

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK
1 & 2 CHRONICLES
THE TEST OF FAITHFULNESS**

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AN 85% COMMITMENT

The old standard "99.44% pure".

In recent years there has been an advertisement about home equity loans:
"Congratulations, Jones, take 85% of the day off!"

Are you satisfied with water that is 85% pure?
How about a husband or wife that is 85% faithful?

GOD WILL NOT ACCEPT AN 85% COMMITMENT

Faithfulness is a key to the success of any kind of contract.

The desire of every couple who comes to their wedding day is that their marriage relationship will be characterized by love, faithfulness and loyalty.

Whenever these ingredients are missing, marital happiness quickly flies out the door.
These three elements are crucial to the marriage agreement:

LOVE - FAITHFULNESS - LOYALTY

These same three characteristics were necessary for the covenant that God made with Israel.

Although this covenant was based on God's love for His people, He required them to respond with love and loyalty also.

That's why these ingredients came to be the principal requirements of the covenant.

If God expected that response from the people in general, it was even more critical for the kings He placed over them.

When God established His covenant with David, God promised that He would never take His loving kindness away from his son Solomon (1 Chr. 17:11-14).

"*Loving kindness*" as used in this promise refers to His "*loyal love*" for them.

It combines the two ideas of love and faithfulness, which God promised, to Solomon and to his children.

He would fulfill His promise whether they fulfilled theirs or not.

In Chronicles, it's clear that God has promised His loving kindness, His loyal love, to the people of Israel, but He requires them to respond with loyal love.

The people in general, and the king in particular, were to enjoy the blessings, and responsibilities, that accompany a covenant relationship with God.

This relationship demands their faithfulness and loyalty.

AUTHOR AND DATE

The present format of these two books makes it hard to keep in mind that these books were originally written as one single volume.

Although the book itself doesn't identify the author, the Talmud, which represents the Jewish tradition concerning it, attributes the book to the scribe Ezra, who we already know as the author of the book that bears his name and as an important participant in the restoration of Israel after the captivity.

Several evidences support this opinion:

- 1) The tradition itself is an important external evidence because the book was written so late and it was still accepted by the people.
- 2) The internal evidence is also quite convincing.

The book was written from the perspective of a priest because the temple is central in his presentation.

Ezra is identified as a priest and demonstrates this same perspective in the book that we know he wrote (Ezr. 7:1-5, 11).

- 3) The genealogies come up to the days of Ezra and support an author contemporary with him. There is no known candidate as likely to have written such a work.
- 4) The use of Hebrew and the literary style resemble those of Ezra.
- 5) Finally, a comparison of the beginning of Ezra (1:1-3) with the conclusion of 2 Chronicles (36:22-23) shows that they are just the same. It would appear that Ezra is a deliberate continuation of the history Chronicles begins to relate.

There is evidence that whoever the author was, he used other historical records as he wrote the book.

As a scribe, Ezra would have had access to the records and would have known how to use them.

The use of other sources would not discredit the divine authority of what is recorded.

God is able to direct the author as he investigates the historical sources in such a way as to guarantee the veracity and value of the message He wishes to communicate to His people.

Date:

Events:

The events cover nearly the entire Old Testament period, from Adam up to the restoration of Israel (1-9).

The more detailed part of the story looks at the period from Saul (1051 B.C.) until Cyrus' decree allowing the people to return to Israel and reconstruct the temple (538 B.C.).

Writing:

No author lived through all this time to be able to tell the whole story as an eye witness.

The author looks back, to point out history's lessons to the people of Israel.

He must have done so near the end of this period.

It is most likely that he did it after his return to Jerusalem in 458.

He probably wrote between 450 and 425 B.C.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although the book makes reference to the entire period of the Old Testament in its genealogies, the principal focus is on the Davidic dynasty over Judah (1011-586).

It concludes with a summary concerning the captivity (606-536).

The emphasis of the book is primarily thematic and theological.

Therefore, its historical perspective is limited.

It deals exclusively with the story of the house of David and Judah.

The more complete story is found in the books of Samuel and Kings.

