EDIFIED EDITION

2 Chronicles

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

36	822	Old	14
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Edified Edition (EDE): a modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, in everyday British English. www.edifiededition.com

Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

2 Chronicles 1 tells how Solomon son of David establishes himself over his kingdom, for the LORD his God is with him and makes him exceedingly great. With the whole assembly he goes to the high place at Gibeon, where the tent of meeting and the bronze altar made by Bezalel stand, and offers a thousand burnt offerings. That night God appears to him and invites him to ask for whatever he wishes. Solomon asks for wisdom and knowledge to lead this great people, and God grants it, together with riches, wealth and honour such as no king before or after him will have. Solomon gathers chariots and horsemen, makes silver and gold as common as stones in Jerusalem, and trades in horses and chariots from Egypt and Kue.

1 Solomon son of David established himself firmly
over his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with
him and made him exceedingly great.

2 Solomon spoke to all Israel: to the commanders
of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges and to
all the leaders in Israel, the heads of families.

3 Then Solomon and the whole assembly went to
the high place at Gibeon, for God's tent of
meeting, which Moses the servant of the LORD
had made in the wilderness, was there.

4 But David had brought up the ark of God from
Kiriath-jearim to the place he had prepared for it,
for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.

5 The bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri, son of
Hur, had made[1] was there before the tabernacle of
the LORD, and Solomon and the assembly sought
Him there.

6 Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the
LORD at the tent of meeting and offered a
thousand burnt offerings on it.

7 During that night God appeared to Solomon and
told him, "Ask whatever you wish Me to give
you."[2]

8 Solomon answered God, "You have shown great
loyal kindness to my father David, and You have
made me king in his place.

9 Now, LORD God, let Your promise to my father
David be confirmed, for You have made me king
over a people as numerous as the dust of the
earth.

10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge, so that I
may go out and come in before this people. For
who is able to govern this great people of Yours?"

11 God answered Solomon, "This is what was in
your heart: you did not ask for wealth, riches or
honour, or for the death of your enemies, or even
for long life. Instead you asked for wisdom and
knowledge to govern My people, over whom I
have made you king.

12 wisdom and knowledge are granted to you. I will
also give you riches, wealth and honour, such as
no king before you has had and none after you will
have."

13 Then Solomon left the high place at Gibeon,
where the tent of meeting stood, and returned to
Jerusalem, and he ruled over Israel.

14 Solomon accumulated chariots and horsemen.
He had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve
thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the
chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.[3]

15 The king made silver and gold as common in
Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as the
sycamore-fig trees of the lowlands.

16 Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and
from Kue; the royal traders bought them from Kue
at the going price.

17 A chariot could be imported from Egypt for six
hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a
hundred and fifty. In the same way they were
exported through the royal traders to all the kings
of the Hittites and of Aram.

1 See Exodus 31:1–11 and 38:1–2.

2 Verses 7–13 follow 1 Kings 3:5–15, more briefly; the wording is kept close to our 1 Kings.

3 Verses 14–17 follow 1 Kings 10:26–29 and are repeated in 9:25–28.

Chapter 2

2 Chronicles 2 tells how Solomon decides to build a house for the name of the LORD and a palace for himself, and conscripts labourers and foremen. He writes to Huram king of Tyre, who had supplied David with cedar, explaining that the house will be great because the LORD is greater than all gods, though even the highest heavens cannot contain Him. He asks Huram for a skilled craftsman in metals, fabrics and engraving, and for cedar, juniper and algum timber from Lebanon, offering wheat, barley, wine and oil for the woodcutters. Huram replies blessing the LORD for giving David a wise son, sends Huram-abi, the son of a Danite woman and a Tyrian father, skilled in every craft, and agrees to float the timber on rafts to Joppa. Solomon counts the foreigners living in Israel, a hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred, and sets them to work as carriers, stonecutters and overseers.

1 Solomon gave orders to build a house for the
name of the LORD and a royal palace for himself.[1]

2 He assigned seventy thousand men as carriers
and eighty thousand as stonecutters in the hills,
with three thousand six hundred overseers over
them.

3 Solomon sent this message to Huram[2] king of
Tyre: “As you did for my father David, sending him
cedar to build a house to live in, so do for me.

4 I am about to build a house for the name of the
LORD my God, to dedicate it to Him for burning
fragrant incense before Him, for the regular
setting out of the bread, and for burnt offerings
morning and evening, on Sabbaths, New Moons
and the appointed feasts of the LORD our God, as
Israel is commanded for ever.

5 The house I am going to build must be great,
because our God is greater than every other god.

6 But who is able to build Him a house, since the
heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot hold
Him? Who am I, then, to build Him a house,
except as a place to burn incense before Him?

7 So now send me a man skilled in working with
gold, silver, bronze and iron, with purple, crimson
and blue yarn, and experienced in engraving, to
work with the craftsmen I have in Judah and
Jerusalem, whom my father David provided.

8 Send me also cedar, juniper and algum[3] logs from
Lebanon, for I know that your servants are skilled
at felling the timber of Lebanon. My servants will
work with your servants

9 to prepare timber for me in abundance, for the
house I am building will be great and wonderful.

10 I will give your servants, the woodcutters who
fell the timber, twenty thousand cors of crushed
wheat, twenty thousand cors of barley, twenty
thousand baths of wine and twenty thousand
baths of oil.”[4]

11 Huram king of Tyre replied in a letter sent to
Solomon: “Because the LORD loves His people, He
has made you king over them.”

12 Huram also said: “Blessed be the LORD, the God
of Israel, who made heaven and earth! He has
given King David a wise son, endowed with
discretion and understanding, who will build a
house for the LORD and a royal palace for himself.

13 Now I am sending you a skilled man, endowed
with understanding, Huram-abi,[5]

14 the son of a woman of the tribe of Dan,[6] whose
father was a man of Tyre. He is skilled in working
with gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and
wood, and with purple, blue and crimson yarn and
fine linen. He can do every kind of engraving and
carry out any design given to him, working with
your craftsmen and with those of my lord David
your father.

15 Now let my lord send his servants the wheat and
barley, the oil and wine he has promised,

16 and we will cut all the timber you need from
Lebanon and bring it to you as rafts by sea to
Joppa. You can then take it up to Jerusalem.”

17 Solomon took a census of all the foreigners
living in the land of Israel, following the census
his father David had taken, and they numbered a
hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred.

18 He assigned seventy thousand of them as
carriers, eighty thousand as stonecutters in the
hills, and three thousand six hundred as overseers
to keep the people working.

1 This verse is 1:18 in the Hebrew text, and 2:2–18 in English are 2:1–17 in Hebrew.

2 Chronicles' form of the name Hiram (1 Kings 5:1).

3 Called almug in 1 Kings 10:11; perhaps red sandalwood, though it is not native to Lebanon.

4 About 4,400 kilolitres of wheat and of barley, and 440 kilolitres of wine and of oil. Compare 1 Kings 5:11.

5 Hebrew 'Huram my father', probably a title of honour, 'master'. He is the craftsman Hiram of 1 Kings 7:13–14.

6 1 Kings 7:14 says of Naphtali; his mother may have been of Danite descent living in Naphtali.

Chapter 3

2 Chronicles 3 tells how Solomon begins to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared to David, at the threshing floor of Ornan, in the second month of his fourth year. The house is sixty cubits long and twenty wide by the old standard, with a porch in front overlaid inside with pure gold. The main hall is panelled with juniper and overlaid with fine gold decorated with palm trees and chains, and adorned with precious stones; beams, thresholds, walls and doors are overlaid with gold, with cherubim carved on the walls. The Most Holy Place, twenty cubits square, is overlaid with six hundred talents of fine gold, and in it stand two great cherubim whose outspread wings reach from wall to wall. A curtain of blue, purple, crimson and fine linen is worked with cherubim, and before the house stand two pillars with capitals, chains and pomegranates, named Jachin and Boaz.

1 Then Solomon began to build the house of the
LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah,[1] where
the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the
place David had prepared on the threshing floor of
Ornan the Jebusite.

2 Building began in the fourth year of his reign, on
the second day of the second month.[2]

3 These are the foundations Solomon laid for
building the house of God: the length was sixty
cubits by the old standard,[3] and the width twenty
cubits.

4 The porch in front of the house was twenty cubits
long, matching the width of the house, and a
hundred and twenty cubits[4] high. He overlaid the
inside with pure gold.

5 He panelled the main hall with juniper wood and
overlaid it with fine gold, and decorated it with
palm trees and chains.

6 To beautify the house he set precious stones in it,
and the gold he used came from Parvaim.[5]

7 He overlaid the house with gold, its beams,
thresholds, walls and doors, and he carved
cherubim on the walls.

8 He made the Most Holy Place. Its length,
matching the width of the house, was twenty
cubits, and its width twenty cubits. He overlaid it
with six hundred talents[6] of fine gold.

9 The gold nails weighed fifty shekels.[7] He also
overlaid the upper rooms with gold.

10 Inside the Most Holy Place he had two cherubim
carved and covered with gold.

11 The total span of the cherubim's wings was
twenty cubits. One wing of the first cherub, five
cubits long, touched the wall of the house, and its
other wing, also five cubits, touched the wing of
the other cherub.

12 Likewise one wing of the second cherub, five
cubits long, touched the other wall of the house,
and its other wing, also five cubits, joined the
wing of the first cherub.

13 The wings of these cherubim extended twenty
cubits. They stood on their feet, facing the main
hall.

14 He made the curtain of blue, purple and crimson
yarn and fine linen, and worked cherubim into it.

15 In front of the house he made two pillars, thirty-
five cubits[8] high, each with a capital of five cubits
on top.

16 He made chains like a necklace[9] for the tops of
the pillars, and a hundred pomegranates which he
attached to the chains.

17 He set up the pillars in front of the temple, one
on the south and one on the north. He named the
one on the south Jachin and the one on the north
Boaz.[10]

1 Traditionally the mountain where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:2).
2 ‘On the second day’ is lacking in some manuscripts. Compare 1 Kings 6:1.
3 The older, longer cubit, about 52 centimetres (20½ inches), rather than the common cubit of about 45 centimetres.
4 So the Hebrew; some manuscripts of the Greek and Syriac have ‘twenty cubits’, which suits the size of the house.
5 An unknown place, perhaps in Arabia.
6 About 20 tonnes.
7 About 575 grams (1¼ pounds).
8 1 Kings 7:15 and 2 Kings 25:17 give each pillar as eighteen cubits; perhaps the two together.
9 Hebrew ‘in the inner sanctuary’, probably a copying error for a word meaning ‘like a necklace’.
10 See the note at 1 Kings 7:21.

Chapter 4

2 Chronicles 4 tells how Solomon makes a bronze altar twenty cubits square and ten high, and the great cast Sea resting on twelve oxen, holding three thousand baths, in which the priests wash. He makes ten basins for washing the burnt offerings, ten gold lampstands and ten tables, a hundred gold bowls, the court of the priests and the great court with bronze-covered doors. Huram completes the work for the house of God: the two pillars with their capitals, networks and four hundred pomegranates, the stands and basins, the Sea and its oxen, and the pots, shovels and forks, all of burnished bronze cast in the Jordan plain, too much to weigh. Solomon also makes all the furnishings of gold: the golden altar, the tables for the bread of the Presence, the lampstands, the flowers, lamps and tongs, and the gold doors of the Most Holy Place and the main hall.

1 He made a bronze altar twenty cubits long,
twenty cubits wide and ten cubits high.[1]

2 Then he made the Sea of cast metal, circular in
shape, ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits
high. A line of thirty cubits would measure round
it.

3 Under its rim, all the way round, were figures of
oxen,[2] ten to a cubit, encircling the Sea. The oxen
were in two rows, cast in one piece with it.

4 It stood on twelve oxen, three facing north, three
facing west, three facing south and three facing
east. The Sea rested on top of them, and their
hindquarters were all towards the centre.

5 It was a handbreadth thick, and its rim was made
like the rim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It held
three thousand baths.[3]

6 He also made ten basins for washing, and placed
five on the south side and five on the north. In
them they rinsed what was used for the burnt
offering, but the Sea was for the priests to wash
in.

7 He made ten gold lampstands as prescribed, and
placed them in the main hall, five on the south and
five on the north.

8 He made ten tables and placed them in the main
hall, five on the south and five on the north. He
also made a hundred gold sprinkling bowls.

9 He made the court of the priests and the great
court with its doors, and overlaid the doors with
bronze.

10 He placed the Sea on the south side, at the
south-east corner of the house.

11 Huram also made the pots, the shovels and the
sprinkling bowls. So Huram finished the work he
had undertaken for King Solomon on the house of
God:

12 the two pillars; the bowl-shaped capitals on top
of the pillars; the two networks covering the two
bowls of the capitals on top of the pillars;

13 the four hundred pomegranates arranged in a
double row on each network, to cover the bowl-
shaped capitals at the tops of the pillars;

14 the stands, and the basins on the stands;

15 the one Sea, and the twelve oxen under it;

16 and the pots, the shovels, the forks and all the
related articles. All these that Huram-abi made for
King Solomon for the house of the LORD were of
polished bronze.

17 The king had them cast in clay moulds in the
plain of the Jordan, between Succoth and
Zeredah.[4]

18 Solomon made all these articles in such great
quantities that the weight of the bronze could not
be determined.

19 Solomon also made all the furnishings that were
in the house of God: the golden altar; the tables on
which was the bread of the Presence;

20 the lampstands of pure gold with their lamps, to burn in front of the inner sanctuary as prescribed;

21 the flowers, the lamps and the tongs, of gold, of the purest gold;

22 the snuffers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and firepans, of pure gold; and the entrance to the house, its inner doors to the Most Holy Place and the doors of the main hall of the house, of gold.

1 About 9 metres square and 4.5 metres high. Verses 2–22 follow 1 Kings 7:23–50.

2 1 Kings 7:24 has ‘gourds’; the two Hebrew words look alike.

3 About 66 kilolitres. 1 Kings 7:26 has ‘two thousand baths’.

4 Called Zarethan in 1 Kings 7:46.

Chapter 5

2 Chronicles 5 tells how, when the work on the LORD’s house is finished, Solomon brings in the things David had dedicated and assembles the elders of Israel at the festival in the seventh month. The Levites carry the ark, and the priests bring it into the Most Holy Place beneath the wings of the cherubim; it holds only the two tablets Moses put there at Horeb. All the priests have consecrated themselves, and the Levitical singers Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, robed in fine linen, stand with cymbals, harps and lyres, with a hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets. As they join in one voice to praise the LORD, “For He is good; His loyal kindness endures for ever,” the house is filled with a cloud, and the priests cannot stand to minister, for the glory of the LORD fills the house of God.

1 When all the work that Solomon did for the house of the LORD was finished, Solomon brought in the things his father David had dedicated, the silver, the gold and all the vessels, and placed them in the treasuries of the house of God.

2 Then Solomon assembled in Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the leaders of the ancestral families of the Israelites, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is Zion.[1]

3 All the men of Israel assembled before the king at the festival in the seventh month.

4 When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the Levites took up the ark.[2]

5 They brought up the ark, the tent of meeting and all the holy vessels in the tent; the Levitical priests brought them up.

6 King Solomon and the whole congregation of Israel who had gathered to him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.

7 Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place in the inner sanctuary of the house, the Most Holy Place, beneath the wings of the cherubim.

8 The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark, and so the cherubim formed a covering above the ark and its poles.

9 The poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the ark in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside. They are there to this day.

10 There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses had put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

11 Then the priests came out of the Holy Place. All the priests who were present had consecrated themselves, regardless of their divisions,

12 and all the Levites who were singers, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and kinsmen, dressed in fine linen, stood east of the altar with cymbals, harps and lyres, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding trumpets.

13 The trumpeters and singers joined together as one to make a single sound of praise and thanks to the LORD. Raising their voices with trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they praised the LORD: “For He is good; His loyal kindness endures for ever.” Then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud,

14 and the priests were unable to remain at their duties because of the cloud, since the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

1 Verses 2–14 and 6:1–39 follow 1 Kings 8:1–50 closely; the wording is kept close to our 1 Kings.

2 1 Kings 8:3 has ‘the priests’; Chronicles stresses the Levites’ role (1 Chronicles 15:2).

Chapter 6

2 Chronicles 6 records Solomon's words at the dedication of the temple, as in 1 Kings 8. He declares that he has built a lofty house for the LORD and blesses the assembly, praising God who chose Jerusalem for His name and David to lead His people, and kept His promise that David's son would build the house. Standing on a bronze platform before the altar, then kneeling with hands spread towards heaven, he prays: there is no God like the LORD, who keeps covenant and loyal kindness; even the highest heavens cannot contain Him, much less this house, yet may His eyes be open towards it day and night. He asks the LORD to hear from heaven and forgive when His people pray towards this place in disputes, defeat, drought, famine and disease, when a foreigner comes to pray, in war, and in exile when they repent. He closes by calling on the LORD God to arise to His resting place with the ark of His might, and to remember His loyal kindness to David His servant.

