

# War in Chronicles

Temple Faithfulness and  
Israel's Place in the Land

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Trinity Term 2014  
DPhil Thesis

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## Abstract

This thesis contends that the Chronicler includes many episodes of war in his retelling of Israel's monarchic history to demonstrate the benefits and consequences of temple faithfulness. Several scholars have long pointed out the Chronicler's reworking of texts in Samuel-Kings to show that Yahweh rewards the good and punishes the wicked (i.e. retribution theology). Some recent scholars, however, have put forward several exceptions to this rule. The analysis of passages in this thesis demonstrates that the Chronicler maintains this cause-effect relationship with the dual themes of war and temple. To do this, it divides the various kings into different categories.

First, David belongs in a category all by himself since he (according to the Chronicler) pioneered the two most foundational elements of the temple cult (i.e. gathering all Israel and providing the building materials). For this reason, he also won many battles to secure Israel's place in the land. The next two groups of kings either show complete faithfulness to (re)establishing the temple cult and its practices (e.g. Solomon, Hezekiah), or neglect it (e.g. Ahaz, Jehoram). Based on their attitude toward the temple, the Chronicler illustrates how they either prosper in the land through military victory, or suffer attack. The Chronicler presents mixed cases with the last two categories. On the one hand, he reports how many faithful kings (in varying degrees) support orthodox temple practices and so prosper on the battlefield. However, none of these kings persevere in their faithfulness so that either their success immediately stops or they suffer attack. On the other hand, the Chronicler also tells how two thoroughly wicked kings committed some of the worse sins in Israel's history, yet repented after suffering swift punishment. Through all these cases, the Chronicler demonstrates that temple faithfulness always brought Israel peace and security.

## Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des Antiken Judentums
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
<i>CurTM</i>	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JANES</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>Transeu</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The Chronicler highlights episodes of war throughout his retelling of Israel's history.<sup>1</sup> Instead of the long description of Saul's rise and fall in 1 Samuel, he records only one battle and inserts his own commentary on why Saul lost (1 Chr 10). As for the dual reigns of David and Solomon, he depicts the former as "a man of wars" who solidified Israel's place in the land (28:3) and the latter as "a man of rest" who was free from concerns about war so that he could build the temple (22:9). Regarding the southern kings in the divided monarchy, not only does he include all but one of their wars found in the books of Kings,<sup>2</sup> he also comments on wars already mentioned (e.g. 2 Chr 16:7-10), inserts several additional instances of war (e.g. 2 Chr 13), and even features periods of no war (e.g. 2 Chr 17:10). Through a wide array of editorial methods, the Chronicler makes war a significant factor in the reign of every king he discusses.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis I use the term "the Chronicler" to refer to a post-exilic author who used various traditions found mostly in the books of Samuel and Kings (though not necessarily the version in MT) as well as others (e.g. Psalms and Genesis) to retell Israel's history. For a recent collection on the Chronicler's use of sources, see E. Ben Zvi and D. V. Edelman eds., *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011). Auld has disagreed with this near-consensus and argued at length that the authors of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles shared a common source; see A. G. Auld, *Kings Without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994); A. G. Auld, *Samuel at the Threshold: Selected Works of Graeme Auld* (SOTSMS; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). On another note, I follow the arguments of Williamson, Japhet, and others who hold Chronicles as a separate work from Ezra-Nehemiah; see S. Japhet, "Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew," *VT* 18 (1968): 330-371; H. G. M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Lastly, I accept the basic unity of the work for essentially the same reasons that Klein argues briefly in the introduction to his commentary; cf. R. W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 11-13. N.B. All translations from this thesis are my own and all scripture references follow the versification found in BHS.

<sup>2</sup> The one exception appears in 2 Kgs 3.

<sup>3</sup> Several edited volumes have explored these methods. Cf. M. P. Graham, et al. eds., *The Chronicler as Historian* (JSOTSup 238; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); M. P. Graham and S. L. McKenzie eds., *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (JSOTSup 263; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic

Despite the preponderance of wars in the books of Chronicles, no study has given systematic attention to them all. Scholars have generally approached the topic in two different ways. Japhet demonstrates the most common approach in her seminal monograph on the ideologies expressed within Chronicles.<sup>4</sup> Significant discussion of war emerges only briefly, after a thorough explication (with several examples) of the doctrine of retribution. She then avers that the majority of wars fall into the readily apparent categories of reward and punishment, while the remaining battle reports showcase instances where God tests humans.<sup>5</sup> Most scholars allude to these broad categories in their discussion of a particular war.<sup>6</sup> Though this method certainly provides a good starting point, as good kings generally win wars and bad kings lose them, it too often neglects the Chronicler's other significant themes.<sup>7</sup>

A second approach isolates a smaller set of wars thought distinctive of the Chronicler's theology. For example, Knoppers addresses the many misconceptions concerning warfare in Chronicles by examining Jehoshaphat's war against a southeastern coalition in 2 Chr 20:1-30.<sup>8</sup> He gives special attention to the critical role of the temple in Jehoshaphat's miraculous victory, an aspect of war he suggests appears prominently in other wars in Chronicles (cf. 2 Chr 13:4-12; 14:7-14). These three wars in particular have

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Press, 1999); M. P. Graham, et al. eds., *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein* (JSOTSup 371; London: T & T Clark, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (BEATAJ 9; trans. A. Barber; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the few instances where a king faces attack immediately after a period of piety (2 Chr 14:8-14; 16:1-7; 20:1-30; 32:1-21). Japhet, *Ideology*, 191-198.

<sup>6</sup> Too many examples exist to list here, but they will receive attention throughout this thesis. For example, see my discussion on David (Chapter 2.1.2) and Asa (Chapter 5.1).

<sup>7</sup> In her defence, Japhet never meant to give a thorough examination of all the wars in Chronicles.

<sup>8</sup> G. N. Knoppers, "Jerusalem at War in Chronicles," in *Zion, City of Our God* (eds. R. S. Hess and G. J. Wenham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 57-76.

received much attention in scholarly research because they have no parallel in the books of Kings and contain many obvious Chronistic themes.<sup>9</sup> However, few have applied the results gained from such studies to the other wars found in Chronicles.

Although both approaches make important contributions to understanding the Chronicler's use of war narratives, each needs refinement. For example, some scholars have warned against holding too strict a theory of retribution within Chronicles because of the many exceptions that appear throughout the text. Ben Zvi notes how the prophets Hanani and Zechariah both suffered for their piety (cf. 16:7-10a; 24:20-22), and the general masses also experienced maltreatment at times though they had done no wrong (cf. 16:10b).<sup>10</sup> Even so, this thesis will show how the Chronicler aims to keep his doctrine of retribution consistent primarily with regard to kings and their success in war. Although Ben Zvi argues that the several instances where certain pious kings underwent attack also contradict a theory of retribution, this assumes that the Chronicler views all instances of war negatively. Not only do the conquests of David and others put war in a positive light, Japhet's category of "test" for these attacks in particular shows the opportunity for unproven kings to demonstrate their true faithfulness (see below on 2 Chr 7:14). The Chronicler may present a variety of circumstances for war in his history, but he remains consistent with them in the basic principles of retribution.

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<sup>9</sup> For example, see the extensive study by A. Ruffing, *Jahwekrieg als Weltmetapher: Studien zu Jahwekriegstexten des chronistischen Sondergutes* (SBB 24; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> E. Ben Zvi, "The Book of Chronicles: Another Look," *SR* 31 (2002): 261-281 (264). Followed by R. W. Klein, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 11-12. B. E. Kelly provides a survey of research on retribution with his own critique in *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (JSOTSup 211; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 29-110. See also his later essay "'Retribution' Revisited: Covenant, Grace and Restoration," in *The Chronicler as Theologian* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.), 206-227.



Commensurate with these rewards and punishments, this study will also show how the Chronicler assesses each king primarily on the basis of his faithfulness to the temple cult. Earlier scholars, perhaps following Wellhausen, assumed that kings received positive and negative consequences based on their adherence to the Mosaic Law.<sup>11</sup> Japhet expressed another view when she argued that the Chronicler demonstrates a system of divine justice throughout Israelite history to provide a general religious awareness that distinguishes between good and evil.<sup>12</sup> The analysis of texts in the following chapters, however, will show that, though the Chronicler certainly does reveal an interest in these general concerns (i.e. the law, good and evil), the vast majority of his examples of wicked and pious behavior pertain directly to the temple cult. Knoppers has shown how Jehoshaphat's faithfulness to the cult enabled him to win his war in 2 Chr 20, but this thesis will explore the many ways in which the Chronicler illustrates temple faithfulness and unfaithfulness for each of the kings. Preliminary discussion on three formative passages containing some of the Chronicler's characteristic vocabulary uncovers this temple trajectory, all of which (i.e. the vocabulary) will receive more attention in the body of this thesis.

First, the Chronicler illustrates how the first resettlers to the land prioritized the reestablishment of the temple cult when they returned from exile in Babylon (1 Chr 9).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (trans. J. S. Black and A. Menzies; New York: Meridian, 1957), 203. See also M. Noth, *The Chronicler's History* (JSOTSup 50; trans. H. G. M. Williamson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 98.

<sup>12</sup> Japhet, *Ideology*, 154.

<sup>13</sup> This thesis will not discuss the preceding genealogies in 1 Chr 1-8 since they do not feature kings, give only minimal attention to war (5:10, 18-22, 25-26), and refer to the temple only briefly (cf. 6:16, 17, 33). Nevertheless, as a whole, their main purpose still evidences the aim of this thesis. Schweitzer and others have argued that 1 Chr 1-8 depicts Israel in its ideal extent; cf. S. J. Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia in Chronicles* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 51, following H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982), 39. In 1 Chr 9, the Chronicler shows how the returnees sought to regain this place in the land with temple reforms after Yahweh had punished them with exile for their unfaithfulness (מעל) (cf. 2

He features the root מַעַל as the reason for their expulsion from the land, “And Judah was taken into exile in Babylon because of their *unfaithfulness* (מַעַל)” (9:1; cf. 2:7; 5:25).

Throughout the Hebrew Bible, the term מַעַל commonly denotes a breach of faith in a particular relationship.<sup>14</sup> It can have a secular context, such as in the description of the law concerning a spouse who may have committed an act of marital infidelity (Num 5:11-31). Most of its occurrences, however, appear in the context of Israel’s unfaithfulness toward their God. While one could innocuously commit such a sin unintentionally and simply make the required sacrifice (e.g. Lev 5:15), biblical authors often use the term to describe a willfully treacherous act by an individual or the people (e.g. Ezek 39:23, 26). The common thread to all these situations lies with the relationship that undergoes a breach of trust committed by one of the parties.

The Chronicler consistently uses the verb מַעַל, with no evidence that he ever borrows it from his *Vorlage*, to describe Israel’s unfaithfulness in maintaining the temple, their central obligation in their relationship with Yahweh in Chronicles. The root must have this nuance in 1 Chr 9:1 since the Chronicler shows the returnees seek to rectify Israel’s breach with their movement to revive the temple practice (vv 2-34; see also 2 Chr 36:14). As I will show in Chapter 4, the Chronicler also illustrates this use of מַעַל with many other clear examples throughout his narrative, such as with Ahaz (2 Chr 28:19, 22; cf. 29:6, 19;

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Chr 36:14). Several monographs and commentaries investigate the themes located within the genealogies as compared with the rest of the Chronicler’s work, cf. M. Kartveit, *Motive und Schichten der Landtheologie in 1 Chronik 1-9* (ConBOT 28; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1989); G. N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 12; New York: Doubleday, 2004); M. Oeming, *Das wahre Israel: die “genealogische Vorhalle” 1 Chronik 1-9* (BWANT 128; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1990); J. T. Sparks, *The Chronicler’s Genealogies: Towards an Understanding of 1 Chronicles 1-9* (Academia Biblica 28; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008); T. Willi, *Chronik* (BKAT 24; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. H. Ringgren, “מַעַל,” *TDOT* 8:460-463. See also J. Milgrom, “The Concept of Ma‘al in the Bible and the Ancient Near East,” *JAOS* 96 (1976): 236-247.

30:7). It can also describe an abuse of the temple cult (2 Chr 26:16, 18). Elsewhere, I will argue that this paradigmatic use of the verb enables him to charge Saul with the same basic offense as several other kings even before the temple appears (cf. 1 Chr 10:13-14).

David's commissioning of Solomon in 1 Chr 28-29 represents a second passage where the Chronicler sets paradigmatic vocabulary. Many have noted the significance of the Chronicler's complete rewriting of the transfer of the kingdom from a period of turbulence to a time of preparation and exhortation.<sup>15</sup> The most important task with which David charged his son undoubtedly regards the construction of the temple, "And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart... If you seek (דרש) him he will be found by you, but if you forsake (עזב) him he will cast you off forever. Be careful now, for Yahweh has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it" (28:9-10). The Chronicler has later kings receive similar warnings from prophets who explain the consequences of neglecting the cult (cf. 2 Chr 12:5; 15:2). Elsewhere, the terms דרש and עזב frequently characterize kings as having either a positive (e.g. 2 Chr 31:21) or negative (e.g. 2 Chr 29:6) orientation towards the temple.<sup>16</sup> Even before Solomon built the temple, the Chronicler uses the term דרש to criticize Saul for never pursuing the idea (1 Chr 10:13), but praises David for his desire to establish a centralized location for Yahweh's presence (1 Chr 13:3). Thus, David's command to Solomon in 28:9-10 illuminates these earlier occurrences of the word.

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<sup>15</sup> See for example the articles of R. Braun, "Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles," *JBL* 92 (1973): 503-516; "Solomon, the Chosen Temple Builder: The Significance of 1 Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Theology of Chronicles," *JBL* 95 (1976): 581-590, and H. G. M. Williamson, "The Accession of Solomon in the Books of Chronicles," *VT* 26 (1976): 351-361.

<sup>16</sup> Certain exceptions can apply. The verb עזב also occurs with the mundane sense of "leave" in Chronicles, e.g. 1 Chr 10:7.

Finally, the Chronicler introduces another important word with his insertion in Yahweh's response at the temple dedication, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves (כָּנַע), and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chr 7:14).<sup>17</sup> Kelly has shown how the statement places a greater emphasis on repentance (i.e. not merit) as the Chronicler's chief concern at the temple dedication.<sup>18</sup> The Chronicler highlights two kings in particular, Rehoboam and Manasseh, who acted as unfaithfully as any other king in Chronicles, yet found relief from divine punishment when they humbled themselves. The word כָּנַע also describes Josiah who acted penitently even though he had committed no wrong (cf. 2 Chr 34:27).<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that the Chronicler finishes his insertion at the temple dedication with Yahweh's avowal, "Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer of this place" (7:15). In other words, these kings not only cried out to Yahweh for help in crisis, but the described scene intimates that they directed their prayers to the divine presence in the temple.<sup>20</sup>

This passage also has importance beyond the theme of repentance. The Chronicler shows how several other kings demonstrated the pious orientation described in 2 Chr 7:14 to find relief from a potential threat. Four kings in particular faced a formidable oncoming invader but cried out to Yahweh and found help (cf. Abijah, 2 Chr 13; Asa, 2 Chr 14; Jehoshaphat, 2 Chr 20; Hezekiah, 2 Chr 32). In contrast, several other kings received

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<sup>17</sup> For the importance of the word כָּנַע to the Chronicler's history, see D. A. Glatt-Gilad, "The Root kn' and Historiographic Periodization in Chronicles," *CBQ* 64 (2002): 248-257.

<sup>18</sup> Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 62.

<sup>19</sup> This theme appears in David's reign even without the particular word כָּנַע itself (cf. 1 Chr 21).

<sup>20</sup> Though 1 Kgs 8:29-30 shows that his *Vorlage* likely already has this terminology in Solomon's preceding prayer, the Chronicler emphasizes the importance of the temple by reiterating the concept here in Yahweh's response.

judgment because they failed to “turn” to Yahweh in their times of need (e.g. 2 Chr 36:13).<sup>21</sup>

The following chapters of this thesis will examine how the Chronicler uses the many war narratives in the reigns of the different kings to illustrate the benefits and consequences that stem from Israel’s temple faithfulness (or lack thereof).

Chapter 2 shows how the Chronicler portrays David as a pioneer of temple faithfulness, first gathering all Israel and then making massive preparations for the construction of the temple. Accordingly, as long as he pursued these two foundational elements of the cult, he found victory on the battlefield.

Chapters 3 and 4 present the clearest examples of faithful and unfaithful kings on the basis of how much they followed the ideal set by David in their attitudes toward the temple. For these kings, the wars validate their measure of faithfulness.

The next two chapters show how the remaining monarchs do not fit as nicely into the categories of the completely faithful or unfaithful king. Nevertheless, the Chronicler still communicates a powerful message to his readers in each of their reigns. Chapter 5 examines many ostensibly faithful kings who had an ironic, faithless downfall and chapter 6 investigates two notoriously unfaithful kings who brought a surprising halt to their judgment through an act of repentance.

Lastly, chapter 7 will assess how well the themes of war and temple serve as indicators for understanding the Chronicler’s evaluation of the different kings. It will also suggest ways in which this research will contribute to future study of the books of Chronicles.

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<sup>21</sup> The word שׁוּב in this verse makes the connection with 7:14, not כָּנַע.

## Chapter 2

### David: Pioneer and Ideal King

David receives more attention in Chronicles than any other king. The Chronicler details his reign over nineteen chapters, while he devotes only nine to Solomon, and decidedly less to the rest. Moreover, David sets the benchmark for how the other kings should reign in Chronicles as many other evaluations show (e.g. 2 Chr 29:2; 34:2). To illustrate David's eminence, the Chronicler structures his reign upon his two (presumably) greatest achievements, the regathering of all Israel back to the worship of Yahweh, the God of their fathers (1 Chr 11-16) and his massive preparations for the temple of Israel's God (1 Chr 17-29).

Certainly a study on the books of Samuel would regard other achievements as more important, but the Chronicler gives these feats the most honor in his narrative since they will prove to be the two most important features of Israel's religious cult. In addition to this, the Chronicler also shows how David found success on the battlefield as long as he pursued these two goals. The following analysis uncovers two literary cycles (i.e. 1 Chr 11-16 and 17-29), each of which traces this dynamic between David's foundational cultic achievements and his great wars through the three different stages of (1) early success, (2) sudden adversity, and (3) future hope.

#### **2.1. First Cycle: Gathering All Israel (1 Chr 11-16)**

##### ***2.1.1. Early Success: The Conquest of Jerusalem (1 Chr 11-12)***

The Chronicler first highlights David's triumph over the Jebusites in Jerusalem at the very beginning of his reign as a strong contrast to the failure of Saul on Mount Gilboa

in 1 Chr 10.<sup>1</sup> He uses several of his favorite literary techniques to make this disparity between the two wars quite evident.<sup>2</sup> First, he skips over the events in 2 Sam 1-4 that tell of the rival kingship of Saul's son Ishbaal and David's rule over Judah alone from Hebron to create a literary proximity between the events. Second, he removes the regnal data in 2 Sam 5:4-5 so that the conquest of Jerusalem appears as soon as possible. While the coronation and conquest narratives appear as two separate episodes in 2 Sam 5, the Chronicler fuses them together into one literary unit. Third, even within this war narrative, the Chronicler tidies up the borrowed material by omitting the confusing details about his taunting "the blind and the lame" (cf. 2 Sam 5:6b, 8b). He tells how David swiftly conquered Jerusalem to make it his capital city, despite the naive taunts of the native Jebusites.

With these changes, the concluding statement in v 9, which the Chronicler borrows in its entirety from 2 Sam 5:10, now has a new effect for the narrative, "And David became greater and greater, for Yahweh of hosts was with him." In 2 Sam 5:10, the verse contends that the righteous David, who had multiple chances to seize the kingdom by his own force, finally began to prosper as king over all the tribes. Such an implied meaning has no place in Chronicles since David had only suddenly appeared on the scene. Rather, the statement prompts the question, why was Yahweh with David?

Another issue arises when we observe the basic literary unity that pervades this first cycle of David's reign in 1 Chr 11-12. Though several older commentators labeled 11:10-

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of Saul in Chronicles, see Chapter 4.1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. I. Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 18-22.

12:40 a later redaction,<sup>3</sup> Williamson has demonstrated that it rather forms part of a larger chiasm along with 11:1-9 where the Chronicler artistically portrays the people's increasing support for David.<sup>4</sup> These parts include David's coronation at Hebron in 11:1-9 (a<sup>1</sup>) and 12:39-41 (a<sup>2</sup>); David's support at Hebron in 11:10-47 (b<sup>1</sup>) and 12:24-38 (b<sup>2</sup>); David's support at Ziklag in 12:1-8 (c<sup>1</sup>) and 20-23 (c<sup>2</sup>); and lastly David's support at the stronghold in 12:9-16 (d<sup>1</sup>) and 17-19 (d<sup>2</sup>). Knoppers argues that the chiasm focuses mainly on how the people of Israel responded to the divine will. Though the books of Samuel show how many Israelites stayed loyal to Saul despite Samuel's prophecies against him (2 Sam 2:12-32, but cf. 1 Sam 13:13-14; 15:26), the Chronicler asserts in 11:10-12:40 that many Israelites (even including some from Saul's own tribe of Benjamin) defected to David at every stage of his ascent according to the word of Yahweh (cf. 11:3, 10; 12:24).<sup>5</sup>

As helpful as these observations from Williamson and Knoppers are, their analysis still suffers from a major shortcoming, namely that though Williamson has organized the chiasm based on the different sites David visited, it does not include a complementing element for the conquest of Jerusalem (11:4-9). Surprisingly enough, Knoppers and Klein have even left out the entire episode in their own rendering of the chiasm and, accordingly, have devoted much of their discussion elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Williamson addressed the problem in

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<sup>3</sup> Noth, *Chronicler's History*, 115-116; W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (HAT 21; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1955), 103-107.

<sup>4</sup> H. G. M. Williamson, "'We Are Yours, O David': The Setting and Purpose of 1 Chronicles 12:1-23," in *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 115-125.

<sup>5</sup> G. N. Knoppers, "Israel's First King and 'The Kingdom of YHWH in the Hands of the Sons of David': The Place of the Saulide Monarchy in the Chronicler's Historiography," in *Saul in Story and Tradition* (eds. C. S. Ehrlich and M. C. White; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 187-213 (193-200).

<sup>6</sup> Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 298; Knoppers, "Israel's First King," 194. Y. Berger ("Chiasm and Meaning in 1 Chronicles," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 14 [2014]: 1-31 [13-14]) includes 11:1-9 in a chiasm that begins with the returnees in 9:2-34 and ends with David's conquest of Jerusalem, but I do not find his presentation compelling.



his original article by supposing that the Chronicler wanted to develop his ideal portrayal of a united Israel under David in Jerusalem that had already begun in vv 1-3. In this manner, vv 4-9 provide an integral part to the opening paragraph.<sup>7</sup> Building on this, I would like to argue that the Chronicler views the capture of Jerusalem as the focal point of 1 Chr 11-12. Having demonstrated that Saul died on the battlefield for his neglect of Yahweh (a point I will argue in depth later), the Chronicler now shows how David could become not only king but also a mighty warrior who could conquer Jerusalem.

On the surface level, the insertion of “all Israel” quickly emerges as one obvious reason for David’s success. In 2 Sam 5:1, “all the tribes of Israel” came to meet David so that they could anoint him as king, a text which shows how the northern tribes finally accepted him after the death of Saul’s son Ishbaal. Afterwards, “David and his men,” a group that likely represents some of the new king’s select forces, then made their way up to Jerusalem to conquer it (v 6). In the parallel account within Chronicles, not only does the context of 2 Sam 1-4 disappear as already mentioned, but the Chronicler also alters the wording so that “all Israel” anoints David and then the same group accompanies him for an easy victory (cf. 1 Chr 11:1, 4). Curiously, David has the entire nation’s unwavering support from the very beginning of his reign.

Since such a hyperbolic reading would require explanation, the Chronicler then uncovers who comprised the group “all Israel” with a flashback using the remaining parts

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<sup>7</sup> Williamson, “We Are Yours,” 118-119. Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 97) asserts that the Chronicler simply maintains his *Vorlage*. Many have argued that the events in 2 Sam 5 (i.e. coronation, conquest of Jerusalem, Philistine attack), and therefore the events of 1 Chr 11:1-9 present a historical sequence; cf. Kalimi, *Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History*, 19-20, and the references there.

of the chiasm.<sup>8</sup> The insertion at 1 Chr 11:10 presumably introduces an account of the mighty men who strengthened David on the eve of his conquest of Jerusalem (vv 11-47 [b<sup>1</sup>] // 2 Sam 23:8-39). Williamson concedes that Hebron does not appear in 11:10, but persuasively argues that the context and content of the verse make this intention clear.<sup>9</sup> The following two paragraphs illustrate how members from the different tribes defected to David at Ziklag (12:1-8 [c<sup>1</sup>]) and even as far back as his time at the stronghold in the wilderness (vv 9-16 [d<sup>1</sup>]). Thus, the central portion of the chiasm shows that David's support, which eventually became all Israel, began to accumulate as far back as his time as a refugee from Saul in the earliest part of his career.

Underneath this surface level, the Chronicler goes deeper to argue that David initially gained this support from all Israel *by his faithfulness to Yahweh*. While the first half of the chiasm illustrates the might of David's support (encapsulated in the phrase "all Israel") by tracing its growth backwards stage by stage (11:1-12:16 [a<sup>1</sup>-d<sup>1</sup>]), the second half moves forward once again to reveal why the people ever began to put their confidence in him (12:17-40 [d<sup>2</sup>-a<sup>2</sup>]). The Chronicler uses the catchword עזר ("help") several times in this section to demonstrate this.<sup>10</sup>

He begins by showing how David appealed to a group of Benjaminites and Judahites for help in his second paragraph on David's days at the stronghold (vv 17-19 [d<sup>2</sup>], esp. v 18). At this point, the reader familiar with the story of 1 Samuel can appreciate the

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<sup>8</sup> For the use of a flashback, cf. S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1993), 233.

<sup>9</sup> Williamson, "We Are Yours," 119.

<sup>10</sup> Knoppers ("Israel's First King," 197) notes that of the eighty-two occurrences for this verb in the Hebrew Bible, twenty-five appear in Chronicles, with eight of them in 1 Chr 12. Williamson ("We Are Yours," 116-118) shows how the nuances of the verb in 1 Chr 12 are distinctive of the Chronicler's uses of the verb elsewhere.

allusions to this early part of David's life, when he was fleeing from Saul who was trying to kill him (cf. 1 Sam 23:14).<sup>11</sup> Naturally, such a band of men as the one in 12:17 would have posed a major threat since David himself would not have had many followers yet. Nevertheless, he entreated them on the basis that he had done no wrong and, more importantly, "the God of our fathers" would judge them if they turned against him.

This divine title for Yahweh, perhaps the Chronicler's favorite,<sup>12</sup> serves two great purposes here. Not only does it give a sense of the kinship that should have existed between the approaching Israelite band and David (i.e., "our"), it also emphasizes David's faithfulness to their common God. The Chronicler, therefore, begins to account for David's success by going back to the first moment he began to rally "all Israel", where he not only offered the first band of defectors a place in his army, but also told them that *his* God Yahweh would defend him if they did not. Hence, David placed his trust in Yahweh at one of his weakest moments, an option Saul certainly did not pursue according to 1 Chr 10:13-14.

The Chronicler affirms David's contention within this same literary unit (vv 17-19 [d<sup>2</sup>]) through the response of the divinely inspired Amasai, "We are yours, O David; and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your *helper*,<sup>13</sup> for your God *helps* you!" (v 19) Williamson compares this poetic fragment with other contrary statements in the books of Samuel (e.g. 2 Sam 20:1) to show the plausibility that it

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<sup>11</sup> C. Mitchell ("The Dialogism of Chronicles," in *The Chronicler as Author* [eds. M. P. Graham and S. L. McKenzie], 311-326 [326]) avers, "The reader of Chronicles does not have to know Samuel-Kings in order to get the message of Chronicles. But the reader of Chronicles who also knows Samuel-Kings can appreciate the dialogue between the two, as well as the little ironies and playfulness that Chronicles has built into its text."

<sup>12</sup> Japhet (*Ideology*, 19) suggests that it stresses the continuity of the relationship between Israel and their God.

<sup>13</sup> Some translations render the participle in לעֲזָרָךְ as a defectively spelled plural (e.g. ESV; Klein, *I Chronicles*, 311). Even so, it still likely refers to David's God (אֱלֹהִים) because of the subsequent clause.

represents an early pro-Davidic saying at its core, in which case the Chronicler likely uses it as a robust affirmation of the people's support for David.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the Chronicler again inserts the thematic word עזר to show that the band clung to David *because of his relationship to Yahweh*. The threefold use of the word שלום in their declaration corresponds to David's appeal ("If you have come in peace [לשלום]...") to emphasize their enthusiasm to join a leader so dedicated to Israel's God. Not only did they wish peace upon David, they hoped for peace upon themselves as his helpers since God helped him. The Chronicler crafts their response to show that they joined David's cause because they believed that he pursued the purposes of their common God, the God of their fathers, Yahweh. They knew that God helped David, so they too wanted to help him as faithful followers so that they could share in his prosperity.

As the Chronicler next revisits the scene of David at Ziklag (vv 20-23 [c<sup>2</sup>]), he uses the theme of *help* to address a potential concern from the account in 1 Samuel, namely, how could he consider David faithful if he had decided to offer up his services to the Philistines? In 1 Sam 27:5-6, David received Ziklag *because* he found favor in the eyes of the king of Gath, Achish. Later, he and his men even took their place in the Philistine army in order to fight Saul's forces at Jezreel. As for the Chronicler, he admits that David stayed at Ziklag since Saul had limited his freedom to roam about the land (1 Chr 12:1-8 [c<sup>1</sup>]). Moreover, the Chronicler claims that many mighty men from Saul's own kinsmen (i.e. the Benjaminites) came to help (עזר) David in war at this stage (v 1). In addition, the corresponding paragraph about his time in Ziklag (vv 20-22) reports that seven "chiefs of thousands" (v 21) from Manasseh came to join David's forces. Knoppers has demonstrated

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<sup>14</sup> Williamson, "We Are Yours," 124.

that the Chronicler routinely condemns any king who tries to grow through foreign alliances,<sup>15</sup> so then how could David prosper militarily when he himself had defected to the Philistine army?

The Chronicler responds to this potential objection by pointing out that David still did not actually “help” the Philistines (1 Chr 12:20), a fact that he gleans from his source (cf. 1 Sam 29:4). Klein notes that David would have passed through the territory of Manasseh having left the Philistines just before the battle at Gilboa on his way to Ziklag,<sup>16</sup> so perhaps he received his reward of a stronger army right away in the process of his departure. More to the point, the Chronicler argues that the newly acquired mighty men “helped” David against the band of raiders, another reference to the narrative in the books of Samuel (v 22; cf. 1 Sam 30).<sup>17</sup> The pleonastic pronoun (המה) before the verb (עזרו) emphasizes the link between David’s faithfulness (i.e. not helping the Philistines) with his reward (i.e. the success in battle against the band of raiders). The summary statement in v 23 (see below) uses the verb עזר to confirm the interpretation of not only this passage in vv 20-22, but also the one in vv 17-19.

Apparently these texts (i.e. 12:17-19 [d<sup>2</sup>] and vv 20-23 [c<sup>2</sup>]) serve as only two examples of David’s growth since the Chronicler states, “For from day to day people came to David in order to *help* him, until there was a great army, like an army of God ( כַּמְחֲנֶה ) (אֱלֹהִים)” (v 23). Scholars generally agree that this statement claims that David grew steadily and immensely during his stays at the stronghold and in Ziklag, but there has been some

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<sup>15</sup> G. N. Knoppers, “‘Yhwh Is Not with Israel’: Alliances as a Topos in Chronicles,” *CBQ* 58 (1996): 601-626.

<sup>16</sup> Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 321.

<sup>17</sup> The definite article in front of גִּדּוֹד may reveal that the Chronicler indeed had in mind the particular episode of 1 Sam 30.

dispute as to why the Chronicler compares David's forces to "an army of God". Some take אלהים as a superlative since it has this nuance elsewhere (cf. 1 Sam 14:15),<sup>18</sup> but such an interpretation makes מְהוּלָה גִּדּוּל before it redundant and does not consider the preposition כ affixed at the beginning. From another angle, Braun translates the phrase literally, but then also neglects the preposition when he *equates* David's army with the heavenly host.<sup>19</sup> While the phrase is best interpreted literally, the full force of the comparison with God's army stresses the type of support David received. Hence, the Chronicler uses these two brief episodes to show that Yahweh rewarded David for his faithfulness with an army as great as his own host in heaven.<sup>20</sup>

The final destination for David in Hebron continues this theme, not by giving another example of David's faithfulness as the previous two, but by making a simple comparison to the unfaithful Saul in vv 24-38 (b<sup>2</sup>). The stretch from vv 25-38 details the great numbers of troops that came to David and made his army "like an army of God" (cf. v 23 above), but even before this the Chronicler explicitly states their purpose, "to turn (להסב) the kingdom of Saul over to him, according to the command of Yahweh" (v 24). The hiphil form of the verb סבב likely links this verse back to the summary statement in 10:13-14, which explains that Yahweh put Saul to death for his unfaithfulness and "turned (סבב, hiphil) the kingdom over to David." Both of these events, Saul's demise and David's rise, happened at the instigation of Yahweh, and came about as a result of each king's level of

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. M. Myers, *I Chronicles* (AB 12; New York: Doubleday, 1965), 95. To make a comparison, the second noun must be somewhat specific. Hence, it makes no sense to say that David's forces were "like a great/godly army".

<sup>19</sup> R. Braun, *I Chronicles* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1986), 166.

<sup>20</sup> Several commentators seem to argue along these lines, though not explicitly; cf. P. B. Dirksen, *I Chronicles* (trans. A. P. Runia; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 187; Klein, *I Chronicles*, 321.

pious devotion. In other words, the language of v 24 implies that David received both the kingdom and even the large masses of troops seen throughout vv 25-38 because he stayed faithful to Yahweh, unlike Saul. The borrowed list of mighty men in 11:10-47 (b<sup>1</sup>) appears in this same light, to illustrate who would strengthen (חזק, hithpael) David in his kingdom according to the word of Yahweh (11:10). It marks the first of several instances where the Chronicler uses חזק in the hithpael to denote the particular help of Yahweh as a reward for faithful behavior (cf. 2 Chr 16:9).<sup>21</sup>

The last component of the chiasm in 12:39-41 (a<sup>2</sup>), still in Hebron but now with all of David's armed forces, shows the final result of David's faithfulness, which the Chronicler just illustrated in the previous three episodes (i.e. 12:17-19 [d<sup>2</sup>], 20-23 [c<sup>2</sup>], 24-38 [b<sup>2</sup>]). All the men that David accumulated to this point responded to his petition for help in 12:18 so that they became עזרי מערכה, "helpers in the battle line", with עזר being a biform of עזר (v 39).<sup>22</sup> They came to Hebron "with a complete heart (בלבב שלם) in order to make him king over all Israel," while the rest of the nation had a לב אחד, "single heart," to make him king also (both expressions in 12:39). The Chronicler will often use the term לב to describe the intentions of various people,<sup>23</sup> but here specifically it shows both the pure and united motives of the people for installing David as their king. The "joy in Israel" (v 41), a theme that the Chronicler will utilize many times elsewhere to depict scenes of

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<sup>21</sup> Much more will be said about the hithpael of חזק in the discussion on 2 Chr 1:1 (see Chapter 3.1.1) and 17:1 (see Chapter 5.2.1)

<sup>22</sup> See HALOT.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 3.1.1 for the discussion of its use in Chronicles.

divine blessing,<sup>24</sup> accentuates the people's virtuous desire to make the devout David their king.

The opening scene of David's coronation at Hebron in 11:1-3 (a<sup>2</sup>; cf. // 2 Sam 5:1-3), where "all Israel" abruptly entered onto the scene to assist David for his conquest of Jerusalem, already hinted at the people's support (v 1; cf. v 4). They mentioned his divine election to the kingship (v 2) and his making a covenant with them before Yahweh (v 3).<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the Chronicler makes insertions in 11:1-3 to intimate that the people support David because of his devotion. In their declaration of David's divine calling (v 2), the Chronicler inserts "your God" in apposition to "Yahweh" to underscore his close relationship to Israel's deity.<sup>26</sup> Also, the people anointed him as king "according to the word of Yahweh by Samuel" (v 3), which must refer to how Yahweh sought David out as "a man after his own heart" (cf. 1 Sam 13:14).

Thus, the Chronicler uses this intricate chiasm in 1 Chr 11-12 to show how David has been accumulating support from the various tribes of Israel since his days at the stronghold through his faithfulness to Israel's God Yahweh. It was David's faith in the God of their fathers that brought them over to his camp away from Saul (cf. 12:19, 24). Once he garnered complete support from the people, he (together with "all Israel") reaped his reward on the battlefield, conquering Jerusalem smoothly and swiftly. The people of Israel benefited too by at last having a faithful leader who could win battles (11:2), creating a

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. 2 Chr 20:27; 29:36. See also S. J. De Vries, "Festival Ideology in Chronicles," in *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim* (eds. H. Sun, et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 104-124.

<sup>25</sup> See Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 299. Though Japhet rightly distinguishes the latter action from a covenant with Yahweh (cf. *Ideology*, 96-116), it nevertheless must have some religious implications.

<sup>26</sup> Though Knoppers (*1 Chronicles*, 10-29, 535) cites the LXX<sup>B</sup> and Syr. as evidence that the Chronicles text does not have "your God" (*lectio brevior*).



reason to rejoice in the land (12:41). Mosis argues that the Chronicler includes these episodes to show how David established the necessary conditions to bring in the ark,<sup>27</sup> but the above arguments demonstrate that 1 Chr 11-12 have importance in their own right. The Chronicler moves David's conquest of Jerusalem to the very beginning as a contrast to Saul's failure. He then surrounds it with a chiasm to show how his devout behavior (as another contrast to Saul) enabled him to obtain the support of all Israel and, accordingly, gain victory on the battlefield. In 1 Chr 13-16, the Chronicler will continue to connect David's military success with his concentration on gathering larger parts of "all Israel".

### **2.1.2. Sudden Adversity: All Israel and the Ark (1 Chr 13-14)**

The second part of the first literary cycle focuses on how David gathered even more people back to the worship of Yahweh, which led to still further victory in war for Israel. Most scholars have treated not just these two chapters, but the larger unit 1 Chr 13-16 as a cohesive segment since it forms an "ark narrative" for the Chronicler. Begg notes how the majority of the occurrences for the term אֲרוֹן ("ark") appear here and in 2 Chr 5-6.<sup>28</sup> Hence, the close attention given to the ark, which emerges suddenly in 1 Chr 13 and then disappears for some time after the celebration of its successful transfer in 1 Chr 16, gives the unit a distinct beginning and end. Other scholars have included slightly more in this unit for different reasons, though they have mostly maintained this basic unity.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> R. Mosis, *Untersuchungen zur Theologie des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes* (Freiburg: Herder, 1973), 45.

<sup>28</sup> Thirty-nine of the forty-six occurrences in Chronicles appear in one of these two passages. C. T. Begg, "The Ark in Chronicles," in *The Chronicler as Theologian* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.), 133-145 (134).

<sup>29</sup> See the references in T. C. Eskenazi, "A Literary Approach to Chronicles' Ark Narrative in 1 Chronicles 13-16," in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday* (eds. A. B. Beck, et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 258-274 (263).

Going against this trend, Wright questions whether the Chronicler even intends an “ark narrative” at this point in his history since his rearrangement of the material creates an awkward break in the story’s flow at 1 Chr 14.<sup>30</sup> He refers to an older generation of scholars, such as Noth and Rudolph,<sup>31</sup> who maintained the unity of 1 Chr 13-16 because the establishment of Jerusalem as a cultic center seemed to support an anti-Samaritan bias they also saw in Ezra-Nehemiah. Since recent research has refuted this theme of a “Samaritan threat” for Chronicles,<sup>32</sup> he continues, there no longer remains any reason to hold on to the idea of an ark narrative in 1 Chr 13-16. Though ultimately Wright’s analysis does not give adequate attention to the obvious literary features stated above, he helpfully calls attention to the intrusion of 1 Chr 14 as a rather difficult obstacle to the cohesion of this stretch of narrative.

Several scholars argue that this changed order simply reflects the Chronicler’s retribution theology since David received the general blessings of new house, larger family, and victorious battles because of his care for the ark.<sup>33</sup> However, this assertion cannot account for the obvious fact that David actually failed in his first attempt to transfer it to Jerusalem, particularly for a cultic violation. Kelly addresses this problem by contending that retribution in the strict sense of recompense for specific action is not the dominant theme, but rather the surprising blessing of Yahweh even to those who seek him

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<sup>30</sup> J. W. Wright, “The Founding Father: The Structure of the Chronicler’s David Narrative,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 45-59 (47).

<sup>31</sup> Noth, *Chronicler's History*, 100-101; Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 111-129.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 74, who follows T.-S. Im, *Das Davidbild in den Chronikbüchern: David als Idealbild des theokratischen Messianismus für den Chronisten* (Europäische Hochschulschriften; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985), 80-81. See also Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 344.

imperfectly, such as David.<sup>34</sup> However, the Chronicler's editorial changes do not imply such divine grace as the reason for David's blessing in 1 Chr 14, nor will he give attention to any fault of David at all.

To the contrary, the Chronicler makes alterations to his *Vorlage* to show how David acted devoutly the entire time. As with 1 Chr 11-12, he demonstrates here that David made a concerted effort to gather even more people to a proper worship of Yahweh, this time concentrated on the symbol of the divine presence in the ark. In this regard, the transfer of the ark has only secondary importance insofar as it allowed David to rally more Israelites to their God. The following analysis will show how Yahweh granted David further victory on the battlefield against the Philistines in 1 Chr 14 for this resolute desire.

As a preliminary point, we may look at how David's eagerness to serve Yahweh stands out as a striking feature of the Chronicler's ark narrative, especially since this theme does not appear in the parallel account in 2 Sam 6. The latter account reported how David's first failed attempt to bring up the ark put an end to the momentum he had gained since he became king over a unified Israel. Once Ish-bosheth had died and the northern tribes accepted him as king, the account asserts that David conquered Jerusalem (5:1-8), renovated the city to make it his capital (v 9-10), had a house built for himself with the help of the foreign king Hiram (vv 11-12), grew a large family with more wives and children (vv 13-16), and finally (and most impressively) defended his new capital from the attack of the Philistines (vv 17-25). Following these successes, David's initial failure to bring the ark up to Jerusalem presented a shocking setback (cf. 6:1-11). Yahweh executed his divine wrath on one of David's helpers, Uzzah, for no clear reason, which made David unwilling

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<sup>34</sup> Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 79.

to try again (cf. v 10). The account records that David only later pursued a second attempt because he heard news that Obed-edom, the new guardian of the ark, had received blessing from Yahweh for keeping it (v 12a). Although David eventually fulfilled his mission to bring up the ark (vv 12b-15), his struggle to do so presented an awkward break in the narrative.

The Chronicler, on the other hand, illustrates David's determination to continue to bring larger numbers of people to the worship of Yahweh as soon as he could, immediately after his conquest of Jerusalem. His insertion at the beginning of the ark narrative demonstrates this (13:1-5). It first shows David consulting with his commanders, who were still with him after the conquest of Jerusalem (v 1),<sup>35</sup> but then reveals David's next objective as gathering more people from "all the lands of Israel" (v 2). Scholars have certainly passed over this primary point too quickly in order to underscore the importance of David's desire to retrieve the ark (v 3), which has consequently led to confusion about how David could prosper after failing to transfer it.<sup>36</sup>

Unquestionably, the ark will play an important role as the precursor to the temple and, hence, the tangible symbol of Israel's faith in Yahweh. Nevertheless, the Chronicler's

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<sup>35</sup> This statement comes naturally from my interpretation of the previous chiasm. If 1 Chr 11-12 offer a flashback to illustrate how David assembled all Israel for the conquest of Jerusalem, the battle itself in 11:4-9 represents the last event in the Chronicler's chronology. Thus, if the next scene (i.e. 13:1-5) pictures him with military commanders, it makes sense that it followed relatively soon after the conquest of Jerusalem. Cf. S. J. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (FOTL 11; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 136. T. Willi (*Die Chronik als Auslegung: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Gestaltung der historischen Überlieferung Israels* [FRLANT 106; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972], 172) refers to vv 1-4 as a "reflection", presumably only for the following ark narrative.

<sup>36</sup> Dirksen (*1 Chronicles*, 191) argues that Saul lost to the Philistines because he did not care for the ark, but that David defeated them because he gave the ark his full attention. However, if that were the case, one would wonder how David conquered Jerusalem *before* he sought the ark. Rather, as I argue throughout, the Chronicler shows in both 1 Chr 11-12 and 13-14 that David's action to assemble all Israel won him both battles.

David did not aim to bring it into his capital for its own sake,<sup>37</sup> but more importantly to guide more Israelites back to a proper worship of their God. The Chronicler portrays David as a pious leader with a robust faith in Yahweh inasmuch as he conducted his actions in accordance to the divine will (“If it seems good to you and *from Yahweh our God*”; v 2)<sup>38</sup> and sought (דרש) to establish orthodox cult practices in his new capital with Israel’s national relic the ark, unlike Saul (v 3). The first common plural forms for סבב and דרש in v 3 reveal that he tried to bring the people into his mission. To be clear, David’s pursuit of the ark, as important to the Chronicler’s narrative as it is, remains secondary to his aim to gather all Israel around it. David simply invited the rest of Israel to join him in following Yahweh.