Politically, the majority of the book reflects the conditions of the times of David and Solomon, when there was little foreign intervention and Israel controlled all the territory around them.

2 Chronicles shows the growing influence of Mesopotamia in the area.

The area was more and more affected by the potent nations to their north and east; first Syria, then Assyria, Babylon (Iraq) and finally, Persia (Iran).

Concerning the politics of the closest region, the most notable influence at the beginning of the period was the reign of the Davidic dynasty over the united kingdom of Israel.

The division of the kingdom after the reign of Solomon produced conflicts between the northern and southern kingdoms.

When the northern kingdom of Israel was taken captive in 722 B.C., the Davidic dynasty went on in the south until 586 B.C.

The political environment became very unstable because of the religious instability of the covenant people with their God.

The book traces the relationship between these two facts throughout their history.

The story concludes with the fall of Judah, provoked by its religious decadence. The hope of future restoration is presented when Cyrus' decree that allowed them to return to the land and start over is proclaimed.

PURPOSE AND THEME

THREE REASONS FOR WRITING

1. NEW START IN THE LAND: Exhortation to be faithful

Return to the promised land

The Jews who were still alive after Cyrus' decree, had just returned to the land to rebuild it.

The last time they had been in the land God had judged them and sent them into captivity because of their unfaithfulness.

Now that they are returning to the promised land, the author wants to be sure the same thing doesn't happen again.

Therefore, he presents this history lesson as a warning and as a stimulus to them.

Their history shows how God controls pagan nations and the destiny of His people.

Therefore, Israel can count on His faithfulness.

In Deut. 28-30, God told them exactly how He would deal with them.

If they would submit to His authority and obey the conditions of His covenant with them, He would bless them.

On the other hand, when they disobey and rebel against His authority, there would be cursing, discipline and destruction.

God wants them to learn from the experience of their forefathers and submit to Him so they might receive blessing.

His people had to learn to be faithful to Him.

2. DISCOURAGEMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR LOSS

LOSS OF THRONE: Encouragement because the heir is there

LOSS OF TEMPLE: Encouragement because God is giving them a new start

When they came back to Jerusalem and observed the conditions which existed there, they observed that two things were lacking:
the throne and the temple.

They would have been discouraged when they focused on what they were missing, their treasured historical treasures.

While observing the missing throne, the author tried to encourage them by reminding them that David's heir was still present.

God is protecting the royal line of David's house.

He could restore the king to his throne whenever He's ready.

He has been protecting him under the care of the Babylonian empire, and now, under the authority of Cyrus, His servant.

The second thing which was lacking was the temple.

The restoration temple would not be as large, nor as glorious as that of Solomon.

When they looked at the difference between this temple and Solomon's, many mourned the loss.

They were discouraged.

They needed to recognize that the building itself was never the most important thing.

Its prominent role in national life was what was important.
Thus they could recognize the importance of the temple and of God's presence with His people for their national life and rejoice in what God had given them.

He is writing the book to encourage them.

God has cared for them and has brought them into the new land.

They have to recognize what God is doing for their welfare.

Therefore the author shows them what God has done for His people so that they might enjoy it and take advantage of the new beginning which God has given them in the land.

In order to encourage them and to help them realize what God has done for them, *he orients them regarding God's perspective concerning Israel's history.*

He makes no attempt to hide their faults; those are already too obvious for those who are returning to the land.

He traces the story of the house of David from God's point of view in order that they might learn how God acts with respect to His king.

The story's climax comes with the decree of Cyrus which produces the hope that God's presence with them will be restored and David's throne reestablished.

This hope ought to encourage God's people to start again and to be faithful to their God.

3. NEGLECT OF THE TEMPLE:

Demonstration that their interest in the temple is a symptom of their spiritual condition.

Lack of care for the temple

Throughout the book the central position the temple occupies in the history of Israel is demonstrated.

This emphasis is partially because the author is a priest.

However, it is also because the interest in the temple and its activities is a symptom of the spiritual condition of the people, and their relationship with Yahweh who resides in the temple.

