

2 CHRONICLES

INTRODUCTION

See the introductory notes on 1 Chronicles as these books were originally written as a unified book.

1 – This chapter parallels the account of the start of Solomon's reign from 1 Kings. In it, God offered Solomon whatever he would ask for. He asked for wisdom to govern God's people. God commended him and also granted him wealth and power that he did not ask for. V1 "Solomon the son of David established himself in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him and made him exceedingly great." V10 is a valid prayer for us to pray since to each of us as his people God has given responsibility to fulfill his call. God is very pleased with us when we ask for his resources to do his work over our own desires and often grants us our desires in addition to what we ask for.

2 – Solomon began to build the temple. Note his good perspective in that he knows that he cannot build a house for the greatness of God. V 5-6 "The house that I am to build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods. But who is able to build him a house, since heaven, even highest heaven, cannot contain him? Who am I to build a house for him, except as a place to make offerings before him?" He enlisted the aid of the king of Lebanon for wood and for a skilled craftsman to carry out all the designs. He also employed the aliens living in the land to do the preparatory work of stonecutting and carrying.

God has blessed Valley Bible Church with the skilled designers and builders we need to carry out his plan for Valley. At the same time, Lord, we want people to look to you. We are the most ignorant of all men and desperately need your wisdom to lead your people in your work here.

3 – The building of the temple began with the dimensions and tons of gold in the interior. Note the gold is in great amounts. Even the nails are made of gold. V8 "And he made the Most Holy Place." V10 "In the Most Holy Place he made two cherubim of wood and overlaid them with gold." V14 "And he made the veil of blue and purple and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and he worked cherubim on it." Some of this raises questions. This was not the largest or most luxurious of the temples of that era though it certainly was expensive with all the gold. Since it was according to the instructions that the Lord gave David, it was perfect. Note later (Ezra 3:12) that when the temple was rebuilt after the exile, the people then seem to groan that the temple built then was no comparison to the temple of Solomon's era.

4 – Here is the account of the making of the furnishings of the temple service. This included the altar of bronze, the sea, the ten golden lampstands, and the tools for the temple work. Again the expense is great with all the gold and bronze. This leads to 5:1. "Thus all the work that Solomon did for the house of the Lord was finished."

5 – With all the expense and greatness of the temple, when it was dedicated, even with all the ceremony and singers and musicians, what really set this temple apart from any other was that it was inhabited by the God of the universe. There is hardly any verse higher in the Old Testament than V13b-14. "...And when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord, 'For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever,' the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God."

Prayer – Lord, there is no use building a new building or holding services on any Sunday if you do not show up. We ask you in your grace to show your presence. We know that your word tells us that you are present with us but we ask you to show your presence and give us the sensitivity to recognize your presence and submit to you in it.

6 – This is one of the highlight chapters of the Old Testament. Solomon offered a prayer for the dedication of the temple. Solomon made his case based on the faithfulness of God stated two times. V4, 15 "You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day." Because of what he had seen God do in the past regarding his father and these people, he appealed to God for the future. In it he requested that even though the temple he built was not worthy of the greatness of God, that God would hear requests from anyone who prayed in or toward that temple and respond with forgiveness or restoration. V29-31 "Whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own sorrow and stretching out his hands toward this house, then hear from heaven our dwelling place and forgive and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways, for you, you only, know the hearts of the children of mankind, that they may fear you and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers." Even sin is not the end. Solomon acknowledged that saying, V36 "For there is no one who does not sin." Forgive and restore.

7 – In this chapter the request was answered. First, fire came down from heaven, a typical divine response. The celebration of the dedication went on for many days. There was great rejoicing and V1 "the glory of the Lord filled the temple." The Lord answered with his own presence. V2 "And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house." The people responded with great praise and worship of God. Then the Lord addressed Solomon after the people had gone home. The address was to say that he has heard the prayer and will answer if his people call out to him in humility and brokenness. V14 "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." Then he turned the instruction into a personal warning to Solomon again that he must continue in the Lord's ways as David did. Promises of punishment in disobedience accompany and counter promises of the Lord for blessing in obedience. He will destroy even this great temple if they disobey.

8 – The building and dedication of the temple is the major part of the early chapters of this book. This chapter picks up the rest of Solomon's activities, which included the building of his own house and trade and wealth. Note that Solomon would not bring his Egyptian wife into the city of David because it is holy. V11 "My wife shall not live in the house of David king of Israel, for the places to which the ark of the Lord has come are holy." It appears that he knew better than to marry the foreign wife, yet did it anyway.