In this same opening insertion, the Chronicler also claims that David succeeded in his execution of this initiative. Not only did all the assembly agree with David to implement this plan (v 4), they assembled a much larger group of people, again labeled “all Israel,” who came from as far as the Shihor of Egypt to Lebo-hamath (v 5). Japhet points out that these geographic markers also occur in Josh 13:1-6 to describe the lands that Joshua did not conquer, which Yahweh intended Israel to possess.<sup>39</sup> The Chronicler of course does not use this geographic designation here to say that Israel under David controlled such a large area of the land, but to indicate the broad extent from which David could gather faithful Israelites back to their God Yahweh. Though he certainly did gather Israelites in order to bring the ark into his new capital (להביא, v 5), this was not his primary

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<sup>37</sup> I have not found convincing Begg’s arguments that the ark still may have a place in post-exilic Israel; cf. “Ark in Chronicles,” 142-145.

<sup>38</sup> It is difficult to see how Kelly reads this statement in terms of “divine initiative”; cf. *Retribution and Eschatology*, 76.

<sup>39</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 278-279.

goal since he could have achieved that more easily with only a few Levites. Apart from this, the Chronicler also affirms in v 5 that David did achieve his main task in rallying even more Israelites back to a proper worship of their God. While this had taken place to some extent in vv 6-8, it became even stronger in the climax of the ark narrative in 1 Chr 16. This great feat proved to be the source of David's rewards in 1 Chr 14.

Some might object to this conclusion by still finding fault with David for the failed attempt to transfer the ark. However, the Chronicler leaves several hints that David deserved none of the blame and that he remained faithful in his response to the adversity resulting from *Uzzah's* mistake. According to 13:9, Uzzah put out his hand *in order to take hold* (לִאֶחֶז) of the ark when the oxen had surprisingly stumbled. The infinitive construct shows how the blame properly belonged to Uzzah for his impious intent. Additionally, v 10 explicitly states that Yahweh put Uzzah to death for stretching his hand out to the ark so that he died “before God”, a sign of the judgment he received. Although the Chronicler likely borrowed these readings from a *Vorlage* other than MT 2 Samuel,<sup>40</sup> his retention of them still provides enough reason to absolve David.

Additionally, the Chronicler does make changes elsewhere to portray David as a pious king who remained devoted to bringing the ark into his new capital. In v 12, he makes David an active agent who pondered “How can I bring (אָבִיא) the ark of God to me?” not “How can the ark come (יָבוֹא)...” (cf. 2 Sam 6:9) Also, the Chronicler removes the verb אָבָה from 2 Sam 6:10 (“So David was not *willing* to take the ark...”), which had made

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<sup>40</sup> W. E. Lemke, “The Synoptic Problem in the Chronicler's History,” *HTR* 58 (1965): 349-363 (350-351); S. L. McKenzie, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History* (HSM 33; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 49. The parallel in MT 2 Sam 6:6 reads וַיֵּאָחֶז instead of לִאֶחֶז and v 7 reads עַם אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים instead of לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים. The text in 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, however, contains the same forms in 1 Chr 13:9-10.

David appear to give up on the matter altogether (cf. 1 Chr 13:13). He also omits the passage in 2 Sam 6:12a that had David simply wait for three months until he heard news of the blessing to Obed-edom, and then came to retrieve the ark seemingly out of jealousy. Hence, though this adversity likely came at no fault of his own (see comment below on 15:13), the Chronicler still asserts that David never gave up hope to bring home the ark.<sup>41</sup>

This background provides a much better context for understanding the period of blessing that the Chronicler places afterwards in 1 Chr 14. He borrows this passage from 2 Sam 5:11-25, but makes adaptations to keep the focus on David and his increased might as a result of his piety. The Chronicler's version of the previous episode portrayed David as confused over a mystifying turn of events. Even though he faithfully sought his God Yahweh, the latter put a stop to his efforts because of the cavalier action of one servant in the process. David wanted to complete this task, but he did not know how he could (cf. 13:12). Did Yahweh really call him to this position?

The Chronicler resolves this confusion through a few slight changes to the statement after the first blessing, where David received help from the foreign king Hiram to build a house (14:1-2). The text in 2 Sam 5:12 states that David realized two things because of this first blessing, (1) Yahweh had established him as king over Israel and (2) Yahweh had exalted his kingdom on account of his people Israel. For the broader context in the books of Samuel, the emphasis naturally falls on the second proposition since there the people of Israel struggled so long through the reign of Saul and even with the ensuing civil

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<sup>41</sup> We may also note the argument of P. C. Beentjes ("Transformations of Space and Time: Nathan's Oracle and David's Prayer in 1 Chronicles 17," in *Sanctity of Time and Space in Tradition and Modernity* [eds. A. Houtman, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1998], 27-44 [29]) who states, "Every single pericope in 1 Chronicles 14 serves as proof that it is not David who is to blame for the unsuccessful transfer of the Ark."

war (2 Sam 1-4) because they did not have a strong king. Hence, that account avers that Yahweh exalted David, but for the sake of his people Israel.

The Chronicler, however, adapts the text so that the reward to David for his earlier faithful pursuit of Yahweh comes to the fore. For example, he removes the *waw* before the second כִּי so that the verse (i.e. 14:2) only contains one proposition. Despite David's adversity in transferring the ark, he knew that Yahweh had established him as king over Israel. How did he know? The second item no longer gives another content clause, but now states the reason with "*because* his kingdom was being highly exalted (נִשְׂאָתָא לְמַעַלָּה)..." The Chronicler inserts the adverb לְמַעַלָּה, one of his favorite words for emphasis,<sup>42</sup> to give prominence to the increase of David's kingdom. The durative sense of the niph'al participle נִשְׂאָתָא, a change from the perfect נִשְׂאָה, gives added expression to how David received much more confirmation from Yahweh than just the assistance of a foreign king in the construction of a house.<sup>43</sup> Rather, David also took more wives and fathered more children (14:3-7).<sup>44</sup> This second paragraph must come as an example (i.e. not a subsequent episode) of Yahweh's assurance to David, otherwise the Chronicler asks the reader to believe he had thirteen children in three months!<sup>45</sup> Though David's kingdom suffered a setback, Yahweh blessed him through it because of his faithfulness to the task of gathering all Israel back to their God. This blessing greatly contrasts with the fate of Saul, whose entire house died in his devastating loss to the Philistines (1 Chr 10:6).

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. 1 Chr 22:5; 29:3, 25; 2 Chr 1:1; 16:12; 17:12; 20:19; 26:8.

<sup>43</sup> For נִשְׂאָתָא as a participle and not a perfect, cf. HALOT, BDB, and Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 337.

<sup>44</sup> The Chronicler attributes larger families to other kings in order to demonstrate that the kingdom remains strong despite extenuating circumstances. See the discussion for Rehoboam (Chapter 6.1.2) and Abijah (Chapter 3.2.2).

<sup>45</sup> *Contra* De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 139. The Chronicler orders the events theologically to show the blessings that David received, not to imply that David became active in these three months.



The report of blessings climaxes with David's successful defense of Jerusalem from the onslaught of the Philistines (1 Chr 14:8-16). As the other wars of Chronicles show, if David had acted unfaithfully then he would not have triumphed in these battles. Saul's earlier loss to these same Philistines (1 Chr 10) serves as the most striking comparison. We may note three differences for this war in the context of 1 Chr 14. First, the Chronicler portrays a much bolder David in the face of Philistine attack. Instead of going down to the stronghold upon news of their approach (2 Sam 5:17), he went out (יצא) to meet them (1 Chr 14:8). For the Philistines' second attack, the Chronicler inserts the verb יצא again in v 15 to show that David had full confidence that Yahweh would prosper him as he presumably learned earlier (v 2).<sup>46</sup> As for Saul, the Chronicler records his demise against this same opponent only after the battle had virtually ended and his own confidence had dwindled to nonexistence. His people had either fled or fallen (10:1), his sons had died (v 2), and his only option had become suicide (v 4).

While this first distinction may seem subtle, a second more marked contrast appears in the way that David inquired (שאל) of Yahweh before engaging in the battles (1 Chr 14:10, 14). Although the Chronicler borrows from 2 Sam 5:19, 23 for this material, he condemns Saul for inquiring (שאל) of the medium instead of seeking Yahweh with his own insertion at 10:13-14. Third and most importantly, the Chronicler appends his commentary to this period of blessing at the end in v 17, "And David's fame went out into all the lands and Yahweh placed the fear of him on all the nations." This insertion reveals the Chronicler's chief concern, to show that a king's faithfulness always resulted in Israel's stability in the land, a security that Saul certainly could not bring to Israel in 1 Chr 10.

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<sup>46</sup> Verse 15 only contains God's command to David to go out, but v 16 records that David acted accordingly.

The above analysis shows that the Chronicler intentionally switched the order of David's first attempt to bring up the ark with the period of divine blessing in order to emphasize the rewards that come to devout kings. Contrary to past interpretations, however, I have argued that David's gathering of all Israel to Yahweh features most prominently in the episode and leads to his success in war. The ark merely serves to focus the people's attention on Yahweh since the temple has not yet been built. Welten has argued that the placement of David's wars with the Philistines after the first attempt to transfer the ark explains how David could move it from one geographic region to another while the Philistines lie in between them,<sup>47</sup> but the Chronicler has at no point shown this *geographic* interest in his literary styling. Rather, his adaptation of the narrative shows a much higher degree of *theological* interest.

Knoppers has pointed out the influence that Psalm 132 has had on the ark narratives in the reigns of both David and Solomon. While the Chronicler quotes this Psalm for the latter (cf. 2 Chr 6:41-42), he demonstrates that the putative desire David expresses in the Psalm comes through in his attempts to bring up the ark. David would not so much as enter his own house and sleep until he had brought the ark to its resting place (Ps 132:3-5).<sup>48</sup> Indeed, this Psalm could provide the source for how the Chronicler chooses to express David's faithfulness to Yahweh at various points in his narrative, but by itself it cannot explain the Chronicler's changed order (i.e. with the blessings coming after an abortive attempt to transfer the ark). As mentioned earlier, the Chronicler could hardly reward

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<sup>47</sup> P. Welten, "Lade-Tempel-Jerusalem: zur Theologie der Chronikbücher," in *Textgemäss: Aufsätze und Beiträge zur Hermeneutik des alten Testaments: Festschrift für Ernst Würthwein zum 70 Geburtstag* (ed. O. Kaiser; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 169-183 (175-176).

<sup>48</sup> G. N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 12A; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 590-591.

David for this act when he failed to execute it fully due to a cultic violation. Even if the Chronicler shows that he did not deserve blame for the calamity, we must look at what David actually did right.

The Chronicler claims that David aspired to gather all Israel from the farthest reaches of the land (13:2), while at the end of his introductory insertion he asserts that David accomplished this (v 5). He next shows that, despite David's setback with the transfer of the ark (vv 6-14), Yahweh's many blessings gave him confidence. These blessings of 1 Chr 14 demonstrate that Yahweh exalted David's kingdom for the sake of his people (cf. v 2). In fact, when their perennial adversaries came to challenge David because he had become king over "all Israel" (v 8), Yahweh gave them into his hand. This insertion of the now familiar designation for the idealized assembly links David's meritorious work with the blessing that he later received. As throughout the Chronicler's narrative, Yahweh always rewarded Israel's pious acts with safety from their enemies. The final clause of 14:17 in particular ("Yahweh placed..." full quote above) highlights both the divine source and intention of this blessing.

### ***2.1.3 Future Hope: All Israel Gathered for Worship (1 Chr 15-16)***

The first cycle concludes with David finally accomplishing his mission of assembling "all Israel" to worship their God Yahweh. The Chronicler inserts this idealized group three times into his narration of David's second attempt to transfer the ark. First, as with the earlier attempt, David gathered "all Israel" to Jerusalem in order to transfer the ark (15:3; cf. 13:5). The company included many singers and other musicians to make it a worshipful procession (cf. vv 16-24). Second, at the end of the transfer, the Chronicler

summarizes the successful execution of the task, “So *all Israel* brought up the ark...” (v 28). The people’s compliance contrasts with the bitter attitude of Saul’s daughter Michal, who despised all the work that David had done in rallying the people around Yahweh (v 29).<sup>49</sup> The third appearance of the phrase occurs in the final celebration, when David distributed food to all Israel from the sacrifices he offered after the final completion of the transfer (16:3). The celebration marks the end of David’s long, painstaking effort to bring all Israel to the worship of Yahweh, an endeavor that began in David’s days at the stronghold (12:17-19). The question now becomes, how did David overcome the first failed attempt (13:9-14) to accomplish his goal?

From the start, the Chronicler contends that David gave much more attention to integrating the Levites into the ark’s transfer. He has David resolve the initial setback by commanding the Levites to carry the ark by themselves as their divinely ordained responsibility (15:2).<sup>50</sup> This rendering relieves the confusing tension in 2 Sam 6 which gave no hint as to why Yahweh struck Uzzah. Of course, the Chronicler did take note of David’s effort to integrate the priests and the Levites to some degree in the first attempt (cf. 13:2). Moreover, we saw earlier how the Chronicler placed blame directly on Uzzah, not on the pious David. Nevertheless, David’s acceptance of responsibility (cf. 15:13) illustrates how far he would go to make sure the Levites took their rightful place in the process so that they could successfully transfer the ark.

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<sup>49</sup> This sequence of events appears also in 2 Sam 6:15-16, but in the larger context of Chronicles it yields one more example of how David sought Yahweh in a manner that Saul did not.

<sup>50</sup> Klein (*1 Chronicles*, 351-352) points out that David’s command accords with legislation in the Pentateuch (Num 4:15; Deut 10:8), but that the two chronological designations “then” and “forever” in 15:2 concede that others had carried it before the time of David.

The Chronicler's restructuring of the ark's transfer does not stop with this singular command to the Levites, but has David meticulously arranging them (vv 4-10) and charging them to consecrate themselves for this special task (vv 11-12).<sup>51</sup> Next, he also organized other Levites into groups of singers and gatekeepers (vv 16-24). Lastly, after he finally completed the transfer, he established Levites to be ministers before the ark for a long time to come (16:4-6). By the end, the Chronicler's David had integrated the Levites into all facets of the plan in order to make the ark's transfer a thoroughly worshipful event. As a final note, the Chronicler gives the cause for the success when he states that "because God helped (עזר) the Levites" (v 26). As we saw in 12:17-19, the word עזר often denotes the divine help given to those who seek Yahweh. David's wise decision to assign the priests and the Levites their special role facilitated the success of this second attempt at the transfer.

Such piety expressed by a king typically resulted in some sort of military victory, but in this last part of the current cycle (and also David's second cycle) it led rather to a more robust hope for the people's security in the land. The Chronicler illustrates this through a medley of Psalms in 16:8-36 (cf. Pss 105:1-15; 96:1-10; 106:1, 47-48). Throntveit has surveyed much of the recent research on the Chronicler's creation of this psalm in terms of structure while noting some major features that have gained a wide acceptance. For example, a first section (vv 8-22) calls upon the congregation to give thanks for Yahweh's past works on Israel's behalf, while a second section (vv 23-34)

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<sup>51</sup> Several scholars contest the integrity of the various lists in 1 Chr 15-16, but note the cautious objections of Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 654-659. Even if some parts of the text reveal a secondary hand, the argument that David first called upon the Levites still stands. Eskenazi ("Literary Approach," 267) affirms that the great detail and numerous lists invite the reader to consider the event's importance.

consists largely of a call to praise for the rest of the world.<sup>52</sup> For a third and final section, Throntveit (following Kleinig<sup>53</sup>) argues persuasively that the imperative *אמרו* forms another major break in the psalm to introduce a concluding petition (vv 35-36).<sup>54</sup>

Much of this research has provided great insight into the various lexical connections within the Chronicler's psalm and even how it could speak to the contemporary community in post-exilic Yehud.<sup>55</sup> However, it still remains to consider why the Chronicler would place it at this point in the narrative of David's reign. The following examination of the text will show that this new psalm offers more than just general praise to Yahweh for his goodness to the people of Israel, but maintains that the successful transfer of the ark marks a continuation of even bigger promises made by Yahweh. The Chronicler formats this new Psalm to illustrate how Yahweh's *past* promises combined with his *present* sovereignty give hope to Israel for a stable *future* in the land.

The first section (vv 8-22) reveals a particular interest in Yahweh's *past* actions on behalf of Israel through the root *זכר*, "remember". This focus surfaces even before the psalm starts when David appointed the Levites "to cause (the people) to remember" (*זכר*, hiphil), "to give thanks" (*ידה*, hiphil), and "to praise" (*הלל*, piel) Yahweh (v 4). The Chronicler's insertion anticipates the prominence of *זכר* in the psalm, which first appears as the last of five imperatives that summon Israel into this celebration at the beginning (vv 8-

<sup>52</sup> Cf. M. A. Throntveit, "Songs in a New Key: The Psalmic Structure of the Chronicler's Hymn (1 Chr 16:8-36)," in *God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller* (eds. B. A. Strawn and N. R. Bowen; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 153-170 (166). He also gives discussion to the considerable debate that exists at this point on how one should divide this section further and also on where exactly it ends.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. J. Kleinig, *The Lord's Song: The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles* (JSOTSup 156; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 133-148.

<sup>54</sup> Against the structure of R. M. Shipp, "'Remember His Covenant Forever': A Study of the Chronicler's Use of the Psalms," *ResQ* 35 (1993): 29-39 (34-37).

<sup>55</sup> R. W. Klein gives this aspect much attention in "Psalms in Chronicles," *CurTM* 32 (2005): 264-275.

12). The first four imperatives give a general appeal to the gathered congregation to praise Yahweh, but the fifth (i.e. זָכַר) lingers on the reason for this praise with a command to remember.

The appearance of the word זָכַר in v 12 reminds Israel in conventional terms of the “wondrous works” that their God Yahweh does on their behalf as his “chosen ones” (vv 12-14). While this broad description of events likely referred to the exodus in Ps 105, that context has no basis here since the Chronicler cuts off Ps 105:12-45 and quite apparently downplays the exodus elsewhere in his narrative.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, Yahweh has done remarkable work on Israel’s behalf until this point in the Chronicler’s history through helping David amass an army large enough to conquer Jerusalem (cf. 1 Chr 12:17-19; 11:9), giving the Philistines into his hand (14:8-17), and even helping the Levites so that they could finally transfer the ark to Jerusalem (15:26). As a simple matter of this Psalm’s placement here, the Chronicler locates the early successes of Israel under David amongst the greatest blessings ever received by the nation from their God Yahweh.

While the first invocation to remembrance refers to the recent past with only general terms, the second calls Israel to remember specifically Yahweh’s much earlier promise to Israel for a place in the land (vv 15-22).<sup>57</sup> This latter group of verses can be subdivided further into two subunits, a call to remember the covenant with their ancestors (vv 15-18) and the protection Israel receives on the basis of that covenant (19-22).<sup>58</sup> The first subunit speaks of the “everlasting covenant” Yahweh made with Israel through her

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<sup>56</sup> For example, 1 Kings 8:51-53; Cf. Japhet, *Ideology*, 379-386.

<sup>57</sup> Throntveit (“Songs in a New Key,” 157) has argued, unpersuasively in my opinion, for reading the 3ms perfect זָכַר with Ps 105:8, LXX<sup>B</sup> (LXX<sup>AL</sup> participle). Cf. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 637, 646.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Kleinig, *The Lord’s Song*, 142.

patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is noteworthy how well this theology fits with the Chronicler's history in light of his favorite title for Yahweh, "the God of their/our/your fathers". That term has only appeared once in the history thus far, at the seminal moment when David first began to gather the people of the land back to Yahweh in 1 Chr 12:17-19.<sup>59</sup> It also resurfaces several other times later at the Chronicler's hand to denote similarly this idea that Israel has a divine claim and responsibility to the land.<sup>60</sup>

While the first subunit upholds Israel's right to pursue settlement in the land, the second in vv 19-22 assures them that God would protect them as they dwell in it. It reflects a similar time when Israel had few people and little stability as wanderers in the land (v 19), but Yahweh warned all other peoples not to touch them since they are his "anointed ones" and "prophets" (v 22). Thus, the Chronicler's incorporation of this segment of the psalm into his narrative adumbrates two major aspects of war that he will illustrate in several different ways, Israel's conquest (vv 15-18) and defense of the land (vv 19-22).

The second section (vv 23-34) of the psalm exhorts the rest of the earth to worship Yahweh in the *present* because of the latter's special relationship to Israel. Scholars have divided vv 23-33 in a number of ways,<sup>61</sup> but the primary emphasis lies on the sovereignty of this God who has covenanted with Israel. For example, the psalm calls upon *the people of the earth* to praise Yahweh for such attributes as his glory (v 24), his greatness (v 25), and also his splendor and majesty (v 27). These qualities make him "above all gods" (v 25), while all other contenders are mere "idols" (v 26). It also summons *the inanimate features*

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<sup>59</sup> But note the exception in the genealogies (5:25).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. 2 Chr 7:22; 20:6-7.

<sup>61</sup> They question whether it is one section along the lines of the Psalm, or whether v 30 goes with the verses before it or after it. See discussion in Throntveit, "Songs in a New Key," 159-170.



*of the earth* to rejoice at the reign of Yahweh. All nature, including the heavens, sea, fields, and trees should do the same because Yahweh “comes to judge the earth” (cf. 31-33). This joyous tone contrasts markedly with the part of creation that should “tremble” before Yahweh (v 30), presumably because Yahweh does not use his power to liberate them like the rest of creation but to judge them. Thus, these different descriptions in vv 23-33 contrast two polar opposites, those who eagerly anticipate Yahweh’s divine judgment of the wicked on the earth and those who dread it.

The final verse in this section clearly marks Israel as those who will rejoice when Yahweh “comes to judge the earth” (v 33) when they say, “Give thanks (הודו) to Yahweh, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever” (v 34). The fact that the Chronicler has borrowed this verse alone without any other connecting material from its original context reveals that he has carefully selected it to conclude the section.<sup>62</sup> It introduces a refrain that the Chronicler uses several times throughout Israel’s preparation for the temple to show their thankfulness to Yahweh for staying true to his promises to bless them in the land (cf. 16:41; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 6; see also 20:21). The word חסד emphasizes that the people understand that Yahweh has acted on their behalf out of his faithfulness to the covenant.<sup>63</sup> This should come as no surprise, however, since the Chronicler highlights the importance of Yahweh’s covenant promises to Israel in the first section.

More than just thematically, the Chronicler binds the first two sections of the psalm together (vv 8-22, 23-34) through an inclusio with the command הודו ליהוה (“give thanks to Yahweh” in vv 8, 34). He already hinted earlier that he would feature the verb ידה in his

<sup>62</sup> It would be difficult to pinpoint one place from where the Chronicler borrowed this verse. If it does come from 106:1, then it does not borrow the word “Halleluiah”. It also occurs at 107:1.

<sup>63</sup> Consider Ezra 3:11, where the returnees sing the same refrain after laying the foundation for the temple.

formation of the psalm (cf. 16:4), so its use here catches the reader's attention. With this in mind, the Chronicler's literary artistry and theological intent with these collected Psalms begin to emerge. They show that Israel's remembrance of Yahweh's *past* graciousness in electing them to a covenantal relationship, combined with his ability to put the blessings of that covenant into effect, give Israel a strong assurance in the *present*.

The Chronicler begins a completely new third section with the marker, "And say..." to describe Israel's resultant confidence for the *future* (vv 35-36). The words שׁע ("save") and נצל ("deliver") picture Israel as still vulnerable, yet hopeful. The Chronicler will use both of them throughout his narration of Hezekiah's defense of Jerusalem from the onslaught of the Assyrians, a true case of Yahweh rescuing his faithful from trouble (cf. 2 Chr 32:11-17, 22). As for Israel in David's time, he presents them as pleading with Yahweh to save and deliver them *so that they can give thanks* (יִדָּה) to his holy name (16:35). In other words, though they have given thanks to Yahweh for the work he has done on their behalf thus far (cf. vv 8, 34), they pray that he will fight on their behalf even more so that they can continue to praise him evermore. These concluding verses set the stage for David's next cycle, where he fights many wars and subdues all of Israel's surrounding enemies (1 Chr 18-20).

#### ***2.1.4. Conclusion to the First Cycle***

The first cycle focuses primarily on David's great achievement in gathering "all Israel" to Jerusalem for a worshipful celebration of the God of their fathers, Yahweh. This group helped him to conquer Jerusalem and push back the Philistines. Although the Chronicler also gives considerable attention to the ark, he lends it only a subservient role to

the theme of all Israel inasmuch as it provided for the latter a tangible representation for the presence of God before the temple. Once Solomon has finished construction of the temple, however, this symbol virtually disappears.<sup>64</sup> With all Israel, on the other hand, the Chronicler shows how several kings attempted to bring back as much of the people from all Israel together even after the division of the kingdom, most notably Hezekiah (2 Chr 30:6-9).<sup>65</sup> As for David, he derived such a following initially through his faith in Yahweh (12:17-19), then drew even more support when he set out to establish a national cult for Israel's God (13:1-5). David's faithfulness at every step resulted not only in Israel's present stability in the land, but also in a robust faith in Yahweh to keep them safe there in the future (16:35-36).

## **2.2. Second Cycle: Temple Preparations (1 Chr 17-29)**

### **2.2.1. Early Success: Subjugation of Surrounding Enemies (1 Chr 17-20)**

With all Israel gathered, the Chronicler focuses a second cycle on David's preparations for the temple. Throughout this first part in 1 Chr 17-20, he again shows that David prospered militarily as long as he worked toward this end. The juxtaposition of David's piety (i.e. 1 Chr 17) with a subsequent phase of war (i.e. 1 Chr 18-20) reveals the Chronicler's hand. This now familiar sequence resembles the combination of David's lightning campaign against the Jebusites in Jerusalem which came about after he rallied all Israel back to the God of their fathers, Yahweh (cf. 1 Chr 11-12).

While the Chronicler makes only slight changes within 1 Chr 17 itself, he modifies the larger narrative in 1 Chr 17-20 to create literary proximity between the piety and wars

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<sup>64</sup> The lone exception occurs in Josiah's reign (2 Chr 35:3), where it still played no significant role.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Abijah (2 Chr 13:4-12), Asa (15:9-15), and Josiah (34:6-7).

in order to make the connection explicit (as in 1 Chr 11-12). For example, he does not include David's later dealings with Saul's house (2 Sam 9:1-13; 21:1-14), nor the substantial drama concerning David's sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:2-12:25) and the consequent fallout (2 Sam 13:1-20:26). Additionally, the Chronicler omits smaller details that make David appear weak militarily, such as Joab's report that he himself defeated Rabbah in David's stead (2 Sam 12:27-29) or David's inability to fight any more at the end of his life (2 Sam 21:15-17). In the account that remains, the Chronicler highlights David's piety as a distinctive feature of the narrative, with his reward from Yahweh on the battlefield predictably close behind.

We may first observe how the Chronicler presents only the piety of David throughout this stretch of time. It certainly appears in the other version of the dynastic oracle at 2 Sam 7, a text which the Chronicler largely follows.<sup>66</sup> For both versions, David initially noticed the major discrepancy between the house in which he lived and Yahweh's tent (v 2 // 1 Chr 17:1). He told Nathan about his idea to build Yahweh a house, a project that would have certainly proven his devotion. As the story goes, Yahweh informed David that he would not build him a house (בית), but *vice versa*. In other words, given the wide range of meanings for the word בית, the passage describes how Yahweh refused David's offer to build a *temple*, but then told the king he would build him a *dynasty* (vv 4-17 // 1 Chr 17:3-15). After this news of future divine blessing, David rejoiced with an elaborate

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<sup>66</sup> Of course, much debate surrounds the text in 2 Sam 7. D. J. McCarthy ("2 Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," *JBL* 84 [1965]: 131-138) was the first to identify it as one of the key structural passages of the Deuteronomistic History. For discussion on its compositional history, cf. P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 9; Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 209-224; S. L. McKenzie, "Why Didn't David Build the Temple: The History of a Biblical Tradition," in *Worship and the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honour of John T. Willis* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 204-224. However, for the purposes of this thesis, only the basic contours of the Chronicler's likely *Vorlage* are needed.

prayer of gratitude (vv 18-29 // 1 Chr 17:16-27). In essence, both the accounts in 2 Sam 7 and 1 Chr 17 present David as a pious king who sought to honor his God with a permanent dwelling in his capital and then even embraced Yahweh's plan for such a temple that excluded him from the construction.

To this basic episode, the Chronicler implements a couple of noteworthy changes.<sup>67</sup> First, he removes the concept of rest, a major theme that runs throughout the books of the Deuteronomistic History and even climaxes in 2 Sam 7. Knoppers points out how incongruous Yahweh's rejection of David's offer to build a temple appears.<sup>68</sup> In Deut 12, Yahweh had commanded the Israelites to construct a central sanctuary for him in the land "when he gives you rest (הַנִּיחָה) from all your surrounding enemies" (v 10), yet then surprisingly rejected David's offer to do so when "Yahweh had given him rest (הַנִּיחָה) from all his surrounding enemies" (2 Sam 7:1b). Moreover, this latter text seems to conflict with the statement later in the dynastic oracle where Yahweh promised David, "I *will give you rest* (הַנִּיחָתִי) from all your enemies" (v 11). The Chronicler, however, keeps the focus on David's future role as conqueror. To do this, he omits the first statement altogether (cf. 1 Chr 17:1), and changes the second so that Yahweh assured David, "And I will *subdue* (וְהִכְנַעְתִּי) all your enemies" (v 10). This promise of success in future war resulted naturally from David's desire to build Yahweh a temple.

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<sup>67</sup> Though I will only discuss the modifications pertinent to my thesis, several commentators have catalogued all the putative changes in this text. Cf. P. Abadie, "Pérennité Dynastique ou Éternité du Temple? Deux Lectures d'un Mème Oracle (2 S 7 et 1 Ch 17)," in *Analyse Narrative et Bible* (eds. C. Focant and A. Wénin; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 117-130; M. Avioz, "Nathan's Prophecy in II Sam 7 and in I Chr 17: Text, Context, and Meaning," *ZAW* 116 (2004): 542-554; Beentjes, "Transformations of Space and Time," 27-44.

<sup>68</sup> G. N. Knoppers, "Changing History: Nathan's Oracle and the Structure of the Davidic Monarchy in Chronicles," in *Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, Its Exegesis, and Its Language* (eds. M. Bar-Asher, et al.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2007), 99-123 (100-101).

The Chronicler illustrates this with the following wars in 1 Chr 18-20, which quite clearly form a cohesive block of material.<sup>69</sup> He forms an inclusio around this arrangement with the word כָּנַע, the same verb he inserted earlier in 17:10, to show that David in fact subdued his enemies (18:1; 20:4). The Chronicler borrows the first of these occurrences of the verb in 18:1 (// 2 Sam 8:1), though this could provide the reason for his use of it at 17:10 and 20:4.<sup>70</sup> Each of the passages in 1 Chr 18-20 has a distinct context in 2 Samuel, whether to show the early successes of David (18:1-17 // 2 Sam 8:1-18),<sup>71</sup> the backdrop to the Bathsheba affair (19:1-20:3 // 2 Sam 10:1-11:1, 12:26-31), or the later victories by David's men when he himself could not fight any more (20:4-8 // 2 Sam 21:18-22). Despite the precarious circumstances of these last two cases, the Chronicler nevertheless includes them as positive examples of David's success.

As with the dynastic oracle, he does not appear to make many significant changes to these texts themselves, but uses them in the broader picture as suitable illustrations for how David conquered the nearby nations that posed the greatest threat to Israel. Each of the three scenes begins with the unremarkable introduction וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי־כֵן, "And it came to pass afterwards," to guide the narrative along smoothly to the next example (cf. 18:1; 19:1;

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<sup>69</sup> For more literary markers that potentially distinguish 1 Chr 18-20 as a cohesive unit, cf. Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 389. See also T. Sugimoto, "Chronicles as Independent Literature," *JSOT* (1992): 61-74 (64-70).

<sup>70</sup> In other words, perhaps it explains why the Chronicler did not use a synonym such as כָּבַשׁ in 1 Chr 22:18. Knoppers avers, "By this choice of words, the author points to the realization of Nathan's promise" ("Changing History," 112).

<sup>71</sup> C. Edenburg shows how the geographical scheme in 2 Sam 8:1-14 and also 1 Chr 18:1-13 pictures David in the same grand position as the Mesopotamian kings who built large empires and claimed to rule the four quarters of the world; cf. "David, the Great King, King of the Four Quarters: Structure and Signification in the Catalogue of David's Conquests (2 Samuel 8:1-4, 1 Chronicles 18:1-13)," in *Raising up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (eds. K. L. Noll and B. Schramm; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 159-175 (173).

20:4). The word נכה appears eleven times<sup>72</sup> and its synonym נגף twice<sup>73</sup> to affirm that David thoroughly defeated all these nations. Just as David appeared to conquer Jerusalem swiftly and easily, the Chronicler has clustered this group of wars together to insist that David subdued his surrounding adversaries with little trouble because “Yahweh gave victory to David wherever he went” (18:6, 13; cf. 11:9).

Turning back to the dynastic oracle, we may note how the Chronicler applies a second set of changes to place an increased emphasis specifically on Solomon’s construction of the future temple, rather than on the promise of a Davidic dynasty.<sup>74</sup> For the passage in 2 Sam 7, even though I presented one clear explanation for Nathan’s initial refusal to let David pursue construction, others also exist within the text. Yahweh’s question to David, “Will *you* (הא אתה) build *me* a house...?” (v 5) has a counterpart in two different places. In the first, Yahweh explained how he never asked for a house since he never needed one (vv 6-7), but then he recounted all the things that he had done or would do for David, the last of which states, “Yahweh will make *you* a house” (vv 8-11, see above). A second interpretation emphasizes the contrast between David who will not build

<sup>72</sup> Cf. 18:1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12; 20:1, 4, 5, 7.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. 19:16, 19.

<sup>74</sup> While the Chronicler does focus less on the future of the Davidic dynasty, considerable debate still exists on how much the Davidides figure into his eschatology. W. M. Schniedewind (*Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1-17* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], 128) argues for a continuing role of the Davidic dynasty in Chronicles on the grounds that the Chronicler found the promise to David itself a sufficient vehicle to support the legitimacy of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. See also Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 135-185; A. Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus: The Historical Josiah and the Messianic Expectations of Exilic and Postexilic Times* (ConBOT 33; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992), 317-329; H. G. M. Williamson, “The Dynastic Oracle in the Books of Chronicles,” in *Studies in Ancient Narrative and Historiography: Sefer Yitshak Aryeh Zeligman (Isac Leo Seeligmann Anniversary Volume)* (eds. A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch; Jerusalem: Rubenstein, 1983), 305-318. For a recent treatment of the topic, cf. J. Tiño, *King and Temple in Chronicles: A Contextual Approach to Their Relations* (FRLANT 234; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

the temple and his seed who would (v 13). A third option could even read both these meanings in the passage.

The Chronicler, on the other hand, removes the ambiguity by his wording of Nathan's initial response, "*It is not you* (לֹא אַתָּה) who will build me *the house* (הַבַּיִת)..." The two changes to this statement, the substitution of the negative לֹא for the interrogative הָ in front of אַתָּה and the addition of the definite article to the word בַּיִת, focus the oracle squarely on the temple that would be built in Jerusalem. Yes, the oracle still spoke of a dynasty for David (v 10), but Nathan's initial refusal did not find resolution until v 12 when he disclosed who would actually build the temple alluded to in v 5. This creates the impression that Yahweh offered David a house/dynasty for the sole purpose of building him his house/temple.

The Chronicler underscores this subservience of the dynastic theme to the temple further in his final change at the end of Nathan's oracle. In 2 Sam 7, Yahweh finished his promises to David by avowing the durability of the latter's dynasty, "*Your house* (בֵּיתְךָ) and *your kingdom* shall be made sure... *Your throne* shall be established forever..." (v 16). By a simple change of the pronominal suffixes, the Chronicler instead emphasizes the permanence of *Yahweh's* house and kingdom together with Solomon's role within them, "I will confirm *him* (i.e. Solomon) in *my house* (בֵּיתִי) and in *my kingdom* forever, and *his throne* shall be established forever." Whereas David obtained an eternal dynasty for his desire to build the temple in 2 Sam 7, the text in Chronicles locates the purpose for this enduring dynasty in building and then maintaining the temple.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. W. Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (JSOTSup 160; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 71, followed by Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 382. E. L. Curtis and A. A.



Later reflections on the dynastic oracle within Chronicles confirm such an interpretation. After David's period of subduing Israel's surrounding enemies, he charged Solomon to build the temple on the basis of Yahweh's words in the dynastic oracle (22:10-11).<sup>76</sup> Still later, the Chronicler makes Solomon's election *specifically to temple building* much more explicit in a speech at the end of David's reign, "See to it, now, for Yahweh has chosen you to build (לבנות, infinitive construct of purpose) a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and do it!" (28:10).<sup>77</sup> As we will see later, the Chronicler focuses Solomon's reign completely on temple building.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, before that time came, David needed to fulfill his obligation implied in the dynastic oracle to make preparations for the temple and also execute a smooth transfer of the kingship to the chosen temple builder, Solomon.

Before we discuss David's post-war preparations, much can be said first of David's wars as a means themselves to make preparations for the temple. We may again look to the subsequent text in 1 Chr 18-20 which shows how he subdued all of Israel's surrounding enemies so that Solomon would not have to do so. By the end of this period of war, David could charge Solomon and all the leaders of Israel to take advantage of the rest Yahweh had provided through David's military victories (22:18-19). As a further point, the Chronicler uses these wars to illustrate how David amassed enough wealth to make abundant provision for the temple project. The borrowed texts mention David's acquisition of spoil several times (e.g. 18:4) and also allude to the fact that Solomon would use it later

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Madsen (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles* [ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1910], 228) take the two nouns בית and ממלכה/מלכות as a hendiadys to God's royal house, i.e. the kingdom of Israel. However, this does not give adequate attention to the intended pun on the word בית.

<sup>76</sup> For an analysis of the Chronicler's reinterpretation of the dynastic oracle in David's later speeches, cf. W. M. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period* (JSOTSup 197; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 155-162.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Braun, "Chosen Temple Builder," 581-590.

<sup>78</sup> See Chapter 3.1.

in the temple's construction (18:8).<sup>79</sup> Again, the Chronicler makes explicit this point that was so subtle in 2 Samuel through a new speech later in David's reign, immediately after he had finished his wars, when he said, "With great pains I have provided for the house of Yahweh..." (22:14).

While the Chronicler certainly utilizes the war motif to show David's *reward* as discussed earlier, this second cycle has also introduced David's *responsibility* in war as a new facet to this theme.<sup>80</sup> David's blessing in victory on the battlefield must not distract him from the much larger goal of preparing for the future temple. The Chronicler used the wars of 1 Chr 18-20 to show David's diligence in achieving this immediately after receiving the oracle from Nathan.

### **2.2.2. Sudden Adversity: David's Census (1 Chr 21-22)**

With so many military victories in 1 Chr 18-20, the sudden adversity in 1 Chr 21 makes one wonder why David's success would suddenly stop. Several scholars have seen the purpose of this episode as explaining the location of the temple site.<sup>81</sup> For example, Duke ponders how the Chronicler could include an episode that reflected so poorly on David even though everything else had appeared to idealize his reign, but then explains, "It was necessary to include this transgression of David in order to not omit an event which was crucial in the founding of the Jerusalem cult..."<sup>82</sup> Knoppers, however, has rightly

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<sup>79</sup> This latter verse (i.e. 18:8) does not appear in the MT of 2 Samuel 8:8, but its presence in the LXX, OL, and Josephus of 2 Sam 8:8 may indicate that the Chronicler merely copied it out of his *Vorlage*. For discussion, see Williamson, "Accession of Solomon," 357 n. 17, and also Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 387.

<sup>80</sup> This theme really only applies to David's reign as a means to prepare for the temple, though perhaps there is a sense in which later kings should be good stewards of their spoil accumulated from war, e.g. Asa in 2 Chr 15:11.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 104-124; Noth, *Chronicler's History*, 34, 55-56; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 142.

<sup>82</sup> R. Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler* (JSOTSup 88; Sheffield: Almond, 1990), 59-60.

pointed out that the Chronicler's text does not even mention the temple until the very end, but rather features the actions of David.<sup>83</sup> He proposes that the Chronicler does not consider David's acknowledged culpability as an error from which he cannot recover, but in fact emphasizes David's guilt in the matter so that he can then accentuate the king's later repentance.<sup>84</sup>

Building on this insight, the following analysis will uncover to a greater degree the nature of David's sin with respect to his wars. More specifically, in light of David's hitherto smooth conquest of all his surrounding enemies, why would the Chronicler suddenly place the devastation of 70,000 Israelites immediately afterwards?

We must first observe that the Chronicler does set this scene in war, a feature less pertinent to the context of 2 Sam 24 (if at all). Klein notes how Israel often took censuses for the purposes of either taxation or military conscription. He then correctly argues that the latter forms the better backdrop here since Joab and the "commanders of the army" executed the initiative (1 Chr 21:2) and gave the total count in terms of those "who draw the sword" (v 5).<sup>85</sup> Also in v 6, the Chronicler states that Joab left Levi and Benjamin out of the final tally. While two references in Numbers (1:49; 2:33) excused the tribe of Levi from partaking in any *military* census, Joab may have left out the tribe of Benjamin since the tabernacle resided in Gibeon at the time.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to these observations, we may note that the Chronicler has done nothing to change the context from the previous events in 1 Chr 17-20, which showed how David

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<sup>83</sup> G. N. Knoppers, "Images of David in Early Judaism: David as Repentant Sinner in Chronicles," *Bib* 76 (1995): 449-470 (451).

<sup>84</sup> Knoppers, "Images," 454.

<sup>85</sup> Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 419.

<sup>86</sup> Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 421-422.

subdued the surrounding nations (cf. 17:10). It is true that the Chronicler used an inclusio (כנע in 18:1; 20:4) to suggest that David achieved this goal, but he does not give any indication that David took his attention off fighting more war. The Chronicler's new arrangement of texts, beginning in 1 Chr 18 and extending to 1 Chr 21, shows how David increasingly used Joab to win more battles. After the first round of campaigns in 18:1-13, he appointed Joab as head over the army (v 14, though cf. 11:6). David later sent him with the army of mighty men to confront the approaching Ammonite forces at Medeba (19:8). David also remained at Jerusalem when Joab took the army out farther to strike down Rabbah (20:1). This next command to Joab in 21:2 follows neatly as a charge to prepare for more battle, or at least to take a tally of David's military might.

The portrayal of David's punishment also uses the vocabulary of war. For example, after Joab's completion of the census, the Chronicler asserts, "And this thing was evil in the eyes of God and he struck (נכה) Israel" (v 7). This verb נכה appeared repeatedly throughout the Chronicler's arrangement of texts in 1 Chr 18-20 to illustrate how David had defeated all the surrounding peoples (see above), yet here it was Yahweh who struck Israel.

Another example occurs in the Chronicler's adaptation of the following judgment scene (vv 8-27 // 2 Sam 24:10-17). Of David's three options for punishment, he abbreviates the first ("three years of famine") but highlights the second and third by expanding them. The Chronicler juxtaposes these latter two options by inserting the word חרב ("sword") for each of them; David could choose to have his punishment through the *sword* of his enemies

or the *sword* of the angel of Yahweh (v 12). Either one would undoubtedly overwhelm the 1.1 million “men who draw the sword” from David’s census (cf. v 5).

Third, in the description of the aftermath, the Chronicler summarizes the devastation with phraseology typical for war by changing “70,000 men died” to “70,000 men fell (נפל)” (21:14). Perhaps he simply makes the war imagery more explicit from David’s plea already in his *Vorlage*, “Let me fall (נפל) into the hand (ביד) of Yahweh... but do not let me fall (נפל) into the hand (ביד) of man” (v 13 // 2 Sam 24:14). Not only do the terms נפל (“fall”) and ביד (“into the hand”, a fourth term for this theme) frequently signal defeat in war narratives throughout the Hebrew Bible,<sup>87</sup> the Chronicler concluded the previous section of David’s success in war with “... and they fell (נפל) into the hand (ביד) of David and into the hand (ביד) of his servants” (20:8). In this light, the Chronicler inserts each of the terms that previously described David’s triumph over the other nations (נכה, הרב, נפל, ביד) in order to demonstrate in this episode that his streak of military success finally ended.

The Chronicler uses all this war imagery to show that David not only had his mind set on building his army, but also suffered military defeat. As this latter fact enters into the narrative abruptly, it raises the question of how he could suddenly fail after gaining so much momentum in 1 Chr 18-20. Yahweh had promised to subdue all his enemies, so how could he falter after campaigning so prosperously? The Chronicler addresses this issue by making subtle adaptations to the basic text of 2 Sam 24 and then greatly extending the scene of repentance at the end (1 Chr 21:26b-22:19).

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<sup>87</sup> For the phrase ביד in the books of the Deuteronomistic History, cf. G. von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (trans. M. J. Dawn; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 42-44.

Most (if not all) scholars have treated 22:2-19 of this latter repentance scene in 21:26b-22:19 with the rest of David's final preparations for the temple in 1 Chr 23-29,<sup>88</sup> but the following analysis shows that it rather fits better here as a conclusion to illuminate the problem of the census crisis. Throughout this entire section (1 Chr 21-22), the Chronicler highlights two aspects of David's guilt, his preoccupation with military matters and his neglect of the temple project.

#### *2.2.2.1. David's Preoccupation with His Military*

As a first note, the Chronicler highlights David's guilt for commanding the census, an episode which pictures David taking stock of those "who draw the sword". The Chronicler uses the words *הדבר הזה* ("this thing") as the action that provoked Yahweh's anger (v 7), then records David's initial confession in v 8, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done *this thing*... for I have acted very foolishly." This link draws the tight connection between David's sin and Yahweh's punishment. Again later, after the destroying angel executed some of the punishment, the Chronicler inserts another more specific admission for David, "Was it not I who commanded to number the people? It is I who have sinned..." (v 17). In this second confession, David identified his sin directly with the census that he commanded earlier. He pled with Yahweh that the consequences for his sin would come solely upon him, not on the "sheep" who were under his protection (v 17). David's admission of the guilt placed the blame squarely on himself alone.