When he describes the aspects of David's reign that explain the greatness of the king "after God's own heart," one of the most important elements of that position was *his attitude concerning the construction of the temple.*

In his last years as king he had a fervent desire to build a house for his God.

He places a heavy emphasis on Solomon's reign as well, not because he was totally dedicated to God, but rather because of his important role in the building of the temple (2 Chron. 1-9).

Even with all the emphasis on Solomon's glory, six of the nine chapters revolve around the temple.

It can be readily observed that following the death of Solomon, the nation abandoned the temple and the worship of Yahweh.

Then wars began to ruin the country.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEMPLE

2 Chronicles

1-9
Exaltation of Solomon
Construction of the temple
Dedication of temple
Solomon's reign

10-36
Degeneration of Judah
Destruction of the temple
Desecration of the temple
Judah's ruin

The author of the Chronicles evaluates each king with relation to the temple, the center of the spiritual power of the nation.

In essence he ignores the northern kingdom because of its false religion and rejection of the temple in Jerusalem.

He concentrates his attention on the south, especially on those kings who did what was right, either because of their interest in the temple or because of their spiritual reforms.

When the people abandoned God, He took away their blessing.

The historical narrative ends with the edict to reconstruct the temple.

It was the representation of Yahweh's presence with them and served as a continual reminder of the privileged position they had before God.

Thus this final comment isn't just another interesting piece of historical information; it was a prophetic note of hope.

The Davidic line, the temple and the priesthood were still theirs. God has not abandoned His people.

THREE PURPOSES:

- * **To exhort them to be faithful to Yahweh**
- * **To encourage them to trust in Him**
- * **To demonstrate the importance of reverence for the temple.**

God requires absolute loyalty and faithfulness from His people, and especially from His king. *85% won't do!*

Throughout Israel's history, when the king has walked properly, the people have followed him.

The kings were to blame for having led their people into unfaithfulness.

The Chronicles present an interpretive account of the history of Israel.

The basis of the evaluation is their faithfulness to Yahweh.

When the king remains faithful, the people prosper; when the king leaves God, seeks after other gods, or tries to imitate the world, God judges them.

The readers, upon returning to the land and getting a new start, need to learn this important lesson from their history.

God demands faithfulness.

If they trust Him and obey His Word, they can be sure of enjoying God's blessing.

ORGANIZATION

1 Chronicles begins with 9 chapters dedicated primarily to the most significant genealogies of Israel's history.

By means of these genealogies, we can see the importance of the Levitical and Davidic lines (1-9).

The rest of the story revolves around those lines.

When he comes to David's reign (10-29), the king God chose, the author points out the aspects of his reign that explain the greatness of the king after God's own heart: his relationship with the ark (13-16), with the covenant (17-20), and with the temple (21-29).

2 Chronicles continues the story where 1 Chronicles finished.

After demonstrating the glory which Solomon reached because of his interest in the construction of the temple (1-9), he traces the degeneration of Judah, referring to the few encouraging periods of reformation, as he went through the list of David's descendants, down to the last king of Judah who saw Jerusalem fall under his reign (10-36:14).

The book ends with the demonstration of the rejection of the kings of Judah and the destruction of the city (36:15-21).

However, he leaves them with a hope for the future as he mentions the decree to restore Judah (36:22-23).

1-2 Chronicles

Genealogies of God's people 1-9

Reign of the king chosen by God 10-29

Reign of Solomon 1-9
Reign of the other kings of Judah 10-36:14
Rejection of the kings of Judah 36:15-21
Restoration of Judah decreed 36:22-23

GENEALOGIES OF GOD'S PEOPLE 1-9

Chronicles begins with a genealogical presentation of Israel's history from Adam all the way to the period of the restoration.
The purposes of the author are revealed by the families that receive the emphasis in the list.

ANCESTRY OF GOD'S KING 1-3

From Adam to Abraham 1:1-27

The list moves rapidly through those who are responsible for the establishing of the nations until it gets to Abraham (1:1-27).

More emphasis is placed on Abraham's line than on that of the others.

