

# 2 Chronicles - Introduction & Background

## III. Solomon builds the temple (2 Chr 1:1—9:31)

### (1) Solomon's wisdom (1:1-17)

- (A) Solomon offers sacrifices on Moses' bronze altar in Gibeon (1:1-6)
- (B) Solomon requests and receives divine wisdom (1:7-13)
- (C) Solomon's prosperous reign (1:14-17)

### (2) Solomon's temple (2 Chr 2:1—7:22)

- (A) Temple preparation (2:1-18)
- (B) Temple construction (2 Chr 3:1—4:22)
- (C) Temple dedication (2 Chr 5:1—7:22)
  - (a) Ark brought into the temple after its construction (5:1-10)
  - (b) Israel praises God while his glory fills the temple (5:11-14)
  - (c) Solomon's dedication prayer (6:1-42)
  - (d) God's glory and fire fill the temple (7:1-3)
  - (e) Dedication feast and sacrifices (7:4-11)
  - (f) God told Solomon that He will bless the nation to the extent that they follow His covenant (7:12-22)

### (3) Solomon's prosperous reign (2 Chr 8:1—9:31)

- (A) His kingdom (8:1-18)
  - (a) Cities (8:1-6)
  - (b) Subjects (8:7-11)
  - (c) Sacrifices (8:12-13)
  - (d) Priests and Levites (8:14-16)
  - (e) Navy (8:17-18)
- (B) His international fame (9:1-12)
- (C) His wealth (9:13-28)
- (D) His death (9:29-31)

## IV. Judah's Kings (2 Chr 10:1—36:23)

### (1) The kingdom is divided (2 Chr 10:1—11:23)

- (A) Rehoboam's excessive taxation caused a split in the kingdom (2 Chr 10:1—11:4)
- (B) Rehoboam consolidates Judah (11:5-23)

### (2) Reform and apostasy in Judah (2 Chr 12:1—36:14)

- (A) Rehoboam's repentance halts Shishak's destruction of Jerusalem (12:1-16)

- (B) Before defeating Jeroboam's army Abijah tells him that Judah is the true kingdom on account of the Davidic Covenant and priestly worship (13:1-22)
- (C) Asa (2 Chr 14:1—16:14)
  - (a) Asa's reforms and military victories through the dependence upon God (14:1—15:19)
    - (i) Reforms (14:1-8)
    - (ii) Victory over Zerah and the Ethiopians (14:9-15)
    - (iii) Reforms (15:1-19)
  - (b) Asa's trust in Ben Hadad rather than the Lord for protection from Baasha leads to curse (16:1-14)
- (D) Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:1—20:37)
  - (a) Jehoshaphat's orthodox worship cause God to bless him with the mighty army striking terror into the hearts of the surrounding national leaders (17:1-19)
  - (b) In spite of Jehoshaphat's foolish alliance with Ahab of Israel God still delivered Jehoshaphat on account of his reforms (2 Chr 18:1—19:3)
  - (c) Jehoshaphat's reforms and justice (19:4-11)
  - (d) His military victory over Moab and Ammon and apostasy (20:1-37)
- (E) Jehoram's wicked reign and apostasy and many covenant curses (21:1-20)
- (F) Ahaziah (22:1-9)
- (G) Athaliah (2 Chr 22:10—23:21)
  - (a) Athaliah's usurpation and wicked rulership (22:10-12)
  - (b) Jehoida overthrows Athaliah and enthrones Joash (23:1-21)
- (H) Joash (24:1-27)
  - (a) Reforms (24:1-16)
  - (b) Apostasy (24:17-27)
- (I) Amaziah's idolatry and covenant consequences (25:1-28)
- (J) Uzziah becomes a leper after usurping priestly prerogatives (26:1-23)
- (K) Jotham's partial reforms (27:1-9)
- (L) Ahaz' idolatry and covenant consequences (28:1-27)
- (M) Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:1—32:33)
  - (a) Hezekiah's reforms (2 Chr 29:1—31:21)
    - (i) Temple worship (29:1-36)
    - (ii) Passover (30:1-27)
    - (iii) Idols (31:1)
    - (iv) Priest and Levitical roles (31:2-19)
    - (v) Summary (31:20-21)
  - (b) Hezekiah's reward (32:1-33)

- (i) Sennacherib's defeat (32:1-23)
  - (ii) Postponed judgment despite his ingratitude and pride (32:24-33)
  - (N) Manasseh's wickedness and restoration (33:1-20)
  - (O) Amon's wicked reign (33:21-25)
  - (P) Josiah's reign (34:1—35:27)
    - (a) Religious reforms (34:1-7)
    - (b) Temple renovation (34:8-13)
    - (c) The discovery of the Law and its resulting impact (34:14-33)
    - (d) Passover (35:1-19)
    - (e) Death (35:20-27)
  - (Q) Jehoahaz (36:1-4)
  - (R) Jehoiakim (36:5-8)
  - (S) Jehoiachin (36:9-10)
  - (T) Zedekiah (36:11-14)
  - (3) Judah taken into the Babylonian captivity (36:15-21)
  - (4) Cyrus' decree allowing Judah to rebuild their temple (36:22-23)
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### **Introduction to 2 Chronicles**

Even though 1 and 2 Chronicles give one continuous story, the emphasis in 2 Chronicles is somewhat different from that in 1 Chronicles. In 1 Chronicles, the emphasis is the *importance* of the temple in national life. However in 2 Chronicles, the emphasis is the *impotence* of the temple in national life.