1 Then Solomon said, "The LORD has chosen to
live in deep darkness.
2 I have indeed built You a lofty house, a place for
You to live in for ever."
3 Then the king turned round and blessed the
whole assembly of Israel, while the whole
assembly of Israel stood.
4 He said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
who with His own mouth made a promise to my
father David and with His own hands has fulfilled
it, saying,
5 'From the day I brought My people out of the
land of Egypt I have chosen no city among all
Israel's tribes as the site of a house for My name,
nor have I chosen anyone to be leader over My
people Israel.
6 But now I have chosen Jerusalem as the place for
My name, and I have chosen David to rule My
people Israel.'
7 My father David had longed to build a house for
the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.
8 But the LORD told my father David, 'You wanted
to build a house for My name, and it was good
that you wanted to.
9 Yet you are not the one to build the house; your
son, who will come from your own body, shall
build the house for My name.'
10 Now the LORD has kept the promise He made. I
have succeeded my father David and sit on the
throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I
have built the house for the name of the LORD,
the God of Israel.
11 There I have placed the ark, in which is the
covenant of the LORD that He made with the
people of Israel."
12 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the
LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel and
spread out his hands.
13 Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits
long, five cubits wide and three cubits high,[1] and
had placed it in the middle of the court. He stood
on it, knelt down in front of the whole assembly of
Israel and spread out his hands towards heaven.
14 He prayed, "LORD God of Israel, no god in
heaven or on earth is like You. You keep covenant
and show loyal kindness to Your servants who live
wholeheartedly in Your presence.
15 You have kept what You promised to Your
servant David my father. You spoke with Your
mouth, and with Your hand You have fulfilled it
this day.
16 Now, LORD, God of Israel, keep for Your servant
David my father what You promised him when You
said, 'You shall never lack a man to sit before Me
on the throne of Israel, if only your sons take care
how they live, walking in My law as you have
walked before Me.'
17 And now, LORD, God of Israel, let Your word
that You spoke to Your servant David be
confirmed.
18 But will God really dwell with mankind on the
earth? Even the heavens, the very highest
heavens, cannot hold You, much less this house
that I have built!
19 Yet turn to Your servant's prayer and his plea,
LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer
that Your servant is praying before You,
20 that Your eyes may be open day and night
towards this house, the place where You have said
You would put Your name, so that You may hear
the prayer Your servant offers towards this place.
21 Listen when Your servant and Your people Israel
plead with You, praying towards this place. Listen
from heaven where You dwell, and as You listen,
forgive.
22 If someone wrongs his neighbour and is
required to take an oath, and he comes and

swears the oath before Your altar in this house,

23 then hear from heaven and act. Judge between
Your servants, repaying the guilty by bringing his
conduct on his own head, and vindicating the
innocent by rewarding him for his innocence.

24 When Your people Israel are defeated by an
enemy because they have sinned against You, and
they turn back and confess Your name, praying
and pleading before You in this house,

25 then listen from heaven, forgive Your people
Israel their sin, and restore them to the land You
gave to them and their ancestors.

26 When the heavens are shut and there is no rain
because they have sinned against You, and they
pray towards this place and confess Your name
and turn from their sin because You have afflicted
them,

27 then listen from heaven and pardon the sin of
Your servants, Your people Israel. Show them the
right road to walk on, and send rain on this land of
Yours that You gave Your people to possess.

28 When there is famine in the land, or plague,
blight or mildew, locust or caterpillar, or when
their enemies besiege them in any of their cities,
whatever disaster or sickness there may be,

29 whatever prayer or plea is made by anyone
among all Your people Israel, each knowing his
own affliction and pain and spreading out his
hands towards this house,

30 then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and
forgive. Deal with each person according to all his
ways, since You know his heart, for You alone
know the human heart,

31 so that they will revere You and walk in Your
ways as long as they live in the land You gave our
ancestors.

32 Likewise, when a foreigner who is not of Your
people Israel comes from a distant land for the
sake of Your great name, Your strong hand and
Your outstretched arm, and comes to pray facing
this house,

33 then listen from heaven where You dwell and
grant whatever the foreigner asks of You. Then
every people on earth will come to know Your
name and revere You as Your people Israel do, and
will know that Your name is called over this house
I have built.

34 When Your people march out to fight their
enemies, by whatever road You send them, and
they pray to You facing this city You chose and the
house I built for Your name,

35 then hear from heaven their prayer and their
plea, and uphold their cause.

36 When they sin against You, for there is no one
who does not sin, and You are angry with them
and give them over to an enemy, who carries them
away captive to a land far off or near,

37 yet if they come to their senses in the land
where they are captives, and turn back and plead
with You in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We
have sinned and done wrong; we have acted
wickedly,'

38 and if, in the land of their captivity where they
were carried off, they return to You
wholeheartedly and with all their soul, and pray
facing the land You gave their ancestors, the city
You chose and the house I built for Your name,

39 then from heaven, where You dwell, listen to
their prayer and their pleas and uphold their
cause. Forgive Your people for their sin against
You.

40 Now, my God, may Your eyes be open and Your
ears attentive to prayer offered in this place.

41 Now arise, LORD God, and come to Your resting
place, You and the ark of Your might. May Your
priests, LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and
may Your faithful ones rejoice in what is good.[2]

42 LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your
anointed one. Remember the loyal kindness shown
to David Your servant."[3]

1 About 2.3 metres square and 1.4 metres high. This verse is not in 1 Kings 8.

2 Verses 41–42 are drawn from Psalm 132:8–10, in place of the ending of the prayer in 1 Kings 8:51–53.

3 Or 'Your loyal kindness to David'; compare Isaiah 55:3 and Acts 13:34, 'the holy and sure blessings of David'.

Chapter 7

2 Chronicles 7 tells how, when Solomon finishes praying, fire comes down from heaven and consumes the offerings, and the glory of the LORD fills the house so that the priests cannot enter. All Israel bows to the ground and worships, giving thanks: "For He is good; His loyal kindness endures for ever." Solomon and the people offer vast sacrifices and dedicate the house, with the priests and Levites at their posts, and keep the festival for seven days and the dedication for seven more, before Solomon sends the people home rejoicing. Then the LORD appears to Solomon by night: He has chosen this place as a house of sacrifice; when He sends drought, locusts or plague, if His people who are called by His name humble themselves, pray, seek His face and turn from their wicked ways, He will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land. His eyes and heart will be there for ever. If Solomon walks before Him as David did, his throne will stand; but if Israel turns to other gods, He will uproot them and make this house a byword among the nations.

1 As soon as Solomon ended his prayer, fire fell
from heaven and burned up the burnt offering and
the sacrifices, and the LORD's glory filled the
house.

2 So great was the LORD's glory filling His house
that the priests were unable to go inside.

3 When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down
and the glory of the LORD on the house, they
knelt on the pavement with their faces to the
ground, worshipped and gave thanks to the LORD:
"For He is good; His loyal kindness endures for
ever."

4 The king and all the people then presented
sacrifices in the LORD's presence.

5 King Solomon sacrificed twenty-two thousand
head of cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand
sheep and goats. In this way the king and the
whole people dedicated God's house.

6 The priests stood at their posts, and the Levites
with the instruments for the LORD's music that
King David had made for giving thanks to the
LORD, "for His loyal kindness endures for ever,"
whenever David offered praise through them.
Opposite the Levites the priests blew trumpets,
and all Israel was standing.

7 Solomon consecrated the middle of the courtyard
in front of the house of the LORD. There he
offered the burnt offerings and the fat of the
peace offerings, because the bronze altar he had
made could not hold the burnt offerings, the grain
offerings and the fat portions.

8 At that time Solomon held the festival for seven
days, and all Israel with him, a very great
assembly, from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of
Egypt.

9 On the eighth day they held a closing assembly,
having celebrated the altar's dedication for seven
days and then the festival for seven more.[1]

10 On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he
sent the people to their homes, joyful and glad at
heart for the good the LORD had done for David
and Solomon and for His people Israel.

11 When Solomon had finished the house of the
LORD and the royal palace, and had successfully
carried out all he had in mind to do in the house of
the LORD and in his own palace,

12 Then the LORD appeared to Solomon during the
night and told him, "I have heard your prayer and
have chosen this place for Myself to be a house of
sacrifice.[2]

13 When I shut up the heavens so that there is no
rain, or command locusts to devour the land, or
send a plague among My people,

14 then if My people, who bear My name, humble
themselves and pray, if they seek My face and turn
back from their wicked ways, I will hear from
heaven; I will forgive their sin and heal their land.

15 Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive
to the prayer offered in this place.

16 For I have now chosen and consecrated this
house so that My name may be there for ever. My
eyes and My heart will be there at all times.

17 As for you, if you walk before Me as your father
David walked, doing all I have commanded you
and keeping My statutes and My rules,

18 then I will establish your royal throne, as I
covenanted with your father David when I said,
'You shall never lack a man to rule over Israel.'[3]

19 But if you people turn back and abandon the
statutes and commandments I have laid before
you, and go off to serve and worship other gods,

20 then I will uproot Israel from My land that I
have given them, and I will cast out of My sight
this house that I have consecrated for My name. I
will make it a byword and an object of ridicule
among all peoples.

21 And this house, now so exalted, will make
everyone who passes by it appalled, and they will
ask, ‘Why has the LORD done this to this land and
to this house?’

22 And people will answer, ‘Because they forsook
the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who
brought them out of the land of Egypt, and clung
to other gods, worshipping and serving them. That
is why He has brought all this disaster on them.’”

1 Compare 1 Kings 8:65–66. The Feast of Booths ended with a solemn assembly on the eighth day (Leviticus 23:36).
2 Verses 12–22 follow 1 Kings 9:2–9, with verses 13–15 added.
3 Compare Micah 5:2.

Chapter 8

2 Chronicles 8 tells how, after twenty years of building the house of the LORD and his own palace, Solomon rebuilds the towns Huram had given him and settles Israelites there. He captures Hamath-zobah, builds Tadmor in the wilderness, the store cities, Upper and Lower Beth-horon with walls, gates and bars, Baalath, and the chariot cities. He conscripts the survivors of the Canaanite peoples as forced labour, while Israelites serve as soldiers and officers. He moves Pharaoh’s daughter out of the City of David, for the places where the ark has been are holy. Solomon offers burnt offerings according to the law of Moses on the Sabbaths, New Moons and the three annual feasts, and appoints the priests, Levites and gatekeepers in their divisions as David commanded. So all Solomon’s work on the house of the LORD is completed. With ships and sailors from Huram, his men sail from Ezion-geber to Ophir and bring back four hundred and fifty talents of gold.

1 At the end of twenty years, during which
Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his
own palace,

2 Solomon rebuilt the towns that Huram had given
him,[1] and settled Israelites in them.

3 Solomon went to Hamath-zobah and captured it.

4 He built Tadmor[2] in the desert, together with all
the store cities he built in the region of Hamath.

5 He also built Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-
horon as fortified cities, with walls, gates and
bars,

6 as well as Baalath and all the store cities
Solomon had, all the cities for his chariots and for
his horsemen, and whatever Solomon desired to
build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout the
territory he ruled.

7 All the people who were left of the Hittites,
Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, who
were not Israelites,

8 their descendants who remained in the land,
whom the Israelites had not destroyed, Solomon
conscripted as forced labour, as they are to this
day.

9 But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the
Israelites for his work. They were his soldiers, the
commanders of his officers, and the commanders
of his chariots and horsemen.

10 These were also King Solomon’s chief officers,
two hundred and fifty who supervised the people.

11 Solomon brought Pharaoh’s daughter up from
the City of David to the palace he had built for her,
for he said, “My wife must not live in the palace of
David king of Israel, because the places to which
the ark of the LORD has come are holy.”

12 Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the
LORD on the altar of the LORD that he had built
in front of the porch,

13 as the duty of each day required, offering them
according to the commandment of Moses on the
Sabbaths, the New Moons and the three annual
appointed feasts: the Feast of Unleavened Bread,
the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Booths.

14 Following the ordinance of his father David, he
appointed the divisions of the priests for their
service, and the Levites for their duties of praise
and of ministering alongside the priests as each
day required, and the gatekeepers in their
divisions at each gate, for this was what David the
man of God had commanded.

15 They did not turn aside from the king’s
command to the priests and Levites in any matter,
including the treasuries.

16 So all Solomon’s work was carried out, from the
day the foundation of the house of the LORD was
laid until it was finished. So the house of the
LORD was completed.

17 Then Solomon went to Ezion-geber and Eloth on
the coast of the sea in the land of Edom.

18 Huram sent him ships by his servants, with servants who knew the sea, and they went with Solomon's servants to Ophir and brought back from there four hundred and fifty talents[3] of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

1 Compare 1 Kings 9:11–14, where Solomon gives towns to Hiram.

2 Later Palmyra; compare the note at 1 Kings 9:18.

3 About 15 tonnes. 1 Kings 9:28 has 'four hundred and twenty'.

Chapter 9

2 Chronicles 9 tells how the queen of Sheba hears of Solomon's fame and comes to Jerusalem with a great caravan to test him with hard questions. Solomon answers them all, and when she sees his wisdom, his house, his court and his offerings at the house of the LORD, she is left breathless. She confesses that not half his wisdom was told her, blesses the LORD for setting Solomon on His throne as king for the LORD his God, and gives him gold and spices beyond compare. The chapter describes Solomon's wealth: six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold a year, gold shields, a great ivory throne overlaid with gold, gold drinking vessels, ships bringing gold, ivory, apes and baboons, and horses brought from Egypt and every land. All the kings of the earth seek his presence. Solomon reigns forty years in Jerusalem, and his acts are written in the records of Nathan, Ahijah and Iddo. He rests with his ancestors, and his son Rehoboam succeeds him.

1 When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions.[1] She came with a very great retinue, with camels carrying spices, a vast amount of gold and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she talked with him about everything she had on her mind.

2 Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too obscure for Solomon to explain to her.

3 The queen of Sheba took in the full extent of Solomon's wisdom and the house he had built,

4 the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attendance of his servants and their dress, his cupbearers and their dress, and the burnt offerings he offered at the house of the LORD;[2] it took her breath away.

5 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom was true.

6 But I did not believe their words until I came and saw it with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half of your great wisdom was told me! You far exceed the report I heard.

7 How blessed your people must be! How blessed these servants of yours, who stand before you continually and hear your wisdom!

8 Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on His throne as king for the LORD your God![3] Because your God loved Israel and would establish them for ever, He has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness."

9 Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, a very great quantity of spices and precious stones. There were never such spices as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

10 Huram's men and Solomon's men, who fetched gold from Ophir, brought back algum timber and precious stones as well.

11 The king used the algum wood to make steps for the house of the LORD and for the royal palace, and to make lyres and harps for the musicians. Nothing like them had ever been seen before in the land of Judah.

12 King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for, more than she had brought to the king. Then she turned and went back to her own country with her servants.

13 Each year Solomon received six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold by weight,

14 besides what the merchants and traders brought. All the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon.

15 King Solomon made two hundred large shields of beaten gold; six hundred shekels of beaten gold went into each shield.

16 He also made three hundred smaller shields of beaten gold, each containing three hundred shekels[4] of gold, and the king placed them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

17 The king also had a great ivory throne made and covered it with pure gold.

18 The throne had six steps and a footstool of gold attached to it. On either side of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each armrest.

19 Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at each end of each step. Nothing like it was ever made for any other kingdom.

20 Every cup King Solomon drank from was gold, and every vessel in the House of the Forest of Lebanon was of pure gold. Silver counted for nothing in Solomon's time.

21 For the king's ships went to Tarshish[5] with the servants of Huram, and every third year they returned laden with gold, silver and ivory, with apes and baboons.

22 In wealth and in wisdom King Solomon outshone every other king on earth.

23 All the kings of the earth sought an audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

24 Year after year, each of them brought a gift: articles of silver and gold, garments, weapons and spices, horses and mules.

25 For his horses and chariots Solomon kept four thousand stalls, and he had twelve thousand cavalrymen, some posted in the chariot towns and some with him at Jerusalem.

26 His rule extended over every king from the Euphrates to Philistine territory and on to the frontier of Egypt.

27 The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as the sycamore-fig trees of the lowlands.

28 Horses were imported for Solomon from Egypt and from all the lands.

29 The rest of the events of Solomon's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the records of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah of Shiloh and in the visions of Iddo the seer about Jeroboam son of Nebat.

30 For forty years Solomon ruled all Israel from Jerusalem.

31 Then Solomon rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of his father David. And his son Rehoboam succeeded him as king.

1 Chapter 9 follows 1 Kings 10:1–29 and 11:41–43; the wording is kept close to our 1 Kings.

2 Or 'the ascent by which he went up to the house of the LORD'.

3 1 Kings 10:9 has 'on the throne of Israel'; Chronicles sees the kingdom as the LORD's own (1 Chronicles 17:14; 29:23).

4 About 3.5 kilograms (7½ pounds); 1 Kings 10:17 has 'three minas'.

5 1 Kings 10:22 has 'ships of Tarshish', that is, ocean-going ships.

Chapter 10

2 Chronicles 10 tells how all Israel gathers at Shechem to make Rehoboam king. Jeroboam returns from Egypt, and the people ask Rehoboam to lighten the heavy yoke his father laid on them. The elders advise kindness, but Rehoboam follows the young men he grew up with and answers harshly that he will add to the yoke, and where his father used whips he will use scorpions. This turn of events comes from God to fulfil the word spoken through Ahijah. Israel rejects the house of David, stones Hadoram, the overseer of forced labour, and goes home, and Rehoboam escapes to Jerusalem. Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David ever since.

1 All Israel had gathered at Shechem to crown Rehoboam king, so he went there.[1]

2 Jeroboam son of Nebat was in Egypt, having fled there from King Solomon, and when he heard the news he came back from Egypt.

3 So they sent for him, and Jeroboam and all Israel came and said to Rehoboam,

4 "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now lighten the harsh labour your father imposed and the heavy yoke he laid on us, and we will serve you."