However, the sons of Abraham in general are presented briefly in order to get to the family of Israel, better known as Jacob, who is the specific source of the nation Israel (1:28-54).

From Abraham to Israel 1:28-54

Apparently the new name God gave him is used here to call attention to the importance of Israel in this picture.

From Israel to David 2

Of all the children of Israel, the family of Judah is chosen to receive special attention.

At the conclusion of the presentation of Judah's family, the way is prepared to consider the most prominent son of that family, David, the one chosen by God to serve as king over His people.

Throughout the rest of the book, the state of the nation rests in the hands of his descendants.

From David to the Captivity 3

After presenting David's ancestors, the author pays closer attention to his descendants.

He is most interested in three aspects of David's lineage:

First, he introduces all the children of David (3:1-9);

Then, he traces the line of those descendants who ruled over Judah (3:10-16).

Finally he presents the descendants of Jeconiah, better known as Jehoiachin, who the author considered to be the legitimate heirs to the throne.

He apparently presents them to demonstrate that even during the captivity period there was always a legitimate heir with the right to claim the throne of David.

The divine promise to preserve the Davidic throne is sure (3:17-24).

ANCESTRY OF GOD'S PEOPLE 4-7

Next, he presents a summary of the genealogies of the 12 tribes.

The preeminence of the tribe of Judah is again seen by its inclusion at the first of the list.

It is possible that these lists were included so that those who have come back from captivity could identify their origin more easily, in order to demonstrate their right to an inheritance in the land.

Judah	4:1-23
Simeon	4:24-43
Reuben	5:1-10

Gad	5:11-22
Manasseh (E)	5:23-26
Levi	6
Issachar	7:1-5
Benjamin	7:6-12
Nephthali	7:13
Manasseh (W)	7:14-19
Ephraim	7:20-29
Asher	7:30-40

The author's special interest in the priesthood can be seen by the emphasis he gives to the genealogy of Levi (6:1-81).

He points specifically to the line of Aaron (6:1-15) and the functions assigned to each of the Levitical families.

ANCESTRY OF BENJAMIN EXPANDED AROUND SAUL 8:1-40

Line of the king chosen by the people 8

As he concludes the genealogies of the twelve tribes, the author describes more slowly the line of Benjamin, perhaps because of his identification with Judah in the southern kingdom and because they were the only tribe not to leave the authority of the Davidic throne which God had established.

It is probable that special attention was given to Benjamin also because of their special relationship with Saul, the first king of Israel.

The enlarged treatment given to Saul's family in the midst of the presentation of Benjamin's line shows the recognition given to him as the first king of Israel.

It appears to be an attempt to identify his family so as not to forget about him and his role in their history.

After all, even with all his faults, Saul had been the one to establish the throne over the nation.

If he had remained faithful to Yahweh, God would have confirmed his throne over Israel.

However, in as much as God knew from the beginning what would happen, He chose Judah to be the source from whom His chosen king would come (Gen. 49:8-10).

RESTORATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE IN JERUSALEM 9:1-34

As he concluded the genealogical records, the first families to return from captivity were identified.

The majority were from Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, which is logical since the majority of those who returned came from Babylonia.

They were from the captivity resulting from the fall of Jerusalem where these tribes were the main ones that resided there.

Also, the presence of these tribes upholds the author's thesis that they were the main ones responsible for the spiritual state of Israel.

If they walked faithfully with God, the rest would follow them.

In the same way, when they wandered away from Him, the people would follow them in their sin.

Even so, the other tribes do have some representatives there.

Although there aren't many details about the ministry of the religious leaders of the people there, the author wants to make it clear that they worked hard to fulfill their responsibilities faithfully.

He notes that the priests were effective in the work of the ministry in God's house (9:13).

There were enough men to carry out adequately the ministries of service in the temple that God had assigned to them.

ANCESTRY OF SAUL REVIEWED 9:35-44

In order to understand the history of David's reign and of his descendants, it is necessary to begin with the final days of the reign of Saul, the first king of Israel.