9 – This chapter recounts the great wisdom of Solomon as well as his great wealth and influence. He was the greatest of all the kings of his day and of any day since. Gold was plentiful, so much so that silver was considered of little worth. Then Solomon died. This account does not go into his sins, only his involvement with the temple. The Queen of Sheba says V6, "Half the greatness of your wisdom was not told me; you surpass the report I heard." V22 "Thus Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom." What was the greatness of Solomon's wealth in God's economy? Was it just to show his blessing on the one he had already blessed with wisdom? Was it to show that when God blesses, he really blesses in all kinds of ways? Help us seek you more than wealth or even wisdom!

10 – This chapter explains how the nation of Israel became two nations of Israel and Judah. Outwardly it appears that the division came due to the foolishness of the son of the wisest man who ever lived. Behind the scenes, God was the mastermind of the movement as V15 states. "So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by God that the Lord might fulfill his word, which he spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat." In Paul's explanation of the sovereign choice of God he does not mention the separation of Israel from Judah that this chapter tells. Evidently even though this caused a separation, as V19 says,

"So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day," it was not a separation that removed them from God's sovereign choice.

11 – Rehoboam did the smart thing here. In seeking to reclaim the kingdom for himself, he mounted a war against Israel but when God told him to back off since these events are from him, Rehoboam obeyed. God's instruction here was not to fight against "your relatives"(V4). He seems to rule wisely, dispersing his many sons throughout the region and grooming his favorite for succession. Note that those who sought the Lord from the tribes of Israel continued to come to Jerusalem to offer their offerings. They did this for three years. V17 "They strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and for three years they made Rehoboam the son of Solomon secure, for they walked for three years in the way of David and Solomon."

12 – It seems that Rehoboam's reign was characterized by arrogance. They abandoned the law of the Lord. When the Lord allowed and sent an enemy to attack them, they "humbled themselves" and God did not destroy them but did permit them to lose many of their valuables. V8 "Nevertheless, they shall be servants to him, that they may know my service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries." V12 "And when he humbled himself the wrath of the Lord turned from him so as not to make a complete destruction. Moreover, conditions were good in Judah."

13 – Abijah succeeded Rehoboam as king. V2 states Abijah reigned only three years. In his fight against Israel and Jeroboam, he claimed the presence of the Lord and that Judah did things the way Israel knew they should be done. He also pointed out that Israel had abandoned the ways of the Lord. Then as the battle broke out, it appeared that Israel would win but the Lord gave victory to Judah. V18 "And the men of Judah prevailed because they relied on the Lord, the God of their fathers." Note that very little press is given to the kingdom of Israel in Chronicles, the main interest centering on the attitude toward the temple and since that is in Jerusalem, Israel is ignored.

14 – Asa was the next king. He sought the Lord. He makes a statement in V7 that sums his perspective. "The land is still ours, because we have sought the Lord our God. We have sought him and he has given us peace on every side." As he led Judah into battle against a "million men and 300 chariots," he prayed a prayer that seems effective with well-placed emphases in v11. "And Asa cried to the Lord his God, 'O Lord, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O Lord, you are our God; let not man prevail against you.'" The Lord won the victory for them.

15 – Asa's reign continued in the right direction. He did what the prophet told him do and that was to continue to seek the Lord. The purpose of this writing to the author was to show that when the king was good in that he followed the ways of the Lord, the Lord blessed him in every area. He was wealthy. He won his battles. He was blessed with peace. The nation prospered both militarily and materially. There were two basic ways that the king showed that he was righteous. He showed it by tearing down the reminders of implements of worship of idols and by seeking after God with all his heart. Note the phrase in V6. "They were broken in pieces. Nation was crushed by nation and city by city, for God troubled them with every sort of distress." It seems like Asa did everything he could to live a godly and righteous life. Yet he is not the most well known of Judah's kings. It may be because of the way his life ends.

16 – The lesson from the life of Asa is that it is not over until it is over. For thirty-five years he was faithful to the Lord and then he turned. He did not even turn against the Lord. It was only that he did not turn to the Lord in time of distress. What a warning! V7 "Because you relied on the king of Syria and did not rely on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Syria has

escaped you." He became very stubborn and would not seek the Lord for his disease either. Lord, do not ever let our hearts turn away from dependence on you for everything. Help us learn this lesson, especially in our marriages. The key is V9. "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."

17 – His son Jehoshaphat seems to have paid attention to the lesson of his father's earlier life. V3-4 "The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David. He did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the practices of Israel." His kingdom went very well with wealth, peace and a strong army presence for defense.

18 – This is one of the great stories of the Old Testament. It is the story of Micaiah who tells the truth of the word of God no matter what social or political pressure is arraigned against him. V13 "As the Lord lives, what my God says, that I will speak." Note also that in the battle, as Ahab schemed to protect himself at the expense of Jehoshaphat, the Lord protected Jehoshaphat by drawing away the enemy when they could have killed him in V31 while the king of Israel was killed by an arrow shot "at random."

