

Bible Study Course

1 & 2 Chronicles

Introduction

We need to remember once again that 1 & 2 Chronicles were originally one book. It was first divided in the LXX. It seems very likely that 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah were at the beginning one work compiled by the same hand. In point of fact, Ezra-Nehemiah is still looked upon as one book in the Jewish Scriptures.

The Hebrew name for 1 & 2 Chronicles is literally “the sayings of the day,” or “the record of days,” and thus “journals,” or “chronicles.” The LXX title is “Things Left Over” or “Supplements.” Our title “Chronicles” has come from the Latin version of Jerome.

1 & 2 Chronicles is not found in “The Prophets” in the Jewish Arrangement of the Scriptures, but is found in the third section, “The Writings.” This is also true of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. In fact 1 & 2 Chronicles are the final books in the Jewish Arrangement completing the Scriptures. This is quite remarkable because it is not in a chronological order, Ezra and Nehemiah preceding 1 & 2 Chronicles, whereas chronologically they follow. This is surely not coincidence and emphasizes the message of these books.

In 1 & 2 Kings we came, as it were to a halt in the unfolding revelation of God’s Purpose. It would appear that before we can go any further we must learn the deepest secret of God’s Purpose and His heart’s desire for men and women.

1 & 2 Chronicles span the whole of history from Adam to Cyrus. The whole drama of human life is seen as being related to one thing. All God’s dealings with nations or individuals are seen as related to the same objective. All that cannot be related to it is ignored or rejected, it can be said truly that 1 & 2 Chronicles begins with the first Adam and ends with the last Adam. We can say then that the books of Samuel-Kings are history written from the point of view of the Throne and the Kingdom; the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles are an interpretation. Therein lays their vital, strategic value and importance. Indeed, if we miss the significance of this we miss the point of all God’s dealings with men. To understand them is to understand the eternal purpose of God.

Authorship and Date

We are nowhere given the name of the compiler, but it is obviously a compilation from many sources extant at the time, as well as being drawn from Samuel and Kings. The compiler or chronicler mentions his sources at least 15 times, and they are to be found in the following verses: - 1 Chron 9:1; 29:29; 2 Chron 9:29; 12:15; 16:11; 20:34; 24:27; 25:26; 26:22; 28:26; 32:32; 33:19; 35:25, 27; 36:8. The sources which are no longer available to us are mentioned in 1 Chron 29:29; 2 Chron 9:29; 12:15; 20:34; 26:22; 33:19; 35:25.

As we said in the Introduction in all probability Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah were originally the work of one hand, and there are a number of interesting links between the books. E.g.

1. 2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-3
2. The abruptness of Ezra’s opening.
3. Chaldeeisms in all four books.
4. Very definite peculiarities of vocabulary in all four books.
5. A deep and real insight into the Law, into the Temple, etc., apparent in the four books, which might well suggest that a priest was the compiler.

It is therefore very interesting to note the strong assertion of Jewish tradition that Ezra the priest and the scribe was the compiler. (Ezra 7:21) This may well be true, although it may have been added to at a later date.

Apart from the genealogies, 1 Chronicles covers the period from the death of Saul, approximately 1000BC to the death of David 960BC, a period of 40 years, i.e. the same period as 2 Samuel. 2 Chronicles covers the period from the accession of Solomon 960BC to the exile of Judah to Babylon, 587BC, ending with the decree of Cyrus. Therefore 1 & 2 Chronicles could not have been compiled in its present form before 587BC. See e.g. 2 Chron 36:22-23.

Key to the Book

It is not difficult to find the key to Chronicles. It is the Temple, the House of God. There are other emphases but they are seen as they are related to the Temple.

It is remarkable that although Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah were one work, they were split up, their order was inverted (therefore possibly the need of the link of 2 Chron 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-3) and Chronicles were placed as the final word of the Jewish Scriptures. It was therefore in the Lord's time the last book of the third division (The Writings). Now with the New Testament added, it has found its rightful place in the second division of the Old Testament. This is very instructive.

Mark also the great span of 1 & 2 Chronicles. Reaching right back to Adam, it traces history swiftly, then more fully as it runs parallel with 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. If we include Ezra and Nehemiah it continues where Samuel and Kings ends and takes us on to the close of Old Testament history.

These facts simply mean one thing – that the Temple is the heart and meaning of God's Purpose and dealings – whether in creation or redemption. This is the vital message of 1 & 2 Chronicles. Take for example the omissions in these two books. The Chronicler is often accused of being nationalistic and over-patriotic, thus giving an unbalanced picture (e.g. Bathsheba, Absalom, Adonijah, the N Kingdom, Israel etc.) Is this accusation true? We must answer that it is not true. The Holy Spirit is simply saying that the House of God is not built by division, by argument, by agitation, by controversy etc., nor by indulgence or by apathy but by going on with the Lord. Therefore what does not build or serve the House of the Lord is not mentioned. Why is so important a matter as the history of the N Kingdom, Israel, largely omitted? The reason is that you cannot build or serve the House of God where you choose or desire. The N Kingdom chose Bethel (which means "house of God", and Dan. 1 Kings 12:25-33. God had clearly defined his choice, Jerusalem. Deut 12:5-14 cp 1 Chron 21:18 - 22:1. To seek to build the House of God anywhere else than the place God had chosen was to move outside of His will.

We ought also to note that there are two other emphases in these two books, which are both related to the House of God – the Messianic line, and priestly and Levitical service. These two matters are the reason for the many genealogies with which these books begin, and which so many find tedious and meaningless. They are however transformed when we realize that God is pointing out a vital truth. Priestly service in the N Kingdom, Israel was totally illegitimate and invalid because it was not Aaronic or Levitical, thus God could not accept the service of such priests. Moreover in the N Kingdom there was no messianic line. By their secession they had alienated themselves from the purpose of God. For us all this contains a tremendous spiritual truth. If we would be related to the purpose of God, if we would be involved in the House of God, there must be a spiritual birth, a spiritual inheritance, a spiritual pedigree and history behind our lives and service, finding its origin with God. The value of our contribution in and to the House of God is dependant upon these factors. So much of what calls itself "service to the Lord" is an imposition of the flesh upon the work of God.

The Outline of the Book

As far as Chronicles goes, the outline is threefold, but if we include Ezra-Nehemiah it is fourfold: -

- I. The Instrument for the Realization of God's Purpose and the Bringing in of God's Christ 1 Chron 1 - 10
- II. The realization of the Purpose of God. 1 Chron 11 – 2 Chron 9.
 - I. Preparation for the Temple
 - II. Building of the Temple
- III. The Continual Conflict over the House of God and its Ruin. 2 Chron 10 – 36

IV. The recovery of the House of God and the Bringing in of the Christ of God. Ezra – Nehemiah.

1. The Instrument for the Realization of God's Purpose and Bringing in of God's Christ. 1 Chron 1 -10

Note: -

1. The contents of these ten chapters.
 - a) The line or seed directly and intimately related to God's Christ and purpose. 1 Chron 1 -3
 - i. The preservation of the Seed to the Flood
Adam to Noah 1:1-4
 - ii. The preservation of the Seed among the nations
Shem to Terah 1:5-27
 - iii. The producing of the people of God.
Abraham to Israel (Jacob) 1:28 – 2:2
 - iv. The preservation of the Seed among that people
Judah to Jesse 2:3-12
 - v. The realization of God's purpose
David to Solomon 2:13 – 3:9
 - vi. The preservation of the Seed in relation to the Temple and Jerusalem till God's Christ.
Rehoboam to Christ 3:10 – 24
 - b) Those others related to God's purpose but not so intimately. 1 Chron 4 – 8
 - i. Judah 4:1-23 (Jabez v9-10.)
 - ii. Simeon 4:24-43
(They possessed the land, destroyed the Amalekites).
 - iii. Reuben, Gad, Manasseh 5:1 – 26
(They destroyed the Hagarites, extended the land; right out of God's purpose finally.)
 - iv. Levi 6:1-81
(Note: the omission of Eli's house; the space devoted to Levi, particularly Heman, Asaph, Ethan, the High Priests; the Levitical houses: David's appointment over the ark: note v48.)
 - v. Other tribes 7:1-40
 - vi. Benjamin 8:1-40
(Note: - After being nearly destroyed (Judg 20) it is interesting to see how Benjamin gets through, especially after Saul! Yet this tribe figures much in the return. The key: the House of God and Jerusalem.)
 - c) The lessons of these ten chapters.

We need to note that God has a purpose, and all is bent toward its realization. It is twofold:

 - A. The House of God
 - B. The bringing in of the Christ

Mark carefully therefore: -

 - a. There is through these chapters selection, election, choice. God sovereignly apprehending the channel for the realizing of His purpose. E.g. Seth, Shem, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, David
 - b. The persistence and perseverance of God in obtaining His purpose over millennia!
 - c. There are only certain genealogies here. It is not exhaustive. It indicates that which is vital and instrumental in God's purpose.
 - d. Some genealogies are mentioned which later run right out of the purpose of God. They are only mentioned because they affected those who were in and remained in the purpose of God! E.g. Japheth, Ham, Ishmael, Keturah, Esau, Achan, Saul, etc.
 - e. We need to note, therefore, that we can be children of God without necessarily being vital or instrumentally related to His purpose. We can also get right out of His purpose, though once within it vitally. Mark also the degrees of

relatedness to the purpose of God. 1 Chron 1-3 cf. 4 – 8. See Eph 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:15-16 cp. Eph 5:18-21.

- f. Thus we see from these genealogies: -
 - i. The House and the land are vital. The way to Christ's fullness is by the church
 - ii. The House of God cannot be built anywhere, but in Jerusalem alone. There is a divine ground and foundation for the building of His House.
Spiritual birthright and inheritance are connected with the House and the land
 - iii. Spiritual history and contribution are similarly related.
 - iv. The coming of Christ is vitally related to all of this.

2. The realization of the Purpose of God. 1 Chron 11:1 – 2 Chron 9:31

In this portion of Chronicles we have reached the heart of the matter. It is subdivided into two parts, the first centering in David and the second in Solomon.