Therefore, the transition from the genealogies to the history of the book is introduced by a partial presentation of the genealogy of Saul's family.

Three lessons for us from the genealogies of Chronicles:

1. **God blesses those who call on Him (4:9-10; 5:18-22)**
2. **God disciplines those who turn from Him (5:24-26; 9:1)**
3. **God requires total commitment**

How should this study affect our lives?

What does God want me to do?

Have you received a new start?
Are you looking back on the discouraging results of a ruined life?
Afraid things will never be the same?

He will give us a new start
He will be with us

BUT--HE WANTS OUR TOTAL COMMITMENT--

THE RULER OF GOD'S PEOPLE 10-29

DAVID'S PREDECESSOR 10

Saul is presented as the first king of Israel, and as the one whose fall brought about the establishment of the Davidic dynasty.

Thus the history of the ruler of God's people begins with Saul, David's predecessor.

Death of Saul 1-7

Display of Saul 8-10

Burial of Saul 11-12

Causes of Saul's death 13-14

DAVID'S ANOINTING 11-12

His accession 11:1-3

After Saul's death, the people's support for David as their king is described.

His capital 11:4-9

After the people rallied to David, He went up and conquered Jerusalem in order to establish it as his capital.

His mighty men 11:10-12:40

DAVID'S REIGN 13-29:21 **Three focal points:**

The ark 13-16

After taking control of the nation and establishing a new national capital, David's concern turned toward the proper worship of God.

They needed the ark in order to worship Him.
David brought it back.
They celebrated its return.

Zeal for the ark 13:1-8
Fear of the ark 13:9-14
Fame and victory 14
Journey of the ark 15
Celebration over the ark 16

The covenant 17-20

Having established the ark in Jerusalem, David observed his own elaborate mansion in comparison to God's tent.

The desire was awakened in David to build a permanent house for Yahweh.

Davidic desire to build temple 17:1-2
Davidic covenant established 17:3-15
Davidic response in worship 17:16-27
Davidic victory in battle 18-20

The temple 21-29:21

David's tragedy converted to temple site 21-22:1

At about that time, Satan tempted David to want to know just how powerful his forces were.

God had wanted David to trust Him, not the strength of his armies numbers.

David's preparation for temple building 22:2-23:1
Provision of materials 22:2-5
Instruction for Solomon 22:6-16
Commission for leadership 22:17-23:1

David's organization for temple service 23:2-26:32

David's organization for civil service 27

David's final instructions for temple building 28-29:21

Finally, previous to His death, David calls together an assembly of the people to challenge them with the importance of the temple construction project.

He presents his own offering as an example 29:1-5

The leaders of the nation likewise contribute generously 29:6-9

All the people noticed their dedication to God and rejoiced at it.

DAVID'S DEATH 29:22-30

1 Chronicles concludes with Solomon's coronation ceremony. 29:22-25

The people pledged to follow his leadership and God greatly exalted him as king over all Israel.

David's death is described and his reign summarized. He had served as God's king and God had prospered his reign. 29:26-30

Future kings would be evaluated on the basis of David's faithful example of submission to God's authority over His kingdom.

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON 2 Chronicles 1-9

Solomon's reign began well.

Having seen his father's relationship with God and having heard his challenge, Solomon determined to follow God.

Therefore, God established his reign and made him great.

His priorities as he began his rule are described.

SOLOMON'S WISDOM 1:1-17

His greatness 1:1

His offering 1:2-6

Although David had moved the ark to Jerusalem, its official house, the tabernacle was still in Gibeon.

Solomon wanted to offer burnt offerings to the Lord and determined to do it on the altar God had established, that of the tabernacle.

God blessed Solomon for his clear profession of submission to God, demonstrated in this way before the entire nation.

His request 1:7-10

Because of Solomon's submission and obedience, God offers him the chance to make any request he wants.

He asks for wisdom to rule God's people wisely. He could have made no better choice.

His answer 1:11-12

His wealth 1:13-17

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE 2-7

Solomon's greatness is further enhanced because of the priority he placed on the building of the temple as the place where God's people might gather to worship Him.