5 He said to them, "Come back to me in three days." So the people went away.

6 King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How do you advise me to answer these people?" he asked.

7 They said to him, "If you will be kind to these people and please them, and give them a favourable answer, they will be your servants for ever."

8 But he rejected the advice the elders gave him
and consulted the young men who had grown up
with him and were serving him.
9 He asked them, “What is your advice? How
should we answer these people who have said to
me, ‘Lighten the yoke your father laid on us’?”
10 The young men who had grown up with him said
to him, “This is what you should tell the people
who said to you, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy,
but you must lighten it for us.’ Tell them, ‘My little
finger is thicker than my father’s waist.
11 My father laid a heavy yoke on you, but I will
make it heavier still. My father disciplined you
with whips, but I will discipline you with
scorpions.’”
12 Three days later Jeroboam and all the people
came back to Rehoboam, as the king had told
them: “Come back to me on the third day.”
13 The king answered them harshly. King
Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders
14 and spoke to them as the young men had
advised: “My father made your yoke heavy, but I
will add to it. My father disciplined you with
whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.”
15 So the king did not listen to the people, for this
turn of events came from God, so that the LORD
might fulfil the word He had spoken through
Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.
16 When all Israel saw that the king would not
listen to them, the people answered the king:
“What share have we in David? We have no
inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his
tents, Israel! Now look after your own house,
David!” So all Israel went home to their tents.
17 But as for the Israelites who lived in the towns
of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.
18 Then King Rehoboam sent out Hadoram,[2] who
was in charge of the forced labour, but the
Israelites stoned him to death. King Rehoboam
managed to get into his chariot and escape to
Jerusalem.
19 So Israel has been in rebellion against the house
of David to this day.

1 Chapter 10 follows 1 Kings 12:1–19; the wording is kept close to our 1 Kings.
2 Called Adoram in 1 Kings 12:18.

Chapter 11

2 Chronicles 11 tells how Rehoboam musters Judah and Benjamin to fight Israel, but the LORD’s word through Shemaiah forbids them to fight their brothers, and they obey. Rehoboam fortifies fifteen towns of Judah and Benjamin and stocks them with commanders, food, oil, wine, shields and spears. The priests and Levites from all Israel abandon their lands and come to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam has rejected them and appointed his own priests for the high places, goat-idols and calves; and those from every tribe who set their hearts on seeking the LORD come to Jerusalem to sacrifice. For three years they strengthen Rehoboam’s kingdom. Rehoboam has eighteen wives and sixty concubines, loves Maacah daughter of Absalom most, and makes her son Abijah chief prince, dispersing his other sons through the fortified towns.

1 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he
mustered the house of Judah and Benjamin, a
hundred and eighty thousand chosen warriors, to
fight against Israel and restore the kingdom to
Rehoboam.[1]
2 Then this word of the LORD came to Shemaiah,
the man of God:
3 “Speak to Rehoboam son of Solomon, Judah’s
king, and to all the Israelites living in Judah and
Benjamin. Tell them,
4 ‘This is what the LORD says: You must not go up
to fight against your brothers. Go home, every one
of you, for this thing is from Me.’” So they obeyed
the words of the LORD and turned back from
marching against Jeroboam.
5 Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built towns for
defence in Judah.
6 He built up Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa,
7 Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam,
8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph,
9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah,
10 Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron, fortified towns in
Judah and Benjamin.
11 He strengthened their defences and put
commanders in them, with supplies of food, oil
and wine.

12 In every town he put shields and spears, and made them very strong. So Judah and Benjamin were his.

13 The priests and the Levites from all their districts throughout Israel took their stand with him.

14 The Levites left their pasturelands and their property and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of the LORD.

15 He had appointed his own priests for the high places, for the goat-idols[2] and for the calves he had made.

16 Following the Levites, those from every tribe of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the LORD, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

17 They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years, walking in the ways of David and Solomon for those three years.

18 Rehoboam married Mahalath, the daughter of David's son Jerimoth and of Abihail daughter of Eliab son of Jesse.

19 She bore him sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham.

20 After her he married Maacah daughter of Absalom,[3] who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith.

21 Rehoboam loved Maacah daughter of Absalom more than all his other wives and concubines. He had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and was the father of twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

22 Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maacah as chief prince among his brothers, intending to make him king.

23 He acted wisely, dispersing some of his sons throughout all the districts of Judah and Benjamin, to all the fortified towns. He gave them abundant provisions and sought many wives for them.

1 Verses 1–4 follow 1 Kings 12:21–24.

2 Hebrew *se'irim*, 'hairy ones', perhaps goat-demons (Leviticus 17:7).

3 Probably his granddaughter; compare 13:2 and 1 Kings 15:2.

Chapter 12

2 Chronicles 12 tells how, once his kingdom is firmly established, Rehoboam and all Israel abandon the law of the LORD. In his fifth year, because they have been unfaithful, Shishak king of Egypt comes up with a vast army and captures the fortified towns of Judah. The prophet Shemaiah tells Rehoboam and the leaders that because they have abandoned the LORD, He has abandoned them to Shishak. The king and leaders humble themselves and say, "The LORD is in the right," and the LORD relents: He will not destroy them, but they will become Shishak's servants and learn the difference between serving Him and serving the kingdoms of the earth. Shishak carries off the treasures of the temple and palace and Solomon's gold shields, which Rehoboam replaces with bronze. Because he humbled himself, the LORD's anger turns away. Rehoboam reigns seventeen years in Jerusalem but does evil, for he does not set his heart on seeking the LORD. His acts are recorded by Shemaiah and Iddo, and his son Abijah succeeds him.

1 When Rehoboam's kingdom was established and he had become strong, he abandoned the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

2 Because they had been unfaithful to the LORD, in the fifth year of King Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt[1] attacked Jerusalem

3 with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, and countless troops who came with him from Egypt: Libyans, Sukkites[2] and Cushites.

4 He captured the fortified towns of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem.

5 Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "This is what the LORD says: 'You have abandoned Me, so I have abandoned you to Shishak.'"

6 Then the king and the leaders of Israel humbled themselves. "The LORD is in the right," they said.

7 When the LORD saw that they had humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah: "They have humbled themselves. I will not destroy them, but will soon give them deliverance. My wrath will not be poured out on Jerusalem through Shishak.

8 But they will become his servants, so that they
may learn the difference between serving Me and
serving the kingdoms of other lands."

9 So Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He
carried off the treasures of the house of the LORD
and the treasures of the royal palace. He took
everything, including the gold shields Solomon
had made.[3]

10 So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to
replace them and entrusted them to the
commanders of the guard who kept the entrance
of the royal palace.

11 Whenever the king went into the house of the
LORD, the guards came and carried the shields,
and afterwards they brought them back to the
guardroom.

12 Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the
LORD's anger turned away from him, and He did
not destroy him completely. Indeed, there was still
some good in Judah.

13 So King Rehoboam held firm in Jerusalem and
went on reigning. He had come to the throne at
forty-one, and for seventeen years he reigned in
Jerusalem, the city that the LORD chose from all
Israel's tribes as the place to put His name. His
mother was Naamah the Ammonite.

14 He did what was evil, because he had not set his
heart on seeking the LORD.

15 The events of Rehoboam's reign, from first to
last, are recorded in the records of Shemaiah the
prophet and of Iddo the seer, in the genealogies.
There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam
continually.

16 Rehoboam rested with his ancestors and was
buried in the City of David. And his son Abijah
succeeded him as king.

1 Sheshonq I, founder of the Twenty-second Dynasty; his campaign in Judah and Israel, about 925 BC, is recorded on a temple wall at Karnak.

2 Probably foreign troops serving in the Egyptian army.

3 Verses 9–16 follow 1 Kings 14:25–31.

Chapter 13

2 Chronicles 13 tells how Abijah becomes king of Judah in Jeroboam's eighteenth year and goes to war with Israel. Outnumbered two to one, Abijah stands on Mount Zemaraim and calls out to Jeroboam and all Israel: the LORD gave the kingdom to David and his sons for ever by a covenant of salt, but worthless men rallied round Jeroboam against young Rehoboam. Now Israel trusts in golden calves and has driven out the LORD's priests, while Judah keeps the LORD's charge with Aaron's sons, the Levites, the daily offerings, the bread and the lampstand. God is at Judah's head, so Israel must not fight the LORD. Jeroboam springs an ambush behind Judah, but Judah cries to the LORD, the priests blow the trumpets, and as the men raise the battle cry God strikes Israel down. Judah wins because it relied on the LORD. Abijah takes Bethel and other towns, Jeroboam never recovers and dies, and Abijah grows strong. His deeds are recorded by Iddo the prophet.

1 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah
came to the throne of Judah.[1]

2 For three years he reigned in Jerusalem. His
mother was Micaiah, Uriel's daughter, from
Gibeah.[2] Abijah and Jeroboam were at war.

3 Abijah went into battle with an army of mighty
warriors, four hundred thousand picked men, and
Jeroboam drew up his battle line against him with
eight hundred thousand picked men, mighty
warriors.

4 Abijah stood up on Mount Zemaraim, in the hill
country of Ephraim, and called out, "Listen to me,
Jeroboam and all Israel!

5 Ought you not to know that the LORD, the God of
Israel, gave the kingship over Israel to David and
his sons for ever, by a covenant of salt?[3]

6 Yet Jeroboam son of Nebat, who was only an
official of David's son Solomon, rose in revolt
against his own master.

7 Worthless scoundrels gathered round him and
stood firm against Rehoboam son of Solomon,
when Rehoboam was young and faint-hearted and
could not hold out against them.

8 And now you think you can hold out against the
kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hands of
David's descendants! You are a vast horde, and
you have with you the golden calves that
Jeroboam made to be your gods.

9 Did you not drive out the priests of the LORD, the
sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and make priests

for yourselves as the peoples of other lands do? Anyone who comes to be ordained[4] with a young bull and seven rams becomes a priest of what are no gods.

10 But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not abandoned Him. The priests who serve the LORD are sons of Aaron, and the Levites are at their work.

11 Every morning and every evening they present burnt offerings and fragrant incense to the LORD. They set out the rows of bread on the table of pure gold, and every evening they light the lamps on the golden lampstand. For we keep the charge of the LORD our God, but you have abandoned Him.

12 See, God is with us at our head, and His priests with their trumpets ready to sound the battle call against you. People of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed."

13 Meanwhile Jeroboam had sent an ambush round to come at them from behind, so that his troops were in front of Judah and the ambush behind them.

14 Judah turned and saw that they were being attacked front and rear. They cried out to the LORD, and the priests blew the trumpets.

15 Then the men of Judah raised the battle cry, and at the sound of their battle cry God struck down Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

16 The Israelites fled before Judah, and God handed them over to them.

17 Abijah and his army inflicted a crushing defeat on them, and five hundred thousand picked men of Israel fell dead.

18 So the Israelites were humbled at that time, and the people of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

19 Abijah chased after Jeroboam and took towns from him: Bethel, Jeshanah and Ephron,[5] each with its surrounding villages.

20 Jeroboam never regained his power in the days of Abijah; the LORD struck him down, and he died.

21 But Abijah grew strong. He married fourteen wives and was the father of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.

22 The other events of Abijah's reign, what he did and what he said, are recorded in the commentary[6] of the prophet Iddo.

1 Compare 1 Kings 15:1–8, where he is called Abijam.

2 1 Kings 15:2 and 2 Chronicles 11:20 name her Maacah daughter of Absalom; she was probably Absalom's granddaughter through Uriel.

3 That is, a lasting, unbreakable covenant; compare Numbers 18:19.

4 Hebrew 'to fill his hand'.

5 So the spoken Hebrew; the written text has 'Ephrain'.

6 Hebrew *midrash*, a study or exposition.

Chapter 14

2 Chronicles 14 tells how Abijah dies and his son Asa succeeds him, and the land has ten years of quiet. Asa does what is good and right in the LORD's eyes: he removes the foreign altars and high places, smashes the sacred stones and cuts down the Asherah poles, and commands Judah to seek the LORD and keep His law. Because they have sought the LORD and He has given them rest, Asa builds fortified towns with walls, towers, gates and bars, and musters an army from Judah and Benjamin. When Zerah the Cushite marches against him with a huge army, Asa calls on the LORD: no one but He can help the powerless against the mighty; they rely on Him and have come in His name against this horde. The LORD strikes down the Cushites, and Judah pursues them to Gerar, plunders the surrounding towns and returns to Jerusalem with great flocks and camels.

1 Abijah rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David, and his son Asa succeeded him as king. In his days the land was at peace for ten years.[1]

2 Asa did what the LORD his God saw as good and right.

3 He removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles.

4 He commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God
of their ancestors, and to carry out His law and
commandments.

5 He removed the high places and the incense
altars[2] from all the towns of Judah, and the
kingdom was at peace under him.

6 He built fortified towns in Judah, since the land
was at peace. No one made war on him in those
years, for the LORD had given him rest.

7 "Let us build up these towns," he said to Judah,
"and surround them with walls and towers, gates
and bars. The land is still ours, because we have
sought the LORD our God. We sought Him, and He
has given us rest on every side." So they built, and
they prospered.

8 Asa had an army of three hundred thousand men
from Judah, armed with large shields and spears,
and two hundred and eighty thousand from
Benjamin, armed with small shields and bows. All
of them were mighty warriors.

9 Zerah the Cushite[3] marched out against them
with an army of a thousand thousands[4] and three
hundred chariots, and came as far as Mareshah.

10 Asa went out to meet him, and they took up
battle positions in the Valley of Zephathah near
Mareshah.

11 Then Asa called to the LORD his God: "LORD,
there is none like You to help the powerless
against the mighty. Help us, LORD our God, for we
rely on You, and in Your name we have come
against this horde. LORD, You are our God; do not
let any mortal prevail against You."

12 So the LORD struck down the Cushites before
Asa and Judah, and the Cushites fled.

13 Asa and the troops with him chased them as far
as Gerar. So many Cushites fell that they could not
recover, for they were crushed before the LORD
and His forces. The men of Judah carried off a
great quantity of plunder.

14 They destroyed all the towns round Gerar, for
terror of the LORD had fallen on them. They
plundered all these towns, since there was much
plunder in them.

15 They also attacked the tents of the herdsmen
and carried off sheep and goats in great numbers,
and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

1 In Hebrew this verse is 13:23, and 14:2–15 are numbered 14:1–14.

2 Or 'sun pillars'; the meaning of Hebrew *hammanim* is uncertain.

3 Probably a commander from the upper Nile region serving Egypt, or a chief of Cushite settlers near Gerar.

4 That is, a vast army, beyond counting.

Chapter 15

2 Chronicles 15 tells how the Spirit of God comes on Azariah son of Oded, who goes out to meet Asa: the LORD is with them while they are with Him; if they seek Him, they will find Him, but if they abandon Him, He will abandon them. Israel long lived without the true God, without a teaching priest and without law, in times of turmoil, but whenever they turned to Him in distress He let them find Him; so they must be strong, for their work will be rewarded. Taking courage, Asa removes the detestable idols from the land, repairs the altar, and gathers Judah and Benjamin, with many who have come over from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon. In his fifteenth year they sacrifice from the plunder and enter a covenant to seek the LORD with all their heart and soul, swearing with shouts, trumpets and horns; and the LORD gives them rest on every side. Asa removes Maacah from her place as queen mother because of her obscene image of Asherah, brings the dedicated gifts into the house of God, and there is no more war until his thirty-fifth year.

1 The Spirit of God came upon Azariah son of
Oded,

2 and he went out to meet Asa and said to him,
"Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin!
The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If
you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you
abandon Him, He will abandon you.

3 For a long time Israel was without the true God,
without a priest to teach them and without the
law.

4 But in their distress they turned back to the
LORD, the God of Israel. They sought Him, and He
let them find Him.

5 In those times no one could travel in safety, for
great turmoil troubled all who lived in the lands.

6 Nation was crushed by nation and city by city,
because God troubled them with every kind of
distress.

7 But as for you, be strong and do not lose heart,
for your work will be rewarded."[1]

8 When Asa heard these words, the prophecy of
Azariah son of Oded the prophet,[2] he took
courage. He removed the detestable idols from
the whole land of Judah and Benjamin and from
the towns he had captured in the hill country of
Ephraim. He repaired the altar of the LORD that
stood in front of the porch of the LORD's house.

9 Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and
the people from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon
who were living among them; for great numbers
had come over to him from Israel when they saw
that the LORD his God was with him.

10 They assembled at Jerusalem in the third month
of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign.

11 On that day they sacrificed to the LORD seven
hundred cattle and seven thousand sheep and
goats from the plunder they had brought back.

12 They bound themselves by covenant to seek the
LORD, their ancestors' God, with their whole
heart and their whole being.

13 Anyone who would not seek the LORD, the God
of Israel, was to be put to death, whether young or
old, man or woman.

14 They swore an oath to the LORD with loud
acclaim, with shouting and with trumpets and
horns.

15 All Judah rejoiced over the oath, because they
had sworn it with all their heart. They sought Him
eagerly, and He let them find Him. So the LORD
gave them rest on every side.

