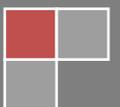
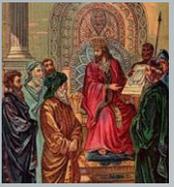


# Reflections From 1st & 2nd Chronicles

The Annals of Israel's Kings



## REFLECTIONS FROM 1 & 2 CHRONICLES

My goal in writing reflections from 1 & 2 CHRONICLES are the following: First, to encourage you the reader that if you will pay attention to the words on the page and listen carefully you will mine a lot of truth for life without the need of a commentary or any secondary source even though at times I'll reference said works for help. That is, "take up and read" to enrich your soul Christian.

Second, I write to give you a model of how observations can be done in scripture that do not read into the text something foreign to the author's intent. This will help you experience the joy of discovery and increase your confidence in your ability to comprehend God's word.

Third, by doing the above my hope is that you will be able to hear God's voice all the more clearly because it is the word of God that is forever settled in heaven, and not our subjective impressions, however valid they may be. That is, we have a more sure word of prophecy according to Peter—meaning the inscripturated word of God—then a glorious experience we may claim to have (2 Peter 1:16-21). Too often we Christians have bizarre ideas of what "God" is supposedly speaking to us and when it contradicts the Bible, be assured we are not hearing his voice.

### 1 CHRONICLES 1-4 "WHAT'S IN A GENEALOGY" Part 1

I've often glanced through my Bible and not really paid much attention to this portion of holy writ. A seemingly endless bouquet of names, attached to each other, I've thought to be laborious at worst and not relevant at best. I was wrong!

According to Gleason Archer, scholar of Old Testament Studies and languages, genealogies are space-time-history events that occurred in redemptive history. That is, God is revealing a specific word through these people and we would do well to heed their message.

First, these chronicles were compiled by either Ezra or one of his contemporaries after the Babylonian captivity of Israel came to an end (586-539), where Jewish colonists were returning to Jerusalem to establish a new commonwealth of Israel [Gleason Archer, *Bible Difficulties*, Pg. 216].

Second, because all that remained in Israel was ruins, the people had to hold on to only their memories, traditions, Scripture and their God. This is the

God who promised to them the restoration of the land after the termination of their exile [Gleason Archer, pg. 216]. They thus had to establish their lines of descent from Abraham and the twelve sons of Jacob so that the apportioned territories of the land could be allotted to the proper heirs.

Third, Yahweh Elohim (LORD God) personally made a covenant with Abraham and his “seed” through which Israel would live consecrated lives to the LORD. Only a tenth of the people are believed to have returned to the land which was in shambles, the rest of Israel chose to die in Babylon. God’s redemptive plan was bound up with those who returned to the land.

Fourth, emphasis in genealogies culminates in the New Testament where Christ is the rightful heir in the Davidic line (Mt.1) and by right has the authority to demand complete obedience of both Jew and gentile alike [*Bible Difficulties*, Pg. 216].

What’s in a genealogy? Identity! The identity of God’s people is wrapped up in God’s work in redemptive history which climaxed in the incarnation, Christ’s arrival in the fullness of time. Here God is revealed as one who strategically, specifically and skillfully redeems a wayward people who owe their blessings entirely to mercy.

For what does this genealogy argue against? It first argues against a cyclical worldview which eradicates any “telos” purpose, from existence and holds to a circle of events which endlessly repeat themselves. It secondly argues against a mechanistic worldview that considers matter as eternal—thus there’s no designer, no mind to consider, no person with which to reckon. Third, it argues against a polytheism that has endless finite gods needing to be appeased so their egotistical needs are met and it goes well with their subordinates—us. Fourth, it argues against a radical monotheism (Islam) where the divine God can’t be known personally but must nonetheless be served and obeyed.

What does this genealogy point to ultimately? This genealogy points the personal, triune, and self-existent, all-knowing, all-wise, all-good, all-powerful, ubiquitous God to whom we owe our very existence and to whom we will all give an account.

That’s significant, maybe laborious but with much reward, it’s not irrelevant but utterly pertinent to making sense out of the Scriptures and what the author of sacred writ (God the Spirit) is revealing.

(SDG)

## 1 CHRONICLES 5-10 “WHAT’S IN A GENEALOGY” Part 2

As I continue to reflect on the importance of genealogies I’m further struck with how they humanize the dead, those who have gone before us. They are remembered not forgotten and their mark on history (whether small or great) does not go unnoticed by their Creator.

This remembrance notes tasks allotted to certain individuals like the sons of Reuben and the Gadites who were men of valor in battle:

*“The sons of Reuben and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, consisting of valiant men, men who bore shield and sword and shot with bow and were skillful in battle, were 44,760, who went to war.” (5:18)*

Again, the Levites are remembered for; *“...all the service of the tabernacle of the house of God.” (6:48)*; or consider how the sons of Issachar are memorialized:

*“Now the sons of Issachar were four: Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron.<sup>2</sup> The sons of Tola were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam and Samuel, heads of their fathers’ households. The sons of Tola were mighty men of valor in their generations; their number in the days of David was 22,600.” (7:1-2)*

Still again, the sons of Elpaal are mentioned:

*“<sup>12</sup>The sons of Elpaal were Eber, Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod, with its towns;<sup>13</sup> and Beriah and Shema, who were heads of fathers’ households of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who put to flight the inhabitants of Gath;” (8:12-13)*

Those who kept the thresholds of the tent:

*“Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his relatives of his father’s house, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent; and their fathers had been over the camp of the LORD, keepers of the entrance.” (9:19)*

Even those who managed the tent service and worship are recalled:

*“<sup>21</sup> Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was gatekeeper of the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>22</sup> All these who were chosen to be gatekeepers at the thresholds were 212. These were enrolled by genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer appointed in their office of trust. <sup>23</sup> So they and their sons had charge of the gates of the house of the LORD, even the house of the tent, as guards... <sup>26</sup> for the four chief gatekeepers who were Levites, were in an office of trust, and were over the chambers and over the treasuries in the house of God. <sup>27</sup> They spent the night around the house of God, because the watch was committed to them; and they were in charge of opening it morning by morning. <sup>28</sup> Now some of them had charge of the utensils of service, for they counted them when they brought them in and when they took them out. <sup>29</sup> Some of them also were appointed over the furniture and over all the utensils of the sanctuary and over the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the frankincense and the spices. <sup>30</sup> Some of the sons of the priests prepared the mixing of the spices.” (9:21-23, 26-30)*

As I consider my life and the contribution God has allotted for me to fulfill, I too like you friend, must remember that they do not go unnoticed by He who sees everything. An example of a task allotted to me is an apologetics sermon I was preparing to deliver at my church, this was accompanied with much anxiety and personal attacks. That is, the work God calls each one of us to do is accompanied with joy but with conflict and cost. Love always costs and serving for the sake of the Name is at times more difficult than others.

