

Outline:

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 2 Chronicles 34-35: Josiah's Reign
 2 Chronicles 36: The fall of Judah and Jerusalem to Babylon, the 70 Year Exile, and the Promise of Restoration

As we mentioned when discussing 1 Chronicles, this book focuses on the southern kingdom, does not emphasize the sins of the kings so much as things accomplished during their reigns, and ends on a higher note. If you will recall, the books of kings ends with a promise of restoration in the release of Jehoiachin, but it is still a dark time for the people. 2 Chronicles ends with the rise of Cyrus (foretold by Isaiah — see Isaiah 44:28; 45:1) who would send the people out of their 70 year exile.

Since we are not working through all of the genealogies, 2 Chronicles usually is a bit easier of a read, though it still covers about 480 years, beginning in 1016 BC, when Solomon began his reign and continuing to the first year of Cyrus' sole reign, in 536 BC.

Solomon's Reign

Much like David's reign in 1 Chronicles, the largest portion of 2 Chronicles deals with the reign of Solomon. We begin with Solomon's prayer for discernment and wisdom, his wealth, and the building of the Temple. With the temple fully constructed, there is a dedication ceremony that is unlike anything the people had ever seen — again, a reminder of Solomon's wealth and grandeur. The Ark is placed in the Temple and God seals the ceremony with fire from heaven and his glory descending into the Holy of Holies of the Temple.

As to accomplishments, 2 Chronicles remembers him for his extensive building projects and the expansion of infrastructure for the kingdom. There is also the account of the Queen of Sheba and her visit to Solomon's palace. What is not recorded is the account of Solomon's many wives nor of the idolatry he practiced alongside of them. As we read this book, such will be the pattern of the record — focus on the good done from the position of King, not the evil.

An interesting tidbit is found in these chapters, and that is that when Solomon built his navy, he had to hire sailors from Hiram, King of Tyre. We are told that the ships sailed as far as Tarshish, which is considered to be just on the west side of the Straits of Gibraltar, probably near the modern port city of Cadiz. There is a great deal of evidence to support the presence of the Phoenicians in that region — perhaps some of those Phoenicians were sailing Solomon's ships.

Rehoboam's Reign

It should be no surprise that the account of Rehoboam's reign is spoken of more favorably than the books of Kings do. There is still the account of his foolish decision to listen to his friends rather than to his father's advisors and there is still the account of the division of the kingdom, but it is downplayed in favor of identifying him as the one that secured the southern kingdom from threats from the north and of his family.

There is the account of Rehoboam's idolatry and God's punishment for his doing so. In this case, punishment was the attack and raids of the Egyptians under King Shishak. So, Jerusalem was plundered. But, Rehoboam repented and humbled himself before the Lord and God stopped Shishak before a complete destruction was made of the city and Shishak was forced to retreat.

Abijah's Reign

The main thing that is recorded about the reign of the son of Rehoboam and grandson of Solomon, is his war with Jeroboam in the north. How sad it is to see brethren fight and wage war on one another.

Asa's Reign

While Asa (Solomon's Great-Grandson) was known for battle, he is best known for his religious reforms. He had idols torn down and destroyed, called people to obey the Law of God. Azariah the priest comes to him and sets before him the gauntlet: be obedient to the word and God will guide your hand; be rebellious and God will abandon you to destruction. Asa chose to obey, even to the point of removing his mother from her role because she had formed an Asherah to worship. While Asa's final years met with a fall from wise leadership, he is still remembered as a good and strong King over Israel.

Jehoshaphat's Reign

Another Reformer, Jehoshaphat reigned in Judah during the era that

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the northern kingdom was beginning its fall to the Assyrians. And though he sought to bring reforms, he ended up joining with wicked Ahaziah of Israel, which brought his downfall (as well as the loss of his fleet of ships).

Jehoram's Reign

And the roller-coaster continues as Jehoshaphat's son took the leadership of the kingdom. Jehoram was an idolater and led the people to reestablish the high places of pagan worship. God stirred up the enemies that were around him and those enemies pillaged Jerusalem, leaving only his son, Jehoahaz alive. He had a reign of only two years that was unremarkable and ended with a disease of the bowels...when he died, the text tells us he was not missed.

