-16 are part of what God said to Solomon that is not in 1 Kings 9.

2Ch 7:14

**“humble themselves.”** The Hebrew is literally, “bend the knee,” or “bow the knee,” and refers to being humble before God.

**“will humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways.”** There is no misunderstanding about the path to restoration here.

**“and will heal their land.”** The land itself is harmed by the actions of the people on it (see commentary on Lev. 18:25).

2Ch 7:15

**“prayer offered in this place.”** The text is literally, “the prayer of this place,” where the genitive is likely a genitive of relation, i.e., the prayers associated with this place or the prayers offered in this place. This is a good example of a collective singular, where the singular “prayer” is collective for the “prayers”

2Ch 7:16

**“for my name to be there forever.”** The verb is an infinitive (see NJB).

**“and my eyes and my heart will be there perpetually.”** Although Jerusalem will be the place of Christ’s Millennial Temple (Ezek. 40-48), there was, and has been a large number of years where “this house,” the Temple, was destroyed and no longer there. Many prophecies are conditional, and this is one of them.

[For more on the conditional nature of many prophecies, see commentary on Deut. 18:20.]

2Ch 7:19

**“But if you...before you.”** The “you” is plural, for you rulers down through the ages. The verbs and pronouns are all plural in 2 Chronicles 7:19.

**“worship them.”** Or “bow down to them.” The Hebrew word translated “worship,” *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is the same Hebrew word as “bow down.”

[For more on bowing down, see the word study on “worship.”]

**2 Chronicles Chapter 8**

2Ch 8:2

**“the cities that Huram had given to Solomon.”** This seems to contradict 1 Kings 9:11, but it is possible that because Huram did not like the cities that he gave them back to Solomon.

2Ch 8:3

**“Hamath-zobah.”** This is a city in Syria. Solomon apparently attacked and conquered it. This may well be God showing that Solomon was interested in establishing the borders of the Promised Land and fulfilling the promise of the land to Abraham.

2Ch 8:5

**“Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon.”** Solomon is protecting the main approach to Jerusalem from the west. Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon are on ridge routes leading from the west coast of Israel into the hill country.

**“bars.”** The “bars” were strong wooden beams that were placed behind the doors of the gate so they could not be opened and could withstand pounding from the outside without giving way. Those bars were the origin of the shout “Bar the doors!” when an enemy would approach.

2Ch 8:6

**“Baalath.”** See commentary on 1 Kings 9:18.

2Ch 8:7

**“the Perizzites.”** A tribe of unknown origin in the hill country of Judah and Ephraim. See commentary on Joshua 9:1.

2Ch 8:10

**“250 *men*.”** The record in 1 Kings 9:23 says “550,” while the record in 2 Chronicles 8:10 says “250.” There is a textual variant based on a scribal error, and which number is correct is not known.

2Ch 8:11

**“must not dwell in the house of David.”** This is a strange act on the part of Solomon. He did not mind marrying foreign women, but now he wants them, including his Egyptian queen, to live in a place that is not where the ark of the covenant had been (or ostensibly, too close to where the ark was). It is possible that this queen from Egypt may have lived in David’s palace until her house was built, but we do not know that for certain. In any case, we know from the biblical record that as Solomon got older, he was less and less inclined to follow Yahweh, and ended up building temples for pagan gods (1 Kings 11:4-10).

2Ch 8:12

**“that he had built in front of the vestibule.”** The Temple faced east, and if a person entered the Temple area from the east, the altar of sacrifice was in front of the vestibule of the Temple.

2Ch 8:13

**“each day required.”** The fire on the altar of sacrifice in the Temple would have burned almost continually because every day there were sacrifices required by the Law of Moses, a morning sacrifice and an evening sacrifice, plus there were extra sacrifices for the Sabbath days, the new moons (the start of the new month), and the special feasts. Also, there were the sacrifices such as the burnt offerings and the sin offerings that people would bring every day.

When we get a picture of the immensity of the number of offerings and sacrifices that were burned on the altar, we can get an appreciation of how busy the Levites were bringing wood to the Temple to burn the sacrifices and water to wash them with.

2Ch 8:17

**“Eloth.”** This is the plural of Elath, on the north shore of the Gulf of Aqaba (cf. Deut. 2:8). It is not known exactly why the name is plural. Solomon went there to secure trade from Aqaba.

2Ch 8:18

**“took 450 talents of gold.”** 1 Kings 9:28 says 420 talents of gold. The text of either Kings or Chronicles was miscopied at some point.

**Ophir.** See commentary on 1 Kings 9:28.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 9**

2Ch 9:1

**“When the Queen of Sheba heard.”** The record of the Queen of Sheba is also in 1 Kings 10.

2Ch 9:4

**“burnt offering.”** The Masoretic text has, “upper room,” but it clearly seems the Hebrew was miscopied, and the Hebrew letter *yod* was miscopied into a *vav*.

2Ch 9:8

**“his throne.”** Solomon sat on the throne, but it rightfully belonged to God, the true King of Israel (see commentary on 1 Chron. 29:23).

2Ch 9:10

**“the servants of Huram.”** These men had ships and had brought the gold from Ophir, and now they bring algum trees and precious stones (cf. 1 Kings 10:11).

2Ch 9:14

**“the governors of the country.”** Although who these governors are is unclear, it seems like they are foreigners. Josephus indicates they were governors of Arabia.[[2]](#footnote-13729)

2Ch 9:16

**“300 *shekels* of gold.”** Three hundred shekels is roughly 7.5 pounds (3.4 kg). A shekel was roughly .4 ounces (11 or 11.5 grams). See commentary on Genesis 24:22, “shekel.” 1 Kings 10:17 says three minas of gold went into each shield. There is evidence for the existence of a “heavy mina,” which was the equivalent of 300 shekels.

2Ch 9:21

**“ships of Tarshish.”** This may refer to ships that were built in Tarshish or were some kind of “Tarshish-style” ship.

2Ch 9:25

**“4,000 stalls for horses.”** There is a contradiction between 1 Kings 4:26 and 2 Chron. 9:25. The Masoretic Hebrew text reads 40,000 stalls in Kings, but 4,000 stalls in Chronicles. Interestingly, 40,000 seems like too many, while 4,000 seems like it could be too little. So it is hard to tell which number is correct and which is a copyist’s error. Also, this is the number of “stalls;” the number of horses may have been different, but that number is not given. However, Solomon was not supposed to have many horses (Deut. 17:16).

2Ch 9:26

**“the River.”** This is the Euphrates River; the southern portion of it running through Syria.

2Ch 9:27

**“the Shephelah.”** The Shephelah is the area of rolling hills east of Israel’s coastal plain and between the coastal plain and the hill country (see commentary on Josh. 9:1).

**2 Chronicles Chapter 10**

2Ch 10:1

**“Shechem.”** Rehoboam’s going to Shechem could well have been a “political” move to try to show the people of Israel that he was going to try to get Israel back to its historical roots as far as their worship of Yahweh was concerned. Shechem was a well-known place of worship in Israel. Shechem was the very first place mentioned in Genesis where Abraham stopped when he entered Canaan (Gen. 12:6). After the conquest of the Promised Land, Joshua gathered all the tribes to Shechem and cut a covenant with the people that they would serve Yahweh (Josh. 24:1, 24-28). Shechem was a Levitical city and city of refuge (Josh. 20:7, 21; 1 Chron. 6:66-67). After the destruction of Israel by Assyria, Shechem remained an important city, but it became a center for the perverted worship in Judah during Hosea’s time, which is why priests from Gilead in the Transjordan would make a pilgrimage there, and according to Josephus, after the Babylonian exile of Judah it was the leading city of the Samaritans.[[3]](#footnote-16301)

2Ch 10:4

**“Your father made our yoke hard.”** Sadly, this reflects the real situation in Israel under Solomon, especially in his later years. We think of Solomon as wise, but he was not wise in the way he treated people. And he was truly wealthy, but that wealth came at a cost. His people worked hard and paid dearly so Solomon could have what he had, which was very impressive to people on the outside such as the Queen of Sheba, but placed a heavy burden on the people on the inside who did all the work.

2Ch 10:7

**“kind…and speak good words to them.”** The Bible is full of advice that people be kind to each other and not speak harshly to each other (cf. Prov. 15:1; 25:11, 15). The saying, “words will never hurt me” is not at all true. Proverbs 15:1 says, “A gentle response turns away rage, but a hurtful word increases anger,” and that is exactly what happened in this case, Rehoboam’s harsh words led to the division of the United Kingdom of Israel.

2Ch 10:8

**“young men.”** The Hebrew is more literally “children;” Fox[[4]](#footnote-19985) has “youngsters.” These men and Rehoboam grew up together as children, but now they were older. Rehoboam was 41 when he became king (1 Kings 14:21), and so the men who grew up with him would have been about the same age. Given that, the fact that the Bible refers to them as “children” is clearly sarcasm, and is pointing out their mental immaturity.

**“and who stood before him.”** The meaning of this phrase is that the young men got to be “before him,” that is, in his presence. These were the young men who were privileged in Rehoboam’s kingdom and who got to be with him and thus had easy access to him. Rehoboam felt very close to these men (see commentary on 2 Chron. 10:9).

2Ch 10:9

**“that we should answer.”** Note the “we” in this verse and how different it is from 2 Chronicles 10:6, when Rehoboam was speaking with the old men and asked how do you advise that “I” answer the people. Rehoboam did not feel close to the older men, but felt very close to the younger men. Sadly, the younger men had been raised as spoiled brats just as Rehoboam had, and they felt privileged and entitled, and that led to the break up of the United Kingdom of Israel.

2Ch 10:10

**“my little thing.”** (See commentary on 1 Kings 12:10).

2Ch 10:14

**“I will make your yoke heavier,”** This translation follows the Masoretic Hebrew text. Some later Hebrew texts and the Septuagint read the same as in the account in Kings, “My father….”

2Ch 10:17

**“Judah.”** Here “Judah” represents the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 11**

2Ch 11:3

**“to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin.”** These are the Israelites who were living in Benjamin and Judah.

2Ch 11:5

**“fortified cities.”** The Hebrew is “built cities,” but the word “built” can mean “built-up” or “fortified,” and that is the case here.

2Ch 11:14

**“Jeroboam and his sons.”** Jeroboam had two sons, Nadab and Abijah (1 Kings 14:1, 20), and it is likely that they oversaw the worship in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and kept the legitimate priests from worshiping the true God the way He required.

2Ch 11:15

**“he had appointed priests for himself.”** Jeroboam chose priests who were not descendants of Aaron to be the priests for his shrines and golden calves.

**“shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

**“goat demons.”** Demons have associated themselves with goats and appeared as goats or goat men from very ancient times, and biblically, unbelievers are referred to as “goats” (Matt. 25:33). Israel worshiped goat demons when they were in the wilderness (Lev. 17:7).

[For more on Azazel and goat demons, see commentaries on Lev. 16:8 and Isa. 14:9.]

2Ch 11:16

**“those *people* from every tribe of Israel.”** This is important historically, because people tend to think that after the United Kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon split into “Judah” in the south and “Israel” in the north, that only Judeans and Benjamites were in Judah, but that is not the case. The Southern Kingdom, “Judah,” had men and women from every tribe in it, as well as priests and Levites who had originally been assigned by Joshua to live in every tribal area. This means that people from every tribe of Israel—all 12 tribes—were preserved in the Babylonian exile to return to Judah and eventually make up the “Jews” who were in Judea and Galilee at the time of Christ.

When Jeroboam set up his golden calves in Bethel and Dan and set up his own priests who were not descendants of Aaron and changed the calendar given to Moses by God (1 Kings 12:25-33), there was an exodus of the truly godly people from the Kingdom of Israel to the Kingdom of Judah. That many godly people left Israel accelerated the downward move into idolatry and godlessness in Israel that eventually led to its destruction by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17). It also shows that truly godly people can determine Good from Evil and Right from Wrong, and that sometimes they have to be bold to do what it takes to worship God even though it means persecution and hardship. It would have been very difficult for many of the godly people of the northern tribes to uproot their families and move to Judah, but to them, the true worship of Yahweh was worth the hardship. Abraham, Moses, and many others had suffered hardship in order to follow the true God (cf. Heb. 11:8-27), and very often believers today have to suffer hardships to worship the true God in a genuine way.

**“followed them.”** That is, the people followed the priests and Levites that had already left the Kingdom of Israel and gone south to the Kingdom of Judah.

2Ch 11:17

**“they walked for three years in the way of David and Solomon.”** For an unstated reason, Rehoboam and the people turned away from Yahweh after three years (cf. 2 Chron. 12:1).

2Ch 11:18

**“Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David and of Abihail.”** So, Mahalath is the granddaughter of David and Eliab, David’s oldest brother. So both sides of Mahalath, her father and mother, were descendants of Jesse. In fact, Mahalath’s mother (Abihail) and her father (Jerimoth) were first cousins. Jerimoth is not mentioned elsewhere as a son of David, and it is believed that he was the son of David and one of David’s unnamed wives.

2Ch 11:19

**“Jeush, and Shemariah, and Zaham.”** This may be included because in spite of the royal pedigree of these men, none of them became king. It was Rehoboam’s wife Maacah, the daughter of David’s rebellious son Absalom, who gave birth to Abijah, who became the king after Rehoboam because Rehoboam loved Maacah the most of all his wives (2 Chron. 11:21).

2Ch 11:21

**“for he took 18 wives and 60 concubines.”** Rehoboam is to a degree following in the footsteps of his father, Solomon, in spite of the injunction in Deuteronomy 17:17 that a king was not to take many wives.

2Ch 11:23

**“and he acquired many wives *for them*.”** Rehoboam acquired many wives for his sons so he would be assured of having solidity in his kingdom and his dynasty would continue.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 12**

2Ch 12:4

**“as far as Jerusalem.”** We know from the records of Shishak that he also made conquests in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, but the Chronicler is simply interested in pointing out that Rehoboam’s abandonment of Yahweh opened up his whole kingdom to attack, including Jerusalem where the king’s palace and the Temple of Yahweh were.

2Ch 12:6

**“the officials of Israel and the king humbled themselves.”** The point of this verse is huge when we consider that the audience reading it was in the Babylonian Captivity and were captive because they had abandoned Yahweh. The lesson for them was that they should humble themselves and obey Yahweh and He might move to restore them to their land.

2Ch 12:7

**“I will grant them a measure of deliverance.”** The way to understand this phrase is unclear. It may refer to “some” deliverance, a partial deliverance, or it may refer to time, deliverance at some time in the near future. The scholars and the English versions are divided. It certainly is true that Judah got a measure of deliverance. God’s wrath was not fully poured out on Jerusalem. Although Shishak took much from Jerusalem, things could have been much worse. He could have occupied the city instead of going back to Egypt, or he could have burned the city like Nebuchadnezzar did. Given what could have happened, it seems Rehoboam and the Jerusalemites got off fairly easily.

2Ch 12:8

**“Nevertheless, they will be his slaves.”** This is a reflection back to when Israel was in Egypt. God had delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt, but now Judah abandoned Yahweh, so they went back to being slaves of Egypt. The translation “slaves” fits here, because slaves cannot quit their service when they want to, and slaves don’t get paid for their work, and both those things are the case here.

2Ch 12:9

**“He took it all away. He *also* took away the shields of gold that Solomon had made.”** This is quite an irony. Israel left Egypt with their gold because Pharaoh had hardened his heart against God, and now Rehoboam and Judah hardened their hearts against Yahweh and so the gold went back to Egypt. Pharaoh Shishak took away the gold weapons that were stored in the Temple, but he must have left the bronze ones because there were weapons from the time of David still in the Temple many years later at the time of Joash (2 Kings 11:10; 2 Chron. 23:9).