Preparation for the temple 2

Building of the temple 3-4

Dedication of the temple 5-7

Preparation for dedication 5

Solomon's dedication 6

God's response 7

SOLOMON'S FAME AND GLORY 8-9:28

Because Solomon accepted God's priorities as his priorities, God blessed him materially.

In spite of his weaknesses, Solomon's reign is viewed as a positive addition to the history of God's people.

He sought to demonstrate true wisdom and to promote the worship of Yahweh.

Therefore, the kingdom grew and material resources were accumulated.

After 40 years as king, Solomon died.

Never again would the kingdom return to the glory and wealth it enjoyed during his reign, until Messiah comes to establish His kingdom.

Cities built 8:1-6
Slave labor conscripted 8:7-10
Palace for Pharaoh's daughter 8:11
Temple service assigned 8:12-16
Ships to transport gold 8:17-18
Visit by queen of Sheba 9:1-12
Wealth accumulated 9:13-28

SOLOMON'S DEATH 9:29-31

THE REIGNS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH 10-36:14

Although some of the tensions which developed during Solomon's reign surface in the narrative after his death, they are not mentioned previously.

The author wants to concentrate on his positive contribution to the kingdom and especially his leadership in building the temple and worshiping Yahweh.

TWO EVIL KINGS 10-14:1

Evil reign of Rehoboam 10-12

When Solomon's son Rehoboam comes to the throne a new tone is begun.

His reign was considered evil in Yahweh's sight, and therefore, his weaknesses are demonstrated.

Revolt of the northern tribes 10:1-11:4
Consolidation of southern tribes 11:5-23
Attack from Egypt 12

In spite of God's help in the establishment and consolidation of his kingdom, once Rehoboam became strong, he became proud and forgot about God.
The Lord used Shishak, king of Egypt to restore him and bring revival.

In spite of Rehoboam's restoration, the overall effect of his reign was negative because he didn't make following the Lord a priority.

Evil reign of Abijah 13-14:1

The failures of his father Rehoboam continued during the evil reign of Abijah as well. Nevertheless the author chooses not to dwell on those failures.

He remembers the reign only for the conflict with Jeroboam.

The conflict occurs early in Abijah's reign when he's still faithful to Yahweh.

Jeroboam wants to conquer Judah.

He was not obeying God.

Abijah opposes Jeroboam and defeats him.

Jeroboam never recovers his strength.

Abijah's example demonstrates again the importance of trust in and faithfulness to Yahweh.

TWO GOOD KINGS 14:2-20:37

Good reign of Asa 14:2-16:14

When Asa became king, he immediately began to reform the degenerate condition in Judah.

Obedience to Yahweh 14:2-7
Victory over Cushites 14:8-15
Response to Azariah's prophecy 15
Treaty with Ben-Hadad 16

Near the end of his reign, Asa was confronted by Baasha, king of Israel.

Rather than trust God to give him victory as he had earlier, Asa used the temple and royal treasuries to buy a treaty with Ben-Hadad, king of Aram.

God's prophet, Hanani, rebuked Asa for his lack of faith and promised that wars would continue throughout his reign,

Rather than repent, Asa became angry with the prophet and threw him in jail, oppressing some of the other people of his nation also.

As a result of his rebellion, God sent severe illness.

Rather than send for help from God's servants, he continued to be angry until his eventual death.

Asa's life story demonstrates the main point of the book:

While he submits to God and places a high priority on the temple and worship, he is blessed.

When he depends on the ways of the other nations and turns from God, his kingdom and personal life suffer.

Nevertheless, the total impact of his reign is considered good.

Good reign of Jehoshaphat 17-20

Jehoshaphat also contributed to the spiritual edification of the nation as a good king.

Obedience to Yahweh 17:1-6

Sending of teachers 17:7-10

Power of armies 17:11-19

Alliance with Ahab 18-19:3

In spite of a bad alliance that almost cost him his life, the overall impact of Jehoshaphat's rule was positive for God's people.