One way to love is to battle the forces of darkness—a battle every believer is called to wage—by considering God’s truth, recalling those who have gone before us, learning from their triumphs and defeats, and committing to look for God’s reward, not man’s recognition, for as we see in genealogies, God does not forget, He sees in the secret place and will give each one their due recompense.

By the above remark, I am in no way asserting that one can earn God’s graces through personal merit, since God throughout Scripture reveals that being in relationship with Him is *all mercy*. What I am saying is that being in relationship with Him does affect the trajectory of our lives. And depending on the choices we make, God will justly reward us.

(SDG)

## **1 CHRONICLES 11-15 “MIGHTY MEN WORTHY OF NOTE—REMEMBERED”**

Reading the accounts of David's mighty men is fascinating to me. These are the ones who are named by clan, country, father and brother, men skilled in tactical warfare. Some are ambidextrous with the bow, sling and sword, others were adroit with spears, ran like gazelles but all were amazing warriors. Among these special mighty men of valor was Uzziah whom David betrayed.

These men had names and are forever memorialized in the annals of heaven. In a dark world, the need for valiant warriors doing righteousness is necessary and thus sanctioned by the LORD. War reminds us of how chaotic things have always been since the fall of man, and how it will continue to be with us until the consummation.

I'm not surprised at the commercial that says, "make love not war," seeing how gruesome it is, while not understanding the horrors humans are capable of performing against one another. Moreover, a relativistic society has nothing to say about this matter if it's going to be consistent with its worldview...but it can't be. But is war ever warranted? The views on this issue are nuanced and deeply affected by one's understanding of humanity (i.e., are people basically good or bad, is there real evil in the world or not?)

People once lived in fortified cities, had watchmen on the walls protecting their citizens, and would sound the alarm if invaders were approaching. In America today we live in huge cities, towns and suburbs protected by unseen agents, military and para-military units. For the most part, our protectors go unnoticed to us (depending on our neighborhoods). The irony is so many people disparage our modern day "watchmen" who truly keep law and order, who provide us the ability to make a life for ourselves, who even protect our freedom to speak against them. Many laud their execution. Such a position is deplorable.

What would happen if our "watchmen" (i.e., law enforcement agents, police) did not exist? Do you really think things would be better? Are you trained in tactical warfare, hand to hand combat, or have skills with weapons? If not, and the real bad guys came knocking at your door, what would transpire? Would you feel safe or threatened? Remember, there's no one to call for aid, no 911 or police or militia, nothing to rely on except "your" abilities to protect "your" loved ones, what would you do, how would you feel?

I think considering the abovementioned scenario is essential to get in touch with a stark reality too many anti-law, anti-police, anti-military people have not considered—those you tend to despise are the very ones protecting your ability to speak against them. Do that in Castro's Cuba and they won't put you into the

Holiday Inn, do that in an Arab Islamic State and they'll relieve you of any headaches, do that in Hitler's Germany and you'd partake in "The Final Solution".

David's men of valor are memorialized because with skill they fought real evil in the land, they were God's hand of wrath in a very real way and these provided safety for those who could not provide it for themselves. In a similar way our military and para-military "watchmen" should be appreciated and remembered for putting their lives on the line for people that hate them. They with great skill fight real evil in the land; they are God's hands of wrath against evil doers (Romans 13); they protect those who can't protect themselves. These people should be appreciated not disparaged, lauded not berated, welcomed not shunned.

(SDG)

## **1 CHRONICLES 16-21 "OF KING'S & WAR: DAVID'S EXPLOITS RETOLD"**

When Israel worshipped the LORD under David's command, the song of the LORD God of Israel was skillfully sung with instruments, cymbals, trumpets, harps and lyres 16:1-7:

*"And they brought in the ark of God and placed it inside the tent which David had pitched for it, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. <sup>2</sup> When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. <sup>3</sup> He distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread and a portion of meat and a raisin cake. <sup>4</sup> He appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel:<sup>5</sup> Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel, with musical instruments, harps, lyres; also Asaph played loud-sounding cymbals, <sup>6</sup> and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests blew trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God. <sup>7</sup> Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD"*

The ark of the presence reminded Israel of their God who acts in space time history and reveals His covenant to the chosen ones. These revelations are to be in song (16:8-36) so that a telling and remembering of Him could be passed down to the generations. This is why God raised David up as leader, and it's also

obvious to David that his successes are based on the God who is there (17:16-27) not through the arm of man.

Moreover, this warrior-king David, was God's chosen to administer justice and righteousness for all His people 18:14-17:

*"So David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and righteousness for all his people. <sup>15</sup> Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; <sup>16</sup> and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar were priests, and Shavsha was secretary; <sup>17</sup> and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and the sons of David were chiefs at the king's side."*

Why do rulers rule? They should do it so that justice and righteousness reign, not for self-aggrandizement. Rulers should recognize that they serve those who they rule, but too often, the converse is true. David as warrior-king was also ruthless when it came to dealing with his enemies and a bloody scene transpired 20:2-8:

*"<sup>2</sup> David took the crown of their king from his head, and he found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there was a precious stone in it; and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount. <sup>3</sup> He brought out the people who were in it, and cut them with saws and with sharp instruments and with axes. And thus David did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> Now it came about after this, that war broke out at Gezer with the Philistines; then Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Sippai, one of the descendants of the giants, and they were subdued. <sup>5</sup> And there was war with the Philistines again, and Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. <sup>6</sup> Again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature who had twenty-four fingers and toes, six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot; and he also was descended from the giants. <sup>7</sup> When he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him. <sup>8</sup> These were descended from the giants in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants."*

Perhaps the puzzling to me was the numbering of Israel and the severe punishment meted out by God (21:1-17) toward David. Why did God allow Satan to move David to number Israel? (See: Gleason Archer: *Bible Difficulties*). According to Archer:

*“God’s anger was unleashed on Israel because of their pride thinking their numbers are what gave them victory and prominence as a nation, rather than God’s sovereign grace.”*

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will trust in the name of the LORD our God. Whenever we as a people move away from the bedrock of the Savior as our protector, deliverer and our Good Shepherd, we inevitably fall into self-reliance and pride swells up the soul. This ends in judgement always depicted in the Angel of the LORD’s destruction through pestilence.