2Ch 12:12

**“there were good things.”** Although the Bible does not describe what the “good things” are, they almost certainly refer to the attitude and humility of the people (cf. 2 Chron. 19:3).

2Ch 12:13

**“and his mother’s name was Naamah the Ammonitess.”** This is stated in 1 Kings 14:21. There is some tradition that Naamah was the daughter of Nahash the Ammonite king, which would make her a princess and a likely wife for Solomon.

**“Rehoboam was 41 years old when he began to reign.”** Since Solomon reigned 40 years (1 Kings 11:42), Rehoboam was born before Solomon became king.

**“and his mother’s name was Naamah the Ammonitess.”** Naamah is the only wife or concubine of Solomon who is named in the Bible, and she is named three times (1 Kings 14:21, 31; 2 Chron. 12:13). It is significant that she is named, because out of all 1,000 of Solomon’s wives and concubines (1 Kings 11:3), it was her son Rehoboam who was chosen to be king. It is not stated in the Bible if his powerful wife from Egypt (1 Kings 3:1) had children, but if she had it seems they would have been strong contenders for the throne given the strength of Egypt at this time in history. In any case, Solomon must have had a special relationship with Naamah, and it seems certain that she was one of the wives who turned his heart away from Yahweh because he worshiped the god Milcom from Ammon and also built a shrine to the Ammonite god Molech on the Mount of Olives (1 Kings 11:4-7).

2Ch 12:16

**“Abijah.”** He is called Abijam in 1 Kings 14:31.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 13**

2Ch 13:1

**“Jeroboam.”** This is Jeroboam I, the first king of Israel.

2Ch 13:2

**“Uriel of Gibeah.”** This would suggest she was a Benjamite.

2Ch 13:4

**“stood up on Mount Zemaraim.”** The exact location of this mountain is unknown, but it is very close to Bethel in Ephraim (cf. Josh. 18:22).

2Ch 13:5

**“sons.”** In this context the word “sons” means descendants.

**“covenant of salt.”** Like the blood covenant, the covenant of salt was an ancient custom that was recognized all over the Middle East. The offerings of the Lord were to be offered with salt as a symbol of the covenant and a reminder of the commitment people made to keep the covenant (Lev. 2:13), and Numbers 18:19 specifically mentions the salt covenant. The importance and solemnity of the salt covenant in the biblical culture is shown here in 2 Chronicles in that God promised the Kingdom of Israel to David by a covenant of salt. In Ezra 4:14, the enemies of the Jews wrote to the Persian king that they felt obligated to report to him what the Jews were doing because they “eat the salt of the king’s palace.”

The salt covenant was considered inviolate, and was often taken instead of a blood covenant to seal an agreement or to confirm friendship (some of the older books on biblical manners and customs refer to it as the “friendship covenant”). However, the terms of the covenant must be understood by clear communication or by custom. Sometimes the salt covenant was forever, as here in 2 Chronicles, and sometimes it was for a very defined period of time.

The most common way to take salt together was to eat food that had been salted. The Eastern sayings, “There is salt between us,” or “There is bread and salt between us,” or “He has eaten of my salt,” all refer to having taken a salt covenant by sharing food together. Edwin Rice writes: “The most common way of confirming a covenant and agreement between two parties, man and man, is to offer a sacrifice, or have a sacrificial feast. Any occasion of unusual joy or gladness is commonly counted poorly or imperfectly celebrated, if not observed by a similar sacrifice of a lamb or some clean animal. It is a universal custom to have such a sacrifice in the Orient at betrothals and at wedding feasts. The custom is widespread throughout all Oriental lands now, and is as old as the history of the Oriental races.”[[5]](#footnote-21431)

Rice goes on to say, “Dr. W. M. Thomson tells of a Bedouin Sheikh, who dipped a bit of bread in grape molasses *(dibs)* and gave it to him to eat, saying, ‘Now we are brothers; there is bread and salt between us.’ The Arab also gave a bit of the bread to all Dr. Thomson’s companions, and to the muleteers, and to all about the tent, who tasted of it. This was the ceremony that sealed a covenant of friendship. It gave the missionary and his company permission to travel wherever they pleased in the Sheikh’s territory, he being pledged to aid and befriend them, ‘even to the loss of his own life.’ …The Rev. F. Moghabghab, a Syrian, tells of three forms of covenants among Oriental shepherds: *1***.** Of drinking water, coffee, or wine together. *2.* Of salt or eating together. *3.* Of blood, the most sacred of all, sealed by “cutting” and killing sheep.”[[6]](#footnote-16226)

E. J. Hardy writes of the custom of eating a meal with salt and how it procured friendship and protection even if the people partaking were not aware they were eating salt: “A traveler being visited in his tent by truculent and apparently dangerous Arabs put salt into food, and induced them to eat it. When the visitors found they had taken the man’s salt, their whole manner changed toward him. They felt bound not only not to injure him, but to protect him.”[[7]](#footnote-27835)

James Freeman writes: “So deeply rooted is this sentiment, that intended robbery has been abandoned when the robber has accidentally eaten salt while getting his plunder. Travelers have sometimes secured their safety in the midst of wild Bedawin by using stratagem in getting the Arabs to eat salt with them. Macgregor tells how he outwitted a sheikh who had made him a prisoner, and whose disposition seemed unfriendly. ‘We had now eaten salt together, and in his own tent, and so he was bound by the strongest tie, and he knew it.’”[[8]](#footnote-14967)

In 1853 Sir Richard Burton made a journey to Mecca and Medina, and wrote of the friendship that salt procured, but warned: “there are, however, some tribes who require to renew the bond every 24 hours, as otherwise, to use their own phrase, ‘the salt is not in their stomachs.’” He also warned about entering salt covenants with people who are involved in blood feuds, because by taking the salt of such a person you are automatically an ally of his and an enemy of his enemies.[[9]](#footnote-31452)

One apparent form of the salt covenant in the biblical culture was that parents salted their children at birth, and if a baby was not salted it was considered neglected (Ezek. 16:4). This was to assure God and others that the parents would raise the child to be faithful to God. However, the way the baby was “salted” varied. Sometimes only a little salt was symbolically rubbed on the child as a sign of the salt covenant, while sometimes the baby was washed in water that had a small amount of salt in it.[[10]](#footnote-24869)

Because the salt covenant and sharing food that had some salt in it was regularly used as a “friendship covenant,” to procure a state of peace and well-being between people, it seems that is why Jesus said to his disciples, “Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another” (Mark 9:50). If we have salt in ourselves, we can be at peace with each other even if we do not share a salted meal together.

The fact that the salt covenant was used in the Middle East until modern times shows how tightly the Eastern people maintain their customs, even when the reasons for those customs have long been forgotten. That is one reason why the study of the customs in the Middle East up until modern times was such a fruitful way of learning and understanding what seemed to be some of the more obscure passages of Scripture.

The salt covenant is so old that no one really knows its origin, although a number of possible reasons have been set forward. One is that because salt is used as a preservative, it symbolized that the agreement was to be kept. Salt is also a cleansing or purifying agent, and so some people say it may have symbolized the purity of the covenant agreement and that it was to be kept. However, the salt of covenant was added to grain offerings and sacrifices that were burned up, so no preserving or cleansing was needed, so those explanations seem to fall short. The most likely reason for the origin of the salt covenant is that it came about as a substitute for the blood covenant because of the salt in the blood. In fact, it is impossible to take a blood covenant without also involving—and sometimes consuming—salt.

2Ch 13:6

**“lord.”** The Hebrew text has the grammatical plural, “lords,” but the reference is to Solomon. This is likely a plural of majesty.

2Ch 13:7

**“sons of Belial.”** This is a designation of sons of the Devil.

[For more on sons of Belial, see commentary on 1 Sam. 2:12. For more on the unforgivable sin and children of the Devil, see commentary on Matt. 12:31.]

**“when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted.”** Abijah may be overstating the goodness of Rehoboam and making it out as if he were a good king. But Rehoboam did more evil in the sight of Yahweh than all the kings before him (1 Kings 14:22). He was 41 years old when he began to reign (2 Chron. 12:13) so he was not that young in chronological years, but this may well refer to the fact that he had not been the king very long. There is a huge difference between not being king and simply watching what the king did, and being the king and having to make those decisions and undergo the pressures of kingship on one’s own.

2Ch 13:8

**“intend.”** The Hebrew is literally “say,” but it sometimes refers to what a person says in their mind (thus the English versions that have “think”), and thus “intend” is a good translation (cp NASB).

**“kingship.”** This is more normally “kingship” (cf. 2 Chron. 13:5), although sometimes it can be translated as “kingdom.” The continual “kingship” is Yahweh’s, and it is in the hand of the sons of David. The NJB has “Yahweh’s sovereignty,” the CEB has “the LORD’s royal rule.”

**“that is in the hand of the sons of David.”** Abijah is thus including himself in the sons of David.

**“you have with you the golden calves.”** Jeroboam was not moving the golden calves around, but he had them “with him” in his kingdom.

2Ch 13:9

**“ordain.”** For the translation “ordain,” see commentary on Exodus 28:41.

**“what are not gods.”** The Hebrew can be translated in different ways, including, “ a priest to a non-god,” and “a priest to what is not God.”

2Ch 13:10

**“and we have not abandoned him.”** King Abijah overstates his commitment to Yahweh here. 1 Kings 15:3 says, “He walked in all the sins that his father before him had committed, and his heart was not wholly devoted to Yahweh his God.”

2Ch 13:11

**“the Bread of the Presence.”** The Bread of the Presence was 12 large cakes of bread that were in the Tabernacle and Temple (see commentary on Exod. 25:30).

2Ch 13:12

**“battle trumpets to sound an attack.”** The Hebrew is difficult to translate and the English versions differ greatly. The idea is that there are battle trumpets ready to sound the battle.

2Ch 13:15

**“God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.”** This is a good example of the principle of agency. God struck the Israelites through the agency of Judah. The Judeans had to go to war, but helped by Yahweh they won a great victory.

2Ch 13:18

**“subdued.”** The Hebrew is the same word that is translated as “humbled” in many other places. This is an interesting reflection on life, because people can humble themselves before God, or they will eventually “be humbled” by outside forces, even by God Himself. Israel would not humble themselves before God, so they were humbled by the Judean army, who had Yahweh on their side.

2Ch 13:19

**“daughter-towns.”** The Hebrew text is just “daughters,” referring to small close-by towns that are supported by a “mother” town, a large and normally well-fortified town (see commentary on Josh. 15:45).

**“Jeshanah.”** Jeshanah is north of Bethel in the tribal area of Ephraim, and it is about three miles south of Shiloh.

2Ch 13:20

**“not regain power again.”** Jeroboam lost 500,000 soldiers, and his kingdom never recovered from it.

**“Yahweh struck him.”** This “struck” can refer to being struck in different ways, for example, by a plague.

2Ch 13:22

**“his ways.”** That is, his way of doing things.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 14**

2Ch 14:1

**“Asa his son reigned in his place.”** The reign of King Asa is covered in 1 Kings 15:9-24, and 2 Chronicles 14:2-16:14.

2Ch 14:3

**“shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

Asa also removed all the male and female cult prostitutes from Judah (1 Kings 15:12).

**“the standing-stones.”** Most standing-stones were set up as part of the worship of pagan gods, and that is the context here. God has no tolerance for idols. They are harmful in many different ways, and God commanded that they be destroyed.

[For more on standing-stones, see commentary on Gen. 28:18. For more on idols being harmful, see commentary on Deut. 7:5.]

2Ch 14:4

**“obey.”** The Hebrew is literally “do,” but that does not read well in English. Some English versions have “obey,” which catches the meaning well.

2Ch 14:5

**“before him.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “before his face.” That is, as Asa surveyed his kingdom, everything was quiet.

2Ch 14:6

**“because the land was quiet.”** Asa had the opportunity to build because his time, energy, and resources were not devoted elsewhere. Asa understood that one of the best deterrents to being attacked was to have such a strong defense that any enemy would not have the strength and time to conquer the kingdom. Once a war has started, the best defense is a good offense, but before war starts many times the best deterrent is the enemy knowing that your defense is so strong you cannot be conquered.

2Ch 14:7

**“bars.”** The “bars” were strong wooden beams that were placed behind the doors so they could not be opened and could withstand pounding from the outside without giving way. Those bars were the origin of the shout “Bar the doors!” when an enemy would approach.

**“The land is still ours.”** The Hebrew is “the land is still before us,” but the meaning of that is unclear in English. Asa was aware that if he and the people turned away from Yahweh they could lose their land.

2Ch 14:8

**“bows.”** The Hebrew also contains the idea of drawing the bow to shoot arrows, but that makes the English awkward.

2Ch 14:9

**“thousands *upon* thousands.”** The Hebrew text is simply, “a thousand thousand,” which some versions take to be one million men, but that is unlikely for a number of reasons, including that there were only 300 chariots. It is much more likely that this is a hyperbole for a whole lot of men. 2 Chronicles 16:8 simply calls this army a huge army.

2Ch 14:10

**“in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.”** This valley is in the Shephelah, and the Ethiopian army is coming from the south. They well could have marched up into Israel on “the Way of the Philistines.”

2Ch 14:11

**“to help the one who has no strength against the mighty.”** The wording of the Hebrew text is idiomatic and much less clear, but means the same thing as the REV translation. The Hebrew text is more literally “between the mighty and him who has no strength.”

**“Help us, Yahweh our God.”** There are two reasons given for Asa’s request. He relies on Yahweh and he comes in Yahweh’s name.

**“rely.”** This word occurs in 2 Chronicles 16:7 when Asa “relies” on Syria.

2Ch 14:13

**“pursued them to Gerar.”** Gerar is a Philistine city in southwest Judah. So Judah engaged the Ethiopians in war and then chased them back to the south.

**“they could not recover themselves.”** Some versions translate this as if it were saying that the Ethiopian army was totally killed off, but the Hebrew more likely means that the army was broken to such an extent that they could not recover and organize themselves as an army again.

**“Judah.”** The Hebrew is literally “they,” but the wording of the sentence makes that unclear in English. The context makes it clear that the “they” is Judah.

2Ch 14:14

**“They struck all the cities around Gerar.”** The cities around Gerar, like Gerar itself, were Philistine cities and the Philistines were enemies of Israel. Although the text does not explicitly say so, it seems apparent and would be logical that the Philistines helped the Ethiopians and thus drew the ire of the Judeans.

**“because the fear of Yahweh had come on those *cities*.”** This is similar to what happened in Jericho (Josh. 2:9-11).

**“much spoil.”** The “much spoil” would have included any gold, silver, iron, copper, or other metals that were there, as well as weapons, livestock, and stored food. It is also possible that Judah took slaves, although there is no way to confirm that.

2Ch 14:15

**“the tents of *those who had* livestock.”** The literal Hebrew, “struck the tents of livestock,” is a metonymy, where the tents of livestock are put for the tents of the people who own livestock.

[See figure of speech “metonymy.”]

**2 Chronicles Chapter 15**

2Ch 15:1

**“was upon.”** The Hebrew text is literally “was upon.” Azariah the prophet had the holy spirit of God just as Moses and other prophets had.

[For more on the spirit of God, see Appendix 7: “What is the Holy Spirit?”]

2Ch 15:3

**“For a long time Israel.”** The prophet is likely referring to the time of the Judges.

**“without a teaching priest.”** One of the jobs of the priests was to teach the people the Law of Moses and the commands of God (Lev. 10:11). However, when the king was against God, they could only do that at the risk of their lives. But Asa supported God and the Law, and so officials and Levites were able to travel around Judah and teach the Law to the people (2 Chron. 17:7-9).