Appointment of judges 19:4-11

Victory over Moabites and Ammonites 20:1-30

Summary of reign 20:31-34

Alliance with Ahaziah 20:35-37

Like his father, Jehoshaphat never learned to avoid alliances with the wicked descendants of Ahab.

One of the side effects of his alliances was the marital alliance between his son, Jehoram, and the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

THREE EVIL KINGS 21-23:15

Evil reign of Jehoram 21:1-20

The results of the family relationship are seen in his reign.

Jehoram abandoned his loyalty to Yahweh and served the pagan gods Israel accepted.

He had his brothers killed so there would be no competitors for the throne.

Because of his evil reign, Elijah wrote to predict his death by an incurable violent disease, which God brought on him.

The nation was also weakened.

When he died, no one cried over the loss.

Evil reign of Ahaziah 22:1-9

Ahaziah continues in the same path as his father.

His mother was his chief adviser and assured that he would remain faithful to the ways of his grandparents, Ahab and Jezebel.

His alliance with Israel caused him to visit Joram when he was recuperating from battle wounds.

While he was there, Jehu came to execute God's judgment against the house of Ahab. Ahaziah was killed along with the others.

Evil reign of Athaliah 22:10-23:15

At the death of Ahaziah, there were no heirs to the throne who were strong enough to take control of the nation.

Therefore, his mother decided to usurp the throne.

She is totally rejected by the author of the book because she is Ahab's daughter, unfaithful to Yahweh, and not a descendant of David.

Athaliah set out to eliminate any competition by killing all members of the royal house. Jehosheba, a daughter of Jehoram, married to the high priest Jehoiada, hid Joash in the temple.

After seven years, Jehoiada led the temple guard in an attempt to overthrow Athaliah and establish Joash as king.

The attempt is successful and a good king finally takes over to remove the contamination caused by Ahab in the southern kingdom.

FOUR GOOD KINGS 23:16-27:9

Three of the four have bad periods in their reign, but the overall effect of their reign is considered good for God's people.

Good reign of Joash 23:16-24:27

His reforms and restoration of temple 23:16-24:16

While Joash was under the guidance of Jehoiada, all went well.

His failure and fall 24:17-27

Once the counsel of Jehoiada was gone, Joash left his loyalty to Yahweh.

God sent prophets to warn him but he wouldn't listen.

The climax came when Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, came to warn him and is stoned to death in the temple courtyard.

God then intervenes against Joash.

He sends a small Aramean army to defeat a much larger army from Judah.

The Arameans leave Joash wounded and his own officers conspire to finish the job.

Once again God demonstrates His control over history.

He will judge severely those who turn from Him.

Good reign of Amaziah 25

Although Amaziah's reign is characterized as a good reign, note is taken of the instability of his commitment to God.

Revenge for father's death 25:1-4

Organization of military 25:5-10

Victory over Seir 25:11-13

Worship of the gods of Seir 25:14-16

Victory in battle produces failure in his relationship to God.

Amaziah gathers the spoils of battle, brings back the gods of Seir and worships them.

When God's prophet rebukes him, the king rejects his message.

The prophet then predicts his destruction.

Destruction by northern kingdom 25:17-28

The destruction comes when he decides to attack Israel.

Their king tries to warn him.

Amaziah refuses all counsel and attacks Israel.

As a result God causes his defeat.

Some of his own men conspire to kill him.

When he escapes to Lachish, they go after him and kill him there.

Another sad story of a king who began well demonstrates the danger of turning from God.

Good reign of Uzziah 26

The lesson is repeated in the case of Uzziah.

He began well, seeking the Lord and obeying His Word.

His success in battle produces pride, which causes his downfall.

Uzziah presumptuously entered the temple to offer incense on the altar.

When confronted by priests, rather than repent, Uzziah gets angry.

As a result, God afflicts him with leprosy.

He had to spend the rest of his reign separated from his people and from the temple of his God.

His son ruled in his place.

Obedience to Yahweh 1-5

Power and prosperity 6-15

Failure from pride 26:16-23

Good reign of Jotham 27

Jotham learned from his father's experience.