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 180; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 392; Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10-29*, 788; S. L. McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 183.

David's confession has surprised some scholars since they see military musters as positive reflections of a king in Chronicles.<sup>89</sup> Wright even uses this line of argument to contend that the Chronicler places the blame for the devastation on Joab rather than on David.<sup>90</sup> Within David's reign alone, Wright suggests that the Chronicler uses the word מִסְפָּר for census to relate this account with the other gatherings in 11:10-12:40 and 23:1-26:32.<sup>91</sup> However, an examination of these episodes shows that the Chronicler does not simply praise kings who took censuses or mustered up their army.<sup>92</sup> For David's first mustering (11:10-12:40), I showed earlier that David secured all Israel's support by his early allegiance to Yahweh (cf. 12:18). David gathered them not for the purposes of war (even though they did help him conquer Jerusalem, 11:1-9), but to rally them to the worship of Israel's God (1 Chr 16). As for the other mustering in 23:1-26:32, David will gather this support from the people in order to make massive preparations for the temple. Again, this differs dramatically in purpose from the census in 21:1-6 which David conducted for the express purpose of assessing his military might.

Moreover, David's census led not to the cooperation of the people with the king as we saw so clearly earlier with the theme of "all Israel", but instead to the breakdown of this relationship.<sup>93</sup> First Joab, even though he had played an instrumental role in leading David's army until this point, later called David's initiative with the census into question and even deemed the command "abhorrent" (v 6). Second, after Joab reluctantly executed

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<sup>89</sup> P. Welten (*Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbüchern* [Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973], 79-114) has done a comprehensive overview of this theme for the divided monarchy.

<sup>90</sup> J. W. Wright, "The Innocence of David in 1 Chronicles 21," *JSOT* (1993): 87-105 (90-92).

<sup>91</sup> It must be noted that the word מִסְפָּר does not appear in any of the military musters that Welten treats in 2 Chr 10-36.

<sup>92</sup> As for the Hebrew Bible in general, von Rad (*Holy War in Ancient Israel*, 44) notes, "One would be ashamed to count the army, because what is a miracle should not be rationalized."

<sup>93</sup> Cf. K. Ristau, "Breaking Down Unity: An Analysis of 1 Chronicles 21:1-22:1," *JSOT* 30 (2005): 201-221.

the tally, he reported the numbers for “all Israel” and Judah separately, with the tribes of Benjamin and Levi even omitted. To reiterate, the nation does not look strong and unified as in the other censuses (which David conducted for religious reforms), but the Chronicler depicts Israel surprisingly in disarray. If the solidarity of “all Israel” demonstrates David’s success as a devout leader in 1 Chr 11-16, their dissolution here reveals the folly of his decision to command the census.

Another question may be raised regarding why David would even receive punishment for preparing for war. If David’s conquests represented a faithful enterprise in 1 Chr 18-20 since they fulfilled part of Yahweh’s promises in the dynastic oracle (cf. 17:10), how could Yahweh punish him for continuing on this course? The answer comes in the Chronicler’s insertion at v 3, where Joab responded to David’s command, “Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord’s servants (עבדים)?” (21:3). The Chronicler’s clustering of texts in 1 Chr 18-20 illustrates how David had subjected all the surrounding peoples as his servants. Beginning in 18:2, David defeated Moab and made them his servants, then he did the same with the Aramaeans (v 6), the Edomites (v 13), and then the servants of Hadadezer (19:19).<sup>94</sup> The last verse of the section 1 Chr 18-20 states that many of David’s servants helped him subdue even more of the surrounding peoples (20:8).

The Chronicler’s arrangement of these borrowed texts containing the root עבד (which are quite disparate in 2 Samuel) gives David’s guilt some context. Joab pleaded to David that he had no more people to conquer since he had subdued them all!<sup>95</sup> The Chronicler states this fact more clearly in David’s speech to the leaders of Israel

<sup>94</sup> All these verses use the noun עבד except for this last one which uses the hiphil of the verb.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. W. Johnstone, *1 Chronicles-2 Chronicles 9: Israel's Place Among the Nations* (JSOTSup 253; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 227.



immediately afterwards, "... Has not [Yahweh] given you rest on every side? For he has given into my hand the inhabitants of the land, and the land is subdued before Yahweh and his people" (22:18). When one considers how David had fought no new battles since the Philistines in 1 Chr 20:4-8, this statement must apply to the circumstances of 21:1-6. Both Japhet and Klein claim that Joab faulted David for organizing the people around a centralized government in Jerusalem,<sup>96</sup> but this ignores the fact that David did this without reproof in 1 Chr 23-29. In this episode, David conducted a military census as more of an act of self-aggrandizing than to prepare for war since no more viable threats existed.

This interpretation lessens some of the ambiguity many have found in the term שָׂטָן at the beginning of the episode (v 1). If Yahweh had brought rest on every side as David acknowledged, then this term could not signify a human enemy that posed a threat to Israel as some have argued.<sup>97</sup> Along similar lines, Japhet also argues that שָׂטָן represents a human figure, but instead of a foreign army she suggests an official inside David's own court.<sup>98</sup> Others have argued that the figure is a heavenly accuser, superhuman opponent, or even Satan himself.<sup>99</sup> In my opinion, Klein states the best case in his arguments for this last figure in the list,<sup>100</sup> though whichever of these latter characters the Chronicler had in mind does not affect my argument here.

The Chronicler inserts this adversarial figure as somebody (from heaven, David's own court, etc.) who enticed (סוֹת) David to take a count of his military forces when

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<sup>96</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 377; Klein, *I Chronicles*, 420.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Knoppers, "Images of David," 455-456. See also J. Sailhamer, "1 Chronicles 21:1— A Study in Inter-Biblical Interpretation," *TJ* 10 (1989): 33-48; Wright, "Innocence of David," 93.

<sup>98</sup> Japhet, *Ideology*, 148.

<sup>99</sup> For a summary of these positions, cf. R. E. Stokes, "The Devil Made David Do It... Or Did He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the Satan in 1 Chronicles 21:1," *JBL* 128 (2009): 91-106.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Klein, *I Chronicles*, 418-419.

Yahweh had already provided rest. The verb סוּת most often has a negative connotation<sup>101</sup> and insinuates that the subject used deception to mislead someone down a destructive path.<sup>102</sup> A human enemy, namely Hanun of the Ammonites, did provoke David to war earlier in 1 Chr 19:1-6, but the Chronicler appears to have approved of David's reaction there since he achieved the victory. In contrast, the adversarial character in 1 Chr 21 enticed David to take pride in his military stature as the leader of a large army, not engage in war. Yahweh had given David the task of subduing Israel's surrounding enemies so that Solomon could later build the temple, but the census contributed nothing to this objective.

As a final note, David's subsequent speech to Solomon (22:7-16) also sheds light on his guilt in the census. The passage appears to come from the Chronicler's own hand as a reflection on the dynastic oracle in light of David's wars.<sup>103</sup> David told Solomon the reason why Yahweh would not let him build the temple, "You (i.e. David) have shed much blood (שָׁפַךְ דָּם) and have waged great wars (מִלְחָמוֹת גְּדוּלוֹת עָשָׂה). You shall not build a house for my name because you have shed much blood before me on the earth" (v 8). This elaboration goes well beyond David's prohibition to build the temple in the dynastic oracle.

Scholars have put forward a variety of interpretations for this verse on why David could not build the temple.<sup>104</sup> Rudolph asserted that since a holy work needs pure hands, David's wars made him ritually unclean and unacceptable for the task.<sup>105</sup> This interpretation does well to call attention to the cult as the reason for David's

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<sup>101</sup> Though see the lone exception of a positive connotation when Yahweh saved Jehoshaphat by leading the enemy away in 2 Chr 18:21. This cannot be the case here, however, since an *adversary* does the action; *contra* Wright, "Innocence of David," 94.

<sup>102</sup> The verb סוּת has the same nuance in 2 Chr 18:2 when Ahab lured Jehoshaphat away from his temple reforms to entertain military activity without good reason (cf. Chapter 5.2.2).

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition*, 155-162.

<sup>104</sup> For a helpful survey, see Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10-29*, 772-774.

<sup>105</sup> Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 151. See also Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 154.

disqualification (as I will elaborate later), yet does not account for the fact that David could perform other cultic activities, nor that the cleanliness laws do not present war as a reason for someone being deemed unclean.<sup>106</sup> Japhet follows a similar line by equating David's engagement in war with bloodshed. She argues that though Yahweh commanded and even blessed David's wars, they in turn required David to shed blood, an act which *paradoxically* disqualified him from building the temple. Though she acknowledges good kings often win wars, she still avers that the Chronicler sees war in a negative light (cf. 2 Chr 16:9).<sup>107</sup> Mosis sees David's wars as morally neutral when he appeals to the Chronicler's tight periodization of history to explain David's disbarment from building the temple. He characterizes David as a "man of wars", but Solomon would have the necessary peace for temple construction since he is "a man of rest" (v 9).<sup>108</sup> These interpretations all offer helpful insights into the text, but they still do not provide a sufficient explanation for the placement of it here. Why did not the Chronicler insert it into the dynastic oracle itself or immediately after the wars in 1 Chr 18-20?

Brian Kelly has persuasively pinpointed the crux of the interpretation in the relationship between Yahweh's two contentions against David in 22:8, (1) "You have shed much blood" and (2) "You have waged great wars".<sup>109</sup> Many have simply equated the two, but this causes problems since the first clearly gives a moral indictment while the second

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<sup>106</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 772.

<sup>107</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 398.

<sup>108</sup> Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 94-100.

<sup>109</sup> B. E. Kelly, "David's Disqualification in 1 Chronicles 22:8: A Response to Piet B. Dirksen," *JSOT* (1998): 53-61 (57-60). P. B. Dirksen ("Why Was David Disqualified as Temple Builder? The Meaning of 1 Chronicles 22:8," *JSOT* [1996]: 51-56) proposed that the Chronicler changed David's inability to build the temple from a circumstantial fact of history into an ethical wrong, so Kelly responds by finding the specific incident wherein David's sin lies.

does not.<sup>110</sup> Kelly refers to a study of שפך דם which separates two distinct senses for this particular expression used in contention (1).<sup>111</sup> The first applies to the pouring out of blood in different sacrificial offerings, which is clearly not the meaning here. Kelly discusses in greater detail the second, which indicates blameworthy acts that result in the death of people. This second sense does not always have to mean the literal act of spilling blood, but can be used metaphorically to charge someone as responsible for the death of innocent people (cf. Ezek 22).

Kelly also points out that the expression שפך דם never refers to killing done in connection with war, as though war were inherently sinful. With this in mind, he makes the logical connection of this charge to David's illicit census in 1 Chr 21 since his sinful act led to the death of 70,000 Israelites.<sup>112</sup> If this interpretation is correct, then the two charges fit the immediate context of Chronicles, with David's "great wars" occurring in 1 Chr 18-20, then the "shedding of much blood" in 1 Chr 21. Kelly concludes that the Chronicler still holds to the "circumstantial, historical explanation" given in 1 Kgs 5:17 (i.e. that wars preoccupied David so much that he could not build the temple), but that the Chronicler also finds his guilt of bloodshed in the census as a second reason.

While accepting the bulk of Kelly's argument, I would like to propose that the first charge has a far more intrinsic relationship to the second than has been hitherto suggested. To understand this we must first go back to when Yahweh originally refused David's offer

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<sup>110</sup> Note also the phrase "before me (i.e. God)" attached to the first charge when it is repeated, which seems to imply the moral guilt attached; Dirksen, "Why Was David," 52-53.

<sup>111</sup> See H. Christ, "Blutvergiessen im Alten Testament: Der gewaltsame Tod des Menschen untersucht am hebräischen Wort dam" (Thesis, Friedrich Reinhardt Kommissionsverlag, 1977).

<sup>112</sup> As a reminder, I argued that David sinned not for engaging in war *per se*, but for taking pride in his large forces when no threat loomed. He himself certainly did not kill the 70,000 Israelites, though he bore the guilt of this charge because he commanded the census which resulted in their death.

to build him a temple in 1 Chr 17. In that scene, Yahweh first mentioned that he never asked any of Israel's leaders to build him a temple (vv 5-6), but then promised to subdue David's enemies (v 10) and allow his son to build him a temple (v 12). This divine speech did not disallow David to build the temple for any wrong he had committed or would later commit, but assigned him a different role, one of conquest and subjugation. Hence, even though the charge of "shedding blood" must differ from "waging war" for the reason stated above, it cannot offer a reason totally unrelated to Yahweh's original refusal to let David build from the dynastic oracle.

Although the episodes in 1 Chr 18-20 indeed show how David waged and even won great wars, this (apparently) led David to take pride in his accomplishments. The Chronicler's arrangement of texts shows that David wanted to take a tally of all the "servants" he had accumulated from war rather than build "all Israel" through devotion to Yahweh as in 1 Chr 11-16. In other words, David's success in 1 Chr 18-20 led naturally to his arrogant mistake in 1 Chr 21. The Chronicler also illustrates this turn of events for many kings in the divided kingdom. Consider the military musters of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:14-19) and Uzziah (2 Chr 26:12-15), which both led to very precarious situations for each king (cf. 2 Chr 18:1-3; 26:16).<sup>113</sup> In this sense, the indictment against David does not reveal a new reason for why he could not build the temple, but describes the course that inevitably transpired from being a man of war (cf. 2 Chr 28:3). Whereas David's preoccupation with war consumed his time and energy in 2 Samuel (cf. 1 Kgs 5:17), it enveloped the entirety of his will in 1 Chr 21.

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<sup>113</sup> I will expand on this in Chapter 5.

#### 2.2.2.2. *David's Preparations for the Temple*

Thus far we have seen the nature of David's folly from the perspective of his wars. Though Yahweh intended for David to subdue the nations so that Solomon his son could build the temple later (17:10), he eventually pursued war past this point to bolster his own military stature (1 Chr 21). All the people in the land were David's servants, yet still he tried to tally them in order to mark his greatness, even against Joab's admonition (cf. v 3). When Yahweh struck the people for David's sin, the Chronicler shows how he immediately realized what he *should not* have been doing (v 17, i.e. the census). Now we must turn to the question of what David *should* have been doing, which was to proceed with temple preparations.

The Chronicler illustrates David's obligation to make preparations for the temple by giving his own version of how David brought relief to the people. Though his preoccupation with war brought disaster, his completion of certain cultic acts brought the devastation to an end. First we may note that in 2 Sam 24, God's destroying angel disappeared only after 70,000 people had died (vv 15-16). The Chronicler, on the other hand, avers that David's construction of an altar together with burnt offerings and peace offerings caused the angel to relent, even though he had his sword ready for more destruction (1 Chr 21:26-27). Secondly, while both accounts report that the prophet Gad commanded David to construct an altar so that Israel could have relief from the plague (1 Chr 21:18, 22 // 2 Sam 24:18, 21), the Chronicler asserts that the mundane altar that David raised in 2 Sam 24 marked where the future temple would go (22:1). Thirdly, the Chronicler attaches the same level of divine acceptance to David's repentant act as to

Solomon's final construction of the temple with the imagery of "fire from heaven" (21:26; cf. 2 Chr 7:1).

As a final point in this regard, we may take note of Williamson's observation that the Chronicler models David's purchase of this site for the future temple after Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah from Hebron (Gen 23).<sup>114</sup> The reason for such a modification comes in the new phrases he inserts, "give it to me *at its full price* (בכסף מלא)" (v 22) and "I will certainly buy it *at the full price* (בכסף מלא)" (v 24). This phrase, which occurs elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only at Gen 23, emphasizes the great length to which David went so that "the plague may be averted from the people" (v 22). David took full responsibility for his neglect of the temple, and then paid a great price so that he could continue his preparations for it. In other words, Israel found relief from the plague only when David began to do what he should have done in the first place.

David's construction of the altar brought safety to the people from the sword of the angel of Yahweh, but the Chronicler's expansion of this repentance scene in 1 Chr 22 makes even more explicit the action David should have pursued once Yahweh had subdued his enemies. His final charge to the leaders of Israel made it very clear that they needed to build a house for their God since Yahweh had given them rest on every side and subdued the land before them (22:18-19). The post-conflict scene before this charge (vv 2-16) illustrates David's renewed prioritization for matters of Israel's religious cult, now localized acutely in preparations for the temple.

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<sup>114</sup> Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 149.

This passage must not be combined with the remaining record of David's final preparations in 1 Chr 23-29 as though they make the same point.<sup>115</sup> The Chronicler places David's thoughts (22:5) and speeches (vv 7-16, 18-19) here to show the dramatic change in course that he made. In contrast to his earlier aim to record those who "draw the sword" (21:5), David gathered the resident aliens along with construction materials in great quantity for the temple (22:2-5). Even though he could not build the temple himself (v 8), he could support Solomon by providing all the precious materials and organizing all the workers (vv 14-16). By using direct speech as a literary device, the Chronicler emphasizes not simply what David contributed, but how he repented from the error of his ways. If an interpreter does not look at 1 Chr 22 from this vantage point, it becomes impossible to separate this material from the speeches of 1 Chr 28-29. With these additions to 1 Chr 22, the Chronicler shows David's aspirations redirected from a mindset on warfare to focusing his energy completely toward temple preparations.

### ***2.2.3. Future Hope: David Finishes Preparations (1 Chr 23-29)***

The Chronicler concludes this second cycle with a detailed account of how David followed through with his preparations for the temple. In 22:5, David considered (in the aftermath of the devastation caused by the census) the onus upon himself to make preparations since Solomon was not yet ready. Now, the Chronicler clearly moves ahead in time to the end of David's life with the statement, "When David was old and full of days,"

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<sup>115</sup> Cf. Braun, "Chosen Temple Builder," 581-590. In this article, he refers to his unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The Significance of 1 Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Structure and Theology of the Work of the Chronicler." To be sure, Braun's work has correctly called upon scholarship to consider how the Chronicler's portrayal of Solomon differs from that of 1 Kings. Unfortunately, this has diverted much attention away from some of *David's* greatest achievements. See also Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition*, 155-160; M. A. Throntveit, "The Idealization of Solomon as the Glorification of God in the Chronicler's Royal Speeches and Royal Prayers," in *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium* (ed. L. K. Handy; New York: Brill, 1997), 411-427.



to catalogue all his preparations since the time of his repentance (23:1). Several features of this work resemble the actions he took to gather all Israel at the completion of the first cycle (1 Chr 15-16). While that passage emphasized his work to accomplish the first goal (i.e. bring all Israel back to Yahweh), those same features in 1 Chr 23-29 will highlight how he met the second goal, the completion of his temple preparations.

First we may look at David's integration of the Levites into the process. The Chronicler made the insertion at 21:6 that Joab left the Levites out of his final count in defiance of David's illicit census. As mentioned earlier, this note likely reveals in part how the Chronicler's David had no intention of making preparations for the temple at that point (see above), but now the inclusion of this material demonstrates the king's desire to get back on track. His arrangement of lists in 1 Chr 23-27 shows how David took special care to prioritize the Levites' role in the business of the kingdom.

Though some scholars have relegated 1 Chr 23-27 to a secondary hand on the grounds of a potential *Wiederaufnahme* in 23:2/28:1,<sup>116</sup> Wright has demonstrated that the two principal verbs in 23:2 and 28:1 (קהל and אסף) often serve different functions.<sup>117</sup> The verb קהל typically signifies the gathering of people for social purposes; or more specifically in Chronicles, it frequently describes a formal assembly that culminates in a cultic ceremony as it does in 28:1. The verb אסף, conversely, most often describes the gathering of goods or people for a particular purpose as with the different groups in 1 Chr 23-27. This more specific sense fits perfectly at the beginning of these organizational lists since it shows how David continued the work he began in his repentance from the census crisis.

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<sup>116</sup> For a summary of other arguments made with discussion, cf. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 788-798.

<sup>117</sup> J. W. Wright, "The Legacy of David in Chronicles: The Narrative Function of 1 Chronicles 23-27," *JBL* 110 (1991): 229-242 (230-231).

The same contrast between these two verbs also appeared earlier in David's second attempt to transfer the ark (i.e. the end of the first cycle). In that episode, he first assembled (קהל) all Israel (15:3, a group that would eventually join in the celebration at the successful completion; cf. 16:3), but then he gathered (קבץ) the sons of Aaron and the Levites for their specific roles (15:4).

In contrast to Wright and other scholars who have attributed most (if not all) of the material in 1 Chr 23-27 to the Chronicler,<sup>118</sup> Williamson has taken a mediating position on the matter. He argues against those who categorize the entirety of 1 Chr 23-27 as a redactional layer when he maintains that the redactor would have copied the sentence in 23:2 from 28:1 exactly had he wished to use a *Wiederaufnahme* in the text.<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, Williamson still does find a major redactional layer within the unit that he labels "pro-prietary", acknowledging that much of the material appears to conflict both internally and with other passages within Chronicles. On his final analysis, he proposes that the Chronicler inserted a literary core that shows how David organized the Levites into classes that oversaw work in the temple, or served as officers, judges, gatekeepers, or singers (cf. 23:3-6a).

With this in mind, the varying proposals of Wright and Williamson both nevertheless aver that David set his focus to gathering the Levites for the purposes of temple work. Thus, while the second part of each cycle (i.e. 1 Chr 13-14, 21-22) showcased

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<sup>118</sup> For example, Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 406-411) addresses all the alleged inconsistencies exegetically, and then also argues that the Chronicler had a higher tolerance for such discrepancies in detail. Perhaps they simply represent the sources that the Chronicler himself used (408).

<sup>119</sup> H. G. M. Williamson, "The Origins of the Twenty-four Priestly Courses: A Study of 1 Chronicles 23-27," in *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament* (ed. J. A. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 251-268 (265).

instances where David struggled through adversity that resulted in the loss of life for Israel (cf. 1 Chr 13, 21), each of the concluding parts illustrate how he overcame those obstacles by prioritizing the role of the Levites (cf. 1 Chr 15, 23-27).

As a second feature of comparison for the two texts (i.e. 1 Chr 15-16, 23-29), the Chronicler has David commission someone whom God has specifically “chosen” for the next task of establishing the temple. In the first cycle, David called upon the Levites to take a special part in transferring the ark, “for Yahweh had chosen (בָּחַר) them to carry the ark of Yahweh and to minister to him forever” (15:2). David needed to recognize their role formally in order to complete the transfer and unite all Israel in the worship of their God Yahweh. In the same manner, David made his son Solomon king over Israel in his old age so that the latter could build the temple (23:1). The Chronicler uses David’s first speech in this section to emphasize Solomon’s election to this task. He asserts that David had many sons (28:5), but that Yahweh had *chosen* Solomon out of all of them to reign as the next king so that he could build the temple, a fact illustrated by the multiple uses of בָּחַר in this speech (cf. vv 5, 6, 10).

Braun has rightly pointed out how the Chronicler has put Solomon in a more positive light as the chosen temple builder,<sup>120</sup> but this emphasis should not overshadow the Chronicler’s chief point in praising David for successfully transferring the kingship. The Chronicler insists that after David realized he must prepare as much of the temple work as possible for the “young and inexperienced” Solomon (22:5), he appointed all the right people for various tasks (23:2-27:34), obtained a plan for all the temple work (28:11-19), donated vast amounts of materials (29:1-5a), and even enlisted the support of all Israel to

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<sup>120</sup> Braun, “Solomonic Apologetic,” 503-516; “Chosen Temple Builder,” 581-590.

help in the same way (vv 5b-9). Before Solomon has done anything, the Chronicler's David has passed the kingship to his chosen son with every opportunity to succeed.

The re-gathering of all Israel represents a third feature that both of these concluding sections share. Though the assembly of the entire nation functions as the goal of the first cycle (cf. 1 Chr 15-16), the Chronicler barely mentions them at all in the first part of this second cycle<sup>121</sup> and even stresses the breakdown of their solidarity in the census debacle (cf. 21:4-6). In David's first address, however, he gave his final charge to the leadership in Israel and to Solomon his son "in the sight of all Israel" (28:8). Perhaps this is the same group that also contributed with David to the preparations made for the temple (cf. 29:1-9).<sup>122</sup> At the end of the ceremony, he led the assembly in making offerings "in abundance for all Israel" (29:21). When Solomon finally took the throne, all Israel obeyed him (v 23) and esteemed him more highly than even David before him (v 25).

The Chronicler mentions these last two notes before he records the death of David and summarizes his main accomplishments. Foremost in this regard, he credits David as the first king to reign over all Israel (v 26). The Chronicler does not credit Solomon with the gathering of all Israel, but shows in detail how David accomplished this feat (1 Chr 11-16).<sup>123</sup> As for this critical aspect of the worship life of the nation, David successfully passed it on to his son so that the latter could focus all his energy solely on the construction of the temple. The Chronicler has evoked this all Israel theme once again to stress the

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<sup>121</sup> He borrows all three occurrences of the phrase (cf. 17:6; 18:14; 19:17).

<sup>122</sup> The Chronicler refers to the group as "all the assembly" (v 1); see also v 10.

<sup>123</sup> Braun does well to point out the differences between 1 Kings and Chronicles with regard to the transfer of the kingship from David to Solomon. Even so, the Chronicler does not include the unanimous support of all Israel to Solomon as "Solomonic apologetic," but to bolster his positive evaluation of David for effectively transferring the kingdom; cf. Braun, "Solomonic Apologetic," 508.

significance of David's work in making abundant preparations for the nation's religious atmosphere.

Fourth, the Chronicler inserts discourse filled with thanksgiving and supplication into this concluding section, another feature it shares with 1 Chr 15-16.<sup>124</sup> The thanksgiving psalm of 1 Chr 16 called Israel to remember their covenant with Yahweh from the days of their ancestors the patriarchs (vv 12, 15) as the basis for their future hope for deliverance amongst the nations (v 35). In contrast to the two sections before it (i.e. 1 Chr 11-12, 13-14), 1 Chr 15-16 contained no episode of war but simply reminisced upon God's faithfulness in the past as a means to strengthen Israel's hope for a future in the land. Likewise, the concluding section to the second cycle contains no war; David's prayer in 1 Chr 29:10-19 serves the same purpose as the psalm in 1 Chr 16. David began with introductory praise to Yahweh as the ruler over all things with his great power and glory (29:10-13), very similar to the panegyric in 16:8-12, 23-33. He then acknowledged that he and the people could make the massive contributions for the upcoming temple construction only because Yahweh had first given to them (vv 14-17). Though the Chronicler concentrates David's reign on subduing the land (see above), he still acknowledged that they would be like their sojourning fathers who had no hope without Yahweh (v 15),<sup>125</sup> an allusion similar to 1 Chr 16:15-22.

As a final point of comparison, both the psalm and the prayer end with a petition to Yahweh. In the former, the people expressed their hope for deliverance from amongst the

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<sup>124</sup> Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 185-186) makes this observation and discusses three points of similarity, (A) the theme of landless patriarchs who receive the promise of land, (B) the celebration of Yahweh's kingship, and (C) a concluding petition. I have modified these categories slightly in my argument.

<sup>125</sup> D. J. Estes, "Metaphorical Sojourning in 1 Chronicles 29:15," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 45-49 (47).

nations, a plea that looked forward to David's battles in 1 Chr 18-20 (cf. 16:35). As for the latter, David prayed that Yahweh would give the people hearts to continue providing for the temple (v 18) and Solomon a heart to build it (v 19). As we will see in the reign of Solomon, the temple offers Israel's only hope to remain secure in the land (cf. 2 Chr 7:12-22).

#### ***2.2.4. Conclusion to the Second Cycle and the Reign of David***

The Chronicler structures David's reign around his two greatest accomplishments as follows:

##### **A. David's desire to gather all Israel to the worship of their God Yahweh (1 Chr 11-16)**

1. Piety<sup>126</sup> empowers him to conquer Jerusalem (11-12)
2. Continued piety enables him to drive back the Philistines (13-14)
3. Mission accomplished leads to future hope (15-16)

##### **B. David's desire to prepare for the temple (1 Chr 17-29)**

1. Piety empowers him to conquer the neighboring nations (17-20)
2. Lack of piety provokes a massive defeat at the hand of Yahweh (21-22)
3. Mission accomplished leads to future hope (23-29)

Through this outline, we can now see how the Chronicler uses the narrative progression of (1) early prosperity, (2) sudden adversity, and (3) future hope (see opening paragraph) to give a mostly positive evaluation to David. At the beginning of each cycle, he shows how David prioritized important facets of the cult that subsequent kings could only try to recapture later. This piety first empowered him to prevail in numerous battles. Next, the two episodes of adversity make much more sense in the middle of these cycles.

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<sup>126</sup> Piety in the sense that he pursues his objective of gathering all Israel or preparing for the temple.

David did not have an easy task, but he had to work through at least one surprising challenge (when Uzzah grabbed the ark, 1 Chr 13) and overcome the allure of self-aggrandizement (as in the census, 1 Chr 21). Even so, adversity only affected the nation when David took his eyes off seeking Yahweh through the cult (compare the wars in parts [2] above). Nevertheless, in the last section for each cycle, David finally persevered through these obstacles to accomplish his goals for Israel's embryonic cult. With materials ready for construction and all Israel gathered for worship, the nation had hope that Yahweh would keep them safe in the land (cf. 16:19-22, 35-36; 29:10-19).

## Chapter 3

### Faithful Kings

Following the exemplary reign of David, each of these kings sought Yahweh through their dedication to the temple and their desire to bring people to it. In return, the Chronicler demonstrates that they had no trouble in maintaining their hold on the land. Of course, the Chronicler does not emphasize the themes of war and temple to the same degree in each of the four reigns below. Circumstances resulting from the previous reign oftentimes dictate the degree to which the Chronicler must highlight one theme or the other.

#### **3.1. Solomon (2 Chr 1-9)**

A simple comparison between the basic structure of Solomon's reign in 1 Kgs 1-11 and the arrangement in 2 Chr 1-9 reveals the remarkably favorable light in which the Chronicler has put him. While the Chronicler leaves out Solomon's early turbulent period (1 Kgs 1-2) and later idolatrous fall (1 Kgs 11), he nevertheless focuses heavily on the glorious era of prosperity in the middle (1 Kgs 3-10). More specifically, several recent scholars have observed the Chronicler's particular emphasis on Solomon's contribution to the temple cult. For example, though Mosis did not convince many of his three individual paradigms for Saul, David, and Solomon, he did correctly note the successful completion of the temple as the Chronicler's primary emphasis in Solomon's reign.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, Braun pointed out that not only David, but Solomon too was a king by divine choice with

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<sup>1</sup> Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 162-169. See Chapter 4.1.1 for my argument that Saul's reign does not serve as a paradigm.



unanimous support from all Israel and a fervent dedication to the cult.<sup>2</sup> In another article, he argued that the Chronicler magnified the character of Solomon the most in his role as faithful temple builder.<sup>3</sup> Surely all these studies have done well to catch this most important facet of the Chronicler's portrayal of Solomon.

Nevertheless, only minimal amounts of research have shown the reign of Solomon to have any plot or compelling storyline in Chronicles. The account in 1 Kgs 1-11 certainly grabs the reader's attention with the political intrigue surrounding his accession (1 Kgs 1-2), the anticipation of what his divinely-bestowed wisdom would bring (3:4-15), and finally his dramatic fall at the end (11:1-40). On the other hand, the Chronicler appears to leave out any measure of suspense since David provided him with every opportunity to do well, Solomon committed no sin, and no outside threat loomed.

Dillard admits such a sentiment when he claims that 2 Chronicles 1-9 does not contain a "dramatic" narrative, a contention that allows him to defend his proposal for an elaborate chiasm covering the entirety of Solomon's reign.<sup>4</sup> Some scholars have followed this line of thought with only minor modifications,<sup>5</sup> while others have maintained the Chronicler's central focus on the temple with only slight parallels for the introductory and concluding chapters.<sup>6</sup> This chiastic interpretation, however, no matter how loosely one might hold to it, has led to an undervaluing, if not misinterpretation, of these passages in their particular *Chronistic* context. It rightly detects the importance of the Chronicler's

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<sup>2</sup> Braun, "Solomonic Apologetic," 503-516.

<sup>3</sup> Braun, "Chosen Temple Builder," 581-590.

<sup>4</sup> R. B. Dillard, "The Literary Structure of the Chronicler's Solomon Narrative," *JSOT* (1984): 85-93 (86-87).

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 87-93; M. J. Selman, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1994), 286-287. See also De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 233.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 20; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 192, who both note the parallels of "wisdom and wealth" in 2 Chr 1, 9.

accentuation of the crucial speeches at the temple dedication ceremony (e.g. 2 Chr 7:12-22), but inadequately examines the surrounding material.

Williamson has made a helpful point in this regard with his observation that the Chronicler models the transfer of kingship from David to Solomon after Moses and Joshua (in Deuteronomy and Joshua) to show that Solomon's chief objective was to bring to fulfillment the work begun by David.<sup>7</sup> This insight reveals that the Chronicler puts at least some sort of challenge before Solomon, namely, the monumental undertaking of building the temple. The analysis below will follow how the Chronicler continues to develop the storyline he began with David, whom the Chronicler emphasizes could not finish this task.<sup>8</sup> His account now shows how Solomon's resolute determination brought David's two earlier objectives together with all Israel in a festive celebration at the completed temple (2 Chr 1-7). Quite predictably, the Chronicler then illustrates how Solomon's temple faithfulness enabled him to further expand Israel's borders, gain hegemony over his neighbors, and establish peace over a broader stretch of land (2 Chr 8-9).

### ***3.1.1. The Temple Trajectory of Solomon's Reign (2 Chr 1-7)***

The Chronicler does not wait to broach the topic of the temple as in 1 Kings, but creates a context for it immediately with his introductory sentence, "Solomon... strengthened himself (חָזַק, hithpa'el) in his kingdom, and Yahweh his God was with him (עִמּוֹ) and made him exceedingly great" (2 Chr 1:1). The end of this verse explains that Yahweh's presence with Solomon constituted the source of his success, a theme that the Chronicler stresses with several later kings also (cf. 2 Chr 13:12; 15:9; 17:3; 32:7-8). In

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<sup>7</sup> Williamson, "Accession of Solomon," 351-361.

<sup>8</sup> On David's inability and the two kings' complementary roles, see *ibid.*, 357-359.

this occurrence, the Chronicler has given it an important nuance, which he first developed from a small note of commentary after David's conquest of Jerusalem, "And David became greater and greater, for Yahweh of hosts was *with him*" (1 Chr 11:9 // 2 Sam 5:10). Though he likely borrowed this from his *Vorlage*, the remaining chiasm (1 Chr 11-12) gives great detail to *the manner in which* Yahweh made David greater and greater. As we noted earlier, these chapters illustrate how the divine presence with David attracted all Israel to his side from the earliest and most precarious moments in his career (cf. 12:17-19).<sup>9</sup>

Just as Yahweh's presence helped David to gather all Israel, so would it help him in all his work of preparation for the temple ("Do all that is in your heart, for God is *with you*," 17:2), most notably to subdue his enemies ("And I have been *with you* wherever you have gone... And I will subdue all your enemies," vv 7-10). Again, though the Chronicler borrows these verses, he capitalizes on their ideas at the end of David's life. In a speech to the people, David exhorted them that the divine presence would support them in their preparations for the temple ("Is not Yahweh your God *with you*?") just as it helped him contribute in that regard (22:18-19).

The Chronicler's David also gave Solomon several charges in this same vein: "Now, my son, may Yahweh be *with you* so that you may succeed and build the house of Yahweh your God as he has spoken concerning you" (22:11); "Arise and work and may Yahweh be *with you*!" (22:16); "Be strong and courageous and work. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for Yahweh God, my God, is *with you*. He will not leave you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of Yahweh is finished" (28:20). These latter charges in particular all refer to the presence of God as the empowering force

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<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 2.1.1.

that would enable Solomon to build the temple. While they point to the tremendous challenge facing Solomon, the Chronicler uses the introductory verse in 1:1 to affirm that he would succeed because Yahweh was with him.<sup>10</sup>

One other note about 2 Chr 1:1 deserves attention, specifically for the comparison it draws with the account in 1 Kgs 2:12-46. The latter summarizes several ruthless actions that Solomon did once he became king. On three different occasions, he sent Benaiah to kill people who could have disturbed his rule, such as his brother and rival Adonijah (vv 13-25), the treacherous army general Joab (vv 28-35), and lastly the antagonistic Shimei (vv 36-46a). In the midst of these, it also tells how he excommunicated Abiathar who conspired with Adonijah (vv 26-27). The account encloses all these episodes between two notices which assert that Solomon eventually established (כִּוַּן) his kingdom by these brutal tactics (vv 12, 46).

The Chronicler, on the other hand, employs the synonym חִזַּק in the hithpael (“he strengthened himself”) for a more positive tone. He uses it elsewhere for other faithful kings to indicate that they either started or continued their reign both prosperously and piously (cf. 1 Chr 11:10; 2 Chr 13:21; 15:8; 17:1; 27:6; 32:5).<sup>11</sup> Note the axiomatic manner in which he uses it later, “For the eyes of Yahweh range throughout the whole earth to give strong support (לְהַתְחַזֵּק) to those whose heart is blameless toward him” (1 Chr 16:9a). Kelly avers that the Chronicler’s use of this word *alludes* to the events in 1 Kgs 2:12-46, but that would defeat the whole purpose of his ensuing narrative where he removes all such

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<sup>10</sup> The Chronicler also applies this theme to the returnees (cf. 2 Chr 36:23). Compare with the northern kingdom (25:7).

<sup>11</sup> For his exceptional use of it in the reigns of Jehoram (21:4) and Rehoboam (12:13), see the discussion there.

negative comments.<sup>12</sup> Rather, the Chronicler *replaces* the word כֹּן with the word חֹזֶק so that he can alert his reader to the pious way in which Solomon established his kingdom. He modifies the following episodes to illustrate this.

Solomon's sacrifices at "the great high place" in Gibeon would only presumably tarnish his reputation (2 Chr 1:2-6 // 1 Kgs 3:4), but the Chronicler could not leave the event out since Yahweh's subsequent epiphany to him there reportedly prompted Solomon's long period of prosperity (cf. 1 Kgs 3-10). To include both aspects of the event, the Chronicler transforms the first to maintain Solomon's dedication to Israel's orthodox cultic practices. In his account of David's reign, the Chronicler had already legitimized Gibeon as a worship site by claiming that David left various temple personnel (i.e. Zadok, a few other priests, and some musicians) there to perform their religious duties after he had transferred the ark from Gibeon to Jerusalem (1 Chr 16:39-42). Now, just as David had gathered all Israel to worship Yahweh at the installation of the ark (cf. 1 Chr 13:1-5; 16:1-3), Solomon led all Israel to Gibeon to seek (דָּרַשׁ) Yahweh through the other relics from Israel's past, the tent of meeting made by Moses and the altar made by Bezalel (2 Chr 1:2-5).<sup>13</sup> Whether or not the pronominal suffix of דָּרַשׁוּ in v 5 applies to the altar or Yahweh, the basic meaning remains the same.<sup>14</sup>

This episode by itself presents Solomon as one who surpassed David since the latter could not seek God at Gibeon for fear of Yahweh's destroying angel after his sin with the

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<sup>12</sup> Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 90-91. Klein and Williamson aver that the term suggests Solomon had to struggle to secure the throne, but 1 Chr 22-29 goes to great lengths to affirm that David provided a smooth transfer. Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 20; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 193.

<sup>13</sup> In both cases, the king speaks with all Israel (with commanders specifically mentioned) and leads them to one or more of Israel's longstanding religious symbols.

<sup>14</sup> Since the Chronicler patterns this episode on David's retrieval of the ark, the pronoun likely refers to the altar (cf. 1 Chr 13:3). See discussion in Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 194.

census (1 Chr 21:29-30). Moreover, the change of the verb conjugation from יעלה to ויעל in v 6 suggests a one-off event for Solomon's sacrifices, not a habitual practice. In other words, this change intimates that the new king was not satisfied with making offerings at Gibeon but indeed wanted to pursue the task that David set out before him (1 Chr 28:20).<sup>15</sup> Lastly, if the Chronicler intended to show the same officials in 2 Chr 1:1 as in 1 Chr 28:1, then it appears Solomon went immediately after David commissioned him.<sup>16</sup> All of these changes clear Solomon from any possible charge of idolatry for his actions at Gibeon and at the same time depict him as an eager, faithful adherent to orthodox worship.

Yahweh's epiphany at Gibeon (2 Chr 1:7-13 // 1 Kgs 3:5-15) now makes better sense as a response to Solomon who has shown himself dedicated to cultic matters. The Chronicler adds "on that night" (בלילה ההוא) to make this connection clearer and the impact immediate.<sup>17</sup> The most important change to this epiphany scene regards its function for the rest of Solomon's narrative. Instead of a request for wisdom that led to several different blessings (1 Kgs 3:16-10:29), the Chronicler claims that Solomon requested that the temple project come to fruition; later, he also shows how the blessings did not come until after its construction. Although it may be difficult to determine the Chronicler's precise *Vorlage* for this text,<sup>18</sup> at least two statements emerge as his own contribution in this regard since they each resonate with his earlier additions and do not appear at all in 1 Kgs 3:5-15.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 530.

<sup>16</sup> Klein (2 *Chronicles*, 21) notes that the two passages only share the term "commanders of thousands and hundreds", but we should not expect the Chronicler to reproduce the same entire long list as earlier. The allusion holds with only a few titles.

<sup>17</sup> The text in 1 Kgs 3:5 states that the theophany happened "at night" (הלילה).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Auld, *Samuel at the Threshold*, 97-107; D. M. Carr, *From D to Q: A Study of Early Jewish Interpretations of Solomon's Dream at Gibeon* (SBLMS 44; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 89-114.

The first comes in Solomon's request. While the account in 1 Kgs 3 records him making the lone request that Yahweh grant him an understanding mind to govern the numerous people of Israel (3:9), the Chronicler makes this a second request (2 Chr 1:10) and places another before it, "O Yahweh God, let your word to David my father be now fulfilled" (v 9). Many have shown how this wording forges links with the dynastic oracle (cf. 1 Chr 17:23-24),<sup>19</sup> where Yahweh's promise to David involved both dynastic heirs and also one particular son who would build the temple (cf. 1 Chr 17:11-12; 22:11; 28:5-10). Since David had already passed the kingship to Solomon by this point, Solomon's request here must refer to the promise of the temple to be built by him.

The second insertion confirms this interpretation in Yahweh's response, "Because this was *in your heart...*" (v 11). The Chronicler frequently uses expressions with לב to describe the faithful actions of various people, most notably with David's initial desire to build the temple (1 Chr 22:7; 28:2; see also 17:2).<sup>20</sup> More importantly, even though David could not fulfill this for himself, he urged Solomon to have this type of heart to construct the temple (28:9-10; see also 29:19).<sup>21</sup> With these exhortations as the nearest context, Yahweh's acknowledgement of Solomon's proper heart in this passage must refer to his ambition to build the temple. Wisdom still has a part in Solomon's request (v 10), but it only plays a secondary role here, one that serves the interests of the temple (see below on 7:11).

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 195.

<sup>20</sup> The Chronicler will categorize many others in the divided kingdom using expressions to describe the heart, cf. 2 Chr 11:16; 12:14; 15:12, 15; 16:9; 17:6; 19:3, 9; 20:33; 22:9; 24:4; 25:2; 26:16; 29:10, 31, 34; 30:12, 19; 31:21; 32:25, 26, 31; 36:13.

<sup>21</sup> For references to the heart of the people, cf. 1 Chr 22:19; 29:9, 17-18.

This initiative that the Chronicler attributes to Solomon also appears in his dealings with Hiram. In 1 Kgs 5:15-32, Solomon told Hiram of his plans to build a temple *only after* the latter had initiated contact with the former; before this dialogue, Solomon had no explicit plan to build the temple. In Chronicles, since Solomon had already expressed his desire at Gibeon to build the temple, *he himself* initiated a business relationship with Hiram to help execute the plan (2 Chr 1:18-2:17). The Chronicler's additions reveal that Solomon already had materials (1:14-17) and workers ready (2:2, 7b, 8b) and knew the type of workers and supplies still needed (vv 7a, 8a). Even more, the Chronicler's Solomon understood that this work aimed to prepare a place for Israel to exercise all their worship rites to their God (v 3).

Hiram's response, then, does not extol Solomon's wisdom in governance (1 Kgs 5:21), but his wisdom for temple preparations, "Blessed be Yahweh... who has given David a wise son, endowed with discretion and understanding, who will build a temple for Yahweh..." (2 Chr 2:11). This verse certainly touches on the theme of wisdom in Yahweh's promise to him at Gibeon (cf. 1:7-13). Nevertheless, the Chronicler uses the wording "discretion and understanding" elsewhere only at 1 Chr 22:11-12, where David prayed that Yahweh would give Solomon insight to obey the law as he would build the temple. Thus, the Chronicler's version of Hiram's benediction shows the fulfillment of that request here.

Interestingly enough, when the Chronicler comes to the construction of the temple in 2 Chr 3-4, he gives it less attention than the parallel in 1 Kgs 6-7. While he cuts out



many details regarding the building's architecture, form, and also furnishings,<sup>22</sup> he instead accentuates the importance of the *finished* temple project as the climactic point of Israel's history. First, he has the people acknowledge it as a defining moment with the repeated refrain, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever" (5:13; 7:3; cf. 7:6). We noted a similar high point in the reign of David, when all Israel said this same refrain after he had gathered them to Jerusalem for the worship of Yahweh at the successful transfer of the ark (1 Chr 16:34; cf. v 41).<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, the Chronicler stresses the magnitude of Solomon's achievement with a much larger celebration attended by all Israel afterwards. In addition to the people singing and playing instruments (7:3, 6), Solomon extended the celebration for an extra period (cf. vv 9-10).<sup>24</sup> This contrasts with the aftermath of Solomon's prayer at Gibeon, where the Chronicler had removed any mention of Solomon's sacrifices (cf. 1:13; 1 Kgs 3:15).