19 – Jehoshaphat's righteousness shows in his justice system. He instructed the judges to only act in righteousness. V7 "Now then, let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Be careful what you do, for there is no injustice with the Lord our God, or partiality or taking bribes." See also V11. "Behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you (the judges) in all matters of the Lord; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the governor of the house of Judah, in all the king's matters, and the Levites will serve you as officers. Deal courageously and may the Lord be with the upright."

20 – This is the end of Jehoshaphat's reign. When a conspiracy of nations attacked him, he did not do as his father did but turned to the Lord in a beautiful prayer of dependence. The Lord delivered. It is interesting that while it was the king who led out to seek the Lord, the answer came through a prophet who seems to have been just standing there. They expressed their faith in the Lord's word of deliverance by sending out the singers at the front of the army to praise God for the victory. At the end of his life, Jehoshaphat entered a treaty with wicked Israel for trade but the Lord opposed that and the venture failed.

There is such rich trust in the Lord in this chapter. The word comes in V15, "the battle is not yours but God's." V17 "You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf." The people responded by worship. The King called on people to "believe in the Lord your God." The impact was felt on many of the surrounding countries in V29-30. "And the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around." One of the best things we can do to express our faith is to find a way that it will show, both to us and to others around us. The people of God showed their faith by sending the singers out first to praise the Lord. How will our faith show today? What will be the picture of our faith in God and his word?

21 – Jehoram, his son, did not live according to God's ways but according to the ways of the kings of Israel. He put his brothers to death, not relying on the Lord to protect him. Edom successfully rebelled against his rule. He was attacked and lost all his wives and sons, except Ahaziah, the youngest. V7 "Yet the Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever." How sad his end in V20, "And he departed with no one's regret."

22 – This seems to be the closest that the word of the Lord comes to failure in the matter of a descendant of David always on his throne. Not only are Jehoram's sons all killed except for Ahaziah, but also he is killed for his wickedness after only one year as king. Jehu killed the king

who was a descendant of David. V7 "But it was ordained by God that the downfall of Ahaziah should come about through his going to visit Joram." His mother, Athaliah, a wicked descendant of Ahab, executed who she thought was all his sons so she can rule. The promise was down to one thread of Jehoram's sisters who rescued the one-year-old baby, the legal heir to the throne and hid him for six years. Outwardly it appeared the Lord's word had failed but in truth it had not.

23 – This chapter recounts the transition from the wicked reign of Athaliah to the reign of Joash, the rightful heir to the throne. She was executed and at seven years old, he became king. The chief priest, Jehoiada, who superintended the kingdom until he reached age, carried all this out. V16 "And Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king that they should be the Lord's people." There is no doubt that sometimes it takes a death to carry out God's plan. Why are we so surprised at this when God says that death is the wage that our sin earns?

24 – Joash did very well in following the Lord as long as Jehoiada lived but after he died, the king turned very far from the Lord in all his ways. V18 "And they abandoned the house of the Lord, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs." Joash died and was buried with almost no recognition or ceremony. V20 "Thus says God, 'Why do you break the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has forsaken you.'"

25 – This is the very sad story of Amaziah. It appears that he started out so well. After hiring mercenaries from Israel to supplement his army, when the prophet told him that was an error, he sent them home and even gave up the money he had paid them. V8 "For God has the power to help or cast down." Yet later, he worshiped the god of the Edomites, whom he had just defeated in battle. The prophet confronted him again with this foolishness. V15 "Why have you sought the gods of a people who did not deliver their own people from your hand?" Instead of submitting, the king argued, turned from the Lord and disobeyed. He ended his life in shame. V20 "But Amaziah would not listen, for it was of God, in order that he might give them into the hand of their enemies, because they had sought the gods of Edom." What would the story of our lives be if told from God's perspective?

26 – This is a similar story of Uzziah. He followed the ways of the Lord and prospered in all he did. The Lord helped him in battle. He did well in building, defense, and agriculture. The key is V15-16 "And his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God..." He ended his life in virtual exile due to leprosy with which the Lord struck him.

Lord, let us be people who finish well. We have not always been faithful but from now on, we want to finish well. It will be by your grace and in your strength.

27 – Jotham's story is told in only a few verses but the key again is his relationship to the Lord. V6 "So Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God." Lord, let us be serious about that as our prayer!