- a) The preparation for the Temple – David 1 Chron 11:1 – 29:30
 - i. The ground and site secured for the House of God 11:1-12:40
 - a. The first thing really mentioned here in David's life is the capture of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the place of God's choice. Cf. Deut 12:5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, with Ex 20:24. Note the difference between being in the wilderness and being in the land. The Holy Spirit focuses attention upon the first absolute necessity for the actual building of the Temple – the recognition of the ground upon which the House of God was to be built. See Especial Note page 7.
 - b. We need also to note the history of experience, fellowship and suffering which was behind this move. We see spiritual courage and prowess; deep, inwrought and tested fellowship; discipline, training, and loyalty in these mighty men of David. All this came out of the exile years. Adullam and Hebron, and was necessary before Jerusalem could be taken,
 - ii. God commits Himself to the right ground – the ark brought up to Jerusalem 13:1 – 16:43.
 - a. Once the ground has been recognized and possessed, the next stage is the Ark of the Covenant coming on to it. In Scripture this is always the symbol of God's committed presence. There is a difference between the general leadership of the Lord, leading them into the recognition and possession of Jerusalem as the ground upon which the Temple was to be built, and the committal of His presence to them as in e.g. Ex 40: 34 -38; 2 Chron 7:1-3.
 - b. We are taught here that there is an order in the building of the house of God. Note: - The first attempt to move the ark 13:1-14:17. Much praise etc. The Philistine method adopted; Uzza's death; the ark left in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite; certain early aspects and events of David's reign related. The second attempt to move the ark. 15:1 – 16:43. A great lesson learnt. 1 Chron 15:2 cp. Num 4:5-16. Only the Levites were allowed by God to carry the ark. David appoints them to this task, instructing them to sing, "Lifting up the voice with joy." Vv. 16-24. It was a perpetual song, a psalm of praise all the way.
 - c. Thus we see that God only commits Himself fully when the ground upon which the House is to be built is seen and taken. His presence, committed in this way, is the key to the church, its building, its function, its pattern and order etc. etc.
 - iii. The provision and preparation of the materials, and the arrangement of the service, for the Temple. 1 Chron 17:1-29:30.
 - a. When the ground is thus clearly seen and taken and God has committed Himself, the next stage is concerned with the materials, the pattern and the arrangement.
 - b. David's desire, God's answer and David's response. Out of his attitude much resulted 17:1-27

- c. Victories over the enemies of God yield the materials for the Temple. 18:1 – 20:8. Note that these materials are the spoils of war; they are the fruit of victory.
- d. The Lord sovereignly turning a tragic and sinful mistake into spiritual discovery and eternal values. 21:1 -22:1. The numbering of Israel. (note 21:1 – Satan) The altar becomes the site of the Temple. Note: - The necessity of the cross as the basis for all directly connected with the building of the Temple. It is interesting that this now comes into view. First David took Jerusalem; then through his sin in numbering the people, when confessed, he is led to the site of the altar in the Temple which is to be built. There is no other way for the House of God to be built than through the altar, the cross.
- e. The final preparations of David’s life. 22:2 – 27:34. Note that with 1 Chron 22:2, we actually begin the preparation of the materials etc. etc. (Note 1 Chron 22:5)
 - i. David’s charge to Solomon, etc. 22:2-19. The preparation has been in much affliction. V 14. It is not enough for the ark merely to be on the right ground. It needs to be “housed” by the Temple. See v19. Again the “holy vessels of God” have no meaning outside of God’s House. They fulfil their purpose and function only within it. It is quite clear from the chapter that the House of God was the passion for David’s heart and life. See vv. 5 – 7 cp. Ps 27:4-6; 23:6; 132:1-8, 13-14.
 - ii. The arrangement for the service of God
 - A. The Levites – 3 houses, 24 courses. 23:1-31
 - B. The priests – 2 houses, 24 courses. 24:1-31
 - C. The singers - 3 houses, 24 courses 25:1-21
 - D. The doorkeepers – 24 courses. 26:1-19
 - E. The treasures. 26:20-28
 - F. The judges and officers. 26:29-32
 - iii. We learn therefore that:
 - A. All have their place, their function and their time. Nothing is left to chance, or to their own will. It is all by appointment of the king and under his hand.
 - B. It reveals a marvellous submission and relatedness.
 - C. All this succeeds, in order, the discovery of the site of the altar. It is by the cross, etc.
 - D. David gave a very great place to the singers. In the final analysis David’s life and experience found its greatest expression in the worship and adoration of the Lord (e.g. his psalms.) True and whole-hearted worship is always linked with the church.
 - iv. The civil leaders and the standing army of the nation 27:1-34. Significantly these matters follow the Temple.
- f. David’s last charge to the leaders of the nation and to Solomon. 28:1-29:30. David gives to Solomon the pattern of the Temple, the materials for building it, and the arrangement for the service of God within it. His life is now finished and his one great desire fulfilled. All is prepared and ready for the actual building to begin. David’s unstinted giving, and the effect of his example on others, is a guide to all who would be co-workers together with God. This section ends with the brief record of Solomon’s coronation, and David’s death.

Especial Note:

Before we move on to the actual building, it would be good to summarize this vital passage of the Bible. We have discovered some of the most fundamental of all lessons concerning God's purpose in our day for the church: -

- i. We must discover the basis upon which believers should gather together. The matter of "church ground" is vital! What is that ground? It is Christ Himself as the basis upon which the church is built in the locality in which we live. The Lord will never commit Himself to anything that is not on this ground. There is no other foundation than Christ. He might bless other things and sovereignly use them, but He never commits Himself to them as far as "church building" goes.
- ii. The Lord commits Himself specifically when He has those as Levites who are utterly given to Him, and prepared to bear the ark on their shoulders.
- iii. The church lies inherent within the life of God. Its order, its functions, its pattern, its harmony are all found within that life.
- iv. The deep and devastating work of the cross is the key to the flow of that life. All that is within that life is expressed and manifested by the working of the cross. Furthermore the Holy Spirit alone can make the cross a reality in our experience. The Spirit will not touch anything that does not come by way of the cross.
- v. All the arrangement for service, the pattern, etc., comes to realization as we abide under the anointing – cleaving to His leadership. The indwelling, empowering and gifts of the Holy Spirit are essential.

b) The building of the Temple – Solomon. 2 Chron 1:1-9:31

Note:

- a) Out of these nine chapters, seven deal exclusively with the Temple. When we consider that in these nine chapters we are dealing with Solomon "in all his glory," the high water mark of Old Testament history, it is surely remarkable that seven of the nine chapters deal with the building and dedication of the House of God. We ought to note what is omitted. Basically there is very little new material added to what we have already in I & II Kings, but what is there is here re-written, either being expanded or contracted.
 - b) In David's life we touched the heart of the matter concerning God's purpose, but now in Solomon we reach the summit.
 - c) It is often said that we are dealing here with the church, eternal and perfected, in the heavenlies. Such see the Tabernacle as the church on earth and the Temple as the church in eternity. This may be a valid point but it is not the principal one, especially when we consider the history of the Temple after Solomon's reign. The fundamental lesson is that we have expressed in the Temple the heart of God's eternal purpose for his own, and the conflict rages over and around it. It is a sobering fact when we realize that the building of this Temple is taking place in time and on earth. See Eph 2:19-21; 1 Pet 2:4-5
- i. Solomon's reign begins in the Tabernacle at Gibeon 1:1-17
 - a. The first thing which the chronicles mentions in the record of Solomon's reign is that the ark and the Tabernacle had become separated. God would bring back to Himself that which had been separated from Him. Note: - the Tabernacle must go to the ark, not the ark to the Tabernacle! The understanding of this matter would explain many a situation. How often we want some work of ours, some denomination etc. revived and filled. What we need to remember is that that work or that denomination must come to the Lord, i.e. there may be many a change required. Furthermore it is possible to have a correct New Testament pattern, something originally given by God Himself, and yet He is no longer committed to it, the ark of His presence has gone
 - b. When the ark and the Tabernacle get separated everything becomes unrelated and confused. E.g. our ministry, service, gifts, etc. The ark was on Mt. Moriah, v4; the other holy vessels were at Gibeon, v3. The things of God were in disorder and disarray. Therefore God met Solomon at the altar at Gibeon. Through the cross God wanted to reunite what had been separated. Reconciliation is the very heart of the finished work of Christ. See Col 1:19-22.
 - c. We ought also to note that the record of Solomon's reign begins with his offering of a thousand burnt offerings on the brazen altar at Gibeon, v6. That same night God appeared

to Him, v7. Here we learn another great lesson about “church building.” It is impossible to build the House of God without God given vision. It cannot be built by mere academic knowledge and study. There must be revelation imparted by the Holy Spirit. See Eph 1:17-18. Such vision is related to an experience of the cross. A thousand burnt offerings represent no small work of the cross.

- d. Solomon epitomizes the character required in a “church builder.” It is noteworthy how the chronicler omits all reference to Solomon’s backsliding. He appears to be concerned only with presenting a picture of fulfilment and glory. Thus we discover the kind of character which is all-important in the building of the House of God. See v7 – 12. Solomon could have asked for so many things. We must remember that he was only 21 years of age with many cunning enemies. He could have asked for power, for peace, for the destruction of his enemies, or for glory, for wealth, or security, or influence, or satisfaction etc. All of these would have been legitimate requests, but would have revealed the kind of person he was. He asked for wisdom and knowledge in order to fulfil the purpose of God, and serve His people. That revealed a selfless character without which the House of God could not be built. It is interesting to note that this character gave rise to all the other blessings with which God blessed him.

ii. The building of the Temple and its furnishings 2 Chron 2:1-4:22

Especial Note: Some technical facts about the Temple.

The work began in May and ended in September seven years later. The dedication took place in October of the following year. It was 90ft. long, 30ft broad, 30ft high, i.e. it was double the Tabernacle’s dimensions. It took 160,000 men, working consistently for 7 years and was undoubtedly one of the most magnificent structures of the ancient world, its colour, harmony, proportions etc. being second to none.