Thirdly, the Chronicler expands summary statements already within the narrative that highlight the finality of Solomon's work on the temple (7:11; 8:16; cf. 1 Kgs 9:1, 25). The first of these (i.e. 7:11) in particular brings cohesion to the Chronicler's focus on Solomon's temple objective. As David exhorted Solomon to have a heart to build the temple (28:9-10; 29:19) and Yahweh recognizes that he indeed had such a heart (2 Chr 1:11), the Chronicler confirms, "And with everything that *came upon his heart* to do in the temple... he succeeded" (7:11b).

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 549-550.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 2.1.3.

<sup>24</sup> The *Vorlage* is difficult, but he extends it for at least a day, but possibly 15 days; cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 108.

Fourth, the Chronicler adapts aspects of Yahweh's response at the temple dedication to mark the end of construction as a watershed moment in Israel's history. To begin with, he adds imagery that indicates divine approval such as fire coming down from heaven and Yahweh's glory filling the temple (cf. 7:1-3).<sup>25</sup> Additionally, he inserts a virtual temple charter into Yahweh's words of acceptance after the temple dedication (cf. 7:13-15).<sup>26</sup> Several scholars have pointed out the importance of this insertion for its articulation of the Chronicler's main themes through some of his most distinctive vocabulary. The many crises that will emerge in the reigns of later kings will further demonstrate the strategic nature of the Chronicler's insertion here.<sup>27</sup> With regard to Solomon specifically, all these insertions accentuate Yahweh's acceptance of his diligent work to finish the temple project. While David rallied all Israel and secured an enormous amount of materials for the temple, Solomon gave them the opportunity to do it after its final construction.<sup>28</sup>

### ***3.1.2. Solomon's Expanded Dominion (2 Chr 8-9)***

The Chronicler adapts the text in 1 Kgs 9:10-10:29 to illustrate how Solomon's diligence with the temple gave Israel greater security in the land (2 Chr 8-9). The first half highlights Solomon's subsequent conquest and further construction (8:1-16; cf. 1 Kgs 9:10-25). Rather than Solomon surrendering twenty cities to Hiram (cf. 1 Kgs 9:11), the Chronicler asserts that Hiram gave several cities to Solomon, who also rebuilt them and

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<sup>25</sup> The Chronicler also marks David's altar building in 1 Chr 21:26 with fire coming down from Yahweh in heaven.

<sup>26</sup> Compare 2 Chr 7:11-22 // 1 Kgs 9:1-9. Cf. R. B. Dillard, "Reward and Punishment in Chronicles: The Theology of Immediate Retribution," *WTJ* 46 (1984): 164-172 (166); Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 225-226.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 1 for discussion of this passage.

<sup>28</sup> Perhaps the expression "from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt" in 7:8 (// 1 Kgs 8:65) further explains the Chronicler's insertion at 1 Chr 13:5. It illustrates how Solomon finished what David started when he first attempted to transfer the ark.

resettled them with Israelites (2 Chr 8:2). The Chronicler next reports Solomon's capture (קִיּוּם) of the city Hamath-zobah to show how far he stretched his rule northwards (2 Chr 8:3). Furthermore, vv 4-6 describe his work in fortifying cities elsewhere in his dominion. The rest of the material in this first half (2 Chr 8:7-15) addresses issues that could have arisen from his many building projects.<sup>29</sup> Unlike several other kings who crumble under the temptation of such success, Solomon pursued these ambitions faithfully even while he completed the construction of the temple (v 16).<sup>30</sup>

The second half of this final section (8:17-9:28) puts forward Solomon's ascendancy over all the other neighboring monarchs as further reward for finishing the temple. Though the parallel account records these episodes in the same place (cf. 1 Kgs 9:10-10:29), it does not show the same cause-effect relationship. The climactic moment for Solomon there stems from his request for wisdom at Gibeon much earlier (1 Kgs 3:5-15), which empowered him with judicial prudence (1 Kgs 3:16-28), the ability to govern all Israel (4:1-20), and even rule over "all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt" (5:1; cf. vv 1-8). He gained this extensive dominion before he even considered building the temple (cf. 5:16). Moreover, the construction of the temple itself, along with the following episodes in 1 Kgs 9:10-10:29, appears as the fruit of the wisdom he gained at Gibeon. The Chronicler, on the other hand, moves the report of

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<sup>29</sup> First, the Chronicler does not alter the point made by 1 Kgs 9:20-22 that Solomon (1) did not force Israelites to do slave labor in order to complete his building works and (2) he did not elevate non-Israelites to leadership (2 Chr 8:7-10). Second, he clarifies the text in 1 Kgs 9:24 by asserting that Pharaoh's daughter never went into those places made holy by the passing of the ark (2 Chr 8:11). Third, he emphasizes that while Solomon created a new cultic beginning with burnt offerings on the altar that he built before the temple, he then appointed the priests and Levites for the regular temple service according to the commandment of David (vv 12-15).

<sup>30</sup> The most notable kings who struggle with pride from building projects are Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Uzziah (see Chapter 5) and Rehoboam (see Chapter 6).

Solomon's broad rule in 1 Kgs 5:1 to the end of his reign so that it further exemplifies Israel's well-being in the land now that Solomon has built the temple (cf. 2 Chr 9:26). That is to say, Solomon not only conquered and rebuilt more cities on the nation's frontier (8:2-10), he ruled over every other king in Israel's vicinity.

The episodes in 2 Chr 8:17-9:28 now have a different context as they lead up to the new concluding statement in 2 Chr 9:26. For example, the Chronicler explains how Hiram supported Solomon in his quest to find gold in the land of Edom by sending him ships and servants with expertise in the matter (8:17-18; see also 9:10-11, 21); 1 Kgs 9:26-28 had Solomon building the ships.<sup>31</sup> The following two episodes also confirm Solomon's domination of the surrounding area, though without adaptations. First, the queen of Sheba traveled all the way to Jerusalem to test Solomon, but then saw for herself his great wisdom and showered him with great gifts (cf. 9:1-9, 12). In the second, all the kings of Arabia brought gold and silver in such massive quantities that he could produce, *inter alia*, shields and a throne with it (cf. 9:13-20). The concluding paragraph stresses the effect of these relationships. Because Solomon became greater than all the "kings of the earth" in wealth and wisdom (2 Chr 9:22), they in turn sought him out to hear his wisdom (v 23). Moreover, each one would bring a present (v 24) so that Solomon's wealth and rule grew more and more (vv 25-28).

Scholars up to this point have tried to argue that the Chronicler includes these episodes merely to emphasize Solomon's wealth and wisdom, but such an idea merely repeats the same theme from 1 Kgs 9:10-10:29. Rather, the Chronicler inserts the statement

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<sup>31</sup> It is important to note that Solomon's relations with these other monarchs do not represent alliances since the Chronicler always portrays those negatively; Cf. Knoppers, "Alliances as a Topos," 601-626. To the contrary, they show his superiority over them.

of Solomon's expansive rule in 9:26 to set a new interpretive lens for the end of Solomon's reign. As important as his wealth and wisdom were, they represent only the mechanism by which he strengthened Israel's place in the land. According to the Chronicler, he gained this opportunity through his faithful completion of the temple's construction.

### **3.2 Abijah (2 Chr 13)**

The Chronicler presents Solomon's grandson Abijah as the next completely faithful king, a total change from his brief and thoroughly negative depiction in 1 Kgs 15:1-8.

Although the Chronicler does not express this through a formal evaluation,<sup>32</sup> commentators have widely noted this positive transformation of the king. The task here will be to ascertain precisely *how* he does it. Aside from the concise introductory and concluding materials (2 Chr 13:1-2, 22), the account focuses solely on his battle against the northern king Jeroboam (vv 3-21). Even though Abijah led a much smaller army against his enemy (cf. v 3), the Chronicler shows how he still prevailed for very specific theological reasons that he includes in his speech (vv 4-12).

#### **3.2.1. Abijah's Speech (2 Chr 13:4-12)**

An older generation of scholars argued that the Chronicler inserts this speech as continued polemic against the northern kingdom and, consequently, the contemporary Samaritan community.<sup>33</sup> More recently however, Japhet and Williamson have shown that the Chronicler still views the northerners as brothers who could always return to the place of proper worship in Jerusalem; i.e. he does not view them as another hostile, foreign

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<sup>32</sup> The Chronicler only leaves one other king without a formal evaluation, Jehoahaz (2 Chr 36:1-4).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Curtis and Madsen, *Books of Chronicles*, 375-376; Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 238; Welten, "Lade-Tempel-Jerusalem," 127-129.

nation.<sup>34</sup> In this light, Abijah's speech calls upon their northern kindred to come back to their common God, Yahweh (cf. 13:12, "God of *your* fathers"). Knoppers adds the helpful comparison to the inner Israelite sacral war authorized in Deut 13 and illustrated in Judg 19-21, where Yahweh commanded the righteous core of Israelites to take specific punitive measures against other Israelites who embraced idolatry.<sup>35</sup> As we will see below, this model illuminates the key ideological difference between the northern and southern kingdoms at this point, the proper cult devoted to Yahweh in Jerusalem versus the false cult that Jeroboam installed in the north (2 Chr 13:8-12; cf. 2 Chr 11:14-15).

In addition to matters of the cult, Knoppers also contends that the Chronicler's Abijah condemned Jeroboam for his institution of a false kingship in 13:5-7. Whereas 1 Kings legitimizes the northern kingship with its recording of Solomon's sins and their aftermath (cf. 11:26-40), Knoppers continues, the Chronicler leaves these details out since he considers it illegitimate from the start. While space does not permit us to undertake a full analysis of Israel's division into two separate kingdoms here,<sup>36</sup> a fresh look at Abijah's speech reveals that he condemned Jeroboam *only for his establishment of a false cult* while saying nothing of northern kingship.

The speech itself divides nicely into two parts, an explanation of how the once unified kingdom split in the past (vv 5-7) and a comparison of the two autonomous kingdoms in the present (vv 8-12). The second quite clearly contains a rebuke towards the northerners for their idolatrous cult (see below), but does the first really offer another

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<sup>34</sup> Japhet, *Ideology*, 267-351; Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*, 87-131.

<sup>35</sup> G. N. Knoppers, "'Battling Against Yahweh': Israel's War Against Judah in 2 Chr 13:2-20," *RB* 100 (1993): 511-532 (524-529).

<sup>36</sup> I hope to write on this topic in the near future.

indictment for the establishment of a separate kingship as several commentators have claimed?<sup>37</sup>

Abijah's statement in v 5 may seem to point in that direction. After a brief address to the northerners (v 4b), Abijah declared, "Do you not know that Yahweh the God of Israel gave kingship over Israel to David and his sons forever as a covenant of salt?"<sup>38</sup> The content of this verse refers back to 1 Chr 17:14 when Yahweh promised David a place in his (i.e. God's) kingdom for all time. Later, at the end of his reign, David's speech to the different leaders of Israel in 28:1-10 asserted the continuance of this promise since God had chosen his son Solomon after him "to sit on the throne of the kingdom of Yahweh over Israel" (v 5). Nevertheless, an element of *individual* conditionality remained in the covenant for the Davidic kings as stated later in v 9b, "If you seek (דרש) him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake (עזב) him, he will cast you off forever." For Solomon specifically, this meant carrying out the construction of the temple (v 10), which he sought to do from the very beginning of his reign (2 Chr 1-2) and eventually completed (2 Chr 3-7). Abijah opened his speech with such a loaded statement because he wanted to show how even though previous regrettable circumstances put Yahweh's promises into question, they certainly did not negate his covenant with the Davidic line.

As for vv 6-7, scholars have offered two different interpretations due to the ambiguous terms, אדני ("his *lord*") in v 6 and the pronominal suffix of עליו ("about *him*") in v 7. In one interpretation, Japhet identifies אדני as Solomon so that v 6 alludes to

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<sup>37</sup> In addition to Knoppers' article listed above, cf. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 295; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 691-692; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 200.

<sup>38</sup> This expression points to the eternal nature of the covenant (cf. Lev 2:13; Num 18:19). See the discussion in Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 691.

Jeroboam's rebellion as recorded in 1 Kgs 11:26-40.<sup>39</sup> As she concedes, this amounts to an unexpected reference since the Chronicler does not include that event in his narrative. Nevertheless, she argues that the strong language of a slave (עבד) rebelling against his lord (אדניו) indicates that the seeds of division had been sown well before Rehoboam came to power. Next, she suggests that the ambiguous pronoun in v 7 refers to Jeroboam in the next stage of his revolt. This time "worthless scoundrels" gathered to him so that together they defied (יתאמצו על) God's chosen king. In doing this, she continues, the Chronicler changes the justifiable complaint made by the people in 1 Kgs 12 into an "irresponsible act of a handful of blackguards."<sup>40</sup> Knoppers takes a similar line, but also remarks that the division took place when the weak-hearted and inexperienced Rehoboam had just assumed the throne, thus relieving him of some of the blame he received in 1 Kgs 12. In addition, this interpretation places the culpability more squarely on Jeroboam for taking advantage of the vulnerable king.<sup>41</sup> Following Abijah's affirmation of the Davidic kingship in v 5, this reading of vv 6-7 blames the opportunistic Jeroboam for establishing another kingship illicitly.

Though this interpretation may work somewhat for v 6, Japhet's identification of the pronominal suffix in עליו as Jeroboam in v 7 creates several problems. For example, the Chronicler's report of the Shechem council does not record any group resembling "blackguards", but he modifies the text so that *all Israel* stood with Jeroboam against the new king Rehoboam. As we saw in the reigns of David and Solomon, the Chronicler uses this moniker to signify the idealized faithful within the country so that the "worthless

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<sup>39</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 691-692.

<sup>40</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 692.

<sup>41</sup> G. N. Knoppers, "Rehoboam in Chronicles: Villain or Victim?," *JBL* 109 (1990): 423-440 (439).



scoundrels” cannot refer to them. Moreover, this interpretation must translate the expression יתאמצו על as “defy” to make the point, yet nowhere else does this verb in any stem have this sense.<sup>42</sup> Dillard cautions not to put too much weight on this word because it occurs only once in the hithpael with this preposition,<sup>43</sup> but certainly it must mean *something* closer to the root’s other uses than what Japhet has suggested.

Williamson has offered a different interpretation of vv 6-7 which attributes both of the ambiguous terms to Rehoboam.<sup>44</sup> This reading makes a better identification of אדניו since Jeroboam’s rebellion against Rehoboam does exist in the Chronicler’s history (cf. 2 Chr 10). For the pronoun in עליו, this identification also coheres more with the Chronicler’s text since אדניו would be the nearest antecedent. Moreover, it allows a more natural use of יתאמצו על as “prevailed over” similar to v 18 or even “persuaded”, which fits well as a reference to how the young counsel swayed Rehoboam to his foolish action (10:8-11).<sup>45</sup> Thus, Williamson’s solution appears to fit better in the near context of the speech (13:4-12) and the larger context of the Shechem council (2 Chr 10).

A look at the Chronicler’s creative use of the word בן (6x in vv 5-8) brings more clarity to the passage. Abijah’s affirmation of God’s everlasting promise to David and his sons (בניו) to rule over Israel in v 5 provokes the question, how could this be true if the northerners had already split off by Abijah’s time? Abijah explained this by discussing two sons in v 6, where Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (בן־נבט; i.e. not David), who was merely a

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<sup>42</sup> The verb אָמַץ in the qal usually means “to be strong” and appears frequently in exhortations (e.g. 1 Chr 22:13; 28:20), while the piel often has a causative sense, “to make strong” (2 Chr 11:17; 24:13). It occurs only four times in the hithpael (Ruth 1:18; 1 Kgs 12:18; 2 Chr 10:18; 13:7).

<sup>43</sup> R. B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles* (WBC 15; Waco: Word Books, 1987), 107-108.

<sup>44</sup> Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*, 110.

<sup>45</sup> Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*, 112.

servant (עבד) of Solomon, the son of David (בן־דָּוִד), rebelled (מרד) against his master (i.e. Rehoboam). Although Japhet claims that the label עבד, which she translates “slave”,<sup>46</sup> reflects poorly on Jeroboam, it likely has the more positive connotation “servant” as it is used for Jeroboam in 1 Kgs 11:26 (see also v 13 and 2 Chr 8:9).<sup>47</sup> Scholars have also seen a criticism against Jeroboam in the word מַרְד, though it can have either a negative (e.g. 2 Kgs 24:1) or a positive (e.g. 2 Kgs 18:7) connotation.<sup>48</sup> Since Jeroboam had all Israel on his side at this point, its use here must point to his justified rebellion in 2 Chr 10:2-3. In fact, the support of the people made him look more like a faithful leader than the true son of David, Rehoboam.

Nevertheless, this understanding presents another question, how could a ‘son of Nebat’, a servant of the ‘son of David’, successfully rebel against the Davidic king? Abijah continued his explanation with two more ‘sons’ in v 7, stating that certain “sons of worthlessness” (בְּנֵי בָלִיעַל) prevailed over the “son of Solomon” when the latter was young and tender-hearted. Yahweh had entrusted his kingdom to the Davidides as long as they remained faithful to him, especially as it pertained to matters of the temple cult (cf. 1 Chr 28:9-10). However, as we will see later in Chapter 6.1.1, Rehoboam squandered this blessing when the sons of worthlessness persuaded him to neglect one of the cult’s most fundamental aspects (i.e. all Israel). The Chronicler stresses Rehoboam’s missed

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<sup>46</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 691.

<sup>47</sup> A. Frisch, “Jeroboam and the Division of the Kingdom: Mapping Contrasting Biblical Accounts,” *JANES* 27 (2000): 15-29 (16-17, 25).

<sup>48</sup> Knoppers (“Rehoboam in Chronicles,” 438) assumes the negative connotation.

opportunity with his paradigmatic verb הִתְחַזֵּק (“he could not *strengthen himself* before them,” v 7).<sup>49</sup>

With this in mind, Abijah’s bold declarations on behalf of the Davidic monarchy (vv 5, 8) affirmed that he himself would not continue Rehoboam’s course, but did not necessarily offer hidden criticism of the northern kingship. They certainly could buffer explicit statements elsewhere that Jeroboam wrongfully sought an illicit kingship alongside the Davidides, but the Chronicler never provides them. On the other hand, the Chronicler shows later in his narrative how the southern kings Amaziah and Ahaz both lost to their northern counterparts. Their abuse of the cult proved to be the deciding factor in their battles, not a divinely bestowed kingship.<sup>50</sup>

In the second part of his speech, the Chronicler’s Abijah moves forward to the present situation (“and now,” v 8). While vv 5-7 had aimed simply to explain the circumstances that led to the division of the kingdom, Abijah then leveled a charge against the northerners for wrongs committed. To do this, he drew a stark comparison between the different cultic environments in the north and south with several emphatic pronouns (i.e. אַתֶּם and אֲנִי). He first rebuked the north for their misguided hope in a false cult, “*You* are intending to stand strong..., *you* being a large multitude and having with you golden calves...” (v 8). As a contrast, Abijah then described the southern kingdom, “As for *us*, Yahweh is our God...” in v 10 and declared at the end in v 11b, “For *we* are keeping the service of Yahweh our god...”

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<sup>49</sup> For discussion of חִזַּק in the hithpael, see above on Solomon (2 Chr 1:1). Rehoboam finally did establish his kingdom according to 12:13, but his rule extended only to Jerusalem. This reflects poorly on him since he squandered the vast kingdom built by David and Solomon (cf. 9:26)

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter 4.3.1 and Chapter 5.4.2.

Whereas the pronouns reveal the present guilt of the northerners, the source of their sins emerges in statements about past *post-secession* events such as “the golden calves *that Jeroboam made for you*” (v 8), “Have you not driven out the priests of Yahweh... and the Levites... and made priests for yourselves... of what are no gods?” (v 9), and the categorical accusation “you have forsaken (עזב) him” (v 11b).<sup>51</sup> Through all these remarks, Abijah made a clear distinction between the north and south by means of their different cults. Every one of these charges referred in some way to Jeroboam’s initial act of apostasy in 11:14-15, but at no point did Abijah say anything about the northern kingdom or its kingship as such.

Knoppers has made the insightful observation that Abijah’s speech does not mention the temple at all and then plausibly reasons that it allows the Chronicler to make connections with Israel’s earlier cultic practices with the tabernacle.<sup>52</sup> However, we may consider this with another oddity that occurs immediately after Abijah’s death, where Asa still needed to remove several illicit cultic objects at the beginning of his reign (14:2, 4). Japhet cites this as one more instance where the Chronicler did not resolve the tension between history and his own theology (cf. 1 Kgs 15:13-14).<sup>53</sup> Alternatively, putting these two passages together, the Chronicler likely gives evidence that Abijah had only the bare minimum for seeking Yahweh.<sup>54</sup> His account of Rehoboam certainly reveals that he did not

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<sup>51</sup> For the cultic orientation of עזב, see Chapter 1.

<sup>52</sup> Knoppers, “Battling Against Yahweh,” 521. This point has some truth for the Chronicler’s work in general. Cf. Williamson’s discussion on 1 Chr 21:26-22:1 for the continuity between Moses’ tabernacle and the temple in *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 150-151.

<sup>53</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 707.

<sup>54</sup> D. G. Deboys (“History and Theology in the Chronicler’s Portrayal of Abijah,” *Bib* 71 [1990]: 48-62 [52]) uses the same passages to argue, unconvincingly in my opinion, that the Chronicler gives Abijah a mixed evaluation.

leave much of a positive religious infrastructure on which to build (cf. 12:1-2, 9),<sup>55</sup> yet the Chronicler demonstrates that Abijah prospered because he moved in the right direction.

The Chronicler's Abijah declared the crucial difference between the two kingdoms at the end of his speech, "Behold, God is *with us* at our head, and his priests with their battle trumpets to sound the battle call against you..." (v 12). The divine presence resided with David and Solomon as they worked to establish the temple cult, but now it indicates that certain post-Solomonic kings maintained it. Since Yahweh presumably resided in the south, Abijah pled with the northerners as fellow kinsmen, "O sons of Israel, do not fight against Yahweh, the God of *your* fathers, for you will not prosper." This divine name (i.e. "the God of your fathers") has a special place in Chronicles since David used it as an initial rallying point to unify all Israel (1 Chr 12:17-19) and later to stir the people to build the temple (29:18-19). Abijah also referred to it to rally the people back to Israel's God in the orthodox practices of the nation's cult. Although he did not succeed in gathering all Israel together as David and Solomon, he undoubtedly made the effort.

### **3.2.2. *Abijah's War (2 Chr 13:13-22)***

As expected, the Chronicler stylizes the ensuing war to demonstrate that Abijah won due to his maintenance of the proper cult and his desire to rally all Israel to it. Despite a smaller army (v 3) and a weaker military position (vv 13-14a), the Chronicler avers that Judah simply cried out, their priests blew the trumpets, and their men raised the battle shout (vv 14b-15). In response, Yahweh defeated Jeroboam and the northern army for them without any struggle "because they relied on Yahweh, the God of their fathers" (v 18). As David and Solomon before him and also many subsequent faithful kings, the Chronicler's

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<sup>55</sup> See Chapter 6.1.3.

Abijah expanded his territory, this time with the acquisition of the northern border cities Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron (v 19), which certainly strengthened Judah's hold on their land. The Chronicler also inserts other characteristic marks of a strong kingdom for Abijah, such as the paradigmatic verb **התחזק** and a massive family (v 21).<sup>56</sup>

As for Jeroboam, the Chronicler stresses that he suffered punishment immediately. Whereas 1 Kgs 15:8-9 avers that Jeroboam lived until after the death of Abijah and into the reign of Asa, the Chronicler stresses, "And Jeroboam did not recover his power again in the days of Abijah, and Yahweh struck him and he died" (2 Chr 13:20). Once again, the Chronicler demonstrates the swift and immediate consequences for temple (un)faithfulness.

### **3.3. Jotham (2 Chr 27)**

The period between Abijah and Hezekiah contains several kings who either abused or abandoned the cult at some point in their reign. Jotham provides the lone exception, but requires only a little attention since neither the books of Kings nor Chronicles say much about him. Moreover, whereas the former isolates his reign quite distinctly from his father's with five northern kings in between their reigns (cf. Uzziah in 2 Kgs 15:1-7; Jotham in vv 32-38), the Chronicler assesses Jotham's rule entirely in light of Uzziah's late failure. As we will see later in Chapter 5.5, Uzziah had a pious, prosperous start to his reign (2 Chr 26:5), but then ended his success with his unfaithfulness (**מעל**) to Yahweh (v 16). Though Uzziah's reign finished on a sour note despite the advances he made (vv 6-15), the Chronicler uses the reign of Jotham to resume the progress for Judah. With just a few changes, he briefly recounts the highlights of Jotham's reign succinctly. In the end, he depicts Jotham's reign just as spotless as that of any other king.

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<sup>56</sup> For a discussion of large families in Chronicles, see Chapter 6.1.2.

The Chronicler modifies the introduction to Jotham's reign to give him a completely positive evaluation. It begins, "And he did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh according to all that his father had done," but then he makes the insertion, "except he did not enter the temple of Yahweh" (2 Chr 27:2). In other words, Jotham acted in the same faithful way as Uzziah yet avoided his father's cultic malfeasance.<sup>57</sup> This latter remark replaces, "However, the high places were not removed..." (2 Kgs 15:35a), so that the Chronicler makes no criticism of Jotham.

Perhaps the next remark, "but the people still acted corruptly (משחיתים)," which finds fault with the people but not the king, simply accounts for why the Chronicler does not give Jotham's faultless reign more than this brief report. It is also important to note that the people's corrupt practices did not serve as a mark against Jotham, but against his father who "grew proud until the point where he acted corruptly (עד-להשחית)" (26:16). Japhet sees ועור at the beginning of the clause as a textual remnant with no literary or theological consequences,<sup>58</sup> but the above interpretation shows how the Chronicler forms a natural link between Uzziah's misconduct and the residual effect on the people. The nationwide revival came only later in the time of Hezekiah (see below), so the Chronicler tempers the praise that he offers to Jotham.

Starting with the note in 2 Kgs 15:35b that Jotham "built the upper gate of the house of Yahweh", the Chronicler adds that the king also did much work on the Ophel (v 3). This initiative, a defensive measure at least in part to strengthen the area around the temple, makes sense as a further reaction to the northern king Joash's attack on Jerusalem

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<sup>57</sup> Myers (*II Chronicles*, 156) interprets 27:2 negatively (i.e. he did not *even* go to the temple), but this misses the whole point of Jotham's reign; cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 341-342.

<sup>58</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 891.

and plundering of the temple much earlier (cf. 2 Chr 25:23-24). In addition, Jotham fortified cities throughout the hill country of Judah and established forts and towers on the wooded hills (27:4), extending the defensive structures set up by his father (cf. 26:9-10). Lastly, his triumph over the Ammonites (with the subsequent acceptance of tribute) also resumed Uzziah's program of subduing the neighboring countries, allowing Judah not only to dwell in the land peacefully, but also to prosper within it (27:5).

The Chronicler concludes these details with a summary of Jotham's restorative activity, "Thus Jotham strengthened himself (התחזק), for he established his ways before Yahweh his God" (v 6). This comment removes any doubt of how Jotham may have prospered in the manner that he did. While the Chronicler could have found reason to indict Jotham for the report of Aramaean and Israelite attacks that began in his day (cf. 2 Kgs 15:37), he instead states explicitly that Jotham grew strong through devotion to Israel's God, which naturally led to the nation's stability in the land.

### **3.4. Hezekiah (2 Chr 29-32)**

The Chronicler presents Hezekiah as Judah's most faithful king after the division of the kingdom. He certainly had great opportunity for improvement since his father Ahaz conducted perhaps the most disastrous reign in the Chronicler's account (see Chapter 4.3). Ahaz committed idolatry throughout his entire reign and, despite many opportunities to repent, persisted in his wicked ways which led to several attacks by the surrounding nations. Whereas David and Solomon gathered all Israel and established the temple with all its cultic practices, Ahaz brought all Israel to ruin and even shut down the temple service (2 Chr 28:22-25). The Chronicler shows how Hezekiah revived the fundamental elements of



the temple cult that David first established as soon as he was able (2 Chr 29-31).<sup>59</sup> This devotion to the temple allowed him to protect Jerusalem from the invading Assyrian army led by Sennacherib (2 Chr 32). While the account in 2 Kgs 18-20 may also claim that Hezekiah prospered as a result of his faith (cf. 18:7-8), the Chronicler gives much more attention to his revival of the temple service in this connection.

### **3.4.1. Temple Reforms (2 Chr 29-31)**

#### **3.4.1.1. Reopening the Temple**

The Chronicler replaces the brief mention of Hezekiah's piety in 2 Kgs 18:4-6 with an extensive account that gives great detail specifically to Hezekiah's reforms. The account in 2 Kgs 18 briefly commends him as the first king to remove the high places from his dominion (v 4), a clear contrast to the many previous southern kings who did not remove them (e.g. Azariah, 15:14) and the northern kings who ultimately received judgment in part for building them (cf. 17:9-11).<sup>60</sup> The same account also praises his strict adherence to Mosaic law (vv 5-6). The Chronicler, on the other hand, places all his attention on Hezekiah's work with regard to the cult. He describes this in three phases, the purification

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<sup>59</sup> Williamson (*Israel in Chronicles*, 119-125) has convincingly criticized the original arguments of Mosis (*Untersuchungen*, 189-192) for a patterning of Hezekiah after David. However, Mosis had not adequately assessed either the uniqueness of the comment in 2 Chr 29:2, which Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 915) demonstrates has more significance in the books of Chronicles than in Kings since the former has removed all such comparisons from other monarchs except for Hezekiah and Josiah (cf. 1 Kgs 15:11), or the evidence I have put forth here. Williamson himself has shown many points of contact between Hezekiah's reign and Solomon's so that a modeling after both kings can be accepted; I will address some of his main arguments in the body of this chapter. For an in-depth treatment of the topic, cf. R. A. Young, *Hezekiah in History and Tradition* (VTSup 155; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 257-283. See also the work of M. A. Throntveit, who also argues for a modeling after both kings in *When Kings Speak: Royal Speech and Royal Prayer in Chronicles* (SBLDS 93; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 121-124. See also his essay, "The Relationship of Hezekiah to David and Solomon in the Books of Chronicles," in *The Chronicler as Theologian* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.), 105-121.

<sup>60</sup> I speak only from a literary standpoint, though for discussion on the nature and extent of Hezekiah's reforms, see N. Na'aman, "The Debated Historicity of Hezekiah's Reform in the Light of Historical and Archaeological Research," *ZAW* 107 (1995): 179-195.

of the temple (2 Chr 29), the celebration of the Passover (2 Chr 30), and then lastly further reforms throughout Judah (2 Chr 31).

With each of these three phases, the Chronicler emphasizes that Hezekiah set out to make the temple operational as quickly as he could. At the very beginning, he places the initiation of his reforms “in the first year of his reign, in the first month...” so that Hezekiah appears eager to achieve this for his first act as king (29:3a).<sup>61</sup> While the Chronicler shows this prioritization of the cult for several other kings in the divided monarchy, he makes this point explicit with Hezekiah by two uses of the word ראשון (“first”).<sup>62</sup>

Hezekiah’s eagerness appears exceptional since he focused on only the barest essentials that he deemed most crucial to the task. First, he spent no time on building projects throughout Judah, amassing large armies, or trying to conquer any of the neighboring areas around him, but took care to repair the doors of the temple and reopen them right away so that the Levites could do further work (v 3b).<sup>63</sup> The Chronicler claims

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<sup>61</sup> Young (*Hezekiah in History and Tradition*, 198-199) shows how the advancement of a leader’s significant accomplishments to the very beginning of his reign, however anachronistic they might be, is quite common in the ancient Near East.

<sup>62</sup> See the discussion Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, and also Josiah in Chapter 5. Each of these other kings start reforms early, but cannot sustain their pious work for different reasons.

<sup>63</sup> The idea that חזק is thematic for Hezekiah as a pun on his name has been overplayed at times. For example, De Vries (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 373) suggests that instead of translating v 3, “He opened the doors... and strengthened them” one could say that “he ‘Hezekiahed’ them”. He argues that the meaning can only be found in the pun since we cannot know what “strengthening” means here; see also McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 341. However, the traditional understanding of “repair” fits perfectly (cf. BDB, HALOT). The Chronicler simply wants to illustrate how the previous king did not only shut the doors of the temple, but he caused further damage. Moreover, the Chronicler attributes this action to more than just one king; both Joash (24:5) and Josiah (34:8) order the clergy to go “repair” the temple. As a final point, the verb חזק (or even its nominal cognate חזקה) do not appear with reference to Hezekiah again until 32:5, 7, where they are likewise stereotypical phrases also used for other kings. Hence, this root should not necessarily be seen as thematic for this verse or even Hezekiah’s reign in general (*contra* De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 389). Along these same lines, see J. Jarick (*2 Chronicles* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007], 170-171) who argues for it based on the word’s appearances in 32:5, 7. This may have more credibility if, as Jarick proposes, the Chronicler illustrates this for several kings’ names.

that Judah had suffered many attacks in the reign of Ahaz, yet he shows that Hezekiah still prioritized the temple rather than the military as his source of hope for protecting the kingdom.

Secondly, he urged the Levites to consecrate the temple immediately, using the word עתה three times (“now” in vv 5, 10, 11). Whereas past generations had slowly let it fall into disuse, he exhorted the Levites, “Do not be negligent!” since the execution of this task would turn away the wrath of Yahweh (vv 10-11). After they finished the entire purification process for the temple (vv 12-19), Hezekiah got up early (שכם, hiphil) the next morning to gather more people to start the next stage of the process (v 20). Once they had made the temple completely ready, the large assembly of people rejoiced because the matter had come about suddenly (בפתאום) (v 36). Indeed, the Chronicler emphasizes the speed at which this event transpired by attributing the work ultimately to God (“because God had prepared for the people”).<sup>64</sup>

Third, the Chronicler demonstrates Hezekiah’s haste with the celebration of the Passover in the second month (30:2). Presumably, the king could have waited until his second year to observe it in the correct month, but wanted to celebrate it at the soonest possible moment.<sup>65</sup> He admonished the people through letters to focus solely on Yahweh’s temple in Jerusalem if they wanted the captivity to end (v 6). Again, his message

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<sup>64</sup> Several emendations have been proposed for לעם in this verse (see Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 411). McKenzie (*Chronicler’s Use of the Deuteronomistic History*, 343) and Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 911) have suggested לבם (“their heart”) which would fit well with the Chronicler’s familiar use of the word לבב. Either way, the Chronicler introduces the work of God into the equation in order to accentuate the surprisingly swift organization of the event.

<sup>65</sup> Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 366) argues that Hezekiah would have found legal justification for such a delay in Num 9:9-12, but this law makes provision only for those who are unclean because they touch a dead body. These laws were aimed at a select few, not the whole community. For more discussion on the differences between these two texts, cf. S. Chavel, “The Second Passover, Pilgrimage, and the Centralized Cult,” *HTR* 102 (2009): 1-24 (6-10).

emphasized the present moment (עתה) as the time for them to “come to his sanctuary which he has consecrated forever, and serve Yahweh your God” (v 8). Even after complications arose that gave him enough reason to wait (i.e. the priests and Levites had still not consecrated themselves in sufficient number, v 15; cf. v 3), he showed his resolve with his prayer, “May Yahweh the good atone for everyone who sets his heart to seek God, Yahweh, the God of his fathers, even though not according to the purity of the sanctuary” (vv 18-19). By maintaining the minimum requirement for the attendees to anyone who “set his heart to seek (שׁוּדָרַשׁ) . . . Yahweh,” the Chronicler shows how Hezekiah understood the urgency of the task at hand. As a sign of divine approval, Yahweh granted healing to the people simply for the fact that Hezekiah’s earnestness to celebrate the Passover outweighed any possible cultic infraction that might have accordingly resulted (v 20).

The reforms slowed down only to prolong the celebration since the assembly decided to keep it for an extra seven days. Immediately afterwards, however, they implemented the reforms throughout Judah and even into the northern kingdom (31:1). Additionally, Hezekiah appointed the priests and Levites to their divisions and established structures for their future provision long-term (vv 2-20a), measures executed in the third to seventh months (v 7). Thus, in seven busy months, Hezekiah quickly brought Yahweh’s temple cult back to life. Since the nation had become so vulnerable to attack with the idolatrous acts of his father Ahaz, Hezekiah knew that he must revive these most critical aspects of Israel’s religious life quickly in order to establish any sense of security for the country.

In addition to Hezekiah's haste, the Chronicler shows how he prioritized the same basic features of the temple cult as David did. Foremost in this regard, Hezekiah needed to mobilize specifically the priests and the Levites to prepare the sanctuary. Surprisingly, the Chronicler has not mentioned them since the reforms of Joash and Jehoiada (24:4-14).<sup>66</sup> In his opening charge, Hezekiah stressed the importance of not only their participation, but even consecration before they started the task (29:5). The Chronicler showed earlier how David failed at this task on his initial attempt to bring the ark into Jerusalem, resulting in the death of Uzzah (1 Chr 13:10). On his second attempt, David took care to delegate this particular task to the priests and Levites because Yahweh had chosen (בחר) them to execute it (1 Chr 15:2). Moreover, in his brief speech he instructed them to consecrate themselves (שקד, hithpael) for their special assignment (v 12).

The Chronicler now shows how Hezekiah did not make David's same mistake since he urged the priests and the Levites at the start to consecrate both themselves (שקד, hithpael) and the house of Yahweh (שקד, piel) as the most fundamental elements of the reform (2 Chr 29:5). A third occurrence of the root שקד in this speech comes with his command to remove the filth from the *sanctuary* (שקד, noun). By utilizing this nominal form of the root as a metonym for the temple, Hezekiah reminded them of their critical role in sanctifying the *holy* dwelling place of their God. Hezekiah's final charge at the end of the speech did likewise as it recalled their divine calling as ministers chosen (בחר) by Yahweh (v 11).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> The only exception to this occurs in the reign of Uzziah, but this instance says nothing about them working on any reforms (cf. 26:16-21).

<sup>67</sup> M. P. Graham explains how Hezekiah's cultic measures entail a process of spreading holiness, which begins here at the temple in Jerusalem as its center, carries on to the outer reaches of the city by cleansing it

The positive response by the priests and Levites validates the king's actions (vv 12-19). As Williamson has shown, the list of names from seven different branches of the Levitical family demonstrates the enthusiasm from the *entire* tribe to carry out the king's request (vv 12-14).<sup>68</sup> After sixteen days of cleansing (טהר) and consecrating (קדש) the house of Yahweh,<sup>69</sup> they reported to Hezekiah how they reversed all the damage that Ahaz had done (vv 18-19). Thus, the whole operation ran smoothly because Hezekiah, like David in 1 Chr 15, mobilized the appropriate, chosen task force (i.e. the Levites) for preparing the temple. In fact, Hezekiah held this element of his reform as so crucial that he was even willing to celebrate the Passover in the wrong month so that the priests could do their job (30:3).<sup>70</sup>

With the temple fully prepared, the Chronicler's Hezekiah installed in it an atmosphere of orderly worship in line with the preparations David had made much earlier. The Chronicler notes how he stationed the Levites in the temple with cymbals, harps, and lyres according to the commandment of David, Gad, and Nathan (29:25).<sup>71</sup> The instruments

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of all idols (30:14), invites the humble into this sphere of holiness (30:6-9), then lastly sends them out to extend the holiness of Jerusalem throughout Judah and other tribes (31:1); cf. "Setting the Heart to Seek God: Worship in 2 Chronicles 30:1-31:1," in *Worship and the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honour of John T. Willis* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 124-141 (135-136).

<sup>68</sup> Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 354. Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 921) adds that the conventionality of the number seven throughout this episode brings a sense of wholeness to the Levites' work. For example, the purification of the temple had two phases, seven days for the first and then seven plus one for the second (v 17). For the sacrifices later, there were seven each of bulls, rams, lambs, and he-goats (v 21). Hence, the Chronicler supplements the six traditional branches of the Levites with a seventh one.

<sup>69</sup> For the project itself, Japhet points out the helpful distinction between the two actions that the Levites performed on the temple, where טהר refers to the removal of the accumulated pollution from the past and קדש denotes the extra effort to bring the temple to a level of sanctity; cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 922.

<sup>70</sup> Some scholars have detected an anti-priestly critique at this point (cf. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 380), but my interpretation for 30:3 suggests that the Chronicler aims to say more about Hezekiah's piety than the priests' laxity. The priests appear primarily as a subgroup of the Levites in both David's transfer of the ark (cf. 1 Chr 15:2, 11-15) and Hezekiah's temple preparations (29:4-5).

<sup>71</sup> De Vries (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 375) claims that this verse must be a secondary expansion for several reasons (the omission of an explicit subject, the peculiarity of authority given to Nathan and Gad and the closing ו clause, the likelihood of v 26 as another starting point), but none of them seem strong enough to

of David appear at different points in the service (vv 26-27). The songs of praise also come from the words of David and Asaph (v 30). Thus, Hezekiah took care to establish an order of worship in the manner that David did from the start (cf. 1 Chr 16:4-7). Even the worshipful ambience with the king amidst כל־הקהל (“all the congregation”) resembles the Chronicler’s depiction of David guiding the people at the end of his life (cf. 1 Chr 29:20-21).<sup>72</sup>

As a final note, Hezekiah’s call upon the assembly to bring their own offerings of worship and thanksgiving (2 Chr 29:31-35; see also 31:3-4) also took after David’s attempt to stir the people to offer willingly as he had done with all his wealth (1 Chr 29:1-5). Just as the people made offerings in abundance at that time, a theme carried out later in that chapter by the verbal root נָדַב (cf. 1 Chr 29:5, 6, 9, 14, 17), so the Chronicler mentions many with a willing heart (נְדִיב־לֵב) who responded to Hezekiah’s call to bring their burnt offerings to the temple celebration (2 Chr 29:31).<sup>73</sup> The Chronicler accentuates their willingness with a record of the large donations they made (vv 32-33), then magnifies it even more with the fact that they did not have enough priests to handle all of the offerings (v 34). At the end of these reforms, Hezekiah made long-term arrangements for the priests and the Levites to minister in their divisions (31:2), institutions first set up by David (cf. 1

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disregard the verse. Willi (*Die Chronik als Auslegung*, 199-200) calls 2 Chr 29 a classic example of the hierarchical differentiation between the priests and Levites, in which he labels the entire paragraph in vv 26-30 secondary due to the prominence of the Levites.

<sup>72</sup> Note the appearance of חוּה that the Chronicler seldom uses, but occurs three times in this passage and also at the end of David’s reign (29:20). One could say it also resembles the temple dedication ceremony in the time of Solomon (2 Chr 7:1-10; cf. v 3).

<sup>73</sup> For discussion on the Chronicler’s use of expressions involving the heart, cf. Chapter 3.1.1.

Chr 23:2-24:31).<sup>74</sup> Thus, the Chronicler patterns Hezekiah after David in order to picture him as a successful and devout king, eager to establish the temple for Israel's God.

#### 3.4.1.2. *The Gathering of All Israel*

The Chronicler also patterns Hezekiah after David in his aim to rally "all Israel" back to the worship of Yahweh.<sup>75</sup> This ideal had not been a reality since Rehoboam caused the division of the kingdom (10:15), a problem Hezekiah's father Ahaz only exacerbated (28:23). He shows how Hezekiah had the reunification of all Israel in his plans from the beginning of his reign.

In his first speech to the priests and Levites, Hezekiah called attention to the sins of both northern and southern kingdoms (29:5-11), though he does not mention the phrase "all Israel" specifically. He described the obstinacy of past generations ("our fathers") in general terms (v 6), then set forth two specific ways in which they had abandoned the temple (v 7). First, he mentioned the most recent offense by the *southern* king Ahaz, who shut the doors of the temple (cf. 28:24).<sup>76</sup> Chapter 4 will show how all his idolatry and abuse of the temple resulted in the exile of many from his kingdom (i.e. not the north as expected). Second, Hezekiah then alluded to the first cultic crime committed by the *northern* king Jeroboam at the beginning of the divided monarchy with the reference to

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<sup>74</sup> Riley (*King and Cultus*, 133) argues that Hezekiah here goes beyond the simple task of restoration to even innovate in cultic matters; see also A. C. Welch, *The Work of the Chronicler: Its Purpose and Its Date* (Schweich Lectures; London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 114.

<sup>75</sup> The phrase "all Israel" appears 22 times in David's reign; for its importance there, see Chapter 2. The phrase only occurs 5 times for Solomon, at the beginning of his reign (1:2 [2x]), the dedication of the temple (7:6, 8, though the latter occurs in 2 Kgs 8:65), and the borrowed reference at the end of his reign (9:30 // 1 Kgs 11:42). While Solomon performed a great feat to keep them together, he did not need to rally them to Yahweh since his father had already accomplished that.

<sup>76</sup> The reference to the "the porch" (אולם) in 2 Chr 29:7 represents another metonym for the temple; cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 918.



lamps (נרות), incense (קטרת), and burnt offerings (עלה) (cf. 13:11).<sup>77</sup> Hence, this broad description attaches the guilt not only to the south for their latest crime of shutting down the temple, but it also points to the initial cause of the problem when the northern kingdom tried to establish a cult of their own (cf. 11:14-15).