2Ch 15:5

**“the one who went out, nor for the one who came in.”** This is the figure of speech polarmerismos for people living their lives, who go out in the morning and come in later in the afternoon after work. The text is saying that people did not have peace and the feeling of well-being in their life. There was always a state of worry and anxiety. They had “great troubles.”

[See word study on “merismos.”]

**“all the inhabitants of the lands.”** This could be the “lands,” i.e., the districts, within Israel, or it could refer to Israel and the lands around it; the other nations as well as Israel.

2Ch 15:7

**“do not let your hands be slack.”** The Hebrew word “slack” has a couple of meanings that both apply. It can be “slack” in the sense of lazy, i.e., don’t back off your work, or it can be “weak,” in the sense of losing strength due to discouragement, etc.

**“because your work will be rewarded.”** The Hebrew has “reward” as a noun, “because there is a reward for your work.”

2Ch 15:8

**“and the prophecy of Oded the prophet.”** Oded is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 15:1, but what he said is not recorded. It seems he must have agreed with the prophecy of Azariah.

**“and from the cities that he had taken from the hill country of Ephraim.”** In the various conflicts between the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Judah had conquered some Israelite cities, and those would have had lots of different idols. Asa removed the idols and abominations from his country, Judah, and even from the cities he had conquered in Israel. That may not have been very popular with the people who lived in those cities, because people get attached to their gods and idols, but Asa was the king and it was his responsibility to see that in his kingdom Yahweh was followed and obeyed.

**“in front of the vestibule *of the house* of Yahweh.”** The Temple of Yahweh built by Solomon had three rooms: an outermost vestibule, then the Holy Place, then the Holy of Holies. The great altar of sacrifice was in the courtyard east of the vestibule.

[For more on the Temple and the vestibule, see commentary on 1 Kings 6:3.]

2Ch 15:9

**“for an abundance of them defected to him from Israel.”** As Israel became more and more ungodly, more and more godly people moved from Israel into Judah. This had happened earlier also, in the days of Rehoboam, son of Solomon (cf. 2 Chron. 11:13-17).

**“defected to him.”** The Hebrew is idiomatic, literally, “fell upon him.”

2Ch 15:10

**“in the third month.”** This gathering is likely at Pentecost, the Old Testament Feast of Weeks, which was 50 days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

2Ch 15:11

**“some of the spoil.”** This spoil is from the battle with the Ethiopians (2 Chron. 14:14).

2Ch 15:13

**“that whoever would not seek Yahweh the God of Israel would be put to death.”** This law was much more severe than the Law of Moses, which never demanded what this law did. It is likely that it did not last long. There is no record of anyone being put to death because of this law, and it is not reflected in the book of Kings.

**“whether small or great.”** The law applied to everyone, whether they were a “great” and powerful person in the kingdom, or whether they were “small,” a common citizen. Some versions have “young or old,” but the Hebrew vocabulary does not support that distinction well.

2Ch 15:16

**“Maacah, the grandmother.”** Maacah was the wife of Rehoboam, the grandfather of Asa, and so Maacah was the grandmother of Asa. The Hebrew does not have a specific word for “grandmother,” but uses “mother” and expects people to know the correct genealogy.

**“queen mother.”** The Hebrew word *gebirah* (גְּבִירָה #01377) refers to the “queen mother,” who in this context is the grandmother of the king.[[11]](#footnote-31104) The queen mother was the most powerful woman in the kingdom, much more powerful than any of the wives of the king, who often did not have much real power at all. In this case, the “queen grandmother” was ungodly and Asa removed her from her powerful position, but the text does not tell us how he did that.

**“in the brook Kidron.”** The brook Kidron ran dry most of the year.

2Ch 15:17

**“the *local* shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

**2 Chronicles Chapter 16**

2Ch 16:1

**“Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah.”** (cf. 1 Kings 15:17).

**“and fortified Ramah.”** Ramah was on the ancient Road of the Patriarchs and was a choke point in the north-south travel. (see commentary on 1 Kings 15:17).

2Ch 16:2

**“the house of Yahweh...the king’s house.”** The house of Yahweh is the Temple, which had treasuries in which gifts were kept. The king’s house is the palace.

2Ch 16:7

**“and have not relied on Yahweh.”** In 2 Chronicles 14:11, Asa relied on Yahweh and was successful, but here he did not rely on Yahweh. This rebuke is completely missing in the record in 1 Kings. The Chronicler is choosing what records get preserved in part to affect his audience, the people at the time of the Babylonian Captivity. There would be an emphasis on how to act to have God assist you.

2Ch 16:10

**“Then Asa was angry with the seer.”** Asa should have repented. We have no way of knowing if his kingdom and health would have been restored in some way, but it would have been the right thing to do.

**“stocks in prison.”** The Hebrew is literally “the house of stocks,” the “house” being the prison, and the stocks being in the prison. This is very harsh treatment to give a prophet of Yahweh.

**“And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.”** It is likely that Hanani had supporters, and Asa is putting down what he considers to be a popular uprising at this time.

2Ch 16:12

**“very severe.”** The Hebrew is an idiom, “unto the heights.”

2Ch 16:14

**“tombs.”** Asa may have been planning ahead and had dug out more than one tomb to make room for family members.

**“cut out.”** The tomb was cut out of the rock, not dug out of the ground.

**“in the bed.”** The Hebrew can also be “on the bier.” There is no way to tell for sure from the text exactly how Asa was buried. Some rock-cut tombs had beds carved into them where the body was laid.

**“and they made a very large burning for him.”** This is not a cremation, but some kind of memorial fire made in honor of King Asa. There seems to be good archaeological evidence for these memorial fires. Gabriel Barkay wrote about them:

“At the beginning of the 20th century, when Jerusalem, still centered around its ancient core, was surrounded by agricultural land and orchards, 20 mysterious earth-and-stone mounds rose above the city’s western horizon, clearly visible from afar. …In 1953 Israeli archaeologist Ruth Amiran excavated three of the mounds and surveyed the others, identifying and numbering 19 mounds within a distance of less than three miles [from Jerusalem]. …Amiran excavated mound 5 down to its foundations. …Amiran began her excavation of mound 5 by exposing a ring wall at the base…. Additional narrow walls encircled the mound higher up on the slope. The inner walls were probably used to contain fill later piled within the base wall. Amiran then dug a 16-foot-wide trench through the heart of the mound, later widening the trench and removing the entire mound. …Beneath the fill comprising the mound she found a platform, partially paved with stone slabs, located on top of a flat, quarried, rocky surface. The paved platform was not in the geometrical center of the mound. …A pit 3 feet deep was located in the paved platform; fine charcoal material filled this pit. …On a pyre near the platform Amiran found burned organic material, which she identified as “charcoal pieces, burnt animal bones, and black earth saturated with fat.” …She concluded from the potsherds and from the few vessels that could be reconstructed that the three mounds date to the time of the late kingdom of Judah, the seventh century B.C.E. In a 1958 article, Amiran wrote of the Jerusalem mounds, ‘The fact that no interment or traces of any human bones were found in the pit or beside it, and the ceremonial character of the flight of steps leading to the platform, led us to [conclude that] the whole site [is] a high place (*bamah*).’ …It is this view that is accepted by most scholars today.”

But Barkay then sets forth some reasons for his belief that the piles were what was left of the memorial burnings for the kings of Judah, and mentions how the Bible mentions those burnings.

“Second Chronicles relates that King Asa of Judah, who died in about 867 B.C.E., was buried in ‘his own sepulcher that he had made for himself in the City of David.’ He was put on a bier of spices and other precious materials. The text then adds: ‘A very great fire was made in his honor’ (2 Chron. 16:14). …By contrast, Jehoram—the mid-ninth-century B.C.E. king of Judah whom, according to the Bible, the Lord inflicted with a gruesome disease (his bowels dropped out and he died)—did not receive an honorary fire: ‘His people made no fire for him, as they had for his forefathers’ (2 Chron. 21:19). …Corroboration of this practice referred to in Chronicles with respect to Jehoram also comes from the Book of Jeremiah. Regarding Zedekiah, the last king of Judah (who ruled 597-586 B.C.E.), Jeremiah prophesied: “You will die in peace and, like the fires for your royal fathers, they will burn fire for you in your memory, and lament hoi adon [alas master]” (Jeremiah 34:5). …It is interesting that there are 19 (or 20) of these mounds. Between kings David and Zedekiah, the last king of the House of David, there were 21 kings. …Each of the mounds may have been the site of a memorial ceremony following the death of a particular king of Judah.”[[12]](#footnote-31970)

The mounds are not tombs, and the number and place of them closely match what the Bible says about the memorial burnings for the kings of Judah. Furthermore, the dates of the pottery found in them match the period of the kings of Judah. So these mounds are most probably one more piece of archaeological evidence that supports the records in the Bible.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 17**

2Ch 17:3

**“the early ways of his father David.”** The life of David had a “before Bathsheba” and “after Bathsheba” sense to them. David was a man after God’s own heart, but in his early days, Yahweh was with him and gave him success in what he did, whereas after Bathsheba he had constant troubles, especially within his own family. After the Bathsheba incident, Nathan the prophet said to him, “now the sword will not depart from your house for years to come, because you have shown contempt for me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.” True to the prophecy, David dealt with war and family problems until his death. Jehoshaphat, however, followed God like David had done in his early years.

2Ch 17:6

**“*pagan* shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. The context indicates these shrines were pagan in nature. Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

2Ch 17:8

**“Tob-adonijah.”** The name means, “Good is the Lord Yahweh.”

2Ch 17:10

**“the lands that were around Judah.”** So this would include nations such as the Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians, etc.

2Ch 17:11

**“Philistines...Arabians.”** Jehoshaphat worshiped Yahweh, and the nations made peace with him, and the Philistines and Arabians brought tribute to him. But his son Jehoram was an evil king and the Philistines and Arabians attacked him (2 Chron. 21:16-17).

2Ch 17:13

**“great works.”** The Hebrew is singular, but “work” in this context is a collective singular for all the works he had done.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 18**

2Ch 18:1

**“great riches and honor.”** Jehoshaphat had great riches and great honor; he was highly honored.

**“and he formed a marriage alliance with Ahab.”** It is unclear how the first and second halves of the verse relate to each other. Was it due to the wealth of Jehoshaphat that Ahab was willing to enter into a marriage alliance with Jehoshaphat? Or is the text saying that Jehoshaphat was wealthy and highly honored, “but” he made the mistake of making a marriage alliance with Ahab? Or both might be true.

2Ch 18:2

**“After some years.”** In 1 Kings 22:1-2 the time is given as three years.

2Ch 18:3

**“I am as you are.”** This is the kind of answer we would expect from someone in a marriage alliance (2 Chron. 18:1).

2Ch 18:6

**“another prophet of Yahweh.”** Jehoshaphat does not challenge the claim of the false prophets to be prophets of Yahweh, even though he likely suspected they were not true prophets of Yahweh. Instead, he asked if there was another prophet of Yahweh who could ask Yahweh about the wisdom of going to war at Ramoth-gilead.

2Ch 18:9

**“threshing floor at the entrance.”** This threshing floor would be outside the gate and since it was flat would be a convenient place to set up the kings’ thrones. The threshing floor would not be in the city. The kings “sat” while the prophets prophesied, and in the Bible, the word “sat” often indicates taking a ruling position (see commentary on the parallel record in 1 Kings 22:10).

2Ch 18:14

**“Go up, and succeed.”** The verbs are plural in Hebrew, so Micaiah is speaking to both kings.

2Ch 18:16

**“like sheep that have no shepherd.”** Kings were often called the “shepherd” of their people. For Israel to be like sheep without a shepherd was a very clear cultural way of saying that the king would be dead; he would be killed in the battle, and indeed, Ahab was killed in the battle. This is reinforced when God says, “These [people] have no lord,” meaning their lord the king was dead.

**“lord.”** The Hebrew is literally “lords,” which is a grammatical plural, in this case, the idiom of the “plural of emphasis,” here used when speaking of the king. The king (singular) is the “shepherd” (singular) of the previous phrase.

2Ch 18:27

**“return, yes, return.”** Micaiah emphasizes that Ahab will not return from this battle by using the figure of speech polyptoton, in which the verb is repeated twice but in different cases, in this case, an infinitive paired with an imperfect.

[For more on polyptoton and the way it is translated in the REV, see commentary on Gen. 2:16.]

2Ch 18:29

**“I will disguise myself and go into the battle, but you put on your *royal* robes.”** That Jehoshaphat would even comply with Ahab’s idea defies logic. Soldiers have always known that a major way to defeat an enemy army is to kill off the leadership. There are several possibilities as to why Ahab would say what he did to Jehoshaphat. One certainly is that to some extent he did not trust his own prophets who foretold victory, but had some trust in Micaiah, who foretold his death in the war, and he wanted to do everything he could to avoid that. One way to possibly save his life was to not be known as the king of Israel but to wear a disguise. Also, if the enemy thought Jehoshaphat was the king, when they killed him they may have retreated and waited to see what would become of the Israelite army; whether they would disband or not. Also, from a spiritual perspective, it seems clear that Satan wanted Jehoshaphat, who was a godly king, to be killed, and so having Jehoshaphat dress in his royal robes and enter the battle was a spiritual set-up to kill him. Ahab, who suggested that tactic, was married to Jezebel, and the two of them were both pawns of Satan and idolaters and they had conspired together in murder before this (1 Kings 21; the murder of Naboth and his family), so Ahab’s suggestion to Jehoshaphat was not out of character for him.

Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, was weak-willed and apparently naïve, and went along with Ahab’s ridiculous plan. This may have been due to an unhealthy desire to please Ahab since he had entered into a marriage alliance with Ahab (2 Chron. 18:1) and his son Jehoram was married to Ahab’s daughter (2 Chron. 21:6). It often happens that believers make unwise decisions based on the desire to please someone, including ungodly people, and that is why believers are to love God with “all” their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 19**

2Ch 19:2

**“hate.”** The word “hate” in the Bible does not always have the meaning it has in English, an intense feeling of animosity, anger, and hostility toward a person, group, or object. In Hebrew and Greek, the word “hate” has a large range of meanings, from actual “hate” to simply loving something less than something else, neglecting or ignoring something, or being disgusted by something. “Hate” can also mean “to have nothing to do with, or to have a lack of love and kindly sentiment toward someone or something.” 2 Chronicles 19:2 says the people of Israel “hate” Yahweh, but although some people probably did have hostile feelings toward Yahweh, most of them simply had nothing to do with Him and showed no kindness to Him, so in the biblical way of speaking, they “hated” Him.

[For more on the large semantic range of “hate” and its use in the Bible, see commentary on Prov. 1:22, “hate.”]

2Ch 19:3

**“there are good things with you.”** The Hebrew is literally, “good things with you.” While it might mean “in you,” like most of the versions, the text says “with,” not “in,” and it could be that the good things “with” Jehoshaphat are the circumstances that were blessings on him and his kingdom because of his cleansing the idols out of Judah. Yes, the prophet said he would have wrath, but he well might have added there were also good things with Jehoshaphat and his kingdom.

2Ch 19:7

**“nor partiality.”** The Hebrew is an idiom: “nor lifting up the face.” It means to give special favor to a person because of who he or she is and not looking at the facts of the case and dispensing true justice.

2Ch 19:8

**“they lived in Jerusalem.”** The Masoretic Hebrew text reads, “and they returned to Jerusalem,” but the Septuagint reads “and they lived in Jerusalem,” and that seems to be the meaning of the text. The difference between the readings in Hebrew is vowel pointing, which was not in the original Hebrew text.