- a. Solomon began to build the Temple at Jerusalem on Mt. Moriah. 2 Chron 3:1. This was the site of David’s altar. 1 Chron 21:1 – 22:1 esp. 21:28 – 22:1. It was also the place where Abraham had offered Isaac. Gen 22:1-19 esp. v2. Gen 22:14. “In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided.” Moriah means “the Lord provides.” Everything is provided in the finished work of Christ both for our salvation and for the building of the church. The building work must always begin at Calvary.
- b. The foundation. The peak of Mt. Moriah was levelled except for one crag, which was left unhewn protruding out from the rest, which was to be the place for the altar. Huge stones were laid together as a great “platform” (some 30ft. long, 7 1/2ft high, and 100tons in weight.) They were cut out, chiselled, their edges bevelled, and each carefully marked. See Matt 16:18 “Upon this rock...” 1 Cor 3:11; 2 Tim 2:19; Eph 2:20. The matter of the foundation is all-important in church building. If we are not clear here, we will not be clear in anything.
- c. The stones for the building. cp 2 Chron 3 with 1 Kings 6. They were a kind of white marble, much smaller than the foundation stones. These stones were selected and cut out in the quarry, each one being shaped to fit the others. They were marked and numbered according to the position they were to occupy in the building. They were then dressed and polished. All this work took place away from the site of the building. 1 Kings 6:7. Josephus says that the grain ran right through the stones and that the Temple looked as if it had grown like a flower. When all this work was done, and the stones fitted together, they were nowhere seen in the Temple. First they were covered with wood and then the wood overlaid with gold. All this is full of spiritual meaning. See 1 Pt 2:4-5 cp. Matt 16:18; Eph 2:20-22. God Himself is the rock out of which we are hewn living stones. As men we are just clay, but through Christ God puts into us His own rock-like nature and character. Once we have been saved we must then be cut out, shaped and fitted together with other living stones upon the foundation; Jesus Christ. Thus being fitly framed together, we grow into a holy temple in the Lord. One living stone even on the right foundation does not make a house. The stones must be built together before anything else can be put in position. Our positions in the building is not left to our choice but is

predetermined by God. We are thus numbered and shaped. This is essential discipline which everyone who would be part of God's eternal habitation must accept. There are therefore three stages in this building work. 1. Quarrying 2. Placing on the foundation. 3. Being fitly framed and built together.

Especial Notes:

1. It appears from 1 Chron 29:2-4, that silver was also used to overlay the walls of the house probably as a membrane between the stone and the wood lining. It is significant that in the record of the actual construction here 2 Chron 3, and in 1 Kings 6, there is no mention of the use of this silver. It is even more significant that in the description of the Holy City, the wife of the Lamb in Rev 21-22 there is again no mention made of silver. Silver in the Bible usually represents the work of redemption. See e.g. Matt 27:3-10. Does the fact that silver is not mentioned in either the construction of the Temple, or in the New Jerusalem, emphasize that we have here the realization of God's eternal purpose? In other words, what God has purposed for man had there been no fall, has been realized in spite of the fall. The fact is that there was much silver used in the construction of the Temple but it seems that it was all hidden.
2. It should be noted that there were also many store chambers running around the walls of the House. See 1 Kings 6:5-6. There is no mention of these in 2 Chron 3. These store chambers were used for a number of purposes all connected with the life of the Temple, e.g. storage of oil, flour, tithes etc.
3. The stone. We ought to take note of the importance of certain structural stones referred to in Scripture. Isaiah 28:16 speaks of "a foundation stone, a precious corner stone." This foundation stone was normally the first to be placed in position and from it all subsequent dimensions and sight lines were taken. It did indeed have to be "tested...and...sure." On top of this stone, corner stones were placed and these had the function of joining two faces of the building together. The straightness of the walls and the final dimensions of the building depended very much upon the accuracy of the corners. At the top of the corner another major stone was placed which served to bring the wall together and consolidate the corner – see Psalm 118:22 – "the Head of the Corner." It is not clear if the stone referred to as the head of the corner occupied the same position, and served the same purpose as the "Top Stone" of Zech 4:7, but the spiritual significance is in no doubt. Each of these stones refers to Christ.
 - d. The wood. There were three woods used – cedar, fir, and olivewood. Cp 2 Chron 3, with 1 Kings 6. The walls were lined throughout with cedar. Fir (or cypress) was used for the floor. The ceiling was constructed with both cedar and fir. The doors to the holy place were made of fir, having olive wood frames. The door and frame to the holy of holies was made of olive wood. The great cherubim were also carved out of olive wood. The wood of the walls and doors was carved with cherubim, palm trees, gourds and open flowers. Once again all this is full of spiritual meaning. Generally, trees and wood in the Bible represent man or human nature. (E.g. Psalm 1:3; Jer 17:5-8.) Thus we as living stones, have put on the new man. See Col 3:10, 11; Eph 4:23-24. This shows us two aspects of what God has made us in and through Christ, rock-like, yet truly human. It is significant that the cedar and fir (or cypress) are never attacked by wood-boring insects, and are disease resistant. Both these trees signify in Scripture firmness – the cedar, nobility and incorruptibility; the fir, strength and durability. See PS 92:12-15; Hos 14:5-8. Olive wood signifies the man anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit. See Zech 4:11-14. The carvings are also significant, for into this kind of human nature God has wrought righteousness, beauty, the shewing forth of His glory and excellencies.
 - e. The gold. Every single part of the holy place and the holy of holies was overlaid with pure gold. One could not see any stone or wood, only pure gold. The walls, the ceilings, the floors, the doors, the beams, the porch, the cherubim, everything was covered by gold. See 2 Chron 3:4, 5, 7, 8,9,10. cp. 1 kings 6:20, 21,22,30,32. The stone was lined with wood and the wood was overlaid with gold. In the Bible, wherever we find the manifestation of the presence and glory of God dwelling in the midst of His own, we find gold. Whether it in the Tabernacle, or the Temple, or the City of God, the New Jerusalem, the wife of the lamb, it is always gold which is used in association with the

- habitation of God's presence and glory. See e.g. Ex 25:10, 11, 13, 17, 18, 24, 26, 28, 29, 31, 38, 39; Ex 26:29, 32; Rev 21:18, 21. Gold thus represents in the Scriptures the divine nature. Of this nature we through Christ have become partakers. 2 Pet 1:4; Heb 12:10; 1 Cor 6:17; Jn 6:56-58 cp. Rev 3:18; 1 Cor 3:12. We must note that the stone had to be cut, shaped and polished; the wood prepared and carved; the gold purified and refined. All this speaks of the cross. See Mk 8:34-35; Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:12; Job 23:10; Mal 3:3
- f. Precious stones. 2 Chron 3:6. 1 Chron 29:2. Informs us of the many precious stones which David had collected for the Temple. These precious stones were evidently mounted in the gold overlay and beautified the House of God. Precious stone, for the most part, is formed under the earth's surface, in dark places, by great pressure and intense heat! It represents in Scripture the perfection of Christ, His incomparable beauty and peerless worth brought to full perfection through suffering. See e.g. Heb 2:10; 5:8-9; 7:28. The adorning of the House of God with these precious stones speaks of the radiant beauties and glories of Christ distributed among the saints. They speak of the manifestation of His perfect life and character through His own. It is instructive to note that precious stone is connected with the breastplate of the high priest, the names of the peoples of God being engraved upon them. Exodus 28:15-21; also with the city of God, Rev 21:18-21. This teaches us that we too must be identified with the sufferings of Christ if we are to reflect His glory and beauty. See Phil 1:29; 3:10; Col 1:24. Once the significance of all these priceless riches begins to dawn upon us, we begin to understand what is meant by such verses as e.g. Col 1:27, "the riches of the glory of this mystery... Christ in you." Eph 1:18 "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Eph 1:7; 3:8, 16 cp. Ps 27:4.
- g. The great cherubim. 2 Chron 3:10-13. They were made of olive wood, and overlaid with pure gold. These cherubim were a new feature altogether, and were evidently additional to the two smaller cherubim, made out of pure gold, which formed part of the mercy seat. These two great cherubim stood in the holy of holies, one on either side of the ark and mercy seat, their outstretched wings touching in the centre over the ark, and extending to the walls either side. See 2 Chron 5:7-8. Whereas the two cherubim above the mercy seat looked down and inwards, these two great cherubim looked outwards to the House. All this is filled with significance. The smaller cherubim draw our attention to the ark with the unbroken tablets of the law within it and the mercy seat above it. Their fixed gaze tells us that the only way to be saved and to know God is by the One who fulfilled the law perfectly, who laid down His life for us, and whose precious blood has atoned for us. The greater cherubim draw our attention to the House of God. This tells us that once we have been saved through Christ, drawn to God by His infinite mercy, we are to grow together into a Holy Temple in the Lord... builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. It is instructive to note that the cherubim were everywhere in evidence in the Temple, engraved on the walls, embroidered on the veil, as well as in the holy of holies. The cherubim are always associated in scripture with the glory of God.
- h. The two pillars. 2 Chron 3:15-17 cp. 1 Kings 7:13-22. There are two kinds of pillar in the Bible. There are those that are structural supports, and those that are set up as a witness, e.g. Gen 28:18, 22; 31:52; 35:14, 20; 2 Sam 18:18; Isa 19:19-20. The two pillars in question did not support the roof of the porch, but were free standing. They stood before the Temple, at the porch, on either side of the door. The capitals were decorated with "lily work" and crowned with wreathes of pomegranates. In all, the pillars stood approx. 40ft high (12.14m.). These two columns stood as monuments, or as a witness to the faithfulness of God. They were named Jachin "He shall establish," and Boaz "In Him is strength." We ought to note that the "lily" is THE flower of the land of promise, and the pomegranate, THE fruit. There are those who associate these two pillars with the pillar of cloud and of fire which led them safely to the Promised Land. Certainly they speak of the fact that what God has promised to His people, He had fulfilled. By His faithfulness He had led them out of Egypt, through the wilderness, into their inheritance. He had established them, and He would be their strength and stay, as He had always been. Every true believer is to be a witness to Christ to the faithfulness of God. Is this so of each believer, how much more is the church to be the testimony of the faithfulness of God.

The farther we go, the more we become a witness to the fact that He is absolutely faithful to His word, He establishes, and He is the strength and power of His own. We ought to note Rev 3:12; 1 Tim 3:15.