1 Chronicles condemns *rationalism* in national life: the idea that we can get along without God. 2 Chronicles condemns *ritualism* in national life: the idea that what satisfies God is external conformity rather than internal reality.

1 Chronicles emphasizes the importance of recognizing God in national life. 2 Chronicles emphasizes the importance of following up that *formal* recognition with *actual* recognition in attitudes and actions. 2 Chronicles is a negative lesson because in it we see that the Israelites' recognition of God was only formal, not actual.

2 Chr 1-9 cover the story of Solomon, and the theme is the demonstration of the impotence and uselessness of merely formal religion. This is shown in four respects:

- (1) Solomon's *inheritance* was more than the throne of Israel. His throne only gave him the opportunity to fulfill God's purpose for his life. That purpose was to enable the people to acknowledge Yahweh's *rule* over them, which the temple symbolized. Solomon's real inheritance, therefore, was his opportunity to build the temple as a

reminder to the people of how important it was for them to recognize Yahweh as their real Ruler.

(2) Solomon's *greatness* was not really his wealth and political influence; these were just the results of his greatness. His real greatness lay in his humility before God and in his intercession for the people with God. He later got away from these things, but when he first began to reign, he had the essentials of greatness.

(3) Solomon's *service* was not most importantly the administration of Israel, though he did that well. His primary service to the nation was the erection of the temple, which the writer emphasized.

(4) Solomon's *failure* was worse than his oppression of the people that set the stage for the division of the kingdom. It was essentially the fact that he ceased to recognize God's rule over him and his kingdom, the very thing the temple he had built promoted. His life became self-centered rather than God-centered. He stopped submitting to the Word of God. For Solomon the temple became only an outward form, not the expression of his inward life. It became an object of ritual rather than the expression of reality. In the years that followed, what had become true of Solomon became true of the whole nation.

In 2 Chr 10-36, we have the history of Israel, which Solomon ruled. It is an illustration of the impotence and uselessness of merely formal religion. This is shown in four respects:

(1) The division of the kingdom resulted because Rehoboam did not acknowledge God's sovereignty over the nation in reality, even though he did so formally. Rehoboam continued the true form of worship in Judah, whereas Jeroboam substituted a new form of worship in Israel. In both cases, the worship became only a matter of formal observance, not a matter of reality. That is why both nations eventually failed.

(2) The degeneracy of the kingdom of Judah, as well as Israel, continued because most of the kings and people that followed continued worship only as a matter of formal observance. This resulted, too, in increasing neglect of even the form. People do not continue to observe a form of worship that is devoid of power very long. Mere formalism dies eventually, as it should. The real issue in Judah was apostasy: infidelity to Yahweh.

(3) The reformations in the kingdom began at the temple. Asa restored the altar. Jehoshaphat sent messengers throughout the land to read the Word of God to the people. Joash renovated the temple. Hezekiah reopened it and revitalized worship in it. Josiah repaired it. In each case, conditions were appalling when these reformations began. In Asa's day, the altar was in disrepair. In Jehoshaphat's day, the people were ignorant of God's Word. In Joash's day, Athaliah had damaged the temple. In Hezekiah's day, no one came to the temple. Its doors were shut and its worship abandoned. In Josiah's day, not one copy of the Law was available. When the king

heard the copy read aloud, that someone had found in the rubble of the temple, he was completely unfamiliar with it. Throughout this period of history, about 350 years, Judah moved further and further from God.

(4) The ultimate disaster in the kingdom was the burning of the temple and the captivity of the people. Through the years, Solomon's temple stood as a reminder to the people to recognize God's rule over them as a nation. It had become a hollow symbol, the symbol of a formal ritualism—rather than the symbol of a vital relationship. It was only fitting that when the nation ceased to exist, and the people left their land, the Babylonians destroyed the temple.

### **Solomon**

- Solomon was David's second son by Bathsheba; the first after their legal marriage (2 Sam 12:1)
  - He was probably born about 1035 BC (1 Chr 22:5; 29:1)
  - He succeeded his father on the throne in early manhood, probably about 16-18 years old
  - His elevation to the throne took place before his father's death, and was hastened on mainly by Nathan and Bathsheba, in consequence of the rebellion of Adonijah (1 Kings 1:5-40)
  - By the interposition of Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, Benaiah, Shimei, and Rei, David's mighty men, Solomon was at David's command, taken on the king's own mule to Gihon, anointed, and proclaimed king.

### **Solomon's Palace**

It took Solomon seven years to build the temple; 13 years to build his royal palace on Ophel (1 Kings 7:1-12). It was 100 cubits long, 50 broad, and 30 high. Its lofty roof was supported by 45 cedar pillars, so that the hall was like a forest of cedar wood, and hence "The House of the Forest of Lebanon."

In front of this "house" was the "Porch of Pillars." In front of this again was the "Hall of Judgment," or Throne Room (1 Kings 7:7; 10:18-20; 2 Chr 9:17-19). A portion of it was set apart as the residence of the queen consort, the daughter of Pharaoh (of whom, however, nothing further is recorded).

Solomon wrote 3,000 Proverbs and 1,005 Songs. The visit of the Queen of Sheba "the queen of the south" (Matt 12:42; 1 Kings 10:1-13; 2 Chr 9:1-12) was a memorable occasion. Deep, indeed, must have been her yearning, and great his fame, which induced a secluded Arabian queen to break through the immemorial custom of her dreamy land, and to put forth the energy required for braving the burdens and perils of so long a journey across a wilderness. Yet this she undertook, and carried it out with safety." She was filled with amazement by all she saw and heard: "there was no more spirit in her."