16 King Asa even removed his grandmother[3]
Maacah from her position as queen mother,
because she had made an obscene image for
Asherah. Asa cut down her image, crushed it and
burned it in the Kidron Valley.[4]

17 Although the high places were not removed
from Israel, Asa's heart was wholly true all his life.

18 He brought into the house of God the silver, the
gold and the vessels that he and his father had
dedicated.

19 And until Asa's thirty-fifth year as king, no war
broke out again.

1 Compare Jeremiah 31:16.

2 So the Syriac and Latin; the Hebrew has 'the prophecy of Oded the prophet'.

3 Hebrew 'mother'; compare 1 Kings 15:10 and the note at 2 Chronicles 13:2.

4 Verses 16–18 follow 1 Kings 15:13–15.

Chapter 16

2 Chronicles 16 tells how, in Asa's thirty-sixth year, Baasha king of Israel fortifies Ramah to cut off Judah. Asa takes silver and gold from the treasuries of the LORD's house and the palace and sends them to Ben-hadad king of Aram, asking him to break his treaty with Baasha. Ben-hadad attacks the towns of Israel, Baasha abandons Ramah, and Asa uses its stones and timber to fortify Geba and Mizpah. Then Hanani the seer comes to rebuke Asa: because he relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD, the army of Aram has escaped him. Had not the LORD given him the vast army of Cushites and Libyans when he relied on Him? For the LORD's eyes range over the whole earth to strengthen those whose hearts are wholly His. Asa has acted foolishly, and from now on he will have wars. Enraged, Asa puts the seer in the stocks and oppresses some of the people. In his thirty-ninth year Asa is struck by a severe disease in his feet, yet even in his illness he does not seek the LORD, only the physicians. He dies in his forty-first year and is buried in his own tomb with spices and a very great fire in his honour.

1 In Asa's thirty-sixth year as king,[1] Baasha king of
Israel marched against Judah and fortified Ramah,
so that no one could leave or reach Asa king of
Judah.[2]

2 Then Asa brought out silver and gold from the
treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the
royal palace, and sent it to Ben-hadad king of
Aram, who ruled in Damascus, with this message:

3 "Let us make a treaty, you and I, as our fathers
did. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Go and
break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so
that he will pull back from me."

4 Ben-hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the
commanders of his forces against the towns of
Israel. They conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim[3] and
all the store cities of Naphtali.

5 When Baasha heard of it, he stopped fortifying
Ramah and abandoned the work.

6 Then King Asa brought all Judah, and they
carried away the stones and timber with which
Baasha had been fortifying Ramah. With them he
fortified Geba and Mizpah.

7 At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of
Judah. “You leaned on the king of Aram,” he told
him, “instead of relying on the LORD your God.
Because of that, the army of Aram’s king has
slipped out of your grasp.

8 Were not the Cushites and the Libyans a mighty
army, with great numbers of chariots and
horsemen? Yet when you relied on the LORD, He
handed them over to you.

9 For the LORD’s eyes range over the whole earth,
to give strength to those whose hearts are wholly
devoted to Him. You have acted foolishly in this,
and from now on you will have wars.”

10 Asa was angry with the seer and put him in the
stocks,[4] so furious was he with him over this. At
that time Asa also oppressed some of the people.

11 The events of Asa’s reign, from first to last, are
recorded in the Book of the Kings of Judah and
Israel.

12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was
afflicted with a disease in his feet, and his illness
grew very severe. Yet even in his illness he did not
seek the LORD, but only the physicians.

13 Asa rested with his ancestors, dying in the forty-
first year of his reign.

14 They buried him in the tomb he had cut out for
himself in the City of David. They laid him on a
bier filled with spices and various blended
perfumes, skilfully prepared, and they made a
very great fire in his honour.[5]

1 Baasha died in Asa’s twenty-sixth year (1 Kings 16:8), so these numbers may count from the division of the kingdom, or a scribe may have altered them; compare 15:19.

2 Verses 1–6 follow 1 Kings 15:17–22.

3 Called Abel-beth-maacah in 1 Kings 15:20.

4 Hebrew ‘in the house of the stocks’, a prison where prisoners were held in a cramped, twisted position.

5 Not a cremation but a burning of spices as a mark of honour; compare 21:19 and Jeremiah 34:5.

Chapter 17

2 Chronicles 17 tells how Jehoshaphat succeeds Asa and strengthens himself against Israel, stationing troops in the fortified towns. The LORD is with him because he walks in the early ways of his ancestor David, seeks his father’s God rather than the Baals, and keeps His commandments. The LORD establishes the kingdom in his hands, and he gains great wealth and honour. His heart takes pride in the ways of the LORD, and he removes the high places and Asherah poles. In his third year he sends officials, Levites and priests through the towns of Judah with the Book of the Law of the LORD to teach the people. Terror of the LORD falls on the surrounding kingdoms, so that none makes war on him; the Philistines and Arabs bring him tribute. Jehoshaphat grows ever more powerful, builds forts and store cities, and keeps great armies of mighty warriors in Jerusalem under their commanders.

1 His son Jehoshaphat succeeded him as king and
strengthened his position against Israel.

2 He stationed troops in all the fortified towns of
Judah and placed garrisons[1] in the land of Judah
and in the towns of Ephraim that his father Asa
had captured.

3 The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he
followed the ways his ancestor David had walked
in at first.[2] He did not seek the Baals,

4 but sought the God of his father and kept His
commandments, not following the practices of
Israel.

5 So the LORD made the kingdom secure in his
hands. All Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat, and
he had great wealth and honour.

6 His heart was emboldened in the ways of the
LORD, and he went on to remove the high places
and the Asherah poles from Judah.

7 In his third year as king he sent out his officials,
Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel and
Micaiah, to teach throughout Judah’s towns.

8 With them went the Levites Shemaiah,
Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth,
Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah and Tob-adonijah,
and the priests Elishama and Jehoram.

9 They taught throughout Judah, taking with them
the Book of the Law of the LORD. They went
round all the towns of Judah and taught the
people.
10 Terror of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of
the lands surrounding Judah, so that they made no
war on Jehoshaphat.
11 Some Philistines brought him gifts and a load of
silver as tribute, and the Arabs brought him
flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and as
many male goats.
12 Jehoshaphat grew steadily more powerful. He
built fortresses and store cities in Judah,
13 and had large stores in the towns of Judah. He
also kept soldiers, mighty warriors, in Jerusalem.
14 This was their enrolment by their families.[3]
From Judah, the commanders of thousands: Adnah
the commander, with three hundred thousand
mighty warriors;
15 next to him Jehohanan the commander, with two
hundred and eighty thousand;
16 and next to him Amasiah son of Zichri, who
volunteered himself for the LORD's service, with
two hundred thousand mighty warriors.
17 From Benjamin: Eliada, a mighty warrior, with
two hundred thousand men armed with bow and
shield;
18 and next to him Jehozabad, with a hundred and
eighty thousand equipped for war.
19 These were the men who served the king,
besides those he had stationed in the fortified
towns throughout Judah.

1 Or 'governors'.

2 Some manuscripts lack 'David'; the sense would then be 'the earlier ways of his father', that is, of Asa.

3 The numbers in verses 14–18 are very large; Hebrew *eleph*, 'thousand', may sometimes denote a military unit.

Chapter 18

2 Chronicles 18 tells how Jehoshaphat, rich and honoured, makes a marriage alliance with Ahab. Visiting Samaria, he agrees to join Ahab in attacking Ramoth-gilead, but first asks for the word of the LORD. Four hundred prophets promise victory, but Jehoshaphat asks for another prophet of the LORD, and Ahab reluctantly sends for Micaiah son of Imlah. At first Micaiah echoes the others, then he describes Israel scattered like sheep without a shepherd and tells of a vision in which the LORD, enthroned among the host of heaven, sends a lying spirit into the mouths of Ahab's prophets. Zedekiah strikes Micaiah, and Ahab has him imprisoned until he returns safely. Ahab goes into battle disguised while Jehoshaphat wears his royal robes. The Aramean chariot commanders pursue Jehoshaphat, but when he cries out the LORD helps him and turns them away. A random arrow strikes Ahab between the joints of his armour, and he stays propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening, when he dies at sunset.

1 Now Jehoshaphat had great wealth and honour,
and he allied himself with Ahab by marriage.[1]
2 Some years later he went down to visit Ahab in
Samaria. Ahab slaughtered great numbers of
sheep and cattle for him and the people with him,
and urged him to attack Ramoth-gilead.
3 Ahab king of Israel asked Jehoshaphat king of
Judah, "Will you go with me against Ramoth-
gilead?" "We are as one, you and I," he answered
him, "and my people are as your people. We will
be with you in the battle."
4 But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel,
"First seek the word of the LORD."
5 So the king of Israel gathered the prophets, four
hundred men, and asked them, "Shall we go to
war against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I hold back?"
"Go," they answered, "for God will give it into the
king's hand."
6 But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no other
prophet of the LORD here whom we can consult?"
7 The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There
is still one man through whom we can enquire of
the LORD. But I hate him, because he never
prophesies anything good about me, only evil, all
his days. He is Micaiah son of Imla." "The king
should not say such a thing," Jehoshaphat replied.
8 So the king of Israel called one of his officials and
said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imla at once."
9 The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah,
dressed in their royal robes, were sitting each on
his throne at the threshing floor by the entrance

of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them.

10 Zedekiah son of Chenaanah had made himself iron horns, and he declared, “This is what the LORD says: ‘With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.’”

11 All the prophets were prophesying the same thing: “Attack Ramoth-gilead and be victorious, for the LORD will give it into the king’s hand.”

12 The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, “Look, the prophets are all agreed in promising success to the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favourably.”

13 But Micaiah said, “As the LORD lives, I will speak whatever my God tells me.”

14 When he arrived, the king asked him, “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I hold back?” He answered, “Attack and be victorious; they will be given into your hand.”

15 The king said to him, “How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?”

16 Then Micaiah said, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep without a shepherd, and the LORD said, ‘These have no master. Let each of them go home in peace.’”

17 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Did I not tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, only evil?”

18 Micaiah went on, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, with all the host of heaven standing on His right and on His left.

19 And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab king of Israel into attacking Ramoth-gilead and falling there?’ One suggested this, and another that.

20 Then a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’ ‘By what means?’ the LORD asked.

21 ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said. ‘You will entice him, and you will succeed,’ said the LORD. ‘Go and do it.’

22 So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you.”

23 Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah went up, struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, “Which way did the Spirit of the LORD go when He left me to speak to you?”

24 Micaiah replied, “You will find out on the day you go into an inner room to hide.”

25 The king of Israel then gave orders: “Seize Micaiah and take him back to Amon, the city governor, and to Joash, the king’s son,

26 and say, ‘This is what the king says: Put this man in prison and give him nothing but scant rations of bread and water until I come back safely.’”

27 Micaiah said, “If you ever come back safely, the LORD has not spoken through me.” And he added, “Mark my words, all you peoples!”

28 The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah then marched against Ramoth-gilead.

29 “I will go into the battle disguised,” the king of Israel told Jehoshaphat, “but you keep your royal robes on.” So the king of Israel put on a disguise, and they went into battle.

30 Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders, “Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel alone.”

31 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, “This is the king of Israel.” So they turned to attack him, but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him,[2]

32 and when the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they stopped pursuing him.

33 But someone drew his bow without taking aim and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armour. The king said to his chariot driver, “Turn round and get me out of the fighting, for I am wounded.”

34 The battle raged all that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. At sunset he died.

1 His son Jehoram married Ahab’s daughter Athaliah (21:6; 22:2). Chapter 18 follows 1 Kings 22:1–35; the wording is kept close to our 1 Kings.

2 This sentence is not in 1 Kings 22:32.

Chapter 19

2 Chronicles 19 tells how Jehoshaphat returns safely to Jerusalem and is met by Jehu son of Hanani the seer, who rebukes him for helping the wicked and loving those who hate the LORD, so that wrath has come on him from the LORD; yet there is good in him, for he has removed the Asherah poles and set his heart on seeking God. Jehoshaphat goes out among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brings them back to the LORD. He appoints judges in every fortified town of Judah, charging them to judge not for man but for the LORD, who has no injustice, partiality or bribery. In Jerusalem he appoints Levites, priests and family heads to decide disputes, charging them to act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and wholeheartedly, and to warn their brothers so that wrath does not come. Amariah the chief priest is over them in the LORD's matters and Zebadiah in the king's. He bids them act with courage, and prays that the LORD will be with those who do good.

1 Jehoshaphat king of Judah returned safely to his
palace in Jerusalem.

2 Jehu son of Hanani the seer came out to meet
him. "Is it right for you to help the wicked," he
asked King Jehoshaphat, "and to love those who
hate the LORD? For this the LORD's wrath is upon
you.

3 Yet some good is found in you, for you have rid
the land of the Asherah poles and have set your
heart on seeking God."

4 Jehoshaphat made his home in Jerusalem, but
once more he went out among the people, from
Beersheba to Ephraim's hill country, and turned
them back to the LORD, their ancestors' God.

5 He appointed judges throughout the land, in each
of the fortified towns of Judah.

6 He said to the judges, "Consider what you are
doing, for you are not judging on behalf of man
but on behalf of the LORD, and He is with you
when you give a verdict.

7 Now let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Take
care what you do, for with the LORD our God
there is no injustice, no favouritism and no taking
of bribes."

8 In Jerusalem too Jehoshaphat appointed some of
the Levites and priests and heads of Israelite
families to administer the law of the LORD and to
settle disputes. They lived in Jerusalem.[1]

9 He gave them these orders: "You must serve in
the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with your
whole heart.

10 Whenever a case comes before you from your
fellow countrymen who live in their towns,
whether it concerns bloodshed or questions of law
and commandment, statutes and rules, you are to
warn them not to incur guilt before the LORD;
otherwise wrath will come on you and on your
brothers. Do this, and you will not incur guilt.

11 Amariah the chief priest will be over you in
every matter concerning the LORD, and Zebadiah
son of Ishmael, the leader of the house of Judah, in
every matter concerning the king; and the Levites
will serve you as officials. Act with courage, and
may the LORD be with those who do what is
good."

1 So the Greek and Latin; the Hebrew reads 'and they returned to Jerusalem'.

Chapter 20

2 Chronicles 20 tells how the Moabites, Ammonites and Meunites march against Jehoshaphat, and a great horde is reported at En-gedi. Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolves to seek the LORD and proclaims a fast, and all Judah gathers. Standing in the house of the LORD, he prays: the LORD rules all the kingdoms of the nations; He gave this land to the descendants of His friend Abraham; now these nations, whom Israel spared, have come to drive them out. They have no strength and do not know what to do, but their eyes are turned to Him. The Spirit of the LORD comes on Jahaziel the Levite: they must not fear, for the battle is God's; they need only take their places, stand firm and see the LORD's deliverance. The people bow in worship and the Levites praise loudly. Next morning Jehoshaphat urges them to trust the LORD and His prophets, and appoints singers to go before the army praising Him. As they sing, the LORD sets ambushes, and the invaders destroy one another. Judah spends three days gathering plunder, blesses the LORD in the Valley of Beracah and returns to Jerusalem rejoicing, and the fear of God falls on the kingdoms. The chapter closes with Jehoshaphat's reign and his ill-fated shipbuilding alliance with Ahaziah of Israel.

1 Some time later the Moabites and Ammonites, together with some of the Meunites,[1] came to make war on Jehoshaphat.

2 Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, “A great horde is coming against you from beyond the Sea, from Edom,[2] and they are already in Hazazon-tamar,” that is, En-gedi.

3 Jehoshaphat was afraid, and he resolved to seek the LORD. He proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

4 Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came from every town of Judah to seek the LORD.

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the LORD, in front of the new courtyard,

6 and said: “LORD, God of our ancestors, are You not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in Your hand, and no one can stand against You.

7 Was it not You, our God, who drove out this land’s inhabitants before Your people Israel, and gave it for ever to the descendants of Your friend Abraham?[3]

8 They settled in it and built You a sanctuary there for Your name, and said,

9 ‘Should disaster strike us, whether sword or judgement, plague or famine, we will stand before You in front of this house, since Your name is in this house, and cry to You in our trouble; and You will hear and rescue us.’

10 But now here are the people of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose lands You would not let Israel invade when they came out of Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them.

11 See how they are repaying us: they are coming to drive us out of the possession You gave us to inherit.

12 Our God, will You not judge them? For we have no strength to face this vast horde that is attacking us. We do not know what to do; our eyes are turned to You.”

13 All the men of Judah were standing before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives and their children.

14 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the descendants of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly.

15 He said: “Listen, all Judah and you people of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or dismayed because of this vast horde, for the battle is not your concern but God’s.

16 Go down against them tomorrow. They will come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will meet them where the valley ends, opposite the wilderness of Jeruel.

17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Take up your positions, stand firm, and watch the LORD deliver you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or dismayed. Tomorrow go out to face them, and the LORD will be with you.’”

18 Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the people of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD in worship.

19 Then some of the Levites, from the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

20 Early in the morning they set out for the wilderness of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Trust in the LORD your God, and you will stand secure; trust His prophets, and you will succeed.”[4]

21 After consulting the people, he appointed singers to sing to the LORD and to praise Him for the splendour of His holiness[5] as they went out ahead of the army, saying, “Give thanks to the LORD, for His loyal kindness endures for ever.”

22 As soon as they began their shouts of joy and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir who had come against Judah, and they were routed.

23 The Ammonites and Moabites rose against the people of Mount Seir to destroy them utterly and wipe them out, and when they had finished off the people of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24 When Judah came to the lookout point over the wilderness and turned towards the horde, there were only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped.

25 Jehoshaphat and his people came to carry off the plunder, and among them they found great quantities of goods, clothing[6] and precious things, more than they could carry away. There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it.

26 On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the LORD. That is why the place is called the Valley of Beracah[7] to this day.

27 Then all the men of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat at their head, returned joyfully to Jerusalem, for the LORD had given them cause to rejoice over their enemies.

28 They entered Jerusalem and went to the house of the LORD with harps, lyres and trumpets.

29 The fear of God fell on all the kingdoms of the lands when they heard how the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel.