- i. The holy vessels of God. 2 Chron 4:1-22. These consisted principally of the brazen altar, speaking of the sacrifice of Christ (Heb 9:13-14); the brazen laver with the new feature of ten small brazen lavers, speaking of regeneration (Tit 3:5 mg. layer of regeneration); the ten golden lamp stands, five on either side of the House. This was a new feature, the Tabernacle having only one. They speak of the testimony of Jesus (Rev 1:20 cp. 1:9); the ten golden showbread tables, five on either side of the House, each table standing before a lamp stand. This was also a new feature, there being only one in the Tabernacle. They speak of Christ as the Bread of Life (Jn 6:35) the Ark of the Covenant with the mercy seat was the only piece of furniture there than the two great cherubim, in the holy of holies. Within were two tablets of the law. Aaron's rod that budded and the golden pot of manna were absent. See 2 Chron 5:10. IT speaks of the presence of God, the word made flesh. Perhaps we ought also to mention here the veil separating the holy place from the holy of holies, 2 Chron 3:14. It speaks again of Christ (Heb 10:20 cp. Matt 27:51.)

Let us summarize the main points that emerge from this section: -

1. In the New Testament the apostles spoke on a number of occasions of the "Mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations...now manifested to His saints." E.g. Col 1:26-27; Eph 3:9-11. cp. Vv4-6; Rom 16:25-26. This mystery is the eternal purpose of God to make us in Christ a home for God in the Spirit. In 1 & 2 Chronicles we have this mystery in type. The chronicler traces the whole of history from Adam to the promised Messiah in the light of the eternal purpose of God to find a dwelling place for Himself in His own. In these two chapters we have come to the heart of this purpose – the building of the House of God. The obtaining, the building and the completion of God's house, His eternal dwelling place, is the focal point of all history and all His dealings with man. See e.g. 1:9-12; 2:11-22; 5:25-27. Even the details in these two chapters are full of divine significance.
2. We must never forget that we are to "grow into a holy Temple in the Lord," Eph 2:21-22. Note carefully "in the Lord." The Temple, of which we are living stones built together, is not detached from Christ, apart from Him. It is IN Him. Note again Eph 2:21, "in whom all the building fitly framed together growth..." Eph 2:22, "in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." See also Rom 12:5, "one body in Christ;" 1 Cor 12:12, "so also is Christ;" Eph 1:23, "His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Eph 2:15 cp. Col 3:10-11; 1 Pet 2:4-5, "to whom coming, as unto a living stone...ye also as living stones are built up in a spiritual house." Jn 15:1, 5, Christ is the whole vine; in Him we are branches. The fact is that the church is IN Christ. Wherever we look in the Temple we see this simple fact. Everything speaks of the nature and Character of Christ. See Psalm 27:45; 29:9.
3. Everything in the church is produced by the Spirit of God out of what Christ is, out of His life, nature, and character. The foundation, the stone, the wood, the gold, the precious stone, all speaks of Him.
4. All and everything has one end – the building up of the House of God. We see this everywhere in 1 & 2 Chronicles, and especially in these particular chapters. This is a vital and essential emphasis in the New Testament. See e.g.
 - Eph 2:20-22, "being built upon..."; "fitly framed together"; are builded together".
 - Eph 4:12, "unto the building up of the body of Christ"; Eph 4:16, "fitly framed and knit together...building up itself..."
 - 1 Thess 5:11, "build each other up"; 1 Cor 10:23, 1 Cor 14:5, 12, 26.
5. This building work is not abstract, vague, ethereal or mystical. It is a spiritually concrete and practical matter dealing with realities in our personal and corporate life. Nor is this building together into Christ to be postponed to some heavenly future. It must take place in time and on earth. It has to do not only with our relationship to the Lord Jesus, which is of supreme importance, but with our relationship to one another. Furthermore we cannot escape from the plain meaning and implications of this matter. It has to do with our relationship to those believers amongst whom we live and worship. It is a matter of oneness, of submission, of discipline and

responsibility. The matter of true fellowship covers all this. It is the recognition that in Christ we are no longer units, but share everything in Him.

6. In the building of the Temple everything is fitted together into one great whole. Every piece finds its vocation, significance and fulfilment, in relation to the rest. No single piece can make the House, not even a collection of pieces as random pieces. A single stone does not make a house, nor does a collection of unrelated stones. Even the holy vessels have no meaning or function outside of the Temple. Everything finds its value in relation to the whole.
7. All the most difficult and hard work is done off the building site. The quarrying, the shaping and the dressing of the stone was a “hidden” work. What would not yield was rejected. None of us like the hidden work, but it is essential if we are to be fitly framed together, growing into a holy temple in the Lord.

iii. The dedication of the Temple II Chron 5:1-7:22.

This great Feast of Dedication was combined with the Feast of Tabernacles and took place in October of the year following the work’s completion. See 2 Chron 7:8-10. cp. Lev 23:34-36; 1 Kings 2:65-66.

- a. The ark and the holy vessels brought into the House of God. 5:1-14.
 - i.) All through the seven years of the Temple’s construction, the ark had rested in the city of David. Now it was brought into the House of the Lord. The ark and the Tabernacle were then reunited in the Temple. The disarray of the holy vessels was at an end. Note chapter 5:6, the great sacrifice that marked the reunion of the ark and the Tabernacle in the Temple.
 - ii.) The staves of the ark were drawn out, thus signifying that God had entered His rest, v9. A.V. There is some question as to whether the staves were completely drawn out, or only partially drawn out. This is not clear from the text. The Hebrew is simply “to lengthen.” This surely could not mean that the staves were made longer or the original ones exchanged for longer ones. Exod 25:15 forbade the withdrawal of the staves. Could it mean that the staves were drawn out to such a point that it would be impossible to carry the ark with the staves in that position? Whether they were completely or partially drawn out, the picture is the same. The ark was to travel no more. It had come to its final resting place. It had come home. We have thus a very beautiful picture of the Lord finding His eternal rest in His own. See Ps 132:8, 13, 14.
 - iii.) The fact that the ark now contained only the two tablets of the law re-emphasizes the truth that God is at home. V10. both Aaron’s rod that budded and the golden pot of manna spoke of provision in one way or another for the wilderness journeyings. The rod that budded represented the authority and leadership of God during the journey through the wilderness and the manna sustained them daily in the desert. These symbols of pilgrimage through the desert were no longer needed. God had not only brought them to their home; He had found His own. The Law, however, expresses the unchanging righteousness of God. God is truth and the ten commandments, the essential moral law, express that truth. That law lies at the heart of all that exists and is forever unchanging. It is a wonderful fact that the righteousness of God in Christ, the law not only unbroken but fulfilled, is the foundation of our salvation and of the throne of God for all eternity.
 - iv.) When all were one to make one sound in worship, the glory of the Lord filled the House of God. Vv13-14. note: the theme of their worship was the mercy and love of God, v13; the priests could not even stand to minister because of God’s glory. The same thing had happened when the tabernacle was set up and dedicated. See Exod 40, esp. vv. 34, 35; all the priests and Levites were present. They did not keep to their rota of duty, vv 11, 12. Thus it was even more of a miracle that so many were one to make one sound in praise and thanksgiving!
 - v.) The glory of the Lord filling the Temple in such a singular way indicates that the Lord had committed Himself in an especial way to His people. How wonderful this

is at any time in the history of God's people! Surely, too, it looks forward to that day when the building of the church will be finally completed. See e.g. 1 Pet 5:10; Rev 21:10, 11, 23.

b. Solomon's prayer of dedication 6:1-42

- i.) He reviews the history of the people of God 6:1-11
- ii.) Everything is related to the House of God: prayer v21; judgment v22, 23; defeat v 24, 25; drought (due to sin), v26, 27; troubles (famine, pestilence, plague, etc.), 28-31; unsaved, v32, 33; victory, v 34, 35; exile, v36-40.
- iii.) The House of God is the heart of all, v 40-42. Note God's rest, the priests, the saints, the king, etc.
- iv.) We ought to note very carefully Solomon's prayer of dedication. If the glory of the Lord had filled the Temple before he began to pray, when he had finished praying the fire of God fell on the altar, and the glory of the Lord again filled the Temple. We have to note that every aspect of the people's life, Personal and national is related to the dwelling place of God. Even the foreigner who relates himself to the House of God is answered by the Lord. Thus we see that true prayer must always be related to God's eternal purpose.

c. The ratification of God 7:1-22

- i.) Note: - the fire of God; the glory of God: the worship of God's people. Vv1 -3. God ratified Solomon's prayer of dedication with divine fire. We cannot help but see a clear connection with Pentecost. See Acts 2:1-4. Pentecost was the ratification of God upon what the finished work of Christ had produced, a holy Temple in the Lord. Fire in the Bible is a symbol of the manifested presence of God, of the Holy Spirit. We have here also one of the most beautiful pictures of worship in the Old testament. The people did not bow themselves with faces to the ground in terror but in awe and reverence.
- ii.) We ought to note the continual refrain throughout the dedication, vv3, 6 cp. 5:13. The grace of God had begun this work, and had sustained it, providing all that was necessary. Now the grace of God had completed the work. See Zech 4:7.
- iii.) God answers Solomon's prayer 7:12-22 God not only answers by fire; He speaks to Solomon. Note that God calls His House a "house of sacrifice" v 12. There would and could be no House of God, no home of God in the Spirit, but for the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. Although the sacrifice of Christ is absolutely unique, and in no way taking from it, there will be no "building" together of believers, no fitly framing together and growing into a holy temple in the Lord, unless we are prepared for a deep work of the cross by the Spirit. There can be no building work apart from sacrifice. Note also the words of the Lord in vv15, 16. "My name... there forever; Mine eyes and My heart... there perpetually." Surely this reveals the yearning love of God to be at home in His own. Finally note the solemn warning in vv17-22. These words were to be fulfilled again and again in succeeding history.
- iv.) A House of prayer for all nations 8:1 – 9:31.
It is remarkable to note how everything now blossoms and prospers. The Queen of Sheba, with all her gifts, is but representative of the world coming to find an answer in God. See chapter 9:8. Again and again in later years the prophets were to take this up, speaking of the nations and their wealth coming to the people of God. See e.g. Is 2:2-4; 60:1-15; Zech 8:20-23. Thus we reach the high-water mark of the Old Testament; His purpose is now realized symbolically. Before, however, we pass on to the Messiah, in whom and by Whom all is to be truly realized, we have yet much to be emphasized and re-emphasized.