The phrase “all Israel” first appears in Hezekiah’s reign after he gathered to the temple the officials of the city, who came bringing with them various animals for a sin offering “for the kingdom, the sanctuary, and for Judah” (29:20-21). When Hezekiah commanded the priests to offer the sacrifices on the altar of Yahweh, however, the Chronicler states that the sin offering served “to make atonement for *all Israel*” (v 24a).<sup>78</sup> He then reveals that it was Hezekiah who changed the objective of the offering with the final statement, “*For the king commanded* the burnt offering and the sin offering for all Israel” (v 24b).<sup>79</sup> In this way, Hezekiah made sure to purify not only the temple, but also the people before the celebration of the Passover.

The Chronicler describes Hezekiah’s execution of his plan to gather the people in the observance of the Passover, when he sent to “all Israel and Judah” and wrote “letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh” (30:1). As Japhet has shown, the mention of the two tribes

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<sup>77</sup> Nowhere else does the Chronicler record a chastisement for the neglect of each of these cultic practices except for 2 Chr 13:11 and 29:7, a strong indication that he does connect them. Williamson (*Israel in Chronicles*, 121-122) has shown how the Chronicler singled out each of these cultic practices (lamps, incense, and burnt offerings) at different places as an ordinance for Israel at the time of Solomon (cf. 2 Chr 2:3; 4:7). In this case, Hezekiah also makes an attempt to return to the conditions set in that time.

<sup>78</sup> Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 422) points out that making atonement for all Israel appears only one other time in Chronicles at 1 Chr 6:34, where adherence to the command of Moses is highlighted. Jarick (*2 Chronicles*, 165) notes that this idea coincides well with the northern kingdom’s acknowledgement of their own sin in Ahaz’s time (cf. 28:13).

<sup>79</sup> Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 357; see also *Israel in Chronicles*, 126-130) argues that the meaning of all Israel here stresses the completeness of the people. In contrast, Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 294) has tried to make the simple equation between “all Israel” here with the southern kingdom (cf. v 21), while others see this discrepancy as an example of secondary expansion within the chapter; cf. D. L. Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy: Studies in Deutero-Prophetic Literature and in Chronicles* (SBLMS 23; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 77-85.

Ephraim and Manasseh serves merely as a stylistic feature in which they function as a subset, one part of the larger nation.<sup>80</sup> In other words, these tribes did not receive different treatment from the rest (i.e. letters), but were placed here to note their importance to Hezekiah's vision. They would seemingly be the most difficult to enlist for the Passover celebration since they represented the heart of the northern kingdom, which had been largely antagonistic toward Yahweh from the time Jeroboam set up his pagan cult (11:14-15; cf. 25:7). On the other hand, some of their leading men had already shown themselves repentant for the longstanding sins of their people (cf. 28:12-13), so that at least one segment of their population seemed ready to return to the true cult in Jerusalem. In addition, the pair "all Israel and Judah" also exhibits this same literary device, where Judah represents an important subset of the larger "all Israel".<sup>81</sup> Unlike Ephraim and Manasseh, however, their importance lies in the fact that they have more faithfully followed Yahweh.

By twice using this stylistic feature, the Chronicler alludes to how fragmented all Israel became. Few kings had shown any desire to try to recapture this onetime ideal,<sup>82</sup> so Hezekiah appeared bold in his attempt to reintegrate the northern tribes. To pursue this, he made the driving force to reunification their mutual worship of Yahweh, "the God of Israel" (30:1, 5). Elsewhere in v 5, the committee that Hezekiah convened made their proclamation to go "throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan", both common phrases used by the Chronicler to emphasize the entire scope of the nation.<sup>83</sup> Along these lines, the

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<sup>80</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 937.

<sup>81</sup> Consider the common Chronic phrase "Judah and Jerusalem"; cf. 1 Chr 6:15; 2 Chr 2:7; 11:14; 20:5, 17, 27; 24: 6, 9, 18, 23; etc.

<sup>82</sup> Asa (2 Chr 15:9), Jehoshaphat (17:1), and Joash (24:5) may serve as the exceptions, but see Chapter 5.

<sup>83</sup> This order occurs only here and at 1 Chr 21:2, but takes the form "Dan to Beersheba" everywhere else in the Hebrew Bible (cf. 1 Kgs 4:25). Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 144) also notes the Chronicler's penchant for a south-to-north orientation found in 1 Chr 13:5 and 2 Chr 19:4.

contents of the letter (30:6-9) serve this same broad purpose by offering a reasoned plea to the many who still lived in the land to return to a proper worship of Yahweh. The letter opens with a very wide-ranging invitation calling all its recipients “O children of Israel” (v 6), thus placing residents from both kingdoms into the same address and identifying them all as Israelites.<sup>84</sup>

Many scholars have cited part of this letter to claim that Assyria had destroyed Samaria by this point: “Return to Yahweh... that he may turn again to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria” (v 6). Such an interpretation would mean that Hezekiah directed the letter more to the remaining northerners,<sup>85</sup> but the Chronicler has left no textual clues that this was the case. It is true that the northern kingdom receives attention only when their history crosses paths with Judah, and so their final destruction at the hands of the Assyrians receives no explicit notice. However, the account in 2 Kings states that the northern kingdom existed until the sixth year of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:10), so it makes most sense to assume this scenario for the Chronicler since he has not even hinted that this aspect of his narrative transpired differently.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Williamson (*Israel in Chronicles*, 131) points out that “the Chronicler presents a unique witness in the Hebrew Bible to the reunification of the people in the land before the exile.”

<sup>85</sup> See Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 944; G. N. Knoppers, “History and Historiography: The Royal Reforms,” in *The Chronicler as Historian* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.), 178-203 (199-200); Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 368; Young, *Hezekiah in History and Tradition*, 224. Perhaps the mention of “kings” in the plural reveals that the persecution by the Assyrians does not refer to only one distinct period. Dillard (*2 Chronicles*, 244), although he indicates the destruction of 722 B.C., suggests the possibility of several intrusions by the Assyrians behind Hezekiah’s statement.

<sup>86</sup> Williamson (*Israel in Chronicles*, 118) offers a couple of arguments that the Chronicler alludes to the northern kingdom’s fall during the reign of Ahaz, but see my discussion on Ahaz in Chapter 4.3.1. Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 935-936), followed by Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 429-430), argues that this Passover celebration could not have occurred when the north was still an independent country. To the contrary, in such a context Hezekiah’s message to his northern kindred could appear as an offer of safety since the northern kingdom was on the decline. The south would survive the Assyrian onslaught, but the north would not (cf. 32:1-23).

Furthermore, the message of the letter does correspond well with the devastation suffered in the reign of Hezekiah's father Ahaz. Due to Ahaz's unrestrained idolatry, several countries defeated Judah and captured many of its people (cf. Chapter 4.3). The Chronicler records Assyria as the last of these assailants (vv 20-21), with Ahaz's final idolatrous effort to shake off their persecution resulting in the ruin of "all Israel" (v 23). In Hezekiah's opening speech to the Levites in 29:5-11, these brutal defeats suffered under Ahaz must be the referent of the destruction and captivity mentioned there (cf. 29:8-9). That first speech differs from this second one only in the scope of the audience, moving from the Levites to "all Israel".

Of course the captivity and devastation mentioned in the second speech would have struck a chord for those in the northern kingdom before the fall of Samaria since the Assyrians reportedly attacked them repeatedly before their final destruction (e.g. 2 Kgs 17:1-5), but that misses the Chronicler's main point. Hezekiah pled with his countrymen, all Israel, to turn from the idolatrous behavior into which Ahaz had led them so that they could reverse the ruinous consequences endured in his reign. The northerners needed to see their plight either within this context, or as a result of their original abandonment of the temple back in the time of Jeroboam (cf. 11:14-15; 29:7).<sup>87</sup> Either way, the Chronicler pictures Hezekiah as the great leader who reunited all Israel on the basis of their shared relationship to Yahweh and his temple in Jerusalem.<sup>88</sup>

The Chronicler illustrates Hezekiah's great success in gathering the people by emphasizing the large participation and the assembly's great joy. The Chronicler first states

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<sup>87</sup> In this sense, Hezekiah's plea to the northern kingdom resembles the actions of Abijah in 13:4-12. Their repentance could only come by means of a return to their proper worship at the temple of Yahweh.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 360.

the main purpose for Hezekiah's celebration of the Passover when Hezekiah took counsel with his officials, "For they had not kept it in great numbers (לרב) as it was written" (30:5).<sup>89</sup> The people's initial response began to show his achievement of this. Hezekiah's letters only went to Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun, and even though some from these tribes laughed at them, many from the same tribes and even farther north in the tribe of Asher "humbled themselves (כנע)" (cf. 2 Chr 7:14) and came to Jerusalem (vv 10-11). Additionally, the Chronicler asserts that "the hand of God" was on Judah to comply; that is, they had such a positive response that it must be attributed to their empowerment by Yahweh (v 12; cf. 29:36). The Chronicler gives fuller expression to this theme when he shifts to the scene of the festival, where he uses the phrases עַם־רַב ("many people") and קהל לרב מאד ("a very great assembly") to describe the gathering (v 13).

Even the shortage of priests and Levites reveals the surprising amount of participation by the people, for the number of arrivals grew so big that they did not have enough clergy consecrated and ready to accommodate the crowd (v 15). They felt shame because, even though the earlier committee had pinpointed the lack of consecrated priests as an issue, the large amount of people still overwhelmed them (v 15; cf. v 3). The Chronicler explains that they could not fulfill their responsibility to slaughter the Passover lamb for every unclean person since a majority of the people who came, many from the northern tribes Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves (v 17-18a). Nonetheless, Yahweh still presumably approved Hezekiah's push to involve as

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<sup>89</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 940-941; cf. ESV) suggests the connotation "often" for לרב, but nowhere else does it have this meaning. It occurs 34 times in Chronicles to refer to abundance in quantity, never with respect to frequency. This is the case with the 20 occurrences outside of Chronicles also.

many people as possible, even northerners, by responding to the king's prayer with healing for them (vv 18b-20).

In addition to the large quantity of people, their obedient response and exuberant joy demonstrate their support of all his actions in the process. For example, Hezekiah's first speech to the priests and Levites inspired them to carry out their task of cleansing and consecrating the temple immediately (29:18-19). After they completed this, Hezekiah called the assembly to bring offerings for sacrifices (v 31), which they did abundantly (לרב) (v 35). All this help enabled Hezekiah to restore the temple entirely, a tremendous achievement that the Chronicler underscores with similar vocabulary for comparable milestones reached by Solomon (8:16) and Josiah (35:16).<sup>90</sup> All the people rejoice (שמח) since they considered the feat so great it had to represent a blessing from God (v 36).<sup>91</sup>

This joy motif appears more strongly during the Passover celebration (שמח, 4x in 30:21-27). The Chronicler begins his description of the event by stating that the children of Israel who were present in Jerusalem celebrated the feast for seven days with singing, food, and great joy (בשמחה גדולה), giving thanks to Yahweh (vv 21-22). With the agreement of the entire assembly, the celebration continued for another seven days with even more joy (שמחה) from the people (v 23), a supplement enabled only by the gifts of Hezekiah and the priests, and also the consecration of more priests (v 24). Next, the Chronicler states that the whole assembly rejoiced (וישמחו) (v 25). This diverse crowd consisted of not only those

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<sup>90</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 931. Compare the use of כון in 29:35 with the uses at 8:16 and 35:16.

<sup>91</sup> De Vries ("Festival Ideology," 111) argues based on four broadly based criteria in a "festival schema" that the Chronicler makes Hezekiah emulate Solomon in the rededication of the temple. Aside from the obvious report of the ceremonies, the fourth criterion regarding the notice of joyful celebration at the end of the occasion seems to be the most compelling mark of a connection. Compare 2 Chr 7:10 with 29:36; 30:23-26. For the theme of joy in David's reign, cf. 1 Chr 12:40; 15:25; 29:9.

from the northern and southern kingdoms, along with the priests and Levites, but also sojourners who lived in both kingdoms.<sup>92</sup>

With one last allusion to the joy motif, the Chronicler explains why there was such great rejoicing (שמחה גדולה) in Jerusalem, “For since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem” (v 26).<sup>93</sup> This joyful celebration compares to the time of the united monarchy since people from all over the kingdom had finally come back together to worship. For Hezekiah’s initiative to reunite the people once again around the temple, which brought joy to all Israel who attended, the Chronicler considers him in the same class as David and Solomon. The concluding benediction by the priests and Levites, which reached “his holy habitation in heaven,” evokes the sense that God has once again approved this entire special occasion (v 27; cf. 6:21).

The people’s abundantly positive response appears last in the final phase of Hezekiah’s reforms (2 Chr 31). Hezekiah first gave of his own possessions so that the clergy could continue performing sacrifices beyond Passover, but then asked the people also to contribute. When Hezekiah’s command “broke out” (כפרץ הדבר),<sup>94</sup> the people immediately gave abundantly (רבה) of their first fruits (ראשית) and they brought in abundantly (לרב) the tithe of everything (v 5). In fact, their contribution grew so large that

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<sup>92</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 955-956) notes the importance of the list’s concentric arrangement, from the true center of citizens of the southern and northern kingdoms to the sojourners, still an integral part of society.

<sup>93</sup> Williamson (*Israel in Chronicles*, 120) uses this verse to stress the similarities between Hezekiah’s reign and Solomon’s reign. While this is true, this verse does not necessarily make the association tighter with Solomon than with David. The Chronicler still finds a way to mention the latter’s name also in this connection, probably for the reason that David himself had more responsibility for the conditions of the period and the solidarity of the people.

<sup>94</sup> The Chronicler uses the verb פָּרַץ frequently to describe an important breakthrough or outburst in the narrative. See especially the reign of David, 1 Chr 13:2, 11; 14:11; 15:13.

the priests and Levites needed to pile it up in heaps, which they continued for five months (vv 6-7). After Hezekiah saw how large the heaps had become, he blessed Yahweh and the people, and then in amazement asked the priests and Levites how this came about (vv 8-9). The chief priest Azariah's answer highlights just how profusely the people gave by again attributing their magnanimous response to divine assistance, "... we have eaten and been satisfied and have an abundance left over (לרוב), *for Yahweh has blessed this people and this large amount (המון) is left*" (v 10). Hezekiah then took advantage of this opportunity by commanding the priests and Levites to make chambers for the overflow inside the house of Yahweh (v 11).

This abundant response effectively replaced the false religious practices, removed by all Israel in 31:1, with a true cult devoted to Yahweh. For this final phase, though the Chronicler gives great detail to the contribution of the general people and the faithfulness of the clergy, he returns the emphasis to Hezekiah with the summary verse, "Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and faithful before Yahweh his God" (v 20). In other words, the people could accomplish many great things, but only when they had a faithful leader directing them.<sup>95</sup>

#### 3.4.1.3. *Summary of Hezekiah's Reforms*

The Chronicler concludes this long, expanded section of Hezekiah's reforms with the summary, "And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in accordance with the law and the commandment, seeking his God, he acted with all his heart and he prospered" (v 21; cf. 2 Kgs 18:7a). By using the verb חָלַל ("began"), the

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<sup>95</sup> The Chronicler will present a major contrast with the next king, Manasseh (2 Chr 33), who led the people astray at his worst (vv 1-9) and failed to provide them with adequate religious infrastructure at his best (v 17). Cf. Chapter 6.2.



Chronicler intimates that he would give even more detail of Hezekiah's reforms if he had the extra room to write! Instead, he assures the reader that Hezekiah continued to support the temple throughout his reign. The mention of his pious heart (לב) reminds the reader of his earnestness since the very beginning of his reign (cf. 29:10) and the attitude David exhorted Solomon to have (1 Chr 28:9-10).<sup>96</sup> With the temple in full working order and the people rallied to it, Hezekiah made the nation as strong as it had ever been.

### 3.4.2. *Jerusalem under Siege (2 Chr 32:1-23)*

After Hezekiah's extensive cult reforms in his first year, the Chronicler finally turns to the war material found in 2 Kgs 18-19. He makes this episode much shorter so that the result of the war can be seen in direct relation to the efficacy of the reforms.<sup>97</sup> The Chronicler explicitly links this report to Hezekiah's reforms with the opening phrase, "After these things and these acts of faithfulness (והאמת האלה)... " (2 Chr 32:1a).<sup>98</sup> He just concluded the opening three chapters with the notion that Hezekiah did what was faithful (האמת) (31:20), and so he prospered (צלח) in his endeavors (v 21). Hence, this last chapter illustrates the further success Hezekiah achieved because of his past faithfulness (cf. ויצלח, 32:30). More importantly, as all wars in Chronicles reflect the vitality of the temple cult at that particular time, the Chronicler now brings forward Hezekiah's defense of Jerusalem to

<sup>96</sup> See the discussion of Solomon's heart (2 Chr 1:11) in Chapter 3.1.1.

<sup>97</sup> The account in 2 Kgs 18-19 covers the attack in sixty-two verses, whereas the Chronicler retells it in twenty-three verses. B. S. Childs (*Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* [SBT; London: SCM, 1967], 105-106) notes that the Chronicler does not merely repeat or abbreviate his sources, but offers a "genuinely new literary creation".

<sup>98</sup> McKenzie (*Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History*, 167) says that it is difficult to find any tendentious reason by the Chronicler for leaving the time marker out from 2 Kgs 18:13 ("In the fourteenth year..."). However, as I will show in Chapter 5.2, the Chronicler often links sequential episodes together thematically, especially with vague time references (i.e. אהרי הדברים). The narrative of Jehoshaphat's reign provides a good example (cf. 18:2; 20:1, 35).

showcase the city's invincibility whenever the people (especially the king) have given it (i.e. the cult) proper care.<sup>99</sup>

The sudden approach of Sennacherib posed a major threat to Judah since he came against the fortified cities “to break into them for himself” (v 1b). Although other rulers had threatened Judah with very large armies (e.g. Zerah, 2 Chr 14:8), no other launched such a wide-scale attack (i.e. multiple cities). Also worthy of note, the Chronicler records no military preparation by Hezekiah beforehand so that, from an earthly standpoint, he appears completely off guard. This presents a stark contrast to previous kings who had taken full stock of their forces before the enemy had emerged on the horizon.<sup>100</sup> Hezekiah's preparations thus far had concentrated solely on bringing the temple cult back to a functional order (i.e. not on gathering troops or building fortifications) to defend Jerusalem from an oncoming attacker.

When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come to fight against him (v 2), he swiftly began to make *modest* preparations right before the attack. First, he rallied a group of officers and mighty men to help him stop up all the water sources outside the city so that the Assyrians could not benefit from them (vv 3-4). Then, the Chronicler focuses on the actions of Hezekiah more specifically, beginning with the paradigmatic verb הִתְחַזֵּק, “Then he strengthened himself...” (v 5). He attributes to the king a few building projects such as repairing the broken-down wall, erecting a second wall outside it, and fortifying the Millo.

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<sup>99</sup> Japhet (*Ideology*, 191-198) puts this war into the category of divine test; see Chapter 1.

<sup>100</sup> C.f. Asa (2 Chr 14:7), Jehoshaphat (17:13b-19), Joash (24:24), Amaziah (25:5-6), and Uzziah (26:12-13) in Chapter 5. David's census also appears in this light; see Chapter 2.2.2. Welten (*Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung*, 79-114) has argued that descriptions of large armies denote a sign of blessing for good kings. However, if that is the case, it is a strikingly peculiar omission for the reign of Hezekiah, who works so hard organizing and preparing for other matters.

Hezekiah executed all these measures, along with the stopping of the water earlier, according to the need of the moment, quite unlike other kings who conducted large building projects to fortify as much of the country as possible with no threat looming.<sup>101</sup>

Much the same could be said for the army that Hezekiah gathers at the last minute, for whom he made weapons and shields, and over whom he set commanders of war. This arrangement also differs greatly from the large military musterings performed by other kings who did not even face real danger.<sup>102</sup> Hezekiah executed these basic plans all in the short time between the initial news of Sennacherib's approach to Jerusalem and the subsequent arrival of his servants (v 9).<sup>103</sup> Before this time, he put all his energy into seeking Yahweh with all his heart in the service of the temple (cf. 31:21).<sup>104</sup>

Nevertheless, the triviality of Hezekiah's military measures did not leave him without hope. In contrast to the fearful Jehoshaphat in 20:3, Hezekiah confidently uttered a brief speech of encouragement (על־לבבם) to the people (vv 7-8). The opening charge uses

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<sup>101</sup> Welten (*Geschichte*, 31) admits that vv 5-6a cannot be formally separated from the context, yet still puts it in his category of *Bauberichte* since it does not add to the story's motive. Later, he argues that the payment of a contribution would not have suited a reforming king such as Hezekiah (cf. 2 Kgs 18:13-16), so the Chronicler replaced that episode with these building projects. From my analysis above, on the other hand, these building notices are not so expendable. Hezekiah had done nothing but work to restore the temple service and so absolutely needed to make immediate preparations for an attack. The devastation suffered under Ahaz's reign accentuates this point. While other kings built in times of relative peace (e.g. Jehoshaphat, 2 Chr 17:12-13a), Hezekiah hastened to do so only in the face of an oncoming threat. In his case, these preparations are an integral part of the story.

<sup>102</sup> These preparations for war do not necessarily clash with Hezekiah's faith that Yahweh would save him (vv 7-8) since they merely add a touch of reasonableness to the story. As Young (*Hezekiah in History and Tradition*, 252-253) has put it, the measures in vv 3-6 "demonstrate the inevitable clash between the author's ideology and recorded history." Hence, Mason's description of Hezekiah's work as "elaborate defensive precautions" does not really capture the point; cf. R. Mason, *Preaching the Tradition: Homily and Hermeneutics after the Exile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 111.

<sup>103</sup> Knoppers ("History and Historiography," 191) notes the "clear logic to this pattern of defensive preparations." Judah did not have so much an interest in building an army for making attacks, but simply *preserving* what their God Yahweh had given them.

<sup>104</sup> Of course there may have been twenty or so years that elapsed between chapters 31 and 32, but the Chronicler's presentation of the material leads the reader to think that Hezekiah continued to focus on the cult until Sennacherib posed a threat.

many of the stock phrases with which David exhorted Solomon before his death such as “Be strong and courageous!” and “Do not fear or be dismayed!” (cf. 1 Chr 28:20) These exhortations acknowledge the difficult task before those who hear it, but also affirm that the future is not as bleak as it appears.<sup>105</sup>

The couplet that follows explains why the people need not fear, with synonymous parallelism and multiple uses of the preposition *עִם* (“with”). The first line states, “For there are more *with* us than *with* him,” a seemingly absurd claim since the Assyrian army had Jerusalem surrounded and was even doing the same to the rest of Judah’s strongest cities (cf. 32:1). The second line, however, clarifies that “*With* him is an arm of flesh, but *with* us is Yahweh our God, to help and to fight our wars.” Mere flesh could not compete with Judah’s God. Moreover, we saw earlier how the divine presence often helped good kings to triumph in their battles (e.g. 1 Chr 11:9; 2 Chr 13:12; compare 2 Chr 25:7).<sup>106</sup> Since Hezekiah had led the people in seeking Yahweh through all the earlier temple reforms, they could have confidence that their God would give them victory over the vastly more numerous Assyrians.

The message from Sennacherib’s emissaries called into question Hezekiah’s actions (vv 9-19). The Chronicler greatly trims down the content here so that this big idea comes through immediately.<sup>107</sup> Although the Chronicler commends Hezekiah’s efforts to stimulate the greatest revival since the united monarchy *because* it concentrated on the

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<sup>105</sup> Jehoshaphat would later turn from his initial fear before the large southeastern army after a Levite exhorts him with similar phraseology (2 Chr 20:15-17).

<sup>106</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 3.1.1.

<sup>107</sup> For example, the two extensive accounts of his meetings with Isaiah (2 Kgs 19:1-7, 14-34) and the movement of the Assyrian force from Lachish to Libnah (vv 8-9) are interruptions to the dialogue between Hezekiah and the Assyrian messengers that cause a bit of repetition. The Chronicler removes them for a smoother exchange.

temple in Jerusalem, these emissaries averred that this centralization could have only weakened Yahweh's power to save (cf. vv 11-12).<sup>108</sup> They asserted that Yahweh had no more power than the gods of any of the other nations that they had conquered (vv 13-14, 17). As opposed to the account in 2 Kgs 18:21, they did not even insinuate that the Jerusalemites might place their hope in Egypt. They referred to Yahweh as "the God of Hezekiah" (v 17). As seen from the taunts of the emissaries, the Assyrians rightly judged that Hezekiah led the people to an unshakable expectation of Yahweh's intervention on their behalf. However, they wrongly assessed that Yahweh would be no more able than the gods of other nations to deliver his people (cf. v 15, "How much less [אֵף כִּי]...").

In typical Chronistic fashion, the king's piety merited a quick, effortless victory for Judah.<sup>109</sup> Again, the Chronicler abbreviates the account in 2 Kgs 18-19, this time shortening the exchange between Hezekiah and Isaiah to a one-sentence summary of their actions (v 20; cf. 2 Kgs 19:1-7, 14-34). The dismal situation spurred them to pray and cry out to heaven, a reaction that closely followed the prescription for Yahweh's people laid out by Solomon at the time of the temple's dedication (cf. 6:34-35; 7:14; see Chapter 1). In turn, Yahweh responded by sending an angel who swiftly annihilated everyone in the camp of the Assyrian king (v 21).<sup>110</sup> Whereas the account in 2 Kgs 19:35 gives the death count for the Assyrian forces as 185,000, the Chronicler gives a greater picture of totality, "all the mighty warriors..."

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<sup>108</sup> Throughout vv 11-19 the messengers try to cast doubt on Yahweh's ability to deliver the people of Jerusalem through multiple uses of the words יכל (5x) and נצל (6x).

<sup>109</sup> Cf. the battles of Abijah (2 Chr 13:15-17), Asa (14:11), and Jehoshaphat (20:22-23), where the defeat of the enemy happens almost instantaneously.

<sup>110</sup> The Chronicler's account differs from 2 Kgs 19:35, where the angel of Yahweh seems to go out on his own accord with no prompting from Yahweh.

The Chronicler paraphrases the concluding note in 2 Kgs 19:36-37 and adds to it for a touch of irony. The Assyrian king, full of shame from this remarkable defeat, turned (שוב), as a contrast to 7:14) homeward and entered the house of *his own god*, yet he found no solace there but met only death at the hand of his sons (2 Chr 32:21). This diverges remarkably from the pious behavior of Hezekiah, whom Yahweh saved from the hand of his enemies and to whom he gave rest on every side (v 22).<sup>111</sup> Moreover, Hezekiah's fidelity gained for him wealth and fame from all the surrounding nations (v 23), a common feature for good kings in Chronicles.<sup>112</sup> Thus, the comparison between the fates of Hezekiah and the Assyrian king, both faithfully reliant upon their deity, represent the power of each deity to save their servant in a time of trouble.

### **3.4.3. Hezekiah's Prosperity and Pride (2 Chr 32:24-31)**

After such a clear demonstration of Hezekiah's brilliant defense of Jerusalem through temple reforms, one may wonder why the Chronicler includes the events of 32:24-31. Two of the events come from the account in 2 Kgs 20 where they each offer criticism of the king. The Chronicler reduces them so much that one can barely recognize them without prior knowledge of them,<sup>113</sup> yet he inserts his own comments so that they make sense within his narrative of Hezekiah's reign. While recent commentators have typically explained them as a confirmation of Hezekiah's rewards for good behavior, the Chronicler does not end them on such a positive note (v 31, see below). Do these episodes have

<sup>111</sup> The MT reads וינח להם מסביב, or "and he provided for them on all sides". Following the LXX and Vulgate, many emend the text to read וינח להם מסביב "he gave them rest from all around" (cf. 20:30); cf. Dillard, 2 *Chronicles*, 254; Klein, 2 *Chronicles*, 457. As Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 991) has noted, the MT reading would combine for an unusual idiom and be rather awkward in this context. I. Gabriel sticks with the MT as the *lectio difficilior*; cf. *Friede über Israel: Eine Untersuchung zur Friedenstheologie in Chronik I 10 - II 36* (ÖBS; Klosterneuburg: Österreichisches Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990), 152-153.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Asa (14:12-14); Jehoshaphat (20:25).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 103; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 386.

anything to do with the temple reforms and war before them? To answer this question, we must first examine how the Chronicler retells the events from 2 Kgs 20.

In 32:24, the Chronicler refers to Hezekiah's seemingly fatal illness, about which the king prayed to Yahweh and received a sign. This much the reader presumably already knows from 2 Kgs 20:1-11, but the Chronicler continues to explain that Hezekiah did not at first respond to the divine healing in a reverent manner, but "his heart became proud" (גבה לבו).<sup>114</sup> This sudden change of behavior immediately brought wrath upon him, Jerusalem, and all of Judah, but when he humbled himself (כנע) along with the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he averted the wrath of Yahweh for the rest of his reign (vv 25-26).

Japhet argues that the Chronicler retains this detail in order to maintain what he regards as historical fact, even though it causes tension with his own theological inclinations.<sup>115</sup> Not only does such a solution seem too convenient, the vocabulary noted above reveals that the Chronicler likely did integrate it into the story to make a theological statement. On several other occasions, he gives a terse evaluation of a king with an expression about the heart (לב) and even used this particular expression as recently as in the reign of Uzziah (26:16). Additionally, the verb for repentance (כנע) comes from his well-known insertion in 7:14. Hence, while the account in 2 Kgs 20:1-11 reflects negatively on Hezekiah, the Chronicler excuses him by placing him into one of his own positive themes. Moreover, it provides one more example of how he models Hezekiah after David, who also committed a prideful sin with the census but repented immediately (cf. 1 Chr 21). Thus,

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<sup>114</sup> I. W. Provan (*1 and 2 Kings* [NIBCOT; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995], 263-264) explains that Hezekiah's prayer seemed self-centered in 2 Kgs 20:1-11, so Yahweh granted his request for his own sake and on account of David (i.e. not Hezekiah). Compare Hezekiah's plea in 20:3 with his prayer for deliverance during the Assyrian crisis in 19:15-19.

<sup>115</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 992.

with the inclusion of this episode, the Chronicler addresses an issue from his *Vorlage* to maintain Hezekiah's positive image.

Immediately after this brief reference to Hezekiah's struggle with pride, the Chronicler details some of his most impressive achievements (vv 27-30). How did Hezekiah manage all of his possessions? To begin with, he made for himself (עשה-לו) treasuries for his costly items (silver, gold, etc.), he made storehouses for foodstuffs, and also stalls for his livestock. In addition to this, he also made for himself (עשה-לו) cities, with flocks and herds in abundance (לרב). The Chronicler then states how Hezekiah could amass such great wealth, "For God had given him very many possessions (רכוש)." Lastly, he mentions how he cleverly redirected the waters of Gihon to defend Jerusalem against Sennacherib and the Assyrians (cf. vv 3-4). Indeed, the Chronicler affirms that "Hezekiah prospered (צלח) in all his works" (v 30), a statement which, as noted earlier, refers back to his success gained because of his devotion to Yahweh in the temple (cf. 31:21).

However, that earlier positive summary of Hezekiah's prosperity differs dramatically from the review here. The former captures the sincere and fervent spirit of the new king who did everything in his power to turn the people back to Yahweh through the proper operation of the temple service. The Chronicler emphasizes Hezekiah's rigorous work on behalf of the temple by use of the verb עשה (2x also in 31:20) and the nominal cognate מעשה. In 32:27-30, on the other hand, Hezekiah acted only on behalf of himself (עשה-לו), which he did abundantly (לרב). He amassed a broad range of metals, grains, spices, and even cities, for God had blessed him with it.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, unlike David who

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<sup>116</sup> A. G. Vaughn (*Theology, History, and Archeology in the Chronicler's Account of Hezekiah* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999], 169) puts forth various pieces of archaeological evidence to show how this economic



gave freely of all his wealth at the end of his reign (1 Chr 29:1-5), or even Hezekiah who did the same with his possessions in his first year (רכוש) (31:3), each for the cause of the temple service, the text here states nothing of that sort. Moreover, though the Chronicler used the adverb לרב many times to highlight Hezekiah's piety and success (e.g. 30:5, 13), it now reveals his selfishness. Since the Chronicler points out such pious behavior so painstakingly elsewhere in his narrative, its absence here must serve as evidence that Hezekiah continued to struggle with pride.<sup>117</sup>

Furthermore, the brief, obscure reference to the Babylonian envoys supports this, a statement the Chronicler links to the summary of Hezekiah's prosperity with the phrase וכן, "And thus..." (v 31).<sup>118</sup> As was well-known from 2 Kgs 20:12-19, Hezekiah received certain envoys from Babylon and showed them all his wealth in his house and in his kingdom. That report ended with a prophetic rebuke given by Isaiah to the king, where the latter naively thought that it was a blessing (2 Kgs 20:16-19). The whole episode in general made Hezekiah's otherwise prosperous reign end on a particularly bad note. In contrast, the Chronicler does not explicitly judge Hezekiah, but only states that God used the occasion to test him (לנסותו).

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prosperity characterizes the whole of Hezekiah's reign, not merely his response to a brief siege function. Its concise placement here supports the fact that the Chronicler included it at the end for thematic purposes.

<sup>117</sup> Most scholars see vv 27-30 as most simply the reward for a positive reign; cf. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 314; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 386-387.

<sup>118</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 995) calls this conjunction an "artificial link" since the episode's position comes only from the order of its source. However, this argument seems to completely ignore the fact that the Chronicler added a conjunction at all. It would not make sense to insert a report of Hezekiah's prosperity beforehand (vv 27-30) if the Chronicler only intended to copy his source. On account of his insertion in vv 27-30, the conjunction must be given an interpretation.

Still, the Chronicler leaves several hints that the king did not act appropriately.<sup>119</sup> First, the placement of this incident after the description of Hezekiah's massive wealth (vv 27-30), all the goods that he would have shown the envoys and in fact did make him prideful, would lead the reader to think that he did not pass this test. In addition, the Chronicler avers that God left him (עזבו האלהים), a statement that seems to imply that Hezekiah had taken a disastrous course afterwards (cf. 2 Chr 12:5; 15:2; 24:20).<sup>120</sup> Lastly, if Hezekiah did pass the test given by God, the Chronicler certainly would have praised it just as he did his earlier righteous deeds, yet he does not. For these reasons, the allusion to the visitation by the Babylonian envoys, as with the reference to Hezekiah's sickness (v 24), is best read as reflecting negatively on his kingship.<sup>121</sup> From this angle, these final episodes in 2 Chr 32:24-31 cannot only indicate Hezekiah's rewards for good behavior.

Nevertheless, the Chronicler chooses not to discuss these blemishes on Hezekiah's record in any detail, but instead moves immediately to his closing remarks on Hezekiah's reign, which praise him for his good deeds and note his honorable death (vv 32-33). This may seem surprising to some readers if the record in vv 24-31 indeed reflects negatively on Hezekiah. Why even hint at these mistakes of his in the narrative? Quite simply, the Chronicler acknowledges them in order to accentuate what he considers truly praiseworthy for Hezekiah. The king's faults, already well known from the account in 2 Kgs 20, have far

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<sup>119</sup> Throntveit ("Relationship of Hezekiah to David and Solomon," 106-107) goes so far as to say, "the Chronicler has positively reinterpreted his *Vorlage* to present a blemish as a beauty mark." Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 996) and Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 469) also claim that Hezekiah passed the test.

<sup>120</sup> For more on the paradigmatic use of עזב, see Chapter 1.

<sup>121</sup> Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 315) argues that this episode must be interpreted in light of vv 24-26, that Hezekiah must have ultimately shown his true heart in light of the divine test. Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 387-388) avers that Hezekiah's last words in 2 Kgs 20:19 ("The word of Yahweh that you have spoken is good.") must be considered in the interpretation; thus, the Chronicler finishes Hezekiah's reign on a positive note.

less importance than his devout work in reestablishing the temple service. The Chronicler addresses them but does not consider them relevant episodes for assessing the king. Thus, the Chronicler's open admission in 32:24-31 ultimately allows him to emphasize his most important requirement for a good king, the operation of the temple in Jerusalem. In this critical task, Hezekiah performed flawlessly.<sup>122</sup>

After David and Solomon, Hezekiah goes down in the Chronicler's history as Israel's next greatest king. His major accomplishments include extensive cult reforms, a dramatic restoration of the temple service, and reuniting many people from both the northern and southern kingdoms around the worship of their God, Yahweh. The Chronicler addresses these topics with the bulk of the narrative so that his readers might know that only the return of Israel's people to the worship of Yahweh at the temple in Jerusalem would provide safety from a massive army like the Assyrians.

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<sup>122</sup> The Chronicler does the same for Solomon when he gives him a spotless record, but concedes that he was not perfect (cf. the mention of Jeroboam in 2 Chr 9:29).

## Chapter 4

### Unfaithful Kings

The Chronicler criticizes each of the kings in this chapter for their neglect and, at times, abuse of the temple cult. In contrast to the faithful kings who either conquered surrounding lands or successfully defended the capital from oncoming attackers, these kings constantly suffered defeat on the battlefield. This theme weighs so heavily in the Chronicler's portrayal of unfaithful kings that he includes not even the slightest concession that they may have acted piously or made any accomplishments. He keeps the record of their reigns to a bare minimum (a chapter at most), yet succinctly demonstrates their inability to keep Israel safe in the land as a consequence of their faithless actions.

#### 4.1. Saul (1 Chr 10)

Just as the Chronicler continually gives credit to David for seeking to establish a temple cult for Yahweh from the very beginning of his reign, he criticizes Saul for never pursuing anything like it. He makes this distinction clear in David's later words, "And let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek (שׁרר) it in the days of Saul" (1 Chr 13:3). However, before he says anything about David at all, the Chronicler devotes one brief chapter to Saul's reign (1 Chr 10), mostly borrowed from his *Vorlage* in 1 Sam 31.<sup>1</sup>

Knoppers provides a helpful survey of the different explanations scholars have offered for why the Chronicler would even include material about Israel's first king,

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<sup>1</sup> C. Y. S. Ho ("Conjectures and Refutations: Is 1 Samuel xxxi 1-13 Really the Source of 1 Chronicles x 1-12?," VT 45 [1995]: 82-106) argues that the authors of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles drew from a common source, but has not convinced others. Cf. Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 283 n. 1; Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1-9*, 525-526.

whether to provide a foil to the reign of David,<sup>2</sup> to set a paradigm for later wicked kings,<sup>3</sup> to show continuity with the reign of David,<sup>4</sup> or to demonstrate the fulfillment of prophecies found in 1 Samuel.<sup>5</sup> To these perspectives, Knoppers adds that the Chronicler openly admits the condemnable actions of Saul so that he can also show that his tribe (the Benjaminites) dissociated themselves from him even before his death, thus avoiding his guilt (cf. 1 Chr 12:1-8, 17-19).<sup>6</sup> In addition to these insightful studies, the analysis below will stress that, of all the material concerning Saul the Chronicler could have borrowed in 1 Sam 9-31, he highlights only the final battle scene where he died (10:1-12). Furthermore, though Israel had no thought of a temple at this point, the Chronicler utilizes his own distinct vocabulary to describe Saul's death as punishment for *cultic* transgressions (vv 13-14). We may address these themes in that order.

#### ***4.1.1. Making an Example of Saul (1 Chr 10:1-12)***

As a first note, the Chronicler isolates this tragic episode from the rest of Saul's volatile reign so that he can quickly demonstrate the fate for all unfaithful kings. He breaks into the action abruptly with a change of the verb *לחם* from the participle *נלחמים* ("they were fighting") in 1 Sam 31:1 to the perfect *נלחמו* ("they fought") in 1 Chr 10:1. This slight adaptation disregards the long history of battles Israel had with the Philistines beforehand in order to introduce Saul's end immediately. Mosis may have gone a little too far by labelling this episode a paradigm, especially since the Chronicler does not refer to Saul again after the reign of David and he has already broached the topic of unsuccessful wars in

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<sup>2</sup> Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 96.

<sup>3</sup> Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 17-43.

<sup>4</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 225-230.

<sup>5</sup> S. Zalewski, "The Purpose of the Story of the Death of Saul in 1 Chronicles 10," *VT* 39 (1989): 449-467.

<sup>6</sup> Knoppers, "Israel's First King," 187-213.

the genealogies (cf. 5:25-26),<sup>7</sup> but he has helpfully perceived the way Saul's death serves as an example.

The Chronicler accentuates the gravity of Saul's judgment through two separate inclusios revealing the implications of his death (מות). The first reads, "Thus Saul *died* with his three sons, and all his house together *died*" (1 Chr 10:6; cf. 1 Sam 31:6). Klein notes how the awkward Hebrew word order emphasizes the chiasmic nature of the verse, placing special emphasis on the blow delivered to Saul and his family.<sup>8</sup> Although this may seem to contradict the reports of Saul's son Ish-bosheth (2 Sam 2-4) or grandson Mephibosheth (2 Sam 9) after his death, the meaning of house (בית) certainly cannot have such an exhaustive sense since the Chronicler included genealogies just before the episode to confirm that Saul's descendants continued in a quite literal way after he died (cf. 8:29-40; 9:35-44).<sup>9</sup> Williamson argues that the word has unmistakable dynastic overtones from Yahweh's promise to David in 1 Chr 17.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the Chronicler has put forward Saul's death on Mount Gilboa as the main piece of evidence that kingship no longer belongs to his house, a conclusion 1 Samuel reaches only after a long series of prophecies to David and blunders by Saul (more on this below).

The Chronicler underscores the death of Saul a second time in his own commentary at the end of the chapter, "So Saul *died* for his unfaithfulness... Therefore Yahweh *put him to death*..." (vv 13-14). The end of this inclusio uses a hiphil form of the verb מות to

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<sup>7</sup> For more arguments against Mosis's view of Saul as a paradigm, see Knoppers, "Israel's First King," 190. Elsewhere, Knoppers notes that the Chronicler also includes more temperate statements about Saul (e.g. 1 Chr 5:10; 26:28) in his account (189).

<sup>8</sup> Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 286.

<sup>9</sup> In light of these genealogies, Curtis and Madsen (*Books of Chronicles*, 181) calls the Chronicler's statement in 10:6 nothing more than a careless statement. Kalimi (*Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History*, 389) categorizes it as yet another contradiction among many in the Chronicler's reworking of his sources.

<sup>10</sup> Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 93.

emphasize Saul's death as an act of judgment on Saul by Yahweh. The beginning and the middle explain the reason for such punishment. Since David only enters the story at the very end and plays no role in Saul's reign (v 14b), the Chronicler focuses the reason for Saul's death on him alone. Zalewski suggests that the Chronicler adds this episode to legitimize David's kingship (i.e. he did not take the throne by force, but Yahweh put Saul to death), but such an explanation simply imports the story's significance from 1 Samuel.<sup>11</sup> Rather than absolve David, it prompts the question, how exactly did Saul misbehave to provoke such judgment?

#### **4.1.2. Saul's Cultic Negligence (1 Chr 10:13-14)**

The Chronicler answers this question most clearly with his description of Saul's offenses in the middle of the second inclusio (i.e. 10:13-14), which contains four different charges:

- A. So Saul died in his unfaithfulness (במעליו) which he committed (מעל)
- B. on account of the word of Yahweh that he did not keep
- C. and he even consulted a medium.<sup>12</sup>
- D. Because he did not seek (דרש) Yahweh, he put him to death...

Beginning with charge (A), we saw in Chapter 1 that Israel's relationship with Yahweh in Chronicles found its fullest expression in the temple and that the Chronicler often describes a breach in that relationship with the root מעל. However, this raises the question of how the Chronicler can fault Saul for מעל before the temple even existed.

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<sup>11</sup> Zalewski, "Death of Saul," 466.

<sup>12</sup> Klein argues that the last three words of v 13 (לשאול באוב לדרוש) are a conflation; cf. Klein; *1 Chronicles*, 283.

The Chronicler gives the answer in charges (B) through (D), but this has been lost through a misidentification (in varying degrees) of the referents in them. For example, Mosis interprets all the expressions as general criticisms against Saul for his bad character, with none of them having a particular historical referent. This explanation comes easily for מעל in charge (A) and could also explain the Chronicler's use of דרש in charge (D) since both function as general catchwords throughout his narrative, even if each has a basic cultic orientation (again, 1 Chr 13:2-3).<sup>13</sup>

For charges (B) and (C), on the other hand, it is much more difficult to attribute this vague sense. Though older scholars linked the expression דבר יהוה אשר לא־שמר (B) to the episodes in 1 Sam 13 and 15 (see discussion below),<sup>14</sup> Mosis compares it to the similar phraseology found throughout Deuteronomy and Psalm 119 to show how the fate of the nation depends on keeping the word of God. Additionally, he finds significant other uses of the word שמר (“keep”), most notably the only other place where it occurs with the expression “the word of Yahweh,” when Josiah found the book of the law (cf. 2 Chr 34:21). He claims that the wording “... those that are left in Israel and Judah” refers to the Babylonian exile, which eventually took place because, *inter alia*, Israel persisted in “despising his *words*...” (2 Chr 36:16). As for the third charge (C), Mosis attempts to distance the accusation וגם־לשאול באוב from any particular event (specifically, 1 Sam 28) by attributing to it the same sense as the fourth charge (D). He also adds that it cannot refer to the incident in 1 Sam 28 since that passage explicitly states that Saul *did* seek Yahweh but the latter did not answer him (cf. 1 Sam 28:6).

<sup>13</sup> For discussion of דרש, see Chapter 1.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Curtis and Madsen, *Books of Chronicles*, 182; Myers, *I Chronicles*, 82. More recently, Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 524.