2Ch 19:10

**“concerning bloodshed.”** This is a case when translating the text literally can be confusing. The Hebrew text literally reads, “between blood and blood,” which in modern English means between members of the same family or clan. But in this case, “between blood and blood” means between cases involving bloodshed: was the bloodshed intentional and therefore murder, or unintentional and thus manslaughter? The punishments required by the Law of Moses are very different.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 20**

2Ch 20:1

**“the Meunites.”** A minor desert tribe of uncertain origin. This translation is from the Septuagint. The Masoretic Hebrew text reads “from the Ammonites,” see the text note in the NET translation.

2Ch 20:2

**“from Edom.”** The Hebrew text reads “Aram” (Syria), but this seems to be a corruption of the Hebrew because Syria is far north of the area. The Septuagint and Vulgate read “Edom.” Also, Jehoshaphat named the enemies including “Mount Seir,” which is Edom, and he did not mention Syria (2 Chron. 20:10). It is likely that the army from Edom crossed the Dead Sea at the jut of land that extends most of the way across the Dead Sea.

**“En-gedi.”** “En-gedi” means “the spring of the wild goats,” and it is located on the west side of the Dead Sea. It is a beautiful oasis, with plenty of water, and David hid out there from Saul (1 Sam. 23:29; 24:1). It is specifically mentioned as part of the global restoration of the earth in the Millennial Kingdom, when the Dead Sea is healed (Ezek. 47:10).

2Ch 20:3

**“set his face to seek Yahweh.”** This is an idiom. Jehoshaphat was afraid, but he was not paralyzed by his fear. He resolved (set his face) to seek Yahweh, and Yahweh acted on his behalf and the enemy was defeated.

2Ch 20:5

**“before the new court.”** This “new court” is not mentioned elsewhere. It could have been “new” because it was rebuilt in some way, but it is more likely that it was some kind of expansion to Solomon’s Temple to allow for more worshipers. The worshipers would not have been allowed into the court of the priests, where the altar of sacrifice was, they were in an outer court.

2Ch 20:7

**“drive out.”** The Hebrew word contains the idea of “dispossess,” such that the Israelites did not just drive out the Canaanites, but they displaced them.

2Ch 20:9

**“we will stand before this house and before you.”** This is one of the many places where standing before God’s house, the Temple, was considered to be standing before God, because God said He would dwell in the Temple. Note that in 2 Chronicles 20:13 and 20:18, the text just says that the people are “before Yahweh” even though they were standing in front of the Temple (2 Chron. 20:5).

2Ch 20:12

**“Our God, will you not judge them?”** Notice that Jehoshaphat does not ask for a victory in a military battle, he asks for vindication from Yahweh. This could well be why Yahweh fought this battle while the people of Judah sang his praise. However, his statement about not having military might is interesting because he did have a well-prepared army (2 Chron. 17:12-18), and small armies with God’s help had defeated large armies many times before.

This sentence must have had a great effect on the exiles in the Persian Empire when Chronicles was written. They were a small group in exile in the midst of a powerful empire and were looking for God’s deliverance.

2Ch 20:13

**“All Judah stood before Yahweh.”** The people were standing in front of the Temple, which was the house of God (God dwelled in the Holy of Holies) and thus they were standing before God (see commentary on 2 Chron. 20:9).

2Ch 20:14

**“came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah.”** Jahaziel, “the one who sees God,” was likely a Levitical musician, not a known prophet.

2Ch 20:15

**“Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed.”** This is very similar to Joshua 1:9. When we are confident in what God tells us to do and confident of His help, we can let go of any fear we have. In this case, when God said, “for the battle is not yours, but God’s,” that would remove a lot of concern and doubt from the people. Until that point, the people might well have thought, and with good reason, that this attack on Judah was spiritual and was punishment for the many sins of Israel and Judah. For example, the Assyrian attack on Israel was because of Israel’s sins (2 Kings 17:6-8), and the famine in David’s reign was due to Saul’s sin (2 Sam. 21:1).

**“The battle is not yours, but God’s.”** There are a number of times in Scripture when God fought for Israel, and Jehoshaphat was confident that this was one of them (cf. Exod. 14:13-14).

2Ch 20:16

**“before the wilderness of Jeruel.”** That is, east of the wilderness of Jeruel.

2Ch 20:17

**“stand firm.”** The Hebrew text is just “stand,” but in this context, it means to stand firm. In the face of the huge enemy army, it would be reasonable that some of the people would have run away.

2Ch 20:18

**“fell down before Yahweh.”** The people were in front of the Temple, which was the house of God (God dwelled in the Holy of Holies) and thus when they got down into a worship posture, bowing down, it was “before Yahweh” (see commentary on 2 Chron. 20:9).

**“worshiping.”** Or “bowing down to.” The Hebrew word translated “worship,” *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is the same Hebrew word as “bow down.”

[For more on bowing down, see the word study on “worship.”]

2Ch 20:19

**“the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites.”** The Korahites were a sub-clan within the Kohathites, a large group of Levites. The fact that those Levites stood up to praise may indicate some kind of sectioning among the Levites; we know there were 24 courses of priests, and the same would be true of the Levites.

2Ch 20:21

**“in holy attire.”** See commentary on Psalms 29:2. However, scholars are divided on how to translate 2 Chronicles 20:21. It is possible to understand the Hebrew text to be saying more like the ESV is translated: “praise him for the splendor of his holiness.”

2Ch 20:23

**“devoting them to destruction.”** That is, totally destroying them.

[For more on things “devoted” to Yahweh and devoted to destruction, see commentary on Josh. 6:17.]

**“to destroy.”** In the Hebrew text, “destroy” is a noun, more like “became a destroyer” of one another.

2Ch 20:25

**“clothing.”** The Masoretic Hebrew text says “dead bodies,” but a few medieval Hebrew texts and the Latin Vulgate read “clothing,” which fits the context much better.

2Ch 20:26

**“Beracah.”** The word “*beracah*” means “blessing.” The Valley of Beracah where the people gathered was the flat at the bottom of the valley, more like a plain. In that sense, it is similar to the “Valley of Jezreel,” which is so wide and flat it is more like a plain.

2Ch 20:31

**“Azubah.”** The name means “abandoned,” “forsaken.”

2Ch 20:33

**“the *local* shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

2Ch 20:34

**“included.”** The Hebrew text is literally “was brought up.” This seems to be saying that Jehu recorded the event and then what he said was included in the book of Kings.

2Ch 20:35

**“After this.”** The text now records a previous event in a flashback.

**“who acted very wickedly.”** Although the meaning of this phrase has been debated, the words are so strong about acting wickedly that they must refer to Ahaziah who did indeed act wickedly, and not to Jehoshaphat who made some ill-advised and wrong decisions but who the Bible never accuses of acting wickedly. Actually, Jehoshaphat joining with Ahaziah was one of his poor decisions.

2Ch 20:37

**“broken out against.”** The same Hebrew occurs in 2 Samuel 5:20.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 21**

2Ch 21:1

**“Jehoram his son reigned in his place.”** The reigns of Jehoram of Judah and Joram of Israel can be very difficult to keep track of because in the Hebrew text, and in many English versions, both kings are called by both names—Joram and Jehoram (sometimes English versions change the names to make them consistent).

Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat and king of Judah is called “Jehoram” in the Hebrew text of 2 Kings 8:16, 29, and 2 Chron. 22:6, but “Joram” in the Hebrew text of 2 Kings 8:21, 24; 11:2; and 1 Chron. 3:11.

In contrast, Joram the son of Ahab and king of Israel is called “Joram” in the Hebrew text of 2 Kings 8:16, 25, 28, and 2 Chron. 22:7, but called “Jehoram” in 2 Chron. 22:5, 6, and 22:7.

If that was not confusing enough, the Hebrew text of 2 Chron. 22:6 has both kings and calls them both “Jehoram,” while the Hebrew text of 2 Chron. 22:7 has only one king, the king of Israel, but calls him by both names, “Joram” and “Jehoram,” in the same verse!

Some English versions try to alleviate the confusion by changing the spelling of the names so one king is consistently called “Joram” and the other is consistently called “Jehoram.” However, people reading the English versions need to be careful because the name changes are not consistent. For example, in 2 Chronicles 22:7, the NET Bible changes both names to “Joram,” while the NJB changes both names to “Jehoram.” The only true way to tell which king is which is to read the context very carefully.

King Joram of Israel lived at the same time as Ahaziah, the son of Joram, king of Judah, and they were friendly toward one another. Jehu, who became king of Israel after King Joram of Israel, killed both Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah on the same day. He also killed Queen Jezebel the same day (2 Kings 9:24, 27, 33).

2Ch 21:2

**“All these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.”** Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah, not Israel. Calling him the king of Israel may be because so many people of Israel migrated into Judah, or it may be because there always should have been a united monarchy with one true king.

2Ch 21:4

**“some of the officials of Israel.”** In this case, “Israel” may refer to Judah, or it is possible that his wife convinced him to actually kill some of the officials of the Northern Kingdom, Israel.

2Ch 21:5

**“Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to reign.”** This is parallel to 2 Kings 8:17.

2Ch 21:9

**“Then Jehoram crossed over.”** Jehoram crossed over the Jordan River and the Rift Valley.

2Ch 21:11

**“*pagan* shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

**“to prostitute themselves.”** Both physically and spiritually. Ritual sex was often a part of the worship of pagan gods.

2Ch 21:12

**“Elijah.”** This is the only mention of Elijah in Chronicles.

2Ch 21:13

**“and also have killed your brothers, *members of* the house of your father.”** This indicates that Jehoram likely killed “brothers,” relatives, that were not just his full brothers, but relatives who he felt threatened by.

2Ch 21:14

**“afflict your people...with a great affliction.”** The Hebrew is more idiomatic, literally, “strike with a great striking.” The word “strike” is sometimes used of a plague, so in some contexts “plague with a great plague.”

**“and all your *personal* property.”** This would include any animals or livestock a person owned, and even possibly slaves.

2Ch 21:15

**“severe sickness.”** The Hebrew is plural, so some versions have “many sicknesses,” but it is likely that the Hebrew is plural of emphasis, a severe sickness. At the end of the sentence in the phrase “because of the sickness,” the word “sickness is singular.

**“until your bowels come out because of the sickness.”** Jehoram may have had a hernia. Whatever it was, it eventually caused his death (cf. 2 Chron. 21:19).

2Ch 21:16

**“the spirit of the Philistines, and *also* of the Arabians.”** These are the same people that gave Jehoram’s father, Asa, gifts (2 Chron. 17:11). Godliness does protect from harm, and godlessness brings trouble.

It is possible that this invasion is the background of Obadiah, although most scholars put Obadiah later than this.

**“the Arabians who are near the Ethiopians.”** The natural reading of this is that at that time in history, there were some Arabians who had migrated to Africa and were near the Ethiopians.

2Ch 21:17

**“Jehoahaz.”** He is called Ahaziah in 2 Chronicles 22. The name change just depends on where in the name the “Yah” is put. The root is “ahaz,” to grasp, and here in 2 Chron. 21, the Yah is put in the front, but the Y becomes a J. When the Yah is put at the end, it becomes “Ahaz” “Yah,” or “Ahaziah.”

2Ch 21:19

**“Then it happened.”** Then “it,” what Elijah said, happened.

**“as time passed.”** The Hebrew is idiomatic: “to days from days.”

**“a *memorial* fire for him.”** Jehoram and other kings were not cremated (Jehoram was buried; 2 Chron. 21:20), but the fire was a way of expressing a memorial for the king’s life (cf. 2 Chron. 16:14).

2Ch 21:20

**“and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.”** So Jehoram died at 39 years old. So his youngest son Ahaziah could not have been 42 when he began to reign (2 Chron. 22:1), because then Ahaziah would have been older than his father, which is impossible.

**“and he departed to no one’s regret.”** The Common English Bible has, “No one was sorry when he died,” and this is the most likely meaning of the text, especially in light of the fact that the people would not burn a memorial fire for him or bury him in the tombs of the kings. However, the Hebrew text can legitimately be translated as something like “He departed without joy (or desire)” (cf. CJB).

**2 Chronicles Chapter 22**

2Ch 22:1

**“Ahaziah.”** Called Jehoahaz in 2 Chronicles 21:17.

**“had killed all the older *sons*.”** This event is recorded in 2 Chronicles 21:17, but in that verse, the older sons were not said to be killed, but only “carried away.” It is more than likely that they were all put to death, as this verse indicates.

2Ch 22:2

**“was 22 years old.”** The Hebrew text says 42, but 2 Kings 8:26 says “22 years old,” and so does the Syriac and the Lucian Septuagint (see commentary on 2 Chron. 21:20).

2Ch 22:5

**“Jehoram.”** This second use is spelled “Joram” in the Hebrew text, a variant spelling of Jehoram.

2Ch 22:6

**“Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah.”** Azariah is called “Ahaziah” in 2 Kings 8-9 (cf. 2 Kings 8:24-26).

**“sick.”** He was “sick” presumably because he had been wounded. At this point he may have also developed an infection with all its accompanying symptoms.

2Ch 22:9

**“he was hiding in Samaria.”** In this context, “Samaria” has to be the region of Samaria because Ahaziah died in Megiddo (2 Kings 9:27). He had fled from Jehu, and apparently tried to hide from him.

**“There was no one of the house of Ahaziah powerful enough to rule the kingdom *in his place*.”** After the king was killed, none of the potential kings were powerful enough to secure the rulership of the kingdom. Jehu killed many of the potential rulers, and later the powerful Athaliah took control and killed almost all her potential rivals in the Davidic dynasty.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 23**

2Ch 23:1

**“took courage.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “strengthened himself.”

2Ch 23:2

**“and the heads of fathers’ households of Israel.”** The Chronicler makes a difference between Judah and Israel, and this likely refers to the elders of Israel who had migrated into Judah at some point.

2Ch 23:4

**“be guards at the gates.”** The Hebrew is more idiomatic, more literally, “be gatekeepers at the thresholds.”

2Ch 23:5

**“the Foundation Gate.”** There are two gates mentioned in 2 Kings 11:6 and neither have this name. That does not mean that one of them is also called the Foundation Gate. The gates were called by different names back then and today as well.

2Ch 23:7

**“when he comes in and when he goes out.”** This is the figure of speech polarmerismos, and means “all the time.”

[See word study on “merismos.”]

2Ch 23:8

**“for Jehoiada the priest did not dismiss the shifts.”** In this unique case, Jehoiada wanted as many men as possible, so he did not dismiss the shift that was supposed to leave when the new shift showed up so that there were double men present to defend the king. The word translated as “shifts” is more literally “divisions,” or “courses,” but in this case, it is referring to the shift they are working.

2Ch 23:9

**“the spears and shields and small shields that had been King David’s.”** See commentary on 1 Kings 14:26 and 2 Kings 11:10.

2Ch 23:15

**“So they seized her.”** The Hebrew reads, “So they laid hands on her,” but that can be misunderstood in English.

**“they killed her there.”** Athaliah had killed many people, and the Bible says that murderers are to be put to death (see commentary on Exod. 21:12).

2Ch 23:16

**“between himself.”** Jehoiada is the priest and the covenant representative of Yahweh.

**“and the king.”** The young king was Joash.

2Ch 23:17

**“the house of Baal.”** The temple of Baal.

2Ch 23:18

**“the Levitical priests.”** The Masoretic Hebrew text reads, “the priests the Levites.” Every priest was also a Levite.

[For more on the Levitical priests, see commentary on 2 Chron. 30:27.]