Ahaziah's Reign

Ahaziah is another name for Jehoahaz, so this is the youngest son of Jehoram, whose reign again met with defeat and an added internal family struggle, leaving Ahaziah without an heir to rule in his place. When he died, his mother sought to seize the throne, though she was prevented from doing so by the work of Jehoiada the priest and Joash would be anointed king at the age of seven.

Joash's Reign

Perhaps the upbringing and counsel of Jehoiada needs to be credited with the change in direction that this young man would take. He sought to repair the temple and bring reform. Sadly, after the death of Jehoiada, Joash led the people in returning to idolatry and even had Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, stoned for speaking against him. It would not be long before the Syrians would march on Judah and the defeated armies of Judah conspired against Joash and murdered him, avenging Zechariah.

Amaziah's Reign

After avenging the death of his father, he began his reign. Yet, once again he is a king that fell into idolatry and would be brought down by the hand of God.

Uzziah's Reign

This king was a bit of a mixed blessing. He began his reign at the age of 16 and sought to prosper Judah and he started out seeking God's rule, but again became proud and God chose to humble him as he sought to burn incense at the Altar of Incense (a job only for the priest). In punishment, he broke out in leprosy and he remained a leper until his death.

Jotham's Reign

The son of Uzziah began reigning as his father had to be removed to the leper's colony. He is known as a good king and one who did some building projects, but overall, the people still pursued their idols.

Ahaz's Reign

Ahaz was wicked...not just an idolater, but he even sacrificed his own children in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom — a valley later known in Greek as "Gehenna," which Jesus uses as an analogy for God's place of judgment and for Hell. Scary stuff.

Hezekiah's Reign

After the Assyrians crush the northern kingdom, they make a push into the southern kingdom and their general makes it as far as the walls of Jerusalem. Hezekiah would be the king who stood against them, trusting in the Lord for deliverance — one that comes through the Angel of Yahweh slaying the majority of Sennacherib's troops in one night. One of his more notable accomplishments is that he had a tunnel built to bring fresh water into the city walls, establishing the pool of Siloam which will be seen in the New Testament era as well.

Manasseh and Amon's Reigns

Manasseh begins evil, though repents and seeks reforms...though his reforms are quickly undone by his son Amon who only reigned for two years before he was assassinated.