With respect to charge (C), Mosis has not persuaded many since the remark bears such a close resemblance to Saul's visit to a medium in 1 Sam 28. Moreover, the Chronicler would have had no reason to include it if it carried the same basic meaning as the charge after it in (D), especially since the word שאל carries no consistent theme in Chronicles.<sup>15</sup> Of course the Chronicler uses parallelism throughout 10:13-14 to emphasize his point, but such a literary device requires at least some differentiation between the various charges in order to develop the argument; Mosis appears to treat the charges in the same way, as non-referential leitmotifs. As for the claim that Saul did seek Yahweh in 1 Samuel 28:6 so that the Chronicler could not be referring to that account, Rudolph shows how the Chronicler could have interpreted that text in light of the *entire* episode,<sup>16</sup> namely, that Saul never genuinely sought Yahweh since he turned to a medium so quickly afterwards, so he received judgment for his already hardened heart.

As for charge (B), while other parts of the Hebrew Bible might use such terminology frequently, the word שמר hardly represents a paradigmatic word for the Chronicler.<sup>17</sup> Though it does appear in Josiah's discovery of the law (2 Chr 34), even here it adds virtually nothing new conceptually from the parallel account in 2 Kgs 22-23.<sup>18</sup> More to the point, the Chronicler does not demonstrate the importance of keeping the law so much as maintaining the temple service. As with charge (C), since the Chronicler does not

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<sup>15</sup> It appears only once after the united monarchy at 2 Chr 11:23, a verse that appears to suffer from corruption. See Chapter 6.1.2.

<sup>16</sup> Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 97.

<sup>17</sup> Several scholars have followed Mosis on this point, e.g. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles*, 166; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 95.

<sup>18</sup> The same terms from charge (B) in 1 Chr 10:13 occur in 2 Chr 34:21, but the account in 2 Kings has "our fathers have not obeyed (שמע) the words of this book" (22:13) and later it reads, "Josiah made a covenant before Yahweh... to keep (שמר) his commandments..." (23:3).

use the terminology from charge (B) distinctively elsewhere, a different reason must exist for his inclusion of it in 1 Chr 10:13-14.

The Chronicler's phrasing in charge (B), which uses the words *שמר*, *יהוה*, and *דבר*, closely resembles several incidents of Saul's disobedience recorded in 1 Samuel. First, in 1 Sam 13, when Saul lost hope before the Philistines, he rushed through the pre-battle sacrifices himself instead of waiting for Samuel as he had been instructed. The latter rebuked him because he did not "keep (*שמר*) the command of Yahweh (*מצות יהוה*)" (cf. vv 13-14). Second, Samuel criticized him again because he "rejected (*מאס*) the word of Yahweh (*דבר יהוה*)" when he spared Agag and did not maintain the *חרם* command given to him (15:26). On a third occasion, Saul again lost his faith in Yahweh when he saw the overwhelming threat of the Philistines in 1 Sam 28, but then visited a medium for help. When Samuel surprisingly emerged onto the scene, he used phraseology that was similar to the previous two instances, "Because you did not obey (*שמע*) the voice of Yahweh (*קול יהוה*)..." (v 18).

Mosis argues that the Chronicler would have mentioned these episodes explicitly if he wanted to refer to them, just as the Targum does.<sup>19</sup> However, a more detailed description of the episodes would have detracted from the cultic nature of Saul's wrongdoing set forth in charge (A). The pithy statement he uses in charge (B) allows him to capture the essence of all three events in one recognizable expression, yet still emphasize their *מעל* character that provoked judgment.

Two other features strengthen this connection to the events of 1 Samuel. First, as Zalewski points out, the Chronicler has in some sense tried to show the prophetic basis for

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<sup>19</sup> Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 34.

David's rise to the kingship, to which each of these passages alludes (cf. 13:14; 15:28; 28:17).<sup>20</sup> In this connection, the Chronicler puts the finishing touch on this allusion after the people made David king over Israel with his insertion, "according to the word of Yahweh by Samuel" (1 Chr 11:3). This phrase added on by the Chronicler demonstrates that he certainly had in mind Saul's confrontations with Samuel as he wrote.

Second, the particle **וְ** that joins (C) to (B) reveals a development in the Chronicler's argument. Ackroyd has relegated this clause (C) to a gloss<sup>21</sup> and others claim that it is only loosely connected to the rest of the summary.<sup>22</sup> However, the word **וְ** likely bears an intensifying effect so that, while (B) refers generally to Saul's sins in 1 Sam 13, 15, and 28, the Chronicler puts forward (C) as the most egregious example, the offense that would eventually trigger his ultimate downfall.<sup>23</sup> A suitable translation might be, "and he *even* consulted a medium!" However, if (B) and (C) only give general criticisms about Saul's character, the literary force of the conjunction **וְ** disappears.

It still remains to be seen how the Chronicler understood these episodes of Saul's misbehavior in 1 Samuel as in some sense cultic transgressions. The preposition **עַל** ("on account of") at the beginning of charge (B) makes this construal explicit, but only an understanding of the Chronicler's particular use of **וַיִּשְׁ** in the fourth charge (D) can explain how Saul committed *cultic* sins. As we saw earlier, the Chronicler uses this verb often in a very broad sense to express an individual king's desire to establish or maintain the temple

<sup>20</sup> Zalewski, "Death of Saul," 460.

<sup>21</sup> P. R. Ackroyd, *The Chronicler in His Age* (JSOTSup 101; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 320. He says this in response to Willi (*Die Chronik als Auslegung*, 170), who contends that the Chronicler makes charge (C) the kernel around which all the other statements have been exegetically arranged.

<sup>22</sup> Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 95. See also Dirksen, *1 Chronicles*, 166.

<sup>23</sup> To put it differently, charge (C) must belong to the broader category expressed in charge (B).

cult (e.g. 1 Chr 13:3; 28:9-10; 2 Chr 31:21). Furthermore, he can also use **שׁוּד** in a very specific way to show a king seek Yahweh in a time of military crisis (e.g. 2 Chr 20:3), or fault a king for seeking other gods for help in war (e.g. 25:15, 20), according to (or against) the precept in Yahweh's response to Solomon (cf. the synonym **בָּקַשׁ** in 7:14).

Against the background of Saul's reign in 1 Samuel, Saul did not meet this criterion for a good king since he never genuinely sought Yahweh when the time for battle came. In 1 Sam 13, he should have waited for Samuel before he made sacrifices. Additionally, he seems to have misunderstood completely Samuel's **הָרַם** command in 1 Sam 15:3, when he destroyed all the worthless of the land yet spared the king and valuable livestock (v 9). In other words, he sought glory for his own kingdom in that battle, not to execute Yahweh's judgment on the Amalekites. As for 1 Sam 28, Saul still chose not to seek Yahweh in any meaningful way (at least according to the Chronicler) but earnestly consulted a medium in his time of crisis, a point the Chronicler explicitly makes in charge (C). Whereas faithful kings sought Yahweh at every point in their military engagements, Saul failed to do so when it mattered most.

In this vein, the Chronicler puts forward Saul's last act of suicide as one final example of his cultic unfaithfulness. Several later kings will find themselves in similar, seemingly impossible situations, but cry out to Yahweh and find deliverance. Chapter 6 will analyze two surprising accounts of thoroughly wicked kings from the books of Kings who find relief when they penitently turn back to Yahweh. For Saul, on the other hand, the unfaithfulness that characterizes his reign according to the Chronicler's summary statement in 1 Chr 10:13-14 will prove to be the recalcitrant state in which he eventually dies (cf. v

13, “So Saul died *in his unfaithfulness* [במעליו]...”).<sup>24</sup> Ironically, in Saul’s judgment, the Chronicler also claims that the Philistines stripped his armor to place it in the temple of their gods and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon (1 Chr 10:10).<sup>25</sup> With these allusions, together with the phraseology in his evaluation at vv 13-14, the Chronicler creatively finds a way to evaluate Saul using the same criteria that he will use with every other king.

#### **4.2. Jehoram and Ahaziah (2 Chr 21-22)**

Even though the Chronicler has not set Saul’s reign as a paradigm for later unfaithful kings, he has treated the northern kingdom in such a way. According to the Chronicler, immediately after the northern secession in the time of Rehoboam (2 Chr 10:1-11:4), Jeroboam drove out the priests and Levites from his northern domain so that he could establish his own illicit cult (11:14-15). As we saw in Chapter 3.2.1, Abijah pinpointed this cultic transgression as the primary fault of the northern kingdom (13:4-12). Though Abijah’s son Asa kept his distance from the northerners and their idolatrous practices (2 Chr 14:2-4) and his grandson Jehoshaphat stayed true in this aspect early in his reign (17:3-4), the latter eventually made a marriage alliance with the northern king at that time, Ahab (2 Chr 18:1).<sup>26</sup>

The Chronicler uses this political alliance to illustrate how the influence of the northern kingdom’s idolatrous religious practices could weaken Judah to the brink of

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<sup>24</sup> Many translations have “because of his unfaithfulness” for במעליו, but cf. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 523.

<sup>25</sup> Compare 1 Sam 31:10 which reads, “They put his armor in the temple of Ashtaroath and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.”

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Chapter 5.2.2.

extinction (2 Chr 21:6, 13; 22:3-4, 7-8; 28:2).<sup>27</sup> The account in 2 Kings 8:16-29, which focuses primarily on the north at this point with Elijah and Elisha's long-standing prophetic tirade against Ahab's royal line, makes a brief interruption to show how Jehoram and Ahaziah entered into the same idolatry and, hence, judgment. The Chronicler elaborates on these brief reports to emphasize how much Judah's adoption of the northern kingdom's idolatry would jeopardize their ability to stay in the land.

#### *4.2.1. Jehoram's Dissolving Kingdom (2 Chr 21)*

The Chronicler certainly had enough source material for this theme from the account of Jehoram in 2 Kgs 8:16-24. He borrows the criticism that makes this association with Israel clear, "And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel as the house of Ahab had done for the daughter of Ahab was his wife" (2 Chr 21:6a // 2 Kgs 8:18a). Furthermore, his adaptation of the following statement in v 7 intimates that Jehoram's sins would concern the temple cult, "Yet Yahweh was not willing to destroy *the house of David on account of the covenant that he made with David...*" The Chronicler's insertion of "the house of David", which replaces "Judah" in 2 Kgs 8:19, must refer to the dynastic oracle where Yahweh promised to build David a "house", which alluded to the enduring rule of his descendants in Yahweh's kingdom (1 Chr 17:10-14).

As we discussed in Chapter 3, the Chronicler shows the conditional nature of this covenant first at the end of David's reign in his speech to Solomon (1 Chr 28:2-10) and second in Abijah's speech to Jeroboam (2 Chr 13:4-12). These passages show how David's descendants needed to maintain the temple practices that he instituted to enjoy the full

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<sup>27</sup> See S. J. De Vries, "The Scheme of Dynastic Endangerment in Chronicles," *Proceedings, Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Bible Society* 7 (1987): 59-77.

benefits of Yahweh's earlier promise. The Chronicler also links this theme to Yahweh's covenant with David in 2 Chr 7:12-22 (cf. v 18, "as I covenanted (כרת) with David your father"),<sup>28</sup> another passage that emphasizes temple faithfulness (cf. vv 13-16).<sup>29</sup> The remaining additions by the Chronicler show how Jehoram strained the limits of Yahweh's covenantal grace.

As a preliminary note, the Chronicler first emphasizes how far Jehoram fell by describing the ideal conditions in which he received the kingdom from Jehoshaphat. His father "strengthened himself over Israel" (17:1)<sup>30</sup> at the beginning of his reign and bore the title the "king of Israel" by the end (21:2).<sup>31</sup> Additionally, the Chronicler then explains that, before Jehoshaphat died, he distributed all the wealth he accumulated over his long reign to his sons, including fortified cities over which they could presumably act as governors (21:3). By placing his sons throughout this extensive domain, Jehoshaphat not only removed any potential rivals to the kingship away from the capital, but also established representatives with a royal interest to a much broader area.<sup>32</sup> The Chronicler also avers in v 3 that Jehoshaphat placed Jehoram over this stable kingdom not because he proved himself worthy in any way, but simply for the fact that he was the firstborn (בכור). Japhet

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<sup>28</sup> Compare 1 Kgs 9:5, "As I promised (דבר) David your father..."

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>30</sup> For a defense of this interpretation, see Chapter 5.2.1.

<sup>31</sup> Some amend to read "king of Judah" based on many of the ancient versions (Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 805), but Dillard (2 *Chronicles*, 165) more plausibly argues that the former should be kept as the more difficult reading; i.e., it seems more likely that a scribe would have missed this nuance and inserted Judah than the other way around. Jonker argues that the Chronicler "blurs the lines" between the northern and southern kingdoms for his post-exilic audience who no longer had to deal with two separate monarchies; cf. L. Jonker, "Textual Identities in the Books of Chronicles: The Case of Jehoram's History," in *Community Identity in Judean historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives* (eds. G. N. Knoppers and K. A. Ristau; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 197-217 (208-212).

<sup>32</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 808.

suggests the Chronicler's source material compelled him to include this last detail,<sup>33</sup> however, the Chronicler reveals his intent for it later in Elijah's letter to the king describing his slain brothers as "better than yourself (i.e. Jehoram)" (v 13). In other words, Jehoram did not have any other qualifications that made him more worthy of kingship than his brothers.

Yet, despite this massive generosity conferred by Jehoshaphat, the Chronicler describes the early part of Jehoram's reign as a complete disaster. He uses the hitherto positive phrase *התחזק* to tell how Jehoram brutally established his kingship, "And he rose up against the kingdom of his father and *strengthened himself*" (21:4). Most English translations have this verse refer to Jehoram's accession to the throne, but Japhet helpfully points to the many other occurrences of *קום על* ("rose up against") that denote hostility.<sup>34</sup> The Chronicler goes into greater detail of this atrocity with the report that the new king "killed all his brothers... and even some of the princes of Israel," where the reference to *Israelite* princes once again points to just how much of Jehoshaphat's gains Jehoram squandered (cf. v 2).<sup>35</sup> Begg puts this episode forward as one of the many ways the Chronicler portrays him in the same negative light as the northern monarchs since Athaliah would commit a similar heinous act after him (22:10 // 2 Kgs 11:1).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., followed by Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 298. See the translations of ESV, RSV ("had ascended the throne"), and NASB ("had taken over the kingdom"), but compare with Deut 19:11; Judg 9:18; 1 Sam 17:35; Amos 7:9.

<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, it does not matter whether "Israel" here refers to the northern kingdom or both parts generally since either reference would reveal the magnitude of Jehoram's mistake.

<sup>36</sup> For more on these allusions to the northern kingdom, cf. C. T. Begg, "Constructing a Monster: The Chronicler's Sondergut in 2 Chronicles 21," *ABR* 37 (1989): 35-51 (37-43). For example, he discusses the fact that Elijah, the well-known opponent of the northern kings Ahab (1 Kgs 17-21) and Ahaziah (2 Kgs 1), confronts Jehoram (2 Chr 21:12-15). Begg also mentions the various letters (*מכתב*) received by members of the Ahabite dynasty that recall this episode (e.g. 1 Kgs 21:8-14).



When the Chronicler describes Jehoram's idolatry, he continues to explain how it affects the people at large. Though several kings before him wavered by leaving high places in the land (Asa, 2 Chr 15:17; Jehoshaphat, 20:33), Jehoram became the first Judean king to actually make them (v 11). Japhet points out that the high places served a significant role in that they marked the transgressions of the people, so Jehoram's actions to install them reveal his malicious intent towards them.<sup>37</sup>

Additionally, the Chronicler describes the effects of Jehoram's actions with two causative hiphil verbs, "he led into whoredom (זנה) the inhabitants of Jerusalem and made Judah go astray (נדד)" (21:11b). The Chronicler's use of the second patterns Jehoram after the first northern king, Jeroboam, the only other king for whom the Chronicler uses this verb (cf. 13:9). The first verb occurs here and again in v 13, where the Chronicler also compares Jehoram's actions to the Ahabite kings in the north. This relationship makes clear the contrast with the faithful southern kings before him who rallied the people to unity for the worship of Yahweh from the very beginning of their reigns such as David (1 Chr 11-12), Solomon (2 Chr 1:1-6),<sup>38</sup> and Abijah (13:4-12), or even Hezekiah after him (2 Chr 30). The end of the account underscores the harmful effects of Jehoram's actions on the people, "*And he departed with no one's regret. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings*" (2 Chr 21:20, the Chronicler's additions in italics).

Elsewhere, the Chronicler links Jehoram's lost battles found in his *Vorlage* to his destruction of Israel's religious ethos, "So Edom revolted... Then Libnah revolted...

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<sup>37</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 811. Also, for a broader discussion of the high places in Chronicles, see Japhet, *Ideology*, 217-221.

<sup>38</sup> The contrast with Solomon is especially great since the Chronicler covered up his killing spree (1 Kgs 2:12-46). See Chapter 3.1.1.

because he had forsaken (עָזַב) Yahweh, the God of his fathers” (v 10).<sup>39</sup> Whereas both David (1 Chr 18:11-13) and Solomon (2 Chr 8:17) could secure a firm hold over Edom during their reigns, and Jehoshaphat had just reasserted dominance against them in a more recent war (2 Chr 20:1-30), Judah’s eastern neighbor managed to set up a king of their own in the time of Jehoram (21:8). Moreover, Jehoram apparently lacked the power to bring the Edomites back under his authority (v 9). The simultaneous loss of Libnah, a Levitical city in the Judean Shephelah (1 Chr 6:42; cf. Josh 21:13), demonstrates that Jehoram had lost control of not only outlying areas but even his own border cities that were critical to the security of the kingdom.<sup>40</sup> The Chronicler lays the blame particularly on Jehoram by inserting the comment “from *his* rule” (מִתַּחַת יָדוֹ, 21:10), stressing that Jehoram (i.e. not simply Judah) had lost control of these areas.<sup>41</sup>

The letter from Elijah reiterates this connection between cultic unfaithfulness and subsequent attack: “Because you have not walked in the ways of your father... Behold, Yahweh is about to strike (נָגַף) your people with a great blow...” (vv 12-14). Despite the English translations,<sup>42</sup> the root נָגַף in v 14 does not refer to an unmentioned plague but to the following attack on Judah by the Philistines and Arabians, who invaded the country and carried away many possessions (vv 16-17). After this first attack, Yahweh himself struck (נָגַף) Jehoram directly with an incurable bowel disease that slowly consumed him until his

<sup>39</sup> For the Chronicler’s use of עָזַב, see Chapter 1. For the divine title, see Chapter 2.1.1.

<sup>40</sup> See 2 Kgs 19:8 for this city’s importance to Hezekiah.

<sup>41</sup> This actually represents the third occurrence of this preposition in vv 8-10a with the first two stating מִתַּחַת יְדֵי-הוֹדָה. However, the Chronicler borrows these first two uses but inserts the third (cf. 2 Kgs 8:20-22). The account in 2 Kgs 8 implied this third use to apply to Judah also, but the Chronicler relates it to Jehoram’s loss specifically.

<sup>42</sup> So ESV, NRSV, and also Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 308), but see NASB. The English word “plague” seems to imply a widespread affliction or even disease.

death two years later. As with Saul, Yahweh executed punishment on the errant king, while the people also suffered for his negligent actions.

#### *4.2.2. Ahaziah Goes Down with Israel (2 Chr 22:1-9)*

The Chronicler paints a similar picture for the next king, Ahaziah, the only son of Jehoram's to survive the earlier attack. The account in 2 Kgs 8:27 states that he too walked in the evil way of the house of the northern king Ahab, but the Chronicler emphasizes to an even greater degree how the northerners influenced him, through two insertions. In v 3b, he asserts that his Omride mother counseled (יָעַץ) him to act wickedly, while in v 4b-5a the house of Ahab counseled (יָעַץ) him to go to war with them against Aram.<sup>43</sup> The Chronicler illustrates the only outcome that could result from such an alliance with his own version of the ensuing war, "Now the downfall of Ahaziah was from God for going to Joram..." (v 7a).<sup>44</sup> He explains that Yahweh had anointed Jehu the son of Nimshi to destroy the house of Ahab, so Jehu eventually executed judgment on Ahaziah and his attendants at the same time as the northern king (vv 7b-9). Ahaziah's attempt to save himself by hiding in Samaria revealed his tight bond with the northern kingdom at this time. This relationship with the idolatrous northerners placed him on the losing side of a battle with Aram that eventually resulted in his death.<sup>45</sup>

#### **4.3. Ahaz (2 Chr 28)**

Following the account in 2 Kgs 16, the Chronicler reports that Ahaz acted worse than even northern Israel's kings by committing the same abominations as the nations that

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<sup>43</sup> The Chronicler inserts the word יָעַץ at several key points in the reigns of other kings as well; cf. 1 Chr 13:1; 2 Chr 20:21; 25:16-17; 30:2, 23; 32:3.

<sup>44</sup> The Chronicler describes other attacks as from God, see also 1 Chr 5:22; 2 Chr 25:20.

<sup>45</sup> For this reason, De Vries (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 337-338) labels Ahaziah's reign the high point in his "Schema of Dynastic Endangerment".

resided in the land before them (2 Chr 28:1-4 // 2 Kgs 16:1-4). Although 2 Kings 16:3 already describes those nations as “whom Yahweh drove out,” which suggests that Judah would meet a similar fate for Ahaz’s actions, that account never demonstrates this connection. To the contrary, when Aram and Israel had surrounded Ahaz at Jerusalem, he looked for and found help from the king of Assyria at great cost to the temple (vv 5-9). Furthermore, in this new vassal relationship, he departed from the established temple customs set since the time of Solomon so that he could introduce cultic innovations (vv 10-18). While these episodes certainly reflect negatively on Ahaz, the account remarkably leaves out any consequences for his actions. Instead, he seems to have saved Jerusalem through his political savvy and maintained a quiet reign until his peaceful death (v 20).

The Chronicler keeps this negative portrayal of the king, but takes great care to show that Ahaz’s abandonment of the temple cult could only result in much of Judah’s expulsion from the land. He intensifies some of the details in the introductory remarks to show further that the coming punishment was justified. For example, the Chronicler asserts that Ahaz brought false cultic practices into Jerusalem itself with metal images for the Baals and sacrifices (vv 2b-3a). Additionally, he changes the singular “son” in v 3b to a plural so that the sole incident of burning his son appears as a recurrent practice for more of his progeny.<sup>46</sup> Combined with the general, pervasive tone of v 4 (i.e. sacrifices and offerings on the high places, hills, and under *every* green tree, // 2 Kgs 16:4), the Chronicler presents Ahaz as a king who constantly engaged in wicked behavior. Though the Chronicler gives more examples of Ahaz’s idolatry in the following narrative, he lays a

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<sup>46</sup> Thus Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 288. Klein (2 *Chronicles*, 397) points out the possibility that the plural could have already been in the Chronicler’s *Vorlage* since the LXX<sup>L</sup> 2 Kgs 16:3 has it.

stronger emphasis on the consequences to Judah for such behavior. Through the course of five different assaults, Ahaz continued to look for help in the wrong places, instead of supplicating his God who could save him and the people of Judah.

#### ***4.3.1. Attacks from the North (2 Chr 28:5-15)***

The first two attacks came from the north as in 2 Kgs 16:5, but this time the armies of Aram and northern Israel clearly had no trouble in devastating Judah (2 Chr 28:5). The Chronicler makes several changes to show the magnitude of Judah's defeat. For example, he explains that for both attacks Yahweh gave Ahaz "into the hand" of the oncoming attacker, an expression that suggests that the assailant's victory never came into doubt because it was divinely decided.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, as Rudolph points out, the Chronicler gives no indication that Aram and northern Israel performed their campaign together so that Judah suffered attack not once but twice.<sup>48</sup>

Beyond this, the Chronicler greatly stresses the massive numbers of Judeans affected by the assaults. The first report for the Aramaeans states quite simply that they defeated Ahaz and took captive a great number of people (שביה גדולה). The second report says that the king of Israel defeated him with a great blow (מכה גדולה), but then gives extensive details of the damage in the next three verses. Pekah the king of Israel slaughtered 120,000 mighty men in one day (v 6), an Ephraimite warrior named Zichri killed three important Judeans close to Ahaz (v 7),<sup>49</sup> and the northerners took 200,000 more Judeans captive from their women, sons, and daughters (v 8). Klein argues that the sheer

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<sup>47</sup> Though not particularly Chronistic, the expression appears many times in Chronicles, cf. 1 Chr 5:10; 14:10; 21:13; 22:18; 2 Chr 13:16; 16:18; 18:5, 11, 14; 24:24; 32:15, 22; 36:17.

<sup>48</sup> Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 289.

<sup>49</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 901) notes that none of these titles belongs to the standard Chronistic vocabulary, while only the "king's son" has any attestation elsewhere as having an official role.

numbers are certainly unrealistic,<sup>50</sup> while Ben Zvi suggests that the Chronicler wants to show that large numbers would not suffice to save the people.<sup>51</sup> Amidst these brutal details, the Chronicler highlights the reason for the devastation, “because they had forsaken (עֲזַב) Yahweh, the God of their fathers” (v 6; see above on 21:10). The verb עֲזַב itself refers to Ahab’s idolatrous practices from the introduction in vv 1-4. The plural suffix attached to it reveals that he did not act alone in his wickedness, but even led away the people at large with his evil ways.

At this point we may note that the Chronicler does not hesitate to point out a particular sense of irony with regard to Israel’s triumph over their southern neighbor. As was well known from the books of Kings, the northern kingdom (not the southern) began to experience a major decline that would lead to their eventual exile to Assyria at this time. In 2 Kgs 16:7, Ahaz pleaded for help from the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser, who then began his attacks on the kingdoms north of Judah. He took out Aram first (v 9), but then he and other Assyrian kings later conquered northern Israel also through a series of campaigns and took many of their people captive (cf. 2 Kgs 17:1-6).<sup>52</sup>

The Chronicler reports none of this, but avers that the northern king Pekah had enough force to kill 120,000 mighty men in one day, while his nation had the power to capture (שָׁבָה) another 200,000 of Judah’s people. The Chronicler uses the verb שָׁבָה and its nominal cognates שְׁבוּיָה and שְׁבוּי frequently during Ahaz’s reign to show that in fact Judah suffered the fate of exile that only the northern kingdom presumably underwent (cf. 2 Kgs

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<sup>50</sup> Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 398.

<sup>51</sup> E. Ben Zvi, “A Gateway to the Chronicler’s Teaching: The Account of the Reign of Ahaz in 2 Chr 28,1-27,” *SJOT* 7 (1993): 216-249 (235).

<sup>52</sup> See also J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 380-388.

17:6).<sup>53</sup> In addition to Israel's massive capture of Judah's people, the king of Damascus had first captured a great number of people before them (v 5a) and the Edomites would also do the same later in the narrative (v 17). While Williamson has persuasively argued that both northern and southern kingdoms stood under God's anger (see discussion below), the Chronicler has not left any reason to think that the north has been exiled at this point.<sup>54</sup> In his account, Judah suffered many deportations, but Israel remained militarily strong with their king (28:5b-8).

For the Chronicler's larger narrative, however, this episode creates specific problems since he often portrays the northern kingdom as incompetent in war because they had forsaken Yahweh (cf. 2 Chr 11:14-15). After the division of the kingdom, Abijah told Jeroboam that his larger northern army could not prevail against the kingdom of Judah because the true temple cult resided in the south (2 Chr 13:8-12). Later, Jehoshaphat almost died in battle because he entered into a foolish alliance with the northern king Ahab (2 Chr 18). Even Amaziah would have lost his battle against the men of Seir if he had held on to the mercenaries he hired from northern Israel (2 Chr 25:5-13). So then, in light of these episodes, how could Pekah defeat Ahaz? Would he not fare as Jeroboam who could not

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<sup>53</sup> In 2 Chr 28 alone, the verb שבה occurs 4 times (vv 5, 8, 11, 17), while the nouns שביה and שבי occur 5 times (vv 5, 11, 13, 14, 15) and 1 time (v 17), respectively. The account in 2 Kgs 16 does not use the lexical domain of שבה at this point, even to describe northern Israel's exile.

<sup>54</sup> See also P. S. Evans, "Prophecy Influencing History: Dialogism in the Chronicler's Ahaz Narrative," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Ancient Israelite Historiography* (eds. M. J. Boda and L. M. Wray Beal; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 143-165 (147). *Contra* Williamson (*Israel in Chronicles*, 114-118), who argues that the Ephraimite heads might serve as evidence that northern Israel had no king and had been exiled by this point. However, these leaders seem to represent only a small contingent within their monarchy (more below). For his other argument on the title "the king of Israel", see below. McKenzie (*1-2 Chronicles*, 337) supposes that the story may have originated after the fall of the kingdom at a time completely unrelated to the Syro-Ephraimite crisis. Ben Zvi ("Gateway," 217-218) contends that Ahaz's reign is the only time in Chronicles where there is a community of kingless Israelites, much like the community that read it.

defeat the weaker Abijah? Had the northern kingdom turned away from their sins against Yahweh?

The Chronicler answers this last question with a resounding no in the next scene. The disjunctive *waw* at the beginning of v 9 “But (וְשָׁם) a prophet of Yahweh was there...” signals that northern Israel had its own problems. The prophet Oded explained to the northern army that Yahweh gave Judah into their hand because of his (i.e. Yahweh’s) anger against them (v 9), but that his wrath remained also on the northerners for their own sins (vv 10-11). Even in their execution of the war, the northerners seemed to have gone too far in their brutality, which put them at the risk of even more guilt (cf. v 9, “you have killed them in a rage that reaches up to heaven”).

A second rebuke came from four Ephraimite chiefs who commanded the army not to bring the captives into Samaria (vv 12-13). Their argument ran the same as the prophet Oded’s in that the northern kingdom already had guilt against it, so the army must be careful not to do anything that would accrue any more guilt. Hence, the testimony of the prophet Oded and the Ephraimite chiefs confirmed that Israel had not achieved this victory as a reward for their faithfulness to Yahweh, a theme the Chronicler only highlights for the southern kingdom. Rather, it accentuated the miserable state to which the religious climate in Judah had deteriorated. They had fallen below the practices of the wayward northern kingdom. For this reason, even the northern kingdom appeared as a thriving nation with a powerful king next to the pitiable Judah.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> McKenzie (*1-2 Chronicles*, 336) argues that the occurrence of the word שׁוֹב for the northerners’ positive behavior constitutes a play on words with the captivity (שְׁבוּה) as punishment for Judah’s sins.



The surprising response of the army not to complete the exile of Judah's women and children in vv 14-15 does not contradict this argument. Their transgressions still remained, that they massacred many "in a rage that reaches up to heaven" (v 9)<sup>56</sup> and also had a king who likely led the nation astray as the northern kings before him.<sup>57</sup> The four honorable Ephraimite elders can only represent a segment (however small) of the kingdom since the Chronicler's statements concerning their kingdom as a whole remain negative, i.e. they had great guilt. Since the Chronicler does not hint that the entire nation repented, it is best to assume that the northern kingdom maintained its rebellious state.<sup>58</sup> As far as Judah is concerned, if some members of the northern kingdom could heed the message of their own guilt, then certainly they too had an opportunity to turn back to Yahweh after their most recent decline.

#### **4.3.2. More Idolatry Leads to More Attacks (2 Chr 28:16-25)**

A second series of foreign attacks clearly demonstrates that Judah did not follow this example of the repentant northern Israelites. Instead, the Chronicler takes note of Ahaz's appeal to the king of Assyria for help found in his *Vorlage* (v 16; cf. 2 Kgs 16:7). As Knoppers has shown, any attempt by Judah to form an alliance represents a bad move throughout Chronicles.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, set in this context, the alliance no longer serves the purpose that it did in 2 Kgs 16 since the two attackers had already come and gone. The

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<sup>56</sup> De Vries (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 368-369) argues that their violence did not consider their brotherhood with Judah and went beyond Yahweh's intent; cf. the use of נא in vv 8, 11.

<sup>57</sup> This is an assumption based on the Chronicler's statements concerning the north elsewhere in the divided kingdom. It seems more likely than the idea that the whole northern kingdom repented. As discussed earlier, the northern kings serve as a negative paradigm.

<sup>58</sup> This does not mean that I disagree with Williamson's argument that the northern kingdom remained a legitimate part of the true Israel; cf. Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*, 130-131. They may have forsaken Yahweh for a time, but they still had the opportunity to repent and return as some of them would later do in the time of Hezekiah (cf. 30:10-12) and even the Ephraimite leaders here.

<sup>59</sup> Knoppers, "Alliances as a Topos," 601-626.

king of Aram came and took a large group of captives, but then returned home with them to Damascus (v 5a). Likewise, though the northern kingdom conducted a large massacre of Judah's army, they then returned to their capital at Samaria (v 8). Even the captives that they originally took, they released to Jericho with new clothes and food (vv 14-15). Although these attacks certainly weakened Judah, Ahaz had no need for a rescuer as he did in 2 Kgs 16.

The Chronicler shows that his plea to Assyria still did not help him (cf. 28:17, "But still [ועוד]..."). With the emergence of two more adversaries, the Chronicler implies that Ahaz's foolish move instigated Yahweh to send more punishment. The first of these latest attackers, Edom, becomes the third nation overall to strike (נכה) Judah and take away captives (וישבוי־שבי). In 2 Kgs 16:6, the Edomites merely settled in Elath after the Aramaeans drove Judah out of it, but here the Chronicler records them as another attacker to accentuate the depth of Judah's sins.

Immediately following, the Chronicler inserts a fourth assailant (no parallel in 2 Kgs 16) as the Philistines captured (לכד) several of Judah's important cities in the south (v 18).<sup>60</sup> It is noteworthy that they became the first attacker to take no captives, but perhaps there remained no important *people* left to capture, so the Chronicler has them take *cities* instead. The Chronicler again explains the reason for Judah's deterioration in v 19 using some of his most characteristic vocabulary, "For Yahweh humbled (הכניע) Judah on account of Ahaz king of Israel because he caused them to act waywardly in Judah and acted very unfaithfully (ומעול מעל) to Yahweh." As with Saul, the root מעל reveals the

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. N. Na'aman, "In Search of Reality behind the Account of the Philistine Assault on Ahaz in the Book of Chronicles," *Transeu* 26 (2003): 47-63, who argues that the Chronicler has shaped v 18 around his doctrine of retribution.

king's shortcomings with regard to the cult since he should have turned to Yahweh for help in this crisis.<sup>61</sup> The Chronicler's Hezekiah certainly places Ahaz's מעל in the cultic domain (cf. 29:6, 19; 30:6-8).

For the fifth and final country to come and attack Ahaz, the Chronicler shows that not only did Assyria not help him but in fact afflicted him (v 20). Again, this account differs greatly from 2 Kgs 16:9, where Ahaz's clever use of temple treasures brought safety to Judah. While the use of temple funds could help kings get out of trouble in the books of Kings, Knoppers has shown that such efforts always appear negatively in Chronicles.<sup>62</sup> Regardless of how one translates the qal of חזק in v 20, the Chronicler's point remains that Assyria leveled a significant blow against the southern kingdom.<sup>63</sup> He inserts his interpretation of this event immediately afterwards, "For Ahaz took a portion from the house of Yahweh... and gave tribute to the king of Assyria, but it did not help him" (v 21). Ahaz's disrespect for the temple did not help him in the end, but it only seemed to add to his misery. The Chronicler makes it the precise reason for Assyria's assault on Judah.

With all five attackers having come and gone, the Chronicler concludes the account of Ahaz's reign with the most devastating marks of his legacy. First, even though his idolatry and call to Assyria for support had brought him and Judah strife, he still looked for help away from Yahweh, this time by sacrificing to the gods of Damascus (v 23). This careless attitude had characterized his reign in Chronicles, so it is only fitting that he

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<sup>61</sup> See the discussion on מעל in Chapter 1.

<sup>62</sup> G. N. Knoppers, "Treasures Won and Lost: Royal (Mis)appropriations in Kings and Chronicles," in *The Chronicler as Author* (eds. M. P. Graham and S. L. McKenzie), 181-208. He also argues that temple despoliation notices in the books of Kings cannot be judged purely negative since four out of six kings who despoiled the temple received positive ratings in the end.

<sup>63</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 907) translates "... instead of *overpowering* him..." Others either reposit the verb to חזקו (cf. HALOT and BHS) or assume that חזק can have this sense in the qal (cf. BDB). Knoppers ("Alliances as a Topos," 610) takes the shorter version in LXX that does not include ולא חזקו.

committed the same foolish, idolatrous mistake at the end. Second, this mistake did not affect him alone, but led to the ruin of “all Israel” (v 23). Ahaz’s faithlessness pushed this ideal even further away from the target David and Solomon had established.<sup>64</sup> Third, the Chronicler reports that Ahaz destroyed the vessels to the temple and closed its doors so that the only channels for worship in the land were the illicit altars in Jerusalem and the high places everywhere else (vv 24-25). While other kings may have neglected the temple, the Chronicler shows how Ahaz actively put it to disuse at the end of his reign. Ahaz has left the country as weak as it has ever been.<sup>65</sup>

#### **4.4. Amon (2 Chr 33:21-25)**

The reign of Amon largely follows the course of his father Manasseh’s, even though he never repented as his father did (see Chapter 6.2). As in 2 Kgs 21, the Chronicler keeps Amon’s account short. The introductory remarks note that for his brief two year reign, he did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh just as Manasseh by sacrificing to the idols that the latter made and also by serving them (vv 21-22). At v 23, the Chronicler emphasizes the critical difference between the two kings using more of his characteristic vocabulary. Unlike Manasseh, Amon did not humble himself (כנע) before Yahweh, but increased the guilt already against him. For this reason, he received immediate judgment from his own servants inside his house (v 24). Again, even though the Chronicler borrows

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. J. W. Wright, “The Fight for Peace: Narrative and History in the Battle Accounts in Chronicles,” in *The Chronicler as Historian* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.), 150-177 (173). Also noteworthy, the title “king of Israel” serves as a sign of missed opportunity for Ahaz (v 19). If he had pursued temple measures as Hezekiah did after him, he could have earned that title in some sense as his son did. Though the Chronicler never literally gave the latter that title, he does assert that Hezekiah had achievements along those lines with his comparison to the kings of the united monarchy in 30:26.

<sup>65</sup> Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 408) notes that the reign of Ahaz serves as a foil for the reign of his son Hezekiah.

this episode mainly from his source (cf. 2 Kgs 21:23), it nevertheless demonstrates his aim to show the vulnerability of any king who does not take care of the temple cult.

#### **4.5. Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah (2 Chr 36)**

The last four kings receive far less attention here than in 2 Kgs 23:31-25:30, which gave much more detail to Jerusalem's destruction. The Chronicler abbreviates the account so that he can illustrate one final time, through a recitation of their reigns in rapid succession, his main theme that Judah's abandonment of Yahweh and his temple could only lead to their God's abandonment of them. This differs from the delayed punishment suffered by Judah because of the sins of Manasseh in 2 Kgs 24:3-4, an inevitable consequence of his idolatry. To the contrary, the Chronicler does not mention Manasseh or even hint that any other king before this last generation could have caused this tragedy.<sup>66</sup> Instead, he groups these last kings together to show how they each suffered the same fate for the same basic reason.

The Chronicler's presentation of the first, Jehoahaz, appears to go against his principle of divine retribution.<sup>67</sup> He devotes four verses to his reign (36:1-4), yet offers no evaluation of the king's behavior,<sup>68</sup> though the account in 2 Kgs 23:32 includes a negative report. Instead, the Chronicler passes from the typical regnal data (vv 1-2) directly to Jehoahaz's immediate judgment when Neco deported him to Egypt and made his brother

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<sup>66</sup> B. Halpern ("Why Manasseh Is Blamed for the Babylonian Exile: The Evolution of a Biblical Tradition," VT 48 [1998]: 473-514 [475-483]) and others argue that the Chronicler has intergenerational sin as the final cause of the exile (see especially 36:15-16). Though a particular pall hangs over Judah after Manasseh's reign due to his sin, I will argue in Chapter 5.6.1 that the final generation went into exile for their own actions.

<sup>67</sup> Japhet (*Ideology*, 192) calls the attack in 36:3 a war of punishment, but 36:1-4 nowhere states this.

<sup>68</sup> Halpern ("Manasseh," 475 n. 4) notes that LXX does and proposes that MT suffered haplography by homoioteleuton, but this does not seem likely. LXX also has the queen mother's name, which the Chronicler does not include for kings after Hezekiah. McKenzie (*Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History*, 184-187) argues that the Chronicler did not use the books of Kings as a source after the death of Josiah.

Jehoiakim king (vv 3-4). At first sight, this seems to occur through no fault of the king's own, but as a further consequence of Josiah's misplaced confidence against the Egyptian king (see Chapter 5.6.2).

Furthermore, the Chronicler records a deportation for each of the next two kings (i.e. Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin), this time by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, even though he does not report any specific action that precipitated it (vv 6, 10). It is true that the Chronicler does transfer over a negative evaluation saying that each "did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh" (36:5, 9), but such a comment alone does not serve as sufficient evidence in the Chronicler's history for such a penalty elsewhere.<sup>69</sup> Thus far, the Chronicler has typically shown kings to have suffered judgment at the hands of Yahweh when they have committed a cultic transgression, so that the punishment here comes as somewhat of a surprise. All three kings receive the typical judgment for cultic malfeasance, but the Chronicler does not give a full explanation for their punishment immediately.

When the Chronicler attaches the same fate to the fourth and final king, Zedekiah, he then reveals the common offense for all of them that caused this fate. As with the previous two kings, the Chronicler also transfers the criticism that he "did evil in the eyes of Yahweh," though this time he further explains that he did not humble himself (כָּנַע) before Jeremiah the prophet (v 12). This criticism offers a noteworthy contrast to the commendation ascribed to Josiah who, after the rampant idolatry of Manasseh and Amon, led the nation to a proper worship of Yahweh in the temple with his own humility (cf. 34:27). Continuing on, the Chronicler adds, "He stiffened his neck and hardened his heart

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<sup>69</sup> The Chronicler illustrates or explains the reasoning for every king's judgment (or prosperity) in terms of cultic (un)faithfulness, even for as brief a reign as Amon (cf. 33:23).

from *turning* to Yahweh,” with שׁוּב being another of the common Chronic phrases for cultic (un)faithfulness.<sup>70</sup> In light of the misfortune experienced by the previous four kings (Josiah-Jehoiachin), whether it was defeat in battle or their swift removal at the will of a foreign king, Zedekiah should have learned and resorted to the requirement set forth by Solomon during the temple’s dedication (e.g. 6:24-25) and confirmed by Yahweh (7:13-15). Since Zedekiah did not do this (i.e. *humble himself* or *turn* to Yahweh in his time of need), the Chronicler shows how he received the same fate.<sup>71</sup>

In fact, this recurring judgment groups all these last kings together since it demonstrates their negligence toward the temple. None of them actually *turned* to Yahweh at their critical time. Though Josiah brought the worship of Yahweh to new heights, his recklessness required his successors to turn to Israel’s God to save them. The very fact that Neco was able to capture Jehoahaz, and that Nebuchadnezzar could do the same with Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, demonstrates for the Chronicler that they fell in this same category of those who abandoned the cult before them. All four kings, grouped here together, suffered attack and capture because they did not turn to Yahweh. The account in 2 Kgs 24-25 does not stress this divine punishment and even appears to contradict it in the case of Jehoiakim who “slept with his fathers” (2 Kgs 24:6, but compare 2 Chr 36:6).

The Chronicler illustrates this principle one last time with respect to the priests and the people of this post-Josiah generation at large (v 14). The text describes their abuse of the temple cult in explicit and extreme terms, “they were very unfaithful (הֵרָבּוּ לַמַּעֲוֹל־מַעַל)

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<sup>70</sup> Both כָּנַע and שׁוּב appear in the Chronicler’s important insertion during Yahweh’s response at the temple dedication (7:14). See Chapter 1.

<sup>71</sup> For Zedekiah, the Chronicler does not state his fate explicitly, but implies later in v 20 that he was either killed or captured.

according to the abominations of the nations and polluted the house he made holy in Jerusalem.” As so often in previous periods of rampant idolatry, Yahweh sent to them messengers (v 15), but they did not heed his words through these prophets (v 16). The Chronicler uses three strong terms to describe their hostile attitude toward the only one who could protect them, all participles to show the ongoing nature of their open defiance, a persistent “mocking” (לעב), “despising” (בוזה), and “scoffing” (תעע). They continued this until Yahweh’s wrath came against them.

The Chronicler describes this final judgment as the point when there was no longer a remedy (מרפא, v 16). In this context, מרפא has a specific referent to the temple in light of his earlier insertion at 2 Chr 7:14, “if my people... humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will... heal (ארפא) their land.” Beginning with Jehoiakim, the Chronicler notes that some of the vessels (מכלי בית יהוה) of the house of Yahweh were taken away because of his disobedience at that time (v 7). After the brief reign of another wicked king, Jehoiachin, Nebuchadnezzar took away more from the temple, this time the precious vessels (כלי חמדת בית־יהוה) of the house of Yahweh (v 10). Thus, when the last of these kings turned away from Yahweh, not only did he see the same individual fate (i.e. death or captivity), he also saw the sole *remedy* to turn to Yahweh in the temple disappear. Accordingly, the Chronicler tells how Nebuchadnezzar made a final campaign either to kill or to enslave the remaining inhabitants of the land (vv 17, 20) and moreover to take *all the vessels* of the house of God and even burn down the building itself (vv 18-19). In this manner, not only did the temple represent the singular solution to



Israel's problems in times of crisis (7:13-15), its destruction constituted the ultimate judgment for their neglect of it.

Within this grim concluding chapter, I. Kalimi and J. D. Purvis have observed an optimistic note mixed into these brief but brutal details of destruction.<sup>72</sup> They point out that the temple vessels received quite a different fate in 2 Kgs 24:13 where they were cut up, or in Jeremiah where only some of them were taken to Babylon (cf. 27:16-22; 28:3, 6). Presumably, the Chronicler holds out hope for a time when the vessels would be returned to Jerusalem into a newly built temple.<sup>73</sup> This sentiment coincides well with the optimistic tone of the last two verses of the book (2 Chr 36:22-23). The end of the narrative exhorts the contemporary community to maintain the temple since it not only has the vessels that date back to the time of David and Solomon, but it also has the promises given to them by their God, to have a secure place in the land if they remain faithful.

