

# THE SECOND BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES

Commentary by **ROBERT JAMIESON**

## CHAPTER 1

### 2 CHRONICLES 1:1-6.

#### SOLEMN OFFERING OF SOLOMON AT GIBEON.

**2-5. *Then Solomon spake unto all Israel*** — The heads, or leading officers, who are afterwards specified, were summoned to attend their sovereign in a solemn religious procession. The date of this occurrence was the second year of Solomon’s reign, and the high place at Gibeon was chosen for the performance of the sacred rites, because the tabernacle and all the ancient furniture connected with the national worship were deposited there. Zadok was the officiating high priest (<sup>1</sup>Chronicles 16:39). It is true that the ark had been removed and placed in a new tent which David had made for it at Jerusalem (<sup>2</sup>Chronicles 1:4). But the brazen altar, “before the tabernacle of the Lord,” on which the burnt offerings were appointed by the law to be made, was at Gibeon. And although David had been led by extraordinary events and tokens of the divine presence to sacrifice on the threshing-floor of Araunah, Solomon considered it his duty to present his offerings on the legally appointed spot “before the tabernacle,” and on the time-honored altar prepared by the skill of Bezaleel in the wilderness (<sup>Exodus</sup> 38:1).

**6. *offered a thousand burnt offerings*** — This holocaust he offered, of course, by the hands of the priests. The magnitude of the oblation became the rank of the offerer on this occasion of national solemnity.

**2 CHRONICLES 1:7-13.****HIS CHOICE OF WISDOM IS BLESSED BY GOD.**

**7. *In that night did God appear unto Solomon*** — (See on <sup><1015></sup>1 Kings 3:5).

**2 CHRONICLES 1:14-17.****HIS STRENGTH AND WEALTH.**

**14. *Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen*** — His passion for horses was greater than that of any Israelitish monarch before or after him. His stud comprised fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses. This was a prohibited indulgence, whether as an instrument of luxury or power. But it was not merely for his own use that he imported the horses of Egypt. The immense equestrian establishment he erected was not for show merely, but also for profit. The Egyptian breed of horses was highly valued; and being as fine as the Arabian, but larger and more powerful, they were well fitted for being yoked in chariots. These were light but compact and solid vehicles, without springs. From the price stated [<sup><417></sup>2 Chronicles 1:17] as given for a chariot and a horse, it appears that the chariot cost four times the value of a horse. A horse brought a hundred fifty shekels, which amounts to about \$100, while a chariot brought six hundred shekels, equal to about \$400. As an Egyptian chariot was usually drawn by two horses, a chariot and pair would cost about \$600. As the Syrians, who were fond of the Egyptian breed of horses, could import them into their own country only through Judea, Solomon early perceived the commercial advantages to be derived from this trade, and established a monopoly. His factors or agents purchased them in the markets or fairs of Egypt and brought them to the “chariot cities,” the depots and stables he had erected on the frontiers of his kingdom, such as Bethmarcaboth, “the house of chariots,” and Hazarsusah, “the village of horses” (<sup><605></sup>Joshua 19:5 <sup><1028></sup>1 Kings 10:28).

**17. *brought ... for all the kings of the Hittites*** — A branch of this powerful tribe, when expelled from Palestine, had settled north of Lebanon, where they acquired large possessions contiguous to the Syrians.

## CHAPTER 2

### <41E>2 CHRONICLES 2:1,2.

#### SOLOMON'S LABORERS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

1. *Solomon determined to build* — The temple is the grand subject of this narrative, while the palace — here and in other parts of this book — is only incidentally noticed. The duty of building the temple was reserved for Solomon before his birth. As soon as he became king, he addressed himself to the work, and the historian, in proceeding to give an account of the edifice, begins with relating the preliminary arrangements.

### <41E>2 CHRONICLES 2:3-10.

#### MESSAGE TO HURAM FOR SKILFUL ARTIFICERS.

3-6. *Solomon sent to Hiram* — The correspondence was probably conducted on both sides in writing (<421>2 Chronicles 2:11; also see on <1E8>1 Kings 5:8).

*As thou didst deal with David my father* — This would seem decisive of the question whether the Hiram then reigning in Tyre was David's friend (see on <1E8>1 Kings 5:1-6). In opening the business, Solomon grounded his request for Tyrian aid on two reasons:

1. The temple he proposed to build must be a solid and permanent building because the worship was to be continued in perpetuity; and therefore the building materials must be of the most durable quality.
2. It must be a magnificent structure because it was to be dedicated to the God who was greater than all gods; and, therefore, as it might seem a presumptuous idea to erect an edifice for a Being "whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain," it was explained that

Solomon's object was not to build a house for Him to dwell in, but a temple in which His worshippers might offer sacrifices to His honor.

No language could be more humble and appropriate than this. The pious strain of sentiment was such as became a king of Israel.

**7. *Send me now therefore a man cunning to work*** — Masons and carpenters were not asked for. Those whom David had obtained (<sup><1340></sup>1 Chronicles 14:1) were probably still remaining in Jerusalem, and had instructed others. But he required a master of works; a person capable, like Bezaleel (<sup><1259></sup>Exodus 35:31), of superintending and directing every department; for, as the division of labor was at that time little known or observed, an overseer had to be possessed of very versatile talents and experience. The things specified, in which he was to be skilled, relate not to the building, but the furniture of the temple. Iron, which could not be obtained in the wilderness when the tabernacle was built, was now, through intercourse with the coast, plentiful and much used. The cloths intended for curtains were, from the crimson or scarlet-red and hyacinth colors named, evidently those stuffs, for the manufacture and dyeing of which the Tyrians were so famous. "The graving," probably, included embroidery of figures like cherubim in needlework, as well as wood carving of pomegranates and other ornaments.

**8. *Send me ... cedar trees***, etc. — The cedar and cypress were valued as being both rare and durable; the algum or almug trees (likewise a foreign wood), though not found on Lebanon, are mentioned as being procured through Hiram (see on <sup><1000></sup>1 Kings 10:11).

**10. *behold, I will give to thy servants ... beaten wheat*** — Wheat, stripped of the husk, boiled, and saturated with butter, forms a frequent meal with the laboring people in the East (compare <sup><1051></sup>1 Kings 5:11). There is no discrepancy between that passage and this. The yearly supplies of wine and oil, mentioned in the former, were intended for Hiram's court in return for the cedars sent him; while the articles of meat and drink specified here were for the workmen on Lebanon.

**2 CHRONICLES 2:11-18.****HURAM'S KIND ANSWER.**

**11.** *Because the Lord hath loved his people*, etc. — This pious language creates a presumption that Hiram might have attained some knowledge of the true religion from his long familiar intercourse with David. But the presumption, however pleasing, may be delusive (see on <sup><1187></sup>1 Kings 5:7).

**13, 14.** *I have sent a cunning man* — (See on <sup><1173></sup>1 Kings 7:13-51).

**17, 18.** *Solomon numbered all the strangers*, etc. — (See on <sup><1183></sup>1 Kings 5:13; <sup><1188></sup>1 Kings 5:18).

# CHAPTER 3

## 2 CHRONICLES 3:1,2.

### PLACE AND TIME OF BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

1. *Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David* — These words seem to intimate that the region where the temple was built was *previously* known by the name of Moriah (<sup>4021</sup>Genesis 22:2), and do not afford sufficient evidence for affirming, as has been done [STANLEY], that the name was *first* given to the mount, in *consequence* of the vision seen by David. Mount Moriah was one summit of a range of hills which went under the general name of Zion. The platform of the temple is now, and has long been, occupied by the haram, or sacred enclosure, within which stand the three mosques of Omar (the smallest), of El Aksa, which in early times was a Christian church, and of Kubbet el Sakhara, “The dome of the rock,” so called from a huge block of limestone rock in the center of the floor, which, it is supposed, formed the elevated threshing-floor of Araunah, and on which the great brazen altar stood. The site of the temple, then, is so far established for an almost universal belief is entertained in the authenticity of the tradition regarding the rock El Sakhara; and it has also been conclusively proved that the area of the temple was identical on its western, eastern, and southern sides with the present enclosure of the haram [ROBINSON]. “That the temple was situated *somewhere* within the oblong enclosure on Mount Moriah, all topographers are agreed, although there is not the slightest vestige of the sacred fane now remaining; and the greatest diversity of sentiment prevails as to its exact position within that large area, whether in the center of the haram, or in its southwest corner” [BARCLAY]. Moreover, the full extent of the temple area is a problem that remains to be solved, for the platform of Mount Moriah being too narrow for the extensive buildings and courts attached to the sacred edifice, Solomon resorted to artificial means of enlarging and levelling it, by erecting vaults, which, as JOSEPHUS states, rested on immense earthen mounds raised from the slope of the hill. It should be borne in mind at the

outset that the grandeur of the temple did not consist in its colossal structure so much as in its internal splendor, and the vast courts and buildings attached to it. It was not intended for the reception of a worshipping assembly, for the people always stood in the outer courts of the sanctuary.

## 2 CHRONICLES 3:3-7.

### MEASURES AND ORNAMENTS OF THE HOUSE.

**3. *these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God*** — by the written plan and specifications given him by his father. The measurements are reckoned by cubits, “after the first measure,” that is, the old Mosaic standard. But there is great difference of opinion about this, some making the cubit eighteen, others twenty-one inches. The temple, which embodied in more solid and durable materials the ground-form of the tabernacle (only being twice as large), was a rectangular building, seventy cubits long from east to west, and twenty cubits wide from north to south.

**4. *the porch*** — The breadth of the house, whose length ran from east to west, is here given as the measure of the length of the piazza. The portico would thus be from thirty to thirty-five feet long, and from fifteen to seventeen and a half feet broad.

***the height was an hundred and twenty cubits*** — This, taking the cubit at eighteen inches, would be one hundred eighty feet; at twenty-one inches, two hundred ten feet; so that the porch would rise in the form of a tower, or two pyramidal towers, whose united height was one hundred twenty cubits, and each of them about ninety or one hundred five feet high [STIEGLITZ]. This porch would thus be like the propylaeum or gateway of the palace of Khorsabad [LAYARD], or at the temple of Edfou.

**5. *the greater house*** — that is, the holy places, the front or outer chamber (see <sup>1KIN7</sup>1 Kings 6:17).

**6. *he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty*** — better, he paved the house with precious and beautiful marble [KITTO]. It may be,



after all, that these were stones with veins of different colors for decorating the walls. This was an ancient and thoroughly Oriental kind of embellishment. There was an under pavement of marble, which was covered with planks of fir. The whole interior was lined with boards, richly decorated with carved work, clusters of foliage and flowers, among which the pomegranate and lotus (or water-lily) were conspicuous; and overlaid, excepting the floor, with gold, either by gilding or in plates (<sup><1061></sup>1 Kings 6:1-38).

## <sup><408></sup>2 CHRONICLES 3:8-13.

### DIMENSIONS, &C., OF THE MOST HOLY HOUSE.

**8. *the most holy house*** — It was a perfect cube (compare <sup><1061></sup>1 Kings 6:20).

***overlaid it with ... gold, amounting to six hundred talents*** — equal to about \$16,000,000.

**10-13. *two cherubims*** — These figures in the tabernacle were of pure gold (<sup><1021></sup>Exodus 25:1-40) and overshadowed the mercy seat. The two placed in the temple were made of olive wood, overlaid with gold. They were of colossal size, like the Assyrian sculptures; for each, with expanded wings, covered a space of ten cubits in height and length — two wings touched each other, while the other two reached the opposite walls; their faces were inward, that is, towards the most holy house, conformably to their use, which was to veil the ark.

<sup><408></sup>2 Chronicles 3:14-17. VEIL AND PILLARS (see <sup><1062></sup>1 Kings 6:21).

The united height is here given; and though the exact dimensions would be thirty-six cubits, each column was only seventeen cubits and a half, a half cubit being taken up by the capital or the base. They were probably described as they were lying together in the mould before they were set up [POOLE]. They would be from eighteen to twenty-one feet in circumference, and stand forty feet in height. These pillars, or obelisks, as some call them, were highly ornamented, and formed an entrance in keeping with the splendid interior of the temple.

# CHAPTER 4

## <40E>2 CHRONICLES 4:1.

### ALTAR OF BRASS.

1. *he made an altar of brass* — Steps must have been necessary for ascending so elevated an altar, but the use of these could be no longer forbidden (<021E>Exodus 20:26) after the introduction of an official costume for the priests (<028E>Exodus 28:42). It measured thirty-five feet by thirty-five, and in height seventeen and a half feet. The thickness of the metal used for this altar is nowhere given; but supposing it to have been three inches, the whole weight of the metal would not be under two hundred tons [NAPIER].

## <40E>2 CHRONICLES 4:2-5.

### MOLTEN SEA.

2. *he made a molten sea* — (See on <102E>1 Kings 7:23), as in that passage “knops” occur instead of “oxen.” It is generally supposed that the rows of ornamental knops were in the form of ox heads.

3. *Two rows of oxen were cast, when it was cast* — The meaning is, that the circular basin and the brazen oxen which supported it were all of one piece, being cast in one and the same mould. There is a difference in the accounts given of the capacity of this basin, for while in <102E>1 Kings 7:26 it is said that two thousand baths of water could be contained in it, in this passage no less than three thousand are stated. It has been suggested that there is here a statement not merely of the quantity of water which the basin held, but that also which was necessary to work it, to keep it flowing as a fountain; that which was required to fill both it and its accompaniments. In support of this view, it may be remarked that different words are employed: the one in <102E>1 Kings 7:26 rendered

*contained*; the two here rendered, *received* and *held*. There was a difference between *receiving* and *holding*. When the basin played as a fountain, and all its parts were filled for that purpose, the latter, together with the sea itself, *received* three thousand baths; but the sea exclusively *held* only two thousand baths, when its contents were restricted to those of the circular basin. It received and held three thousand baths [CALMET, *Fragments*].

## 2 CHRONICLES 4:6-18.

### THE TEN LAVERS, CANDLESTICKS, AND TABLES.

**6. *ten lavers*** — (See on <sup><1172></sup>1 Kings 7:27). The laver of the tabernacle had probably been destroyed. The ten new ones were placed between the porch and the altar, and while the molten sea was for the priests to cleanse their hands and feet, these were intended for washing the sacrifices.

**7. *ten candlesticks*** — (See on <sup><1174></sup>1 Kings 7:49). The increased number was not only in conformity with the characteristic splendor of the edifice, but also a standing emblem to the Hebrews, that the growing light of the word was necessary to counteract the growing darkness in the world [LIGHTFOOT].

**11. *Huram made*** — (See on <sup><1174></sup>1 Kings 7:40).

# CHAPTER 5

## 2 CHRONICLES 5:1.

### THE DEDICATED TREASURES.

**1. *Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated*** — the immense sums and the store of valuable articles which his father and other generals had reserved and appropriated for the temple (<sup><1324></sup>1 Chronicles 22:14 <sup><1325></sup>26:26).

## 2 CHRONICLES 5:2-13.

### BRINGING UP OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

**2, 3. *Then Solomon assembled ... in the feast which was in the seventh month*** — The feast of the dedication of the temple was on the eighth day of that month. This is related, word for word, the same as in <sup><1131></sup>1 Kings 8:1-10.

**9. *there it is unto this day*** — that is, at the time when this history was composed; for after the Babylonish captivity there is no trace of either ark or staves.

**11. *all the priests that were present ... did not then wait by course*** — The rotation system of weekly service introduced by David was intended for the ordinary duties of the priesthood; on extraordinary occasions, or when more than wonted solemnity attached to them, the priests attended in a body.

**12. *the Levites which were the singers*** — On great and solemn occasions, such as this, a full choir was required, and their station was taken with scrupulous regard to their official parts: the family of Heman occupied the central place, the family of Asaph stood on his right, and that of Jeduthun

on his left; the place allotted to the vocal department was a space between the court of Israel and the altar in the east end of the priests' court.

***with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets*** — The trumpet was always used by the priests, and in the divine service it was specially employed in calling the people together during the holy solemnities, and in drawing attention to new and successive parts of the ritual. The number of trumpets used in the divine service could not be less than two (<sup><040D</sup>Numbers 10:2), and their greatest number never exceeded the precedent set at the dedication of the temple. The station where the priests were sounding with trumpets was apart from that of the other musicians; for while the Levite singers occupied an orchestra east of the altar, the priests stood at the marble table on the southwest of the altar. There both of them stood with their faces to the altar. The manner of blowing the trumpets was, first, by a long plain blast, then by one with breakings and quaverings, and then by a long plain blast again [BROWN, *Jewish Antiquities*].

**13. *the house was filled with a cloud*** — (See on <sup><108D</sup>1 Kings 8:10).

# CHAPTER 6

## 2 CHRONICLES 6:1-41.

### SOLOMON BLESSES THE PEOPLE AND PRAISES GOD.

**1. *The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness*** — This introduction to Solomon’s address was evidently suggested by the remarkable incident recorded at the close of the last chapter: the phenomenon of a densely opaque and uniformly shaped cloud, descending in a slow and majestic manner and filling the whole area of the temple. He regarded it himself, and directed the people also to regard it, as an undoubted sign and welcome pledge of the divine presence and acceptance of the building reared to His honor and worship. He referred not to any particular declaration of God, but to the cloud having been all along in the national history of Israel the recognized symbol of the divine presence (<sup><1260></sup>Exodus 16:10 <sup><1246></sup>24:16 <sup><1263></sup>40:34 <sup><1095></sup>Numbers 9:15 <sup><1080></sup>1 Kings 8:10,11).

**13. *Solomon had made a brazen scaffold*** — a sort of platform. But the *Hebrew* term rendered “scaffold,” being the same as that used to designate the basin, suggests the idea that this throne might bear some resemblance, in form or structure, to those lavers in the temple, being a sort of round and elevated pulpit, placed in the middle of the court, and in front of the altar of burnt offering.

***upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees*** — After ascending the brazen scaffold, he assumed those two attitudes in succession, and with different objects in view. He stood while he addressed and blessed the surrounding multitude (<sup><1463></sup>2 Chronicles 6:3-11). Afterwards he knelt down and stretched out his hands towards heaven, with his face probably turned towards the altar, while he gave utterance to the beautiful and impressive prayer which is recorded in the remainder of this chapter. It is deserving of notice that there was no seat in this pulpit — for the king either stood or knelt all the time he was in it. It is not improbable that it

was surmounted by a canopy, or covered by a veil, to screen the royal speaker from the rays of the sun.

**18-21. *how much less this house which I have built! Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant*** — No person who entertains just and exalted views of the spiritual nature of the Divine Being will suppose that he can raise a temple for the habitation of Deity, as a man builds a house for himself. Nearly as improper and inadmissible is the idea that a temple can contribute to enhance the glory of God, as a monument may be raised in honor of a great man. Solomon described the true and proper use of the temple, when he entreated that the Lord would “hearken unto the supplications of His servant and His people Israel, which they should make towards this place.” In short, the grand purpose for which the temple was erected was precisely the same as that contemplated by churches — to afford the opportunity and means of public and social worship, according to the ritual of the Mosaic dispensation — to supplicate the divine mercy and favor — to render thanks for past instances of goodness, and offer petitions for future blessings (see on <sup><1082></sup>1 Kings 8:22). This religious design of the temple — the ONE temple in the world — is in fact its standpoint of absorbing interest.

**22. *If a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house,*** etc. — In cases where the testimony of witnesses could not be obtained and there was no way of settling a difference or dispute between two people but by accepting the oath of the accused, the practice had gradually crept in and had acquired the force of consuetudinary law, for the party to be brought before the altar, where his oath was taken with all due solemnity, together with the imprecation of a curse to fall upon himself if his disavowal should be found untrue. There is an allusion to such a practice in this passage.

**38. *If they return to thee ... in the land of their captivity ... and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers*** — These words gave rise to the favorite usage of the ancient as well as modern Jews, of turning in prayer toward Jerusalem, in whatever quarter of the world they might be, and of directing their faces toward the temple when in Jerusalem itself or in any part of the holy land (<sup><1084></sup>1 Kings 8:44).

**41. *arise, O Lord God into thy resting-place*** — These words are not found in the record of this prayer in the First Book of Kings; but they occur in <sup><41B></sup>Psalm 132:8, which is generally believed to have been composed by David, or rather by Solomon, in reference to this occasion. “Arise” is a very suitable expression to be used when the ark was to be removed from the tabernacle in Zion to the temple on Mount Moriah.