3. The continual Conflict Over the House of God and Its Ruin 2 Chron 10:1 – 36:23

We enter now an atmosphere of conflict and intrigue, all of which has as its aim the compromising of the people of God and the thwarting of His purpose. We find that the Temple is the focal point of this battle. Moreover, the reign of every king is judged by his attitude and relationship to the House of God. We ought to remember that even in that age, it was not merely a question of bricks and mortar, but the sovereign presence of the Living God in the midst of His own.

Note:-

- i.) Israel is almost entirely ignored. The chronicler deliberately disregards them.
- ii.) Often the term “all Israel” or “Israel” means the Southern Kingdom of Judah, in 2 Chronicles. Throughout both I & II Chronicles the unity of the whole nation in the mind of God is never abandoned.
- iii.) Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the Temple, and the Lord’s answer, is a key to the rest of Chronicles.
- iv.) The chronicler selects the material for each reign carefully. It is not intended to be a full historical record.

1. Rehoboam 2 Chron 10:1-12:16

- a) The disruption and division of the nation into two kingdoms, the Southern Kingdom, Judah and the Northern Kingdom, Israel, or Ephraim. 10:1-11:12
- b) The faithful in the nation; the Levites and others 1:13-17
- c) Backsliding and Egypt’s victory 12:1-11
- d) Repentance of Rehoboam: “good things found in Judah!” v 12
- e) Summary
 - i.) The heart of the conflict – the Temple
 - ii.) The judgment of God: either His service or Egypt’s (the world’s) service. v8 cp Matt 6:24
 - iii.) When the Temple was spoilt, they were spoilt. Note: - Brass for gold; under constant guard vv10-11
 - iv.) Rehoboam’s mother – an Ammonitess v13. Was this the root? Note also 11:21 cp. Vv 15,16

2. Abijah (Abijam) 2 Chron 13:1-22

- a) All-out war between Judah and Israel. Vv2-20
- b) Abijah’s address vv 4 – 12
- c) Judah ambushed. They cried to the Lord. Knew a great deliverance and victory. Vv 13-20
- d) Summary
 - i.) The Temple (King, Service, House) – the focal point of the division. Vv 9 -11
 - ii.) They cried to the Lord and kept His ordinance. Note: - trumpets. Num 10:9
 - iii.) Judah relied upon the Lord – that was the secret of their victory 13:18
 - iv.) It is interesting that the chronicler is positive about Abijah. 1 Kings 15:3 tells us that “his heart was not perfect,” although his attitude toward the Temple was correct. The chronicler passes over this but neither does he say that Abijah’s heart was perfect as he does of Asa 15:17

3. Asa. II Chron 14:1-16:14

- a) He dealt with the inroads of idolatry etc 14:2-5
- b) He sought the Lord; his building programme; his army. 14:6-8
- c) The Ethiopian invasion; Asa’s cry of trust; Judah’s deliverance. 14:9-15
- d) Azariah’s prophecy; the altar renewed; the covenant renewed 15:1-15
- e) Asa’s faithfulness; the Queen Mother deposed for idolatry (Absalom’s daughter), 15:16-19
- f) Asa’s compromise and some of the Temple treasures give to Syria; the Lord’s rebuke; Asa’s reaction; God’s judgment (war, disease, burned not buried!!), 16:1-14
- g) Summary

- i.) The Temple, the altar, the covenant. In this Asa's heart was perfect.
- ii.) Asa went very far in the destruction of the high places and idolatry, but he did not go far enough. 14:3-5; 15:8, 16 cp. 15:17. In this matter, there could be no quarter given, for the little left would grow again to threaten everything.
- iii.) Asa's reliance upon the Lord was the key. Evidently whilst he thus wholly trusted the Lord, his heart was perfect. When he relied upon others, he fell away. 14:11; 15:17 cp. 16:7-9. This is a sobering lesson for us all.

4. Jehoshaphat II Chron 17:20:37

- a) The best king since Solomon, a heart for the Lord; his shrewd defence programme; his building programme; his teaching programme; his destruction of high places; his army 17:1-19
- b) Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab of Israel was a sad and unhappy compromise. 18:1-19:3. Especially note 19:2, 3. Evidently this alliance of Judah and Israel was sealed by the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, to Ahab and Jezebel's daughter. Athaliah. (See II Chron 18:1 cp. 21:6). Note 18:2, "after certain years...". The "affinity was obviously the marriage of the two royal houses. No more evil character was ever introduced into the house and lineage of David than Athaliah. Note also the faithfulness of the prophets Micaiah, 18:12-27, and Jehu 19:1-3.
- c) His judicial reforms 19:4-11
- d) The Moabite and Ammonite invasion 20:1-30. The confederacy against Israel – Moab, Ammon and Edom. Jehoshaphat and Judah seek the Lord in prayer and fasting; Jehoshaphat's prayer; Jehaziel's prophecy; Jehoshaphat's and Judah's response; praise and worship before deliverance – the singers to lead out the army. The mighty deliverance.
- e) Jehoshaphat's further compromise and God's judgment. 20:31-37.
- f) Summary
 - i.) Jehoshaphat's life was basically centred in the Temple 17:3-6; 20:5, 28
 - ii.) It is instructive to note Jehoshaphat's knowledge of the history of God's people, and his knowledge of the word of God. See 20:6-10. we see here the necessity and value of an understanding of God's word and ways, and true prayer.
 - iii.) We have in Jehoshaphat's life a solemn reminder of the fact that the greatest and most spiritual men can collapse through compromise. It is sad that the last matter we have recorded of his reign was a further compromise.
 - iv.) Jehoshaphat was supremely a man of faith. Note how he was always seeking the word of the Lord, e.g. II Chron 18:4, 6; 19:3; 20:3. There is an essential link between living faith and the word of God. Note how Jehoshaphat expresses faith in II Chron 20:18-21. Worship, praise and implicit trust preceding victory and deliverance. Here is a fundamental lesson.

5. Jehoram and Ahaziah II Chron 21:1-22:9

- a) Jehoram's murder of his brothers and other leaders 21:4
- b) The terrible influence of Athaliah, his wife. Jehoshaphat's compromise in the matter of the marriage of his to Ahab and Jezebel's daughter now bears its fruit. Note Jehoram's positive evil doing – "he made high places...made the inhabitants of Judah to play the harlot...led Judah astray." 21:6 cp vv 11-15
- c) Elijah's letter to Jehoram. 21:12-15. Note the judgment of God, and cause given for that judgment, in Elijah's prophecy. It is interesting to see that Elijah spoke with as great an authority to the king of Judah, as he did to the king of Israel.
- d) Edom and Libnah revolt and are lost to Judah. The Philistines and Arabians invade Judah and plunder the royal palace. All Jehoram's sons except Ahaziah (Jehoahaz) were slain. 21:8-10, 16, 17. Note the Lord was behind this, vv 10, 16.
- e) Jehoram died of an incurable disease exactly as Elijah had prophesied. Vv 18-10. Note the terrible comment, "he departed with no one's regret." V 10, RSV; NASB

- f) Ahaziah, Jehoram's only surviving son, reined in his stead. He continued evil policy of his father. 22:1-4. Note that the influence of Athaliah, his mother, was even greater, vv 3-4.
- g) Ahaziah was completely identified with the house of Ahab and its evil ways. This led to Ahaziah's downfall and death. 22:5-9
- h) Summary.
 - i.) Idolatry and compromised worship, with all its evil implications, made terrible inroads upon the life of God's people. 21:11. It seems from II Chron 24:4, 7 that the Temple was desecrated by both Jehoram and Ahaziah. They took the holy vessels and made them over to gods of Baal. Such changes were made that the Temple had to be "restored."
 - ii.) We can never minimize the gravity of compromise. The smallest compromise can lead in the end to the most terrible and destructive consequences. We must all take note of this for no one is immune from the possibility of compromise.

6. Athaliah II Chron 22:10-23:21.

- a) She slew the whole royal family - "the seed royal." 22:10. Many of these were her own kith and kin, her grandchildren, nephews, nieces etc.
- b) Joash, the son of Ahaziah, miraculously preserved in spite of this blood bath. 22:11-12. His aunt, Jehoshabeath, married to the high priest was the instrument God used to save him. For seven years he was kept hidden in the House of God.
- c) The covenant of the faithful made in the House of the Lord leading to the coronation of Joash there. 23:1-11.
- d) The execution of Athaliah, the destruction of the house of Baal, and the restoration of true worship. 23:12-21, note v16. The covenant Jehoida, the high priest, made with the people; vv18-19., the return to the original order for God's House given by Moses and David.
- e) Summary
 - a. This reign marked the most serious attempt yet made to frustrate the purpose of God. Athaliah's reign was the culmination of the evil policies and designs of both Jehoram and Ahaziah. Indeed, she may well have been the mastermind behind these. We have here a concerted satanic attack upon the purity and continuance of both Messiah in seed and the House of God.
 - b. It is significant that the seed royal was preserved within the Temple in spite of death reigning all around. There too, true authority was maintained in the face of usurped authority. It was also from the House of the Lord that judgment was executed upon the enemies of God.

7. Joash, II Chron 24:1-27

- a) The reign of Joash begins with the restoration of the Temple. 24:1-14. This evidently was the occasion of no small revival. Note how the people gave, vv 8-11. Extensive repairs were made and the original order for the daily burnt offerings was observed. Vv 12-14
- b) With the death of the Godly Jehoiada, Joash backslides. 24:15-19. He appears to have been very impressionable, and not to have had any deep roots.
- c) Zechariah's faithful witness and martyrdom. 24:20-22. Joash had fallen away so completely that he martyred God's prophet, and the son of the man who had saved his life. IN fact, Zechariah was Joash's cousin.
- d) The judgments of God on Joash and Judah; Syrian victory; Joash's assassination. 24:23-27
- e) Summary
 - i.) Joash began well but ended far from the Lord. 24:2, 4, 6, 8 cp 17, 18, 21. To begin in the Lord's will is no guarantee of ending in the Lord's will. Joash fell as deeply and disastrously as it is possible to fall.