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<sup>72</sup> "King Jehoiachin and the Vessels of the Lord's House in Biblical Literature," *CBQ* 56 (1994): 449-457.

<sup>73</sup> See also the discussion of 1 Chr 9:1 in the Chapter 1.

## Chapter 5

### Faithful Kings Who Falter

Whereas the Chronicler has given the kings of the previous three chapters unambiguous evaluations through the joint themes of temple faithfulness and war, he does not present the remaining kings so monolithically. For the current chapter, these kings start off successful in ways similar to the other faithful kings, but then fall in the manner of the unfaithful kings. To emphasize this downward trend, the Chronicler integrates a touch of irony into each of their reigns. Just as he features one remarkable aspect of their faithfulness in the beginning, he will then also illustrate how they act contrary to that particular positive mark, leading to their demise.

#### 5.1. Asa (2 Chr 14-16)

The account of Asa's reign in 1 Kgs 15:9-24 would have caused significant problems for the Chronicler.<sup>1</sup> It first asserts that Asa did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh by performing several reforms within Judah's cult (vv 11-15). However, it then reports that he won a battle over the northern kingdom by plundering the temple treasuries to buy help from the Aramaeans (vv 16-22). Using the various time markers in the narrative (cf. 13:23; 15:10, 19; 16:1, 12, 13), Dillard argues that the Chronicler reformats Asa's reign based on his retribution theology.<sup>2</sup> While appeal to this theme can explain many of the Chronicler's changes in broad terms, it cannot provide a reason for why a king

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<sup>1</sup> Many scholars have discussed the chronological discrepancies with the account in 1 Kgs 15, but I agree with Klein that the Chronicler was either unaware of or unconcerned with such difficulties. For a summary of this discussion, see Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 209-212.

<sup>2</sup> Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 115. See also McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 285; W. Rudolph, "Aufbau der Asa-Geschichte," *VT* 2 (1952): 367-371.

would face attack immediately after reforms, on two occasions. Also, it does not account for how Asa could win his war against Baasha as a righteous king when he plundered the temple treasuries to do so.<sup>3</sup>

Rather than demonstrate a strict doctrine of retribution, the Chronicler illustrates the irony of both how and when Asa relied on Yahweh. His account contains two periods of reform and two periods of war. While scholars have generally seen the difference between Asa's behavior in the two war reports and their outcomes, they have not delineated the variance between the reforms. Rudolph has persuaded some that 2 Chr 15:8-15 is simply a doublet of 14:2-4,<sup>4</sup> but the analysis below will show how the Chronicler portrays the two reforms quite differently, with the second a greater reflection of Asa's piety. This disparity accentuates the folly of Asa's behavior in his war with Baasha. If he could rely on Yahweh in the face of the enormous Cushite army having done only minimal cultic preparations, then why would he not simply do the same against Baasha after his second, more thorough reform later? To uncover the force of the Chronicler's point, we must first see how he develops the two different cult reforms.

#### ***5.1.1. A Comparison of the Reforms (2 Chr 14:1-6; 15:1-19)***

In a quite common assumption, Japhet argues that Asa's reforms in 2 Chr 14:2-4 lack any historical logic since Solomon has committed no transgressions, Rehoboam receives only a brief, vague label as "evil", and Abijah observes temple worship as a model

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<sup>3</sup> R. B. Dillard still asserts that Asa won this battle because of his faithfulness in his article ("The Reign of Asa [2 Chronicles 14-16]: An Example of the Chronicler's Theological Method," *JETS* 23 [1980]: 207-218 [213]), but also notes the Chronicler does not condone foreign alliances in his commentary (2 *Chronicles*, 123). See Knoppers, "Treasures Won and Lost," 198-205.

<sup>4</sup> Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 240-241. Followed by De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 296-297.

of fidelity.<sup>5</sup> However, I will show in the next chapter that Rehoboam did great damage to the cult insofar as he abandoned (עזב) Yahweh and acted unfaithfully (מעל) (2 Chr 12:1-2; see also v 9).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, in Chapter 3.2.1, we saw how Abijah only claimed the bare minimum of temple cult operations in his speech to Jeroboam and the Northern Kingdom (13:10-11).<sup>7</sup> Though this enabled him to win that battle, much work remained for Asa with regard to the temple cult.

In addition to this need for reforms, the Chronicler also shows how Asa had plenty of opportunity to conduct reforms since Abijah had created rest (שקט) in the land with his victory over Jeroboam (13:20-23). Klein states that this first occurrence of the word שקט refers to the rest Asa merits for his reforms, but its placement here suggests that Abijah achieved it for him since the Chronicler has not yet reported that Asa did anything good.<sup>8</sup> More to the point, the root שקט appears most typically after a long period of strife has finally settled so that the land has quiet and relief.<sup>9</sup> In the united monarchy, David fought many wars to establish peace and rest in the land so that Solomon could build the temple (cf. 1 Chr 22:9). As for Asa, the Chronicler describes how he used this restful period early in his reign, merited by Abijah's faithfulness, to focus his kingship completely on matters that would strengthen the kingdom.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 707. See also Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 213.

<sup>6</sup> Rehoboam's one act of repentance may have brought relief, but the account never says that he conducted cult reforms to make up for it; cf. Chapter 6.1.

<sup>7</sup> It would be very odd for the Chronicler not to have Abijah even mention the temple in his speech if the cult indeed flourished during his reign.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 212.

<sup>9</sup> Note the occurrence in Josh 11:23 at the end of the conquest, or the several occurrences in the book of Judges (3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28).

<sup>10</sup> Not every king begins his reign with equally favorable circumstances. Solomon, Asa, and Jehoram all have peaceful conditions because of their predecessors. The final four kings (Jehoahaz – Zedekiah) all face far greater challenges. See the discussion for each of these kings.

The opening paragraph (vv 1-6) shows two different types of measures that Asa pursued in these ten years, marked by two additional uses of שקט (vv 4, 5). The first part describes the cultic reforms Asa performed to maintain the rest gained by Abijah (cf. v 4b, “And the kingdom had rest [שקט] under him”). From one angle, the Chronicler praises Asa for these reforms as he has done with other faithful kings, “And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of Yahweh his God” (v 1 // 1 Kgs 15:11). From another angle, these reforms appear weaker than those analyzed in Chapters 2 and 3. Asa’s removal of various illicit cult items draws the people away from improper worship (vv 2, 4), and his command to seek (דרש) Yahweh, the God of their fathers, summons them to worship their God (v 3). However, the report lacks any mention of the two most foundational elements of any truly great reform, reparations on the temple itself and the gathering of the people to it in Jerusalem. The familiar moniker “the God of their fathers” and the word דרש may evince a general temple orientation, but that is it.<sup>11</sup> Even if Asa had no reforms to perform, it is surprising that he did not gather people for a celebration at the temple in the first ten years of his reign.

The Chronicler describes a different type of measure in vv 5-6, namely, Asa’s building projects. They do not show how Asa maintained the peace like the cultic reforms above, but explain other ways in which he sought to make the kingdom strong, “... because the land had rest (שקט)” (v 5). Welten has argued at length that the Chronicler inserted such building notices for various kings to show the rewards that come to righteous rulers.<sup>12</sup> While this point has some truth, many have followed this line to assert that the reward for

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<sup>11</sup> For דרש, see Chapter 1. For “the God of their fathers”, see Chapter 2.1.1.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung*, 9-78.

Asa's piety represents the Chronicler's main point for such notices.<sup>13</sup> For several other kings in this chapter and the next, however, building projects for military purposes often serve as a source of pride (e.g. 2 Chr 26:16) or false hope (e.g. 2 Chr 11:5-12), in either case a distraction from the temple.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, they highlight a potential obstacle for the king.<sup>15</sup> Asa undoubtedly has an interest in strengthening his defenses with the command, "Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars" (14:6).<sup>16</sup> In contrast, the Chronicler records only modest construction within Jerusalem for the reign of Hezekiah when the quickly approaching Assyrians appeared on the horizon (cf. 2 Chr 32:5).<sup>17</sup> More will be said on this topic with other kings later.

In addition to building projects, the beginning of the war report reveals that he exerted great energy in amassing substantial troops also, "And Asa had an army of..." (v 7). Many scholars include this record of Asa's large army with v 6 as an indication of the blessing he received for his faithfulness in vv 2-4.<sup>18</sup> As with the building notices, Welten contends that the Chronicler uses such notices of large armies to show how Yahweh led faithful kings to military greatness.<sup>19</sup> Though Williamson has previously shown how a

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 118; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 708; McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 277-278; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 260.

<sup>14</sup> See the later discussion on Jehoshaphat and Uzziah in this chapter, and Rehoboam and Manasseh in the next.

<sup>15</sup> Few commentators even mention such a temptation, but see Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 216, who follows Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 243.

<sup>16</sup> The phrase עָרֵי מִצּוּרָה in v 5 also suggests this.

<sup>17</sup> The Chronicler records building projects for Solomon, but only after he has built the temple (cf. 2 Chr 8:1-6).

<sup>18</sup> In addition to the divisions in BHS, see Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 705-709; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 217. In contrast, see Ruffing, *Jahwekrieg*, 81-82, who correctly puts it with the battle report. The next verse (i.e. v 8) will state that Zerah has come out אֵלֵיהֶם 'against them' so that the pronominal suffix, which must refer to the army in v 7, binds the two verses together. Also, the Chronicler uses the stitch-word הָיָה across both verses to compare the armies quantitatively; Asa mustered 580,000 for Judah and Benjamin (v 7), which contrasts with the 1 million troops Zerah brought (v 8).

<sup>19</sup> Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung*, 79-114.

similar notice for Amaziah in 2 Chr 25:5 casts doubt on such a motif, he and many others still hold this as a general trend for the Chronicler.<sup>20</sup>

However, the Chronicler illustrated earlier the futility of David's desire to take stock of his large army when he tried to take a census (1 Chr 21).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, as we will see later, Jehoshaphat (17:2, 13b-19), Joash (24:24), Amaziah (25:5-10), and Uzziah (26:11-15) will all face a similar temptation to put hope in their military forces during their respective periods of prosperity. As a contrast, Hezekiah certainly did not trust in large numbers (cf. 2 Chr 32:7-8). Unlike David, the Chronicler does not point out any sin that Asa has committed; the notice simply states how large his army had grown (580,000 men, cf. 14:7) since the time of his father (400,000 men, cf. 13:3). Nevertheless, the recorded increase in numbers, together with their weapons and armor, exposes Asa's interest in developing his military forces alongside the fortresses he had built earlier.

The events of 2 Chr 15 further confirm that Asa faced great temptation to rely on military power rather than Yahweh. First, the prophet Azariah came out to meet Asa after the war with a divinely inspired message of warning in 15:1-7, an oddity if Asa has undergone no temptation to this point. Curtis and Madsen claim that this whole speech fits badly in the aftermath of the victory,<sup>22</sup> while Knoppers avers that the admonition anticipates Asa's later failings in 2 Chr 16.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, if the recorded military

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<sup>20</sup> Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 261.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 2.2.2.

<sup>22</sup> Curtis and Madsen, *Books of Chronicles*, 384.

<sup>23</sup> Knoppers, "Alliances as a Topos," 606. Followed by Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 223. Jarick (*2 Chronicles*, 108) contends that a king faces the strongest temptation to adopt another nation's gods after he has defeated that nation based on 2 Chr 25:14, but see below on Amaziah.

ventures did distract Asa from giving adequate attention to the temple cult, then the prophet's speech was timely.

Additionally, though the prophet did not explicitly tell Asa to conduct temple reforms, several allusions in his speech inferred this. First, he began the exhortation, "Yahweh is with you while you are with him" (v 2). In Chapter 3.1.1 we saw how the Chronicler described the divine presence at the beginning of Solomon's reign as the empowering force that would enable him to build the temple (1:1).<sup>24</sup> Second, the opening and closing statements echoed David's charge to Solomon to build the temple (cf. 1 Chr 28:9-10). The prophet first stressed the high stakes for the king's actions, either reward for seeking Yahweh in the temple or punishment for neglecting him, "If you seek him... If you forsake him..." (15:2; cf. 1 Chr 28:9b). At the end, he charged Asa, "Be strong!" just as David did to Solomon since he would find reward for his work on the temple (15:7; cf. 1 Chr 28:10). Third, the terminology in 15:4-6 evoked the crisis scenarios mentioned by Solomon at the temple dedication,<sup>25</sup> while v 4 specifically mentions two of the responses Yahweh commanded later generations to do at the temple, to turn (שוב) and seek (בקש) the God of Israel (cf. 7:14-15).<sup>26</sup> With this in mind, the prophet's words indeed spoke poignantly to a king with divided interests, not whole-hearted faithfulness.

In the second episode, the Chronicler shows how Asa responded to the prophet's admonishment by conducting temple reforms. The divine presence mentioned in v 2 helped Asa gather many Israelites to the temple for a celebration at the temple, "... for great

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<sup>24</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 3.1.1.

<sup>25</sup> Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 241-242) interprets vv 3-6 as a prophecy about the future based on the label given to it in v 8 (נְבוּאָה) and the renderings of the LXX and the Vulgate. For a rebuttal, cf. Klein, 2 *Chronicles*, 224. See also Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 718-721.

<sup>26</sup> See Chapter 1.



numbers deserted to him from Israel when they saw that Yahweh his God was with him” (v 9, see also vv 10-15). In response to the charge to be strong (v 7), Asa strengthened himself (חִזַּק, hithpael) by removing idols and repairing the altar in front of the temple (v 8).<sup>27</sup> The Chronicler also notes that Asa and the people did seek (בָּקַשׁ) Yahweh (v 15), presumably by their actions done at the temple (cf. vv 10-15), as the prophet commanded (v 4). Lastly, while the prophet stated, “If you seek him, he will be found by you...” (v 2), the Chronicler affirms that “he was found by them and Yahweh gave them rest all around” (v 15) because of their oath at the temple.

On another note, the Chronicler pictures Asa’s second set of reforms in 15:8-19 as much more extensive. Although Rudolph argues that it would be unlikely for Asa to command the first reform without seeing the measure through to its completion, this is exactly what the text affirms.<sup>28</sup> In the first, the Chronicler tells how Asa removed various false cult objects from the land of Judah alone (14:2, 4), but in the second he claims that Asa put away detestable idols from all the land of Judah, Benjamin, and cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim (15:8). Whereas the first reform never mentions the temple, this time Asa repaired the altar in front of the “house of Yahweh” (v 8b), brought all the people to it (v 9), and they performed many sacrifices there (v 11).<sup>29</sup> In the first reform he gave the people a simple command (cf. 14:3), but in the second he entered them into a covenant to seek Yahweh with the threat of execution for those who did not comply

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion on חִזַּק in the hithpael, see the discussion in Chapter 3.1.1.

<sup>28</sup> See Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 241.

<sup>29</sup> Japhet surprisingly claims that the Chronicler has left out all the signs of temple ritual from this episode; cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 723.

(v 13). Not only did this second reform reach farther in its eradication of idolatry, it emphasized the centrality of the people's worship at the temple.

This new reform raises the question, why did Asa not perform these actions earlier in the first reform? The broader scope, which reached to the north, could not have represented a new opportunity gained from the battle against Zerah since that confrontation and its aftermath occurred on the southern frontier. We may draw the conclusion that the need for these reforms existed in the first ten years of his reign, but the Chronicler's Asa had neglected them so that he could build fortresses and amass a larger army.

This does not mean that the Chronicler criticizes Asa's first set of reforms. At that time, Asa told the people, "The land is still ours because we have sought Yahweh our God..." (v 6).<sup>30</sup> The problem lies with how they use this prosperity, which surfaces in Asa's exhortation just before the above quote, "Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars..." The Chronicler undoubtedly shows their success in his comments later in the same verse ("And they built and they prospered"), but Asa's actions paled in comparison to a king such as Hezekiah who did not pursue such measures until a threat appeared on the horizon. Hence, Asa did not receive rewards comparable to Hezekiah's until after the second reform, when the people came in large numbers (לרב, v 9; cf. 30:5), rejoiced over the work being done (שמח, v 15; cf. 30:23-26), and obeyed with their whole heart (לבב, v 15; cf. 30:18-19). Through these various nuances, the Chronicler illustrates how Asa made the nation much stronger with the second reform than with the first.

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<sup>30</sup> The contrast with the prophet's words in 15:2 is revealing, however. In the words of Asa, he and the people had sought Yahweh, but the prophet informed him that he still had a long way to go.

### 5.1.2. A Comparison of the Wars (2 Chr 14:7-14; 16:1-10)

The Chronicler uses this contrast in reforms to emphasize the foolishness of Asa's decision to seek help from Aram in 1 Kgs 15:16-22. The first war account highlights a remarkable demonstration of faith for Asa. Even though Asa had fortified cities including walls with towers and a large well-equipped army (vv 6-7), Zerah managed still to penetrate into Judah's southwest border at Mareshah with a larger army of one million (v 8).<sup>31</sup> The Chronicler mentions this city as one of several that Rehoboam had fortified after the kingdom split (cf. 11:8), so Zerah's assault appears formidable. The mention of three hundred chariots also depicts the invading party as more technologically advanced than the Judeans who had only spears, shields, and bows. Although Asa had put considerable effort into building a large army with sufficient defenses, he still did not have adequate support to defend Judah from such an assailant.

The description of Asa's war shows how he turned to Yahweh in his time of crisis according to the prescription set out at the dedication of the temple (14:7-14; cf. 6:34-35; 7:14). The Chronicler emphasizes that Yahweh promised to keep his eyes open and ears attentive to prayers made at the temple (cf. 7:15), which makes Asa's plea in this instance directed there.<sup>32</sup> In his prayer, Asa acknowledged Yahweh as his only means of help (עֶזֶר) and the one upon whom he relies (שָׁעֵן) (v 10). The reappearance of the leitmotifs of help (e.g. 1 Chr 12:19) and reliance (cf. 2 Chr 13:18; 16:7-8) mark the Chronicler's approval of Asa's behavior. The brief subsequent battle report also confirms that Asa clearly passed

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung*, 132, though he himself thinks that the Chronicler fabricated this war, in which case the Judean army has met the enemy outside of the post-exilic province of Yehud.

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter 1.

this initial test by placing all his hope in Yahweh for deliverance (v 11). Yahweh defeated the enemy and caused them to flee, with Asa and those accompanying him pursuing after the Cushites for all the plunder (vv 12-14). All his military preparations apparently played no role in the battle. By simply relying on Yahweh as his only source of help, Asa not only protected Judah from devastation by the attacker, but also secured Judah's southern border.

The Chronicler's insertion of the first war account creates a strong contrast for the second. In 2 Kgs 15:16-22, Asa's maneuver to despoil the treasuries so that he could buy help from Ben-hadad looked clever since he obtained the desired result. Moreover, this victory appeared to put to rest the continual clashes that occurred between the northern and southern kingdoms over the border territory (cf. 2 Kgs 14:30; 15:7b; 15:16).<sup>33</sup> The account ends with Asa as the victor, then alludes to the rest of his acts as "all his might and all that he did and the cities that he built" (v 23). From the introductory statement of approbation ("And Asa did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh...; v 11) to this closing summary, the account in 1 Kgs 15 offers no criticism against Asa for any of his actions.<sup>34</sup>

This same war in 2 Chr 16:1-6 appears far less clever in the Chronicler's history. We noted earlier in the reign of Ahaz how the Chronicler always condemns alliances with foreign nations.<sup>35</sup> Although Asa had just entered into a covenant with the people to seek Yahweh (15:12), he then pursued a covenant with the Aramaean king Ben-hadad (16:3). In the account itself, the Chronicler minimizes Asa's gains. The rebuilding of Geba and

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<sup>33</sup> For maps and discussion concerning the geographical importance of this battle for Benjamin, cf. Y. Aharoni, et al., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 93-94.

<sup>34</sup> The mundane detail of his diseased feet does not seem to carry any condemnation. In the big picture, 1 Kgs 15 portrays him as a cult reformer who gained the upper hand over the northern kingdom and reigned for 41 years.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Knoppers, "Alliances as a Topos," 601-626.

Mizpah, crucial cities for maintaining the Benjamin Plateau in 1 Kgs 15, represent a regression from Abijah's gains of the outlying cities Bethel, Jeshana, and Ephron earlier (2 Chr 13:19), or even the cities that Asa himself took in the hill country beyond those (15:8). Additionally, the Chronicler no longer claims that Baasha moved back to Tirzah in defeat (1 Kgs 15:21b), but simply "stopped (שבת) his work" (v 5). This seems to imply that he only gave up on a particular building project at that time, not the war with Judah in general.

In the Chronicler's insertion after the war, he does not mention any gains that Asa had made, but concentrates on the losses. The prophet Hanani categorized the result as a missed opportunity, "Because you relied (שען) on the king of Aram and did not rely (שען) on Yahweh your God, therefore the army of the king of Aram<sup>36</sup> has escaped you" (16:7). In the first war report, the Chronicler set a pattern for rewarding Asa's faithfulness. Since Asa relied solely on Yahweh in the earlier confrontation (14:10), Yahweh defeated the enemy and let Asa pursue them gathering land and spoils (vv 11-14). This enabled Asa to have a secure buffer zone on Judah's southern border. Hence, the Chronicler implies (i.e. through the prophet Hanani) that if Asa would have simply relied on Yahweh this second time he would have also secured a stronger northern border. Not only would he have defeated the northern kingdom, he would have defeated the Aramaeans too.<sup>37</sup> Though this possibility seemed unbelievable, the prophet reminded Asa of the massive size of Zerah's army earlier, the one that he had already defeated (v 8).

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<sup>36</sup> Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 247-248) and Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 240) follow LXX<sup>L</sup> which reads 'Israel' in the place of 'Aram' since Asa seems to be at war with Baasha, but as Japhet shows, Asa is not really fighting with either of them and so that is not a reason to make a change of such slim textual evidence. Japhet, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 735-736.

<sup>37</sup> Dillard points out that the addition of the Libyans adds some symmetry to the speech in that Asa could have had victory over *both* Israel and Aram just as he did against the Cushites and Libyans earlier; cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 126. The mention of Libyans with the Ethiopian army also implies that Asa had bigger gains than were originally reported.

The irony of the contrasting war reports elucidates the utter folly of Asa's decision to seek help from Ben-hadad. At the beginning of Asa's reign, he conducted only mediocre cult reforms that did not directly involve the temple, yet when Zerah came he cried out to Yahweh according to the latter's promise always to hear prayers made toward the temple (7:14-15). In response to the prophet's warning, Asa finally performed reforms focused explicitly on the temple, but then neglected to call upon Yahweh again when Baasha's much less imposing army confronted him. For his punishment, the Chronicler claims that Asa did not bring resolution to the constant border clashes with the northern kingdom, but that his foolish action provoked a period of continual wars (cf. 2 Chr 16:9).<sup>38</sup> His plea to Aram may have gained him temporary respite, but a cry to Yahweh in the temple would have brought the type of rest (שָׁלוֹם) he saw at the beginning of his reign (cf. 13:23).

## **5.2. Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17-20)**

The Chronicler devotes great attention to the reign of Jehoshaphat, yet scholarship in general has failed to find any unifying theme that can make sense of all the material as one cohesive unit. How can a king who reached such great heights in his different reforms (2 Chr 17:6b-9, 19:4-11) make some of the most careless blunders (2 Chr 18; 20:35-37)? Japhet has appealed to the Chronicler's need to incorporate all his source material that mentions the relations between Judah and Israel.<sup>39</sup> However, not only does this explanation fail to account for the Chronicler's omission of Jehoshaphat's joint expedition with the northern king Jehoram in 2 Kgs 3, it ignores the Chronicler's many indications that he

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<sup>38</sup> The Chronicler does not mention the foot disease as Asa's punishment for his covenant with Ben-hadad (*contra* Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 126), but as another example that he continues not to seek Yahweh, "Yet even (וְגַם) in his disease..." (16:12b).

<sup>39</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 756.

compiles the entire narrative with intent. As he does with Asa and other kings, the Chronicler structures Jehoshaphat's reign with time references to show causal links between events (17:6; 18:2; 20:1, 35). In another view, Knoppers correctly pinpoints the Chronicler's aim to accentuate the epoch that Jehoshaphat inaugurates, when Judah became entangled in the affairs of the northern kingdom,<sup>40</sup> but he too claims that the Chronicler never reconciles the many divergent portraits of this much celebrated king.<sup>41</sup>

Dillard has pointed out how the Chronicler ordered the events of Jehoshaphat's reign in a manner similar to the reign of Asa with 1) reform, building programs, and large armies; 2) battle report; 3) reform; 4) battle report; 5) transgression and death.<sup>42</sup> He argues that the Chronicler's intent once again lies in his theme of retribution,<sup>43</sup> but as with Asa, one wonders why Jehoshaphat would face an attack immediately after a reform (cf. 2 Chr 19-20). Moreover, though Dillard argues that Jehoshaphat received a swift rebuke in 19:1-2 for his infidelity, this does not come close to the harsh punishment other kings suffered for lesser crimes.<sup>44</sup> More importantly, this cause-effect relationship does not explain why he

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<sup>40</sup> G. N. Knoppers, "Reform and Regression: The Chronicler's Presentation of Jehoshaphat," *Bib* 72 (1991): 500-524 (501).

<sup>41</sup> Knoppers, "Reform and Regression," 522. See also S. L. McKenzie, "The Trouble with King Jehoshaphat," in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (eds. R. Rezetko, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 299-314 (313), who asserts that the Chronicler gives an ambivalent evaluation of Jehoshaphat based on his interpretation of Kings through the lens of his own theology. McKenzie also states that this unusual perspective cannot be attributed only to source material. Neither does K. Strübind (*Tradition als Interpretation in der Chronik: König Josaphat als Paradigma chronistischer Hermeneutik und Theologie* [BZAW 201; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991], 200) come to any firm conclusion, though he does argue that the Chronicler puts the different references to Jehoshaphat from the books of Kings into a coherent whole.

<sup>42</sup> R. B. Dillard, "The Chronicler's Jehoshaphat," *TJ* 7 (1986): 17-22 (18). Followed and adapted by Klein, 2 *Chronicles*, 247.

<sup>43</sup> Dillard, "Jehoshaphat," 20.

<sup>44</sup> As I showed in Chapter 4, Jehoshaphat's alliance had serious consequences for Judah, yet he came out of his joint campaign with Ahab unscathed and the kingdom suffered no devastation for his mistake. All the kings in Chapter 4 suffered far worse fates for their transgressions.

would add so much positive material when his source (at least in the books of Kings) mostly offered data the Chronicler found problematic.

For whatever reason, the Chronicler portrays Jehoshaphat's reign in mostly positive terms inasmuch as he conducted several reforms (17:6b-9, 19:4-11), received a remarkable amount of blessing (e.g. 17:1-5, 10-19), and triumphed in one of the most colorful war reports of the Chronicler's history (20:1-30). All these episodes illustrate how "he strengthened himself over Israel" (17:1). At the same time, the Chronicler will use this same material to show how Jehoshaphat grew to the point that he became greedy for more power. Ironically enough, though Yahweh blessed him with sovereignty over Israel (i.e. the geographic entity) for his piety, the Chronicler also avers that Jehoshaphat sought to extend his power to further reaches by allying himself with Israel (i.e. the wicked northern kingdom).<sup>45</sup> The Chronicler explains how Jehoshaphat gained international acclaim on two separate occasions only to squander it with this foolish alliance.

#### ***5.2.1. Sovereignty over Israel and International Acclaim (2 Chr 17)***

For Jehoshaphat's first rise to fame, the Chronicler illustrates how he achieved it not through war but due to his piety. He begins with a note of Jehoshaphat's extensive hegemony, "And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place and strengthened himself over (וַיַּחֲזֶק עַל) Israel" (17:1). Against this common translation, Knoppers renders על in this last phrase differently so that it describes how the new king strengthened his position *against* his northern neighbor. To support his case, he suggests that this verse continues the previous conflict between Asa and Baasha. He also contends that Jehoshaphat's placement

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<sup>45</sup> For why the Chronicler would condemn such an alliance, cf. Chapter 3.2.1.



of troops in Judah and Ephraim in v 2 reveals the same concern.<sup>46</sup> From a lexical standpoint, Williamson makes the observation that both Judah (vv 2, 5, 6) and Israel (v 4) appear in their normal senses in the following verses, which would support Knoppers' position since the allusion to Israel in v 1 would then refer to the northern kingdom.<sup>47</sup> If this reading is correct, then the Chronicler's Jehoshaphat tightened up his forces to protect his domain. In light of his father Asa's battles, he hoped to defend the kingdom from any outside attack by fortifying the area already in his jurisdiction.

However, such an interpretation assumes that the bellicose conditions at the end of Asa's reign would naturally continue into Jehoshaphat's, but the Chronicler specifically linked those past wars to Asa's sin, "You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars" (16:9b). Of course, even faithful kings such as Hezekiah could undergo an attack as a test of their faith (cf. 2 Chr 32), but Hanani promised Asa *continual* wars as a punishment for seeking help from Ben-hadad (cf. 16:1-6). In contrast to Asa's continual wars as punishment, Hanani's words just beforehand alluded to the potential reward for the faithful king, "For the eyes of Yahweh range throughout the whole earth to give strong support (להתחזק) to those whose heart is blameless toward him" (16:9a). The Chronicler later notes that Jehoshaphat's heart was devoted to Yahweh (17:6a). Hence, his ability to strengthen himself in 17:1 distinguishes his rule from his father's declining years in 2 Chr 16.

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<sup>46</sup> Knoppers, "Reform and Regression," 505. Many translations follow this understanding, cf. ESV, RSV, and NIV. Strübind (*Tradition als Interpretation*, 142) also argues for על as an adversative, but asserts that it is a positively understood predication.

<sup>47</sup> Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*, 105. However, he ultimately leaves the issue open because of the conflicting evidence.

In addition to this, the Chronicler uses חזק in the hithpael at several other key places to show how certain kings established a strong position over their kingdom.<sup>48</sup> The occurrence at the beginning of Solomon's reign helps the most since it also has the preposition על after it (2 Chr 1:1). The allusion to Solomon's reign becomes even closer in view of the statement that Yahweh was "with" each king (cf. 1:1; 17:3). In both cases, the Chronicler uses these expressions to introduce a prosperous, peaceful period. Dillard points out that many of the other occurrences describe periods of consolidation,<sup>49</sup> which would aptly characterize Jehoshaphat's accomplishments in the rest of 2 Chr 17 (see below).

In this light, the term "Israel" in v 1 cannot bear the same theological sense as v 4 where it refers strictly to the northern kingdom, "(Jehoshaphat) sought the God of his father... not according to the practices of Israel." This sense comes through in the way the Chronicler mentions the northern kingdom's practices (מעשה), which describes the idolatry they had committed since the time of Jeroboam (cf. 11:15). The Chronicler provides no such clues that he means only the wicked northern kingdom in v 1.<sup>50</sup> Rather, he likely refers to it with the same plain geographical sense he used for Judah and Ephraim in v 2 and Benjamin later in v 17. Jehoshaphat's installation of forces throughout Judah and even into Ephraim in v 2 then illustrates one way he began to strengthen himself over the entire kingdom of Israel.<sup>51</sup> As the Chronicler typically does for kings who act faithfully, he contends that Jehoshaphat searched for a way to consolidate as much of Israel under his

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<sup>48</sup> See also 1 Chr 11:10; 2 Chr 1:1; 13:21; 15:8; 25:11; 27:6; 32:5. Some occurrences have special nuances that I discuss in other chapters; cf. 2 Chr 12:13; 21:4; 23:1. Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 745.

<sup>49</sup> Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 133.

<sup>50</sup> Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 249) argues that "Israel" in v 1 refers to the southern kingdom as in 21:2, 4, but that "Ephraim" in 17:2 refers to the northern kingdom. Conceptually, this does not contradict my point here since Jehoshaphat in this scenario would still be consolidating his power over the entire kingdom.

<sup>51</sup> If he needed to buffer his defenses *against* the northern kingdom, he would not be able to put forces *in* their domain.

power as possible. Since the Chronicler aims to put Jehoshaphat in a positive light at least for this first section, it would make no sense to picture him in a military standstill, but to continue in the earlier work of his father (vv 2-3; cf. 15:8).

At the same time, it is in v 4 that the Chronicler first alludes to the irony for Jehoshaphat's reign, that he would gain power over the geographic kingdom of Israel (vv 1-2) as long as he did not adopt the idolatrous practices of wayward Israel. The books of Kings explain how Ahab committed more evil than all those before him by introducing Baal worship into Israel (cf. 16:31-32), but the Chronicler insists that Jehoshaphat did not seek the Baals but the God of his father (i.e. Yahweh). Before Jehoshaphat, both Abijah and Asa had done well to keep their distance from the northern kingdom's idolatry, which helped each of them to expand their territory. Abijah took the three northern cities Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron after he defeated Jeroboam (13:19), while Asa took cities in the hill country of Ephraim (15:8). Whereas 17:1-2 illustrate how Jehoshaphat strengthened the position that Abijah and Asa gained, the Chronicler explains in v 5a that Yahweh established the kingdom in Jehoshaphat's hand *because of his faithfulness*.

The Chronicler describes how Jehoshaphat showed faithfulness to Yahweh with a description of his two particular initiatives on behalf of the cult. First, he states that Jehoshaphat took the high places and the Asherim out of Judah (v 6b), a move similar to the earlier actions of his father Asa (cf. 14:2, 4). Second, the Chronicler reports that, along with the eradication of false religion in v 6, Jehoshaphat sent throughout all the cities of Judah officials, Levites, and priests to install orthodox religion by teaching from the "Book

of the Law of Yahweh” (17:7-9).<sup>52</sup> The time marker, “In the third year,” reveals the immediacy of Jehoshaphat’s plan once he had consolidated his rule.<sup>53</sup> As with Asa’s first reform, Jehoshaphat’s initiatives do not bring people to the temple as other more robust reform movements in the Chronicler’s history (e.g. 2 Chr 29-31), yet still the Chronicler depicts this early period in Jehoshaphat’s reign as a time when he sought to revive the people’s faith in Yahweh (more on these reforms below).<sup>54</sup>

The rest of 2 Chr 17 lists the many rewards that come to Jehoshaphat as a result of his reforms and piety. First, the Chronicler mentions the divine fear that fell upon the surrounding nations (vv 10-11). Though this concept appears several times in the Chronicist *Sondergut* (cf. 1 Chr 14:17; 2 Chr 14:13; 20:29), in this instance it gripped the nearby kingdoms not in the face of their military defeat but at the sight of Judah’s strength as manifested through the teaching of its law throughout their land. Accordingly, the Chronicler notes that the Philistines and Arabians brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, presumably to avoid war with him. In other words, while previous kings had engaged in wars to collect spoil and to further build the kingdom, Jehoshaphat achieved this through his focus on the cult. At the end of v 10, the Chronicler asserts that he accomplished all these great feats without any military confrontations (“and they made no war with Jehoshaphat”).

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<sup>52</sup> On the roles of these different groups, see G. N. Knoppers, “Jehoshaphat's Judiciary and ‘The Scroll of YHWH'S Torah’,” *JBL* 113 (1994): 59-80 (64-65). For the debated historicity of 17:7-9 and especially the judicial reforms in 19:5-11, see also B. S. Jackson, “Law in the Ninth Century: Jehoshaphat's ‘Judicial Reform’,” in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* (ed. H. G. M. Williamson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 369-397.

<sup>53</sup> This could even refer to his first year; cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 282.

<sup>54</sup> The Chronicler often links the law with cultic matters; cf. 2 Chr 14:2-3; 23:18; 31:3-4.

Second, the Chronicler concludes this opening period of blessing with various non-cultic enterprises Jehoshaphat undertook. In v 12, he began another list of ostensible blessings with the statement, “And Jehoshaphat grew greater and greater...” (17:12). It includes a brief report of fortresses and store cities that he built in Judah (vv 12b-13a), then gives great detail to the several musters of soldiers under his command, a total of 1,160,000 from both Judah and Benjamin (vv 13b-18). This number certainly surpasses the military musters of Abijah and Asa (400,000 and 580,000 men respectively, see above), but it even goes beyond David’s reckoning of potential troops in all Israel (1,100,000 men; cf. 1 Chr 21:5). Jehoshaphat clearly concentrated heavily on the growth of his military. Moreover, the Chronicler summarizes the section, “These were the ones who served the king *besides* those whom the king had placed in the fortified cities throughout all Judah” (v 19). In other words, this personal guard reported in 17:13b-18 goes beyond the troops already mentioned in v 2.

As he did with Asa, the Chronicler thus records an initial period of blessing for Jehoshaphat gained by his faithfulness to Yahweh. The reforms do not measure as greatly as Hezekiah’s complete resuscitation of the temple cult, yet the Chronicler does find them praiseworthy enough to accord Jehoshaphat great rewards, all of which describe how he began to strengthen himself over Israel (v 1). These include his ability to place forces in fortified cities throughout Judah and Ephraim (v 2), build fortresses and store cities in Judah (vv 12b-13a), and lastly amass a separate army for his own services (vv 13b-19). On top of all this, he gained a period of peace where he could collect tribute from neighboring countries without even going to war (vv 10-11). Surely the Chronicler’s Jehoshaphat

understood that he could achieve great things if he relied solely on Yahweh for his success. All these accomplishments give fuller expression to the isolated positive statement he found in 1 Kgs 22:43a, “He walked in all the way of Asa his father. He did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the eyes of Yahweh.”

### **5.2.2. *Collusion with Israel (2 Chr 18:1-19:3)***

The Chronicler uses the episode of Jehoshaphat’s joint venture with the northern king Ahab to Ramoth-gilead to illustrate how Jehoshaphat fell from this great position.<sup>55</sup> The account in 1 Kgs 22:1-40 focuses mainly on the final demise of Ahab, who eventually received judgment for his cruelty to Naboth as a fulfillment of the prophecy given to him by Elijah (cf. 1 Kgs 21). To direct the attention of this episode to the southern kingdom and Jehoshaphat, the Chronicler inserts his own introduction (2 Chr 18:1-2) and conclusion (19:1-3) along with some modifications to the text itself. The Chronicler’s version of the story shows how Jehoshaphat got into trouble when he gave into temptation, yet got out when he finally relied upon Yahweh.

Many have noted the Chronicler’s obvious disapproval of Jehoshaphat’s decision to join Ahab on his military campaign. Jehu’s rebuke to the southern king after he barely made it back alive makes this clear, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate Yahweh? Because of this, wrath has gone out from Yahweh” (19:2). The references to the northern kingdom as “wicked” and “those who hate Yahweh” stem from their idolatrous practices initiated in Jeroboam’s reign (2 Chr 11:14-15). The Chronicler condemns them on such an account in Abijah’s speech (13:4-12) and also makes the northern kings a negative

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<sup>55</sup> McKenzie (“Jehoshaphat,” 305-308) argues persuasively that the Chronicler borrowed this episode from the books of Kings and not a shared source as argued by A. G. Auld, “Prophets Shared—but Recycled,” in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 19-28.

paradigm that causes later southern kings to stumble after Jehoshaphat's death (see Chapter 4). Even Jehoshaphat receives the Chronicler's praise for abstaining from the northerners' idolatry (17:3-4), though this rebuke condemns him now for joining them. The word אהב ("love") in 19:2 stresses Jehoshaphat's sense of loyalty to Ahab's cause.<sup>56</sup>

The Chronicler's insertion in 18:1 explains how Jehoshaphat turned from a pious reformer to an accomplice of the wicked northern kingdom ("... and he made a marriage alliance with Ahab"). The statement in the first half of the verse, "Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor...", appeared earlier in 17:5 to summarize Jehoshaphat's rapid growth in military forces (vv 2, 13b-19), outposts (vv 2, 12), and wealth (vv 5, 11, 13a) by trusting only in Yahweh (vv 3-4), which should have sufficed to confirm that his God would help him achieve further exploits. In that same context, the Chronicler described the effect that Yahweh's massive blessing had on Jehoshaphat, "And his heart (לבו) became high (גבה)" (v 6), an expression that most often refers to a king's sinful pride (cf. 26:16; 32:25-26). However, he then qualified it with the phrase "in the ways of Yahweh" (v 6a) to say that Jehoshaphat had confidence because he trusted in his God. The various cult reforms that Jehoshaphat subsequently performed demonstrate this (vv 6b-9).

In contrast, the statement in 18:1 tells a different story, one that does not explain away Jehoshaphat's "riches and honor" again with news of Jehoshaphat's piety. Instead, it illustrates how the temptation seized him. As a comparison, we may note how the

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<sup>56</sup> Knoppers ("Reform and Regression," 512-513) argues that the Chronicler has used the word אהב in the same vein as the formulaic language of diplomacy found in various ANE treaties to emphasize the close bond depicted between Jehoshaphat and Ahab. See also W. L. Moran, "Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 77-87. Knoppers also notes the same language in 2 Chr 18:3, "You and I are as one, your people and my people as well." He rightly criticizes Myers for labeling it a "mild rebuke"; cf. Myers, *II Chronicles*, 107.

Chronicler introduced Asa's first war report in the same way at 14:7, "Now Asa had an army of..." Both 14:7 and 18:1 begin with the same grammatical construction (וַיְהִי ל־) to show the accumulated blessing that could give each king false hope (see also 26:11, 16). Whereas Asa trusted in his army after he had built his defenses (14:5-6), he still passed his initial test against Zerah and his opponent's larger army (vv 7-14).<sup>57</sup> Jehoshaphat, in a similar vein, received massive wealth and international recognition (vv 10-11) as a reward for his various cult reforms (vv 6b-9). An alliance with the opportunistic northern king Ahab presumably would have helped him gain more of this prestige, which provides the link between the two statements in 17:5 and 18:1. Jehoshaphat's growing riches and honor, blessings from Yahweh for his pious devotion, led him to seek more of it through political alliances.<sup>58</sup> Going beyond his northern border of Ephraim (cf. 2 Chr 17:2), his new pact would extend his political reach to at least Samaria and possibly (if successful in the war) Ramoth-gilead in 2 Chr 18.

In this light, the Chronicler may have also patterned Jehoshaphat's careless mistake after David's census (cf. 1 Chr 21). While Yahweh blessed both kings with massive armies for their devotion, the blessing also distracted each king from giving the temple cult their complete attention. Additionally, deeper into Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, the northern king entices (סוֹת) him to commit a sin in joining him in the war campaign to Ramoth-gilead (18:2), similar to the way an adversarial figure enticed (סוֹת) David to send Joab out to number his troops (cf. 1 Chr 21). Lastly, both rectify the disaster that arose

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<sup>57</sup> Again, the idea that the Chronicler has modeled Jehoshaphat's reign after Asa's supports the parallel between 14:7 and 18:1. See Dillard, "Jehoshaphat," 18, and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 247.

<sup>58</sup> The books of Kings, of course, accuse Solomon of this very same crime; cf. 1 Kgs 11.



from their sin by devoting themselves once again to the cult.<sup>59</sup> The Chronicler showed David's great temptation to build a large army and extend his dominion at the expense of work towards the temple and now these same literary features express that particular assessment for Jehoshaphat.

As a final note, we may point out how the time marker "after some years (לקץ (שנים)" in 18:2 strengthens this thematic link between Jehoshaphat's period of blessing and his careless decision. Again, as the Chronicler did with Asa in marking certain years of his reign, so he makes clear that he moves from one illustrative episode to the next by noting the passage of time. He has employed this literary technique at several important transitions in the reigns of other kings as well (cf. 2 Chr 24:17; 32:1; 35:20). Jehoshaphat, in the Chronicler's framework, has turned from the reforms he pursued "in the third year of his reign" (v 7) to seek further gains through different means, an alliance with the northerners.

Surprisingly enough, the Chronicler never makes the point that Jehoshaphat ever acted impiously during the war itself, which locates his guilt even more squarely on his political alliance with Ahab. Several features may be considered. As a first note, Jehoshaphat still did not seek the Baals at all in this episode, but insisted on seeking (דרש) a word from Yahweh (18:4-7 // 1 Kgs 22:5-8; cf. 17:3-4; 19:3). His behavior resembles David's when he fought off the Philistines after he had taken Jerusalem (1 Chr 14:10, 14).<sup>60</sup> Secondly, the Chronicler modifies the text later so that Jehoshaphat eventually relied on Yahweh as he cried out in battle and so the latter came to help him (18:31).<sup>61</sup> Other

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<sup>59</sup> See Chapter 2.2.2-3. David not only built an altar after the census (1 Chr 21:26-22:1), but made vast preparations for Solomon's final construction of the temple (1 Chr 22-29).

<sup>60</sup> In this sense, the words דרש (2 Chr 18) and שאל (1 Chr 14) are synonyms.

<sup>61</sup> Without the insertion, Jehoshaphat's cry simply makes him look like a coward in 1 Kgs 22:32.

instances of this “crying out” theme in Chronicles occur before the danger becomes so intense, but its presence here still puts Jehoshaphat in a positive light as one who trusted in Yahweh for deliverance.<sup>62</sup> Third, the Chronicler concludes the war report with Jehoshaphat’s return to his home in Jerusalem “in peace” according to Micaiah’s prophecy (19:1; cf. 18:16).<sup>63</sup> Fourthly, even after the seer Hanani rebuked Jehoshaphat for his foolishness, he still commended the king for his earlier work on the cult and his overall inclination to seek (דַּרַּשׁ) God (19:3). The use of דַּרַּשׁ could allude to Jehoshaphat’s reforms in 17:6b-9 (cf. v 4), but likely refers even more specifically to his resolve to inquire (דַּרַּשׁ) of Yahweh at the beginning of the campaign (18:4, 6).