***into thy resting-place*** — the temple so called (<sup><26B></sup>Isaiah 66:1), because it was a fixed and permanent mansion (<sup><41D4></sup>Psalm 132:14).

***the ark of thy strength*** — the abode by which Thy glorious presence is symbolized, and whence Thou dost issue Thine authoritative oracles, and manifest Thy power on behalf of Thy people when they desire and need it. It might well be designated the ark of God’s strength, because it was through means of it the mighty miracles were wrought and the brilliant victories were won, that distinguish the early annals of the Hebrew nation. The sight of it inspired the greatest animation in the breasts of His people, while it diffused terror and dismay through the ranks of their enemies (compare <sup><47B></sup>Psalm 78:61).

***let thy priests ... be clothed with salvation*** — or with righteousness (<sup><41B></sup>Psalm 132:9), that is, be equipped not only with the pure white linen garments Thou hast appointed for their robe of office, but also adorned with the moral beauties of true holiness, that their person and services may be accepted, both for themselves and all the people. Thus they would be “clothed with salvation,” for that is the effect and consequence of a sanctified character.

**42. *turn not away the face of thine anointed*** — that is, of me, who by Thy promise and appointment have been installed as king and ruler of Israel. The words are equivalent in meaning to this: Do not reject my present petitions; do not send me from Thy throne of grace dejected in countenance and disappointed in heart.

***remember the mercies of David thy servant*** — that is, the mercies promised to David, and in consideration of that promise, hear and answer my prayer (compare <sup><41B></sup>Psalm 132:10).



# CHAPTER 7

## 2 CHRONICLES 7:1-3.

### GOD GIVES TESTIMONY TO SOLOMON'S PRAYER; THE PEOPLE WORSHIP.

**1. *the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering*** — Every act of worship was accompanied by a sacrifice. The preternatural stream of fire kindled the mass of flesh, and was a token of the divine acceptance of Solomon's prayer (see on <sup><102></sup>Leviticus 9:24; <sup><103></sup>1 Kings 18:38).

***the glory of the Lord filled the house*** — The cloud, which was the symbol of God's presence and majesty, filled the interior of the temple (<sup><104></sup>Exodus 40:35).

**2. *the priests could not enter*** — Both from awe of the miraculous fire that was burning on the altar and from the dense cloud that enveloped the sanctuary, they were unable for some time to perform their usual functions (see on <sup><105></sup>1 Kings 8:10). But afterwards, their courage and confidence being revived, they approached the altar and busied themselves in the offering of an immense number of sacrifices.

**3. *all the children of Israel ... bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement*** — This form of prostration (that of lying on one's knees with the forehead touching the earth), is the manner in which the Hebrews, and Orientals in general, express the most profound sentiments of reverence and humility. The courts of the temple were densely crowded on the occasion, and the immense multitude threw themselves on the ground. What led the Israelites suddenly to assume that prostrate attitude on the occasion referred to, was the spectacle of the symbolical cloud slowly and majestically descending upon the temple, and then entering it.

## 2 CHRONICLES 7:4-11.

### SOLOMON'S SACRIFICES.

**4. *Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices*** — Whether the individual worshippers slaughtered their own cattle, or a certain portion of the vast number of the Levitical order in attendance performed that work, as they sometimes did, in either case the offerings were made through the priests, who presented the blood and the fat upon the altar (see on <sup><110></sup>1 Kings 8:62).

**5, 6. *so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God*** — The ceremonial of dedication consisted principally in the introduction of the ark into the temple, and in the sacrificial offerings that were made on a scale of magnitude suitable to the extraordinary occasion. All present, the king, the people, and the priests, took part according to their respective stations in the performance of the solemn service. The duty, of course, devolved chiefly on the priests, and hence in proceeding to describe their several departments of work, the historian says, generally, “the priests waited on their offices.” While great numbers would be occupied with the preparation and offering of the victims, others sounded with their trumpets, and the different bands of the Levites praised the Lord with vocal and instrumental music, by <sup><100></sup>Psalm 136:1-26, the hundred thirty-sixth Psalm, the oft-recurring chorus of which is, “for His mercy endureth for ever.”

**7. *Solomon hallowed the middle of the court*** — On this extraordinary occasion, when a larger number of animals were offered than one altar and the usual place of rings to which the animals were bound would admit, the whole space was taken in that was between the place of rings and the west end of the court to be used as a temporary place for additional altars. On that part of the spacious court holocausts were burning all round.

**8. *Solomon kept the feast seven days*** — The time chosen for the dedication of the temple was immediately previous to the feast of tabernacles (see on <sup><100></sup>1 Kings 8:1-12). That season, which came after the harvest, corresponding to our September and October, lasted seven days, and during so prolonged a festival there was time afforded for the offering

of the immense sacrifices enumerated. A large proportion of these were peace offerings, which afforded to the people the means of festive enjoyment.

*all Israel ... from the entering in of Hamath* — that is, the defile at Lebanon.

*unto the river of Egypt* — that is, Rhinocorura, now El-Arish, the south boundary of Palestine.

**10. *on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month*** — This was the last day of the feast of tabernacles.

## ~~4472~~ 2 CHRONICLES 7:12-22.

### GOD APPEARS TO HIM.

**12. *the Lord appeared to Solomon by night*** — (See on ~~4190~~ 1 Kings 9:1-9). The dedication of the temple must have been an occasion of intense national interest to Solomon and his subjects. Nor was the interest merely temporary or local. The record of it is read and thought of with an interest that is undiminished by the lapse of time. The fact that this was the only temple of all nations in which the *true God* was worshipped imparts a moral grandeur to the scene and prepares the mind for the sublime prayer that was offered at the dedication. The pure theism of that prayer — its acknowledgment of the unity of God as well as of His moral perfections in providence and grace, came from the same divine source as the miraculous fire. They indicated sentiments and feelings of exalted and spiritual devotion, which sprang not from the unaided mind of man, but from the fountain of revelation. The reality of the divine presence was attested by the miracle, and that miracle stamped the seal of truth upon the theology of the temple-worship.

## CHAPTER 8

### <481>2 CHRONICLES 8:1-6.

#### SOLOMON'S BUILDINGS.

2. *cities which Hiram had restored ... Solomon built them*, etc. — These cities lay in the northwest of Galilee. Though included within the limits of the promised land, they had never been conquered. The right of occupying them Solomon granted to Hiram, who, after consideration, refused them as unsuitable to the commercial habits of his subjects (see on <481>1 Kings 9:11). Solomon, having wrested them from the possession of the Canaanite inhabitants, repaired them and filled them with a colony of Hebrews.

3-6. *And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah* — Hamath was on the Orontes, in Coele-Syria. Its king, Toi, had been the ally of David; but from the combination, Hamath and Zobah, it would appear that some revolution had taken place which led to the union of these two petty kingdoms of Syria into one. For what cause the resentment of Solomon was provoked against it, we are not informed, but he sent an armed force which reduced it. He made himself master also of Tadmor, the famous Palmyra in the same region. Various other cities along the frontiers of his extended dominions he repaired and fitted up, either to serve as store-places for the furtherance of his commercial enterprises, or to secure his kingdom from foreign invasion (see on <4814>2 Chronicles 1:14; <4815>1 Kings 9:15).

### <4817>2 CHRONICLES 8:7-11.

#### THE CANAANITES MADE TRIBUTARIES.

7. *all the people that were left*, etc. — The descendants of the Canaanites who remained in the country were treated as war prisoners, being obliged to “pay tribute or to serve as galley slaves” (<4818>2 Chronicles 2:18), while

the Israelites were employed in no works but such as were of an honorable character.

**10. *two hundred and fifty that bare rule*** — (Compare <sup><4023></sup>1 Kings 9:23). It is generally agreed that the text of one of these passages is corrupt.

**11. *Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her*** — On his marriage with the Egyptian princess at the beginning of his reign, he assigned her a temporary abode in the city of David, that is, Jerusalem, until a suitable palace for his wife had been erected. While that palace was in progress, he himself lodged in the palace of David, but he did not allow her to occupy it, because he felt that she being a heathen proselyte, and having brought from her own country an establishment of heathen maid-servants, there would have been an impropriety in her being domiciled in a mansion which was or had been hallowed by the reception of the ark. It seems she was received on her arrival into his mother's abode (<sup><2181c></sup>Song of Solomon 3:4 8:2).

## <sup><4485></sup>2 CHRONICLES 8:15-18.

### SOLOMON'S FESTIVAL SACRIFICES.

**15. *they departed not from the commandment of the king*** — that is, David, in any of his ordinances, which by divine authority he established.

***unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures*** — either in regulating the courses of the priests and Levites, or in the destination of his accumulated treasures to the construction and adornment of the temple.

**17. *Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth*** — These two maritime ports were situated at the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, now called the Gulf of Akaba. Eloth is seen in the modern Akaba, Ezion-geber in El Gudyen [ROBINSON]. Solomon, determined to cultivate the arts of peace, was sagacious enough to perceive that his kingdom could become great and glorious only by encouraging a spirit of commercial enterprise among his

subjects; and, accordingly, with that in mind he made a contract with Hiram for ships and seamen to instruct his people in navigation.

**18. *Hiram sent him ... ships*** — either sent him ship-*men*, able seamen, overland; or, taking the word “sent” in a looser sense, *supplied* him, that is, *built* him ships — namely, in docks at Eloth (compare <sup><1026></sup>1 Kings 9:26,27). This navy of Solomon was manned by Tyrians, for Solomon had no seamen capable of performing distant expeditions. The Hebrew fishermen, whose boats plied on the Sea of Tiberias or coasted the shores of the Mediterranean, were not equal to the conducting of large vessels laden with valuable cargoes on long voyages and through the wide and unfrequented ocean.

***four hundred and fifty talents of gold*** — (Compare <sup><1028></sup>1 Kings 9:28). The text in one of these passages is corrupt.

# CHAPTER 9

## 2 CHRONICLES 9:1-12.

### THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON; SHE ADMIRES HIS WISDOM AND MAGNIFICENCE.

**1-4.** *when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon* — (See on ~~1~~<sup>1</sup> Kings 10:1-13). It is said that among the things in Jerusalem which drew forth the admiration of Solomon's royal visitor was "his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord." This was the arched viaduct that crossed the valley from Mount Zion to the opposite hill. In the commentary on the passage quoted above, allusion was made to the recent discovery of its remains. Here we give a full account of what, for boldness of conceptions for structure and magnificence, was one of the greatest wonders in Jerusalem. "During our first visit to the southwest corner of the area of the mosque, we observed several of the large stones jutting out from the western wall, which at first seemed to be the effect of a bursting of the wall from some mighty shock or earthquake. We paid little regard to this at the moment; but on mentioning the fact not long after to a circle of our friends, the remark was incidentally dropped that the stones had the appearance of having once belonged to a large arch. At this remark, a train of thought flashed across my mind, which I hardly dared to follow out until I had again repaired to the spot, in order to satisfy myself with my own eyes as to the truth or falsehood of the suggestion. I found it even so. The courses of these immense stones occupy their original position; their external surface is hewn to a regular curve; and, being fitted one upon another, they form the commencement or foot of an immense arch which once sprung out from this western wall in a direction towards Mount Zion, across the Tyropoeon valley. This arch could only have belonged to the bridge, which, according to JOSEPHUS, led from this part of the temple to the Xystus (covered colonnade) on Zion; and it proves incontestably the antiquity of that portion from which it springs" [ROBINSON]. The distance from this point to the steep rock of Zion ROBINSON calculates to

be about three hundred and fifty feet, the probable length of this ancient viaduct. Another writer adds, that “the arch of this bridge, if its curve be calculated with an approximation to the truth, would measure *sixty* feet, and must have been one of five sustaining the viaduct (allowing for the abutments on either side), and that the piers supporting the center arch of this bridge must have been of great altitude — not less, perhaps, than one hundred and thirty feet. The whole structure, when seen from the southern extremity of the Tyropoeon, must have had an aspect of grandeur, especially as connected with the lofty and sumptuous edifices of the temple, and of Zion to the right and to the left” [ISAAC TAYLOR’S EDITION OF TRAILL’S JOSEPHUS].

## 2 CHRONICLES 9:13-28.

### HIS RICHES.

**13.** *Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year* — (See on <sup><1004></sup>1 Kings 10:14-29).

*six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold* — The sum named is equal to about \$17,000,000; and if we take the proportion of silver (<sup><4004></sup>2 Chronicles 9:14), which is not taken into consideration, at one to nine, there would be about \$2,000,000, making a yearly supply of nearly \$19,000,000, being a vast amount for an infant effort in maritime commerce [NAPIER].

**21.** *the king’s ships went to Tarshish* — rather, “the king’s ships of Tarshish went” with the servants of Hiram.

*ships of Tarshish* — that is, in burden and construction like the large vessels built for or used at Tarshish [CALMET, *Fragments*].

**25.** *Solomon had four thousand stalls* — It has been conjectured [GESENIUS, *Hebrew Lexicon*] that the original term may signify not only stall or stable, but a number of horses occupying the same number of stalls. Supposing that ten were put together in one part, this would make forty thousand. According to this theory of explanation, the historian in Kings refers to horses [see <sup><1000></sup>1 Kings 10:26]; while the historian in



Chronicles speaks of the stalls in which they were kept. But more recent critics reject this mode of solving the difficulty, and, regarding the four thousand stalls as in keeping with the general magnificence of Solomon's establishments, are agreed in considering the text in Kings as corrupt, through the error of some copyist.

**28. *they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt*** — (See on <sup>4114</sup>2 Chronicles 1:14). Solomon undoubtedly carried the Hebrew kingdom to its highest pitch of worldly glory. His completion of the grand work, the centralizing of the national worship at Jerusalem, whither the natives went up three times a year, has given his name a prominent place in the history of the ancient church. But his reign had a disastrous influence upon “the peculiar people,” and the example of his deplorable idolatries, the connections he formed with foreign princes, the commercial speculations he entered into, and the luxuries introduced into the land, seem in a great measure to have altered and deteriorated the Jewish character.

# CHAPTER 10

## <400>2 CHRONICLES 10:1-15.

### REHOBOAM REFUSING THE OLD MEN'S GOOD COUNSEL.

1. *Rehoboam went to Shechem* — (See on <400>1 Kings 12:1). This chapter is, with a few verbal alterations, the same as in <400>1 Kings 12:1-19.

7. *If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them* — In the Book of Kings [<sup><400></sup>1 Kings 12:7], the words are, “If thou wilt be a servant unto this — people, and wilt serve them.” The meaning in both is the same, namely, If thou wilt make some reasonable concessions, redress their grievances, and restore their abridged liberties, thou wilt secure their strong and lasting attachment to thy person and government.

15-17. *the king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was of God* — Rehoboam, in following an evil counsel, and the Hebrew people, in making a revolutionary movement, each acted as free agents, obeying their own will and passions. But God, who permitted the revolt of the northern tribes, intended it as a punishment of the house of David for Solomon's apostasy. That event demonstrates the immediate superintendence of His providence over the revolutions of kingdoms; and thus it affords an instance, similar to many other striking instances that are found in Scripture, of divine predictions, uttered long before, being accomplished by the operation of human passions, and in the natural course of events.

# CHAPTER 11

## <4110> 2 CHRONICLES 11:1-17.

### REHOBAM, RAISING AN ARMY TO SUBDUE ISRAEL, IS FORBIDDEN BY SHEMAIAH.

**1-4.** *Rehoboam ... gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin ... to fight against Israel* — (See <4122>1 Kings 12:21-24).

**5-11.** *built cities for defense in Judah* — This is evidently used as the name of the southern kingdom. Rehoboam, having now a bitter enemy in Israel, deemed it prudent to lose no time in fortifying several cities that lay along the frontier of his kingdom. Jeroboam, on his side, took a similar precaution (<4125>1 Kings 12:25). Of the fifteen cities named, Aijalon and Zorah lay within the province of Benjamin. Gath, though a Philistine city, had been subject to Solomon. And Etham, which was on the border of Simeon, now incorporated with the kingdom of Israel, was fortified to repel danger from that quarter. These fortresses Rehoboam placed under able commanders and stocked them with provisions and military stores, sufficient, if necessary, to stand a siege. In the crippled state of his kingdom, he seems to have been afraid lest it might be made the prey of some powerful neighbors.

**13-17.** *the priests and the Levites ... resorted to him out of all their coasts* — This was an accession of moral power, for the maintenance of the true religion is the best support and safeguard of any nation; and as it was peculiarly the grand source of the strength and prosperity of the Hebrew monarchy, the great numbers of good and pious people who sought an asylum within the territories of Judah contributed greatly to consolidate the throne of Rehoboam. The cause of so extensive an emigration from the kingdom of Israel was the deep and daring policy of Jeroboam, who set himself to break the national unity by entirely abolishing, within his dominions, the religious institutions of Judaism. He dreaded an eventual reunion of the tribes if the people continued to repair thrice a year to

worship in Jerusalem as they were obliged by law to do. Accordingly, on pretense that the distance of that city was too great for multitudes of his subjects, he fixed upon two more convenient places, where he established a new mode of worshipping God under gross and prohibited symbols [<sup><1126></sup>1 Kings 12:26-33]. The priests and Levites, refusing to take part in the idolatrous ceremonies, were ejected from their living (<sup><1113></sup>2 Chronicles 11:13,14). Along with them a large body of the people who faithfully adhered to the instituted worship of God, offended and shocked by the impious innovations, departed from the kingdom.

**15. *he ordained him priests*** — The persons he appointed to the priesthood were low and worthless creatures (<sup><1128></sup>1 Kings 12:31 <sup><1133></sup>13:33); any were consecrated who brought a bullock and seven rams (<sup><1132></sup>2 Chronicles 13:9 <sup><1137></sup>Exodus 29:37).

***for the high places*** — Those favorite places of religious worship were encouraged throughout the country.

***for the devils*** — a term sometimes used for idols in general (<sup><1170></sup>Leviticus 17:7). But here it is applied distinctively to the goat deities, which were probably worshipped chiefly in the northern parts of his kingdom, where the heathen Canaanites still abounded.

***for the calves which he had made*** — figures of the ox gods Apis and Mnevis, with which Jeroboam's residence in Egypt had familiarized him. (See on <sup><1126></sup>1 Kings 12:26).

**17. *they strengthened the kingdom of Judah*** — The innovating measures of Jeroboam were not introduced all at once. But as they were developed, the secession of the most excellent of his subjects began, and continuing to increase for three years, lowered the tone of religion in his kingdom, while it proportionally quickened its life and extended its influence in that of Judah.

## 2 CHRONICLES 11:18-23.

### HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN.

**18. *Rehoboam took Mahalath*** — The names of her father and mother are given. Jerimoth, the father, must have been the son of one of David's concubines (<sup><118></sup>1 Chronicles 3:9). Abihail was, of course, his cousin, previous to their marriage.

**20. *after her he took Maachah ... daughter*** — that is, granddaughter (<sup><147></sup>2 Samuel 14:27) of Absalom, Tamar being, according to JOSEPHUS, her mother. (Compare <sup><188></sup>2 Samuel 18:18).

**21. *he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines*** — This royal harem, though far smaller than his father's, was equally in violation of the law, which forbade a king to "multiply wives unto himself" [<sup><177></sup>Deuteronomy 17:17].

**22. *made Abijah ... chief ... ruler among his brethren*** — This preference seems to have been given to Abijah solely from the king's dotting fondness for his mother and through her influence over him. It is plainly implied that Abijah was not the oldest of the family. In destining a younger son for the kingdom, without a divine warrant, as in Solomon's case, Rehoboam acted in violation of the law (<sup><115></sup>Deuteronomy 21:15).

**23. *he dealt wisely*** — that is, with deep and calculating policy (<sup><110></sup>Exodus 1:10).

***and dispersed of all his children ... unto every fenced city*** — The circumstance of twenty-eight sons of the king being made governors of fortresses would, in our quarter of the world, produce jealousy and dissatisfaction. But Eastern monarchs ensure peace and tranquillity to their kingdom by bestowing government offices on their sons and grandsons. They obtain an independent provision, and being kept apart, are not likely to cabal in their father's lifetime. Rehoboam acted thus, and his sagacity will appear still greater if the wives he desired for them belonged to the cities where each son was located. These connections would bind them more closely to their respective places. In the modern countries of the East, particularly Persia and Turkey, younger princes

were, till very lately, shut up in the harem during their father's lifetime; and, to prevent competition, they were blinded or killed when their brother ascended the throne. In the former country the old practice of dispersing them through the country as Rehoboam did, has been again revived.