**“to the order of David.”** The Hebrew is idiomatic, more literally, “upon the hands of David.”

**2 Chronicles Chapter 24**

2Ch 24:5

**“annually.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “from year to year,” but that phrase means annually, or every year.

2Ch 24:6

**“the tax of Moses the servant of Yahweh and of the assembly of Israel.”** This is apparently the half-shekel tax levied on all the people (Exod. 30:12-16), but that was a one-time tax whereas this is an annual tax. It is possible that the reason Jehoiada had not required the Levites to bring the tax was that it was supposed to be a one-time tax, not an annual one.

**“the Tent of the Testimony?”** At the time of King Joash, the people worshiped God at the Temple, not the Tabernacle. It is likely that Joash used the phrase “Tent of the Testimony” to try to prod Jehoiada into action by reminding him of the Tabernacle.

2Ch 24:7

**“and her sons.”** Since Athaliah had killed all the royal family, either her “sons” are children by other men who were not in line to inherit the throne and thus no threat to Athalia, or else the word “sons” is being used culturally for “followers.”

**“broken into the house of God.”** The text is worded as if Athaliah was a thief who “broke in” and stole, and she was a thief and a murderer.

**“they also gave all the dedicated things of the house of Yahweh to the Baals.”** Athaliah and her sons would have given the things in the “house of Yahweh,” the Temple, to the Baals by taking the things from God’s Temple and putting them in the temples of Baal around the kingdom.

2Ch 24:8

**“and set it outside at the gate of the house of Yahweh.”** To be easily accessible to all the people, the chest would have been put outside the Temple courtyard, but at the entrance to the courtyard.

2Ch 24:14

**“They offered burnt offerings in the house of Yahweh.”** This is an example of when “the house of Yahweh” refers to the whole Temple complex. The burnt offerings were offered in the courtyard on the altar.

**“regularly.”** The Hebrew text is more often translated “continuously,” but in this context that gives the wrong impression. It is not that the burnt offerings were offered all day and night continuously, but rather they were offered regularly, as the Law of Moses required. So at the very least, there was a morning sacrifice and an evening sacrifice.

2Ch 24:16

**“They buried him in the city of David among the kings.”** What happened with Jehoiada is very rare. He may be the only one who was not a king that was buried in the city of David among the kings.

**“toward God and his house.”** Jehoiada did good to God and the Temple.

2Ch 24:18

**“this guilt of theirs.”** Here in 2 Chronicles 24:18, the word guilt is a metonymy of the effect, put for the sin that causes the guilt. By the metonymy, the Word of God lets us know that the sin of the people created guilt in the eyes of God that had serious consequences.

2Ch 24:20

**“Why do you disobey the commandments of Yahweh? You will not be prosperous!”** The Hebrew can also be translated, “Why do you disobey the commandments of Yahweh and not prosper?”

2Ch 24:21

**“They conspired against him and stoned him with stones.”** The murder of the prophet-priest Zechariah in the Temple courts is almost certainly referred to by Jesus (Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:51). However, there are some problems with making what Jesus said fit with the Zechariah of 2 Chronicles 24:21. The problems have resulted in scholars suggesting three possibilities for who the “Zechariah” that Jesus spoke of actually was.

It is possible that the Zechariah Jesus spoke of was the Old Testament prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah who penned the book of Zechariah (Zech. 1:1). However, we have no account of the prophet Zechariah being killed, and it is unlikely that two different people by the name of Zechariah were killed in the courtyard of the Temple.

It is possible that the Zechariah that Jesus spoke of is someone we do not know, who has disappeared from history. However, just as with Zechariah the writing prophet, it is unlikely that two different people by the name of Zechariah were killed in the courtyard of the Temple.

It is most likely that Zechariah son of Jehoiada here, in (2 Chron. 24:20-22), is the Zechariah Jesus spoke about. His murder took place in the courtyard of the Temple and is described toward the end of 2 Chronicles which was the last book in the Hebrew canon. So the Zechariah of 2 Chronicles 24 would fit with what Jesus said about Abel, the son of Adam, and Zechariah the descendant of Jehoiada, being the first and last people to be murdered in the Hebrew Bible. But the problem with the Zechariah of 2 Chronicles 24 is the name of Zechariah’s father. The name that Jesus gave and the name in 2 Chronicles 24 are different. But just as the prophet Zechariah is alternately known by his father’s patronymic (Zech. 1:1) and his grandfather’s (Ezra 6:14), it is possible that Jehoiada is the grandfather of the Zechariah of 2 Chron. 24.

That suggestion is made much more plausible by the fact that Jehoiada lived to be 130 years old (2 Chron. 24:15). In those years Jehoiada could have fathered an otherwise unknown Berechiah, who would have had time to father Zechariah and live to a good age, but still die before the death of his own father, Jehoiada, which would mean that Berechiah would never have had the chance to be chief priest. Although we do not have that history, it is possible that Jesus did have it and spoke about it. Although this explanation is very possible, the fact is that we just do not know who the Zechariah that Jesus mentioned was.

2Ch 24:22

**“repay it.”** The Hebrew word is usually associated with seeking God.

2Ch 24:23

**“at the turn of the year.”** This was most likely in the spring when the new year began in Israel. It was at that time that the rainy season stopped and the land dried out and it was much easier for armies to move.

**“destroyed all the officials of the people from among the people.”** The Syrians targeted the leaders and killed them, leaving the common people alive. However, the Syrians did not kill Joash the king (cf. 2 Kings 12:17-18).

2Ch 24:24

**“So they executed judgment on Joash.”** “They,” the Syrians, executed the judgment that Zechariah the murdered prophet spoke about and even spoke of as he died (2 Chron. 24:20, 22).

2Ch 24:25

**“When they had departed from him.”** There is a play on words in the Hebrew text that is hard to reproduce in English. Joash “forsook” Yahweh, and here the Syrians “forsook” Joash, and his own servants killed him.

**“for they left him very sick.”** This was probably from wounds he received from the Syrians when they came to Jerusalem, but the Scripture does not say so.

2Ch 24:26

**“Zabad the son of Shimeath the Ammonitess and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith the Moabitess.”** It is noteworthy here that the text gives the names of the mothers of the men who killed King Joash.

2Ch 24:27

**“Now concerning his sons.”** Nothing specific is known about the sons except that he had both sons and daughters (2 Chron. 24:3).

**“and the many prophecies against him.”** There were apparently many prophecies spoken against Joash and his kingdom, but they are not specifically laid out (2 Chron. 24:19).

**2 Chronicles Chapter 25**

2Ch 25:3

**“firmly under his control.”** The Hebrew text is simply, “firmly upon him,” but the idea is firmly under his control.

2Ch 25:4

**“The fathers are not….”** Here 2 Chron. 25:4 quotes the Law of Moses (Deut. 24:16; cf. Jer. 31:30)

2Ch 25:5

**“spears and shields.”** The Hebrew text is “spear and shield,” using the singular as a collective singular.

2Ch 25:8

**“Will God overthrow you before the enemy?”** The Hebrew text can be translated as a question. It seems out of place here that the prophet would be being sarcastic toward the king. There was no need for that here, and it would actually risk angering the king. The answer to the rhetorical question is “No.”

2Ch 25:10

**“their anger was greatly kindled against Judah.”** This seems to be counterintuitive because they get to keep the money and go home. These soldiers must have been looking forward to a large amount of loot from the battle.

2Ch 25:11

**“Amaziah strengthened himself.”** Amaziah had to talk to himself and strengthen his resolve to enter into this battle.

**“the children of Seir.”** That is, the Edomites (cf. 2 Kings 14:10-11). “Seir” is a geographical term referring to where they lived.

2Ch 25:12

**“10,000.”** This could be the use of “10,000” that refers to a military unit. If so, then ten military units, say of 15 people each, would be 150 people, which seems more realistic here.

**“the rock.”** In 2 Kings 14:7, this is the same word as is transliterated “Sela,” which means “rock,” but here it has the definite article.

2Ch 25:13

**“sent back.”** That is, sent back up north to Israel.

**“raided”** The literal is “stripped,” but they did that in their raid.

**“from Samaria to Beth-horon.”** Samaria was the capital city of Israel, and Beth-horon was a city of Ephraim that was on the border of Benjamin (Josh. 16:1-5; 18:11-14). The geographical references to those cities make this a very strange verse. The Israelite army was going back north because they were not allowed to fight with the Edomites in the south of Judah. As they traveled north they would first encounter Beth-horon, then go north to Samaria. Thus there are two major problems with the verse: the geographical references are in the wrong order; Beth-horon should be before Samaria (this is unusual but not a huge problem), and more problematic is that both Beth-horon and Samaria are cities of Israel. So why would an Israelite army attack them? It could be argued that Beth-horon was so close to Judah that it had joined Judah when the kingdom split into Israel in the north and Judah in the south, and that may be true. But that explanation does not work for Samaria, which was in the heart of Israel. Ralph Klein writes: “The reference to Samaria is much more difficult to understand since it suggests that the mercenaries attacked their own people. and no explanation is fully convincing.”[[13]](#footnote-11440)

Some scholars suggest that when the kingdom split some towns or villages still were somewhat loyal to Judah, or contained people who were known to be loyal to Judah, and the mercenaries attacked those cities, but it is just a possible explanation because there is no biblical or historical support for the statement. The verse has never been satisfactorily explained.

2Ch 25:14

**“set them up to be his gods.”** Amaziah’s behavior makes no sense. He had just defeated Edom and their gods with the help of Yahweh, so why would he then turn to Edom’s gods and worship them? Sometimes human behavior is completely irrational, and this is an example of it.

**“bowed down.”** The common biblical way of bowing down before people or God was to fall to one’s knees and bow the upper body and face to the earth. The word translated “bowed down,” *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is the same Hebrew word as “worship.”

[For more on bowing down, see the word study on “worship.”]

**“burned incense.”** The Hebrew is also used in general for making offerings, but it specifically means to burn incense.

2Ch 25:15

**“Why have you consulted the gods.”** This is a very good question. Amaziah was obviously seeking counsel from the pagan gods, and also, by expecting an answer was inherently seeking their approval as well. This does not seem to make any sense. For one thing, Amaziah had a history of doing what was right in the eyes of God (2 Chron. 25:1-2), but also, these pagan gods were not able to deliver their own people in a war, so why would Amaziah consult them?

One of the lessons we can learn from the Bible in records like this is that we always have to be diligent to follow Yahweh and obey Him. When we have questions we should do our best to get answers that make sense to us, because that helps us stay in love with God.

2Ch 25:16

**“counselors...counsel...counsel.”** The threefold repetition of the word “counsel” emphasizes the tug of war that goes on in the world between people seeking counsel from God or people being content to have counsel that is from other sources. This tug-or-war is clearly stated in Deuteronomy 18, where the people had a choice between turning to the Dark Side for answers, or going to God’s prophet (Deut. 18:9-15).

2Ch 25:17

**“consulted.”** The Hebrew is the same as “counsel” in 2 Chronicles 25:16.

**“Come, let’s look one another in the face.”** In this context, this is an idiom and is an invitation to war (see 2 Kings 14:8; cf. 2 Kings 14:11). The reason for the war is not stated but was most likely due to what the Israelite soldiers who were returning to Israel through Judah did when they raided the cities of Judah and killed 3,000 people and took much spoil home to Israel.

2Ch 25:20

**“so that he would give them.”** That is, so that God would give them (the Judeans) into the hands of the enemy.

**“because they consulted the gods of Edom.”** This is a great example of demons misleading people to do unwise things. “Consulting the gods of Edom” was consulting demons, who of course wanted Judah to be defeated and the name of Yahweh besmirched. Consulting pagan gods was strictly forbidden by Yahweh.

2Ch 25:21

**“So Joash king of Israel went up.”** So Joash king of Israel went south from the city of Samaria to Beth-shemesh, and Amaziah went north from Jerusalem to Beth-shemesh.

2Ch 25:23

**“the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate, 400 cubits.”** This would be the north wall of Jerusalem, either toward the west side or the east side.

2Ch 25:24

**“Obed-edom.”** The caretaker of the treasures. This is obviously not the same Obed-edom as in 2 Sam. 6:10-12; 1 Chronicles 13:13, but he could be a descendant.

2Ch 25:28

**“city of Judah.”** This would be a unique phrase for Jerusalem, which the city has to be if he was buried with his ancestors as the verse says. The Septuagint and 2 Kings 14:20 and some medieval Hebrew manuscripts read “David.”

**2 Chronicles Chapter 26**

2Ch 26:2

**“Eloth.”** This is the plural form of the word “Elath,” which is the word in Kings. The plural form often carries the “essence” of the word.

2Ch 26:5

**“who had instructed him in the fear of God.”** This is a very likely translation of the text. However, the Masoretic Hebrew text reads, “had understanding in visions of God.”[[14]](#footnote-22241)

2Ch 26:6

**“and broke down the wall of Gath.”** King David and King Uzziah are the only two Israelite kings to conquer Gath.

2Ch 26:7

**“in Gur-baal.”** This city is mentioned only here in the Bible.

2Ch 26:10

**“the Shephelah.”** The Shephelah is the area of rolling hills east of Israel’s coastal plain and between the coastal plain and the hill country (see commentary on Josh. 9:1).

2Ch 26:13

**“Under their authority.”** The Hebrew is idiomatic: “under their hand.”

2Ch 26:18

**“to burn incense to Yahweh.”** That is, to burn the special incense on the golden altar of incense inside the Holy Place of the Temple.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 27**

2Ch 27:2

**“the people continued acting corruptly.”** The local shrines for pagan worship were not taken away (2 Kings 15:35).

2Ch 27:3

**“He built the Upper Gate of the house of Yahweh.”** This is the gate in the northern wall of the Temple, not the northern gate in the city wall (see commentary on 2 Kings 15:35).

**“and he built extensively at the wall of Ophel.”** This may be extra work on the wall, or on the wall and structures associated with the wall.

2Ch 27:6

**“So Jotham became strong.”** Chronicles may point this out because it was during the full reign of Jotham that the Assyrians were starting to expand their empire and threaten Israel and Judah.

**“he established his ways.”** Jotham established his ways, he made his ways firm, which he did by obeying Yahweh.

2Ch 27:8

**“He was 25 years old.”** That is, Jotham.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 28**

2Ch 28:1

**“Ahaz was 20 years old when he began to reign.”** The reign of Ahaz is also covered in 2 Kings 16.

2Ch 28:2

**“the Baals.”** In different locations, the god Baal was worshiped differently and also had somewhat different characteristics. This is not unusual. Even God, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, is worshiped differently and said to have different characteristics in the different Christian denominations. For example, a Calvinist and a Free Will Baptist see God quite a bit differently. This verse shows that Ahaz worshiped Baal in his different ways of being, or according to the different ways he was worshiped in the different locations.

2Ch 28:3

**“Valley of the Son of Hinnom.”** The word “valley” in Hebrew is “*ge*” and the phrase “valley of the son of Hinnom” is the “ge ben Hinnom,” which was eventually referred to in Greek as “Gehenna.” The valley was considered unclean because of all the human sacrifice that had taken place there, and by the time of Christ was the garbage dump of the City of Jerusalem.

[See commentary on Matthew 5:22, “Gehenna.”]

2Ch 28:4

**“at the *local* shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

2Ch 28:5

**“carried away from him.”** That is, the Syrians carried away from his kingdom a great number of captives.

2Ch 28:6

**“120,000.”** This might also be 120 military units instead of 120,000.

2Ch 28:7

**“Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim.”** Zichri was obviously a knightly leader in the Israelite army.