30 So Jehoshaphat's kingdom was at peace, for his God gave him rest on every side.

31 So Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five when he came to the throne, and he ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-five years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.[8]

32 He followed the ways of his father Asa and did not turn from them, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD.

33 But the high places remained, and the people had not yet fixed their hearts on their ancestors' God.

34 The other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, from first to last, are recorded in the records of Jehu son of Hanani, which are included in the Book of the Kings of Israel.

35 Later Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an alliance with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted wickedly.

36 He joined with him in building ships to go to Tarshish, and they built them at Ezion-geber.

37 Then Eliezer son of Dodavahu from Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat: "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD will wreck what you have made." So the ships were wrecked and could not set sail for Tarshish.[9]

1 So the Greek; the Hebrew repeats 'Ammonites'. Compare 26:7 and verse 10.
2 So one Hebrew manuscript; most manuscripts have 'Aram'. The Hebrew letters for Edom and Aram are very similar.
3 Compare Isaiah 41:8 and James 2:23.
4 A play on the Hebrew verb *aman*, 'be firm'; compare Isaiah 7:9.
5 Or 'in holy attire'.
6 So some Hebrew manuscripts and the Latin; most manuscripts have 'corpses'.
7 *Beracah* means 'blessing'.
8 Verses 31–37 follow 1 Kings 22:41–49.
9 Compare 1 Kings 22:48–49, where Jehoshaphat refuses a later offer from Ahaziah.

Chapter 21

2 Chronicles 21 tells how Jehoshaphat dies and his firstborn Jehoram succeeds him. Once secure on the throne, Jehoram puts all his brothers to the sword, along with some of Israel's officials. Married to Ahab's daughter, he walks in the ways of the kings of Israel and does evil, yet the LORD will not destroy the house of David because of His covenant. Edom and Libnah revolt. Jehoram builds high places and leads Judah astray, and a letter comes from Elijah the prophet: because he has not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat and Asa but has led Judah into unfaithfulness and murdered his brothers, the LORD will strike his people, his family and his possessions, and he himself will suffer a disease of the bowels. The LORD stirs up the Philistines and Arabs, who invade Judah and carry off his possessions, his sons and his wives, leaving only Jehoahaz. Then the LORD strikes him with an incurable disease, and after two years he dies in agony. No fire is made in his honour; he departs with no one's regret and is buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

1 Jehoshaphat rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. And his son Jehoram succeeded him as king.

2 Jehoram had brothers, sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael and Shephatiah; all of them sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.[1]

3 Their father had given them many gifts of silver, gold and valuables, together with fortified towns in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was the firstborn.

4 When Jehoram had taken over his father's kingdom and made himself secure, he put all his brothers to death with the sword, together with some of the officials of Israel.

5 At thirty-two Jehoram became king, and for eight
years he reigned in Jerusalem.[2]

6 He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as
the house of Ahab had done, for he had married a
daughter of Ahab. He did what was evil in the
sight of the LORD.

7 Yet because of the covenant He had made with
David, the LORD was not willing to destroy the
house of David, since He had promised to give a
lamp to him and his descendants for ever.

8 In Jehoram's days Edom rebelled against Judah's
rule and set up its own king.

9 So Jehoram crossed over with his commanders
and all his chariots. He rose by night and broke
through the Edomites who had surrounded him
and his chariot commanders.

10 So Edom has been in rebellion against Judah's
rule to this day. Libnah also rebelled against him
at that time, because he had abandoned the
LORD, the God of his ancestors.

11 He also built high places in the hill country of
Judah, led the people of Jerusalem into
unfaithfulness and made Judah go astray.

12 Then a letter came to him from Elijah the
prophet,[3] which said: "This is what the LORD, the
God of your ancestor David, says: 'You have not
walked in the ways of your father Jehoshaphat or
of Asa king of Judah,

13 but have walked in the way of the kings of
Israel. You have led Judah and the people of
Jerusalem into unfaithfulness, just as the house of
Ahab did, and you have also murdered your own
brothers, your father's family, men who were
better than you.

14 So now the LORD is about to strike your people,
your sons, your wives and all your possessions
with a heavy blow.

15 You yourself will suffer a severe illness, a
disease of the bowels, until day after day the
disease makes your bowels come out.'"

16 The LORD roused against Jehoram the hostility
of the Philistines and of the Arabs who lived near
the Cushites.

17 They invaded Judah, broke into it and carried off
all the possessions found in the king's palace,
together with his sons and his wives. Not a son
was left to him except Jehoahaz,[4] the youngest.

18 After all this the LORD struck him with an
incurable disease of the bowels.

19 In the course of time, at the end of two years,
his bowels came out because of the disease, and
he died in terrible pain. His people made no fire in
his honour, as they had done for his ancestors.

20 He was thirty-two years old when he became
king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. He
passed away with no one's regret, and they buried
him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of
the kings.

1 Chronicles sometimes calls Judah 'Israel', as the true heir of the people of God; compare 12:6 and 28:19.

2 Verses 5–10 follow 2 Kings 8:17–22.

3 The only mention of Elijah in Chronicles. 2 Kings 3:11 suggests he had been taken up before Jehoshaphat's death, so the letter may have been written in advance, or have come from one of his disciples.

4 Another form of the name Ahaziah (22:1).

Chapter 22

2 Chronicles 22 tells how the people of Jerusalem make Ahaziah, Jehoram's youngest son, king, because raiders have killed all his older brothers. His mother Athaliah, Omri's granddaughter, counsels him to do evil, and he follows the advice of the house of Ahab to his ruin. He joins Joram son of Ahab against Hazael at Ramoth-gilead, and goes to visit him in Jezreel when he is wounded. It is God's doing that Ahaziah goes there, for Jehu, whom the LORD has anointed to destroy Ahab's house, kills the officials of Judah and Ahaziah's relatives, then finds Ahaziah hiding in Samaria and puts him to death. They bury him out of respect for Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart, but no one in his house is able to rule. Athaliah destroys the royal family, but Jehoshabeath, wife of Jehoiada the priest, hides Ahaziah's son Joash and his nurse, and he stays hidden in the house of God for six years while Athaliah rules the land.

1 The people of Jerusalem made Ahaziah,
Jehoram's youngest son, king in his place, since
the raiders who came with the Arabs into the
camp had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah son
of Jehoram king of Judah became king.

2 Ahaziah was forty-two[1] years old when he
became king, and he reigned one year in
Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, a
granddaughter of Omri.

3 He too walked in the ways of the house of Ahab,
for his mother advised him in doing wickedly.

4 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as
the house of Ahab had done, for after his father's
death they were his advisers, to his ruin.

5 He also followed their advice when he went with
Joram son of Ahab king of Israel to war against
Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth-gilead, and the
Arameans wounded Joram.[2]

6 So he returned to Jezreel to recover from the
wounds they had inflicted on him at Ramah when
he fought against Hazael king of Aram. And
Ahaziah[3] son of Jehoram king of Judah went down
to Jezreel to see Joram son of Ahab, because he
had been wounded.

7 God had ordained that Ahaziah's visit to Joram
would be his undoing. On arriving, he went out
with Jehoram to confront Jehu son of Nimshi, the
man the LORD had anointed to wipe out Ahab's
house.

8 While Jehu was carrying out judgement on the
house of Ahab, he came upon the officials of Judah
and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who were
serving Ahaziah, and he killed them.

9 He then searched for Ahaziah, who was captured
while hiding in Samaria. He was brought to Jehu
and put to death. They gave him burial, for they
said, "He was the grandson of Jehoshaphat, who
sought the LORD with all his heart." So there was
no one in the house of Ahaziah strong enough to
hold the kingdom.

10 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that
her son was dead, she set about destroying the
whole royal family of the house of Judah.[4]

11 But Jehoshabeath,[5] the king's daughter, took
Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from
among the king's sons who were about to be
murdered. She put him and his nurse in a
bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King
Jehoram and wife of Jehoiada the priest, hid him
from Athaliah, since she was Ahaziah's sister, and
Athaliah did not kill him.

12 He remained hidden with them in the house of
God for six years, while Athaliah ruled the land.

1 So the Hebrew; 2 Kings 8:26 and some Greek and Syriac manuscripts have 'twenty-two'. His father died at forty (21:20).

2 Verses 5–6 follow 2 Kings 8:28–29; verses 7–9 summarise 2 Kings 9:14–28 and 10:12–14.

3 So some Hebrew manuscripts and the ancient versions; most manuscripts have 'Azariah'.

4 Verses 10–12 follow 2 Kings 11:1–3.

5 Called Jehosheba in 2 Kings 11:2.

Chapter 23

2 Chronicles 23 tells how, in the seventh year, Jehoiada the priest takes courage and makes a covenant with five commanders of hundreds, who go through Judah gathering the Levites and family heads to Jerusalem. The whole assembly makes a covenant with the king in the house of God, and Jehoiada shows them the king's son, who must reign as the LORD promised concerning David's descendants. He assigns the priests and Levites coming on duty on the Sabbath to guard the doors, the palace and the Foundation Gate, allowing no one but the consecrated into the LORD's house, and he arms the commanders with King David's spears and shields. They bring out the king's son, crown him, give him the testimony and anoint him, shouting, "Long live the king!" Athaliah comes to the temple, tears her clothes and cries "Treason!", and is taken out and put to death at the Horse Gate. Jehoiada makes a covenant that they will be the LORD's people; the people tear down the temple of Baal and kill Mattan its priest. Jehoiada restores the temple service as David arranged, posts gatekeepers, and brings the king to sit on the royal throne. The people rejoice, and the city is quiet.

1 In the seventh year Jehoiada took courage and
made a covenant with the commanders of
hundreds: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of
Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of
Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zichri.[1]

2 They went round Judah and gathered the Levites
from all the towns of Judah and the heads of
Israelite families, and they came to Jerusalem.

3 The whole assembly made a covenant with the
king in the house of God. Jehoiada said to them,
"Here is the king's son! He shall reign, as the
LORD promised concerning the descendants of
David.

4 This is what you are to do: a third of you priests
and Levites who come on duty on the Sabbath are
to keep watch at the doors,
5 a third at the royal palace, and a third at the
Foundation Gate,[2] while all the people are to be in
the courts of the house of the LORD.
6 No one is to enter the house of the LORD except
the priests and the Levites on duty; they may
enter because they are consecrated, but all the
people must observe the LORD's command.[3]
7 The Levites are to station themselves round the
king, each man with his weapon in his hand.
Anyone who enters the house is to be put to death.
Stay close to the king wherever he goes."
8 The Levites and all Judah did just as Jehoiada the
priest ordered. Each one took his men, those
coming on duty on the Sabbath and those going
off duty, for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed
the divisions.
9 Jehoiada the priest gave the commanders of
hundreds the spears and the large and small
shields that had belonged to King David and were
kept in the house of God.
10 He stationed all the people, each with his
weapon in his hand, from the south side of the
house to the north side, near the altar and the
house, all round the king.
11 Then they brought out the king's son, crowned
him, gave him the testimony[4] and proclaimed him
king. Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and the
shout went up, "Long live the king!"
12 Athaliah heard the din of the people running and
acclaiming the king, and she went to join the
crowd at the house of the LORD.
13 She looked, and there was the king, standing by
his pillar at the entrance, with the commanders
and the trumpeters beside the king, and all the
people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets,
and the singers with their instruments leading the
praises. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and cried
out, "Treason! Treason!"
14 Jehoiada the priest brought out the commanders
of hundreds who were in charge of the troops and
said to them, "Bring her out between the ranks,
and put to the sword anyone who follows her." For
the priest had said, "Do not put her to death in the
house of the LORD."
15 So they seized her as she reached the entrance
of the Horse Gate of the palace, and there they
put her to death.
16 Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself
and all the people and the king, that they would
be the LORD's people.
17 All the people went to the temple of Baal and
tore it down. They smashed its altars and its
images, and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal
in front of the altars.
18 Jehoiada placed the oversight of the house of the
LORD in the hands of the Levitical priests, whom
David had organised in divisions over the house of
the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD
as written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and
singing, as David had ordained.
19 He stationed gatekeepers at the gates of the
house of the LORD, so that no one who was in any
way unclean could enter.
20 He took the commanders of hundreds, the
nobles, the rulers of the people and all the people
of the land, and they brought the king down from
the house of the LORD. They went through the
Upper Gate into the palace and seated the king on
the royal throne.
21 All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city
was quiet, for Athaliah had been put to the sword.

1 Chapter 23 follows 2 Kings 11:4–20. In Chronicles the guard is made up of priests and Levites, so that no layman enters the LORD's house (verse 6).

2 Called the Sur Gate in 2 Kings 11:6.

3 That is, remain outside in the courts.

4 Probably a copy of the covenant law; compare Deuteronomy 17:18–20.

Chapter 24

2 Chronicles 24 tells how Joash becomes king at seven and does what is right while Jehoiada the priest lives. He resolves to restore the house of the LORD, and when the Levites are slow to collect the money, he has a chest placed at the gate for the tax Moses laid on Israel. Leaders and people give gladly, the chest is emptied day after day, and craftsmen restore the house to its proper condition, with the surplus made into vessels. Jehoiada dies at a hundred and thirty and is buried among the kings for the good he has done. Afterwards the officials of Judah win the king over, and they abandon the LORD's house to serve Asherah poles and idols. The LORD sends prophets to warn them, and the Spirit of God clothes Zechariah son of Jehoiada, who declares that because they have abandoned the LORD, He has abandoned them. At the king's command they stone him in the temple court, and as he dies he says, "May the LORD see this and call you to account!" Within the year a small Aramean force defeats Judah's great army and executes judgement on Joash. Wounded, he is murdered in his bed by his officials for the blood of Jehoiada's son, and buried in the City of David but not in the tombs of the kings. His son Amaziah succeeds him.

1 Joash was seven years old when he became king,
and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His
mother's name was Zibiah; she was from
Beersheba.[1]

2 As long as Jehoiada the priest lived, Joash did
what the LORD saw as right.

3 Jehoiada chose two wives for him, and he had
sons and daughters.

4 Some time later Joash decided to restore the
house of the LORD.

5 He gathered the priests and the Levites and said
to them, "Go out to the towns of Judah and collect
from all Israel the money due each year to repair
the house of your God. Do it quickly." But the
Levites did not act quickly.

6 So the king summoned Jehoiada the chief priest
and said to him, "Why have you not required the
Levites to bring in from Judah and Jerusalem the
tax that Moses the servant of the LORD and the
assembly of Israel laid on them for the Tent of the
Testimony?"[2]

7 For the sons of that wicked woman Athaliah had
broken into the house of God and had even used
its sacred objects for the Baals.

8 So at the king's order a chest was made and
placed outside the gate of the LORD's house.

9 A proclamation was issued throughout Judah and
Jerusalem that they should bring to the LORD the
tax that Moses the servant of God had laid on
Israel in the wilderness.

10 All the officials and all the people gladly brought
their money and dropped it into the chest until it
was full.

11 Whenever the chest was brought by the Levites
to the king's officials and they saw that there was
a large amount of money, the king's secretary and
the officer of the chief priest would come, empty
the chest, and carry it back to its place. They did
this day after day and collected a great amount of
money.

12 The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did
the work on the house of the LORD. They hired
masons and carpenters to restore the house of the
LORD, and also workers in iron and bronze to
repair it.

13 The workmen were diligent, and the repairs
progressed under their hands. They restored the
house of God to its proper design and
strengthened it.

14 When they had finished, they brought the rest of
the money to the king and Jehoiada, and with it
were made articles for the house of the LORD:
articles for the service and for the burnt offerings,
dishes, and other vessels of gold and silver. Burnt
offerings were offered in the house of the LORD
continually as long as Jehoiada lived.

15 Jehoiada grew old and full of years, and he died
at the age of a hundred and thirty.

16 He was buried among the kings in the City of
David, for the good he had done in Israel for God
and for His house.

17 But once Jehoiada was dead, Judah's officials
came and paid homage to the king, and he
listened to their advice.

18 They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God
of their ancestors, and served the Asherah poles
and the idols. Because of this guilt, wrath came
upon Judah and Jerusalem.

19 Yet the LORD sent prophets among them to
bring them back to Him, and they warned them,
but the people would not listen.

20 Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood above the people and said to them, “This is what God says: ‘Why do you break the LORD’s commandments? You will not prosper. Because you have abandoned the LORD, He has abandoned you.’”

21 But they conspired against him, and at the king’s command they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD.[3]

22 King Joash did not remember the loyal kindness that Zechariah’s father Jehoiada had shown him, but killed his son. As he was dying, he said, “May the LORD see this and call you to account!”

23 At the turn of the year the army of Aram marched against Joash. They invaded Judah and Jerusalem, wiped out all the leaders of the people, and sent all their plunder to the king of Damascus.

24 Although the army of Aram had come with only a few men, the LORD handed over to them a very large army, because Judah had abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors. So judgement was carried out on Joash.

25 When the Arameans withdrew, they left Joash severely wounded. His officials conspired against him because of the blood of the son[4] of Jehoiada the priest, and they killed him in his bed. So he died, and they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

26 Those who conspired against him were Zabad son of Shimeath the Ammonite woman and Jehozabad son of Shimrith the Moabite woman.[5]

27 The account of his sons, the many prophecies against him, and the rebuilding of the house of God are recorded in the commentary on the Book of the Kings. And his son Amaziah succeeded him as king.