# CHAPTER 12

## <4117> 2 CHRONICLES 12:1-12.

### REHOBOAM, FORSAKING GOD, IS PUNISHED BY SHISHAK.

1. *when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself* — (See on <4117> 2 Chronicles 11:17). During the first three years of his reign his royal influence was exerted in the encouragement of the true religion. Security and ease led to religious decline, which, in the fourth year, ended in open apostasy. The example of the court was speedily followed by his subjects, for “all Israel was with him,” that is, the people in his own kingdom. The very next year, the fifth of his reign, punishment was inflicted by the invasion of Shishak.

2. *Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem* — He was the first king of the twenty-second or Bubastic Dynasty. What was the immediate cause of this invasion? Whether it was in resentment for some provocation from the king of Judah, or in pursuance of ambitious views of conquest, is not said. But the invading army was a vast horde, for Shishak brought along with his native Egyptians an immense number of foreign auxiliaries.

3-5. *the Lubims* — the Libyans of northeastern Africa.

*the Sukkiims* — Some think these were the Kenite Arabs, dwellers in tents, but others maintain more justly that these were Arab troglodytes, who inhabited the caverns of a mountain range on the western coast of the Red Sea.

*and the Ethiopians* — from the regions south of Egypt. By the overwhelming force of numbers, they took the fortresses of Judah which had been recently put in a state of defense, and marched to lay siege to the capital. While Shishak and his army was before Jerusalem, the prophet Shemaiah addressed Rehoboam and the princes, tracing this calamity to the national apostasy and threatening them with utter destruction in consequence of having forsaken God (<4117> 2 Chronicles 12:6).

**6. *the princes of Israel*** — (compare <sup><4125></sup>2 Chronicles 12:5, “the princes of Judah”).

**7, 8. *when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves*** — Their repentance and contrition was followed by the best effects; for Shemaiah was commissioned to announce that the phial of divine judgment would not be fully poured out on them — that the entire overthrow of the kingdom of Judah would not take place at that time, nor through the agency of Shishak; and yet, although it should enjoy a respite from total subversion, [Judah] should become a tributary province of Egypt in order that the people might learn how much lighter and better is the service of God than that of idolatrous foreign despots.

**9. *So Shishak ... came up against Jerusalem*** — After the parenthetical clause (<sup><4125></sup>2 Chronicles 12:5-8) describing the feelings and state of the beleaguered court, the historian resumes his narrative of the attack upon Jerusalem, and the consequent pillage both of the temple and the palace.

***he took all*** — that is, everything valuable he found. The cost of the targets and shields has been estimated as about \$1,200,000 [NAPIER, *Ancient Workers in Metal*].

***the shields of gold*** — made by Solomon, were kept in the house of the forest of Lebanon (<sup><4126></sup>2 Chronicles 9:16). They seem to have been borne, like maces, by the guards of the palace, when they attended the king to the temple or on other public processions. Those splendid insignia having been plundered by the Egyptian conqueror, others were made of inferior metal and kept in the guard room of the palace, to be ready for use; as, notwithstanding the tarnished glory of the court, the old state etiquette was kept up on public and solemn occasions. An account of this conquest of Judah, with the name of “king of Judah” in the cartouche of the principal captive, according to the interpreters, is carved and written in hieroglyphics on the walls of the great palace of Karnak, where it may be seen at the present day. This sculpture is about twenty-seven hundred years old, and is of peculiar interest as a striking testimony from Egypt to the truth of Scripture history.

**12. *when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him*** — The promise (<sup><4127></sup>2 Chronicles 12:7) was verified. Divine providence



preserved the kingdom in existence, a reformation was made in the court, while true religion and piety were diffused throughout the land.

## ~~<1123>~~ 2 CHRONICLES 12:13-16.

### HIS REIGN AND DEATH.

**13, 14. *Rehoboam strengthened ... and reigned*** — The Egyptian invasion had been a mere predatory expedition, not extending beyond the limits of Judah, and probably, ere long, repelled by the invaded. Rehoboam's government acquired new life and vigor by the general revival of true religion, and his reign continued many years after the departure of Shishak. But

*he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord* — that is, he did not adhere firmly to the good course of reformation he had begun, “and he did evil,” for through the unhappy influence of his mother, a heathen foreigner, he had no doubt received in his youth a strong bias towards idolatry (see on ~~<1142>~~ 1 Kings 14:21).

# CHAPTER 13

## <413> 2 CHRONICLES 13:1-20.

### ABIJAH, SUCCEEDING, MAKES WAR AGAINST JEROBOAM, AND OVERCOMES HIM.

2. *His mother's name also was Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel* — the same as Maachah (see on <115P>1 Kings 15:2). She was “the daughter,” that is, granddaughter of Absalom (<115P>1 Kings 15:2; compare <104P>2 Samuel 14:1-33), mother of Abijah, “mother,” that is, grandmother (<115P>1 Kings 15:10, *Margin*) of Asa.

*of Gibeah* — probably implies that Uriel was connected with the house of Saul.

*there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam* — The occasion of this war is not recorded (see <115P>1 Kings 15:6,7), but it may be inferred from the tenor of Abijah's address that it arose from his youthful ambition to recover the full hereditary dominion of his ancestors. No prophet now forbade a war with Israel (<412>2 Chronicles 11:23) for Jeroboam had forfeited all claim to protection.

3. *Abijah set the battle in array* — that is, took the field and opened the campaign.

*with ... four hundred thousand chosen men ... Jeroboam with eight hundred thousand* — These are, doubtless, large numbers, considering the smallness of the two kingdoms. It must be borne in mind, however, that Oriental armies are mere mobs — vast numbers accompanying the camp in hope of plunder, so that the gross numbers described as going upon an Asiatic expedition are often far from denoting the exact number of fighting men. But in accounting for the large number of soldiers enlisted in the respective armies of Abijah and Jeroboam, there is no need of resorting to this mode of explanation; for we know by the census of David the

immense number of the population that was capable of bearing arms (<sup><1320></sup>1 Chronicles 21:5; compare <sup><1440></sup>2 Chronicles 14:8 <sup><1474></sup>17:14).

**4-12. *Abijah stood up upon Mount Zemaraim*** — He had entered the enemy's territory and was encamped on an eminence near Beth-el (<sup><1682></sup>Joshua 18:22). Jeroboam's army lay at the foot of the hill, and as a pitched battle was expected, Abijah, according to the singular usage of ancient times, harangued the enemy. The speakers in such circumstances, while always extolling their own merits, poured out torrents of invective and virulent abuse upon the adversary. So did Abijah. He dwelt on the divine right of the house of David to the throne; and sinking all reference to the heaven-condemned offenses of Solomon and the divine appointment of Jeroboam, as well as the divine sanction of the separation, he upbraided Jeroboam as a usurper, and his subjects as rebels, who took advantage of the youth and inexperience of Rehoboam. Then contrasting the religious state of the two kingdoms, he drew a black picture of the impious innovations and gross idolatry introduced by Jeroboam, with his expulsion and impoverishment (<sup><1414></sup>2 Chronicles 11:14) of the Levites. He dwelt with reasonable pride on the pure and regular observance of the ancient institutions of Moses in his own dominion (<sup><1431></sup>2 Chronicles 13:11) and concluded with this emphatic appeal: "O children of Israel, fight ye not against Jehovah, the God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper."

**13-17. *But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them*** — The oration of Abijah, however animating an effect it might have produced on his own troops, was unheeded by the party to whom it was addressed; for while he was wasting time in useless words, Jeroboam had ordered a detachment of his men to move quietly round the base of the hill, so that when Abijah stopped speaking, he and his followers found themselves surprised in the rear, while the main body of the Israelitish forces remained in front. A panic might have ensued, had not the leaders "cried unto the Lord," and the priests "sounded with the trumpets" — the pledge of victory (<sup><1010></sup>Numbers 10:9 31:6). Reassured by the well-known signal, the men of Judah responded with a war shout, which, echoed by the whole army, was followed by an impetuous rush against the foe. The shock was resistless. The ranks of the Israelites were broken, for "God smote Jeroboam and all Israel." They took to flight, and the merciless

slaughter that ensued can be accounted for only by tracing it to the rancorous passions enkindled by a civil war.

**19. *Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him*** — This sanguinary action widened the breach between the people of the two kingdoms. Abijah abandoned his original design of attempting the subjugation of the ten tribes, contenting himself with the recovery of a few border towns, which, though lying within Judah or Benjamin, had been alienated to the new or northern kingdom. Among these was Beth-el, which, with its sacred associations, he might be strongly desirous to wrest from profanation.

**20. *Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah*** — The disastrous action at Zemaraim, which caused the loss of the flower and chivalry of his army, broke his spirits and crippled his power.

***the Lord struck him, and he died*** — that is, Jeroboam. He lived, indeed, two years after the death of Abijah (<sup><114></sup>1 Kings 14:20 15:9). But he had been threatened with great calamities upon himself and his house, and it is apparently to the execution of these threatenings, which issued in his death, that an anticipatory reference is here made.

# CHAPTER 14

## 2 CHRONICLES 14:1-5.

### ASA DESTROYS IDOLATRY.

1. *In his days the land was quiet ten years* — This long interval of peace was the continued effect of the great battle of Zemaraim (compare <sup><1151></sup>1 Kings 15:11-14).

2. *Asa did that which was good and right* — (compare <sup><1154></sup>1 Kings 15:14). Still his character and life were not free from faults (2 Chronicles <sup><1407></sup>16:7,10,12).

3. *brake down the images* — of Baal (see on <sup><1304></sup>2 Chronicles 34:4; <sup><1307></sup>Leviticus 26:30).

*cut down the groves* — rather, “Asherim.”

5. *he took away ... the high places* — that is, those devoted to idolatrous rites.

*took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images* — All public objects and relics of idolatry in Jerusalem and other cities through his kingdom were destroyed; but those high places where God was worshipped under the figure of an ox, as at Beth-el, were allowed to remain (<sup><1154></sup>1 Kings 15:14); so far the reformation was incomplete.

## 2 CHRONICLES 14:6-8.

### HAVING PEACE, HE STRENGTHENS HIS KINGDOM WITH FORTS AND ARMIES.

6. *he built fenced cities in Judah* — (See on <sup><1152></sup>1 Kings 15:22).

**7. *while the land is yet before us*** — that is, while we have free and undisputed progress everywhere; no foe is near; but, as this happy time of peace may not last always and the kingdom is but small and weak, let us prepare suitable defenses in case of need. He had also an army of five hundred eighty thousand men. Judah furnished the heavily armed soldiers, and Benjamin the archers. This large number does not mean a body of professional soldiers, but all capable of bearing arms and liable to be called into service.

## 2 CHRONICLES 14:9-15.

### HE OVERCOMES ZERAH, AND SPOILS THE ETHIOPIANS.

**9. *there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian*** — This could not have been from Ethiopia south of the cataracts of the Nile, for in the reign of Osorkon I, successor of Shishak, no foreign army would have been allowed a free passage through Egypt. Zerah must, therefore, have been chief of the Cushites, or Ethiopians of Arabia, as they were evidently a nomad horde who had a settlement of tents and cattle in the neighborhood of Gerar.

***a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots*** — “Twenty camels employed to carry couriers upon them might have procured that number of men to meet in a short time. As Zerah was the aggressor, he had time to choose when he would summon these men and attack the enemy. Every one of these Cushite shepherds, carrying with them their own provisions of flour and water, as is their invariable custom, might have fought with Asa without eating a loaf of Zerah’s bread or drinking a pint of his water” [BRUCE, *Travels*].

**10. *Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array ... at Mareshah*** — one of the towns which Rehoboam fortified (<sup>4108</sup>2 Chronicles 11:8), near a great southern pass in the low country of Judah (<sup>6544</sup>Joshua 15:44). The engagement between the armies took place in a plain near the town, called “the valley of Zephathah,” supposed to be the broad way coming down Beit Jibrin towards Tell Es-Safren [ROBINSON].

**11-13. *Asa cried unto the Lord his God*** — Strong in the confidence that the power of God was able to give the victory equally with few as with many, the pious king marched with a comparatively small force to encounter the formidable host of marauders at his southern frontier. Committing his cause to God, he engaged in the conflict — completely routed the enemy, and succeeded in obtaining, as the reward of his victory, a rich booty in treasure and cattle from the tents of this pastoral horde.

# CHAPTER 15

## <4150> 2 CHRONICLES 15:1-15.

### JUDAH MAKES A SOLEMN COVENANT WITH GOD.

1. *Azariah the son of Oded* — This prophet, who is mentioned nowhere else, appears at this stage of the sacred story in the discharge of an interesting mission. He went to meet Asa, as he was returning from his victorious pursuit of the Ethiopians, and the congratulatory address here recorded was publicly made to the king in presence of his army.

2. *The Lord is with you, while ye be with him* — You have had, in your recent signal success, a remarkable proof that God's blessing is upon you; your victory has been the reward of your faith and piety. If you steadfastly adhere to the cause of God, you may expect a continuance of His favor; but if you abandon it, you will soon reap the bitter fruits of apostasy.

3-6. *Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God*, etc. — Some think that Azariah was referring to the sad and disastrous condition to which superstition and idolatry had brought the neighboring kingdom of Israel. His words should rather be taken in a wider sense, for it seems manifest that the prophet had his eye upon many periods in the national history, when the people were in the state described — a state of spiritual destitution and ignorance — and exhibited its natural result as widespread anarchy, mutual dissension among the tribes, and general suffering (<sup><0023></sup>Judges 9:23 <sup><0024></sup>12:4 <sup><0025></sup>20:21 <sup><4157></sup>2 Chronicles 13:17). These calamities God permitted to befall them as the punishment of their apostasy. Azariah's object in these remarks was to establish the truth of his counsel (<sup><4152></sup>2 Chronicles 15:2), threatening, in case of neglecting it by describing the uniform course of the divine procedure towards Israel, as shown in all periods of their history. Then after this appeal to national experience, he concluded with an earnest exhortation to the king to prosecute the work of reformation so well begun (<sup><4157></sup>2 Chronicles 15:7).



**7. *Be ye strong*** — Great resolution and indomitable energy would be required to persevere in the face of the opposition your reforming measures will encounter.

***your work shall be rewarded*** — What you do in the cause and for the glory of God will assuredly be followed by the happiest results both to yourself and your subjects.

**8. *when Asa heard ... the prophecy of Oded the prophet*** — The insertion of these words, “of Oded the prophet,” is generally regarded as a corruption of the text. “The sole remedy is to erase them. They are, probably, the remains of a note, which crept in from the margin into the text” [BERTHEAU].

***he took courage*** — Animated by the seasonable and pious address of Azariah, Asa became a more zealous reformer than ever, employing all his royal authority and influence to extirpate every vestige of idolatry from the land.

***and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim*** — He may have acquired cities of Ephraim, the conquest of which is not recorded (<sup><4170></sup>2 Chronicles 17:2); but it has been commonly supposed that the reference is to cities which his father Abijah had taken in that quarter (<sup><4439></sup>2 Chronicles 13:19).

***renewed the altar of the Lord ... before the porch*** — that is, the altar of burnt offering. As this was done on or about the fifteenth year of the reign of this pious king, the renewal must have consisted in some splendid repairs or embellishments, which made it look like a new dedication, or in a reconstruction of a temporary altar, like that of Solomon (<sup><4400></sup>2 Chronicles 7:7), for extraordinary sacrifices to be offered on an approaching occasion.

**9-15. *he gathered all Judah and Benjamin*** — Not satisfied with these minor measures of purification and improvement, Asa meditated a grand scheme which was to pledge his whole kingdom to complete the work of reformation, and with this in view he waited for a general assembly of the people.

***and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh*** — The population of Asa’s kingdom had been vastly increased by the continued

influx of strangers, who, prompted by motives either of interest or of piety, sought in his dominions that security and freedom which they could not enjoy amid the complicated troubles which distracted Israel.

*and out of Simeon* — Although a portion of that tribe, located within the territory of Judah, were already subjects of the southern kingdom, the general body of the Simeonites had joined in forming the northern kingdom of Israel. But many of them now returned of their own accord.

**10-14. *the third month*** — when was held the feast of pentecost. On this occasion, it was celebrated at Jerusalem by an extraordinary sacrifice of seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep, the spoil of the Ethiopians being offered. The assembled worshippers entered with great and holy enthusiasm into a national covenant; and, at the same time, to execute with rigor the laws which made idolatry punishable with death (<sup><14513></sup>2 Chronicles 15:13 <sup><15719></sup>Deuteronomy 17:2-5 <sup><16810></sup>Hebrews 10:2,8). The people testified unbounded satisfaction with this important religious movement, and its moral influence was seen in the promotion of piety, order, and tranquillity throughout the land.

**18. *the things that his father had dedicated*** — probably part of the booty obtained by his signal victory over Jeroboam, but which, though dedicated, had hitherto been unrepresented.

*and that he himself had dedicated* — of the booty taken from the Ethiopians. Both of these were now deposited in the temple as votive offerings to Him whose right hand and holy arm had given them the victory.

# CHAPTER 16

## <446> 2 CHRONICLES 16:1-14.

### ASA, BY A LEAGUE WITH THE SYRIANS, DIVERTS BAASHA FROM BUILDING RAMAH.

**1-6.** *In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha ... came up against Judah* — Baasha had died several years before this date (<sup><4153></sup>1 Kings 15:33), and the best biblical critics are agreed in considering this date to be calculated from the separation of the kingdoms, and coincident with the sixteenth year of Asa's reign. This mode of reckoning was, in all likelihood, generally followed in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel, the public annals of the time (<sup><4461></sup>2 Chronicles 16:11), the source from which the inspired historian drew his account.

*Baasha ... built Ramah* — that is, fortified it. The blessing of God which manifestly rested at this time on the kingdom of Judah, the signal victory of Asa, the freedom and purity of religious worship, and the fame of the late national covenant, were regarded with great interest throughout Israel, and attracted a constantly increasing number of emigrants to Judah. Baasha, alarmed at this movement, determined to stem the tide; and as the high road to and from Jerusalem passed by Ramah, he made that frontier town, about six miles north of Asa's capital, a military station, where the vigilance of his sentinels would effectually prevent all passage across the boundary of the kingdom (see on <sup><4156></sup>1 Kings 15:16-22; also <sup><3440></sup>Jeremiah 41:9).

**4.** *Ben-hadad ... sent the captains of his armies ... and they smote ... Abelmaim* — “The meadow of waters,” supposed to have been situated on the marshy plain near the uppermost lake of the Jordan. The other two towns were also in the northern district of Palestine. These unexpected hostilities of his Syrian ally interrupted Baasha's fortifications at Ramah, and his death, happening soon after, prevented his resuming them.

**7-10. *Hanani the seer came to Asa ... and said*** — His object was to show the king his error in forming his recent league with Ben-hadad. The prophet represented the appropriation of the temple treasures to purchase the services of the Syrian mercenaries, as indicating a distrust in God most blameable with the king's experience. He added, that in consequence of this want of faith, Asa had lost the opportunity of gaining a victory over the united forces of Baasha and Ben-hadad, more splendid than that obtained over the Ethiopians. Such a victory, by destroying their armies, would have deprived them of all power to molest him in the future; whereas by his foolish and worldly policy, so unworthy of God's vicegerent, to misapply the temple treasures and corrupt the fidelity of an ally of the king of Israel, he had tempted the cupidity of the one, and increased the hostility of the other, and rendered himself liable to renewed troubles (<sup><116></sup>1 Kings 15:32). This rebuke was pungent and, from its truth and justness, ought to have penetrated and afflicted the heart of such a man as Asa. But his pride was offended at the freedom taken by the honest reprove of royalty, and in a burst of passionate resentment, he ordered Hanani to be thrown into prison.

**10. *Asa oppressed some of the people the same time*** — The form or degree of this oppression is not recorded. The cause of his oppressing them was probably due to the same offense as that of Hanani — a strong expression of their dissatisfaction with his conduct in leaguings with Ben-hadad, or it may have been his maltreatment of the Lord's servant.

**12. *Asa ... was diseased in his feet*** — probably the gout.

***yet his disease was exceeding great*** — better, “moved upwards” in his body, which proves the violent and dangerous type of the malady.

***yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians*** — most probably Egyptian physicians, who were anciently in high repute at foreign courts, and who pretended to expel diseases by charms, incantations, and mystic arts. Asa's fault consisted in his trusting to such physicians, while he neglected to supplicate the aid and blessing of God. The best and holiest men have been betrayed for a time into sins, but through repentance have risen again; and as Asa is pronounced a good man (<sup><4157></sup>2 Chronicles 15:17), it may be presumed that he also was restored to a better state of mind.

**14. *they buried him in his own sepulchres*** — The tombs in the neighborhood of Jerusalem were excavated in the side of a rock. One cave contained several tombs or sepulchres.

***laid him in the bed ... filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices*** — It is evident that a sumptuous public funeral was given him as a tribute of respect and gratitude for his pious character and patriotic government. But whether “the bed” means a state couch on which he lay exposed to public view, the odoriferous perfumes being designed to neutralize the offensive smell of the corpse, or whether it refers to an embalmment, in which aromatic spices were always used in great profusion, it is impossible to say.

***they made a very great burning for him*** — according to some, for consuming the spices. According to others, it was a magnificent pile for the cremation of the corpse — a usage which was at that time, and long after, prevalent among the Hebrews, and the omission of which in the case of royal personages was reckoned a great indignity (<sup><401B></sup>2 Chronicles 21:19 <sup><0812></sup>1 Samuel 31:12 <sup><2815></sup>Jeremiah 34:5 <sup><3160></sup>Amos 6:10).

# CHAPTER 17

## <4470>2 CHRONICLES 17:1-6.

### JEHOSHAPHAT REIGNS WELL AND PROSPERS.

1. *Jehoshaphat ... strengthened himself against Israel* — The temper and proceedings of the kings of Israel rendered it necessary for him to prepare vigorous measures of defense on the northern frontier of his kingdom. These consisted in filling all the fortresses with their full complement of troops and establishing military stations in various parts of the country, as well as in the cities of Mount Ephraim, which belonged to Jehoshaphat (<4458>2 Chronicles 15:8).

3-5. *he walked in the first ways of his father David* — He imitated the piety of his great ancestor in the early part of his reign before he made those unhappy lapses which dishonored his character.

*and sought not unto Baalim* — a term used for idols generally in contradistinction to the Lord God of his father.

4. *and not after the doings of Israel* — He observed with scrupulous fidelity, and employed his royal influence to support the divine institutions as enacted by Moses, abhorring that spurious and unlawful calf-worship that now formed the established religion in Israel. Being thus far removed, alike from gross idolatry and Israelitish apostasy, and adhering zealously to the requirements of the divine law, the blessing of God rested on his government. Ruling in the fear of God, and for the good of his subjects, “the Lord established the kingdom in his hand.”

5. *all Judah brought ... presents* — This was customary with the people generally at the beginning of a reign (<4362>1 Samuel 10:27), and with the nobles and high functionaries yearly afterwards. They were given in the form of voluntary offerings, to avoid the odious idea of a tax or tribute.

**6. *his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord*** — Full of faith and piety, he possessed zeal and courage to undertake the reformation of manners, to suppress all the works and objects of idolatry (see on <sup><40B></sup>2 Chronicles 20:33), and he held out public encouragement to the pure worship of God.

## <sup><40C></sup>2 CHRONICLES 17:7-11.

### HE SENDS LEVITES TO TEACH IN JUDAH.

**7-11. *Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, ... to teach in the cities of Judah*** — The ordinary work of teaching devolved on the priests. But extraordinary commissioners were appointed, probably to ascertain whether the work had been done or neglected. This deputation of five princes, assisted by two priests and nine Levites, was to make a circuit of the towns in Judah. It is the first practical measure we read of as being adopted by any of the kings for the religious instruction of the people. Time and unbroken opportunities were afforded for carrying out fully this excellent plan of home education, for the kingdom enjoyed internal tranquillity as well as freedom for foreign wars. It is conformable to the pious style of the sacred historian to trace this profound peace to the “fear of the Lord having fallen on all kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah.”

**9. *the book of the law*** — that is, either the whole Pentateuch or only the book of Deuteronomy, which contains an abridgment of it.

**11. *Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver*** — either they had been his tributaries, or they were desirous of securing his valuable friendship, and now made a voluntary offer of tribute. Perhaps they were the Philistines who had submitted to the yoke of David (<sup><40D></sup>2 Samuel 8:1 <sup><40E></sup>Psalm 60:8).

***the Arabians*** — the nomad tribes on the south of the Dead Sea, who, seeking the protection of Jehoshaphat after his conquest of Edom, paid their tribute in the way most suitable to their pastoral habits — the present of so many head of cattle.

**2 CHRONICLES 17:12-19.****HIS GREATNESS, CAPTAINS, AND ARMIES.**

**14. *these are the numbers*** — The warriors were arranged in the army according to their fathers houses. The army of Jehoshaphat, commanded by five great generals and consisting of five unequal divisions, comprised one million one hundred and sixty thousand men, without including those who garrisoned the fortresses. No monarch, since the time of Solomon, equalled Jehoshaphat in the extent of his revenue, in the strength of his fortifications, and in the number of his troops.



# CHAPTER 18

## <del>1</del> 2 CHRONICLES 18:1-34.

### **JEHOSHAPHAT AND AHAB GO AGAINST RAMOTH-GILEAD.**

2. *after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria* — This is word for word, the same as <del>1</del> 1 Kings 22:1-53. (See commentary on that chapter).

# CHAPTER 19

## 2 CHRONICLES 19:1-4.

### JEHOSHAPHAT VISITS HIS KINGDOM.

**1-4. *Jehoshaphat ... returned to his house in peace*** — (See <sup><4816></sup>2 Chronicles 18:16). Not long after he had resumed the ordinary functions of royalty in Jerusalem, he was one day disturbed by an unexpected and ominous visit from a prophet of the Lord (<sup><4817></sup>2 Chronicles 19:2). This was Jehu, of whose father we read in <sup><4818></sup>2 Chronicles 16:7. He himself had been called to discharge the prophetic office in Israel. But probably for his bold rebuke to Baasha (<sup><4819></sup>1 Kings 16:1), he had been driven by that arbitrary monarch within the territory of Judah, where we now find him with the privileged license of his order, taking the same religious supervision of Jehoshaphat's proceedings as he had formerly done of Baasha's. At the interview here described, he condemned, in the strongest terms, the king of Judah's imprudent and incongruous league with Ahab — God's open enemy (<sup><4820></sup>1 Kings 22:2) — as an unholy alliance that would be conducive neither to the honor and comfort of his house nor to the best interests of his kingdom. He apprised Jehoshaphat that, on account of that grave offense, "wrath was upon him from before the Lord," a judgment that was inflicted soon after (see <sup><4821></sup>2 Chronicles 20:1). The prophet's rebuke, however, was administered in a mingled strain of severity and mildness; for he interposed "a nevertheless" (<sup><4822></sup>2 Chronicles 19:3), which implied that the threatened storm would be averted, in token of the divine approval of his public efforts for the promotion of the true religion, as well as of the sincere piety of his personal character and life.

**4. *he went out again through the people*** — This means his reappointing the commissioners of public instruction (<sup><4823></sup>2 Chronicles 17:7-9), perhaps with new powers and a larger staff of assistants to overtake every part of the land. The complement of teachers required for that purpose would be easily obtained because the whole tribe of Levites was now concentrated within the kingdom of Judah.

~~1496~~ 2 CHRONICLES 19:5-7.

## HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO THE JUDGES.

**5-7. *he set judges in the land*** — There had been judicial courts established at an early period. But Jehoshaphat was the first king who modified these institutions according to the circumstances of the now fragmentary kingdom of Judah. He fixed local courts in each of the fortified cities, these being the provincial capitals of every district (see on ~~1508~~ Deuteronomy 16:18).

~~1498~~ 2 CHRONICLES 19:8-11.

## TO THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

**8. *set of the Levites ... priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel*** — A certain number of these three classes constituted a supreme court, which sat in Jerusalem to review appellate cases from the inferior courts. It consisted of two divisions: the first of which had jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters; the second, in civil, fiscal, and criminal cases. According to others, the two divisions of the supreme court adjudicated: the one according to the law contained in the sacred books; the other according to the law of custom and equity. As in Eastern countries at the present day, the written and unwritten law are objects of separate jurisdiction.

# CHAPTER 20

## <del>2</del> 2 CHRONICLES 20:1-21.

### JEHOSHAPHAT, INVADED BY THE MOABITES, PROCLAIMS A FAST.

**1. *the children of Moab ... Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites*** — supposed to be rather the name of a certain people called Mohammonim or Mehunim (<sup><del>1</del></sup>2 Chronicles 26:7), who dwelt in Mount Seir — either a branch of the old Edomite race or a separate tribe who were settled there.

**2. *from beyond the sea on this side Syria*** — Instead of “Syria,” some versions read “Edom,” and many able critics prefer this reading, both because the nomad tribes here mentioned were far from Syria, and because express mention is made of Mount Seir, that is, Edom. The meaning then is: this confederate horde was composed of the different tribes that inhabited the far distant regions bordering on the northern and eastern coasts of the Red Sea. Their progress was apparently by the southern point of the Dead Sea, as far as En-gedi, which, more anciently, was called Hazon-tamar (<sup><del>1</del></sup>Genesis 14:7). This is the uniform route taken by the Arabs in their marauding expeditions at the present day; and in coming round the southern end of the Dead Sea, they can penetrate along the low-lying Ghor far north, without letting their movements be known to the tribes and villages west of the mountain chain [ROBINSON]. Thus, anciently, the invading horde in Jehoshaphat’s time had marched as far north as En-gedi, before intelligence of their advance was conveyed to the court. En-gedi is recognized in the modern Ainjidy and is situated at a point of the western shore, nearly equidistant from both extremities of the lake [ROBINSON].

**3, 4. *Jehoshaphat ... proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah*** — Alarmed by the intelligence and conscious of his total inability to repel this host of invaders, Jehoshaphat felt his only refuge was at the horns of the altar. He

resolved to employ the aid of his God, and, in conformity with this resolution, he summoned all his subjects to observe a solemn fast at the sanctuary. It was customary with the Hebrew kings to proclaim fasts in perilous circumstances, either in a city, a district, or throughout the entire kingdom, according to the greatness of the emergency. On this occasion, it was a universal fast, which extended to infants (<sup>402</sup>2 Chronicles 20:13; see also <sup>405</sup>Joel 2:15,16 <sup>400</sup>Jonah 3:7).

**5-13. *Jehoshaphat stood ... in the house of the Lord, before the new court*** — that is, the great or outer court (<sup>409</sup>2 Chronicles 4:9) called the new court, probably from having been at that time enlarged or beautified.

**6-12. *And said, O Lord God of our fathers*** — This earnest and impressive prayer embraces every topic and argument which, as king and representative of the chosen people, he could urge. Then it concludes with an earnest appeal to the justice of God to protect those who, without provocation, were attacked and who were unable to defend themselves against overwhelming numbers.

**14-18. *Then upon Jahaziel ... came the Spirit of the Lord*** — This prophet is not elsewhere mentioned, but his claim to the inspiration of a prophetic spirit was verified by the calm and distinct announcement he gave, both of the manner and the completeness of the deliverance he predicted.

**16. *they come up by the cliff of Ziz*** — This seems to have been nothing else than the present pass which leads northwards, by an ascent from Engedi to Jerusalem, issuing a little below Tekoa. The wilderness of Jeruel was probably the large flat district adjoining the desert of Tekoa, called El-Husasah, from a wady on its northern side [ROBINSON].

**18. *Jehoshaphat bowed his head ... and all Judah***, etc. — This attitude was expressive of reverence to God and His Word, of confidence in His promise, and thankfulness for so extraordinary a favor.

**19. *the Levites ... stood up to praise the Lord*** — doubtless by the king's command. Their anthem was sung with such a joyful acclaim as showed that they universally regarded the victory as already obtained.

**20, 21. *as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood ... Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem*** — probably in the gate of Jerusalem, the place of general rendezvous; and as the people were on the eve of setting out, he exhorted them to repose implicit trust in the Lord and His prophet, not to be timid or desponding at sight of the enemy, but to remain firm in the confident assurance of a miraculous deliverance, without their striking a single stroke.

**21. *he appointed singers ... that they should praise ... as they went out before the army*** — Having arranged the line of procession, he gave the signal to move forwards. The Levites led the van with their musical instruments; and singing the 136th Psalm, the people went on, not as an army marching against an enemy, but returning in joyful triumph after a victory.

## 2 CHRONICLES 20:22-30.

### THE OVERTHROW OF HIS ENEMIES.

**22. *when they began to sing and to praise the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir*** — Some think that this was done by angels in human form, whose sudden appearance diffused an uncontrollable panic. Others entertain the more probable opinion that, in the camp of this vast horde, composed of different tribes, jealousies and animosities had sprung up, which led to widespread dissensions and fierce feuds, in which they drew the sword against each other. The consequence was, that as the mutual strife commenced when the Hebrew procession set out from Jerusalem, the work of destruction was completed before Jehoshaphat and his people arrived at the battlefield. Thus easy is it for God to make the wrath of man to praise Him, to confound the counsels of His enemies and employ their own passions in defeating the machinations they have devised for the overthrow of His Church and people.

**24-26. *when Judah came toward the watchtower in the wilderness*** — Most probably the conical hill, Jebel Fereidis, or Frank Mountain, from the summit of which they obtained the first view of the scene of slaughter.

Jehoshaphat and his people found the field strewn with dead bodies, so that they had not to fight at all, but rather to take possession of an immense booty, the collection of which occupied three days. On the fourth they set out on their return to Jerusalem in the same order and joyful mood as they came. The place where they mustered previous to departure was, from their public thanksgiving service, called, “The Valley of Berachah” (“benediction”), now Wady Bereikut.

## 2 CHRONICLES 20:31-37.

### HIS REIGN.

**31. *Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah*** — (See <sup><420></sup>2 Chronicles 24:1).

**32. *walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it*** — He was more steadfast and consistently religious (compare <sup><458></sup>2 Chronicles 15:18).

**33. *the high places were not taken away*** — Those on which idolatry was practiced were entirely destroyed (<sup><470></sup>2 Chronicles 17:6); but those where the people, notwithstanding the erection of the temple, continued to worship the true God, prudence required to be slowly and gradually abolished, in deference to popular prejudice.

**35-37. *after this did Jehoshaphat ... join himself with Ahaziah ... to make ships*** — A combined fleet was built at Ezion-geber, the destination of which was to voyage to Tartessus, but it was wrecked. Jehoshaphat's motive for entering into this partnership was to secure a free passage through Israel, for the vessels were to be conveyed across the Isthmus of Suez, and to sail to the west of Europe from one of the ports of Palestine on the Mediterranean. Eliezer, a prophet, denounced this unholy alliance, and foretold, as divine judgment, the total wreck of the whole fleet. The consequence was, that although Jehoshaphat broke off — in obedience to the divine will — his league with Ahaziah, he formed a new scheme of a merchant fleet, and Ahaziah wished to be admitted a partner [<sup><128></sup>1 Kings 22:48]. The proposal of the Israelitish king was respectfully declined [<sup><129></sup>1 Kings 22:49]. The destination of this new fleet was to Ophir, because the

Israelitish seaports were not accessible to him for the Tartessus trade; but the ships, when just off the docks, were wrecked in the rocky creek of Ezion-geber.



# CHAPTER 21

## <420> 2 CHRONICLES 21:1-4.

### JEHORAM SUCCEEDS JEHOSEPHAT.

**1-4. *Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers ... Jehoram ... reigned*** — The late king left seven sons; two of them are in our version named Azariah; but in the Hebrew they appear considerably different, the one being spelt “Azariah,” and the other “Azariahu.” Though Jehoshaphat had made his family arrangements with prudent precaution, and while he divided the functions of royalty in his lifetime (compare <420> 2 Kings 8:16), as well as fixed the succession to the throne in his oldest son, he appointed each of the others to the government of a fenced city, thus providing them with an honorable independence. But this good intentions were frustrated; for no sooner did Jehoram find himself in the sole possession of sovereign power than, from jealousy, or on account of their connections, he murdered all his brothers, together with some leading influential persons who, he suspected, were attached to their interest, or would avenge their deaths. Similar tragedies have been sadly frequent in Eastern courts, where the heir of the crown looks upon his brothers as his most formidable enemies, and is therefore tempted to secure his power by their death.

## <420> 2 CHRONICLES 21:5-7.

### HIS WICKED REIGN.

**6, 7. *he walked ... as did the house of Ahab, for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife*** — The precepts and examples of his excellent father were soon obliterated by his matrimonial alliance with a daughter of the royal house of Israel. Through the influence of Athaliah he abolished the worship of the Lord, and encouraged an introduction of all the corruptions prevalent in the sister kingdom. The divine vengeance was denounced

against him, and would have utterly destroyed him and his house, had it not been for a tender regard to the promise made to David (<sup><1029></sup>2 Samuel 7:29 <sup><1189></sup>2 Kings 8:19).

## <sup><1218></sup>2 CHRONICLES 21:8-17.

### EDOM AND LIBNAH REVOLT.

**8-10. *the Edomites revolted*** — That nation had been made dependent by David, and down to the time of Jehoshaphat was governed by a tributary ruler (<sup><1227></sup>1 Kings 22:47 <sup><1230></sup>2 Kings 3:9). But that king having been slain in an insurrection at home, his successor thought to ingratiate himself with his new subjects by raising the flag of independence [JOSEPHUS]. The attempt was defeated in the first instance by Jehoram, who possessed all the military establishments of his father; but being renewed unexpectedly, the Edomites succeeded in completely emancipating their country from the yoke of Judah (<sup><1274></sup>Genesis 27:40). Libnah, which lay on the southern frontier and towards Edom, followed the example of that country.

**12-15. *there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet*** — That prophet's translation having taken place in the reign of Jehoshaphat [<sup><1211></sup>2 Kings 2:11,12], we must conclude that the name of Elijah has, by the error of a transcriber, been put for that of Elisha.

**13-19. *hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem ... like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab*** — that is, introduced the superstitions and vices of Phoenician idolatry (see on <sup><1536></sup>Deuteronomy 13:6-14). On this account, as well as for his unnatural cruelties, divine vengeance was denounced against him, which was soon after executed exactly as the prophet had foretold. A series of overwhelming calamities befell this wicked king; for in addition to the revolts already mentioned, two neighboring tribes (see <sup><1471></sup>2 Chronicles 17:11) made hostile incursions on the southern and western portions of his kingdom. His country was ravaged, his capital taken, his palace plundered, his wives carried off, and all his children slain except the youngest. He himself was seized with an incurable dysentery, which, after subjecting him to the most painful suffering for the unusual period of two years, carried him off, a monument

of the divine judgment. To complete his degradation, his death was unlamented, his burial unhonored by his subjects. This custom, similar to what obtained in Egypt, seems to have crept in among the Hebrews, of giving funeral honors to their kings, or withholding them, according to the good or bad characters of their reign.

# CHAPTER 22

## 2 CHRONICLES 22:1-9.

### AHAZIAH SUCCEEDING JEHORAM, REIGNS WICKEDLY.

**1. *the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah ... king*** — or Jehoahaz (<sup><4217></sup>2 Chronicles 21:17). All his older brothers having been slaughtered by the Arab marauders, the throne of Judah rightfully belonged to him as the only legitimate heir.

**2. *Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign*** — (Compare <sup><11817></sup>2 Kings 8:26). According to that passage, the commencement of his reign is dated in the twenty-second year of his age, and, according to this, in the forty-second year of the kingdom of his mother's family [LIGHTFOOT]. "If Ahaziah ascended the throne in the twenty-second year of his life, he must have been born in his father's nineteenth year. Hence, it may seem strange that he had older brothers; but in the East they marry early, and royal princes had, besides the wife of the first rank, usually concubines, as Jehoram had (<sup><4217></sup>2 Chronicles 21:17); he might, therefore, in the nineteenth year of his age, very well have several sons" [KEIL] (compare <sup><4217></sup>2 Chronicles 21:20 <sup><11817></sup>2 Kings 8:17).

***Athaliah the daughter of Omri*** — more properly, "granddaughter." The expression is used loosely, as the statement was made simply for the purpose of intimating that she belonged to that idolatrous race.