**“the Ruler of the House.”** The “Ruler of the House” is the title for the top palace administrator, the top man over the palace, palace staff, etc.

2Ch 28:9

**“a rage that has reached up to heaven.”** That is, a rage that is so intense that it has gotten God’s attention. It is so intense that it is moving God to act, including sending a prophet to address the situation.

2Ch 28:10

**“And now you intend to subjugate the children of Judah and Jerusalem.”** The people of Israel were not to rule over one another harshly (Lev. 25:46).

**“don’t you have transgressions.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “are there not with you transgressions.” The Hebrew language does not really have the word “have” but speaks of things being “with” someone. For example, instead of saying “the man has wisdom,” it would say, “wisdom is with him.”

2Ch 28:11

**“for the fierce wrath of Yahweh *is hanging* over you.”** The Hebrew is more literally that the wrath of God is “upon” Israel or “over” Israel, but it had not yet actually happened; it was imminent if something did not change. A good way to bring that imminence into English is by saying that the wrath “is hanging over” Israel (cf. NJB).

2Ch 28:12

**“heads of the children of Ephraim.”** These are not prophets, but leaders that have some respect for Yahweh; we can assume that these men are older and experienced, and realize how disobeying Yahweh can mean real trouble.

2Ch 28:13

**“guilt on us before Yahweh.”** The text is literally, “the guilt of Yahweh upon us.” The phrase is idiomatic.

2Ch 28:15

**“City of Date Palms.”** The palm trees in Israel were date palms, not coconut palms.

2Ch 28:17

**“For the Edomites had again come.”** The Edomites came from the southeast. We learn that Ahaz was also attacked by Syria and Israel from the north and also by the Philistines from the west (2 Chron. 28:18).

2Ch 28:18

**“the Shephelah.”** The Shephelah is the area of rolling hills east of Israel’s coastal plain and between the coastal plain and the hill country (see commentary on Josh. 9:1).

**“Beth-shemesh...Aijalon...Gederoth…Soco...Timnah...Gimzo.”** These are all towns in the Shephelah, west of the Judean hills. So the Philistines attacked both the Negev and the Shephelah, but the text only lists specific towns in the Shephelah.

2Ch 28:19

**“Ahaz king of Israel.”** Ahaz was technically the king of “Judah,” but “Israel” is often used in 2 Chronicles for Judah. This is perhaps because of their ancient history and perhaps due to the fact that when Jeroboam became king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel after Solomon died and turned to idols, many people of Israel moved to Judah.

**“who caused a lack of restraint in Judah.”** The Hebrew text indicates that Ahaz acted without restraint and sinned, and caused Judah to sin, in many ways. The exact nuance of the Hebrew text is hard to capture, and the versions vary greatly. For example, translations include that Ahaz, “dealt wantonly” (ASV); “exercised no restraint” (CEB); “caused disturbances” (CJB); “threw off restraint” (CSB); “made Judah lawless” (DBY); “made Judah act sinfully” (ESV); “made Judah naked” (KJV); “let Judah go its own way” (JPS); “encouraged Judah to sin” (NET); and “promoted wickedness in Judah” (NIV).

The sins of Ahaz the king were basically forced upon the people of Judah, and that, along with the people’s seemingly natural tendency to worship physical objects such as idols, meant that sins of all kinds abounded in Judah. The people ignored the Mosaic Law and turned away from Yahweh and sinned against Him, and Yahweh could not defend them against their spiritual and physical enemies.

**“and was unfaithful, yes, unfaithful.”** This is the figure of speech polyptoton, in which the verb is repeated twice for emphasis. The meaning is to be extremely unfaithful to Yahweh, which he did by sinning greatly (see commentary on Gen. 2:16).

2Ch 28:23

**“to stumble.”** The idol gods of Syria were a stumbling block to Ahaz and Israel. The worship of idols always causes problems. For one thing, it gives demons access to one’s life (or kingdom) and they cause nothing but trouble.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 29**

2Ch 29:3

**“opened the doors of the house of Yahweh.”** Hezekiah opened the Temple; his father Ahaz had closed it (2 Chron. 28:24).

2Ch 29:4

**“*public* square.”** The Hebrew is more literally a “wide place,” but we today would call it a public square, an open place where people could gather. It is noteworthy that Hezekiah brought the priests and Levites into a public area to talk to them, and thus made it easy for the people to hear. This would have helped the people support the revival and restoration efforts that Hezekiah was going to do. The reign of Hezekiah’s father, Ahaz, had been horribly ungodly and hard on the people, and Hezekiah wanted to get everyone supporting his restoration work. It is also likely that since Ahaz closed the Temple, it was not yet a good place to have a meeting.

**“in the *public* square on the east.”** This is most likely inside the Temple enclosure on the east side, or it could be a public square inside the city walls. Once you get outside the eastern wall of the city there is not a lot of room before it descends into the Kidron Valley.

2Ch 29:5

**“Now sanctify yourselves.”** The Levites needed to “make themselves holy” to do the work in the Temple.

**“remove the filth.”** This was an honest way of saying that the Levites were to remove all the unclean things from the Temple. Although the Bible never specifically says that Ahaz put idols in the Temple, it seems likely that he did. After all, “he made altars for himself in every corner of Jerusalem” (2 Chron. 28:24) and that would almost certainly include the Temple. The word “uncleanness” implies impurity and then idolatry. The word refers to all these things.

**“the holy place.”** Given the context of this phrase, “the holy place” is the whole Temple complex. It took many priests 16 days to cleanse the Temple and its courts.

2Ch 29:7

**“the vestibule.”** This is the first room in the Temple, the “Holy Place,” and behind it (west of it) was the second room, the Holy of Holies. In the Holy Place were the menorahs, the lampstands for the oil lamps, and also the Table of the Bread of the Presence, and also the golden altar of incense. Under the reign of Ahaz, the Temple was shut down and filled with idols, so the lamps were not burned and the incense was not burned.

[For regulations on the incense altar, see Exod. 30:1-10. For regulations on the menorah and its lamps, see Exod. 25:31-40 and Lev. 24:1-4.]

2Ch 29:8

**“and he has made them an object of terror, of horror, and a hissing.”** Cf. Deut. 28:37

2Ch 29:9

**“our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity.”** Many people in the Southern Kingdom of Judah were killed or captured during the reign of Ahaz, Hezekiah’s father (2 Chron. 28:5-7, 17-18). By this time the Assyrians had conquered and carried away the Northern Kingdom of Israel, but they had not yet attacked Judah and Hezekiah, which happened later and is recorded in 2 Chron. 32 and 2 Kings 18-19).

2Ch 29:11

**“My sons.”** Hezekiah used this as a term of endearment and to show closeness of purpose. At 25 years old, a large number of the priests and Levites would have been older than he was.

**“burn incense.”** Referring to being allowed to enter the Holy Place of the Temple and burn incense there.

2Ch 29:16

**“that they found in the Temple of Yahweh out into the court.”** The fact that the priests brought the unclean things out of the Temple into the court lets us know that they were cleaning the inside of the Temple.

**“The Levites took it and carried it outside to the Kidron Valley.”** The Levites took the unclean things outside the Temple courts to the Kidron Valley on the east.

2Ch 29:17

**“and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule of Yahweh.”** So it took the priests and Levites eight days to cleanse the court of the Temple, and then they came to the vestibule, the outer room, the Holy Place. Then they cleansed the rest of the Temple, the Holy Place and Holy of Holies, in another eight days, so that on the sixteenth day of the first month, Nisan, the Temple was cleansed and was holy in God’s sight.

2Ch 29:18

**“the Bread of the Presence.”** The Bread of the Presence was 12 large cakes of bread that were in the Tabernacle and Temple (see commentary on Exod. 25:30).

2Ch 29:20

**“and went up to the house of Yahweh.”** The city of David and Hezekiah’s palace were south of the Temple, and the Temple was on the top of Mount Zion and higher in elevation than the palace.

2Ch 29:21

**“to offer them on the altar of Yahweh.”** Ahaz, Hezekiah’s father, had taken away the true altar of sacrifice made by Solomon and replaced it with an altar made like the pagan altar in Damascus (2 Kings 16:10-15). Hezekiah got rid of the pagan altar and reestablished true worship on “the altar of Yahweh.”

2Ch 29:23

**“and they laid their hands on them.”** The king and the people laid their hands on the sacrifices (cf. Lev. 1:3-4).

2Ch 29:24

**“were to be made for all Israel.”** This was clearly an acknowledgment of the sin of Israel. The Northern Kingdom had not been carried away by Assyria at this time since this was apparently the first year of Hezekiah’s reign (Israel was carried away a few years later, likely in the sixth year of Hezekiah’s reign). So it shows the heart of Hezekiah for all of God’s people that he would sacrifice for both Israel and Judah.

2Ch 29:28

**“worshiped.”** Or “bowed down.” The people were bowing with their faces to the ground, not standing in worship like Christians mainly do today.

[For more on bowing down, see the word study on “worship.”]

2Ch 29:29

**“kneeled and worshiped.”** The kneeling preceded bowing down to the ground. The two actions, kneeling and then bowing to the ground blended into one act of homage or worship. The common biblical way of bowing down before people or God was to fall to one’s knees and bow the upper body and face to the earth. Also, instead of “kneeled and worshiped,” the text could be translated “kneeled and bowed down,” with “kneeling” being understood as part of the process of bowing down, and “bowing down” was the act of worship. The same Hebrew verb, *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is translated as both “bow down” and “worship;” traditionally “worship” if God is involved and “bow down” if people are involved, but the verb and action are the same, the act of bowing down is the worship.

[For more on bowing down, see the word study on “worship” and commentary on 1 Chron. 29:20.]

2Ch 29:30

**“bowed down and worshiped.”** The bowing down preceded bowing down to the ground. The two actions, bowing down and then bowing to the ground blended into one act of homage or worship. The common biblical way of bowing down before people or God was to fall to one’s knees and bow the upper body and face to the earth. Also, instead of “bowed down and worshiped,” the text could be translated “kneeled and bowed down,” with “kneeling” being understood as part of the process of bowing down, and “bowing down” was the act of worship, or it could be “bowed down and prostrated themselves.” The same Hebrew verb, *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is translated as both “bow down” and “worship;” traditionally “worship” if God is involved and “bow down” if people are involved, but the verb and action are the same, the act of bowing down is the worship.

[For more on bowing down, see the word study on “worship.”]

2Ch 29:31

**“you have dedicated yourselves.”** The Hebrew is idiomatic, literally, “you have filled your hand to Yahweh,” and in this context, the idiom “filling the hand” carries the meaning of dedication or devoting oneself.

**“and as many as were of a willing heart brought burnt offerings.”** It took a willing heart to bring a burnt offering because the burnt offering was completely burnt up except for the skin of the animal, which was given to the priests (Lev. 7:8). The burnt offering was different from the other animal sacrifices such as the sin offering or fellowship offering because the person who offered those animal sacrifices got to eat some of the meat.

2Ch 29:36

**“for the situation had come about so quickly.”** The “situation” was the change from the horrible leadership and situation under the ungodly King Ahaz to the situation under godly King Hezekiah.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 30**

2Ch 30:1

**“and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh.”** These letters are above and beyond the messengers, and showed the leaders of Ephraim and Manasseh great respect and thus made a genuine and concerted effort to win them back to Yahweh and the Temple in Jerusalem.

2Ch 30:2

**“decided.”** The Hebrew is more literally “took counsel,” but that could be unclear since they actually consulted each other, they did not have outside counsel.

2Ch 30:3

**“had not sanctified themselves in sufficient numbers.”** The Hebrew is more literally that the priests had not sanctified themselves “enough,” but that can be unclear in English and be mistaken to mean that the priests were not holy enough. The “enough” refers to enough in number; there were not enough priests sanctified to take care of all the people who would show up for Passover.

2Ch 30:5

**“to keep the Passover.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “to make the Passover.” So the idea in the writer’s mind is more like the Passover and all that is involved with it: the sacrifice and meal.

**“in great numbers.”** The Hebrew text is ambiguous and the scholars are divided, as are the English translations. The text could mean that the Passover had not been being kept by the large numbers of people that should have been there, or it could mean that the Passover had been neglected (which it had been) and that it had not been celebrated every year in the way prescribed by the Law of Moses. It seems more likely, however, that the large numbers is the correct meaning of the text.

2Ch 30:8

**“but stretch out your hand.”** More literally, “give your hand” (cf. YLT “give a hand”), but in this context is seems to refer to reaching out for God (cf. NAB “stretch out your hands;” CSB “give your allegiance”).

2Ch 30:9

**“your brothers and your children will find mercy.”** Hezekiah’s messengers went to the people of Israel, whose relatives and children had been carried away by the Assyrians. The messengers told the people who had been left in the land of Israel that if they returned to Yahweh then their relatives and children would return from the Assyrian Captivity. However, the people of Israel mocked the messengers (2 Chron. 30:10).

2Ch 30:10

**“Zebulun.”** One of the most northern of the tribes of Israel, west of the Sea of Galilee and the tribe of Naphtali. The text does not explain why Dan is not mentioned, but it may be due to the extent of the Assyrian invasion.

2Ch 30:12

**“in accordance with the word of Yahweh.”** The king and officials were consulting the Word of God and following its guidance.

2Ch 30:14

**“set to work.”** The Hebrew is more literally that they “rose,” but that makes it sound like they got up in the morning, which is not what the text is referring to. The people got to work to remove the uncleanness from the holy place.

2Ch 30:15

**“Then they slaughtered.”** The connection of 2 Chronicles 30:15 with 2 Chronicles 30:14, and the fact that the priests and Levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves indicates that the “they” here referred to the people, who were zealous for Yahweh. Although “the” Passover lamb was killed in the Temple, the ordinance of the Passover lamb allowed people to slaughter their own lambs.

**“were ashamed.”** We learn from the context that they had not been diligent to sanctify themselves.

2Ch 30:17

**“to make *them* holy to Yahweh.”** That is, to make the Passover sacrifices holy (the word “Passover” is plural, and the sacrifices could be lambs or goats). The word “Passover” can refer to the sacrifice itself (cf. 1 Cor. 5:7; where Christ is called “our Passover lamb”).

2Ch 30:19

**“according to the purity required by the sanctuary.”** The text could also refer to “the purity required for the holy things.”

2Ch 30:22

**“encouragingly.”** The exact nuance of the Hebrew text is not stated, it simply reads “to the heart.” Hezekiah would have said a lot, and it would have been encouraging, comforting, consoling, and kind. All those meanings and more would have been in Hezekiah’s message to the Levites.

**“giving thanks.”** The Hebrew word contains the sense of acknowledging (in this case Yahweh; but it can refer to acknowledging other things as well), and that is the origin of some of the versions having “made confession to Yahweh” in this verse (cf. KJV), but that does not seem to be the correct translation or even fit the circumstances of the Passover Feast.

2Ch 30:27

**“the Levitical priests.”** The Masoretic Hebrew text (MT) reads, “the priests the Levites,” and this phrase occurs a number of times in the Hebrew text (cf. Deut. 17:9, 18; 18:1; 24:8; 27:9; Josh. 3:3; 8:33; 2 Chron. 23:18, etc.). The phrase “the priests the Levites” is technically correct since every priest was also a Levite. When it comes to 2 Chronicles 30:27, there are some Hebrew manuscripts, the Old Latin, the Latin Vulgate, and the Syriac that read “the priests and Levites,” and some English versions read that way, however, the Septuagint follows the Masoretic Hebrew text.