After the judgment was met out, David was terrified of the Angel’s sword before the altar of God. It’s as if his pride melted away before the God of creation, the God who redeems Israel (21:18-30). We must thus tell and remember with thankful hearts the deeds of the LORD God so that we don’t forget the Creator/creature distinction and His good acts toward His people and opposite wrath toward His enemies. Today this is very instructive.  
(SDG)

## **1 CHRON: 27-29 “THE ORDER OF THE KINGDOM”**

Every tribe and part of the land was organized under King David. The commanders of the army, the chief officers of the tribes and the many overseers made life in Israel ordered and prosperous (27). Part of human thriving comes from order, not chaos and this too comes from the LORD. I tremble at the thought of disorder in our country today from the top down.

The temple was also to be built under Solomon’s reign not his father David because of the blood of war on David’s hands:

*“Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the commanders of the divisions that served the king, and the commanders of thousands, and the commanders of hundreds, and the overseers of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons, with the officials and the mighty men, even all the valiant men. <sup>2</sup> Then King David rose to his feet and said, “Listen to me, my brethren and my people; I had intended to build a permanent home for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God. So I had made preparations to build it. <sup>3</sup> But God said to me, ‘You shall not build a house for My name because you are a man of war and have shed blood.’ <sup>4</sup> Yet, the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me from all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. For He has chosen Judah to be a leader;*

*and in the house of Judah, my father's house, and among the sons of my father He took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel. " (1 Chron.28:1-14)*

As God chose King David so also he chose Solomon to rule over Israel. However the stipulation for ruling righteously was simple—obey the LORD and you'll be blessed, reject God and he'll reject you:

*<sup>5</sup>Of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons), He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. <sup>6</sup>He said to me, 'Your son Solomon is the one who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be a son to Me, and I will be a father to him. <sup>7</sup>I will establish his kingdom forever if he resolutely performs My commandments and My ordinances, as is done now.' <sup>8</sup>So now, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek after all the commandments of the LORD your God so that you may possess the good land and bequeath it to your sons after you forever. <sup>9</sup>"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. <sup>10</sup>Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be courageous and act." (1 Chron.28:5-9)*

The time to build and move forward with the temple required courage and action and the means for said items were Gods very presence:

*"All this," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern." <sup>20</sup>Then David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished." (1 Chron.28:19-20)*

I often feel timid with life's challenges and need the reminder to act through with courage God, the LORD has not abandoned me, but is rather graciously ever with me.

LORD, I need a renewal in my soul of the reality of Your presence in my life for I feel bowed low and weary, my sins are ever before me so hear my cry for mercy and lift me up from the miry pit and cleanse me from idolatry and the anxiety it produces in me. Also help me live in light of life's brevity before Your face, my LORD and my God:

*“But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from You, and from Your hand we have given You. <sup>15</sup> For we are sojourners before You, and tenants, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope... <sup>28</sup> Then he died in a ripe old age, full of days, riches and honor; and his son Solomon reigned in his place.” (1 Chron.29:14-15, 28)*

## **2 CHRON: 1 “GOD GRANTS WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE”**

I have often ruminated in the proverbs over the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom, qualities for the soul to attain and develop or so I think. But when texts like the following appear something foundational to these qualities seem to elude me:

*“Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of Yours?” <sup>11</sup> God said to Solomon, “Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king, <sup>12</sup> wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed nor those who will come after you.” (2 Chron.1:10-12)*

This text accounts Solomon’s prayer to God for aid in ruling Israel. The proverbs often speak of wisdom and knowledge being superior to anything else one may desire or possess. Why? Because it comes from fearing the LORD (Prov.1:7); it is true treasure (Prov.8:11) not riches, wealth, honor, revenge nor a long life.

That which is so dear to our society is shown to be vain by this text for it is fleeting and in the end incapable of satisfying our deepest longings and desires. To rule the people of God Solomon understood that he needed nothing less than the all-knowing God’s wisdom—the proper application of knowledge for the flourishing of a thing or person according to its divine design.

When I prepared to do a seminar on “Darwin, Design & Origins” I was both nervous and perplexed at the amount of study and preparation I needed to execute. But Solomon’s prayer is an insightful model of asking God for these

qualities and rigorously applying oneself to the task of said acquisition. Consider the following texts:

*“Wise men store up knowledge, But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.” (Prov.10:14)*

*“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,  
But he who hates reproof is stupid” (Prov.12:1)*

*“My son, if you will receive my words  
And treasure my commandments within you,  
<sup>2</sup> Make your ear attentive to wisdom,  
Incline your heart to understanding;  
<sup>3</sup> For if you cry for discernment,  
Lift your voice for understanding;  
<sup>4</sup> If you seek her as silver  
And search for her as for hidden treasures;  
<sup>5</sup> Then you will discern the fear of the LORD  
And discover the knowledge of God.” (Prov.2:1-5)*

We see here that hard work is indispensable and nevertheless through it knowledge and wisdom are granted. That is, God is the source of that which is given even if we (and we must) labor rigorously.

We're so desperate for you LORD God in our lives, our hearts may fail but nevertheless you remain faithful and true. Often we are derailed from fixing our eyes upon you yet this is not hidden from your sight. Our passions, sloth and the resulting misery have brought us low. Yet, for your Names sake lift us up so that we might enjoy the delights purchased for your children by your son. For the sake of your renown give us wisdom and knowledge to rule well in the lot apportioned for us.