**3, 4. *his mother was his counsellor ... they were his counsellors*** — The facile king surrendered himself wholly to the influence of his mother and her relatives. Athaliah and her son introduced a universal corruption of morals and made idolatry the religion of the court and the nation. By them he was induced not only to conform to the religion of the northern kingdom, but to join a new expedition against Ramoth-gilead (see <sup><1190></sup>2 Kings 9:10).

**5. *went ... to war against Hazael, king of Syria*** — It may be mentioned as a very minute and therefore important confirmation of this part of the sacred history that the names of Jehu and Hazael, his contemporary, have both been found on Assyrian sculptures; and there is also a notice of Ithbaal, king of Sidon, who was the father of Jezebel.

**6. *Azariah went down*** — that is, from Ramoth-gilead, to visit the king of Israel, who was lying ill of his wounds at Jezreel, and who had fled there on the alarm of Jehu's rebellion.

**9. *he sought Ahaziah, and they caught him (for he was hid in Samaria)*** — (compare <sup><112></sup>2 Kings 9:27-29). The two accounts are easily reconciled. "Ahaziah fled first to the garden house and escaped to Samaria; but was here, where he had hid himself, taken by Jehu's men who pursued him, brought to Jehu, who was still near or in Jezreel, and at his command slain at the hill Gur, beside Ibleam, in his chariot; that is, mortally wounded with an arrow, so that he, again fleeing, expired at Megiddo" [KEIL]. Jehu left the corpse at the disposal of the king of Judah's attendants, who conveyed it to Jerusalem, and out of respect to his grandfather Jehoshaphat's memory, gave him an honorable interment in the tombs of the kings.

***So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom*** — His children were too young to assume the reins of government, and all the other royal princes had been massacred by Jehu ( <sup><121></sup>2 Chronicles 22:8).

## <sup><121></sup>2 CHRONICLES 22:10-12.

### ATHALIAH, DESTROYING THE SEED ROYAL SAVE JOASH, USURPS THE KINGDOM.

**10. *Athaliah ... arose and destroyed all the seed royal*** — (See on <sup><211></sup>2 Kings 11:1-3). Maddened by the massacre of the royal family of Ahab, she resolved that the royal house of David should have the same fate. Knowing the commission which Jehu had received to extirpate the whole of Ahab's posterity, she expected that he would extend his sword to her. Anticipating his movements, she resolved, as her only defense and

security, to usurp the throne and destroy “the seed royal,” both because they were hostile to the Phoenician worship of Baal, which she was determined to uphold, and because, if one of the young princes became king, his mother would supersede Athaliah in the dignity of queen mother.

**12. *he was with them hid in the house of God*** — Certain persons connected with the priesthood had a right to occupy the buildings in the outer wall, and all within the outer wall was often called the temple. Jehoiada and his family resided in one of these apartments.

# CHAPTER 23

## <1210> 2 CHRONICLES 23:1-11.

### JEHOIADA MAKES JOASH KING.

1. *in the seventh year Jehoiada ... took the captains of hundreds*, etc. — (See on <1210> 2 Kings 11:4; <1211> 2 Kings 11:17). The five officers mentioned here had been probably of the royal guard, and were known to be — Strongly disaffected to the government of Athaliah.

2. *chief of all the fathers of Israel* — This name is frequently used in Chronicles for Judah and Benjamin, now all that remained of Israel. Having cautiously entrusted the secret of the young prince's preservation to all the leading men in the kingdom, he enlisted their interest in the royal cause and got their pledge to support it by a secret oath of fidelity.

*they came to Jerusalem* — The time chosen for the grand discovery was, probably, one of the annual festivals, when there was a general concourse of the nation at the capital.

4-9. *This is the thing that ye shall do* — The arrangements made for defense are here described. The people were divided into three bodies; one attended as guards to the king, while the other two were posted at all the doors and gates, and the captains and military officers who entered the temple unarmed to lull suspicion, were furnished with weapons out of the sacred armory, where David had deposited his trophies of victory and which was reopened on this occasion.

8. *Jehoiada ... dismissed not the courses* — As it was necessary to have as large a disposable force as he could command on such a crisis, the high priest detained those who, in other circumstances, would have returned home on the expiry of their week of service.

11. *Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony* — Some think that the original word rendered

“testimony,” as its derivation warrants, may signify here the regalia, especially the bracelet (<sup><4012></sup>2 Samuel 1:10); and this view they support on the ground that “gave him” being supplemented, the text properly runs thus, “put upon him the crown and testimony.” At the same time, it seems equally pertinent to take “the testimony” in the usual acceptance of that term; and, accordingly, many are of opinion that a roll containing a copy of the law (<sup><4178></sup>Deuteronomy 17:18) was placed in the king’s hands, which he held as a scepter or truncheon. Others, referring to a custom of Oriental people, who when receiving a letter or document from a highly respected quarter, lift it up to their heads before opening it, consider that Joash, besides the crown, had the book of the law laid upon his head (see <sup><4315></sup>Job 31:35,36).

*God save the king* — literally, “Long live the king.”

## <sup><4212></sup>2 CHRONICLES 23:12-15.

### ATHALIAH SLAIN.

**12. *Athaliah heard the noise of the people*** — The unusual commotion, indicated by the blast of the trumpets and the vehement acclamations of the people, drew her attention, or excited her fears. She might have flattered herself that, having slain all the royal family, she was in perfect security; but it is just as likely that, finding on reflection, one had escaped her murderous hands, she might not deem it expedient to institute any enquiries; but the very idea would keep her constantly in a state of jealous suspicion and irritation. In that state of mind, the wicked usurper, hearing across the Tyropoeon the outburst of popular joy, rushed across the bridge to the temple grounds, and, penetrating from a single glance the meaning of the whole scene, raised a shriek of “Treason!”

**13. *behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in*** — The king’s pillar was in the people’s court, opposite that of the priests’. The young king, arrayed in the royal insignia, had been brought out of the inner, to stand forth in the outer court, to the public view. Some think that he stood on the brazen scaffold of Solomon, erected beside the pillar [see on <sup><4162></sup>2 Chronicles 6:13].



**14, 15. *Slay her not in the house of the Lord ... and when she was come to the entering of the horse gate by the king's house, they slew her there***

— The high priest ordered her immediately to be taken out of the temple grounds and put to death. “And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain” (<sup><2116></sup>2 Kings 11:16). “Now, we are not to suppose that horses came into [the king's house] of residence, but into the king's (horses') house or hippodrome (the gate of the king's mules) [JOSEPHUS], he had built for them on the southeast of the temple, in the immediate vicinity of the horse gate in the valley of Kedron — a valley which was at that time a kind of desecrated place by the destruction of idols and their appurtenances” (<sup><2210></sup>2 Kings 23:2,6,12) [BARCLAY, *City of the Great King*].

## <sup><4236></sup>2 CHRONICLES 23:16.

### JEHOIADA RESTORES THE WORSHIP OF GOD, AND SETTLES THE KING.

**16. *Jehoiada made a covenant*** — (See on <sup><2117></sup>2 Kings 11:17).

## CHAPTER 24

### <DMS> 2 CHRONICLES 24:1-14.

#### JOASH REIGNS WELL ALL THE DAYS OF JEHOIADA.

1-3. *Joash ... began to reign* — (See on <DMS> 2 Kings 12:1-3).

3. *Jehoiada took for him two wives* — As Jehoiada was now too old to contract such new alliances, the generality of interpreters apply this statement to the young king.

4-14. *Joash was minded to repair the house of the Lord* — (See on <DMS> 2 Kings 12:4-16).

### <DMS> 2 CHRONICLES 24:15,16.

#### JEHOIADA BEING DEAD.

15, 16. *Jehoiada waxed old ... and died* — His life, protracted to unusual longevity and spent in the service of his country, deserved some tribute of public gratitude, and this was rendered in the posthumous honors that were bestowed on him. Among the Hebrews, intramural interment was prohibited in every city but Jerusalem, and there the exception was made only to the royal family and persons of eminent merit, on whom the distinction was conferred of being buried in the city of David, among the kings, as in the case of Jehoiada.

### <DMS> 2 CHRONICLES 24:17-22.

#### JOASH FALLS INTO IDOLATRY.

17-22. *Now came the princes of Judah, and make obeisance to the king* — Hitherto, while Joash occupied the throne, his uncle had held the reins

of sovereign power, and by his excellent counsels had directed the young king to such measures as were calculated to promote both the civil and religious interests of the country. The fervent piety, practical wisdom, and inflexible firmness of that sage counsellor exerted immense influence over all classes. But now that the helm of the state-ship was no longer steered by the sound head and firm hand of the venerable high priest, the real merits of Joash's administration appear; and for want of good and enlightened principle, as well as, perhaps, of natural energy of character, he allowed himself to be borne onward in a course which soon wrecked the vessel upon hidden rocks.

*the king hearkened unto them* — They were secretly attached to idolatry, and their elevated rank affords sad proof how extensively and deeply the nation had become corrupted during the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah. With strong professions of allegiance they humbly requested that they might not be subjected to the continued necessity of frequent and expensive journeys to Jerusalem, but allowed the privilege their fathers had enjoyed of worshipping God in high places at home. They framed their petition in this plausible and least offensive manner, well knowing that, if excused attendance at the temple, they might — without risk of discovery or disturbance — indulge their tastes in the observance of any private rites they pleased. The weak-minded king granted their petition; and the consequence was, that when they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, they soon “served groves and idols.”

**18. *wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem*** — The particular mention of Jerusalem as involved in the sin implies that the neglect of the temple and the consequent idolatry received not only the king's toleration, but his sanction; and it naturally occurs to ask how, at his mature age, such a total abandonment of a place with which all his early recollections were associated can be accounted for. It has been suggested that what he had witnessed of the conduct of many of the priests in the careless performance of the worship, and especially their unwillingness to collect the money, as well as apply a portion of their revenues for the repairs of the temple, had alienated and disgusted him [LE CLERC].

**19. *Yet he sent prophets*** — Elisha, Micah, Jehu son of Hanani, Jahaziel son of Zechariah (<sup>404</sup>2 Chronicles 20:14), Eliezer son of Dodavah (<sup>405</sup>2 Chronicles 20:37), lived and taught at that time. But all their prophetic warnings and denunciations were unheeded.

**20, 21. *the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada*** — probably a younger son, for his name does not occur in the list of Aaron's successors (<sup>406</sup>1 Chronicles 6:4-47).

***stood above the people*** — Being of the priestly order, he spoke from the inner court, which was considerably higher than that of the people.

***and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper, etc.*** — His near relationship to the king might have created a feeling of delicacy and reluctance to interfere; but at length he, too, was prompted by an irresistible impulse to protest against the prevailing impiety. The bold freedom and energy of [Zechariah's] remonstrance, as well as his denunciation of the national calamities that would certainly follow, were most unpalatable to the king; while they so roused the fierce passions of the multitude that a band of miscreants, at the secret instigation of Joash, stoned him to death. This deed of violence involved complicated criminality on the part of the king. It was a horrid outrage on a prophet of the Lord — base ingratitude to a family who had preserved his life — atrocious treatment of a true Hebrew patriot — an illegal and unrighteous exercise of his power and authority as a king.

**22. *when he died, he said, The Lord look upon it and require it*** — These dying words, if they implied a vindictive imprecation, exhibit a striking contrast to the spirit of the first Christian martyr (<sup>407</sup>Acts 7:60). But, instead of being the expression of a personal wish, they might be the utterance of a prophetic doom.

## 2 CHRONICLES 24:23-27.

### HE IS SLAIN BY HIS SERVANTS.

**23. *at the end of the year the host of Syria came up*** — This invasion took place under the personal conduct of Hazael, whom Joash, to save the miseries of a siege, prevailed on to withdraw his forces by a large present of gold (<sup>2</sup> Kings 12:18). Most probably, also, he promised the payment of an annual tribute, on the neglect or refusal of which the Syrians returned the following year, and with a mere handful of men inflicted a total and humiliating defeat on the collected force of the Hebrews.

**25. *they left him in great diseases*** — The close of his life was embittered by a painful malady, which long confined him to bed.

***his own servants conspired against him*** — These two conspirators (whose fathers were Jews, but their mothers aliens) were probably courtiers, who, having constant access to the bedchamber, could the more easily execute their design.

***for the blood of the sons*** — read “the son” of Jehoiada. Public opinion seems to have ascribed the disasters of his life and reign to that foul crime. And as the king had long lost the esteem and respect of his subjects, neither horror nor sorrow was expressed for his miserable end!

# CHAPTER 25

## ~~420~~ 2 CHRONICLES 25:1-4.

### AMAZIAH BEGINS TO REIGN WELL.

1. *Amaziah was twenty and five years old*, etc. — (See ~~240~~ 2 Kings 14:1-6).

## ~~425~~ 2 CHRONICLES 25:5-10.

### HAVING HIRED AN ARMY OF ISRAELITES AGAINST THE EDOMITES, AT THE WORD OF A PROPHET HE LOSES A HUNDRED TALENTS AND DISMISSES THEM.

5. *Amaziah ... made captains*, etc. — As all who were capable of bearing arms were liable to serve, it was quite natural in making up the muster-roll to class them according to their respective families and to appoint the officers of each corps from the same quarter; so that all the soldiers who formed a regiment were brothers, relatives, friends. Thus the Hebrew troops were closely linked together, and had strong inducements to keep steady in their ranks.

*found them three hundred thousand choice men* — This was only a fourth part of Jehoshaphat's army (~~474~~ 2 Chronicles 17:14-19), showing how sadly the kingdom of Judah had, in the space of eighty-two years, been reduced in population by foreign wars, no less than by internal corruptions. But the full amount of Amaziah's troops may not be here stated.

6. *He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valor ... for an hundred talents of silver* — This sum was paid into the treasury of Jehoahaz — not given as bounty to the mercenaries who were obliged to serve at the sovereign's call; their remuneration consisting only in the booty they might obtain. It was about \$170,000 in our currency, or \$17

per man, including officers — a very paltry pay, compared with the bounty given for a soldier in this country. But it must be remembered that in ancient times campaigns were short and the hazards of the service comparatively small.

**7, 8. *there came a man of God*** — sent to dissuade Amaziah from the course he was following, on the ground that “the Lord is not with Israel.” This statement was perfectly intelligible to the king. But the historian, writing long after, thought it might require explanation, and therefore added the comment, “with all the children of Ephraim.” Idolatry had long been the prevailing religion in that kingdom, and Ephraim its headquarters. As to the other part of the prophet’s advice (<sup><4238></sup>2 Chronicles 25:8), considerable obscurity hangs over it, as the text stands; and hence some able critics have suggested the insertion of “not” in the middle clause, so that the verse will be thus: “But if thou wilt go [alone], do, be strong for the battle; God shall *not* make thee fall before the enemy.”

**10. *separated them ... the army ... out of Ephraim ... their anger was greatly kindled against Judah*** — Amaziah, who knew his position as the Lord’s viceroy, complied with the prophet’s counsel, and, consenting to forfeit the purchase money of the Israelitish soldiers, discharged them. Exasperated at this treatment, they resolved to indemnify themselves for the loss of their expected booty, and so on their return home they plundered all the towns in their way, committing great havoc both of life and property without any stoppage, as the king of Judah and his army had set out on their expedition (<sup><12418></sup>2 Kings 14:7).

**11. *valley of salt*** — This ravine lies to the south of the Dead Sea. The arms of Amaziah, in reward for his obedience to the divine will, were crowned with victory — ten thousand of the Edomites were slain on the field, and as many taken prisoners, who were put to death by precipitation “from the top of the rock” [<sup><4252></sup>2 Chronicles 25:12]. This rock might be situated in the neighborhood of the battlefield, but more probably it formed one of the high craggy cliffs of Selah (Petra), the capital of the Edomites, whither Amaziah marched directly from the Valley of Salt, and which he captured (<sup><12418></sup>2 Kings 14:7). The savage cruelty dealt out to them was either in retaliation for similar barbarities inflicted on the Hebrews, or to strike terror into so rebellious a people for the future. The mode of

execution, by dashing against stones (<sup>4570</sup>Psalm 137:9), was common among many ancient nations.

**14-16. *Amaziah ... brought the gods of the children of Seir*** — The Edomites worshipped the sun under different forms and with various rites. But burning incense upon altars was a principal act of worship, and this was the very thing Amaziah is described as having with strange infatuation performed. Whether he had been captivated with the beauty of the images, or hoped by honoring the gods to disarm their spite at him for his conquest and harsh treatment of their votaries, his conduct in establishing these objects of religious homage in Jerusalem was foolish, ignorant, and highly offensive to God, who commissioned a prophet to rebuke him for his apostasy, and threaten him with the calamity that soon after befell him.

**16. *as he talked with him***, etc. — Those who were invested with the prophetic character were entitled to counsel kings. Amaziah, had he not been offended by unwelcome truths, would have admitted the claim of this prophet, who was probably the same that had given him counsel previous to the war with Edom. But victory had elated and blinded him.

## <sup>4576</sup>2 CHRONICLES 25:17.

### HE PROVOKES JOASH TO HIS OVERTHROW.

**17. *Then Amaziah ... sent to Joash ... Come, let us see one another in the face*** — (See on <sup>4248</sup>2 Kings 14:8-20).



# CHAPTER 26

## 2 CHRONICLES 26:1-8.

### UZZIAH SUCCEEDS AMAZIAH AND REIGNS WELL IN THE DAYS OF ZECHARIAH.

1. *Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah* — (See on <sup><1240></sup>2 Kings 14:21; <sup><261></sup>2 Kings 15:1).

2. *He built Eloth* — or, “He it was who built Eloth.” The account of the fortifications of this port on the Red Sea, which Uzziah restored to the kingdom of Judah (<sup><4613></sup>2 Chronicles 33:13), is placed before the chronological notices (<sup><1013></sup>2 Chronicles 26:3), either on account of the importance attached to the conquest of Eloth, or from the desire of the historian to introduce Uzziah as the king, who was known as the conqueror of Eloth. Besides, it indicates that the conquest occurred in the early part of his reign, that it was important as a port, and that Hebrew merchants maintained the old trade between it and the countries of the East [BERTHEAU].

5. *he sought God in the days of Zechariah* — a wise and pious counsellor, who was skilled in understanding the meaning and lessons of the ancient prophecies, and who wielded a salutary influence over Uzziah.

6, 7. *he went forth and warred against the Philistines* — He overcame them in many engagements — dismantled their towns, and erected fortified cities in various parts of the country, to keep them in subjection.

*Jabneh* — the same as Jabneel (<sup><6511></sup>Joshua 15:11).

7. *Gur-baal* — thought by some to be Gerar, and by others Gebal.

8. *the Ammonites gave gifts* — The countries east of the Jordan became tributary to him, and by the rapid succession and extent of his victories, his kingdom was extended to the Egyptian frontier.

## 2 CHRONICLES 26:9,10.

### HIS BUILDINGS.

**9. *Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem,*** etc. — whence resistance could be made, or missiles discharged against assailants. The sites of the principal of these towers were: at the corner gate (<sup>4023</sup>2 Chronicles 25:23), the northwest corner of the city; at the valley gate on the west, where the Joppa gate now is; at the “turning” — a curve in the city wall on the eastern side of Zion. The town, at this point, commanded the horse gate which defended Zion and the temple hill on the southeast [BERTHEAU].

**10. *Also he built towers in the desert*** — for the threefold purpose of defense, of observation, and of shelter to his cattle. He dug also a great many wells, for he loved and encouraged all branches of agriculture. Some of these “were in the desert,” that is, in the district to the southeast of Jerusalem, on the west of the Dead Sea, an extensive grazing district “in the low country” lying between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean; “and in the plains,” east of the Jordan, within the territory of Reuben (<sup>6946</sup>Deuteronomy 4:43 <sup>4318</sup>Joshua 20:8).

***in Carmel*** — This mountain, being within the boundary of Israel, did not belong to Uzziah; and as it is here placed in opposition to the vine-bearing mountains, it is probably used, not as a proper name, but to signify, as the word denotes, “fruitful fields” (*Margin*).

## 2 CHRONICLES 26:11-15.

### HIS HOST, AND ENGINES OF WAR.

**11-15. *an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands*** — He raised a strong body of militia, divided into companies or regiments of uniform size, which served in rotation. The enumeration was performed by two functionaries expert in the drawing up of military muster-rolls, under the superintendence of Hananiah, one of the high officers of the crown. The army consisted of 307,500 picked men, under the command of two thousand gallant officers, chiefs or heads of fathers’ houses, so that

each fathers house formed a distinct band. They were fully equipped with every kind of military accoutrements, from brazen helmets, a habergeon or coat of mail, to a sling for stones.