- ii.) Joash, it would appear, lived in the shadow of Jehoiada. Whilst Jehoiada lived, Joash served the Lord. Here there is a lesson for us all. We can live in the shadow of other believers, having ourselves only second-hand experience. This is no substitute for our own deep roots and original experience.
- iii.) The scene of his preservation, his coronation, and his first devotion and zeal, became the scene of his tragedy. There he slew a true prophet of God.

8. Amaziah II Chron 25:1-26

- a) Amaziah did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, but he did not have a perfect heart toward the Lord, 25:1-4 cp. II Kings 14:4. Note his right attitude concerning the assassin's sons.
- b) His wrongful association with Israel. He sought to buy their support and help 25:5-13. Compromise was once again at the root of this matter. Note the man of God's words, vv 7, 8, 9; Amaziah's obedience and the victory over Edom.
- c) Amaziah's backsliding. 25:14-16. Outwardly, almost grudgingly, he obeyed the Lord. Inwardly he was divided. Thus in the victory over Edom were the seeds of his own backsliding and fall. Instead of destroying the Edomite gods, he brought them back and worshipped them. Note the Lord's word to him, vv 15-16.
- d) His foolish antagonism of Israel 25:17-20. Amaziah now goes to the other extreme. He seeks to engineer a war with Israel. The Lord was behind this foolishness v20.
- e) The battle with Israel; God's judgment; Israel's victory; the despoiling of the House of God; Amaziah's murder, 25:21-28.
- f) Summary
 - i.) The vital importance of having a heart perfect toward the Lord, i.e. a whole heart for God. Anything less spells trouble. Amaziah outwardly did the right thing; inwardly there was ground for Satan. We must learn this lesson. See Matt 6:19-24.
 - ii.) Amaziah's attitude to the Lord was not one of rejection. His view of the Edomite gods and other gods was "inclusive." He believed that Jehovah was supreme among these gods, but the others were deities deserving recognition and worship, even in defeat. There is here a lesson for us in this age of the "permissive society" and the "new morality." We can be inclusive of many things which are wrong and evil in a tolerant way, believing that we are in the vanguard of "divine progress." Many of these conceptions are the "doctrines of demons" and the work of "seducing spirits." See 1 Tim 4:1.
 - iii.) Note the wrong kind of unity between the people of God. It is mercenary, humanly organized unity, conforming totally to this world's standards. See v6. Why did the Lord say "the Lord is not with Israel, nor with any of the sons of Ephraim" v7? Were they not the people of God as well? The point was that they had separated themselves from the House of God. Neither the Messianic line, nor even the symbols of the eternal purpose of God i.e. Zion, Jerusalem, the Temple, the altar, the priesthood etc. etc. were to be found in Israel. They were still the people of God but divorced from the heart of the matter.

9. Uzziah (Azariah) and Jotham II Chron 26:1 – 27:9

- a) Uzziah and Jotham are bound together, Jotham being for the major part of his reign co-regent with his father, due to his father's serious illness. See 26:21. Azariah is Uzziah's other name. See II Kings 15:1; I Chron 3:12. Azariah may have been his official name.
- b) Uzziah did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. In his earlier days (he was only 16 years of age when he came to the throne) he appears to have had a heart for the Lord being particularly influenced by a man of God called Zechariah. 26:1-5. Note v 4 "according to all that his father Amaziah had done." It would appear that Uzziah like Amaziah began well and ended disastrously.
- c) We must remember that politically and economically Uzziah and Jotham's reign mark one of the most prosperous periods in history. General living standards rose; foreign goods, fashions and ways became the vogue; the nation enjoyed great prosperity and

- security. An evidence of this was the building, agricultural and defence programmes. Above all their reign was crowned with military successes. 26:6-15 cp. V 2; 27:3-6.
- d) Uzziah's successes went to his head and became his downfall. Filled with pride he committed the sin of presumption. He sought to usurp the position of the priests in God's House. No doubt he was influenced by the current ideas in the surrounding nations of the "priest king." 26:16-23. Note the courageous faithfulness of the priests' vv17-18; Uzziah's fury and God's terrible instantaneous judgment, vv 19-21 cp Num 16:39-40; Lev 13:46.
 - e) Due to Uzziah's leprosy, Jotham became co-regent, ruling in his father's stead. Jotham appears to have learnt the lesson contained in his father's downfall. He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and ordered his ways before the Lord His God. 27:1-7. see esp. vv 2, 6
 - f) It was during the reign of Uzziah and Jotham that Isaiah's and Micah's ministry began. See Isa 6:1 cp 1:1; Mic 1:1.
 - g) Summary
 - i.) Doing that which is "right in the eyes of the Lord" is something which the Lord both commands and honours. Nevertheless, it is also as clear from the record that the Lord is not deceived by it. Often it can be superficial although sincere. The Lord seeks for a heart which is wholly for Him. See Pro 4:23. Once again we are reminded of a good and right beginning but a sad end. The "heart" is the key to this matter.
 - ii.) It is interesting to note that the reigns which by this world's standards are very great (i.e. politically, materially, and economically) are not necessarily made much of by the Holy Spirit. In Chronicles the governing factor in each reign is revealed as the House of God. We see this clearly in Uzziah's reign. The main matter dealt with is his trespass in the House of the Lord. A normal historian would have dwelt upon Uzziah's civil and military programmes. This reveals to us heaven's priorities and values.
 - iii.) Uzziah was a spiritually undiscerning kind of man. His sin was the sin of presumption. He arrogated to himself authority not given to him by God 26:16, "lifted up" AV, RV cp. Ezek 28:17. In Hebrew, the same word. Pride leads to presumption, rebellion, disorder in the House of God, and always rings us into conflict with God. Pride always leads to a fall. 26:16 cp v15. "...till he became strong. But when he was strong..." See also 1 Cor 11:29-32 cp 1 Jn 5:16; 1 Pet 4:17; Acts 5:1-11.

10. Ahaz II Chron 28:1-27

- a) Ahaz was the most evil king to come to the throne thus far. He did not merely tolerate evil practices; he positively practiced evil of every form. He pioneered the way in idolatrous worship. He even practiced human sacrifice, sacrificing his own children. It would be hard to find greater depths in depraved worship. 28:1-4 cp. Vv 19:22-25
- b) The judgment of God upon Ahaz – the Syrian and Israelite invasion and victories. 28:5-15. Note Oded's prophecy, vv 9-11; the righteous remnant in Israel vv 12-15.
- c) The Edomite and Philistine invasion; the Assyrian alliance made by Ahaz; the despoiling of the Temple to pay for Assyrian help 28:16-21.
- d) Ahaz remained unrepentant to the very end. Indeed, he became more and he did more evil. 28:22-27. Note how he desecrated the Temple, cutting up the holy vessels, closing down the House of the Lord, vv 24-25. II Kings 16:10-16, gives us more information. Ahaz introduced an Assyrian altar to the court of the Lord's House, to replace the brazen altar. He built Baal altars in every corner of Jerusalem, and legalized a high place in every city of Judah.
- e) Summary
 - i.) Satan's aim was to corrupt the people of God and even the House of God beyond the possibility of recovery. Only the grace of God could answer such a situation.

- ii.) It becomes more and more clear in Chronicles that it is the Temple which is the heart of the conflict. In the books of Samuel and Kings it was the throne and the kingdom (the Messianic line and seed) which was vital to the issue. No doubt King Ahaz and many of those who preceded and succeeded him were unaware that the House of God was the focal point of the battle. The record has been given to us by inspiration of the Holy Spirit for our instruction. See 1 Cor 10:11; Rom 15:4.
- iii.) It is a fact well worth noting that trial and affliction only bring out what is inside. See v22.
- iv.) It is also noteworthy that the chronicler carefully records where and how each king was buried, as if this were in itself an evaluation of his reign.

11. Hezekiah II Chron 29:1 – 32:33.

- a) Hezekiah was the best king to sit on the throne since David. His heart was wholly toward the Lord all his days. Even his shortcomings were not of the same order as the preceding kings. His failings were more a question of human weakness than positive involvement with evil. 29:1-2 cp 31:20-21; II Kings 18:5-6
- b) Hezekiah's reign marked the greatest reformation in Judah's history. At the very beginning of his momentous reign, in the first month of the first year, when he was 25 years of age, he "opened the doors of the Lord's House and repaired them." This reformation began with dramatic suddenness. It started with the Temple and encompassed the whole nation. 29:3-11 cp v36. Note Hezekiah's address to the priests and Levites, v 4 -11; his understanding and interpretation of their history. This reveals that he had been taught of the Lord.
- c) This reformation led to a period of great literary activity as far as the Bible is concerned. Jewish tradition ascribes a number of books in their final form to the work of scholars in Hezekiah's reign, e.g. Isaiah, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Proverbs and books II and III of the Psalter. Both Isaiah and Micah exercised their ministry during this reign, having an undoubted influence upon its course.
- d) The restoration and recovery of the House of God. It took eight days to clean the House, and sixteen days to complete the work 29:12-19. Note that the priests and Levites sanctified themselves for this work of recovery, v15 cp v5; that there was so much "uncleanness" in God's House, v16 cp v5 "filthiness"; that the holy vessels were prepared and sanctified vv 18-19.
- e) The re-dedication of the House of God. 29:20-36. Note: -
 - i.) The re-dedication began with the sin offering for the whole people of God. Vv 20-24; "all Israel" v24, means Judah and Israel together.
 - ii.) The worship and praise of the people began with the burnt offering and continued till it was finished. Vv 25-30.
 - iii.) The service of the Lord's House was restored, vv 31-36. As the service of the Temple was renewed, the response was so great from the people that the priests were unable to cope and had to call upon the Levites for help.
- f) The great Passover, 30:1-27. Since Solomon's day the like of this Passover had never been seen. Note: -
 - i.) God's judgement had already fallen upon Israel. The invitation to celebrate the Passover at Jerusalem was to all in Israel who had not been deported to Assyria. There had not been since Solomon such a united Passover. Vv 5, 6, 10, 11, 18.
 - ii.) The commandment of the king reveals great authority and spiritual insight vv 6 – 9
 - iii.) The care with which this Passover was kept. Vv 14, 15, 16, 22. Even Hezekiah's prayer in vv 18-20 reveals much concern and respect for the Lord's commandments.
 - iv.) The great joy of the whole nation, vv 21, 23-27.
- g) The abolition of idolatry 31:1. There had never been quite such a spirit in the people of God since the days of David. Even those from Israel joined in.