1 Verses 1–14 follow 2 Kings 11:21–12:16, with differences in the account of the collection.

2 See Exodus 30:12–16.

3 Jesus recalls this murder in Matthew 23:35 and Luke 11:51. Chronicles is the last book of the Hebrew Bible, so Abel and Zechariah are the first and last martyrs in its order. Matthew’s ‘son of Berekiah’ may reflect Zechariah 1:1 or a family link.

4 So the Greek and Latin; the Hebrew has ‘sons’.

5 2 Kings 12:21 names them Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer.

Chapter 25

2 Chronicles 25 tells how Amaziah becomes king at twenty-five and does what is right, but not wholeheartedly. He executes his father’s murderers but spares their children, as the Law of Moses commands. He musters three hundred thousand men of Judah and hires a hundred thousand from Israel for a hundred talents of silver, but a man of God warns him that the LORD is not with Ephraim, so he sends the hired troops home; angered, they raid the towns of Judah. Amaziah defeats the Edomites in the Valley of Salt, but brings back their gods and worships them. A prophet rebukes him for seeking gods that could not save their own people, and Amaziah silences him; the prophet replies that God has resolved to destroy him. Amaziah challenges Jehoash king of Israel, who answers with the fable of the thistle and the cedar. Because God has determined to hand Judah over, the armies meet at Beth-shemesh; Judah is routed, Amaziah is captured, and Jehoash breaks down Jerusalem’s wall and plunders the house of God. From the time Amaziah turns from the LORD, there is a conspiracy against him; he flees to Lachish and is killed there.

1 Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jehoaddan; she was from Jerusalem.[1]

2 He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a whole heart.

3 As soon as the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, he executed the officials who had murdered his father the king.

4 Yet he did not put their children to death, in keeping with what is written in the Law, in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded: “Fathers are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin.”[2]

5 Amaziah assembled the people of Judah and assigned them by families to commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds for all Judah and Benjamin. He mustered those twenty years old and upward and found that there were three hundred thousand picked men fit for military service, able to handle spear and shield.

6 He also hired a hundred thousand mighty warriors from Israel for a hundred talents[3] of silver.

7 But a man of God came to him and said, “O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel, with any of the people of Ephraim.

8 Even if you go and fight bravely in battle, God will bring you down before the enemy, for God has the power to help or to overthrow.”

9 Amaziah asked the man of God, “But what about the hundred talents I have paid for these Israelite troops?” The man of God replied, “The LORD can give you much more than that.”

10 So Amaziah dismissed the troops who had come to him from Ephraim and sent them home. They were furious with Judah and went home in a rage.

11 Then Amaziah took courage and led his army to the Valley of Salt, where he struck down ten thousand men of Seir.

12 The army of Judah also captured ten thousand men alive, took them to the top of a cliff and threw them down from the top, so that they were all dashed to pieces.

13 Meanwhile the troops Amaziah had sent back and not allowed to go with him to battle raided the towns of Judah from Samaria to Beth-horon. They killed three thousand people and carried off a great deal of plunder.

14 After Amaziah returned from slaughtering the Edomites, he brought back the gods of the people of Seir. He set them up as his own gods, bowed down to them and burned incense to them.

15 The LORD’s anger burned against Amaziah, and He sent a prophet to him, who said, “Why have you sought the gods of this people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?”

16 The king cut him short. “Did we make you the king’s adviser? Be quiet! Do you want to be killed?” So the prophet held his peace, though he added, “Now I know that God has resolved to destroy you, since you have done this and refused my advice.”

17 Then Amaziah king of Judah took counsel and sent messengers to Jehoash[4] son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, “Come, let us face each other in battle.”

18 But Jehoash king of Israel replied to Amaziah king of Judah, “A thistle in Lebanon sent word to a cedar in Lebanon, ‘Give your daughter to my son in marriage.’ Then a wild animal in Lebanon came by and trampled the thistle underfoot.

19 You say, ‘See, I have defeated Edom,’ and now you are proud and boastful. Stay at home! Why stir up trouble that will bring you down, and Judah with you?”

20 Amaziah, however, refused to listen, for this was God’s doing, so that He might hand them over, because they had sought the gods of Edom.

21 So Jehoash king of Israel marched out, and he and Amaziah king of Judah met in battle at Beth-shemesh in Judah.

22 Judah was routed by Israel, and every man fled to his home.

23 Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, son of Joash, son of Jehoahaz,[5] at Beth-shemesh. Then he brought him to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate, a stretch of four hundred cubits.[6]

24 He took all the gold and silver and all the articles found in the house of God in the care of Obed-edom, together with the treasures of the royal palace. He also took hostages and returned to Samaria.

25 After Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, Israel’s king, died, Amaziah son of Joash, Judah’s king, lived on for fifteen years.

26 The other events of Amaziah’s reign, from first to last, are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

27 From the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD, a plot was hatched against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish, but they sent after him to Lachish and put him to death there.

28 He was brought back on horses and was buried with his ancestors in the city of Judah.[7]

1 Verses 1–4, 11 and 17–28 follow 2 Kings 14:2–20.

2 Deuteronomy 24:16.

3 About 3.4 tonnes.

4 Hebrew ‘Joash’, a shorter form of the same name. Here and below he is called Jehoash, as in 2 Kings 13–14, to distinguish him from Joash of Judah.

5 That is, Ahaziah; compare 21:17 and 2 Kings 14:13.

6 About 180 metres (600 feet).

7 That is, the City of David, as in 2 Kings 14:20.

Chapter 26

2 Chronicles 26 tells how the people of Judah make sixteen-year-old Uzziah king. He rebuilds Elath and reigns fifty-two years, doing what is right and seeking God in the days of Zechariah, who instructs him in the fear of God; as long as he seeks the LORD, God gives him success. He wars against the Philistines, the Arabs and the Meunites, receives tribute from the Ammonites, and his fame spreads as far as Egypt. He builds towers in Jerusalem and the wilderness, digs cisterns, and loves the soil, keeping herds, farmers and vinedressers. He has a well-equipped army and ingenious machines to shoot arrows and great stones from the walls. But when he becomes strong, his pride leads to his downfall: he enters the LORD’s temple to burn incense, and Azariah the priest with eighty brave priests confronts him, for only the consecrated sons of Aaron may burn incense. As Uzziah rages at them with a censer in his hand, a skin disease breaks out on his forehead, and they hurry him out. He remains diseased until his death, living in a separate house, cut off from the LORD’s house, while his son Jotham governs. Isaiah the prophet records his acts, and he is buried in a field belonging to the kings.

1 Then the whole people of Judah chose Uzziah,[1] then sixteen years old, and crowned him king to succeed his father Amaziah.

2 It was he who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after the king rested with his ancestors.

3 Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jecoliah; she was from Jerusalem.

4 He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done.

5 He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear[2] of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.

6 He went out and made war on the Philistines, and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod. He built towns in the region of Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines.

7 God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabs who lived in Gur-baal, and against the Meunites.

8 The Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread as far as the border of Egypt, for he had become very powerful.

9 In Jerusalem Uzziah built and fortified towers over the Corner Gate, over the Valley Gate and at the angle of the wall.

10 He also built towers in the wilderness and dug many cisterns, for he had large herds in the lowlands and on the plain. He had farmers and vinedressers in the hills and in the fertile lands,[3] for he loved the soil.

11 Uzziah had a trained army, ready to go out to war by divisions according to the numbers in the muster made by Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer, under the direction of Hananiah, one of the king’s commanders.

12 The total number of family heads over the mighty warriors was two thousand six hundred.

13 Under their command was an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred men trained for war, a powerful force to support the king against his enemies.

14 Uzziah provided the whole army with shields, spears, helmets, body armour, bows and slingstones.

15 In Jerusalem he made machines designed by skilled men, to be placed on the towers and the corner defences, for shooting arrows and hurling large stones. His fame spread far and wide, for he was wonderfully helped until he became strong.

16 But when he had become strong, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

17 Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD.

18 They confronted King Uzziah and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful, and you will receive no honour from the LORD God.”

19 Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests, in their presence in the house of the LORD beside the altar of incense, a skin disease broke out on his forehead.

20 When Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, there was the skin disease on his forehead. They hurried him out of there, and he himself hastened to get out, because the LORD had struck him.

21 King Uzziah had a skin disease until the day of his death. He lived in a separate house,[4] diseased and cut off from the house of the LORD, while his son Jotham was in charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

22 The other events of Uzziah’s reign, from first to last, were recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.[5]

23 Uzziah rested with his ancestors and was buried near them in a burial field that belonged to the kings, for they said, “He had a skin disease.” And his son Jotham succeeded him as king.

1 Called Azariah in 2 Kings 14:21 and 15:1–7, and in 1 Chronicles 3:12.

2 So many Hebrew manuscripts and the ancient versions; most manuscripts have ‘in the seeing’.

3 Or ‘on Carmel’.

4 Or ‘a house of freedom’, that is, released from duties.

5 Compare Isaiah 1:1 and 6:1.

Chapter 27

2 Chronicles 27 tells how Jotham becomes king at twenty-five and reigns sixteen years in Jerusalem. He does what is right, as his father Uzziah did, though he does not enter the temple of the LORD, and the people still act corruptly. He rebuilds the Upper Gate of the LORD’s house, works on the wall of Ophel, and builds towns, forts and towers. He defeats the Ammonites, who pay him silver, wheat and barley for three years. Jotham grows powerful because he orders his ways before the LORD his God. He rests with his ancestors, and his son Ahaz succeeds him.

1 Jotham came to the throne at twenty-five and ruled in Jerusalem for sixteen years. His mother was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.[1]

2 He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done, except that he did not go into the temple of the LORD.[2] But the people went on in their corrupt ways.

3 He rebuilt the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD and did much work on the wall of Ophel.

4 He built towns in the hill country of Judah, and forts and towers in the wooded areas.

5 He made war on the king of the Ammonites and overcame them. That year the Ammonites paid him a hundred talents[3] of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat and ten thousand of barley.[4] The Ammonites paid him the same in the second and third years.

6 Jotham grew powerful because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God.

7 The other events of Jotham’s reign, all his wars and all that he did, are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

8 He had come to the throne at twenty-five and ruled in Jerusalem for sixteen years.

9 Jotham rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. And his son Ahaz succeeded him as king.

1 Verses 1–3 and 7–9 follow 2 Kings 15:33–38.

2 That is, he did not repeat Uzziah’s offence (26:16).

3 About 3.4 tonnes.

4 About 2,200,000 litres (480,000 gallons) of each.

Chapter 28

2 Chronicles 28 tells how Ahaz becomes king at twenty and does not do what is right. He makes images for the Baals, burns incense in the Valley of Ben-hinnom and burns his sons in the fire. So the LORD hands him over to the king of Aram and to Pekah of Israel, who kills a hundred and twenty thousand men of Judah in one day and carries off two hundred thousand women and children. In Samaria the prophet Oded meets the returning army: they have killed in a rage that reaches to heaven, and must not enslave their brothers but send them back. Leaders of Ephraim stand with him; the captives are clothed, fed, anointed and brought to Jericho. Ahaz appeals to the kings of Assyria while Edomites and Philistines invade, for the LORD is humbling Judah. Tiglath-pileser oppresses rather than helps him, though Ahaz strips the temple to pay him. In his distress Ahaz is more unfaithful still: he sacrifices to the gods of Damascus, cuts up the vessels of God's house, shuts its doors, and sets up altars on every street corner. He is buried in Jerusalem, but not in the tombs of the kings, and his son Hezekiah succeeds him.

1 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king,
and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did
not do what was right in the sight of the LORD, as
his ancestor David had done.[1]

2 He followed the kings of Israel in their ways, and
even cast metal images for the Baals.

3 He burned incense in the Valley of Ben-hinnom
and burned his sons in the fire,[2] following the
detestable practices of the nations the LORD had
driven out before the Israelites.

4 He sacrificed and burned incense at the high
places and on the hilltops, and beneath every
spreading tree.

5 So the LORD his God handed him over to the
king of Aram, who defeated him, took many of his
people captive and brought them to Damascus. He
was also handed over to the king of Israel, who
inflicted heavy losses on him.

6 In one day Pekah son of Remaliah killed a
hundred and twenty thousand men in Judah, all of
them brave soldiers, because they had abandoned
the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

7 Zichri, a warrior from Ephraim, killed Maaseiah
the king's son, Azrikam the officer in charge of the
palace, and Elkanah, who was second to the king.

8 The Israelites took captive from their own kin
two hundred thousand women, boys and girls.
They also carried off a great quantity of plunder
and brought it to Samaria.

9 A prophet of the LORD named Oded was there,
and he went out to meet the army as it came to
Samaria. He said to them, "It was because the
LORD, the God of your ancestors, was angry with
Judah that He handed them over to you. But you
have slaughtered them in a rage that has reached
up to heaven.

10 And now you intend to make the people of Judah
and Jerusalem your male and female slaves. Are
you yourselves not guilty of sins against the LORD
your God?

11 Now listen to me! Send back these captives you
have taken from your own kin, for the LORD's
fierce anger is upon you."

12 Then some of the leaders of the Ephraimites,
Azariah son of Johanan, Berechiah son of
Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum and
Amasa son of Hadlai, stood up against those
returning from the war.

13 "You must not bring the captives here," they
said, "for you intend to bring guilt before the
LORD upon us, adding to our sins and our guilt.
Our guilt is already great, and fierce anger hangs
over Israel."

14 So the armed men left the captives and the
plunder in the presence of the officials and all the
assembly.

15 The men named above got up and took charge of
the captives. From the plunder they clothed all
who were naked, giving them garments and
sandals, food and drink, and anointing them with
oil. All who were too weak to walk they put on
donkeys, and they brought them to their kinsmen
at Jericho, the City of Palms.[3] Then they returned
to Samaria.

16 It was then that King Ahaz appealed to the
kings[4] of Assyria to come to his aid.

17 The Edomites had again invaded, defeated Judah
and carried off captives.

18 The Philistines had also raided the towns of the
lowlands and the Negev of Judah, and had
captured and occupied Beth-shemesh, Aijalon and
Gederoth, as well as Soco, Timnah and Gimzo with
their villages.

19 The LORD humbled Judah because of Ahaz king
of Israel,[5] for he had let Judah run wild and had
been utterly unfaithful to the LORD.

20 Tiglath-pileser[6] king of Assyria came against him
and oppressed him instead of strengthening him.

21 Ahaz took a share of the wealth of the house of
the LORD, the palace and the officials and gave it
to the king of Assyria, but it did not help him.

22 In the time of his distress King Ahaz became still
more unfaithful to the LORD.

23 He sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, which
had defeated him. “The gods of the kings of Aram
have helped them,” he said, “so I will sacrifice to
them, and they will help me.” But they brought
about his downfall and that of all Israel.

24 Ahaz gathered the vessels of the house of God
and cut them in pieces. He shut the doors of the
house of the LORD and set up altars for himself on
every street corner in Jerusalem.

25 In every town of Judah he built high places to
burn incense to other gods, and so provoked the
LORD, the God of his ancestors, to anger.

26 The other events of his reign and all that he did,
from first to last, are recorded in the Book of the
Kings of Judah and Israel.

27 Ahaz rested with his ancestors and was buried
in the city, in Jerusalem, but they did not bring
him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. And his
son Hezekiah succeeded him as king.

1 Verses 1–4 follow 2 Kings 16:2–4; the rest of the chapter tells the story of 2 Kings 16:5–20 in its own way. Compare Isaiah 7.
2 2 Kings 16:3 has ‘made his son pass through the fire’.
3 This act of mercy on the road to Jericho may lie behind the parable in Luke 10:30–35.
4 So the Hebrew; the Greek, Syriac and Latin have ‘king’. Compare verse 20.
5 Compare the note at 21:2.
6 Hebrew ‘Tilgath-pilneser’, a variant spelling; compare 1 Chronicles 5:6.

Chapter 29

2 Chronicles 29 tells how Hezekiah becomes king at twenty-five and does what is right, as David did. In the first month of his first year he opens and repairs the doors of the LORD’s house and calls the priests and Levites to consecrate themselves and cleanse the sanctuary, for their fathers were unfaithful, and wrath has fallen on Judah. He intends to make a covenant with the LORD, and they must not be negligent. The Levites assemble, the priests carry out the uncleanness to the Kidron Valley, and in sixteen days the house is consecrated. Hezekiah gathers the city officials and brings seven each of bulls, rams, lambs and male goats as a sin offering for the kingdom, the sanctuary and Judah, making atonement for all Israel. He stations the Levites with David’s instruments and the priests with trumpets; when the burnt offering begins, the song to the LORD begins too, and the whole assembly worships. The people bring sacrifices and thank offerings in such numbers that the Levites must help the priests. So the service of the LORD’s house is restored, and Hezekiah and the people rejoice at what God has done so suddenly.

1 Hezekiah came to the throne at twenty-five and
ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years. His
mother was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.[1]

2 He did what was right in the sight of the LORD,
just as his ancestor David had done.

3 In the first month of the first year of his reign he
opened the doors of the house of the LORD and
repaired them.

4 He brought in the priests and the Levites,
gathered them in the square on the east side,

5 and said to them, “Listen to me, you Levites!
Consecrate yourselves now, and consecrate the
house of the LORD, the God of your ancestors.
Remove all that defiles it from the holy place.

6 For our fathers have been unfaithful and have
done what was evil in the sight of the LORD our
God. They abandoned Him, turned their faces
away from the LORD’s dwelling and turned their
backs on Him.

7 They also shut the doors of the porch and put out
the lamps. They have burned no incense and
offered no burnt offerings in the holy place to the
God of Israel.

8 So the LORD’s wrath has fallen on Judah and
Jerusalem, and He has made them an object of
terror, horror and scorn, as you can see with your
own eyes.