**15. *he made ... engines, invented by cunning men ... to shoot arrows and great stones*** — This is the first notice that occurs in history of the use of machines for throwing projectiles. The invention is apparently ascribed to the reign of Uzziah, and PLINY expressly says they originated in Syria.

***he was marvellously helped till he was strong*** — He conducted himself as became the viceroy of the Divine King, and prospered.

## ~~<1336>~~ 2 CHRONICLES 26:16-21.

### HE INVADES THE PRIEST'S OFFICE, AND IS SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY.

**16-21. *he transgressed against the Lord***, etc. — (See on ~~<1315>~~ 2 Kings 15:5). This daring and wicked act is in both records traced to the intoxicating influence of overweening pride and vanity. But here the additional circumstances are stated, that his entrance was opposed, and strong remonstrances made (~~<1310>~~ 1 Chronicles 6:10) by the high priest, who was accompanied by eighty inferior priests. Rage and threats were the only answers he deigned to return, but God took care to vindicate the sacredness of the priestly office. At the moment the king lifted the censer, He struck him with leprosy. The earthquake mentioned (~~<3000>~~ Amos 1:1) is said to have been felt at the moment [JOSEPHUS].

**21. *dwelt in a several house*** — in an infirmary [BERTHEAU].

**23. *they buried him ... in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings*** — He was interred not in, but near, the sepulcher of the kings, as the corpse of a leper would have polluted it.

# CHAPTER 27

## 2 CHRONICLES 27:1-4.

### JOTHAM, REIGNING WELL, PROSPERS.

1. *Jotham was twenty and five years old* — (See on <sup><1253></sup>2 Kings 15:32-35).

*His mother's name ... Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok* — or descendant of the famous priest of that name [<sup><1087></sup>2 Samuel 8:17].

2. *he did that which was right* — The general rectitude of his government is described by representing it as conducted on the excellent principles which had guided the early part of his father's reign.

*the people did yet corruptly* — (See <sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:35); but the description here is more emphatic, that though Jotham did much to promote the good of his kingdom and aimed at a thorough reformation in religion, the widespread and inveterate wickedness of the people frustrated all his laudable efforts.

3. *He built the high gate of the house of the Lord* — situated on the north — that portion of the temple hill which was high compared with the southern part — hence “the higher,” or upper gate (see on <sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:35).

*and on the wall of Ophel* — *Hebrew*, “the Ophel,” that is, the mound, or eminence on the southeastern slope of the temple mount, a ridge lying between the valleys Kedron and Tyropoeon, called “the lower city” [JOSEPHUS]. He

*built much* — having the same desire as his father to secure the defense of Jerusalem in every direction.

4. *in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers* — that is, in the elevated and wooded spots where fortified cities could not be placed, he erected castles and towers.

**2 CHRONICLES 27:5.****HE SUBDUES THE AMMONITES.**

**5. *He fought also with the king of the Ammonites*** — This invasion he not only repelled, but, pursuing the Ammonites into their own territory, he imposed on them a yearly tribute, which, for two years, they paid. But when Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, combined to attack the kingdom of Judah, they took the opportunity of revolting, and Jotham was too distracted by other matters to attempt the reconquest (see on **2 Kings 15:37**).

## CHAPTER 28

### <del>2</del> 2 CHRONICLES 28:1-21.

#### AHAZ, REIGNING WICKEDLY, IS AFFLICTED BY THE SYRIANS.

**1-4. *Ahaz was twenty years old*** — (See on <del>2</del> Kings 16:1-4). This prince, discarding the principles and example of his excellent father, early betrayed a strong bias to idolatry. He ruled with an arbitrary and absolute authority, and not as a theocratic sovereign: he not only forsook the temple of God, but embraced first the symbolic worship established in the sister kingdom, and afterwards the gross idolatry practiced by the Canaanites.

**5-7. *the Lord ... delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria ... he was also delivered into the hand of the King of Israel*** — These verses, without alluding to the formation of a confederacy between the Syrian and Israelitish kings to invade the kingdom of Judah, or relating the commencement of the war in the close of Jotham's reign (<del>2</del> Kings 15:37), give the issue only of some battles that were fought in the early part of the campaign.

***delivered him ... smote him ... he was also delivered*** — that is, his army, for Ahaz was not personally included in the number either of the slain or the captives. The slaughter of one hundred twenty thousand in one day was a terrible calamity, which, it is expressly said, was inflicted as a judgment on Judah, “because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers.” Among the slain were some persons of distinction:

**7. *Maaseiah the king's son*** — the sons of Ahaz being too young to take part in a battle, this individual must have been a younger son of the late King Jotham;

***Azrikam the governor of the house*** — that is, “the palace”; and

***Elkanah that was next to the king*** — that is, the vizier or prime minister (<sup><0440></sup>Genesis 41:40 <sup><0700></sup>Esther 10:3). These were all cut down on the field by Zichri, an Israelitish warrior, or as some think, ordered to be put to death after the battle. A vast number of captives also fell into the power of the conquerors; and an equal division of war prisoners being made between the allies, they were sent off under a military escort to the respective capitals of Syria and Israel (<sup><0400></sup>2 Chronicles 28:8).

**8-14. *the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand*** — These captives included a great number of women, boys, and girls, a circumstance which creates a presumption that the Hebrews, like other Orientals, were accompanied in the war by multitudes of non-combatants (see on <sup><0700></sup>Judges 4:8). The report of these “brethren,” being brought as captives to Samaria, excited general indignation among the better-disposed inhabitants; and Oded, a prophet, accompanied by the princes (<sup><0400></sup>2 Chronicles 28:12, compared with <sup><0400></sup>2 Chronicles 28:14), went out, as the escort was approaching, to prevent the disgraceful outrage of introducing such prisoners into the city. The officers of the squadron were, of course, not to blame; they were simply doing their military duty in conducting those prisoners of war to their destination. But Oded clearly showed that the Israelitish army had gained the victory — not by the superiority of their arms, but in consequence of the divine judgment against Judah. He forcibly exposed the enormity of the offense of keeping “their brethren” as slaves got in war. He protested earnestly against adding this great offense of unnatural and sinful cruelty (<sup><0400></sup>Leviticus 25:43,44 <sup><0300></sup>Micah 2:8,9) to the already overwhelming amount of their own national sins. Such was the effect of his spirited remonstrance and the opposing tide of popular feeling, that “the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation.”

**15. *the men which were expressed by name rose up*** — These were either the “heads of the children of Ephraim” (mentioned <sup><0400></sup>2 Chronicles 28:12), or some other leading individuals chosen for the benevolent office. Under their kindly superintendence, the prisoners were not only released, but out of the spoils were comfortably relieved with food and clothing, and conveyed as far as Jericho on their way back to their own homes. This is a beautiful incident, and full of interest, as showing that even at this period

of national decline, there were not a few who steadfastly adhered to the law of God.

**16. *At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria*** — “kings,” the plural for the singular, which is found in many ancient versions. “At that time,” refers to the period of Ahaz’ great distress, when, after a succession of defeats, he retreated within the walls of Jerusalem. Either in the same or a subsequent campaign, the Syrian and Israelitish allies marched there to besiege him (see on <sup><1261></sup>2 Kings 16:7). Though delivered from this danger, other enemies infested his dominions both on the south and the west.

**17. *again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah*** — This invasion must have been after Rezin (at the beginning of the recent Syro-Israelitish war), had released that people from the yoke of Judah (<sup><4451></sup>2 Chronicles 15:11; compare <sup><1261></sup>2 Kings 16:6).

**18. *Gederoth*** — on the Philistine frontier (<sup><4651></sup>Joshua 15:41).

***Shocho*** — or Socoh (<sup><6655></sup>Joshua 15:35), now Shuweikeh, a town in the Valley of Judah (see on <sup><9701></sup>1 Samuel 17:1).

***Gimzo*** — now Jimza, a little east of Ludd (Lydda) [ROBINSON]. All these disasters, by which the “Lord brought Judah low,” were because of Ahaz, king of Israel (Judah), see <sup><1201></sup>2 Chronicles 21:2 <sup><4241></sup>24:16 <sup><4271></sup>28:27, who made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord.

**20. *Tilgath-pilneser ... distressed him, but strengthened him not*** — that is, notwithstanding the temporary relief which Tilgath-pilneser afforded him by the conquest of Damascus and the slaughter of Rezin (<sup><1261></sup>2 Kings 16:9), little advantage resulted from it, for Tilgath-pilneser spent the winter in voluptuous revelry at Damascus; and the connection formed with the Assyrian king was eventually a source of new and greater calamities and humiliation to the kingdom of Judah (<sup><4231></sup>2 Chronicles 28:2,3).



~~<482>~~ 2 CHRONICLES 28:22-27.**HIS IDOLATRY IN HIS DISTRESS.**

**22. *in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord*** — This infatuated king surrendered himself to the influence of idolatry and exerted his royal authority to extend it, with the intensity of a passion — with the ignorance and servile fear of a heathen (~~<482>~~ 2 Chronicles 28:23) and a ruthless defiance of God (see on ~~<1260>~~ 2 Kings 16:10-20).

## CHAPTER 29

### ~~400~~ 2 CHRONICLES 29:1,2.

#### HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN.

1. *Hezekiah began to reign*, etc. — (see on ~~281~~ 2 Kings 18:1). His mother's name, which, in ~~281~~ 2 Kings 18:2, appears in an abridged form, is here given in full.

### ~~405~~ 2 CHRONICLES 29:3-11.

#### HE RESTORES RELIGION.

3. *in the first year of his reign, in the first month* — not the first month after his accession to the throne, but in Nisan, the first month of the sacred year, the season appointed for the celebration of the passover.

*he opened the doors of the house of the Lord* — which had been closed up by his father (~~403~~ 2 Chronicles 28:24).

*and repaired them* — or embellished them (compare ~~286~~ 2 Kings 18:16).

4, 5. *the east street* — the court of the priests, which fronted the eastern gate of the temple. Assembling the priests and Levites there, he enjoined them to set about the immediate purification of the temple. It does not appear that the order referred to the removal of idols, for objects of idolatrous homage could scarcely have been put there, seeing the doors had been shut up (~~403~~ 2 Chronicles 29:3); but in its forsaken and desolate state the temple and its courts had been polluted by every kind of impurity.

6, 7. *our fathers have trespassed* — Ahaz and the generation contemporary with him were specially meant, for they “turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord,” and whether or not they turned east to the rising

sun, they abandoned the worship of God. They “shut up the doors of the porch,” so that the sacred ritual was entirely discontinued.

**8, 9. *Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem*** —

This pious king had the discernment to ascribe all the national calamities that had befallen the kingdom to the true cause, namely, apostasy from God. The country had been laid waste by successive wars of invasion, and its resources drained. Many families mourned members of their household still suffering the miseries of foreign captivity; all their former prosperity and glory had fled; and to what was this painful and humiliating state of affairs to be traced, but to the manifest judgment of God upon the kingdom for its sins?

**10, 11. *Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God*** —

Convinced of the sin and bitter fruits of idolatry, Hezekiah intended to reverse the policy of his father, and to restore, in all its ancient purity and glory, the worship of the true God. His commencement of this resolution at the beginning of his reign attests his sincere piety. It also proves the strength of his conviction that righteousness exalteth a nation; for, instead of waiting till his throne was consolidated, he devised measures of national reformation at the beginning of his reign and vigorously faced all the difficulties which, in such a course, he had to encounter, after the people’s habits had so long been moulded to idolatry. His intentions were first disclosed to this meeting of the priests and Levites — for the agency of these officials was to be employed in carrying them into effect.

2 CHRONICLES 29:12-36.

**THE HOUSE OF GOD CLEANSED.**

**12-19. *Then the Levites arose*** — Fourteen chiefs undertook the duty of collecting and preparing their brethren for the important work of cleansing the Lord’s house. Beginning with the outer courts — that of the priests and that of the people — the cleansing of these occupied eight days, after which they set themselves to purify the interior; but as the Levites were not allowed to enter within the walls of the temple, the priest brought all the sweepings out to the porch, where they were received by the Levites

and thrown into the brook Kedron. This took eight days more. At the end of this period they repaired to the palace and announced that not only had the whole of the sacred edifice, within and without, undergone a thorough purification, but all the vessels which the late king had taken away and applied to a common use in his palace, had been restored, “and sanctified.”

**20-30. *Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city*** — His anxiety to enter upon the expiatory service with all possible despatch, now that the temple had been properly prepared for it, prevented his summoning all the representatives of Israel. The requisite number of victims having been provided, and the officers of the temple having sanctified themselves according to the directions of the law, the priests were appointed to offer sacrifices of atonement successively, for “the kingdom,” that is, for the sins of the king and his predecessors; for “the sanctuary,” that is, for the sins of the priests themselves and for the desecration of the temple; “and for Judah,” that is, for the people who, by their voluntary consent, were involved in the guilt of the national apostasy. Animals of the kinds used in sacrifice were offered by sevens, that number indicating completeness. The Levites were ordered to praise God with musical instruments, which, although not originally used in the tabernacle, had been enlisted in the service of divine worship by David on the advice of the prophets Gad and Nathan, as well calculated to animate the devotions of the people. At the close of the special services of the occasion, namely, the offering of atonement sacrifices, the king and all civic rulers who were present joined in the worship. A grand anthem was sung (<sup>428b</sup>2 Chronicles 29:30) by the choir, consisting of some of the psalms of David and Asaph, and a great number of thank offerings, praise offerings, and freewill burnt offerings were presented at the invitation of the king.

**31. *Hezekiah ... said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near*** — This address was made to the priests as being now, by the sacrifice of the expiation offerings, anew consecrated to the service of God and qualified to resume the functions of their sacred office (<sup>428h</sup>Exodus 28:41 <sup>428j</sup>29:32).

***the congregation brought in*** — that is, the body of civic rulers present.

**34-36. *the priests were too few, ... wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them*** — The skins of beasts intended as peace offerings might be

taken off by the officers, because, in such cases, the carcass was not wholly laid upon the altar; but animals meant for burnt offerings which were wholly consumed by fire could be flayed by the priests alone, not even the Levites being allowed to touch them, except in cases of unavoidable necessity (<sup><451></sup>2 Chronicles 35:11). The duty being assigned by the law to the priests (<sup><300></sup>Leviticus 1:6), was construed by consuetudinary practice as an exclusion of all others not connected with the Aaronic family.

*for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests* — that is, displayed greater alacrity than the priests. This service was hastened by the irrepressible solicitude of the king. Whether it was that many of the priests, being absent in the country, had not arrived in time — whether from the long interruption of the public duties, some of them had relaxed in their wonted attentions to personal cleanliness, and had many preparations to make — or whether from some having participated in the idolatrous services introduced by Ahaz, they were backward in repairing to the temple — a reflection does seem to be cast upon their order as dilatory and not universally ready for duty (compare <sup><405></sup>2 Chronicles 30:15). Thus was the newly consecrated temple reopened to the no small joy of the pious king and all the people.

# CHAPTER 30

## <480>2 CHRONICLES 30:1-12.

### HEZEKIAH PROCLAIMS A PASSOVER.

**1-5. *Hezekiah sent to all ... Judah ... to come to ... Jerusalem, to keep the passover*** — This great religious festival had not been regularly observed by the Hebrews in their national capacity for a long time because of the division of the kingdom and the many disorders that had followed that unhappy event. Hezekiah longed extremely to see its observance revived; and the expression of his wishes having received a hearty response from the princes and chief men of his own kingdom, the preparatory steps were taken for a renewed celebration of the national solemnity.

***letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh*** — The names of these leading tribes are used for the whole kingdom of Israel. It was judged impossible, however, that the temple, the priests, and people could be all duly sanctified at the usual time appointed for the anniversary, namely, the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan). Therefore it was resolved, instead of postponing the feast till another year, to observe it on the fourteenth day of the second month; a liberty which, being in certain circumstances (<490>Numbers 9:6-13) granted to individuals, might, it was believed, be allowed to all the people. Hezekiah's proclamation was, of course, authoritative in his own kingdom, but it could not have been made and circulated in all the towns and villages of the neighboring kingdom without the concurrence, or at least the permission, of the Israelitish sovereign. Hoshea, the reigning king, is described as, though evil in some respects, yet more favorably disposed to religious liberty than any of his predecessors since the separation of the kingdom. This is thought to be the meaning of the mitigating clause in his character (<470>2 Kings 17:2).

**6. *the posts*** — that is, runners, or royal messengers, who were taken from the king's bodyguard (<420>2 Chronicles 23:1,2). Each, well mounted, had a certain number of miles to traverse. Having performed his course, he was

relieved by another, who had to scour an equal extent of ground; so that, as the government messengers were despatched in all directions, public edicts were speedily diffused throughout the country. The proclamation of Hezekiah was followed by a verbal address from himself, piously urging the duty, and setting forth the advantages, of a return to the pure faith and institutions which God had delivered to their ancestors through Moses.

*the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria* — This implies that several expeditions against Israel had already been made by Assyrian invaders — by Pul (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:19), but none of the people were then removed; at a later period by Tiglath-pileser, when it appears that numbers among the tribes east of Jordan (<sup><1131></sup>1 Chronicles 5:26), and afterwards in the northern parts of Israel (<sup><1251></sup>2 Kings 15:20), were carried into foreign exile. The invasion of Shalmaneser cannot be alluded to, as it did not take place till the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign (<sup><1270></sup>2 Kings 17:6 <sup><1289></sup>18:9-12).

**10-12.** *the posts passed from city to city* — It is not surprising that after so long a discontinuance of the sacred festival, this attempt to revive it should, in some quarters, have excited ridicule and opposition. Accordingly, among the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun, Hezekiah's messengers met with open insults and ill usage. Many, however, in these very districts, as well as throughout the kingdom of the ten tribes, generally complied with the invitation; while, in the kingdom of Judah, there was one unanimous feeling of high expectation and pious delight. The concourse that repaired to Jerusalem on the occasion was very great, and the occasion was ever after regarded as one of the greatest passovers that had ever been celebrated.

## <sup><413></sup>2 CHRONICLES 30:13-27.

### THE ASSEMBLY DESTROYS THE ALTARS OF IDOLATRY.

**14.** *they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem* — As a necessary preparation for the right observance of the approaching solemnity, the removal of the altars, which Ahaz had erected in the city, was resolved upon (<sup><482></sup>2 Chronicles 28:24); for, as the people of God, the

Hebrews were bound to extirpate all traces of idolatry; and it was a happy sign and pledge of the influence of the Spirit pervading the minds of the people when they voluntarily undertook this important preliminary work.

**15. *the priests and the Levites were ashamed*** — Though the Levites are associated in this statement, the priests were principally referred to; those of them who had been dilatory or negligent in sanctifying themselves (<sup><408></sup>2 Chronicles 29:34) were put to the blush and stimulated to their duty by the greater alacrity and zeal of the people.

**16-18. *the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites*** — This was a deviation from the established rules and practices in presenting the offerings of the temple. The reason was, that many present on the occasion having not sanctified themselves, the Levites slaughtered the paschal victims (see on <sup><485></sup>2 Chronicles 35:5) for everyone that was unclean. At other times the heads of families killed the lambs themselves, the priests receiving the blood from their hands and presenting it on the altar. Multitudes of the Israelites, especially from certain tribes (<sup><408></sup>2 Chronicles 30:18), were in this unsanctified state, and yet they ate the passover — an exceptional feature and one opposed to the law (<sup><096></sup>Numbers 9:6); but this exception was allowed in answer to Hezekiah's prayer (<sup><408></sup>2 Chronicles 30:18-20).

**20. *the Lord ... healed the people*** — We imagine the whole affair to have been the following: In consequence of their transgressions they had cause to fear disease and even death (<sup><051></sup>Leviticus 15:31). Hezekiah prayed for the nation, which was on the point of being diseased, and might therefore be regarded as sick already [BERTHEAU].

**21-24. *the children of Israel ... kept the feast*** — The time appointed by the law for the continuance of the feast was seven days [<sup><075></sup>Exodus 12:15 13:6 <sup><020></sup>Leviticus 23:6]; but in consequence of its having been allowed to fall so long into desuetude, they doubled the period of celebration and kept it fourteen days with unabated satisfaction and joy. Materials for the additional sacrificial meals were supplied by the munificence of the king and the princes.