(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 2-7 “THE TEMPLE DEDICATION POINTS TO GOD’S FIDELITY”**

The conditions for blessing and cursing are directly linked to our obedience or disobedience. God clearly stipulates this to Solomon after the dedication of the temple:

*“<sup>11</sup> Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king’s palace, and successfully completed all that he had planned on doing in the house of the LORD and in his palace. <sup>12</sup> Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, ‘I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. <sup>13</sup> If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, <sup>14</sup> and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. <sup>15</sup> Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place. <sup>16</sup> For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. <sup>17</sup> As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, even to do according to all that I have commanded you, and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, <sup>18</sup> then I will establish your royal throne as I covenanted with your father David, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to be ruler in Israel.’ <sup>19</sup> ‘But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, <sup>20</sup> then I will uproot you from My land which I have given you, and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. <sup>21</sup> As for this house, which was exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’ <sup>22</sup> And they will say, ‘Because they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers who brought them from the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this adversity on them.’” (2 Chron.7:11-22)*

And yet, what we see in King David’s life are glimpses of the new covenant where God’s mercy to the king seemed to be a travesty of justice (E.g., Uriah and Bathsheba). If our hope was not on the heart of flesh God would put into those He chose, we would be in utter despair:

*“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least*

*of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jer.31:31-34)*

And yet, this new covenant demands the holiness of God in those professing to be believers, in order to warrant its genuineness. That is, in the new covenant God brings dead sinners to life through Christ’s work on Calvary’s cross. This new life is God’s life which necessarily produces the fruit of holiness in his children. That’s the power of the gospel. That’s what Jeremiah prophesied would take place, and that’s what Christ accomplished for His own. The genuine believer does have a sin problem, but in Christ it can no longer prevent us from loving God and neighbor as ourselves. That is, where once before Christ all we could do was sin, now after being in Christ through new birth, we actually have a choice of whether or not we will obey. May we choose life always.  
(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 9-10 “THE QUEEN OF SHEBA AND THE GLORIES OF GOD”**

Looking at a picture of the Eastern Sierra Mountains with snow-capped tops is a delight to behold. At times it seems as if the photographs taken of these majestic peaks have been tampered with in order to make them look better than they are in reality. But then seeing, smelling, and walking the base of such mammoth rocks illuminates the reality that its pictures are a faint glimmer of the actual glories they possess. And, the joy of both experiences can’t compare for the former is a taste in abstraction, whereas the latter is a plunge into actual elation.

The queen of Sheba had a similar experience when she heard of king Solomon’s fame. After answering all of her questions with absolute clarity all that was in her heart, the text reads:

*“<sup>3</sup> When the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house which he had built, <sup>4</sup> the food at his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his ministers and their attire, his cupbearers and their attire, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, she was breathless.” (9:3-4)*

Note that to “hear” or to “see” through the words eye picture is one thing, but to actually taste and see the reality is incomparable. The text continues to unfold her experience:

*“<sup>5</sup> Then she said to the king, “It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless I did not believe their reports until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me. You surpass the report that I heard.<sup>7</sup> How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually and hear your wisdom.<sup>8</sup> Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you, setting you on His throne as king for the LORD your God; because your God loved Israel establishing them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness.” (9:5-8)*

There are many lessons here to note. First, *there’s a difference between hearing about, as opposed to seeing and tasting this wisdom.* Now while Solomon’s riches astounded her, it was the wisdom with which he answered and disclosed to her every question that threw her over the edge. How about Jesus’ wisdom, do we ever consider him as a top tier thinker among the great thinkers in recorded history? According to Mathew 12:42, not even Solomon can compare to Christ’s wisdom and knowledge:

*“The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.”*

This wisdom and knowledge that’s from another age came in Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of God where much confusion had to be corrected for the Jews regarding the Torah (Mt.11-12). Unlike any Old Testament prophet, Jesus preached himself as the message; he was God incarnate and thus superseded the splendor of Solomon.

Second, when the queen says, “the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me”, reveals that *there’s so much more that words could have*

*described.* Solomon serves as a shadow example of the breath, width, height and depth of God's wisdom and splendor that surpasses our ability to imagine or think. It's precisely this wisdom that culminates in the cross of Christ and its preaching that's hidden from all of us until God the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see and taste the glories of God's majesty revealed in Christ Jesus (1 Cor.2:1-16).

Third, *to be continuously before said wisdom is cause for deep happiness in the soul.* "How blessed are your men...servants..." Why, because it's utterly rare and delightful. That is, the knowledge and wisdom of God was given to Solomon by God because the king feared the LORD. If the notion of God's wisdom and knowledge conjures up a boring notion, then we haven't tasted said knowledge or wisdom.

Jesus said that he was greater than Solomon (Mt.12); the Hebrews writer explains that Jesus upholds creation by the word of his power (Heb.1:1-3) and thus by virtue is better than the rest of creation combined. And the reason the generation of Jesus will be judged more strictly than other generations is based strictly on the ontological status of the one speaking.

Fourth, *the place of power belongs to God always,* but Solomon is placed as God's vice regent to do justice, and righteousness (v.8). The qualities of love and delight, justice and righteousness are what moved God to make Solomon king over Israel. God delighted in Solomon and thus set him up on the throne of power which ultimately belongs to God, not man. Moreover, it was God's love for Israel that moved Him to choose Solomon to be their king (v.8.c) for the purpose of doing ruling justly and righteously.

Since God by virtue of being the Creator, is the ground of what is just, right and true, when a nation departs from His ways and ignore the Designers understanding of reality, what ultimately awaits is misery, not bliss.  
(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 10-14 "WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN EVIL & GOOD KING?"**

Ruling comes with much pressure. That burden is an opportunity to either submit to the LORD God or to rebel against Him. Both Rehoboam and Jeroboam instruct us on what it means to be objectively evil, regardless if our relativistic culture denies this reality.