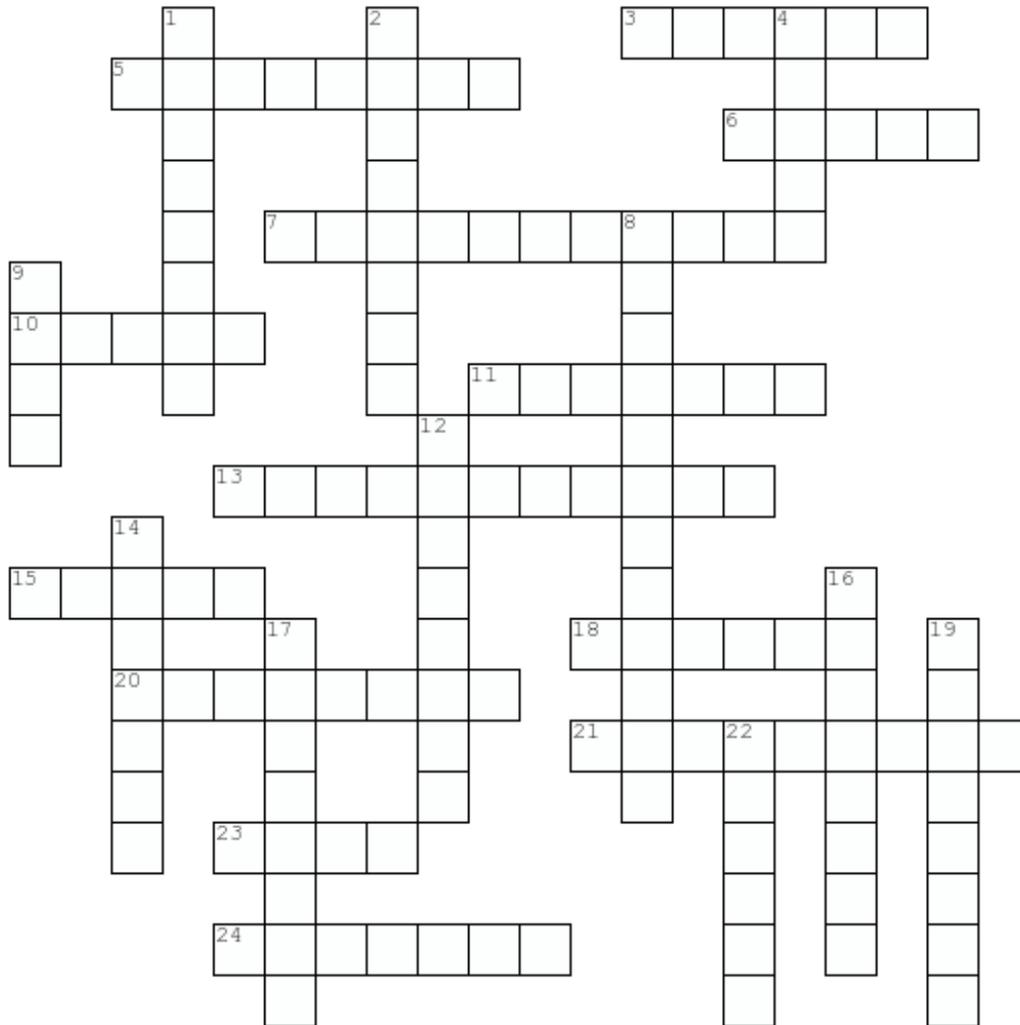
Josiah's Reign

One of the more noble of the Judean kings, Josiah's name and reputation remains with us today. Space does not permit us to explore him in depth apart from saying that he brought about reforms in the lives of the people...more extensive than most before him had done.

The fall of Judah and Jerusalem to Babylon, the 70 Year Exile, and the Promise of Restoration

These books close with a promise of a return to the Promised Land after their 70 year exile. Cyrus is God's chosen tool to bring this about. The book ends with the words "Let him go up," which, are Messianic in nature. If you recognize that Chronicles are the last books in the Hebrew order of the Old Testament, it seems that the response to "let him go up" is found in Matthew's genealogy of the one who will go up.

Week 15: 2 Chronicles



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Across

3. The Tent of Meeting (which Moses made in the wilderness) was located here as Solomon began his reign.
5. The man who oversaw Joash's upbringing; after he died, Joash abandoned God.
6. With the deportation of the people to Babylon comes the promise of this coming redeemer.
7. He allies with wicked Ahab and is opposed by the prophet Micaiah.
10. The king of Tyre who helped both David and Solomon.
11. The Valley of the Son of Hinnom is better known to us as this...
13. This Assyrian King tried to invade Jerusalem and failed.
15. 'Will God indeed _____ with man on earth?' This question is ultimately answered affirmative in Christ.
18. This wife of Rehoboam gave him Abijah as an heir.
20. The wicked mother of Ahaziah who tried to reign.
21. Joash had this prophet stoned to death.
23. The north pillars of the Temple were named after this noble husband during the days of the Judges.
24. King Uzziah proved proud and God punished him with this disease.

Down

1. This reformer built a tunnel from the Spring of Gihon into the city, forming the Pool of Siloam.
2. With the help of Hiram, Solomon's fleet made it all of the way to this city.
4. Josiah was killed in battle against King Neco of what nation?
8. This kind of fruit was carved into the pillars of the Temple.
9. This king sacrificed children to pagan gods.
12. Rehoboam's first wife, who bore him children, but not an heir.
14. Timber for the building of the Temple was cut from this region.
16. Two of these were crafted to go over the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.
17. Hezekiah and Josiah both sought to restore the practice of this festival.
19. In addition to 12,000 horsemen, Solomon gathered together 1,400 of these.
22. 'If my people who are called by my name _____ themselves, and pray and seek my face...'