**24. *and a great number of priests sanctified themselves*** — so that there would be a sufficient number of hands for the additional services.



# CHAPTER 31

## <480>2 CHRONICLES 31:1-10.

### THE PEOPLE FORWARD IN DESTROYING IDOLATRY.

1. *all Israel ... present went out to the cities of Judah* — The solemnities of this paschal season left a deep and salutary impression on the minds of the assembled worshippers; attachment to the ancient institutions of their country was extensively revived; ardor in the service of God animated every bosom; and under the impulse of the devout feelings inspired by the occasion, they took measures at the close of the passover for extirpating idolatrous statues and altars out of every city, as at the beginning of the festival they had done in Jerusalem.

*Judah and Benjamin* — denote the southern kingdom.

*Ephraim also and Manasseh* — refer to the northern kingdom. This unsparing demolition of the monuments of idolatry would receive all encouragement from the king and public authorities of the former; and the force of the popular movement was sufficient to effect the same results among the tribes of Israel, whatever opposition the power of Hoshea or the invectives of some profane brethren might have made. Thus the reign of idolatry being completely overthrown and the pure worship of God re-established throughout the land, the people returned every one to his own home, in the confident expectation that, through the divine blessing, they would enjoy a happy future of national peace and prosperity.

2-5. *Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests*, etc. — The king now turned his attention to provide for the orderly performance of the temple-worship — arranging the priests and Levites in their courses, assigning to every one his proper place and functions — and issuing edicts for the regular payment of those dues from which the revenues of the sanctuary were derived. To set a proper example to his subjects, his own proportion was announced in the first instance, for to the king it belonged, out of his privy purse, to defray the expenses of the altar, both stated and occasional

(<sup><ORIS></sup>Numbers 28:3,4,9,11,19); and in making this contribution from his own means, Hezekiah followed the course which David and Solomon had taken before him (see <sup><ORIS></sup>2 Chronicles 8:14 <sup><ORIS></sup>1 Kings 9:25). Afterwards he reappointed the people's dues to the temple; and from its being necessary to issue a royal mandate in reference to this matter, it appears that the sacred tribute had been either totally neglected, or (as the idolatrous princes were known to appropriate it to their own purposes) the people had in many cases refused or evaded the duty. But with the improved state of public feeling, Hezekiah's commandment was readily obeyed, and contributions of first-fruits and tithes were poured in with great liberality from all parts of Judah, as well as from Israel. The first-fruits, even of some articles of produce that were unfit for sacrifice (<sup><ORIS></sup>Leviticus 2:11), such as honey (*Margin*, "dates"), were appropriated to the priests (<sup><ORIS></sup>Numbers 18:12,13 <sup><ORIS></sup>Deuteronomy 18:4). The tithes (<sup><ORIS></sup>Leviticus 27:31) were intended for the support of the whole Levitical tribe (<sup><ORIS></sup>Numbers 18:8,20,24).

**6, 7. *and laid them by heaps*** — The contributions began to be sent in shortly after the celebration of the passover, which had taken place in the middle of the second month. Some time would elapse before the king's order reached all parts of the kingdom. The wheat harvest occurred in the third month, so that the sheaves of that grain, being presented before any other, formed "the foundation," an under-layer in the corn stores of the temple. The first-fruits of their land produce which were successively sent in all the summer till the close of the fruit and vintage season, that is, the seventh month, continued to raise heap upon heap.

**9. *Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps*** — The object of his enquiries was to ascertain whether the supplies afforded the prospect of a sufficient maintenance for the members of the sacred order.

**10. *Azariah ... answered ... we have had enough*** — This is probably the person mentioned (<sup><ORIS></sup>2 Chronicles 26:17), and his reply was to the following purport: There has been an abundant harvest, and a corresponding plenty in the incoming of first-fruits and tithes; the people have testified their gratitude to Him who has crowned the year with His goodness by their liberality towards His servants.

## 2 CHRONICLES 31:11-19.

### HEZEKIAH APPOINTS OFFICERS TO DISPOSE OF THE TITHES.

**11-18.** *Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the Lord* — storehouses, granaries, or cellars; either the old ones, which had been allowed through neglect to fall into decay, were to be repaired, or additional ones built. Private individuals brought their own first-fruits to the temple; but the tithes were levied by the Levites, who kept a faithful account of them in their several places of abode and transmitted the allotted proportion to the priests. Officers were appointed to distribute equal rations to all in the cities of the priests who, from age or other reasons, could not repair to the temple. With the exception of children under three years of age — an exception made probably from their being considered too young to receive solid food — lists were kept of the number and age of every male; of priests according to their fathers' house, and Levites from twenty years (see <sup><004></sup>Numbers 4:3 28:24 <sup><023></sup>1 Chronicles 23:24). But, besides, provision was also made for their wives, daughters, and servants.

**18.** *for in their set office they sanctified themselves* — This is the reason assigned for providing for the wives and children out of the revenues of the sanctuary, that priests, withdrawing from those secular pursuits by which they might have maintained their households, devoted themselves entirely to the functions of the ministry.

## 2 CHRONICLES 31:20,21.

### HIS SINCERITY OF HEART.

**20.** *Hezekiah ... wrought that which was good and right* — He displayed the qualities of a constitutional king, in restoring and upholding the ancient institutions of the kingdom; while his zealous and persevering efforts to promote the cause of true religion and the best interests of his subjects

entitled him to be ranked with the most illustrious of his predecessors  
(~~2~~ 2 Kings 18:15).

# CHAPTER 32

## 2 CHRONICLES 32:1-20.

### SENNACHERIB INVADES JUDAH.

**1. *After these things, and the establishment thereof*** — that is, the restoration of the temple-worship. The precise date is given, <sup><12813></sup>2 Kings 18:13. Determined to recover the independence of his country, Hezekiah had decided to refuse to pay the tribute which his father had bound himself to pay to Assyria.

***Sennacherib ... entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities*** — The whole land was ravaged; the strong fortresses of Ashdod (<sup><23011></sup>Isaiah 20:1) and Lachish had fallen; the siege of Libnah had commenced, when the king of Judah, doubting his ability to resist, sent to acknowledge his fault, and offer terms of submission by paying the tribute. The commencement of this Assyrian war was disastrous to Hezekiah (<sup><12813></sup>2 Kings 18:13). But the misfortunes of the early period of the war are here passed over, as the historian hastens to relate the remarkable deliverance which God wrought for His kingdom of Judah.

**2-8. *when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib ... was purposed to fight against Jerusalem*** — An account of the means taken to fortify Jerusalem against the threatened siege is given only in this passage. The polluting or filling up of wells, and the altering of the course of rivers, is an old practice that still obtains in the wars of the East. Hezekiah's plan was to cover the fountain heads, so that they might not be discovered by the enemy, and to carry the water by subterranean channels or pipes into the city — a plan which, while it would secure a constant supply to the inhabitants, would distress the besiegers, as the country all around Jerusalem was very destitute of water.

**4. *So there was gathered much people ... who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land*** — “Where these various fountains were, we have now no positive means of ascertaining;

though En-rogel, and the spring now called the Virgin's Fount, may well be numbered among them. JOSEPHUS mentions the existence of various fountains without the city, but does not mention any of them in this connection but Siloam. 'The brook,' however, is located with sufficient precision to enable us to trace it very definitely. We are told that it 'ran through the midst of the land.' Now a stream running through either the Kedron or Hinnom Valley, could, in no proper sense, be said to run *through the midst of the land*, but one flowing through the true Gihon valley, and separating Akra and Zion from Bezetha, Moriah, and Ophel, as a stream once, doubtless, did, could, with peculiar propriety, be said to run through the midst of the land on which the [Holy] City was built. And that this is the correct meaning of the phrase is not only apparent from the force of circumstances, but is positively so declared in the Septuagint, where, moreover, it is called a 'river,' which, at least, implies a much larger stream than the Kedron, and comports well with the marginal reading, where it is said to overflow through the midst of the land. Previous to the interference of man, there was, no doubt, a very copious stream that gushed forth in the upper portion of that shallow, basin-like concavity north of Damascus Gate, which is unquestionably the upper extremity of the Gihon valley, and pursuing its meandering course through this valley, entered the Tyropoeon at its great southern curve, down which it flowed into the valley of the Kedron" [BARCLAY, *City of the Great King*].

**5, 6. *he strengthened himself*** — He made a careful inspection of the city defenses for the purpose of repairing breaches in the wall here, renewing the masonry there, raising projecting machines to the towers, and especially fortifying the lower portion of Zion, that is, Millo, "(in) the original city of David." "In" is a supplement of our translators, and the text reads better without it, for it was not the whole city that was repaired, but only the lower portion of Zion, or the original "city of David."

**6. *he ... gathered them together ... in the street*** — that is, the large open space at the gate of Eastern cities. Having equipped his soldiers with a full suit of military accoutrements, he addressed them in an animated strain, dwelling on the motives they had to inspire courage and confidence of success, especially on their consciousness of the favor and helping power of God.

**9-20.** (See on <sup><1267></sup>2 Kings 18:17-35; also <sup><1298></sup>2 Kings 19:8-34).

**18. *they cried with a loud voice ... unto the people of Jerusalem ... on the wall*** — It appears that the wall on the west side of the city reached as far to the side of the uppermost pool of Gihon at that time as it does now, if not farther; and the wall was so close to that pool that those sent to negotiate with the Assyrian general answered him in their own tongue (see on <sup><1267></sup>2 Kings 18:27).

## <sup><4821></sup>2 CHRONICLES 32:21-33.

### AN ANGEL DESTROYS THE ASSYRIANS.

**21. *an angel ... cut off all the mighty men*** — (See on <sup><1295></sup>2 Kings 19:35-37).

## <sup><4824></sup>2 CHRONICLES 32:24-26.

### HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY.

**24. *In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death*** — (See on <sup><1210></sup>2 Kings 20:1-11).

## <sup><4827></sup>2 CHRONICLES 32:27-33.

### HIS RICHES AND WORKS.

**27-29. *he had exceeding much riches and honor*** — (compare <sup><1213></sup>2 Kings 20:13 <sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 39:2). A great portion of his personal wealth, like that of David and Uzziah, consisted in immense possessions of agricultural and pastoral produce. Besides, he had accumulated large treasures in gold, silver, and precious things, which he had taken as spoils from the Philistines, and which he had received as presents from neighboring states, among which he was held in great honor as a king under the special protection of Heaven. Much of his great wealth he expended in improving

his capital, erecting forts, and promoting the internal benefit of his kingdom.

**30. *stopped the ... watercourse of Gihon, and brought it ... to the west side of the city*** — (Compare <sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 20:20). Particular notice is here taken of the aqueduct, as among the greatest of Hezekiah's works. "In exploring the subterranean channel conveying the water from Virgin's Fount to Siloam, I discovered a similar channel entering from the north, a few yards from its commencement; and on tracing it up near the Mugrabin gate, where it became so choked with rubbish that it could be traversed no farther, I there found it turn to the *west* in the direction of the south end of the cleft, or saddle, of Zion, and if this channel was not constructed for the purpose of conveying the waters of Hezekiah's aqueduct, I am unable to suggest any purpose to which it could have been applied. Perhaps the reason why it was not brought down on the Zion side, was that Zion was already well-watered in its lower portion by the Great Pool, 'the lower pool of Gihon.' And accordingly WILLIAMS [*Holy City*] renders this passage, 'He stopped the upper outflow of the waters of Gihon, and led them down westward to the city'" [BARCLAY, *City of the Great King*]. The construction of this aqueduct required not only masonic but engineering skill; for the passage was bored through a continuous mass of rock. Hezekiah's pool or reservoir made to receive the water within the northwest part of the city still remains. It is an oblong quadrangular tank, two hundred forty feet in length, from one hundred forty-four to one hundred fifty in breadth, but, from recent excavations, appears to have extended somewhat farther towards the north.

**31. *in the business of the ambassadors who sent ... to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land***, etc. — They brought a present (<sup><1423></sup>2 Chronicles 32:23; see on <sup><1212></sup>2 Kings 20:12,13), and a letter of congratulation on his recovery, in which particular enquiries were made about the miracle of the sun's retrocession — a natural phenomenon that could not fail to excite great interest and curiosity at Babylon, where astronomy was so much studied. At the same time, there is reason to believe that they proposed a defensive league against the Assyrians.

***God left him, to try him***, etc. — Hezekiah's offense was not so much in the display of his military stores and treasures, as in not giving to God the



glory both of the miracle and of his recovery, and thus leading those heathen ambassadors to know Him.

## CHAPTER 33

### <481> 2 CHRONICLES 33:1-10.

#### MANASSEH'S WICKED REIGN.

1, 2. *Manasseh ... did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord* — (See on <421> 2 Kings 21:1-16).

### <481> 2 CHRONICLES 33:11-19.

#### HE IS CARRIED UNTO BABYLON, WHERE HE HUMBLING HIMSELF BEFORE GOD, AND IS RESTORED TO HIS KINGDOM.

11. *the captains of the host of the king of Assyria* — This king was Esarhaddon. After having devoted the first years of his reign to the consolidation of his government at home, he turned his attention to repair the loss of the tributary provinces west of the Euphrates, which, on the disaster and death of Sennacherib, had taken the opportunity of shaking off the Assyrian yoke. Having overrun Palestine and removed the remnant that were left in the kingdom of Israel, he despatched his generals, the chief of whom was Tartan (<2300> Isaiah 20:1), with a portion of his army for the reduction of Judah also. In a successful attack upon Jerusalem, they took multitudes of captives, and got a great prize, including the king himself, among the prisoners.

*took Manasseh among the thorns* — This may mean, as is commonly supposed, that he had hid himself among a thicket of briars and brambles. We know that the Hebrews sometimes took refuge from their enemies in thickets (<936> 1 Samuel 13:6). But, instead of the *Hebrew, Bacochim*, “among the thorns”, some versions read *Bechayim*, “among the living”, and so the passage would be “took him alive.”

***bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon*** — The *Hebrew* word rendered “fetters” denotes properly two chains of brass. The humiliating state in which Manasseh appeared before the Assyrian monarch may be judged of by a picture on a tablet in the Khorsabad palace, representing prisoners led bound into the king’s presence. “The captives represented appear to be inhabitants of Palestine. Behind the prisoners stand four persons with inscriptions on the lower part of their tunics; the first two are bearded, and seem to be accusers; the remaining two are nearly defaced; but behind the last appears the eunuch, whose office it seems to be to usher into the presence of the king those who are permitted to appear before him. He is followed by another person of the same race as those under punishment; his hands are manacled, and on his ankles are strong rings fastened together by a heavy bar” [*Nineveh and Its Palaces*]. No name is given, and, therefore, no conclusion can be drawn that the figure represents Manasseh. But the people appear to be Hebrews, and this pictorial scene will enable us to imagine the manner in which the royal captive from Judah was received in the court of Babylon. Esar-haddon had established his residence there; for though from the many revolts that followed the death of his father, he succeeded at first only to the throne of Assyria, yet having some time previous to his conquest of Judah, recovered possession of Babylon, this enterprising king had united under his sway the two empires of Babylon and Chaldea and transferred the seat of his government to Babylon.

**12, 13. *when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God*** — In the solitude of exile or imprisonment, Manasseh had leisure for reflection. The calamities forced upon him a review of his past life, under a conviction that the miseries of his dethronement and captive condition were owing to his awful and unprecedented apostasy (<sup>448</sup>2 Chronicles 33:7) from the God of his fathers. He humbled himself, repented, and prayed for an opportunity of bringing forth the fruits of repentance. His prayer was heard; for his conqueror not only released him, but, after two years’ exile, restored him, with honor and the full exercise of royal power, to a tributary and dependent kingdom. Some political motive, doubtless, prompted the Assyrian king to restore Manasseh, and that was most probably to have the kingdom of Judah as a barrier between Egypt and his Assyrian dominions. But God overruled this measure for higher purposes.

Manasseh now showed himself, by the influence of sanctified affliction, a new and better man. He made a complete reversal of his former policy, by not only destroying all the idolatrous statues and altars he had formerly erected in Jerusalem, but displaying the most ardent zeal in restoring and encouraging the worship of God.

**14. *he built a wall without the city ... on the west side of Gihon ... even to the entering in at the fish gate*** — “The well-ascertained position of the fish gate, shows that the valley of Gihon could be no other than that leading northwest of Damascus gate, and gently descending southward, uniting with the Tyropoeon at the northeast corner of Mount Zion, where the latter turns at right angles and runs towards Siloam. The wall thus built by Manasseh on the west side of the valley of Gihon, would extend from the vicinity of the northeast corner of the wall of Zion in a northerly direction, until it crossed over the valley to form a junction with the outer wall at the trench of Antonia, precisely in the quarter where the temple would be most easily assailed” [BARCLAY].

**17. *the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the Lord their God only*** — Here it appears that the worship on high places, though it originated in a great measure from the practice of heathenism, and too often led to it, did not necessarily imply idolatry.

## ~~483~~ 2 CHRONICLES 33:20-25.

### HE DIES AND AMON SUCCEEDS HIM.

**20, 21. *Manasseh slept with his fathers ... Amon began to reign*** — (See on ~~4219~~ 2 Kings 21:19).

# CHAPTER 34

## ~~460E~~ 2 CHRONICLES 34:1,2.

### JOSIAH'S GOOD REIGN.

1. *Josiah was eight years old* — (See on ~~4220E~~ 2 Kings 22:1). The testimony borne to the undeviating steadfastness of his adherence to the cause of true religion places his character and reign in honorable contrast with those of many of his royal predecessors.

## ~~460E~~ 2 CHRONICLES 34:3-7.

### HE DESTROYS IDOLATRY.

3. *in the eighth year of his reign* — This was the sixteenth year of his age, and, as the kings of Judah were considered minors till they had completed their thirteenth year, it was three years after he had attained majority. He had very early manifested the piety and excellent dispositions of his character. In the twelfth year of his reign, but the twentieth of his age, he began to take a lively interest in the purgation of his kingdom from all the monuments of idolatry which, in his father's short reign, had been erected. At a later period, his increasing zeal for securing the purity of divine worship led him to superintend the work of demolition in various parts of his dominion. The course of the narrative in this passage is somewhat different from that followed in the Book of Kings. For the historian, having made allusion to the early manifestation of Josiah's zeal, goes on with a full detail of all the measures this good king adopted for the extirpation of idolatry; whereas the author of the Book of Kings sets out with the cleansing of the temple, immediately previous to the celebration of the passover, and embraces that occasion to give a general description of Josiah's policy for freeing the land from idolatrous pollution. The exact chronological order is not followed either in Kings or

Chronicles. But it is clearly recorded in both that the abolition of idolatry began in the twelfth and was completed in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. Notwithstanding Josiah's undoubted sincerity and zeal and the people's apparent compliance with the king's orders, he could not extinguish a strongly rooted attachment to idolatries introduced in the early part of Manasseh's reign. This latent predilection appears unmistakably developed in the subsequent reigns, and the divine decree for the removal of Judah, as well as Israel, into captivity was irrevocably passed.

**4. *the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them*** — He treated the graves themselves as guilty of the crimes of those who were lying in them [BERTHEAU].

**5. *he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars*** — A greater brand of infamy could not have been put on idolatrous priests than the disinterment of their bones, and a greater defilement could not have been done to the altars of idolatry than the burning upon them the bones of those who had there officiated in their lifetime.

**6. *with their mattocks*** — or, “in their deserts” — so that the verse will stand thus: “And so did [namely, break the altars and burn the bones of priests] he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, in their deserted suburbs.” The reader is apt to be surprised on finding that Josiah, whose hereditary possessions were confined to the kingdom of Judah, exercised as much authority among the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon, and others as far as Naphtali, as he did within his own dominion. Therefore, it is necessary to observe that, after the destruction of Samaria by Shalmaneser, the remnant that continued on the mountains of Israel maintained a close intercourse with Judah, and looked to the sovereigns of that kingdom as their natural protectors. Those kings acquired great influence over them, which Josiah exercised in removing every vestige of idolatry from the land. He could not have done this without the acquiescence of the people in the propriety of this proceeding, conscious that this was conformable to their ancient laws and institutions. The Assyrian kings, who were now masters of the country, might have been displeased at the liberties Josiah took beyond his own territories. But either they were not informed of his doings, or they did not

trouble themselves about his religious proceedings, relating, as they would think, to the god of the land, especially as he did not attempt to seize upon any place or to disturb the allegiance of the people [CALMET].