First, Rehoboam shows us the brazen foolishness of youth. He discards the wise council of the elders to gently and kindly deal with the people for the foolish advice of those with whom he grew up. Instead of being gentle, he was counseled to be brutal with the people:

*“<sup>6</sup> Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, “How do you counsel me to answer this people?” <sup>7</sup> They spoke to him, saying, “If you will be kind to this people and please them and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.” <sup>8</sup> But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him. <sup>9</sup> So he said to them, “What counsel do you give that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?’” <sup>10</sup> The young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you shall say to the people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter for us.’ Thus you shall say to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins! <sup>11</sup> Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.’” <sup>12</sup> So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as the king had directed, saying, “Return to me on the third day.” <sup>13</sup> The king answered them harshly, and King Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the elders. <sup>14</sup> He spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.” <sup>15</sup> So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of events from God that the LORD might establish His word, which He spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” (2 Chron.10:6-15)*

This ultimately came from God’s hand (v.15) and yet they were culpable. This tension in Scripture is rife where one’s actions while evil are somehow ordained by God and He is not unjust in punishing their evil deeds. Rehoboam did what so many kings before had already done, “...he and all Israel forsook the law of the LORD (12:1)” and because of this “He did evil because he did not set his

*heart to seek the LORD (12:14)”. It is evil to turn a deaf ear to God’s word and thus seek some other “word” by which to ultimately live; it is evil to have a predisposition to listen to the creatures’ voice above and beyond the Creators.*

Why, because the creature is finite and contingent, whereas the Creator is infinite and self-existent; because as Creator He owns everything and thus the creature owes its very existence to the Designer of all things. When we as people look to creatures for ultimate understanding, purpose and meaning for life; “empty will be our fill”.

Rehoboam was not the only ruler who did evil in God’s sight, so too did Jeroboam for the king set-up “teflon” priests in order to worship other gods:

*“<sup>14</sup> For the Levites left their pasture lands and their property and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had excluded them from serving as priests to the LORD. <sup>15</sup> He set up priests of his own for the high places, for the satyrs and for the calves which he had made.”*

*“<sup>6</sup> Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his master, <sup>7</sup> and worthless men gathered about him, scoundrels, who proved too strong for Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when he was young and timid and could not hold his own against them. <sup>8</sup> “So now you intend to resist the kingdom of the LORD through the sons of David, being a great multitude and having with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made for gods for you.” (2 Chron.11:14-15; 13:6-8)*

To worship any “god” (which is no god at all), instead of worshipping the One True God of Israel, is ultimately damnable. Too many around me think this statement is truly “nonsensical” poppycock! (Look up this word).

The two characteristics that were evil and remain to this day is first that God’s word and thus His law are neglected and replaced for the creatures’ word and law in order to rule. And secondly such neglect leads to idolatry and the worship of false gods. But another king did not do evil in the eyes of the LORD.

Asa, unlike these previous two evil kings, “...did good”:

*“<sup>2</sup> Asa did good and right in the sight of the LORD his God, <sup>3</sup> for he removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down*

*the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherim, <sup>4</sup> and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandment. <sup>5</sup> He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah. And the kingdom was undisturbed under him. <sup>6</sup> He built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years, because the LORD had given him rest.” (2Chron.14:2-6)*

Redirecting people who have gone astray into idolatrous living are never just told to stop, instead they are told to turn to the LORD God, which means to repent! This king models an amazing prayer for divine help in the face of war and a foe far too great for the people to overcome:

*“<sup>11</sup> Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, “LORD, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against You.” <sup>12</sup> So the LORD routed the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.”*

In this petition for help, king Asa affirms first *a personal relationship to the Creator by means of the covenant name of Yahweh*; he secondly *recalls the rescue through the Red Sea from Pharaoh’s army* and in his plea he continues, thirdly to *confess human weakness comparing it to God’s might* which is incomparable. Moreover, he acknowledges that it’s *because of the renown of the LORD that they are meeting the enemy in battle* (God’s glory is at the core of this event), and finally, he *reaffirms the covenant relationship between Israel and God* thus “Your name be exalted!” is the final cry.

I see this petition as a model for doing spiritual warfare, especially with the idea of scientific naturalism that blatantly and brazenly mocks God’s existence. But I also see that this prayer is for the church, the influential who are in charge, who unwittingly have forsaken the God of Creation, while giving lip service to His name. LORD, act swiftly and let not man prevail against You. As if we could.

(SDG)

## 2 CHRON: 15 “WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE SPIRIT OF GOD BRINGS HIS WORD TO THE PEOPLE?”

Why do men need a word from God?, because we’re in the dark without it, because our bent toward self ends in death and the Almighty cares for those creatures in His household. The prophet Azaiah, Obed’s son came to King Asa and sounded the warning:

*“Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded, <sup>2</sup>and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, “Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.” (Vvs.1-2)*

He then reminds them of their past where God was forsaken by their forefathers without a teaching priest and without the law (v.3), yet when in their distress Israel turned to the LORD God “they sought Him, and He let them find Him” (v.4)

Idolatry ever lurks in the land especially in the fertile soil of our souls that is bent toward death! To forsake the fountain of life for murky waters is what all people do without divine aid. To forsake the God of creation for idols was evident then as it is today. It’s nothing new.

But God has conditions for His inheritance to be in proper relationship with Him and it’s, “if you seek Him, He will let you find Him”. Note the relationship of choice between the Creator and the creature, “if you...He will let you.” But if one forsakes Him for another “god” (which is no god at all) He will also forsake them.

Here there’s an amazing interplay between God and man of “Hide and seek”. I think the reason this obtains is because God deals with our desires, “how much do we really desire Him?” An answer often given affirmatively is behind the soul’s curtain and the requisite work to find Him is exposed where we behold our real motives before God. We need to face the fact that we do what we want in order to attain the prize we believe will bring us happiness. Unfortunately when the object of said prize is not God, our end is misery but then it’s too late.

May I seek my joy in You LORD God today and not in some worthless idol that promises what it can’t deliver—true, lasting, joy. Teach me to love you and follow you more consistently.