Although his ability to transform the practice of the people was ineffective, he was personally right before God and sought to please Him throughout his reign.

Jotham was a successful king and God strengthened him.

EVIL REIGN OF AHAZ 28

In spite of the example of a father who was strengthened by following God, Ahaz rejected that way and sought to imitate the pagan ways of the neighboring nations.

As a result his reign was a tragic story of degeneration and destruction.

GOOD REIGN OF HEZEKIAH 29-32

Having seen his father's example, Hezekiah determined that his rule would be different.

He wanted to follow God.

He brought reforms at a crucial time in the history of Judah, which resulted in their salvation from destruction.

Purification and dedication of temple 29

Celebration of the Passover 30

Destruction of pagan worship centers 31:1

Contributions for the priestly ministry 31:2-21

Invasion by Sennacherib 32:1-23

Restoration from illness 32:24

Pride from prosperity 32:25-33

TWO EVIL KINGS 33

Evil reign of Manasseh 33:1-20

Although his father had been faithful to God, Manasseh chose a different path.
He welcomed all the heathen religious customs of the other nations around them.
When God tried to correct them, they ignored him.
Therefore, He sent the Assyrians.

From captivity, Manasseh called on the Lord and was restored.

Although there was repentance and restoration at the end of his reign, his negative influence on the nation weakened much of what Hezekiah had accomplished.

Imitation of pagan religions 33:1-9
Invasion by Assyria 33:10-11
Repentance and restoration 33:12-20

Evil reign of Amon 33:21-25

Manasseh's negative influence is noted in the reign of his son, Amon.

Amon ignored the lessons his father learned late in life and returned to the idolatry which his father had removed at the end.

His reign was worse than his father's and he never did repent.

GOOD REIGN OF JOSIAH 34-35

Josiah learned from his father's tragic end.

He led the nation in its final reform prior to the captivity.

His reforms 34:1-7
His repair of the temple 34:8-13
His reading of the law 34:14-30
His reconfirmation of the covenant 34:31-33
His celebration of the Passover 35:1-19
His death 35:20-27

After Josiah's death, the degeneration of Judah proceeded at a rapid pace.

FINAL FOUR EVIL KINGS 36:1-14

Evil reign of Jehoahaz 36:1-4
Evil reign of Jehoiakim 36:5-8
Evil reign of Jehoiachin 36:9-10

He was the surviving king in Babylon and considered the legitimate heir to the throne of Judah.

Evil reign of Zedekiah 36:11-14

THE REJECTION OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH 36:15-21

The story concludes with some divine interpretative commentary on the last few chapters of Israel's history.

The cause for Judah's downfall was their sin and rebellion.

God sent warnings to them over and over again, but they refused to listen.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM 15-19

When there was no other remedy, God sent the Babylonians to destroy them.

CAPTIVITY IN BABYLONIA 20

It should not be assumed that God is finished with Judah and has no future for them.

He sent a remnant into exile in Babylon.

SEVENTY YEARS OF REST 21

God's land would receive seventy years rest to make up for the sabbath rests which He had commanded but the people never observed.

After the seventy years are over, God will again act in favor of His people.

THE RESTORATION OF JUDAH DECREED 36:22-23

The author, writing after the return of many from captivity to Judah, wants them to be excited about what God is doing.

The decree of Cyrus was part of God's plan to restore the people.
That was a big first step.

God's action to restore them to the land is an indication that He will finish the process.

GOD'S CALL TO CYRUS 22

CYRUS' DECREE 23

They may not see the king on throne now, but he will come in the future.

Their responsibility is to rebuild.

They need to prepare the land, **and even more important, they need to prepare their own lives for His kingdom to become a reality.**

**God wants a prepared people.
His restoration program has begun.
They had better get ready.**

*God is going to do some great things for His people,
if they will be faithful to Him!*

85% won't do!

God is calling for total commitment!

"The eyes of the Lord roam too and fro across the land,

Looking for people who are totally committed to following Him!"

WHAT LESSONS SHOULD WE LEARN FROM THIS BOOK?