The biblical and historical evidence supports that the reading in the MT and Septuagint, “the priests, the Levites” is the original reading. It was the role of the priests to bless the people (Num. 6:23-27; Lev. 9:22; Deut. 10:8; 21:5; Joshua 8:33; 1 Chron. 23:13), and a priestly benediction is given in Numbers 6:23-27. Furthermore, in verses such as Ezekiel 43:19 and 44:15, the descendants of Zadok are called “the priests, the Levites” even though all of them were priests. Also, other verses that have the phrase “the priests, the Levites” show that the phrase refers to the priests, not the Levites (cf. Deut. 18:1; 24:8; Jer. 33:18).

Given the evidence, in contexts such as here in Chronicles the phrase “the priests, the Levites” should be understood as “the Levitical priests,” and a number of English translations and commentaries read that way (cf. CEB, GW, NAB, NASB, NJB, TNK). Raymond Dillard translates the phrase as “Levitical priests,” and writes, “the priests bless the people, presumably with the words of the Aaronic benediction (Num. 6:22-27).”[[15]](#footnote-32051) There are also a number of English versions that simply follow the literal reading of the Hebrew and retain the phrase “the priests, the Levites,” even though that can be confusing to the average English reader (cf. ASV, DBY, RV, JPS, KJV, WEB, YLT, Rotherham). The Complete Jewish Bible conflates the phrase for clarity, and reads, “Then the *cohanim* [priests], who were *L'vi'im* [Levites], stood up and blessed the people” (brackets added for clarity).

**2 Chronicles Chapter 31**

2Ch 31:1

**“Now when all this was finished.”** The thing that was finished was the celebration of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, and that the people recommitted themselves to the worship of Yahweh (2 Chron. 30).

**“standing-stones.”** Most standing-stones were set up as part of the worship of pagan gods, and that is the context here. God has no tolerance for idols. They are harmful in many different ways, and God commanded that they be destroyed.

[For more on standing-stones, see commentary on Gen. 28:18. For more on idols being harmful, see commentary on Deut. 7:5.]

**“shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. The context indicates these shrines were pagan in nature (cf. “pagan shrines” NLT ), but in many cases, the people would not have thought that way. Many people thought they were worshiping Yahweh by their objects of worship. This kind of thing goes on today. Many people think they get “spiritual help” from prayer hands, statues of Mary and various holy men and women, and other “holy” things. But while the people may think they are honoring God by their piety, God does not want that kind of worship. Sadly, many of the towns in Israel and Judah had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

2Ch 31:2

**“in the gates of the camp of Yahweh.”** In the Hebrew text the word “camp” is plural, “camps” (“the gates of the camps of Yahweh”), which is most likely a plural of emphasis, emphasizing the majestic nature of the place where God stayed. The phrase “camp of Yahweh” has a military sense to it, and implies that God and some of His “army” stays there, which would certainly be true. Angels and likely other invisible spiritual beings inhabited the Temple area, God’s “camp.”

2Ch 31:3

**“the designated feasts.”** At this time, the “designated feasts” were Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

2Ch 31:4

**“to give the *required* portion of the priests and the Levites.”** The Law of Moses directed that certain portions of the produce of the land and portions of the sacrifices and offerings go to the Levites. A more complete sentence might be, “to give the *required* portion of the priests and the Levites t*o them*, so that they could give themselves.”

2Ch 31:7

**“In the third month...the seventh month.”** The third month would be about our June, and the seventh month would be about our September, and this was the dry season so there was not a lot of need for shelter.

**“make the piles.”** The Hebrew text is more literally, “make a foundation,” but it is referring to making the “foundation” of the pile so it will pile up nicely. This is not the “foundation” of a building, like we think of a foundation.

2Ch 31:13

**“under the authority of Conaniah.”** The Hebrew text is literally, “under the hand of Conaniah,” but here “hand” is idiomatic for authority.

**“Azariah the ruler of the house of God.”** Azariah was the High Priest, the “ruler” of the Temple (2 Chron. 31:10; cf. 1 Chron. 9:11).

2Ch 31:14

**“the east gate.”** This was the east gate of the Temple, not the east gate of the city.

**“to give the contribution *reserved* for Yahweh, even the most holy offerings.”** Kore the son of Imnah was in charge of making sure that when the offerings came to the Temple that Yahweh got his share. Yahweh was to get some of the offerings, “even the most holy offerings.” They were burned on the altar as a sweet-smelling aroma to Yahweh.

2Ch 31:15

**“Eden.”** The Hebrew word “Eden” means “delight.” It is a popular name in Israel today.

**“Jeshua.”** This is the shortened form of “Joshua.” There is no “J” in Hebrew, so the name is more technically “Yeshua,” also a name for Jesus.

2Ch 31:16

**“from three years old and upward.”** The number “three” seems out of place, and some scholars suggest that it was a copyist’s mistake for 30. However, the Hebrew text does read “three,” and some scholars point out that this section of Chronicles is about those priests who can receive sustenance from the sacrifices and offerings that were brought to the Temple. They point out that a child was often weaned at three years old, and that this verse is saying that priests did not have to wait until they were actually serving in the Temple to receive sustenance from the Temple, but that from three years old and up priests were allowed to be sustained by the sacrifices, gifts, and offerings of the people.[[16]](#footnote-18493)

**2 Chronicles Chapter 32**

2Ch 32:1

**“Sennacherib king of Assyria.”** Sennacherib’s attack is recorded in 2 Kings 18; 2 Chronicles 32, and Isaiah 36.

**“and intended to break into them *and capture them*.”** In 2 Kings 18:13, Sennacherib did capture the fortified cities.

2Ch 32:2

**“his face was set to fight against Jerusalem.”** This is an idiom for Sennacherib’s intention to fight against Jerusalem.

2Ch 32:3

**“the springs.”** The springs were likely En-rogel and the Gihon.

2Ch 32:4

**“and the brook that flowed through the land.”** The “brook” that flowed would be the overflow of the Gihon Spring, which ran down the Kidron Valley. This was before Hezekiah’s Tunnel, which prevented that overflow into the countryside. In this context, the “land” was the land south and west of Jerusalem.

2Ch 32:5

**“built up all of the wall that had been broken down.”** There was apparently a part of the wall of Jerusalem that was broken down when the Syrians and Israelites attacked Jerusalem (2 Kings 16:5).

**“and raised it up to the towers.”** This could mean that Hezekiah rebuilt the walls all the way to the corner towers, or it could mean that he built the wall and put towers on it.

**“and the other wall outside.”** This is almost certainly a wall Hezekiah built to protect Jerusalem’s west side, and it is likely the wall called “the Broad Wall” in the excavation of Jerusalem’s Jewish Quarter.

**“Millo.”** The area that protects the Gihon Spring and the pools in the area.

2Ch 32:6

**“spoke encouragingly to them.”** Literally, “spoke to the heart of them.”

2Ch 32:7

**“for with us is One greater than *whoever* is with him.”** Hezekiah was confident that Yahweh was greater than any god or force that was with the Assyrians. Although some English versions read in essence, “there are more with us than with him,” that is not the best way to translate the Hebrew text. For one thing, the Assyrian army was definitely more numerous than the small army Hezekiah had with him in Jerusalem. That is why Hezekiah had to tell the people not to be afraid of the “multitude” of the Assyrians. 2 Chronicles 32:8 makes it clear that “the One” with Judah was Yahweh.

The phrase of 2 Chron. 32:8, וְעִמָּ֜נוּ יְהוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֵ֨ינוּ֙ = “Yahweh our God *is* with us” (or “Yahweh our God with us”) parallels and gives meaning to the name of the child born in Isaiah 7:14: עִמָּ֥נוּ אֵֽל “God is with us” (or “God with us”).

The human child was named “Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14) because the Judeans knew that in a transcendent way, Yahweh Elohim was with them, protecting Judah and fighting their battles. Yahweh God was with Judah in the days of Hezekiah. This doesn’t mean that Yahweh Elohim was literally walking around as a human being during Hezekiah’s and Isaiah’s day.

2Ch 32:8

**“but with us is Yahweh our God.”** This obviously does not mean that Yahweh was somehow among the Judeans as a person, but He was with them to help them (see commentary on 2 Chron. 32:7).

**“relied upon.”** Literally, “rested” or “leaned” upon. The people leaned on the words of Hezekiah for support and comfort as one might lean on a staff to gain support and/or rest.

2Ch 32:10

**“On what are you trusting while you sit under siege in Jerusalem?”** Sennacherib writes as if the siege is actually going on. It was not, but it might as well have been because the Judeans had shut themselves up in Jerusalem.

2Ch 32:11

**“by saying.”** 2 Kings 18:22; 2 Chronicles 32:11-12, and Isaiah 36:7 are very similar.

2Ch 32:12

**“Hasn’t this same Hezekiah.”** 2 Kings 18:22; 2 Chronicles 32:12, and Isaiah 36:7 are very similar.

**“shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. The context indicates these shrines were pagan in nature (cf. NLT, “pagan shrines”). Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

**“worship.”** The Hebrew word translated “worship,” *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is the same Hebrew word as “bow down.”

[For more on bowing down, see the word study on “worship.”]

2Ch 32:13

“able, yes, able.” The Hebrew text has the figure polyptoton (see commentary on Gen. 2:16).

2Ch 32:14

**“devoted to destruction.”** That is, destroyed them.

[For more on things “devoted” to Yahweh and devoted to destruction, see commentary on Josh. 6:17.]

**“your god.”** The Assyrians thought of Yahweh as just another god.

2Ch 32:17

**“gods of the nations...god of Hezekiah.”** Both occurrences of “god” are Elohim, but the first is a plural reference and the second is a singular reference.

**“of the *other* lands.**” The “lands” in this context are the lands that the Assyrians have already conquered.

**“the god of Hezekiah.”** The Assyrians thought of Yahweh as just another god.

2Ch 32:21

**“who wiped out all the mighty men of valor.”** The angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (2 Kings 19:35). The angel “wiped out” the enemy. In Exodus 23:23, God said his angel would “wipe out” the enemies in Canaan.

**“shame of face.”** The idiom means “humiliated.”

**“some of his own sons struck him down there.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “those who came from his own bowels [or innards]. 2 Kings 19:37 gives the names of the sons who killed Sennacherib. Sennacherib went back to Nineveh and decorated his throne room with the bas-relief of the siege of Lachish.

2Ch 32:22

**“and from the hand of all *his enemies*.”** The Hebrew text just ends with “all,” and it may refer to all enemies or perhaps “all” other Assyrians, such as the commanders.

**“he gave them rest on every side.”** This reading is from the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and fits the context. The Masoretic Hebrew text reads, “guided them from every side,” which does not make as much sense in the context and which can read like the Septuagint with only a small emendation.

2Ch 32:24

**“sick to *the point of* death.”** The record of Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery is in 2 Kings 20:1-11; 2 Chronicles 32:24-26; and Isaiah 38:1-22.

**“and Yahweh spoke to him.”** Yahweh spoke to Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah (2 Kings 20:1-11).

2Ch 32:25

**“the benefit he received.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “the benefit upon him,” meaning the benefit done to him or the benefit he received.

**“there was wrath *hanging* over him.”** This wrath never materialized because Hezekiah humbled himself (2 Chron. 32:26). For the translation, see 2 Chron. 28:11.

2Ch 32:26

**“for being proud of heart.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “for the pride of his heart,” but that translation can be confusing because it can seem like the pride of his heart caused him to humble himself.

2Ch 32:28

**“and storehouses.”** There are archaeological remains of storehouses in cities such as Beersheba.

**“and sheepfolds for the flocks.”** The Hebrew is difficult; the word is more like “pens” or “little pens.” In biblical times, “sheepfolds” were used for more than sheep, especially sheep and goats. So there were bigger stalls for the larger animals and smaller pens for the smaller animals.

2Ch 32:30

**“the waters of Gihon and brought them straight down to the west side of the city of David.”** This is almost certainly a reference to Hezekiah’s tunnel. The Gihon Spring is on the east side of Jerusalem, so Hezekiah brought its waters to the west side of the city via Hezekiah’s tunnel.

2Ch 32:32

**“and his faithful acts.”** That is, Hezekiah’s acts that sprang from his trust in God.

2Ch 32:33

**“they buried him in the ascent *to* the tombs of the sons of David.”** From the southern tip of the city of David up the ridge as if walking up to the Temple the climb is steep, and it seems that Hezekiah was buried on that steep ascent.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 33**

2Ch 33:3

**“*local* shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. The context indicates these shrines were pagan in nature (cf. NLT, “pagan shrines”). Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

**“worshiped.”** The Hebrew word translated “worshiped,” *shachah* (#07812 שָׁחָה), is the same Hebrew word as “bow down.”

[For more on bowing down, see the word study on “worship.”]

2Ch 33:6

**“the Valley of the Son of Hinnom.”** The Hebrew word for “valley” is *ge*, and the Hebrew Valley of Hinnom became the Greek “Gehenna.” It was a place where the garbage was thrown. It had become considered unclean due to all the human sacrifice done there.

**“familiar spirits.”** See commentary on Deuteronomy 18:11.

**“making him angry.”** The NET text note on Deuteronomy 4:25 gets the sense of the text correctly when it says, “The infinitive construct [in the Hebrew text] is understood here as indicating the result, not the intention of their actions.” Although many English versions use the word “provoke,” the Israelites did not worship idols with the intention of provoking God. But the result of their idolatry was that God was angered. In everyday English, “provoke” means to do something to intentionally upset someone, and that is not what was happening with Israel’s idolatry.

2Ch 33:9

**“the nations that Yahweh destroyed before the children of Israel.”** This refers to the Canaanite nations that Israel destroyed when they entered the Promised Land and conquered and destroyed the Canaanite nations who were living there. Now Israel is doing worse things than the Canaanites.

2Ch 33:10

**“Yahweh spoke to Manasseh and to his people.”** 2 Kings 21:10 adds that Yahweh spoke through His prophets.

2Ch 33:11

**“who captured Manasseh with hooks.”** This is likely literal. The Assyrians were very cruel, and there are Assyrian depictions of captors being led by cords attached to hooks in the mouth, lips, tongue, or cheek. A hook in the mouth would force the captive to be compliant very quickly.

2Ch 33:12

**“he begged Yahweh his God.”** This is idiomatic. The literal is more like he “sweetened the face of Yahweh” (cf. Ps. 119:58).

2Ch 33:13

**“Then Manasseh knew that Yahweh was God.”** This is quite similar to Nebuchadnezzar, who had to go through a terrible ordeal before he recognized that Yahweh was God.

2Ch 33:14

**“on the west side of Gihon.”** This wall would have only been part way down the east slope of the Temple Mount and city of David.

2Ch 33:17

**“*local* shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. The context indicates these shrines were pagan in nature (cf. NLT, “pagan shrines”). Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

**“but only to Yahweh their God.”** It is interesting that people can disobey God but justify their actions as somehow being to God.

2Ch 33:19

**“the carved images.”** God had commanded that idols and images of gods be destroyed (see commentary on Deut. 7:5).

2Ch 33:22

**“He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh, as Manasseh his father had done.”** The same as 2 Kings 21:20.

**“And Amon sacrificed to all the carved images that Manasseh his father had made.”** Did Amon get these images from outside the city where Manasseh had thrown them (2 Chron. 33:15, 19)?

2Ch 33:23

**“wrongdoing.”** The Hebrew is “guilt,” which in this case is put by metonymy for the wrongdoing or sin that produced the guilt.

[See figure of speech “metonymy.”]

2Ch 33:24

**“His servants conspired against him and put him to death.”** The Bible does not give us the “who” or the “why” of this assassination (see commentary on 2 Kings 21:23).