(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 16 “WE OUGHT TO BEWARE OF HARDENING OUR HEARTS BEFORE THE LORD GOD\_\_ BECASUE THE PATH TO RETURN MAY BECOME SHUT TO US”**

What struck me of king Asa’s life is that in his earlier years he trusted in the LORD to aid in his affairs (2 Chron.14:11) which he demonstrated through an amazing prayer for God’s help, but something along the way happened to him, such that he no longer had ears to hear the word of the LORD:

*“7 At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, “Because you have relied on the king of Aram and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of your hand...<sup>10</sup> Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him for this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time.”*

While Asa imprisoned the prophet because of the word of the LORD, the irony is by his own mouth he revealed the prison cell his soul was in. Even to his old age, when his foot was diseased the text reads:

*“12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians”*

Once, Asa relied on the Deliver to rescue his people from their enemies, but now he looked to the arm of man which will fail him inevitably. Even in sickness, instead of calling out to the great physician he settles for what only the creature could do for him. We are all prone to wander LORD like king Asa, so keep our hearts from becoming proud and hardened.

(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 17-18 “THE CONTRAST BETWEEN A FOOLISH AND WISE KING IS WORD FOCUSED”**

Jehoshaphat followed Asa his father as king over Israel and Judah. He was like David in his earlier years and did not worship the Baals, but instead sought

God, followed his commandments and did not become stiff-necked like the rest of Israel:

*<sup>3</sup>The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, <sup>4</sup>but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. <sup>5</sup>So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. <sup>6</sup>He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah. (17:3-6)*

This king walked with God and was thus honored by Him in battle (18:31). By contrast Ahab was an evil king, for unlike Jehoshaphat he did not receive the word of the LORD, but instead the word of man as ultimate. Before going into battle this king would inquire of prophets who would tell him “good news”, but they were merely mouthpieces of deceiving spirits sent by God:

*<sup>20</sup>Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' And the LORD said to him, 'How?' <sup>21</sup>He said, 'I will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice him and prevail also. Go and do so.' <sup>22</sup>Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of these your prophets, for the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you.'” (18:20-22)*

Several observations are evident from the context; first, Ahab viewed the word of God from a true prophet as (Micaiah) evil and the deceptive false word of man as good:

*<sup>6</sup>But Jehoshaphat said, “Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?” The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me but always evil. He is Micaiah, son of Imla.” But Jehoshaphat said, “Let not the king say so.” (18:6-7)*

Somewhere it is written, “Woe to the nation that calls what is righteous evil and what is wicked good” (sort of). Second, Micaiah was determined to speak God’s word whether or not it was popular or even if it caused him harm—which it did landing him in prison (18:12-13, 14-18).

Third, God was behind the scenes working out His providential purposes, puzzling as it may be to us:

*“<sup>18</sup>Micaiah said, “Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right and on His left. <sup>19</sup>The LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab king of Israel to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said this while another said that. <sup>20</sup>Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’ And the LORD said to him, ‘How?’ <sup>21</sup>He said, ‘I will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ Then He said, ‘You are to entice him and prevail also. Go and do so.’ <sup>22</sup>Now therefore, behold, **the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of these your prophets, for the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you.” (18:18-22)***

This text is one of many (Is.19:1-15; Ez.14:6-11) that reveals the God of love acting in a way that evil might be attributed to Him; actions that seem cruel, wicked and manipulative for the purpose of ridding Israel of her idolatry and letting the nations know that God is the LORD.

Fourth, Micaiah lets Ahab know that if he returns from battle, then he indeed is not God’s prophet; *“<sup>27</sup>Micaiah said, “If you indeed return safely, the LORD has not spoken by me.” And he said, “Listen, all you people.”* Here the prophet is putting himself under the authority of God’s word. He is not above the word, nor is any earthly king.

The events turned out as God said they would, how could they not?! And yet the choices of human beings play significant roles in how history unfolds. For every action we take, an account to the God of creation will be given. This is a deeply sobering matter.

The wise king heeded the prophet’s word, the foolish king did not. So if any of us are going to be considered either wise or foolish, there’s one issue to settle: what will be our response to the revelation of Yahweh?  
(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 19-20 “WHEN KINGS RULE WELL”**

The ruled and those ruling have a long history. Those oppressed by rulers groan, those with power too often wield it foolishly. King Jehoshaphat instituted two reforms worthy of note and demonstrated one act of desperation as war was upon him.

First, *the king appointed judges in all of the fortified cities of Judah.* He said:

*“Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD who is with you when you render judgment. <sup>7</sup> Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe.” (19:6-7)*

When kings rule well judges are appointed to represent God’s authority under which justice is administered. A judge’s dealings are meticulously before God’s gaze and the corruption of justice will not go unpunished. Only the fear of the LORD in these judges will assure they act justly, not wickedly. Note they must be men who can’t be bought, who are not partial, and who do righteousness.

Today it’s no different. Judges in power will give an account to God for how they have administered their sword of influence (lawyers too), for this power does not originate in man, but in the God of creation they are to mirror. Yet, when there’s no fear of the LORD, justice is aborted and perverted, folly is exalted, and equity is deplored. What an ominous thought. Oh God! may the judges in this nation judge righteously, may those in the three branches of government tremble with the power bestowed on them, and may the righteous truly shine.

Second, *Levites and priests were also appointed to judge in Israel.* The king warns these judges that the fear of the LORD, the law ordinances and statutes are to be faithfully upheld to avert God’s wrath and thus assure peace is in the land:

*“<sup>8</sup> In Jerusalem also Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the heads of the fathers’ households of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD and to judge disputes among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup> Then he charged them saying, “Thus you shall do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and wholeheartedly. <sup>10</sup> Whenever any dispute comes to you from your brethren who live in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and ordinances, you shall warn them so that they may not be guilty before the LORD, and wrath may not come on you and your brethren. Thus you shall do and you will not be guilty. <sup>11</sup> Behold, Amariah the chief priest will be over you in all that pertains to the LORD, and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, in all that pertains to the king. Also the Levites shall be officers before you. Act resolutely, and the LORD be with the upright.” (19:8-11)*

The LORD is a God who loves justice to be done in the land and His people are to also love it. When a king rules well his main concern—along with the securing of borders—is for justice to be executed in the land. When this does not occur, the moral fabric of a people eventually deteriorates. The reason I think is unfortunately quite simple—as the leadership of a home, city or nation goes, so too do those who follow. People are deeply impacted in their behavior from what they see modeled more (it seems) from what they are “told to do”.