- h) The Lord's rights re-established -0 offerings and tithes. 31:2-21. Not since the days of David and Solomon had the people of God given so willingly. Note esp. vv 7-10, this is a hallmark of true revival.
- i) The siege of Sennacherib; Hezekiah's faith in the Lord in the face of an impossible situation; the Lord's deliverance 32:1-23 cp. II Kings 18:13-19, 37; Isa 36, 3. It appears that Hezekiah began by paying tribute to Sennacherib but soon found that compromise was no solution. Sennacherib having taken the tribute money dishonoured the agreement; and laid siege to Jerusalem. Note carefully the satanic strategy, vv 10-15, 17. It is interesting to see the satanic reaction to Hezekiah's reformation 32:1-2. Note also the part played by Isaiah, v20 cp. Isa 37:5-7, 21-35.
- j) Hezekiah's sickness and restoration. 32:24-26 cp. II Kings 20:1-19. It would seem that Hezekiah succumbed to pride over the Lord's miraculous deliverance from Sennacherib, vv 24, 25 cp vv 22, 23. It is clear from the record his sickness and restoration came before he fell into pride. See v25. Was his "pride" showing the Babylonians all the treasures of the Temple and land? We cannot be dogmatic but it appears to be so. The point which the chronicler makes is that Hezekiah humbled himself before the Lord, he and the people, and the Lord forgave him.
- k) Summary
 - i.) We must note that this reign, with all its greatness, began with the opening of the Temple doors and the cleansing of the House of God. See II Chron 29:3-19. the greatest reformation thus far in Judah's history began here. Judgement began at the House of God and the consequence was blessing for the whole nation. Even Israel was touched. Through this the Spirit of God draws our attention even more clearly to the simple fact that the dwelling place of God is the heart of the matter. We thus learn the lesson that all true reformation, recovery or revival begins with the House of God, the church. This is true of all church history.
 - ii.) We are presented with this penetrating and uncomfortable truth that whenever the people of God have lost spiritual values (i.e. they have been robbed of their possessions in Christ, their birthright and their inheritance) and these is a move towards recovery, much filth and uncleanness has to be removed from God's House. See II Chron 29:5, 16-17 – sixteen days' work. By satanic strategy and activity much has found a place in the House of God which does not belong there. It is not of God, it is not of Christ, nor is it of faith. In the eyes of God it is filth and uncleanness, however beautiful, or desirable, or apparently useful it may seem to be to human eyes. The fact is it should not be there, and is consequently unclean to God. The lasting value and effect of any reformation or recovery is determined by the extent to which the people of God are prepared to go in the removal of all uncleanness and filth from the House of God.
 - iii.) We see here another important principle in any work of recovery. When the Temple was rededicated, the offerings were made for all Israel and not just for Judah. See II Chron 29:20-36. Similarly the great Passover was kept for all Israel. In other words the restoration of the House of God was for the whole people of God and not just for an elite group or particular section. We see in this vital principle that all work of recovery by God, all true reformation or revival is for the whole people of God and never for any one particular denomination or section. Failure to realise this has led to many tragedies.
 - iv.) Hezekiah teaches us that it essential to have a heart wholly toward the Lord, II Chron 29:2; 31:20-21 cp. II Kings 18:5-6; 20:3. He did not merely do that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. There was an inward character and devotion as well. Even when he fell there was a sensitivity to the Lord. Other kings did that which was right in the Lord's eyes, but departed from the Lord and ended in disaster. Hezekiah never departed from the Lord. The lesson is simple. No amount of sound knowledge, or power, or correct outward action and work can make up for a heart devoted to the Lord.

- v.) It is remarkable to note that Ahaz was the worst king thus far in Judah's history, and that his son Hezekiah was the best king thus far. Furthermore, Hezekiah was to be followed by his son Manasseh, the worst of all. **Spiritual character is not hereditary!** Note also that in Hezekiah we see God's reaction to man's defections.
- vi.) "When the burnt offerings began, the son of the Lord began also." II Chron 29:27-28. The worship and song continued until the burnt offering was finished. Note carefully the relation of true worship to sacrifice. We must never be deceived into believing that worship is only a matter of words and song. Important as our words are in praise, and the expression of our lips, true worship is a much deeper matter. The fact is that the worship and the song of the Lord were connected to the burnt offering. This is an illustration of Rom 12:1. Note AV. "reasonable service," RSV "spiritual worship," NASB "spiritual service of worship."
- vii.) Note connection between the abolition of idolatry 31:1, and the offerings and tithes of God's people 31:2-19. Idolatry is the substitution of the Lord for other things. Those things can literal idols, or an ideology, or material things, or people or oneself. Eph 5:5 throws an interesting light on this matter. The point is that when idolatry in any form is destroyed the Lord gets His rights.
- viii.) One of the most important lessons in Hezekiah's reign is to understand Satan's reaction to the reformation. See II Chron 31:20-21 cp. 32:1, especially note "after these things, and this faithfulness." Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem was designed by Satan to destroy the work of recovery. This is always the satanic strategy when there has been a work of recovery. When God is committed, however, He undertakes to both keep and deliver and Satan is powerless to do anything about it.

12. Manasseh and Among II Chron 33:1-25

- a) Manasseh was the most evil king of Judah. He restored all his Grandfather's works (Ahaz) and outstripped him in evil. In 55 years he made Judah more evil than the nations which the Lord judged by the hand of Israel for their iniquity. 33:1, 2, 9.
- b) He restored all the old high places destroyed by his father and created new ones. He legalised nature worship with all its evil and depraved practices. He gave his children as human sacrifices. He practiced spiritism (spiritualism), astrology, black magic, divination, and witchcraft. He did not merely indulge in these things personally, but officially introduced them as his religious policy. 33:3-4.
- c) Manasseh made changes in the Temple, desecrating it. 33:4, 5, 7, 8. He built heathen altars in the House of God, and in the Temple courts he built altars for the practice of spiritism and astrology. He even set up an idol with the holy place as Jehovah's wife. See II Kings 21:7 cp. II Kings 23:4, 6, and 7.
- d) From the foregoing it could be concluded that Manasseh was licentious – a man indulging in evil practices. However, there was much more to it than that. He pursued a definite religious policy. That policy was to combine Phoenician or Canaanite nature worship, Babylonian and Assyrian religion (especially spiritism and astrology) with the worship of Jehovah.
- e) The warning voice of God, 33:10 cp. II Kings 21:10-15. This was not only rejected but every opposing voice was murdered. See II Kings 21:16.
- f) The judgment of God and Manasseh's repentance, 33:11-13. In Babylon, at the heart of the religion he so much admired, he turned to the Lord, and God heard and forgave him. In his later years he sought to undo his earlier evil, but was not wholly successful. It is possible that he was not so whole-hearted about his reforms. 33:14-17.
- g) Amon succeeded his father, Manasseh, for 2 years. He was named after an Egyptian divinity. He boldly pursued his father's earlier evil policy until he was assassinated. 33:21-25.
- h) Summary

- i.) The chronicler once again focuses our attention upon the House of God as the issue. See e.g. 33:4, 7, and 8.
- ii.) We learn from this reign that Satan's aim, if he cannot destroy the church, is to prostitute it. This he does by introducing all kinds of practices, foreign philosophies and ideas, satisfying to the worldly mind, but not of God. Thus we end up with a hideous conglomeration of all kinds of things in the "name of Jesus Christ." This can be seen in many quarters today. For instance, we are told that thing which really matters today is to bring together men and women of faith and goodwill, whatever their persuasion, be they not only of the traditional Christian denominations, but Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, etc. Indeed, some go so far as to say that Buddha, or Krishna, or Mohammed are really manifestations of Christ in different form. Others would that Christ along with these others are different manifestations of the one God. The consequences of this are always the same - the plain meaning of the word of God is obscured and devalued., Christ crucified as the Power and Wisdom of God to save those who believe is dismissed or watered down to "another gospel," the church becomes not the company of the redeemed, but a semi social – ethical body of unregenerate members.
- iii.) It is highly instructive to note that the chronicler emphasises and re-emphasises Manasseh's repentance, without minimizing the gross evil which he did. In comparing Amon and Manasseh, the chronicler stresses the fact that Amon did not repent as did Manasseh. See II Chron 33:12, 13, 18, 19, 22, 23. All this is even more extraordinary when one considers that the record of Manasseh's reign in II Kings 21 fails to make a single reference to his repentance.

13. Josiah II Chron 34:1-35:27

- a) Josiah was a wholly good king, following the Lord All the way. From a very early age he sought the Lord and was devoted to him. 34:1-3. Note "turned not aside to the right hand, or to the left," v2. This is no small commendation in the light of the history of Judah's kings. Note also that he was 8 years old when he began to reign, v1.; he was 16 years old when he began to seek the Lord, v3; he was 20 years old when the reformation began, v3; he was 26 years old when he started the repair of the House of God, v8.; he was 39 years old when he died in battle, v1 cp. 35:20-24
- b) We ought to remember that Zephaniah and Jeremiah ministered in this reign. See Zeph 1:1; Jer 1:1-2 cp. II Chron 35:5. Both of these prophets undoubtedly influenced the course of events during it. Many scholars believe that the ministry of Zephaniah was behind the reformation.
- c) Josiah's reformation was the second greatest reformation in Judah's history. We cannot help but note how thorough-going Josiah was. He destroyed not only the altars, the idols, the sacred groves and the high places, but desecrated them in such a way as to ensure that there would be no recovery. Furthermore, he carried the reformation throughout the northern territory. 34:3-7. Note the sense of resolute determination that breathes through the account of the reformation. Compare II Kings 23:4-20, 24, 25.
- d) The restoration and recovery of the Temple. 34:8-33. Six years after the reformation began the work on the Temple started. It was marked by the generous giving of the people both from Judah and from the North, v, and by the faithful work of skilled men, vv10-13 esp. V 12.
- e) The discovery of the book of the Law and the renewing of the covenant. 34:14-33. almost at the beginning of the work of the Temple's restoration, the book of the Law was found. This single event was to have the most profound influence of all upon the reign of Josiah. Although the reformation had begun six years earlier. It was this discovery which was to give the reformation its greatest impetus. Note 34:3, "...in the twelfth year he began...", cp. II Kings 22:8; 23:1-25. Huldah's prophetic interpretation of this event, vv 22-28, led to the renewing of the covenant by king and people, vv 29-33. We do not know whether this "book of the Law" was the Pentateuch, or whether it

was Deuteronomy as suggested by some scholars. Support for the latter suggestion is found in Deut 31:9, 26, and in the character of Josiah's reformation.