28 – This is an account of another of Judah's kings, Ahaz. He did not follow the Lord. There are several statements in this chapter about the relationship between his disobedience and the troubles that he encountered as king. After his wickedness is described in early verses, V5 says, "Therefore the Lord his God gave him into the hand of the king of Syria." Their problem as described in V6 is "because Judah had forsaken the Lord." Israel joined in against Judah and the prophets warned them of punishment. But they were his downfall and the downfall of all Israel." There is a great story in V8-15. After Israel had captured Judah, the prophets confronted them

with their sin that they had been too strong against Judah. They repented and returned the captives and the spoil to Judah.

It is such a fine a line we walk that we are dependent on God even for our interpretation of what happens in our lives. Ahaz concluded that because he had been defeated in battle that he should worship the gods of the enemy because they had won. Instead he should have turned to the Lord because it was the Lord who had defeated him because of his sin.

29 – The next king, Hezekiah, not only followed the Lord; he did all he could to restore worship at the temple as it was supposed to be. He cleaned out the temple, throwing away all that was not supposed to be there and bringing back in all the utensils that were supposed to be there. Sacrifices and offerings were made and incense offered. The priests and Levites all worked together to carry out proper worship. The advantage of all the detail is that every step of obedience is another step closer to the Lord. There are advantages in long and slow processes. V15 "They gathered their brothers and consecrated themselves and went in as the king had commanded, by the words of the Lord to cleanse the house of the Lord." V36 "And Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced because God had prepared for the people, for the thing came about suddenly."

30 – The account of the revival under Hezekiah continues with the first Passover the nation had celebrated in many generations. It was the greatest since Solomon had been king in Jerusalem. V12 "The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the Lord." In the middle of the celebration, many people wanted to join who had not had the time to purify themselves. Hezekiah prayed for them based on their heart and desire and God permitted them to worship at this time without this ritual. V27 "Then the priests and the Levites arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came to his holy habitation in heaven." V9 shows how serious the rebellion of Israel was when it says that the appeal went out to them based on the compassion of the Lord. "For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you will return to him." The result was that in V10 it says, "but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them."

31 – This celebration was followed by the destruction of sacred places built to idols. Not only is celebration important, so is getting rid of all sin and false gods. This was followed by a call from the king for the people to bring their offerings and tithes so that the priests and Levites could afford to remain in the service of the temple. The response was overwhelming. So much came in that there was great support and the king blessed all the people for their willingness and response. It was a time of great revival. V20 "Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God."

32 – Note the way this chapter begins. It virtually says, even though Hezekiah did all that was right, he still was attacked by the foreign army of Assyria. Hezekiah handled this well. He prepared the city and the army as well as he could but wholly cast his dependence on the Lord and the Lord delivered him. None of the gods of the other nations were able to and Hezekiah gained great respect from the other nations for this victory. V7-8 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him, for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles. And the people took confidence from the words of Hezekiah king of Judah." The problem is expressed best in V19. "And they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they spoke of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of men's hands." There is also a profound statement in V25 that occurs after God healed Hezekiah. "But Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud. Therefore wrath came upon him and Judah and Jerusalem."

33 – This is the Chronicler’s account of Manasseh’s life. It goes from the worst in the history of Judah to one who is blessed by God. In between obviously was repentance brought about by humbling himself and seeking to turn to the Lord. V9-10 “Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel. The Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they paid no attention.” Manasseh was followed by his son Amon who repeated all the evil of his father without the return to the Lord. He only reigned for two years. There are several indicators of when a king was seeking the Lord and several opposite indicators when one is not. A king seeks God by restoring the Temple and sacrifices as well as strengthening the defense of the city. They either build up or tear down the altars of the Lord or the altars and high places of the idols. It is such a great example of repentance in the story of Manasseh as when he saw the trouble headed his way, he turned to the Lord in humility and changed. V13 “Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.” We too can and must repent, turning from our sin and selfishness to seek the Lord and his ways.

34 – Josiah followed as king. He reigned from age eight for thirty-one years. He instituted reforms and revival broke out. Even though all he did was good, it was not enough to reverse the judgment and destruction that God had already decreed for Jerusalem, though he did get it postponed until after his lifetime. Note what a great deal is made when they found the book of the Law. It caused them to make a great turn around. They said V21, “for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do according to all that is written in this book.”

35 – Josiah’s revival continues with a celebration of the Passover, which is said to have been the greatest since the time of Samuel. V18 “No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah, and the priests and the Levites and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Josiah did end up not listening to the Lord and went into battle. He was subsequently killed in that battle.

36 – The succession of the final kings of Judah is given. Each one is wicked and replaced in only a few short years. The judgment against Jerusalem was carried out “to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah.” V12 “He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the Lord.” V16 “But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, until there was no remedy.” However, totally faithful to his word, the Lord brought about a restoration through Cyrus king of Persia who permitted to be rebuilt and restored the city of Jerusalem and its temple. V22 “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing.” God is faithful. He keeps his promises both for salvation and for judgment.