Third, *when war was upon the king he cried out to the LORD God of his fathers:*

*“Now it came about after this that the sons of Moab and the sons of Ammon, together with some of the Meunites, came to make war against Jehoshaphat. <sup>2</sup> Then some came and reported to Jehoshaphat, saying, “A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, out of Aram and behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar (that is Engedi).” <sup>3</sup> Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. <sup>4</sup> So Judah gathered together to seek help from the LORD; they even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD.” (20:1-4)*

His nation-wide fast and prayer is an illustration of desperation for divine aid that is utterly dependent on a positive response from God or else hope vanishes. It is an act of desperate measure appropriate for the occasion. The king rehearses in his prayer the covenant and its application of being in the land which was now being threatened. The word of the prophet assured Jehoshaphat that the battle belongs to the LORD God. The deliverance comes and worship is expressed led by the king:

*<sup>8</sup> They have lived in it, and have built You a sanctuary there for Your name, saying, <sup>9</sup> ‘Should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You (for Your name is in this house) and cry to You in our distress, and You will hear and deliver us.’ <sup>10</sup> Now behold, the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom You did not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt (they turned aside from them and did not destroy them), <sup>11</sup> see how they are rewarding us by coming to drive us out from Your possession which You have given us as an inheritance. <sup>12</sup> O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes*

are on You.”<sup>13</sup> All Judah was standing before the LORD, with their infants, their wives and their children. (20:8-13)

Often I feel utterly doomed with the lack of resources in my life (even though I live in America) be they physical or spiritual, and I have the occasion to seek Him through prayer and fasting. May I seize those moments and not let them go to waste.

(SDG)

## 2 CHRON: 21 “A FOOLISH KING’S REWARD”

The saga of the kings of Israel and Judah continues its’ sad account of the age old truth: before you and I, God has placed both blessing and cursing, life and death, therefore we should choose life. Yet too often the kings like us, chose death not life.

Jehoshaphat now dead previously appointed his first born son to rule, but he did so wickedly. He killed all his siblings and many of Israel’s rulers (Vv.1-4), yet God because of His covenant with Davids’ house, did not destroy Jehoram, even though he did evil in the sight of the LORD by causing Israel to play the harlot.

However, God will not be mocked (Vv.14-20) for He promised calamity by His own hand to come upon Jehoram even through a letter delivered by the prophet Elijah came to pass:

*<sup>14</sup> behold, the LORD is going to strike your people, your sons, your wives and all your possessions with a great calamity; <sup>15</sup> and you will suffer severe sickness, a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the sickness, day by day.”*

*<sup>16</sup> Then the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who bordered the Ethiopians; <sup>17</sup> and they came against Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions found in the king’s house together with his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.*

*<sup>18</sup> So after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable sickness. <sup>19</sup> Now it came about in the course of time, at the end of two years, that his bowels came out because of his sickness and he died in great pain. And his people made no fire for him like the fire for his fathers. <sup>20</sup> He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years; and he departed with no one’s regret, and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.*

To trifle with God's people and His authority is no small matter. Rulers forget that they are not ultimate, but God who raises them up is. What God promised to the king came to pass and what He promises to us will also. Obey Him and blessing will follow, disobey Him and cursing is assured.

(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 22 "AT TIMES OUR PROGENY WILL NOT LOVE YAHWEH & THUS BE LOST"**

The cause for much grief in a parents' life is their children's choice to reject the God of the covenant. For children to depart from the faith in order to meander in the cesspool of temporary worldly pleasures not only pains the godly parent, it is a sign that they may not be in fact part of the covenant family.

Perhaps you have a son or daughter that has hardened their heart; confused and captivated by their passions such that they can't see the difference between right and wrong. Things may seem bleak, but there's hope while they are alive and pray that parent must.

While King Jehoshaphat loved the LORD his son Ahaziah did not with a little help from his mother Athaliah (Vv.2-4). He did evil in the sight of the LORD by forsaking Him which never ends well for finite creatures. In fact the text says that the destruction which awaited this young man was from God:

*"Now the destruction of Ahaziah was from God, in that he went to Joram. For when he came, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab."*

The house of Ahab, if you recall, forsook the ways of the LORD and turned Israel away to worship false gods—which is idolatry. Here, Holy Scripture reveals that God was personally putting an end to the king's life and to the house of Ahab. The straying of Ahab away from the LORD did not happen overnight but gradually.

Often we find ourselves gradually straying away from the LORD but don't notice it until we find ourselves in "the badlands" and the hunger to know and follow God is nowhere to be found. The reason is because we have chosen to

worship false gods by listening to false prophets that eventually leads to our eternal demise and damnation.

There are warnings in Scripture to guard against an unbelieving heart causing us to fall away from the living God. The *general principle* in proverbs to “train a child in the way they should go and in the end they will not depart from it” is just that, general. It does not guarantee a child won’t be forever lost. And the *ad hoc* situation in the book of Acts where the jailer asks Paul, “What must I do to be saved?” and the apostle responds, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16) is just that, ad hoc, not a promise that because we are saved our progeny will be.

So what do we do? While our children are alive: we need the LORD’s strength to walk in his ways; to trust in His truth, and to make our intercession on behalf of our straying sons and daughters to return home (i.e., to be in a right relationship with God). May our children not perish but declare the mighty deeds of Yahweh. May they understand what it means to walk in the fear of the LORD and adore Him, and may they be salt and light to those who previously were leading them astray.

(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 23-27 “WHAT DOES DOING EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD LOOK LIKE?”**

The kings of Israel and Judah serve as an example of what God loves and hates, and depending on how their lives are bent—either toward Him or away—the scales of justice will accordingly be swayed.

In these chapters of the Chronicles we see more of the same old song and dance of one king doing what is right in the sight of the LORD and one king doing what is evil before the Creator. God honors obedience and punishes idolatrous hearts. Few kings of Israel from the start to the end of their reign sustained a faithful dedication to the God of the covenant. Why, because the Spirit of the LORD did not reside in their souls (only few under the Old Covenant experienced this). It’s under the New Covenant, inaugurated by the blood of Christ, after the Day of Pentecost, that God unleashed His Spirit for “new birth” to be realized in the saints.