9 That is why our fathers have fallen by the sword,
and our sons, our daughters and our wives are in

captivity.

10 Now I intend to make a covenant with the
LORD, the God of Israel, so that His fierce anger
may turn away from us.

11 My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD
has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him,
and to be His ministers and burn incense to Him."

12 Then the Levites set to work: from the
Kohathites, Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of
Azariah; from the Merarites, Kish son of Abdi and
Azariah son of Jehallelel; from the Gershonites,
Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah;

13 from the descendants of Elizaphan, Shimri and
Jeiel; from the descendants of Asaph, Zechariah
and Mattaniah;

14 from the descendants of Heman, Jehiel and
Shimei; and from the descendants of Jeduthun,
Shemaiah and Uzziel.

15 They gathered their brothers, consecrated
themselves and went in to cleanse the house of
the LORD, as the king had commanded by the
words of the LORD.

16 The priests entered the inner part of the LORD's
house to cleanse it. Everything unclean they found
in the temple they brought out into its court, and
from there the Levites took it away to the Kidron
Valley outside.

17 They began the consecration on the first day of
the first month, and on the eighth day of the
month they reached the porch of the LORD. For
eight more days they consecrated the house of the
LORD, and on the sixteenth day of the first month
they finished.

18 Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said,
"We have cleansed the whole house of the LORD,
the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and
the table for the rows of bread with all its utensils.

19 We have prepared and consecrated all the
utensils that King Ahaz cast aside during his reign
in his unfaithfulness. They are now in front of the
altar of the LORD."

20 Early next morning King Hezekiah gathered the
officials of the city and went up to the house of the
LORD.

21 They brought seven each of bulls, rams, lambs
and male goats, a sin offering for the kingdom, the
sanctuary and Judah, and he told the priests,
Aaron's sons, to offer them on the LORD's altar.

22 So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests
took the blood and splashed it on the altar. They
slaughtered the rams and splashed their blood on
the altar, and they slaughtered the lambs and
splashed their blood on the altar.

23 Then the goats for the sin offering were brought
before the king and the assembly, and they laid
their hands on them.

24 The priests slaughtered them and presented
their blood on the altar as a sin offering, to make
atonement for all Israel, for the king had ordered
the burnt offering and the sin offering for all
Israel.

25 He stationed the Levites in the house of the
LORD with cymbals, harps and lyres, as
commanded by David, by Gad the king's seer and
by Nathan the prophet; for the command came
from the LORD through His prophets.

26 So the Levites took their places with David's
instruments, and the priests with their trumpets.

27 Hezekiah gave the order to offer the burnt
offering on the altar. As the offering began, the
song to the LORD began as well, with the
trumpets and the instruments of David king of
Israel.

28 The whole assembly worshipped, while the
singers sang and the trumpeters played, until the
burnt offering was finished.

29 When the offering was over, the king and all who
were with him knelt down and worshipped.

30 King Hezekiah and the officials told the Levites
to praise the LORD in the words of David and of
Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with joy, and
they bowed down and worshipped.

31 Then Hezekiah said, "Now that you have
consecrated yourselves[2] to the LORD, come and
bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house
of the LORD." So the assembly brought sacrifices
and thank offerings, and all whose hearts were
willing brought burnt offerings.

32 The number of burnt offerings the assembly
brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams and
two hundred lambs, all as burnt offerings to the
LORD.

33 The consecrated offerings were six hundred
cattle and three thousand sheep and goats.

34 But there were too few priests to skin all the
burnt offerings, so their brothers the Levites
helped them until the work was finished and until
the other priests had consecrated themselves; for

the Levites had been more conscientious in consecrating themselves than the priests.

35 Besides the great number of burnt offerings, there was the fat of the peace offerings and the drink offerings for the burnt offerings. So the service of the house of the LORD was re-established.

36 Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had done for the people, because it had happened so suddenly.

1 Called Abi in 2 Kings 18:2. Chapters 29–31 go far beyond the brief account in 2 Kings 18:1–6.
2 Hebrew ‘filled your hand’; compare 13:9.

Chapter 30

2 Chronicles 30 tells how Hezekiah invites all Israel and Judah, including Ephraim and Manasseh, to keep the Passover at Jerusalem. Because the priests are not ready and the people have not gathered, the king and assembly agree to hold it in the second month. Couriers carry letters from Beersheba to Dan, calling the Israelites to return to the LORD, who will return to the remnant left by the kings of Assyria, for He is gracious and compassionate. Many laugh them to scorn, but some from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humble themselves and come, and God’s hand gives Judah one heart. A great crowd assembles, removes the altars from Jerusalem, and slaughters the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. Many from the north eat without being cleansed, but Hezekiah prays that the good LORD will pardon everyone who sets his heart on seeking God, and the LORD hears him and heals the people. They keep the festival for seven days with great joy, then agree to keep seven days more. Nothing like it has been seen in Jerusalem since Solomon’s time, and the priests’ prayer reaches heaven, God’s holy dwelling.

1 Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to come to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem to keep the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel.

2 The king, his officials and the whole assembly in Jerusalem had decided to keep the Passover in the second month.[1]

3 They had not been able to keep it at the proper time, because too few priests had consecrated themselves and the people had not gathered in Jerusalem.

4 The plan seemed right to the king and to the whole assembly.

5 So they issued a decree to send a proclamation throughout Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that the people should come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel; for it had not been kept by so many as the law prescribed.

6 The couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his officials, and at the king’s command they said, “People of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, so that He may return to those of you who have escaped from the power of the kings of Assyria.

7 Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD, the God of their ancestors, so that He made them an object of horror, as you see.

8 Do not be stiff-necked as your fathers were. Yield yourselves to the LORD and come to His sanctuary, which He has consecrated for ever. Serve the LORD your God, so that His fierce anger may turn away from you.

9 For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your children will find mercy with their captors and will return to this land. The LORD your God is gracious and compassionate, and He will not turn His face from you if you return to Him.”

10 The couriers went from town to town through the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun, but the people laughed at them and mocked them.

11 Even so, some from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and made the journey to Jerusalem.

12 In Judah too the hand of God was at work to give them one heart to carry out what the king and the officials had commanded by the word of the LORD.

13 So a huge crowd, a very great assembly, gathered in Jerusalem in the second month to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

14 They set to work and removed the altars in Jerusalem, and they took away all the incense

altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley.

15 They slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed, and they consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the house of the LORD.

16 They took up their regular positions, as prescribed in the Law of Moses the man of God. The priests splashed the blood they received from the Levites.

17 Because many in the assembly had not consecrated themselves, the Levites were in charge of slaughtering the Passover lambs for all who were not clean, to consecrate them to the LORD.

18 For a great many of the people, many of them from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, “May the good LORD pardon

19 everyone who sets his heart on seeking God, the LORD, the God of his ancestors, even if he is not clean by the rules of the sanctuary.”

20 And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

21 The Israelites who were in Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy, while the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day after day with loud instruments.[2]

22 Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good understanding in the service of the LORD. For the seven days of the festival they ate their portions, offering peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

23 Then the whole assembly agreed to keep the festival for seven more days, and they kept them with joy.

24 For Hezekiah king of Judah provided the assembly with a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep and goats, and the officials provided them with a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep and goats. Priests consecrated themselves in great numbers.

25 The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, together with the priests and the Levites, all the assembly who had come from Israel, and the foreigners who had come from the land of Israel or who lived in Judah.

26 There was great joy in Jerusalem, for nothing like this had happened in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel.

27 Then the Levitical priests stood up and blessed the people. Their voice was heard, and their prayer reached heaven, His holy dwelling place.

1 The law allowed the second month for those who were unclean or away on a journey (Numbers 9:9–11).

2 Or ‘with all their strength’; compare 1 Chronicles 13:8.

Chapter 31

2 Chronicles 31 tells how, after the festival, the Israelites go out and smash the sacred stones and Asherah poles and tear down the high places throughout Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh. Hezekiah organises the priests and Levites in their divisions and gives from his own possessions for the burnt offerings. He orders the people of Jerusalem to give the priests and Levites their portion, so that they may devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. The people respond generously with firstfruits and tithes, heaping them up from the third month to the seventh. Azariah the chief priest tells Hezekiah that they have eaten their fill with plenty left over, for the LORD has blessed His people. Storerooms are prepared in the LORD’s house, Conaniah and his brother Shimei are put in charge, and Kore and his helpers distribute the gifts fairly to the priests and Levites and their families in all their towns. Hezekiah does what is good, right and true before the LORD; in all that he undertakes, seeking his God with all his heart, he prospers.

1 When all this was over, all the Israelites who were there went out to the towns of Judah and smashed the sacred stones, cut down the Asherah poles, and tore down the high places and the altars throughout Judah and Benjamin and in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the Israelites returned to their own towns, each to his own property.

2 Hezekiah appointed the priests and the Levites by their divisions, each according to his service, for the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, to

minister, to give thanks and to praise at the gates of the LORD's camp.[1]

3 The king's own share from his possessions went to the burnt offerings, the morning and evening offerings and the burnt offerings on Sabbaths, New Moons and appointed feasts, as written in the Law of the LORD.

4 He told the people living in Jerusalem to give the priests and the Levites their portion, so that they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD.

5 As soon as the order went out, the Israelites gave in abundance the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and of all the produce of the field. They brought a tithe of everything in great quantity.

6 The people of Israel and Judah living in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of cattle and sheep, and a tithe of the holy things consecrated to the LORD their God, and they piled them up in great heaps.

7 They began to pile up the heaps in the third month and finished in the seventh.[2]

8 Hezekiah and his officials came to view the heaps, and they praised the LORD and blessed His people Israel.

9 Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites about the heaps,

10 and Azariah the chief priest, of the house of Zadok, answered him, "Ever since the people began to bring their offerings to the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat with plenty to spare, for the LORD has blessed His people, and this great store is what is left over."

11 Hezekiah ordered storerooms to be prepared in the house of the LORD, and they prepared them.

12 They faithfully brought in the offerings, the tithes and the consecrated things. Conaniah the Levite was in charge of them, and his brother Shimei was next in rank.

13 Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath and Benaiah were overseers under Conaniah and his brother Shimei, by appointment of King Hezekiah and Azariah the chief officer of the house of God.

14 Kore son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the East Gate, was in charge of the freewill offerings to God, to distribute the LORD's offerings and the most holy things.

15 Under him in the towns of the priests, Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah and Shecaniah faithfully distributed to their brothers by their divisions, great and small alike.

16 They also gave to males three years old and upward who were enrolled in the genealogies,[3] to all who entered the house of the LORD for their daily duties, for their service by their divisions.

17 The priests were enrolled by their families, and the Levites twenty years old and upward by their duties and their divisions.

18 The enrolment included all their little ones, their wives, their sons and their daughters, the whole company, for they were faithful in keeping themselves consecrated.

19 As for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who lived on the farmlands around their towns, men were designated by name in every town to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to everyone enrolled among the Levites.

20 This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah. He did what was good, right and true before the LORD his God.

21 In all that he undertook in the service of the house of God, and in keeping the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he worked with all his heart, and he prospered.

1 That is, the temple, pictured as the camp around the Tabernacle.

2 From the grain harvest (May–June) to the end of the fruit harvest (September–October).

3 Some read 'thirty years', as in 1 Chronicles 23:3.

Chapter 32

2 Chronicles 32 tells how, after these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria invades Judah and plans to attack Jerusalem. Hezekiah stops up the springs outside the city, repairs the wall and appoints commanders, telling the people to be strong, for with Assyria is only human might, but with Judah is the LORD. Sennacherib's officers mock Hezekiah's reforms and boast that no god has saved its people from Assyria, and shout in Hebrew to terrify those on the wall. Hezekiah and Isaiah pray, and the LORD sends an angel who destroys the Assyrian leaders; Sennacherib goes home in shame and is killed in the temple of his god. The LORD saves Jerusalem, and many bring gifts. Hezekiah falls ill and prays, and the LORD gives him a sign, but his heart grows proud; then he humbles himself, and wrath does not come in his days. He gains great wealth and channels the Gihon waters into the City of David. God leaves him to himself when envoys come from Babylon, to test him. He is buried with honour, and his son Manasseh succeeds him.

1 After these acts of faithfulness Sennacherib king
of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege
to the fortified towns, intending to break into
them.[1]

2 When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come
and intended to make war on Jerusalem,

3 he planned with his officials and his warriors to
stop the flow of the springs outside the city, and
they helped him.

4 A great many people gathered and stopped up all
the springs and the stream that flowed through
the land. "Why should the kings of Assyria come
and find plenty of water?" they said.

5 Then Hezekiah set to work with determination.
He rebuilt all the broken sections of the wall and
raised towers on it.[2] He built another wall outside
it, strengthened the Millo[3] in the City of David,
and made a great quantity of weapons and shields.

6 He appointed military commanders over the
people and gathered them to him in the square at
the city gate. He encouraged them, saying,

7 "Be strong and resolute! Do not be afraid or
dismayed because of the king of Assyria and the
great horde with him, for there is a greater power
with us than with him.

8 He has only human strength, but the LORD our
God is on our side to help us and fight our
battles." And Hezekiah's words gave the people of
Judah confidence.

9 After this Sennacherib king of Assyria, while he
and all his forces were besieging Lachish, sent his
officers to Jerusalem with a message for Hezekiah
king of Judah and all the people of Judah who
were in Jerusalem:

10 "This is what Sennacherib king of Assyria says:
What is this confidence of yours based on, that
you stay in Jerusalem under siege?

11 Is Hezekiah not misleading you, to give you over
to death by hunger and thirst, when he says, 'The
LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the
king of Assyria'?

12 Is He not the one whose high places and altars
Hezekiah has removed, telling Judah and
Jerusalem, 'You must worship before one altar and
burn your offerings on it'?

13 You know what I and my fathers have done to all
the peoples of other lands. Could the gods of those
nations ever save their lands from me?

14 Who among all the gods of these nations that my
fathers utterly destroyed has been able to deliver
his people from my hand, that your God should be
able to deliver you from my hand?

15 So now, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or
mislead you in this way. Do not believe him, for no
god of any nation or kingdom has been able to
deliver his people from my hand or from the hand
of my fathers. How much less will your God
deliver you from my hand!"

16 His officers spoke still more against the LORD
God and against His servant Hezekiah.

17 The king also wrote letters insulting the LORD,
the God of Israel, and speaking against Him: "As
the gods of the nations of the lands did not deliver
their people from my hand, so the God of
Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my
hand."

18 They shouted in Hebrew[4] to the people of
Jerusalem on the wall, to frighten and terrify them
so that they could capture the city.

19 They spoke of Jerusalem's God as if He were like
the gods of the world's peoples, things made by
human hands.

20 Because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet
Isaiah son of Amoz prayed and cried out to
heaven.

21 And the LORD sent an angel, who wiped out every mighty warrior, leader and commander in the camp of the king of Assyria. So Sennacherib returned to his own land in disgrace. When he entered the temple of his god, some of his own sons struck him down with the sword.

22 So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all others, and He gave them rest[5] on every side.

23 Many brought gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem and valuable presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, and from then on he was held in high regard by all the nations.

24 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a sign.[6]

25 But Hezekiah did not respond to the kindness shown him, for his heart grew proud, and wrath came upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

26 Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the people of Jerusalem, so that the LORD's wrath did not come on them in the days of Hezekiah.

27 Hezekiah had very great wealth and honour. He made himself treasuries for silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuable articles.

28 He also made storehouses for the harvest of grain, new wine and oil, stalls for all kinds of cattle, and pens for the flocks.

29 He built towns for himself and acquired flocks and herds in abundance, for God had given him very great possessions.

30 It was Hezekiah who blocked the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and channelled them down to the west side of the City of David.[7] Hezekiah prospered in all that he did.

31 But when the envoys of the rulers of Babylon were sent to him to enquire about the sign that had occurred in the land, God left him to himself, to test him and to know all that was in his heart.[8]

32 The other events of Hezekiah's reign and his acts of loyal kindness are recorded in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

33 Hezekiah rested with his ancestors and was buried on the ascent to the tombs of David's descendants. All Judah and the people of Jerusalem honoured him at his death. And his son Manasseh succeeded him as king.

1 In 701 BC. The chapter retells 2 Kings 18:13–20:21 and Isaiah 36–39 in shorter form.

2 Or 'raised it up to the towers'.

3 Probably the terraces or embankment of the City of David; compare 1 Kings 9:15.

4 Literally 'in Judean'; compare 2 Kings 18:26.

5 So the Greek and Latin; the Hebrew has 'guided them'.

6 See 2 Kings 20:1–11 and Isaiah 38.

7 Hezekiah's tunnel, some 530 metres (1,750 feet) long, still survives; compare 2 Kings 20:20.

8 See 2 Kings 20:12–19 and Isaiah 39.

Chapter 33

2 Chronicles 33 tells how Manasseh comes to the throne at twelve and rules fifty-five years. He does evil, following the detestable practices of the nations: he rebuilds the high places, sets up altars for the Baals and the host of heaven even in the LORD's house, makes his sons pass through the fire in the Valley of Ben-hinnom, practises sorcery, and sets a carved image in the house of God. He leads Judah to do more evil than the nations. The LORD speaks, but they do not listen, so the Assyrian commanders capture him with hooks, bind him in bronze chains and take him to Babylon. In his distress he humbles himself greatly before the God of his ancestors and prays; the LORD hears him and restores him to Jerusalem, and Manasseh knows that the LORD is God. He builds an outer wall, removes the foreign gods and the image, repairs the LORD's altar and tells Judah to serve the LORD. His prayer and sins are recorded among the records of the seers. His son Amon does evil and does not humble himself, and his officials murder him; the people of the land kill the conspirators and make Josiah king.