- f) The greatest Passover held since the days of Samuel, 35:1-19. Especially note v18. This Passover also eclipsed not only that of Hezekiah's day, but those of David and Solomon's day. It is worth noting that in one year, the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, so much was accomplished. In that one year the repair of God's House was started., 34:8, the book of the Law was found, 34:8 cp. V14; the covenant was renewed, 34:8 cp. V31; the Passover was kept 35:19.
- g) The death of Josiah in battle 35:20-27. Josiah was killed by Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo. It is interesting to note that a heathen king spoke the word of God in the words of Necho and he died. Thus Huldah's prophecy was not completely fulfilled. See 34:28.
- h) Summary
 - i.) If the Lord is going to recover values that have been lost to His people, there must be the thorough-going, resolute determination which we find in Josiah. In the conflict over the eternal purpose of God, nothing short of whole-hearted devotion and uncompromising faithfulness, will serve the ends of God. There are times in the conflict with evil when we need a holy severity such as is found in Josiah.
 - ii.) We ought to note what God can do in evil days with anyone, however young or inexperienced, when they have a heart for Him. Youthfulness is no problem with God, once He has our absolute devotion, and unreserved obedience.
 - iii.) It is interesting to see that the chronicler rerecords the many different office and functions in the work of restoration, from the bearer of burdens, to the overseers, from musicians to carpenters. See II Chron 34:9-13. In NT terms this I Cor 12:4-31; Rom 12:L4-8. etc.
 - iv.) Why have Levites "skilful with instruments of music" been listed amongst those engaged in the work of rebuilding? Were they merely supervisors of the work, or did they lead times of praise and worship? See I Chron 25:1-8. Certainly worship is an integral and essential part of any work or recovery.
 - v.) Another feature of any work of recovery is fellowship. We see this illustrated in the band of faithful men and women who were at the heart of the reformation and of the rebuilding of God's House. There were in this band, Josiah, the king,; Hilkiah, the high priest; Shaphan, the scribe; Huldah, the prophetess; Jeremiah, the prophet; Zephaniah, the prophet; Shallum, Ahikam, Abdon, etc.
 - vi.) It is interesting to note that in the two greatest reformations in Judah's history, the Passover played such a part. The reason for this is simply that the Passover is fundamental to all the other festivals. The lamb slain is the foundation for all. Pentecost (the feast of weeks) and Tabernacles spiritually come out of Passover.
 - vii.) There is a remarkable similarity in principle between the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. The similarities are very marked – the reformation, the rebuilding of the Temple, the keeping of the Passover, etc. Etc. Note especially II Chron 32:1 and 35:20. In Hezekiah's case there was a direct threat to Jerusalem etc., and God directed throughout. In Josiah's case, Judah was not threatened and Josiah apparently acted upon his own initiative. He even ignored that warning voice of God through the words of Pharaoh Necho. It is not always easy to discern the voice of God speaking through the words of an unsaved man. Josiah's failure here cost him his life.

14. Jehoahaz – Zedekiah II Chron 36:1-21

- a) We come now to the last four kings of Judah. This was a period of confusion lasting 23 years. All four of these kings were evil, although not to the same extent as Ahaz, Manasseh, or Amon. All four were to die in exile. Three of these kings Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, were sons of Josiah. Jehoiachin was his grandson.
- b) Judah no longer at this time had the choice between independence or alliance with major powers. She had only the stark choice between vassalage to Egypt or vassalage

to Babylon. This was the period when the Assyrian Empire was breaking up to make way for the Babylonian.

- c) This was also the period of some of the great prophetic ministries e.g. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Habakkuk, Obadiah.
- d) Let us consider these four kings in greater detail: -
 - i.) Jehoahaz (Shallum). 36:1-4 cp II Kings 23:31-35.
Judah had become vassal to Egypt, Jehoahaz reigned only 3 months. He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, evidently following the bad policy of Judah's worst kings. He was deposed by pharaoh Necho and exiled to Egypt where he died. He was the first of Judah's kings to die in captivity.
 - ii.) Jehoiakim (Eliakim) 36:5-8 cp II Kings 23:36 – 24:7
He was made king by Pharaoh Necho in place of his deposed brother. He reigned for eleven years. He was more positively evil than his brother. He murdered Uriah, a prophet of the Lord, and sought to murder Jeremiah as well, Jer 26:20-24. He switched his loyalties from Egypt to Babylon, but after three years vassalage to Babylon he rebelled. In answer to this rebellion Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. This resulted in the First stage of the Captivity. The Temple was ransacked and some of the holy vessels taken away. Certain children of the nobility and of the upper classes were deported to Babylon. Jehoiakim died on his way into exile. See also Dan 1:1-7. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were amongst deportees.
 - iii.) Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) 36:9-10 cp II Kings 24:8-17
Jehoiachin was the son of Jehoiakim, and reigned in his deported father's place for only 3 months. He also did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. He evidently resisted Nebuchadnezzar at some point in that short period and Nebuchadnezzar again laid siege to Jerusalem. Thus began the Second Stage of the Captivity. More of the holy vessels were taken to Babylon and the royal house was exiled except for Zedekiah and his immediate family. 10,000 persons from the nobility and professional classes were deported. Ezekiel was amongst these (Ezek 1:1-2), as were also Mordechai's ancestors (Est 2:5).
 - iv.) Zedekiah (Mattaniah) 36:11-21 cp II Kings 24:11-20 – 25:31.
Zedekiah also did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, following the policy of earlier evil kings. He was not as evil as some of his predecessors, but was very weak. See e.g. Jer 37:1 - 39:14. Whilst secretly inquiring of the word of the Lord from Jeremiah, and evidently holding him in some measure of respect, he officially rejected the word of the Lord. This may well have been due to the influence of his government. See vv14-16. He rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar in spite of Jeremiah's warning and thus brought about the Final Stage of the Captivity. All the population except for the very poor were deported. The House of God was destroyed and Jerusalem was razed to the ground. The rest of the holy vessels were taken to Babylon. The last thing that Zedekiah saw before they blinded him was the execution of all his sons. See II Kings 25:6-7.
- e) Summary
 - i.) Note carefully that the satanic strategy is first to compromise and pollute the House of God, then to rob it, and finally to destroy it.
 - ii.) When the House of God is in ruins, the result is always the same. There is a scattering and a dividing of the people of God, it always results in disintegration, fragmentation and captivity.
 - iii.) What place has the holy vessels and the things of God in a heathen temple? The answer is none! What rest and inheritance have the people of God in Babylon, in heathen surroundings? The answer is none!
 - iv.) We are forced to say that all this has a serious and solemn application to the present situation amongst the people of God.

Thus closes this part of the chronicler's history, which we have entitled "The Continual Conflict over the House of God and Its Ruin." II Chron 10:1 – 36:23. We have seen the battle raging backwards and forwards over God's House, until at last Satan appears to win, and all seems lost. The final word of Chronicles, however, is the decree of Cyrus authorising the return of God's people and the rebuilding of the House of God. Like the day star in the darkest part of night before the dawn, it is the guarantee of a glorious and new day.

Message of the Book

The message of Chronicles is that God has an eternal Purpose concerning His Son, and we are called according to that Purpose of His. Saved by His grace, and joined to His Son, we together become the House of God, the very dwelling place of God. Fitly framed together, we are to grow into a holy temple in the Lord... built together for a home of God in the Spirit. This was the great secret of God's heart for humanity from the beginning, the objective for which we were created. Though mankind is now fallen, yet by that redemption which is in Christ, God is realizing His original Purpose. Chronicles reveals that all His dealing and workings have this in view. It reveals the essential character and nature of His dwelling place, and the terrible conflict that rages over it. Its theme is that "Mystery of the Ages," now revealed to us in Christ.

Recommended books

History of Israel and Judah from the Birth of Solomon to the Reign of Ahab
Solomon and His Temple
Spiritual Thoughts on Solomon's Temple

A. Edersheim
W. W. Fereday
Jesse Sayer

Halford House Tapes

BS 13	1 Chronicles
BS 14	1 Chronicles
BS 15	1 Chronicles
BS 15A	1 Chronicles
BS 16	2 Chronicles
BS 17	2 Chronicles
BS 18	2 Chronicles

Questions

1. What is the heart of God's Purpose and His dealings with men and women?
2. Why is it that the kings of the Northern Tribes of Israel are more or less ignored in 1 & 2 Chronicles?
3. What are the three main emphases in 1 & 2 Chronicles?
4. In 1 Chronicles 11 – 13 what are the first two things that David does?
5. Why is it that the ground is so important for the building of the House of God? What do you think this means for us today?
6. How many offices or positions in the House of God are mentioned in 1 Chronicles 23 – 27? What are they and what do they teach us?
7. What do we learn from 1 Chronicles 28:29 about the great concern of David's life? Describe in a few sentences what he did to bring his plan into being. What does 1 Chron 28:19 suggest to you?
8. Write a few sentences on each of the following: -
 - a) The importance of genealogies
 - b) The character of Solomon
 - c) The structural details of the Temple, 2 Chron 2 - 4
9. Comment briefly upon each of the following kings: -
 - a) Abijah
 - b) Joash
 - c) Uzziah
 - d) Hezekiah
10. Write a paragraph on Solomon's prayer of dedication. What does it teach you about prayer?
11. Briefly describe the end of the kingdom of Judah, stating what the main stages are and what the main lessons are for us today.
12. State briefly what you have learned about the Cross and the Life of God, in relation to the House of God.