Yet, New Covenant people also sin and at times horribly. Paul, as he's unpacking the meaning of the Gospel and its implications, addresses this in Romans 6-8 especially in 7 does he consider the war of sin within believers that the non-believer does not experience.

I've had my share of dark times and hardness of heart toward the things of God caused by my own idolatrous battles in the soul. Such downfalls often affect our desire to keep on living. I know that's been true in my journey, how about you friend?

Sometimes the obvious is hidden from us, which among other things, reveals the foolishness within. The Chronicles are coming to a conclusion and several themes are stark. In space time history kings, kingdoms, and God's activity is not unlike what we today experience. In the Ancient world, they did not have the "news" sources and means of dispersing the latest happenings as we obviously do today, and yet today with so much access to information events and their meanings are too often heralded in a slanted, ambiguous, emotional way that leaves the hearer in a stupor.

If you are like me, it's difficult to trust what the media, papers, and talking heads bring to us daily. The fact remains that after the "Fall" in Genesis humans are bent to suppress the truth of God (which is all that is true) in unrighteousness. When the text says, "Let God be true and every man a liar" so be it! Why can I trust this statement? Because in every book of the Bible, especially in the Chronicles, the writer recounts the names of kings, their deeds, their triumphs their defeats and then there's always God in the background who is constantly weaving His divine sovereign will through the significant choices of image bearers. It's amazing to me.

Moreover, it's very obvious that the land and worship are intricately connected. Depending on the peoples response to God, be it favorably or negatively, what follows is either blessing or cursing, the latter of which is the result of idolatry in Israel. This roller coaster ride evidenced in redemptive history (as is witnessed in the Old Testament) is a warning to the listening ear to beware, lest the same peril and perdition take place in our individual lives.

The Scriptures are clear that Israel's faithfulness more often than not waned miserably as she went from idolatry, to captivity, only to be rescued by God's tender mercies because of the covenant He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All this is a sober reminder that as Israel's choices, whether negative or positive, correspondingly impacted the community. So do mine and yours friend.

Often when we make a mess of things, God is there to clean up the mess through either rescue or judgment. That's sobering.  
(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 31-34 "ARE YOU EVER AMAZED BY GOD'S MERCY?"**

The heart of man is deceitfully wicked above all things who can know it? Other than the LORD God, the scriptures constantly remind me of how deep human depravity goes.

For example consider King Hezekiah who demonstrated his faithfulness to God by destroying the idols in the land, then re-instituting the nurture and care for God's ministers and reviving the worship of Yahweh in Israel. Nevertheless, this king still had to deal with his own pride which set him against the LORD God 2 CHRON: 32:23-26:

And many were bringing gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem and choice presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter. <sup>24</sup>In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill; and he prayed to the LORD, and the LORD spoke to him and gave him a sign. <sup>25</sup>But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received, because his heart was proud; therefore wrath came on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>26</sup>However, Hezekiah humbled the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come on them in the days of Hezekiah.

Manasseh, who succeeded Hezekiah, returned to the idolatrous ways, formerly practiced in Israel and skillfully rebelled against God (33:3-9). It was only after Manasseh humbled himself that he showed himself to be faithful to Yahweh 2 CHRON. 33:10-16:

The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. <sup>11</sup>Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze *chains* and took him to Babylon. <sup>12</sup>When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. <sup>13</sup>When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD *was* God. <sup>14</sup>Now after this he built the outer wall of the city of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance of the Fish Gate; and he encircled the Ophel *with it* and made it very high. Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah. <sup>15</sup>He also removed the foreign gods

and the idol from the house of the LORD, as well as all the altars which he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and he threw *them* outside the city. <sup>16</sup> He set up the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it; and he ordered Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.

Unfortunately, the damage had already been done. For under Josiah's reign there's a devotion to the LORD God (34:1-13) where the reading of the Torah warns of the coming Babylonian captivity that he would not experience because of his devotion to God but many in Israel would have to endure (34:14-21, 27-30).

God's mercy is daunting like His wrath. What a God! What a patient Creator! Why don't we trust Him?! It's because of sin. This menace has blinded God's people since time and the "Fall" inaugurated it.

LORD, your patience and mercy are stunning. To consider your dealings with sinners like us through immeasurable grace makes the heart glad. So may we consider your attributes, and reflect on them as we live out the rest of this journey on until the new heaven and new earth arrive.

(SDG)

## **2 CHRON: 35-36 "LAMENTATION IS THE PROPER RESPONSE FROM A PEOPLE THAT REBEL AGAINST YAHWEH"**

The conclusion of this book is sobering and truly lamentable. After celebrating the Passover Feast like never before under the kings of Israel's rule, Josiah when hearing of coming judgment turned to the LORD, was then set on pleasing Him (34:27) but the damage had already been done. God assured Josiah that because of his humility, he would not see the captivity of Judah in his life time (34:28).

Even though Judah's captivity loomed on the horizon and the word of the LORD would be fulfilled, Josiah's heart was nevertheless bent towards God (35:18-19). The king would die before witnessing the shameful and horrific sight of God's judgment on the land (35:20-25). Josiah was so loved by Israel that even Jeremiah the prophet lamented his death (35:25).

Unfortunately, the hearts of Israel had gone past the point of no return as the state of their wickedness demonstrated their embrace of the surrounding Nations abominations (36:14). This is clear as they; defiled Gods house (36:14), continually mocked God's messengers (36:16a), despised God's words (36:16b),

and scoffed God's prophets (36:16c). This resulted in God's wrath (specifically the LORD's wrath) being poured out on His people (36:16d).

This wrath was merciless as the Chaldeans "slew Israel's young men with the sword", and no compassion was shown to neither; the sick, the virgin, nor to the elderly. God had absolutely delivered Israel into the hands of foreign kings (36:17).

We can learn many things here and a few are sobering. First, it's madness to rebel against the great I AM, the Self-existent One. Second, we humans are blind to this doom of madness. Third, when God's word comes to us it is His mercy for the good of all. Fourth, those who reject the revelation of God Himself will be crushed. Lastly, today is the day to submit to His will.

(SDG)