1 Manasseh came to the throne at the age of twelve and ruled in Jerusalem for fifty-five years.[1]

2 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations

the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

3 He rebuilt the high places that his father
Hezekiah had pulled down. He set up altars to the
Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to
all the host of heaven and served them.

4 He even built altars inside the LORD's house, the
house of which the LORD had said, "My name will
be in Jerusalem for ever."

5 In both courts of the house of the LORD he built
altars to all the host of heaven.

6 He made his sons pass through the fire in the
Valley of Ben-hinnom. He practised soothsaying,
divination and sorcery, and dealt with mediums
and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the
LORD, provoking Him to anger.

7 He took the carved image he had made and set it
up in the house of God, of which God had told
David and his son Solomon, "This house and
Jerusalem, the city I chose from all Israel's tribes,
are where I will put My name for all time.

8 I will not again make the feet of Israel leave the
land I appointed for your ancestors, if only they
will be careful to do all that I have commanded
them, the whole law, the statutes and the rules
given through Moses."

9 Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem
astray, so that they did more evil than the nations
the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.

10 The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people,
but they paid no attention.

11 So the LORD brought against them the
commanders of the army of the king of Assyria,
who captured Manasseh with hooks,[2] bound him
with bronze chains and took him to Babylon.

12 In his distress he pleaded with the LORD his
God and humbled himself deeply before the God of
his ancestors.

13 When he prayed to Him, God was moved by his
entreaty, heard his plea and brought him back to
Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh
knew that the LORD is God.

14 After this he built an outer wall for the City of
David, west of Gihon in the valley, as far as the
entrance at the Fish Gate. He carried it round
Ophel and made it very high. He also put army
commanders in all the fortified towns of Judah.

15 He removed the foreign gods and the image
from the house of the LORD, and all the altars he
had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem, and
he threw them outside the city.

16 He rebuilt[3] the altar of the LORD and sacrificed
peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and he
told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel.

17 The people, however, still sacrificed at the high
places, but only to the LORD their God.

18 The other events of Manasseh's reign, his prayer
to his God and the words the seers spoke to him in
the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, are
recorded among the annals of the kings of Israel.

19 His prayer and how God was moved by it, all his
sin and unfaithfulness, and the places where he
built high places and set up the Asherah poles and
the carved images before he humbled himself, are
all recorded in the records of the seers.[4]

20 Manasseh rested with his ancestors and was
buried in his palace.[5] And his son Amon succeeded
him as king.

21 Amon came to the throne at twenty-two and
ruled in Jerusalem for two years.

22 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD,
as his father Manasseh had done. Amon sacrificed
to all the carved images his father Manasseh had
made, and served them.

23 But he did not humble himself before the LORD,
as his father Manasseh had done; instead Amon
went on adding to his guilt.

24 Amon's officials conspired against him and killed
him in his palace.

25 But the people of the land struck down all who
had conspired against King Amon, and they made
his son Josiah king in his place.

1 Verses 1–9 follow 2 Kings 21:1–9. Manasseh's captivity and repentance (verses 10–17) are found only in Chronicles.

2 Assyrian reliefs show captives led by hooks through the nose or lip.

3 So the spoken Hebrew; the written text has 'prepared'.

4 So one Hebrew manuscript and the Greek; most manuscripts have 'Hozai'. The Prayer of Manasseh in the Apocrypha is a later composition.

5 2 Kings 21:18 has 'in the garden of his palace'.

Chapter 34

2 Chronicles 34 tells how Josiah becomes king at eight and does what is right, turning neither to the right nor to the left. In his eighth year he begins to seek the God of David, and in his twelfth he begins to purge Judah and Jerusalem, smashing the altars, images and Asherah poles and burning the bones of the priests on their altars; he carries the purge into Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon and Naphtali. In his eighteenth year he sends Shaphan and others to repair the LORD's house with money collected by the Levites. While they are bringing out the money, Hilkiah the priest finds the Book of the Law of the LORD given through Moses. Shaphan reads it to the king, who tears his clothes and sends to enquire of the LORD. Huldah the prophetess declares that disaster will come on this place, but because Josiah's heart was tender and he humbled himself, he will be laid in his grave in peace. The king gathers the people, reads the Book of the Covenant to them, renews the covenant before the LORD, and removes the detestable idols from all Israel's lands; as long as he lives, they do not turn from the LORD.

1 Josiah came to the throne at the age of eight and
ruled in Jerusalem for thirty-one years.[1]
2 He did what was right in the sight of the LORD
and walked in the ways of his ancestor David,
turning neither to the right nor to the left.
3 In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still
a youth, he began to seek the God of his ancestor
David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah
and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherah
poles, and the carved and cast images.
4 In his presence the altars of the Baals were torn
down, and he cut down the incense altars[2] above
them. He smashed the Asherah poles and the
carved and cast images, ground them to dust and
scattered it over the graves of those who had
sacrificed to them.
5 The priests' bones he burned on their own
altars.[3] In this way he cleansed Judah and
Jerusalem.
6 In the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim and Simeon,
and as far as Naphtali, and in the ruins[4] all around
them,
7 he tore down the altars and the Asherah poles,
beat the carved images to powder, and cut down
all the incense altars throughout the land of
Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.
8 In his eighteenth year as king, once the land and
the house were purged, he sent three men to
repair the house of the LORD his God: Shaphan
son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the city governor, and
Joah son of Joahaz the recorder.
9 They went to Hilkiah the high priest and handed
over the money that had been brought into the
house of God, which the Levites who kept the
doors had collected from Manasseh, Ephraim and
all the remnant of Israel, and from all Judah and
Benjamin and the people of Jerusalem.[5]
10 They handed it over to the men appointed to
supervise the work on the house of the LORD, and
these paid it to the workmen who were repairing
and restoring the house.
11 They gave it to the carpenters and builders, to
buy cut stone and timber for the joists and beams
of the buildings that the kings of Judah had let fall
into ruin.
12 The men did the work faithfully. Over them were
appointed Jahath and Obadiah, Levites of the
Merarites, and Zechariah and Meshullam of the
Kohathites, to direct them. The Levites, all who
were skilled with instruments of music,
13 were over the burden-bearers and directed all
the workmen in every kind of task. Some of the
Levites were secretaries, officials and
gatekeepers.
14 While they were bringing out the money that
had been brought into the house of the LORD,
Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the
LORD given through Moses.
15 Hilkiah told Shaphan the secretary, "In the
LORD's house I have come upon the Book of the
Law." He handed the book to Shaphan.
16 Shaphan took the book to the king and reported
to him further: "Your servants are doing all that
was entrusted to them.
17 They have emptied out the money that was
found in the house of the LORD and have handed
it over to the supervisors and the workmen."
18 And Shaphan the secretary told the king,
"Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And
Shaphan read from it before the king.
19 As the king listened to what the Law said, he
tore his clothes.
20 He gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of
Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah,[6] Shaphan the

secretary and Asaiah the king's servant:

21 "Go and enquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and Judah about the words of the book that has been found. Great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our ancestors did not keep the word of the LORD, to do all that is written in this book."

22 Hilkiah and those the king had named went to the prophetess Huldah. She was married to Shallum son of Tokhath,[7] son of Hasrah, who kept the wardrobe, and she lived in the Second Quarter of Jerusalem. They spoke to her about this,

23 and she said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Tell the man who sent you to me,

24 This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its inhabitants, all the curses written in the book that was read before the king of Judah.

25 Because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, provoking Me to anger by all the work of their hands, My wrath will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched.'

26 But to the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the LORD, say this: 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you have heard:

27 Your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God on hearing what He said against this place and its inhabitants. You humbled yourself before Me, tore your clothes and wept in My presence, and so I in turn have heard you, declares the LORD.

28 So I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be laid in your grave in peace. You will not live to see all the disaster I am about to bring on this place and its inhabitants.'" And they carried her reply back to the king.

29 Then the king summoned all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to meet together.

30 With him to the LORD's house went all the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites and the whole population, from the greatest to the least. There he read aloud to them everything written in the Book of the Covenant found in the LORD's house.

31 Standing in his place, the king renewed the covenant in the LORD's presence: to follow the LORD, to keep His commandments, testimonies and statutes wholeheartedly and with all his soul, and so to fulfil the terms of the covenant written in this book.

32 He made all who were in Jerusalem and Benjamin commit themselves to it, and the people of Jerusalem acted in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors.

33 Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the lands belonging to the Israelites, and he made all who were in Israel serve the LORD their God. As long as he lived, they did not turn from following the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

1 Verses 1–2 and 8–32 follow 2 Kings 22:1–23:3; verses 3–7 draw on 2 Kings 23:4–20, in a different order.

2 See the note at 14:5.

3 Fulfilling 1 Kings 13:2.

4 The meaning of the Hebrew here is uncertain.

5 So the written Hebrew; the spoken text has 'and they returned to Jerusalem'.

6 2 Kings 22:12 has 'Achbor son of Micaiah'.

7 2 Kings 22:14 has 'Tikvah son of Harhas'.

Chapter 35

2 Chronicles 35 tells how Josiah keeps the Passover in Jerusalem on the fourteenth day of the first month. He appoints the priests to their duties and tells the Levites, who need no longer carry the ark, to prepare by their divisions and slaughter the Passover lambs for their brothers. Josiah gives thirty thousand lambs and kids and three thousand cattle from his own possessions, and the officials and Levite leaders give generously too. The priests and Levites do their work, the singers and gatekeepers stay at their posts, and the Levites prepare for them all. No Passover like it has been kept since the days of Samuel the prophet. After this Neco king of Egypt marches to Carchemish, and Josiah goes out against him. Neco warns him that God is with him and tells him not to oppose God, but Josiah disguises himself and will not listen to the words from God's mouth. At Megiddo archers wound him, and he is taken to Jerusalem, where he dies. All Judah mourns, and Jeremiah composes a lament for him.

1 Josiah kept the Passover to the LORD in
Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover
lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month.[1]
2 He appointed the priests to their duties and
encouraged them in the service of the house of the
LORD.
3 He said to the Levites, who taught all Israel and
were consecrated to the LORD, "Put the holy ark
in the house that Solomon son of David king of
Israel built. You no longer have to carry it on your
shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and His
people Israel.
4 Prepare yourselves by your families in your
divisions, following the written instructions of
David king of Israel and of his son Solomon.
5 Stand in the holy place, with a group of Levites
for each family group of your brothers, the lay
people.
6 Slaughter the Passover lamb, consecrate
yourselves and make preparations for your
brothers, to do as the LORD commanded through
Moses."
7 For all the lay people present Josiah provided
Passover offerings, thirty thousand lambs and
young goats and three thousand cattle, all from
the king's own possessions.
8 His officials also contributed willingly to the
people, the priests and the Levites. Hilkiah,
Zechariah and Jehiel, the officers in charge of the
house of God, gave the priests two thousand six
hundred Passover offerings and three hundred
cattle.
9 Conaniah, his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel,
and Hashabiah, Jeiel and Jozabad, the leaders of
the Levites, provided the Levites with five
thousand Passover offerings and five hundred
cattle.
10 So the service was prepared, and the priests
stood in their places and the Levites in their
divisions, as the king had commanded.
11 They slaughtered the Passover lamb, and the
priests splashed the blood they received from
them, while the Levites did the skinning.
12 They set aside the burnt offerings to give them
to the family groups of the lay people, to offer to
the LORD as it is written in the Book of Moses,
and they did the same with the cattle.
13 They roasted the Passover lamb over the fire as
prescribed,[2] and boiled the holy offerings in pots,
cauldrons and pans, and quickly carried them to
all the lay people.
14 Only then did the Levites make preparations for
themselves and for the priests, since Aaron's sons
were occupied until nightfall with the burnt
offerings and the fat portions. That is why the
Levites prepared for themselves and for the
priests, Aaron's sons.
15 The singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their
places, as commanded by David, Asaph, Heman
and Jeduthun the king's seer. The gatekeepers at
each gate did not need to leave their posts, for
their brothers the Levites made preparations for
them.
16 So all the service of the LORD was carried out
that day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt
offerings on the altar of the LORD, as King Josiah
had commanded.
17 All the Israelites present kept the Passover then,
and for seven days the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
18 No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since
the days of Samuel the prophet.[3] None of the
kings of Israel had ever kept such a Passover as
Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all
Judah and Israel who were present, and the
people of Jerusalem.

19 This Passover was kept in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

20 After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order, Neco king of Egypt came up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him.[4]

21 But Neco sent messengers to him, saying, "What quarrel is there between you and me, king of Judah? I am not coming against you today, but against the house with which I am at war, and God has told me to hurry. Stop opposing God, who is with me, or He will destroy you."

22 Yet Josiah would not turn away from him. He disguised himself to fight him, and would not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but went to fight on the plain of Megiddo.

23 Archers hit King Josiah. "Get me away from here," the king told his servants, "for I am badly wounded."

24 So his servants took him out of the chariot, put him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died. He was buried in the tombs of his ancestors, and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

25 Jeremiah composed a lament for Josiah, and to this day all the male and female singers speak of Josiah in their laments. These became a custom in Israel, and they are written down in the Laments.[5]

26 The other events of Josiah's reign, his acts of loyal kindness in keeping with what is written in the Law of the LORD,

27 and all that he did, from first to last, are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

1 2 Kings 23:21–23 gives the same Passover in three verses.

2 Exodus 12:8–9.

3 2 Kings 23:22 has 'since the time when the judges led Israel'.

4 In 609 BC. Neco was marching to help the last of the Assyrians against Babylon; compare 2 Kings 23:29.

5 Not the biblical book of Lamentations, but a collection now lost.

Chapter 36

2 Chronicles 36 tells how Judah's last kings fall. The people make Jehoahaz king, but Neco removes him after three months, fines the land, makes his brother Eliakim king as Jehoiakim, and takes Jehoahaz to Egypt. Jehoiakim does evil, and Nebuchadnezzar binds him in bronze chains and carries off temple vessels. Jehoiachin reigns three months and ten days before he too is taken to Babylon, and Zedekiah is made king. Zedekiah does evil, does not humble himself before Jeremiah, rebels against Nebuchadnezzar and hardens his heart. The leaders and priests defile the LORD's house. The LORD sends His messengers again and again because He has compassion on His people, but they mock them, until there is no remedy. The king of the Chaldeans kills young and old, carries off the temple treasures, burns the house of God and breaks down the wall of Jerusalem. The survivors are exiled to Babylon until the kingdom of Persia, and the land enjoys its Sabbaths for seventy years, as Jeremiah said. Then in his first year Cyrus king of Persia, moved by the LORD, proclaims that God has charged him to build Him a house in Jerusalem, and invites God's people to go up.

1 Then the people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoahaz and crowned him king in Jerusalem in his father's place.[1]

2 Jehoahaz[2] was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.

3 The king of Egypt deposed him in Jerusalem and imposed on the land a levy of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.[3]

4 Eliakim, the brother of Jehoahaz, was installed by the king of Egypt as king over Judah and Jerusalem and renamed Jehoiakim, while Neco took Jehoahaz away to Egypt.

5 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God.

6 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against him and put him in bronze chains to carry him off to Babylon.

7 Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the vessels from the LORD's house to Babylon and placed them in his own temple there.[4]

8 The other events of Jehoiakim's reign, the detestable things he did and what was found against him, are recorded in the Book of the Kings

of Israel and Judah. And his son Jehoiachin succeeded him as king.

9 Jehoiachin came to the throne at eight[5] and ruled in Jerusalem for three months and ten days. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

10 At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and brought him to Babylon, together with the precious vessels of the house of the LORD, and he made his brother[6] Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

11 Zedekiah came to the throne at twenty-one and ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years.

12 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD.

13 He also revolted against King Nebuchadnezzar, though the king had put him under oath in God's name. He stubbornly set his heart against turning back to the LORD, Israel's God.

14 All the leaders of the priests and the people likewise became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations, and they defiled the house of the LORD, which He had consecrated in Jerusalem.

15 The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through His messengers again and again, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.

16 But they kept mocking God's messengers, despising His words and scoffing at His prophets, until the LORD's wrath rose against His people and there was no remedy.

17 So He brought the king of the Chaldeans against them. Their young men were put to the sword inside their own sanctuary, and no pity was shown to young man or girl, to the old or the frail. God gave them all into his power.

18 He carried off to Babylon everything: the vessels of God's house, large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's house, of the king and of his officials.

19 They burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem. They set fire to all its palaces and destroyed everything of value in it.

20 He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.

21 This fulfilled the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah,[7] until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, until seventy years were complete.

22 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD stirred the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, and he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom and also put it in writing:[8]

23 "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever among you belongs to His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up."

1 Verses 1–14 summarise 2 Kings 23:30–24:20.

2 Hebrew 'Joahaz', a shorter form of the name; so also in verse 4.

3 About 3.4 tonnes of silver and 34 kilograms (75 pounds) of gold.

4 Compare Daniel 1:1–2; Ezra 1:7.

5 So most Hebrew manuscripts; 2 Kings 24:8 and some Greek and Syriac manuscripts have 'eighteen'.

6 Or 'relative'; Zedekiah was his uncle (2 Kings 24:17).

7 Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10; compare Leviticus 26:34–35.

8 In 538 BC. Verses 22–23 are repeated at the start of Ezra (1:1–3). Chronicles is the last book of the Hebrew Bible, which therefore ends on this note of return.