2Ch 33:25

**“struck down.”** This record in Chronicles has the verb in the plural, whereas the account in Kings has the verb in the singular. The difference is due to the word “people,” which can be taken as a singular or plural.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 34**

2Ch 34:3

**“shrines.”** The Hebrew word “shrines” is *bamot*, which referred to a place that was leveled and built up and on which were placed various idols and objects of worship. The context indicates these shrines were pagan in nature (cf. NLT, “pagan shrines”). Many of the towns had such shrines (see commentary on Num. 33:52).

2Ch 34:4

**“incense altars.”** The Hebrew for this word is uncertain, and different things have been suggested.

2Ch 34:6

**“in their ruins all around.”** This is the Qere reading (a marginal reading) of the Hebrew text. The Assyrians had left the Northern Kingdom of Israel in ruins.

2Ch 34:7

**“beat the Asherah poles and the carved images into powder.”** Josiah destroyed the idols, as the Law of Moses commanded (see commentary on Deut. 7:5). The fact that these were beaten to powder indicated they were stone or perhaps clay.

2Ch 34:8

**“the house *of God*.”** The Hebrew simply says, “the house,” a reference to the house of God, the Temple.

**“governor.”** This can be “leader,” “ruler,” or “governor.”

**“the recorder.”** This would be a person charged with writing and keeping records of what went on in the city.

2Ch 34:9

**“the guards of the threshold.”** These are also mentioned in 2 Kings 22:4. More than just “doorkeepers,” these men guarded the Temple entrances and protected it and its contents.

2Ch 34:10

**“restore.”** The Hebrew word is literally “strengthen.”

2Ch 34:14

**“the Book of the Law.”** This was actually a scroll. One scroll could not hold the entire Torah, so this is either a scroll with part of the Torah on it, or a collection of scrolls with all the Torah on it.

**“the Law of Yahweh given by the hand of Moses.”** The Hebrew is “the *torah* of Yahweh,” where “*torah*” is much more than “law.” The *torah* involves instruction in many different ways (see commentary on Prov. 1:8). The phrase “given by the hand of Moses” almost certainly means that this was a copy of what had been written by Moses. However, it is possible that Moses actually wrote some of what they found.

2Ch 34:15

**“told.”** The Hebrew is literally, “answered.”

2Ch 34:16

**“reported.”** The Hebrew is idiomatic, more literally, “returned a word to the king.”

2Ch 34:22

**“the second *district*.”** See commentary on 2 Kings 22:14.

2Ch 34:24

**“all the curses that are written in the scroll.”** There are curses in Deuteronomy 27:14-26, 28:15-68.

2Ch 34:25

**“the works of their hands*.*”** Although the people sinned in many ways by what they did and how they behaved, “the works of their hands,” almost certainly refers to idols.

2Ch 34:26

**“the words that you have heard.”** That is, the words of the scroll that the king heard when they were read to him.

2Ch 34:27

**“you humbled yourself.”** Being “humble” is a key concept in Chronicles.

2Ch 34:29

**“Then the king sent and gathered together.”** This verse is very similar to 2 Kings 23:1.

2Ch 34:30

**“and the Levites.”** The book of Kings has “prophets” instead of Levites. However, from the text we learn that many Levites were prophets.

2Ch 34:31

**“to carry out.”** In 2 Kings 23:3, the word is “confirm.”

**2 Chronicles Chapter 35**

2Ch 35:3

**“Put the holy ark in the house that Solomon the son of David king of Israel built.”** So the ark of the covenant had been moved from the Temple for some reason, but that reason is unknown. It may be an idolatrous king had moved it from the Temple, or it may have been taken out to war but then not returned.

**“For you, there is no longer a burden on the shoulders.”** The exact meaning of this phrase is unclear. The Levites carried the ark of the covenant around from place to place, and Josiah may be saying they will not need to carry it anymore. However, it may be a more general reference to carrying all kinds of things that may not now be necessary, which opens the door for them to serve God’s people more. Thus the concluding phrase, “Now serve Yahweh your God and his people Israel.”

2Ch 35:5

**“the holy place.”** In this context, “the holy place” refers to the entire Temple complex, not just the Temple building proper.

**“your relatives the common people.”** This is more literally, “your brothers, the sons of the people,” but in this case, it refers to fellow Israelites who were the common people.

**“and *let there be* Levites for each group from a father’s house.”** The text is not particularly clear, but what it seems to be saying is that there are to be divisions of the Levites and each family group of the common people was to be associated with a given division of the Levites.

2Ch 35:6

**“make yourselves holy.”** The people were to do what it took to make themselves holy in the sight of God (cf. Lev. 11:44).

[For more on “make yourselves holy,” see commentary on Josh. 3:5.]

2Ch 35:7

**“lambs and young goats.”** Both lambs and goats were acceptable Passover sacrifices (cf. Exod. 12:5).

**“the Passover offerings.”** The Hebrew text simply has “the Passovers,” where “Passover” means the Passover sacrifice.

2Ch 35:8

**“2,600 *small livestock*.”** The Hebrew text is just “2,600 and 300 cattle,” but the 2,600 obviously refers to small livestock that would be sheep and goats, both of which were acceptable Passover sacrifices (Exod. 12:5).

**“Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, the rulers of the house of God.”** These men seem to be the “officials” in the first part of the verse. They are priests in high positions, and they gave to the other priests, and in the next verse (2 Chron. 35:9), the chiefs of the Levites gave to the rest of the Levites.

**“the Passover offerings.”** The Hebrew text simply has “the Passovers,” where “Passover” means the Passover sacrifice.

2Ch 35:9

**“*small livestock*.”** The small livestock would be sheep and goats, both of which were acceptable Passover sacrifices (Exod. 12:5).

**“and 500 cattle.”** The cattle could not be for the Passover offerings but would have been for other kinds of offerings. The cattle might be used for different offerings around the Passover time, but not for the sacrifices used at the Passover meal.

2Ch 35:11

**“*that they received* from them.”** The priests seem to have gotten the blood from the Levites who slaughtered the animals (cf. 2 Chron. 35:6).

2Ch 35:12

**“They set apart the burnt offerings.”** The small livestock were for the Passover offerings, and then the cattle mentioned in the verses above would be for the burnt offerings, which were completely burned up except for the skins, which were given to the priests.

2Ch 35:13

**“they boiled the holy offerings.”** There must have been other offerings that were boiled and given to the people besides the Passover offerings themselves and the animals sacrificed as burnt offerings.

2Ch 35:15

**“the sons of Asaph.”** The phrase means the descendants of Asaph. Asaph himself lived in the time of David and was long dead.

2Ch 35:20

**“Neco king of Egypt.”** In 2 Kings 23:29, the man is Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt.

2Ch 35:21

**“against the house with which I have war.”** Pharaoh Neco left Egypt to go to the aid of Assyria in their battle against Babylon. It seems that Egypt, which had not been at war with Assyria, feared that Babylon’s successful attacks on Assyria would continue and would open the door for Babylon to gain control of Palestine and then attack Egypt. Assyria had attacked and destroyed Israel and had attacked and destroyed many cities in Judah when Hezekiah was king, and so Josiah would not have wanted to see Assyria helped. There is no mention of him asking God if he should attack Egypt, to him it seemed like the logical thing to do. However, God was with Babylon, and Neco’s warning that God would be with him and not Josiah if Josiah attacked him went unheeded (2 Chron. 35:21). Actually, Babylon defeated both Assyria and Egypt at Carchemish, which opened the door for the Babylonian conquest of Israel and Judah.

2Ch 35:22

**“would not turn his face from him.”** This is an idiom that means that King Josiah would not be dissuaded from fighting against Neco of Egypt.

**“but disguised himself.”** In 1 Kings 22:30, king Ahab disguised himself and died, just like Josiah did here. And both were killed with arrows.

2Ch 35:23

**“seriously wounded.”** The Hebrew is more literally “very sick,” but the “sickness” can be caused by many things, in this case, being wounded.

2Ch 35:24

**“and brought him to Jerusalem.”** Josiah was dead when he arrived in Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:30).

2Ch 35:25

**“the male and female singers.”** The Hebrew word for “singers” can also refer to poets. It is likely that singers and poets spoke of Josiah.

**“the Laments.”** The “Laments” is not the book of Lamentations, but a lost collection of Laments.

**2 Chronicles Chapter 36**

2Ch 36:1

**“took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and made him king.”** Jehoahaz becomes king here and in 2 Kings 23:30. There is not a lot about Jehoahaz in the Bible. He is only mentioned in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, unlike the other last kings of Judah, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah and Coniah), and Zedekiah, who are not only written about in Kings and Chronicles, but are also written about in the prophets such as Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

2Ch 36:4

**“the brother of Jehoahaz.”** The text is literally, “his brother,” but a straightforward reading in English would make Eliakim the brother of Pharaoh Neco, which is not the case.

2Ch 36:6

**“and bound him in bronze chains to carry him to Babylon.”** Chronicles omits that Jehoiakim served Nebuchadnezzar for three years before he rebelled (2 Kings 24:1-6). Jehoiakim died in chains and never made it to Babylon. His dead body was ingloriously dumped outside the city of Jerusalem where it was left to rot (see commentary on 2 Kings 24:6).

2Ch 36:7

**“palace.”** The Hebrew word can also mean “temple,” but the articles seem to have been kept in the palace at Babylon (Dan. 5:2-3). Also, it is unlikely that Nebuchadnezzar had a temple referred to as “his temple” in Babylon.

2Ch 36:8

**“and what was found against him.”** The Hebrew is more literally, “that which was found upon him,” and the Jewish commentator Rashi surmises that Jehoiakim had tattoos on him.[[17]](#footnote-20051) But Jehoiakim did have a lot of sin against him, such as cutting up the scroll of the prophet Jeremiah.

2Ch 36:9

**“18.”** The Masoretic Hebrew text, which is normally used for the translation of the Old Testament, reads “eight,” but in this instance, as in quite a few in the Old Testament, there was an obvious copyist’s error. The original reading of “18” is preserved in 2 Kings 24:8, as well as in some of the other Hebrew manuscripts, and also in the Septuagint version. Thus, some modern translations read “18” as the REV does (BBE, HCSB, DBY ESV, NAB, NET, NIV, NLT). There was no apparent good reason to preserve the reading in the Masoretic text when there was such weighty evidence that it was a scribal error and it caused a contradiction between the books of Kings and Chronicles. For another example of a scribal error involving numbers, see 1 Samuel 6:19, where the Masoretic text reads 50,070 people, when the actual reading was no doubt just 70 (see commentary on 1 Sam. 6:19).

2Ch 36:10

**“At the beginning of the year.”** The literal Hebrew is “at the return of the year,” but it refers to the start of the year. The year started in Nisan, which was a spring month, so some versions read, “In the springtime.”

**“*father’s* brother.”** Zedekiah was a son of Josiah and thus an uncle of Jehoiachin. The Hebrew word is just “brother,” and that has been handled different ways in the English translations. Some just leave it as “brother” in the text even though that is confusing and contradicts 2 Kings 24:17. Some translator’s recognize that in the Hebrew jargon, “brother” can mean “relative,” so they translate it “relative,” which is accurate but vague. The REV chose to retain the word “brother,” but put the word “father’s” in italics in front of brother. Zedekiah was Jehoiachin’s uncle, his “father’s brother.”

2Ch 36:11

**“Zedekiah.”** There is much more about Zedekiah in 2 Kings and especially in Jeremiah. Zedekiah was eventually carried to Babylon and died in prison there (Jer. 52:11).

2Ch 36:13

**“He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar.”** For his rebellion, Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, where he died in prison (2 Kings 25:5-7; Jer. 52:10-11).

2Ch 36:14

**“defiled.”** That is, they made it ceremonially unclean.

2Ch 36:15

**“messengers.”** The Hebrew word can refer to angels or human messengers, and here it refers to human messengers, the prophets.

**“rising up early and sending them.”** This is an idiom meaning to send again and again. The idea is that God rose up and sent His prophets early and often; He sent them over and over as the day progressed. The REV has kept the idiom but inserted the meaning of the idiom by adding “again and again” in italics.

[For more on this idiom and where it occurs, see commentary on Jer. 26:5.]

2Ch 36:17

**“he brought against them the king of the Chaldeans.”** The record of the siege of Jerusalem and its conquest is in 2 Kings 25:1-4 and Jeremiah 52:4-5. The siege of Jerusalem took from the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:1; Jer. 52:4) to the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:2-3; Jer. 52:6-7). So the siege of Jerusalem took about 18 months.

2Ch 36:19

**“They burned the house of God.”** The burning of the Temple in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar’s army is mentioned in 2 Kings 25:9; 2 Chron. 36:19, and Jeremiah 52:13. The Temple was so central to Judaism that one would think God would have given more detail about its destruction, but instead, He just states it quickly in a matter-of-fact way.

2Ch 36:20

**“to him and his sons.”** That is, to Nebuchadnezzar and his descendants, in this case, the kings who ruled Babylon after him, not all of whom were related to him.

**“until the reign of the kingdom of Persia.”** The Persians conquered Babylon in 539 BC (cf. Dan. 5:30-31). Cyrus let the Jews return from Babylon (Ezra 1:1-3).

2Ch 36:21

**“to fulfill the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah.”** Jeremiah the prophet foretold that the Babylonian Captivity would last 70 years and after that, they would return to the land of Judah (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10).

**“made up for.”** The Hebrew word translated in the REV as “made up for” can also mean more like “enjoyed,” and thus could be translated “until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths,” but here “made up for,” in the sense of “paid back,” catches the meaning well. God expected the Jews to give the land rest on the Sabbath years, and the fact that they did not was taken in the sense that the Jews then “owed” God that time for His land to rest, and that is the point being made here in 2 Chronicles 36:21. See commentary on Leviticus 26:34.

2Ch 36:23

**“Yahweh his God is with him, so let him go up.”** Many English translations translate the verse as if it is a jussive: “May his God be with him,” but there is no jussive in the Hebrew text. This seems to be a statement about Cyrus’ confidence. Yahweh had raised him up and now stirred him up, so with confidence he can say to the Jews who would be available to go back to Judah, “Yahweh his God is with him.”

1. Cp. Ralph W. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, Hermeneia. [↑](#footnote-ref-27499)
2. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 8:179. [↑](#footnote-ref-13729)
3. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.8.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-16301)
4. E. Fox, *The Schocken* Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-19985)
5. Edwin Rice, *Orientalisms in Bible Lands*, section 441. [↑](#footnote-ref-21431)
6. Rice, *Orientalisms*, section 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-16226)
7. E. J. Hardy, *The Unvarying East*, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-27835)
8. James Freeman, *Hand-book of Bible Manners and Customs*, section 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-14967)
9. Richard Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Meccah*, 2:112. [↑](#footnote-ref-31452)
10. Bishop K. C. Pillai, *Light Through An Eastern Window*, 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-24869)
11. BDB, *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. [↑](#footnote-ref-31104)
12. Gabriel Barkay, “Mounds of Mystery: Where the Kings of Judah were Lamented,” *Biblical Archaeological Review* 29, no. 3 (May/June 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-31970)
13. Ralph Klein, *2 Chronicles*, Hermeneia, 359. [↑](#footnote-ref-11440)
14. See Ralph Klein, *2 Chronicles*, Hermeneia, 367, 371. [↑](#footnote-ref-22241)
15. Raymond Dillard, *2 Chronicles* [WBC]. [↑](#footnote-ref-32051)
16. Cp. Sara Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary* [OTL]. [↑](#footnote-ref-18493)
17. *The Complete Jewish Bible*, https://www.chabad.org/library/bible\_cdo/aid/16585/showrashi/true, accessed October 30, 2024. [↑](#footnote-ref-20051)