## ~~1418~~ 2 CHRONICLES 34:8-18.

### HE REPAIRS THE TEMPLE.

**8.** *in the eighteenth year of his reign ... he sent Shaphan* — (See on ~~12218~~2 Kings 22:3-9).

## ~~1419~~ 2 CHRONICLES 34:19-33.

### AND, CAUSING THE LAW TO BE READ, RENEWS THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND THE PEOPLE.

**19.** *when the king had heard the words of the law*, etc. — (See on ~~12211~~2 Kings 22:11-20 ~~12211~~23:1-3).

# CHAPTER 35

## 2 CHRONICLES 35:1-19.

### JOSIAH KEEPS A SOLEMN PASSOVER.

**1-3. *Moreover Josiah kept a passover*** — (See on <sup><1231></sup>2 Kings 23:21). The first nine verses give an account of the preparations made for the celebration of the solemn feast (<sup><1481></sup>2 Chronicles 35:1-9). The day appointed by the law was kept on this occasion (compare <sup><1481></sup>2 Chronicles 30:2,13). The priests were ranged in their courses and exhorted to be ready for their duties in the manner that legal purity required (compare <sup><1481></sup>2 Chronicles 29:5). The Levites, the ministers or instructors of the people in all matters pertaining to the divine worship, were commanded (<sup><1481></sup>2 Chronicles 35:3) to “put the holy ark in the house which Solomon did build.” Their duty was to transport the ark from place to place according to circumstances. Some think that it had been ignominiously put away from the sanctuary by order of some idolatrous king, probably Manasseh, who set a carved image in the house of God (<sup><1481></sup>2 Chronicles 33:7), or Amon; while others are of opinion that it had been temporarily removed by Josiah himself into some adjoining chamber, during the repairs on the temple. In replacing it, the Levites had evidently carried it upon their shoulders, deeming that still to be the duty which the law imposed on them. But Josiah reminded them of the change of circumstances. As the service of God was now performed in a fixed and permanent temple, they were not required to be bearers of the ark any longer; and, being released from the service, they should address themselves with the greater alacrity to the discharge of other functions.

**4. *prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses*** — Each course or division was to be composed of those who belonged to the same fathers’ house.

***according to the writing of David and ... Solomon*** — Their injunctions are recorded (<sup><1481></sup>2 Chronicles 8:14 <sup><1321></sup>1 Chronicles 23:1-26:32).



**5. *stand in the holy place*** — in the court of the priests, the place where the victims were killed. The people were admitted according to their families in groups or companies of several households at a time. When the first company entered the court (which consisted commonly of as many as it could well hold), the gates were shut and the offering was made. The Levites stood in rows from the slaughtering places to the altar, and handed the blood and fat from one to another of the officiating priests (<sup>4816</sup>2 Chronicles 30:16-18).

**6. *So kill the passover*, etc.** — The design of the minute directions given here was to facilitate the distribution of the paschal lambs. These were to be eaten by the respective families according to their numbers (<sup>4078</sup>Exodus 12:3). But multitudes of the people, especially those from Israel, having been reduced to poverty through the Assyrian devastations, were to be provided with the means of commemorating the passover. Therefore, the king enjoined the Levites that when the paschal lambs were brought to them to be killed (<sup>4812</sup>2 Chronicles 35:7-9) they should take care to have everything put in so orderly a train, that the lambs, after due presentation, might be easily delivered to the various families to be roasted and eaten by themselves apart.

**7. *Josiah gave to the people ... lambs and kids*** — These were in all probability destined for the poor; a lamb or a kid might be used at convenience (<sup>4078</sup>Exodus 12:5).

***and ... bullocks*** — which were offered after the lambs on each of the successive days of the feast.

**8, 9. *his princes*** — These gave to the priests and Levites; as those of Hezekiah's princes (<sup>4812</sup>2 Chronicles 30:24). They were ecclesiastical princes; namely, Hilkiah the high priest (<sup>4812</sup>2 Chronicles 34:9). Zechariah, probably the second priest of the Eleazar (<sup>4268</sup>2 Kings 16:18), and Jehiel, of the Ithamar line. And as the Levitical tribes were not yet sufficiently provided (<sup>4812</sup>2 Chronicles 35:9), some of their eminent brethren who had been distinguished in Hezekiah's time (<sup>4812</sup>2 Chronicles 31:12-15), gave a large additional contribution for the use of the Levites exclusively.

**10, 11. *So the service was prepared*, etc.** — All the necessary preparations having been completed, and the appointed time having arrived for the

passover, the solemnity was celebrated. One remarkable feature in the account is the prominent part that was taken by the Levites in the preparation of the sacrifices; namely, the killing and stripping of the skins, which were properly the peculiar duties of the priests; but as those functionaries were not able to overtake the extraordinary amount of work and the Levites had been duly sanctified for the service, they were enlisted for the time in this priestly employment. At the passover in Hezekiah's time, the Levites officiated in the same departments of duty, the reason assigned for that deviation from the established rule being the unprepared state of many of the people (<sup><4877></sup>2 Chronicles 30:17). But on this occasion the whole people had been duly sanctified, and therefore the exceptional enlistment of the Levites' services must have been rendered unavoidably necessary from the multitudes engaged in celebrating the passover.

**12. *they removed the burnt offerings*** — Some of the small cattle being designed for burnt offerings were put apart by themselves, that they might not be intermingled with the paschal lambs, which were carefully selected according to certain rules, and intended to be sacramentally eaten; and the manner in which those burnt offerings were presented seems to have been the following: "All the subdivisions of the different fathers' houses came one after another to the altar in solemn procession to bring to the priests the portions which had been cut off, and the priests laid these pieces upon the fire of the altar of burnt offering."

**13. *they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance*** — (See <sup><9227></sup>Exodus 12:7-9). This mode of preparation was prescribed by the law exclusively for the paschal lamb; the other offerings and thank offerings were cooked in pots, kettles, and pans (<sup><9224></sup>1 Samuel 2:14).

***divided them speedily among the people*** — The haste was either owing to the multiplicity of the priests' business, or because the heat and flavor of the viands would have been otherwise diminished. Hence it appears that the meal consisted not of the paschal lambs alone, but of the meat of the thank offerings — for part of the flesh fell to the portion of the offerer, who, being in this instance, the king and the princes, were by them made over to the people, who were recommended to eat them the day they were offered, though not absolutely forbidden to do so on the next (<sup><9275></sup>Leviticus 7:15-18).

**14. *afterwards they made ready for themselves, and for the priests*** — The Levites rendered this aid to the priests solely because they were so engrossed the entire day that they had no leisure to provide any refreshments for themselves.

**15. *And the singers ..., were in their place*** — While the priests and people were so much engaged, the choir was not idle. They had to sing certain Psalms, namely, the hundred thirteenth to the hundred eighteenth inclusive, once, twice, and even a third time, during the continuance of each company of offerers. As they could not leave their posts, for the singing was resumed as every fresh company entered, the Levites prepared for them also; for the various bands relieved each other in turn, and while the general choir was doing duty, a portion of the tuneful brethren, relieved for a time, partook of the viands that were brought them.

**18. *there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel*** — One feature by which this passover was distinguished was the liberality of Josiah. But what distinguished it above all preceding solemnities was, not the imposing grandeur of the ceremonies, nor the immensity of the assembled concourse of worshippers; for these, with the exception of a few from the kingdom of Israel, were confined to two tribes; but it was the ardent devotion of the king and people, the disregard of purely traditional customs, and the unusually strict adherence, even in the smallest minutiae, to the forms of observance prescribed in the book of the law, the discovery of an original copy of which had produced so great a sensation. Instead of “from the days of Samuel,” the author of the Book of Kings says, “from the days of the judges who judged Israel” [<sup>2</sup> Kings 23:22]. The meaning is the same in both passages, for Samuel concluded the era of the judges.

***all Judah and Israel that were present*** — The great majority of the people of the northern kingdom were in exile, but some of the remaining inhabitants performed the journey to Jerusalem on this occasion. 37,600 paschal lambs and kids were used, which [<sup>480</sup> 2 Chronicles 35:7], at ten to a company, would make 376,000 persons attending the feast.

**19. *In the eighteenth year of the reign Josiah was this passover kept*** — “It is said (<sup>227</sup> 2 Kings 22:3) that Josiah sent Shaphan to Hilkiyah in the eighth month of that year.” If this statement rests upon an historical basis,

all the events narrated here (at <sup>46B</sup>2 Chronicles 34:8-35:19) must have happened in about the space of five months and a half. We should then have a proof that the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign was reckoned from the autumn (compare <sup>42B</sup>2 Chronicles 29:3). "The eighth month" of the sacred year in the eighteenth year of his reign would be the second month of his eighteenth year, and the first month of the new year would be the seventh month [BERTHEAU].

## <sup>46B</sup>2 CHRONICLES 35:20-27.

### HIS DEATH.

**20. *After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple*** — He most probably calculated that the restoration of the divine worship, with the revival of vital religion in the land, would lead, according to God's promise and the uniform experience of the Hebrew people, to a period of settled peace and increased prosperity. His hopes were disappointed. The bright interval of tranquillity that followed his re-establishment of the true religion was brief. But it must be observed that this interruption did not proceed from any unfaithfulness in the divine promise, but from the state into which the kingdom of Judah had brought itself by the national apostasy, which was drawing down upon it the long threatened but long deferred judgments of God.

***Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates*** — Necho, son of Psammetichus, succeeded to the throne of Egypt in the twentieth year of Josiah. He was a bold and enterprising king, who entered with all his heart into the struggle which the two great powers of Egypt and Assyria had long carried on for the political ascendancy. Each, jealous of the aggressive movements of its rival, was desirous to maintain Palestine as a frontier barrier. After the overthrow of Israel, the kingdom of Judah became in that respect doubly important. Although the king and people had a strong bias for alliance with Egypt, yet from the time of Manasseh it had become a vassal of Assyria. Josiah, true to his political no less than his religious engagements, thought himself bound to support the interests of his Assyrian liege lord. Hence, when "Necho king of Egypt

came up to fight Carchemish, Josiah went out against him.” Carchemish, on the eastern side of the Euphrates, was the key of Assyria on the west, and in going thither the king of Egypt would transport his troops by sea along the coast of Palestine, northwards. Josiah, as a faithful vassal, resolved to oppose Necho’s march across the northern parts of that country. They met in the “valley of Megiddo,” that is, the valley or plain of Esdraelon. The Egyptian king had come either by water or through the plains of Philistia, keeping constantly along the coast, round the northwest corner of Carmel, and so to the great plain of Megiddo. This was not only his direct way to the Euphrates, but the only route fit for his chariots, while thereby also he left Judah and Jerusalem quite to his right. In this valley, however, the Egyptian army had necessarily to strike across the country, and it was on that occasion that Josiah could most conveniently intercept his passage. To avoid the difficulty of passing the river Kishon, Necho kept to the south of it, and must, therefore, have come past Megiddo. Josiah, in following with his chariots and horsemen from Jerusalem, had to march northwards along the highway through Samaria by Kefr-Kud (the ancient Caper-Cotia) to Megiddo [VAN DE VELDE].

**21, 22. *But he sent ambassadors ... What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah?*** — Not wishing to spend time, or strength in vain, Necho informed the king of Judah that he had no intention of molesting the Jews; that his expedition was directed solely against his old Assyrian enemy; and that he had undertaken it by an express commission from God. Commentators are not agreed whether it was really a divine commission given him through Jeremiah, or whether he merely used the name of God as an authority that Josiah would not refuse to obey. As he could not know the truth of Necho’s declaration, Josiah did not sin in opposing him; or, if he sinned at all, it was a sin of ignorance. The engagement took place. Josiah was mortally wounded (~~482~~ 2 Chronicles 35:23).

**24. *took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot*** — the carriage he had for ordinary use, and which would be more comfortable for the royal sufferer than the war chariot. The death of this good king was the subject of universal and lasting regret.

**25. *Jeremiah lamented for Josiah***, etc. — The elegy of the prophet has not reached us; but it seems to have been long preserved among his

countrymen and chanted on certain public occasions by the professional singers, who probably got the dirges they sang from a collection of funeral odes composed on the death of good and great men of the nation. The spot in the valley of Megiddo where the battle was fought was near the town of Hadad-rimmon; hence the lamentation for the death of Josiah was called “the lamentation of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddo,” which was so great and so long continued, that the lamentation of Hadad passed afterwards into a proverbial phrase to express any great and extraordinary sorrow (~~3217~~ Zechariah 12:11).

# CHAPTER 36

## 2 CHRONICLES 36:1-4.

### JEHOAHAZ, SUCCEEDING, IS DEPOSED BY PHARAOH.

**1. *the people of the land took Jehoahaz*** — Immediately after Josiah's overthrow and death, the people raised to the throne Shallum (<sup><1385></sup>1 Chronicles 3:15), afterwards called Jehoahaz, in preference to his older brother Eliakim, from whom they expected little good. Jehoahaz is said (<sup><1232></sup>2 Kings 23:30) to have received at Jerusalem the royal anointing — a ceremony not usually deemed necessary, in circumstances of regular and undisputed succession. But, in the case of Jehoahaz, it seems to have been resorted to in order to impart greater validity to the act of popular election; and, it may be, to render it less likely to be disturbed by Necho, who, like all Egyptians, would associate the idea of sanctity with the regal anointing. He was the youngest son of Josiah, but the popular favorite, probably on account of his martial spirit (<sup><2390></sup>Ezekiel 19:3) and determined opposition to the aggressive views of Egypt. At his accession the land was free from idolatry; but this prince, instead of following the footsteps of his excellent father, adopted the criminal policy of his apostatizing predecessors. Through his influence, directly or indirectly used, idolatry rapidly increased (see <sup><1233></sup>2 Kings 23:32).

**2. *he reigned three months in Jerusalem*** — His possession of sovereign power was of but very brief duration; for Necho determined to follow up the advantage he had gained in Judah; and, deeming it expedient to have a king of his own nomination on the throne of that country, he deposed the popularly elected monarch and placed his brother Eliakim or Jehoiakim on the throne, whom he anticipated to be a mere obsequious vassal. The course of events seems to have been this: on receiving intelligence after the battle of the accession of Jehoahaz to the throne, and perhaps also in consequence of the complaint which Eliakim brought before him in regard to this matter, Necho set out with a part of his forces to Jerusalem, while the remainder of his troops pursued their way at leisure towards Riblah,

laid a tribute on the country, raised Eliakim (Jehoiakim) as his vassal to the throne, and on his departure brought Jehoahaz captive with him to Riblah. The old expositors mostly assumed that Necho, after the battle of Megiddo, marched directly against Carchemish, and then on his return came to Jerusalem. The improbability, indeed the impossibility, of his doing so appears from this: Carchemish was from four hundred to five hundred miles from Megiddo, so that within “three months” an army could not possibly make its way thither, conquer the fenced city of Carchemish, and then march back a still greater distance to Jerusalem, and take that city [KEIL].

3. *an hundred talents of silver* — about \$170,000.

*and a talent of gold* — about \$25,000; total amount of tribute, about \$195,000.

4. *carried him* — Jehoahaz.

*to Egypt* — There he died (<sup>320</sup>Jeremiah 22:10-12).

## <sup>485</sup>2 CHRONICLES 36:5-8.

### JEHOIAKIM, REIGNING ILL, IS CARRIED INTO BABYLON.

5. *Jehoiakim ... did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord* — He followed the course of his idolatrous predecessors; and the people, to a great extent, disinclined to the reforming policy of his father, eagerly availed themselves of the vicious license which his lax administration restored. His character is portrayed with a masterly hand in the prophecy of Jeremiah (<sup>323</sup>Jeremiah 22:13-19). As the deputy of the king of Egypt, he departed further than his predecessor from the principles of Josiah’s government; and, in trying to meet the insatiable cupidity of his master by grinding exactions from his subjects, he recklessly plunged into all evil.

6. *Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon* — This refers to the first expedition of Nebuchadnezzar against Palestine, in the lifetime of his father Nabopolassar, who, being old and infirm, adopted his son as joint sovereign and despatched him, with the command of his army,



against the Egyptian invaders of his empire. Nebuchadnezzar defeated them at Carchemish, drove them out of Asia, and reduced all the provinces west of the Euphrates to obedience — among the rest the kingdom of Jehoiakim, who became a vassal of the Assyrian empire (<sup><1210></sup>2 Kings 24:1). Jehoiakim at the end of three years threw off the yoke, being probably instigated to revolt by the solicitations of the king of Egypt, who planned a new expedition against Carchemish. But he was completely vanquished by the Babylonian king, who stripped him of all his possessions between the Euphrates and the Nile (<sup><1210></sup>2 Kings 24:7). Then marching against the Egyptian's ally in Judah, he took Jerusalem, carried away a portion of the sacred vessels of the temple, perhaps in lieu of the unpaid tribute, and deposited them in the temple of his god, Belus, at Babylon (<sup><2000></sup>Daniel 1:2 5:2). Though Jehoiakim had been taken prisoner (and it was designed at first to transport him in chains to Babylon), he was allowed to remain in his tributary kingdom. But having given not long after some new offense, Jerusalem was besieged by a host of Assyrian dependents. In a sally against them Jehoiakim was killed (see on <sup><1210></sup>2 Kings 24:2-7; also <sup><2028></sup>Jeremiah 22:18,19 36:30).

**9, 10. *Jehoiachin was eight years old*** — called also Jeconiah or Coniah (<sup><2028></sup>Jeremiah 22:24) — “eight” should have been “eighteen,” as appears from <sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 24:8, and also from the full development of his ungodly principles and habits (see <sup><3800></sup>Ezekiel 19:5-7). His reign being of so short duration cannot be considered at variance with the prophetic denunciation against his father (<sup><3830></sup>Jeremiah 36:30). But his appointment by the people gave umbrage to Nebuchadnezzar, who, “when the year was expired” (<sup><4830></sup>2 Chronicles 36:10) — that is, in the spring when campaigns usually began — came in person against Jerusalem, captured the city, and sent Jehoiachin in chains to Babylon, removing at the same time all the nobles and most skillful artisans, and pillaging all the remaining treasures both of the temple and palace (see on <sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 24:8-17).

## 2 CHRONICLES 36:11-21.

### ZEDEKIAH'S REIGN.

**11. *Zedekiah*** — Nebuchadnezzar appointed him. His name, originally Mattaniah, was, according to the custom of Oriental conquerors, changed into Zedekiah. Though the son of Josiah (<sup><481></sup>1 Chronicles 3:15 <sup><410></sup>Jeremiah 1:2,3 37:1), he is called the brother of Jehoiachin (<sup><480></sup>2 Chronicles 36:10), that is, according to the latitude of Hebrew style in words expressing affinity, his relative or kinsman (see <sup><248></sup>2 Kings 24:18 <sup><251></sup>25:1-21).

**13. *who had made him swear by God*** — Zedekiah received his crown on the express condition of taking a solemn oath of fealty to the king of Babylon (<sup><370></sup>Ezekiel 17:13); so that his revolt by joining in a league with Pharaoh-hophra, king of Egypt, involved the crime of perjury. His own pride and obdurate impiety, the incurable idolatry of the nation, and their reckless disregard of prophetic warnings, brought down on his already sadly reduced kingdom the long threatened judgments of God. Nebuchadnezzar, the executioner of the divine vengeance, commenced a third siege of Jerusalem, which, after holding out for a year and a half, was taken in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah. It resulted in the burning of the temple, with, most probably, the ark, and in the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah (see on <sup><251></sup>2 Kings 25:1-7; <sup><321></sup>Ezekiel 12:13; <sup><370></sup>Ezekiel 17:16).

**21. *until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths*** — The return of every seventh was to be held as a sabbatic year, a season of rest to all classes, even to the land itself, which was to be fallow. This divine institution, however, was neglected — how soon and how long, appears from the prophecy of Moses (see on <sup><1834></sup>Leviticus 26:34), and of Jeremiah in this passage (see <sup><259></sup>Jeremiah 25:9-12), which told that for divine retribution it was now to remain desolate seventy years. As the Assyrian conquerors usually colonized their conquered provinces, so remarkable a deviation in Palestine from their customary policy must be ascribed to the overruling providence of God.

2 CHRONICLES 36:22,23.

**CYRUS' PROCLAMATION.**

**22.** *the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus* — (See on <sup><500></sup>Ezra 1:1-3).