The similarities between Asa’s and Jehoshaphat’s reigns further reveal the folly of the latter’s decision. Both kings received blessing in the form of building projects and armies in addition to peace in the land for their early piety. However, whereas Asa turned to Yahweh in the face of a sudden crisis, Jehoshaphat pursued more blessing through an alliance with the worst of possible partners when he had no need of one.

### ***5.2.3. Another Rise to International Acclaim (2 Chr 19:4-20:30)***

The second half of Jehoshaphat’s reign shows him again reach international acclaim only to spoil it one more time through a joint venture with the northern kingdom. As he did with Asa, the Chronicler reports a second set of reforms for Jehoshaphat that surpasses the first in terms of scope and substance. Whereas Jehoshaphat put much energy into fortifying cities with armed troops all throughout Judah and even as far north as some cities in Ephraim (cf. 17:2, 12-19), he executed cult reforms only in the cities of Judah (vv 6b-9). In

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<sup>62</sup> The word for cry out here (זָעַק) occurs also in 1 Chr 5:20; 2 Chr 20:9; 32:20. A bi-form (צָעַק) occurs at 13:14.

<sup>63</sup> Knoppers, “Reform and Regression,” 512.

the second set of reforms, on the other hand, Jehoshaphat went out to the people “from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim” and brought them back to “Yahweh, the God of their fathers” (19:4). The second expression aligns his mission with David’s in 1 Chr 11-16, where he sought to rally all Israel to worship Yahweh in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Chr 12:18).<sup>64</sup> The Chronicler frequently centers major cult reforms on this divine title, which makes Jehoshaphat’s work here part of that same class.<sup>65</sup> The first expression evokes the very common geographic designation, “from Dan to Beersheba,” found throughout the Hebrew Bible, only this time with a southern orientation.<sup>66</sup> It suggests that Jehoshaphat sought to gather as many people as possible from his constituency to participate; hence, it also touches upon the “all Israel” theme from the united monarchy.

The Chronicler has also patterned Jehoshaphat’s installation of judges in 19:5-11 after David’s contributions to the temple. First of all, both renew their focus on the cult after a lapse where they incur guilt (נשא).<sup>67</sup> Whereas David rectified his guilt from the census (cf. 21:3) by constructing an altar (vv 26-27) and starting more extensive temple preparations (1 Chr 22-29), Jehoshaphat saw his guilt and so commanded these judges to warn the people so that neither they nor the judges themselves would incur guilt (נשא, v 10).

Secondly, Jehoshaphat’s final charge to the judges resembles David’s exhortation to Solomon to build the temple in several ways. Just as David urged Solomon to devote his

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<sup>64</sup> See Chapter 2.1.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. 1 Chr 12:18; 29:18-20; 2 Chr 11:16; 15:12; 29:5; 34:32. Though the Chronicler states that Jehoshaphat sought “the God of his father” in 17:4, it likely refers to how he had a positive start like his biological father Asa (see also 20:32). That is to say, it does not have the same meaning as the common title for Yahweh.

<sup>66</sup> For more on this Chronistic expression, cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 144.

<sup>67</sup> For the cultic implications of the root נשא, see the frequent occurrence of this verb and its nominal cognate in Lev 4-6.

attention to temple construction with a “whole heart” (1 Chr 28:9; 29:19),<sup>68</sup> so Jehoshaphat charged Levites, priests, and various heads of families to adjudicate the conflicts of the people with a “whole heart” (v 9). Also, as Jehoshaphat told them, “Be strong (חזק) and do it (עשה), and may Yahweh be with (עם) the good(!),” so David had earlier encouraged Solomon to “Be strong (חזק) and do it (עשה)” because Yahweh was with (עם) him (cf. 28:10, 20). Lastly, both Jehoshaphat and David reminded their respective hearers in these same passages that they would have many people, including priests, Levites, and other officials, to support them in their tasks (v 11; cf. 1 Chr 28:21). Thus, the Chronicler’s Jehoshaphat charged the judges in ways similar to how David charged Solomon.

Despite all the above allusions to the cult, the text never mentions measures involving the temple itself. Even the short accounts of Abijah and Jotham report more work on the temple than the depiction of Jehoshaphat’s reign thus far. Moreover, all the great reforms discussed earlier have brought people *to the temple in Jerusalem*,<sup>69</sup> but Jehoshaphat still has not done this. His move to disseminate the law in 17:7-9 certainly reflects positively on his reign, yet nowhere else does the Chronicler praise obedience to the law by itself (i.e. apart from reforms directly related to the temple).<sup>70</sup> His initiative to put judges in Judah and especially in Jerusalem vigorously reinforced his earlier action from the first reform, making sure that the people did in fact keep the law. However, his earlier sinful alliance with Ahab required at least some attention to the temple, the place where Yahweh heard penitent prayers (cf. 7:14-15). Instead of instructing the people how

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<sup>68</sup> For the Chronicler’s use of expressions involving the heart, see chapter 3.1.1.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Solomon (2 Chr 7), Asa (15:9-15), Hezekiah (2 Chr 29-30).

<sup>70</sup> See discussion later in this chapter on Amaziah and Josiah.

to avoid the wrath (קצף) of Yahweh (19:10), he needed to remove Yahweh's wrath (קצף) from himself (19:2).

With this in mind, the second war report (20:1-30) uncovers the test facing Jehoshaphat to see how much he relied on the temple practices for Judah's safety in the land.<sup>71</sup> Abijah had passed his test because he had a fully functioning temple cult (2 Chr 13). Asa had passed his first test because he relied on Yahweh (via the temple dedication promise in 7:14) when Zerah approached (14:7-14), but failed the second because he relied on the king of Aram and despoiled the temple treasures (16:1-9). Hezekiah outperformed all others on his test because he put all his hope on Yahweh's presence in the renovated temple (32:1-23). For Jehoshaphat's test, the Chronicler shows how he suddenly demonstrated a heavy reliance upon the temple in at least four different ways.

First, he depicts Jehoshaphat as an otherwise weak king (i.e. aside from his faith in Yahweh). Once Jehoshaphat heard news of the great multitude's penetration to Engedi, he grew afraid because he did not have the capability to withstand such a large force (20:3a). This apprehension emerged also at the end of his prayer when he said, "For we are powerless before this great multitude coming against us and we do not know what to do..." (v 11). These details come as a surprise especially since Jehoshaphat had accumulated so many troops at the beginning of his reign in addition to all the fortified cities he had built up. Rather than rely on these earlier blessings, the Chronicler contends that Jehoshaphat chose to make himself and the nation even weaker by proclaiming a fast for all Judah (v

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<sup>71</sup> See the discussion of this category "war as test" suggested by Japhet in Chapter 1.

3c).<sup>72</sup> Throughout the account, the Chronicler attributes to him only passive actions such as setting his face to seek Yahweh (v 3b), calling upon Yahweh to judge the enemy (vv 6-12), bowing his head in submission (v18), and finally leading the faithful gathering in worship as they went out to meet the enemy (vv 20-23). With these actions, Jehoshaphat fully embraced the fact that he could not win this battle through his own might.

Second, the Chronicler portrays Jehoshaphat as a king who relied completely on Yahweh's promise always to hear the prayers of his people in the temple (cf. 2 Chr 7:14). Jehoshaphat's immediate response upon news of the crisis, both to *seek* Yahweh and also to rally the people to do likewise, reflects this (20:3-4).<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, he offered up a prayer in the midst of the gathered assembly at the temple with phraseology reminiscent of the many crisis scenarios Solomon mentioned at the temple's dedication (esp. v 9; cf. 6:22-39). Klein notes that "pestilence" and "famine" come straight from the scenario depicted in 6:28, the "sword" could be an allusion to the defeat described in 6:24, and "disaster" could refer to any of the potential crises.<sup>74</sup>

The prayer used three rhetorical questions for greater argumentative effect (הלל in 20:6, 7, 12). The first praised Yahweh for his sovereignty as God in heaven and ruler over other kingdoms (v 6; cf. 6:18), while the second reminded Yahweh of the first moment he began to fulfill the promise of the land to Israel (v 7; cf. 6:5).<sup>75</sup> The many second person pronouns accentuated Yahweh's obligation to act on behalf of his people since he knew

<sup>72</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 787) calls the fast "the strongest expression of human soul-searching and complete surrender to God."

<sup>73</sup> The Chronicler uses the word בקש to describe the people's "seeking" as the prescription in 7:14. For Jehoshaphat, he uses the equally paradigmatic synonym דרש (see Chapter 1).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 287. Though many different interpretations have been suggested for שפוט, Klein suggests the emendation שטף ("flood") by metathesis.

<sup>75</sup> Knoppers ("Jerusalem at War in Chronicles," 66) notes how the prayer resembles David's farewell blessing (1 Chr 29:10-19) in these aspects.

Yahweh had the power to do so (v 6) and he initiated this covenantal relationship (v 7). After Jehoshaphat explained that they had built a sanctuary for Yahweh so that they could come to him in such critical times as this (vv 8-11), his third rhetorical question essentially called upon Yahweh to act according to his promise to come to their aid (v 12, “Will you not judge...?”).<sup>76</sup> His last words in the prayer made a play on a recurring theme at that temple dedication. While Yahweh had promised to keep his eyes open and ears attentive to the prayers made at the temple (7:15; see also 6:20, 40), Jehoshaphat declared that his (and the people’s) eyes were on Yahweh to act (20:12).

Third, the Chronicler illustrates how Jehoshaphat tried to take the temple service with him into battle. The spirit-inspired Jahaziel instructed him to go down against the enemy, but not to be afraid since Yahweh would win this battle for him and the people (vv 15-17). Even though obedience to this command took them away from the temple, Jehoshaphat led the army out with the singers in front. Kleinig notes how remarkable this would have been since the priests normally preceded the army in times of war with the sound of the trumpet and the ark in their midst.<sup>77</sup> Instead, the temple singers acted as the vanguard with a song of thanksgiving as their battle cry, “Give thanks to Yahweh, for his steadfast love endures forever” (v 21). This common refrain had appeared at several points in the united monarchy to celebrate Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness in establishing the temple (cf. 1 Chr 16:34, 41; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 6).<sup>78</sup> For 2 Chr 20, the singers praised Yahweh for staying true to his promise to hear their cry for help before they had even seen the

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<sup>76</sup> P. C. Beentjes (“Tradition and Transformation: Aspects of Innerbiblical Interpretation in 2 Chronicles 20,” *Bib* 74 [1993]: 258-268 [261-262]) points out the many Old Testament traditions from which the Chronicler draws to make this plea to God; cf. Deut 22:1-22; Num 20:14-21; Judg 11:14-18.

<sup>77</sup> Kleinig, *The Lord’s Song*, 177.

<sup>78</sup> See Chapter 2.1.3.

result. This recorded act attributes to Jehoshaphat the same level of faithfulness as David and Solomon at those critical times since he too saw the importance of the temple for Israel's safety.

Finally, the fourth way the Chronicler emphasizes Jehoshaphat's reliance on the temple comes through the full measure of blessings he received for his faithfulness. He first draws the correlation between the singing (i.e. at Jehoshaphat's command) and Yahweh's intervention, "And when they began to sing and praise, Yahweh set an ambush..." (v 22). This battle required no fighting from Judah since the divinely set ambush somehow caused the coalition of armies to attack each other to death (v 23).<sup>79</sup> The rewards continue in v 25 as they needed three days just to collect all the spoil from their defeated adversaries. Additionally, the joy of the people functions as another mark of blessing, similar to other high points in the Chronicler's history (v 27).<sup>80</sup> Lastly, the Chronicler states that the kingdom finally received rest from all of Judah's surrounding enemies (v 30). It is worth repeating that nothing like these rewards came to Jehoshaphat and the people after his judicial reform in 2 Chr 19:4-11. His faithfulness to the temple service merited the blessing.

As with the first set of reforms, the Chronicler shows how the divine terror (פחד) caused all the surrounding nations to honor Israel (20:29; cf. 17:10). This episode also illustrates how Jehoshaphat strengthened himself over Israel as the Chronicler set out to demonstrate at the outset of his reign (17:1). The southeastern coalition attempted to challenge Israel's viability in the land, but their failure to do so sent a message to the

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<sup>79</sup> The Chronicler does not emphasize so much who performed the ambush, but that it was brought about by divine intervention; cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 291-292.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. David (1 Chr 12:41; 15:25; 29:22), Solomon (2 Chr 7:10), Hezekiah (2 Chr 30:25).



remainder of the surrounding nations not to attempt anything similar. Jehoshaphat won this position for the nation through his faithfulness to Yahweh.<sup>81</sup>

#### ***5.2.4. Jehoshaphat Stumbles Again (2 Chr 20:35-37)***

The inclusion of this last episode allows the Chronicler to emphasize the irony in Jehoshaphat's reign once again. Though he strengthened himself over (geographic) Israel through his devotion to Yahweh, he sought to stretch his political reach with the help of (wicked) Israel. The temporal marker at the beginning of v 35 ("After this...") links the commercial venture with the successful war report before it.<sup>82</sup> The episode itself reflects much more negatively on Jehoshaphat than the parallel account in 1 Kgs 22:48-49, where his attempt to obtain gold in Ophir failed simply because his ships crashed, but the report gives no theological explanation. The northern king Ahaziah offered to send servants to go with Jehoshaphat's servants on another outing, but the latter refused and the obscure record ends there.

The Chronicler, on the other hand, explains how the shipwreck occurred because Jehoshaphat constructed the ships with Ahaziah. While problems may exist in ascertaining how the event may have actually transpired,<sup>83</sup> the Chronicler shows his disapproval of Jehoshaphat's actions with two key words. For the first, whereas the Chronicler uses strong covenantal language to describe Jehoshaphat's bond with Ahab in 2 Chr 18:1-3 (see above), he describes his alliance with Ahab's son Ahaziah with the one word **חָבַר** (piel and hithpael, "to make an alliance with") in each of the three verses in 20:35-37. The

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<sup>81</sup> Note how the Chronicler says "the kingdom of Jehoshaphat" (not Judah or Israel) in 20:30 since it was his faithful actions in the crisis that merited Yahweh's favor.

<sup>82</sup> See also 18:2 and the discussion above.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 802.

prominence of this word, which does not appear in the 1 Kgs 22 parallel, reveals the Chronicler's negative evaluation of the event since it shows that Jehoshaphat continued to have improper relations with the northern kingdom.

The second key word creates a lexical link with past and future events to condemn Jehoshaphat since he united himself with one “who acted wickedly (רשע)” (v 35).<sup>84</sup> The Chronicler illustrates this same problem earlier in Jehoshaphat's reign when the prophet asked him, “Should you help the wicked (רשע)...?” (19:2) As we noted in Chapter 4, the northern kings serve as a negative paradigm for Judah's kings immediately following, a theme the Chronicler emphasizes after Jehoshaphat's mistake. Later, he uses the verb רשע again in the reign of the southern king Ahaziah to describe how much the northern kingdom eventually influenced Judah, “He (i.e. Ahaziah) also walked in the ways of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor in acting wickedly (רשע)” (22:3).

The thematic (חבר) and lexical (רשע) links of this episode to Jehoshaphat's sinful alliance with Ahab demonstrate the Chronicler's aim to uncover this trend for this king's entire reign. Though Jehoshaphat had reached a position of international fame through remarkable piety on two separate occasions, he squandered those gains through his greedy attempts to expand to greater heights with the help of wicked northern monarchs.

### **5.3. Joash (2 Chr 23-24)**

For the reign of Joash, the Chronicler needed to explain how Judah could suffer an attack from the Aramaeans at the end of his career in light of all his great cult reforms (cf. 2 Kgs 12). Even his own servants conspired against him and murdered him (2 Kgs 12:20-21).

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<sup>84</sup> See Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 281, for this translation. The Hebrew הוא הרשיע לעשות has ambiguity and some translations render Jehoshaphat as the one who “acts wickedly”; cf. NASB.

Though 2 Kings 12:2 claims that Joash acted faithfully all his days because the priest Jehoiada instructed him, the Chronicler records Jehoiada's death in the middle of his reign so that the Aramaean attack happens because Joash apostatized in the priest's absence (2 Chr 24:17-24). As Klein has already noted, the Chronicler fills the story with several particularly ironic details concerning Joash's death.<sup>85</sup> Many of Klein's points highlight Joash's ingratitude toward Jehoiada, who had restored rule to his hand as the Davidic king. The analysis below will explore this irony further in the way the Chronicler describes both of their actions (i.e. for Jehoiada and Joash) with respect to the cult. The account first focuses on Jehoiada who, though a priest, acted as faithfully as any king in the history of the monarchy.

### ***5.3.1. Jehoiada's Revival of the Kingdom (2 Chr 23)***

For the telling of Jehoiada's coup, the Chronicler uses much of the same storyline as 2 Kgs 11, but the purposes of each differ. In the latter, the priest focused mainly on putting a Davidide back on Judah's throne. It tells how Athaliah began her "reign" after her son Ahaziah had died and she murdered all but one of the royal descendants (v 1).<sup>86</sup> In her seventh year, Jehoiada mobilized two segments of the royal guard so that they could *stealthily* create a safe environment for the young prince near the house of Yahweh and the house of the king (vv 4-9). After they crowned Joash (v 12) and executed Athaliah (v 16), the scene comes to a climax with a covenant between the king and the people (v 17), a renewal of their relationship.

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<sup>85</sup> R. W. Klein, "The Ironic End of Joash in Chronicles," in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* (eds. R. A. Argall, et al.; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), 116-127 (126-127).

<sup>86</sup> Though neither the books of Kings nor Chronicles views her reign as legitimate; cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 828.

The Chronicler's Jehoiada does many of these same things, but he did them so that he could set up the temple cult once again. We have already seen how the Chronicler kept to certain key thematic elements in the reforms of David and Hezekiah when they revived the cult after periods of abuse and disuse, most importantly the gathering of all Israel and the preparation of the temple.<sup>87</sup> Of these recurring themes, we may first note how he has Jehoiada rally the people to participate. Instead of two small brigades, he directed five military commanders<sup>88</sup> who in turn gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah and also the other leaders (רָאשֵׁי הָאֲבוֹת) of "Israel" to come to Jerusalem (2 Chr 21:1b-2). Williamson avers that the reference to Israel in v 2 must refer to the southern kingdom, but it also seems likely that the Chronicler uses this term to give the appearance of a larger group (cf. 24:5 and the discussion below).<sup>89</sup> Other phrases used later in this particular episode also imply that many people took part in the coup such as "all the assembly" (v 3), "all the people" (vv 5, 6, 10, 16), and "all Judah" (v 8). The account in 2 Kgs 11 may mention "all the people of the land" rejoicing over the work the select group had already done (v 14 // 2 Chr 23:13), but the Chronicler emphasizes their greater involvement in the earlier stages of the process.

As a second feature, the Chronicler modifies the text to show how Jehoiada made conditions right to reestablish the worship of Yahweh at the temple. To begin with, he placed the Levites back in their proper role.<sup>90</sup> After he gathered all of them from abroad (v

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<sup>87</sup> Of course, all good kings do this in some sense; cf. Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>88</sup> The text does not address so much whether the commanders themselves are Levites (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 315) or not (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 829-830), but that this military personnel gathered a larger group of Levites for the operation.

<sup>89</sup> Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*, 102.

<sup>90</sup> The Chronicler shows the importance of making this a priority for David and Hezekiah also; cf. 1 Chr 15 and 2 Chr 29, respectively. See Chapter 3.4.1.1.

2), he stationed the priests and Levites into three different companies, one for gatekeepers, a second to guard the king's house, and the third at the gate of the Foundation (vv 4-5a). While each of these would have provided protection for the prince, the employment of the Levites and priests in this role assured that the temple received proper care in the process. The gatekeepers in particular had the aptitude for both military action and also maintaining reverence for the temple.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, Jehoiada told the Levites to put to death whoever comes "towards this *house*" (v 7, cf. "ranks" in 2 Kgs 11:8) in order to guard the sanctity of the temple in addition to the life of the king. In contrast to the Levites, Jehoiada made sure that *the general masses* stayed in the court so that the sacred precincts would remain holy (vv 5b-6).

Further to this point, Jehoiada's restoration of the kingship to the Davidides also functions as a necessary element to this reform. In 23:3 he urged the people, "Behold, the son of the king! Let him reign as Yahweh spoke concerning the sons of David!" As we noted above, the version in 2 Kgs 11 sought to show the restored relationship between the Davidic king and the people, yet the Chronicler goes further with this statement in 2 Chr 23:3 based on the broader context. In Chronicles, Yahweh did not give kingship to the Davidides for the sole purpose of governing the people, but to build and maintain a sacred dwelling place for Israel's God.<sup>92</sup> This thesis has shown how the Chronicler assessed every king primarily on this criterion. The Chronicler had just illustrated how Jehoram (2 Chr 21) and Ahaziah (2 Chr 22) received judgment for neglecting the temple cult (cf. Chapter 4.2), so Jehoiada's plea to the people here must have had a view to rectifying the wrong of those

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. J. W. Wright, "Guarding the Gates: 1 Chronicles 26:1-19 and the Roles of Gatekeepers in Chronicles," *JSOT* (1990): 69-81.

<sup>92</sup> See my comments on Abijah's speech (13:4-12) in Chapter 3.2.1

previous kings.<sup>93</sup> Of course governance over the people had some role also, but such a theme in Chronicles lies subordinate to the maintenance of the temple.<sup>94</sup> Jehoiada rallied the people around a Davidic king who could revive the orthodox temple cult in the life of the community.

Even after the takeover was complete, the Chronicler's Jehoiada continued to make other conditions right for worship at the temple. In 23:18, he assigned the oversight of the temple to the Levites and priests and stationed them there to offer up burnt offerings with rejoicing and singing, all according to the precedent set by David. In v 19, he set the gatekeepers at the gates of the temple so that no unclean person could enter. Both of these actions allowed for the most basic temple practices to commence, replacing the Baal cult that had prevailed until this point. The temple may not have had many functions at this moment in the story, but the Chronicler has shown how Jehoiada effectively gave it new life after one of the most idolatrous periods in the nation's history.<sup>95</sup>

As a third and final feature, the Chronicler portrays Jehoiada's takeover as a war victory, a reward that came not only to the revivalist kings but also to every other faithful monarch. Several details in 2 Kgs 11 already form this picture somewhat since the divisions assisting Jehoiada had weapons (vv 8, 11), they executed Athaliah (v 16), destroyed the Baal cult including its priest (v 18), and the city lay quiet (שָׁקֵט) afterwards (v 20).<sup>96</sup> Before all these details, the Chronicler states that Jehoiada "strengthened himself (הִתְחַזֵּק)," a word that has characterized only kings in the process of tightening their grip on

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<sup>93</sup> See my comments on 21:7 in Chapter 4.2.1

<sup>94</sup> The Chronicler makes this point in Yahweh's appearance to Solomon at Gibeon. See the discussion in Chapter 3.1.1.

<sup>95</sup> See De Vries, "Dynastic Endangerment," 59-77.

<sup>96</sup> For discussion of the word שָׁקֵט, see my earlier commentary on 14:1-6 (5.1.1).

the kingdom (2 Chr 23:1).<sup>97</sup> Jehoiada's takeover bears the marks of a worship service insofar as he armed the Levites that he brought in for the occasion with weapons (v 7). Additionally, the singers were present at the capture of Athaliah (v 13), a feature similar to Jehoshaphat's victory over the southeastern coalition (cf. 2 Chr 20:22). Along the same lines, the Chronicler maintains the rejoicing (רָגַז) of all the people of the land, a common feature of both cultic observances and victory celebrations (23:21 // 2 Kgs 11:20).<sup>98</sup>

If Jehoiada were a king in Judah, he would have undoubtedly ranked among the greatest in the Chronicler's history. After a very low point for the temple cult, he rallied the people back to it, organized the priests and Levites, and destroyed the Baal cult. Perhaps most importantly, he put the rightful Davidic king back on the throne so that the latter could pursue the temple reforms further. The report that Jehoiada supplied Joash with two wives accentuates how much the priest did for the king (24:3). Athaliah had destroyed most of the royal family (23:10), but Jehoiada did well to rebuild this institution in addition to restoring the temple service.

### ***5.3.2. Joash's Eager Reforms (2 Chr 24:1-16)***

For the early part of Joash's reign, the Chronicler portrays him as a reformer of the cult, much like the version in 2 Kgs 12. Both accounts tell the same basic story. Joash gathered the clergy to collect money from the people so that they (i.e. the clergy) could repair the temple. When they did not act as quickly as Joash desired, the king rebuked them, then commanded that the reforms be carried out in another way. A chest was made

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<sup>97</sup> For רָגַז in the hithpael, see the above discussion on 2 Chr 17:1 (Chapter 5.2.1).

<sup>98</sup> For discussion of joy as an integral aspect of celebrations in Chronicles, see discussion in Chapter 3.4.1.2.

so that people could give money to fund the restoration of the temple. In each account, Joash appeared as a king concerned to restore the cult to life after a period of abuse.

At first look, the Chronicler goes beyond the positive depiction in 2 Kgs 12 by attributing to Joash many of the qualities of an eager reformer. The transition at 2 Chr 24:4, “And it came about afterwards,” links the reforms to his enthronement, implying that Joash wanted to perform them as soon as he could.<sup>99</sup> Also in this opening verse, the Chronicler uses another expression with the “heart” (עַם־לֵב) to emphasize the king’s enthusiasm.<sup>100</sup> In his command to the Levites and priests, he gave them the monumental task of gathering money from “all Israel”, an idealized group of people unmentioned since the division of the kingdom in 2 Chr 10.<sup>101</sup> Joash told them to act quickly, but when they did not act as quickly as he desired, he then summoned the chief of them all (i.e. Jehoiada) and demanded to know why he had not pursued this (vv 5-6). He also showed an awareness of the need for this urgency with the explanation that the temple did not gradually fall into a period of disuse, but that the wicked Athaliah had broken into it and used its sacred objects for the Baals (v 7). In contrast, the report in 2 Kgs 12:6 that the priests had made no repairs by the twenty-third year of Joash’s reign reveals that the king either gave them the command late or waited a while to check up on them. Nevertheless, these undesired results did not hinder the Chronicler’s Joash, but he appears to pursue an even better plan right away in vv 9-14.

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<sup>99</sup> The preposition *אחרי־כן* does not link to Jehoiada’s procurement of two wives for him and his fathering many children (v 3). The Chronicler places this note by his insertion “all the days of Jehoiada the priest” in v 2 to emphasize how much Jehoiada did for the new king. The unit 24:1-3 serves as a conclusion to Jehoiada’s work on behalf of the king detailed in 23:1-21, not an introduction to the following material. Reports of more wives often appear out of sequence; cf. 1 Chr 14:3-7 and the discussion there.

<sup>100</sup> For the Chronicler’s distinct use of “heart”, see discussion on 2 Chr 1:11 in Chapter 3.1.1.

<sup>101</sup> A lone exception must be made for the borrowed occurrence in 18:16.



Another look at Joash's urgent push to implement reforms, however, reveals that the king perhaps acted *too* eagerly. If the Chronicler has indeed depicted Joash as starting the reforms right away, then the same picture must have also shown him as very young since he became king at the age of seven (v 1).<sup>102</sup> In this light, the young king could hardly justifiably rebuke Jehoiada for not seeking (דרש) a particular task from the Levites (v 6) since the latter had just solicited their help in grand fashion to make him king; the use of דרש would make this far too serious of an offense. Furthermore, Joash appears to explain to the priest the necessity of these reforms as if he did not already know (v 7). The Chronicler never insinuates that the priests or Levites (including Jehoiada) ever did anything wrong,<sup>103</sup> but rather the emphatic syntax in v 5 (וְאַתֶּם תַּמְהָרוּ לַדָּבָר, “and *you* shall do the matter quickly”) hints that Joash acted too eagerly with his demand.

The Chronicler's portrayal of Joash's shortcoming in vv 4-7 resembles David's struggle through adversity when he failed to bring the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem because he did not adequately use the Levites in the transfer (cf. 1 Chr 14). This comparison explains why the Chronicler would not also include a rebuke against Joash for being too hasty. Such an explanation has no place here since he wants to praise the king for his sense of urgency, just as he does with David earlier and also later with the eager Hezekiah who did not comply with all the rules (cf. 30:19). The Chronicler's shaping of the episode illustrates how Joash acted faithfully, even if not perfectly. At the same time, it

<sup>102</sup> It is difficult to know if the Chronicler wishes his readers to picture Jehoiada as in his nineties at this point. He certainly does not want them to do this kind of math elsewhere. For example, was Ahaz eleven years old when Hezekiah was born? Compare 2 Chr 28:1 with 29:1.

<sup>103</sup> The statement that “the Levites did not act quickly” in 5b cannot be a criticism of the Levites. As with the people, the Chronicler typically makes their compliance a reward to faithful kings. See the discussion of “all Israel” in Chapter 6.1.1. De Vries (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 345) and Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 320) claim that vv 5b-6 are a late intrusion, but see the arguments in Dillard (*2 Chronicles*, 189-190) and Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 339-340).

also adumbrates the king's ingratitude later. Already we see how the young king bossed around the proven priest. Not only will he fail to achieve the same level of success as Jehoiada here (the priest will still get most of the credit), he will completely disavow every support that Jehoiada had put in place for him to succeed (see below).

The Chronicler's depiction of Joash's second attempt to restore the temple (vv 9-14) reveals the inadequacy of the king's first attempt, validating the reluctance of the priests and Levites. Similar to the other great reforms in the Chronicler's history, Joash brought the people in towards the temple in his second attempt rather than leave them in their scattered cities (v 10). The Chronicler has already shown this difference between the initial reforms of Asa and Jehoshaphat and their later improved reforms. Additionally, he pictures this attempt as remarkably successful with several of his common themes. All the officials and all the people participated, came joyfully (שמח), and gave in great abundance (לרב) (vv 10-11).<sup>104</sup> With this money, the workers had the capability to repair the temple (חזק, v 12), strengthen it (אמץ, v 13), and make utensils with the leftover money for the service and the different offerings (v 14).<sup>105</sup> This phase of the repairs prospered in 2 Kgs 12:9-16 also, but that account notes the various items that the people's money could not provide (v 13). Whereas the Chronicler's version focuses completely on the benefits to the temple at this time, the account in 2 Kgs 12 records how the workmen and the priests received the compensation due to them (vv 14-16).

Although the Chronicler considers Joash faithful for initiating these reforms (v 4, 8), he has still made Jehoiada stand more prominently in them. While the former fades into

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<sup>104</sup> See similar features for the Passover observance by Hezekiah (2 Chr 30) in Chapter 3.4.1.2.

<sup>105</sup> For the importance of the utensils, see discussion for the last four kings in Chapter 4.5.

the background (his name does not appear after v 4 until v 22, but the Chronicler refers to him simply as “the king” in vv 6, 8, 12, 14, 17), Jehoiada’s name appears several times in an especially positive light (cf. vv 12, 14, 15). The mention in v 14 even links the ongoing success with his administration and the later reference in v 15 praises him for his lifelong work towards God and the temple. The Chronicler’s particular nuancing of this sequence of events in vv 4-16 allows him to acknowledge how Joash could be considered a faithful king, yet also pinpoint exactly what enabled his faithfulness (i.e. the supervision of the more faithful Jehoiada).

### ***5.3.3. Joash’s Fall after the Death of Jehoiada (24:17-27)***

For the period after Jehoiada’s death, the Chronicler describes Joash’s apostasy using many of his favorite terms and themes in v 18. First, he explains that the officials in Judah came to him and persuaded him to abandon (עָזַב) the house of Yahweh (see also vv 20, 24). Second, while other kings would serve foreign gods later in the Chronicler’s history, Joash became the first to do it (cf. Amaziah in 25:14-15; Ahaz in 28:22-23). Third, the Chronicler describes Joash’s misbehavior as guilt (אָשָׁם) that provoked Yahweh’s wrath (קָצַף). David had brought Israel under the wrath of Yahweh for his guilt regarding the illicit census much earlier (1 Chr 21:3; cf. 27:24).<sup>106</sup> Though the Chronicler does not give specific details of what Joash did wrong, he portrays him as one of Judah’s worst kings after Jehoiada dies.

To accentuate the weight of Joash’s rebelliousness, the Chronicler inserts reports of prophecies that gave him chances to turn back. Japhet explains that the role of prophets

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<sup>106</sup> This same word pair occurs in the reign of Jehoshaphat also, who charged his judges to warn people so that they would not incur guilt and subsequently suffer wrath (2 Chr 19:10).

takes two forms in Chronicles, either as a call to repentance or as an explanation of an event that has already occurred (or will occur).<sup>107</sup> The group of prophets in v 19 fulfills the first role, yet Joash refuses to listen even to them. In v 20, the Chronicler tells how Jehoiada's son Zechariah gave a message inspired by the spirit of God that fit more in the second category, "Why do you transgress the commandments of Yahweh so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken (עֲזַבְתֶּם) Yahweh, he has forsaken (עֲזַבְתִּי) you." The Chronicler uses the formula in the second sentence throughout his history to describe a king's attitude toward the temple cult (cf. 1 Chr 28:9; 2 Chr 12:5; 15:2). Not even Jehoiada's son, however, could turn Joash back to Yahweh, but the king ordered him to be stoned in the courts of the temple (vv 21-22). The Chronicler links this offense to Joash's assassination in v 25.

Before this final punishment on Joash himself, the Chronicler illustrates the more considerable consequences on the nation for his cultic offenses. Though the account in 2 Kgs 12:17-18 claims that Joash could find relief from the Aramaean attack by giving Hazael sacred objects from the temple, the Chronicler asserts that the assailants penetrated all the way to Jerusalem and sent the spoil to Damascus themselves. He suggests that Joash tried to withstand the Aramaeans with his own numerous (לָרַב מְאֹד) army, but Yahweh gave them into the hand of their much smaller adversary, "because Judah had forsaken (עֲזַבְתֶּם) Yahweh..." (v 24). The Chronicler had used the adverb לָרַב to describe the numerous people that other kings of Judah had gathered to the temple (cf. 15:9; 30:5), but here he asserts that Joash tried to gather a large army for his protection just as Asa (14:7) and

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<sup>107</sup> Japhet, *Ideology*, 178.

Jehoshaphat (17:2, 13b-19) before him.<sup>108</sup> The time marker in v 23, “And it came about at the end of the year...,” makes the firm connection between Joash’s idolatry and this punishment.

The Chronicler’s juxtaposition of Jehoiada’s tenure with Joash’s reign makes the irony clear. Jehoiada had done so much for the king so that he could succeed, from putting him on the throne to removing the northern kingdom’s influence with the Baal cult. Surprisingly, Joash rebuked Jehoiada once he started his first reforms as king, giving the impression that he could outdo the priest. Nevertheless, not only does the Chronicler vindicate Jehoiada by crediting him for the successful reform that was ostensibly under Joash’s supervision, he also illustrates how much the king indeed depended on him by describing Joash’s idolatrous actions after his death. Whereas Jehoiada brought quiet to the land and rejoicing to the people (23:21), Joash provoked foreign attack and an assassination from his own servants (24:23-26).

#### **5.4. Amaziah (2 Chr 25)**

Amaziah probably ranks the lowest among the Chronicler’s faithful kings who falter. Several scholars have observed the Chronicler’s division of his reign into a positive earlier period and a second negative period (cf. “After Amaziah came...” in 25:14) much like the reigns of the other kings I have put in this chapter, but they have overplayed how much the Chronicler praises him at the beginning (see below). While the Chronicler avers that Amaziah did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, he qualifies this praise with the caveat, “yet not with a whole heart (לבב שלם)” (2 Chr 25:2). As I have shown in earlier

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<sup>108</sup> One wonders when Joash accumulated a massive army. The two kings before him certainly had great losses in this regard. Once again the Chronicler downplays the importance of having a large army.

chapters, the Chronicler often describes temple faithfulness as a matter of the heart (cf. 1 Chr 28:9-10), which makes this criticism against Amaziah significant.<sup>109</sup> In fact, unlike all other kings judged at least partially faithful, the Chronicler does not even hint that Amaziah conducted any temple reforms during his reign. The Chronicler can categorize him as mildly faithful initially for the things he did not do, but then ultimately shows how he ironically behaved far worse when he did take action.

#### ***5.4.1. Amaziah's Superficially Positive Beginnings (2 Chr 25:1-13)***

In 2 Kgs 12:20-21, Amaziah became king after two royal servants assassinated his father Joash for seemingly no reason. Joash had proved himself worthy of the Judean kingship earlier by conducting many temple reforms and staying away from the wicked ways of the northern kingdom (cf. 2 Kgs 12:1-19). Hence, Amaziah could justifiably execute the conspirators once he had control of the kingdom (14:5). The same account also praises him for his obedience to the “Book of the Law of Moses” since he did not put to death also the conspirators’ sons (v 6). As a final positive note, v 7 tells how he defeated Edom so that he could add the city Sela to Judah’s southern frontier; Judah had squandered this dominion earlier in the days of Jehoram (cf. 8:20-22).

The Chronicler, on the other hand, places these events into a new context so that they do not appear nearly as positively. While the two conspirators deserved the death penalty in 2 Kgs 14 because they had murdered the great reforming king Joash, the Chronicler makes the assault against him an act of divine judgment for his wickedness. In other words, the conspiracy against Joash in Chronicles looks as warranted as the conspiracy against Athaliah before him (23:12-15) or even the conspiracy against Amaziah

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<sup>109</sup> For the Chronicler’s use of expressions involving the heart, see discussion of 2 Chr 1:11 in chapter 3.1.1.

himself later (25:27-28), with each plot presumably approved by the Chronicler for the stability it brought to a chaotic kingdom.<sup>110</sup> Additionally, Amaziah's strict adherence to the law does not resemble the positive behavior the Chronicler typically praises. It shows how the king has not gone too far, but such an accolade falls far short of the acclamation he routinely gives other kings for the preparation of the temple and the gathering of the people in large numbers for worship there. The Chronicler does not condemn Amaziah's behavior here, but categorizes it as half-hearted piety (cf. v 2).<sup>111</sup>

As for Amaziah's battle against the Edomites, the Chronicler expands this episode with much more detail to present it as another example of the king's feeble devotion. In v 5, he assembled Judah not for reforms but for war, organized under various commanders. Though this report resembles similar military musters for Asa (14:7) and Jehoshaphat (17:13b-18), Welten argues that the different context of 25:5 provides enough of a reason not to include it in this group. For example, the episode contains no record of any building activity and the king receives only a conditionally positive judgment.<sup>112</sup> He claims that the Chronicler includes this note concerning the need to supplement the army with soldiers so that he can reveal the relationship between the southern and northern kingdoms (cf. 25:7). However, if these notices do not serve to extol the rewards of pious kings as much as to reveal the temptation for them to win wars by their own might, then this text does belong in

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<sup>110</sup> The word for conspiracy (קשר), which has the same sense in qal and hithpael for these different contexts in Chronicles, does not necessarily require unfaithful behavior; cf. the example of Jehu in 2 Kgs 9:14; 10:9.

<sup>111</sup> R. W. Klein ("The Chronicler's Theological Rewriting of the Deuteronomistic History: Amaziah, a Test Case," in *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* [eds. K. L. Noll and B. Schramm; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010], 237-245 [241]) argues that the Chronicler has purposefully changed the verb for "kill" (הרג) in 2 Chr 24:25 and 25:3 to show his theme of retribution; see also McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 322. However, the account in 2 Kings used a synonymous verb (נכה) also in the same places.

<sup>112</sup> Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung*, 90-93.

the same category as the other texts that describe military musters. Several of the Chronicler's modifications to the text demonstrate this.

First, Amaziah's desire to recruit even from the wicked northern kingdom (of all places) demonstrates how badly he wanted to win in battle. Judah had just broken free from the idolatrous influence of the northerners with the execution of Athaliah (2 Chr 23), but Amaziah did not hesitate to integrate their forces into his army. Though he had the smallest of all the military musters in Chronicles with 300,000 men,<sup>113</sup> this amount still would have seemed enormous to the reading community.<sup>114</sup> Graham also notes the irony in Amaziah's anxiety over the army's size since they should have been more than enough to subdue Edom.<sup>115</sup> Even when a man of God warned him such an action would receive divine punishment because "Yahweh is not with Israel" (vv 7-8), Amaziah worried about the silver he had already invested in the troops (v 9).

Second, the Chronicler never praises Amaziah when he did seem to do right. Since the man of God persisted with the promise that God had the power to help Amaziah and could give the king much more than he had paid for the Israelites forces, Amaziah eventually let the northern troops go (vv 8-10). Graham argues that the prophetic rebuke functions to move the king to "repentance" so that Judah could win the battle against

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<sup>113</sup> Both David (1 Chr 21:5) and Jehoshaphat had over 1 million soldiers (2 Chr 17:13b-18). Even Abijah had 400,000 after Rehoboam had lost most of the kingdom (2 Chr 13:3)

<sup>114</sup> Klein ("Amaziah, a Test Case," 241) avers that the number 300,000 should not be taken literally; see also R. W. Klein, "How Many in a Thousand?" in *The Chronicler as Historian* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.), 270-282. E. Ben Zvi ("A House of Treasures: The Account of Amaziah in 2 Chronicles 25—Observations and Implications," *SJOT* 22 [2008]: 63-85 [76]) notes how this number extends well beyond Yehud's actual potential in the Achaemenid period whose population peaked at about one tenth of that number; see also O. Lipschitz, "Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (eds. O. Lipschitz and J. Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 323-376.

<sup>115</sup> M. P. Graham, "Aspects of the Structure and Rhetoric of 2 Chronicles 25," in *History and Interpretation: Essays in Honour of John H. Hayes* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 78-89 (87).



Edom.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, this passage nowhere uses any of the typical vocabulary for repentance that the Chronicler inserts for the truly repentant kings such as Rehoboam or Manasseh (12:6; 33:12; cf. 7:14).<sup>117</sup> In essence, this episode reveals how much the opportunity tempted him just as it did David, Asa, and Jehoshaphat before him (see below also for Uzziah).

Third, the Chronicler does not characterize Amaziah as pious in his victory over the Edomites as he does the other faithful kings. The words שָׁעַן (e.g. 14:10) or שָׁרַף (e.g. 20:3) do not appear, nor do the ubiquitous themes of temple or the divine presence.<sup>118</sup> Rather, the previous scene ends with the released Israelite troops in a fit of rage (v 10), an image that foreshadows their retaliation when they struck 3,000 people and took much spoil from various cities in Judah (v 13). Such a result appears frequently with the unfaithful kings, not with the faithful. On the other hand, the Chronicler could have easily borrowed the record in 2 Kgs 14:7 that Amaziah conquered Sela and renamed it Joktheel, which would have portrayed his victory more as a reward as with other faithful kings, but he leaves this out. Moreover, the greater reward mentioned by the man of God will not come until later in the reign of Jotham, who acquired not only 100 talents of silver, but also 10,000 cors each of wheat and barley for three consecutive years (27:5). The Chronicler certainly would not have neglected this aspect of Amaziah's war if he wanted to praise his efforts.

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<sup>116</sup> Graham, "Aspects," 80. Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 327) also acknowledges Amaziah's error in hiring the Israelite mercenaries, but eventually argues that "the underlying character of this period of Amaziah's reign is demonstrated by the fact of his heeding the prophetic warning and taking action in the light of it."

<sup>117</sup> See Chapter 6.

<sup>118</sup> The use of חִזַּק in the hithpael in v 11 cannot stand alone to portray the king as faithful (cf. 12:13; 21:4). Like the military victory, it serves as a minor reward more than an absolute indicator of Amaziah's faithfulness.

Further to this point, when the Chronicler does describe the subsequent war report, he uses only the most mundane details to show how Amaziah wanted simply to exert his military strength. For example, the account stresses the number of people he struck down more than anything else. The record of the initial ten thousand people Amaziah killed in v 11 stems from the account in 2 Kgs 14:7, but then the Chronicler adds that he captured another ten thousand and threw them from the top of the rock, dashing them to pieces (v 12).<sup>119</sup> Klein states that, “Obedience to the word of the man of God led to military victory, and *the doubling of the Edomite body count* illustrates that ‘Yahweh has the ability to give you much more than this’” (italics mine).<sup>120</sup> However, while the Chronicler certainly accords kings victory in war for an act of faithfulness, he never praises mere brutality for its own sake. To the contrary, the Chronicler criticizes the northern kingdom later for killing Judeans “in a rage that has reached up to heaven” (28:9).

Fourth, the northern king’s commentary in 25:18-19 reveals that Amaziah had great pride from his attack on Edom. We may compare with the parallel passage in 2 Kgs 14:9-10, where Amaziah looked to build on his success in the south with a campaign to the north. He challenged the northern king to fight (v 8), but the latter warned him that though he had won his battle against Edom he was still no match for the stronger northern kingdom, “You have indeed struck down Edom and your heart has lifted you up. Be content with your glory (הַכְּבֹד, niphah imperative) and stay at home...” (v 10). The northern king in this account pointed out to Amaziah that his victory had unwittingly emboldened him; hence, the former informed the latter that he had no chance of defeating him. The

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<sup>119</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 865) notes that the reference to “the rock” in 2 Chr 25:12 is to be seen as a misunderstanding, or possibly an interpretation, of the place name “Sela” in 2 Kgs 14:7.

<sup>120</sup> Klein, “Amaziah, a Test Case,” 242.

northern king in the Chronicler's version, on the other hand, warned Amaziah not to brag about his victory over the Edomites, "You say, 'Behold, I have struck down Edom!'<sup>121</sup> Your heart has lifted you up in boastfulness (להכביד, hiphil infinitive construct). Now stay at home..." (v 19). With these changes, the Chronicler not only makes Amaziah's challenge to the northern king explicitly boastful as in 2 Kgs 14, he places his attack on Edom in the same category.

In summary, the Chronicler counts Amaziah as initially faithful only for the things that he refrained from doing; he did not execute the children of the conspirators who had assassinated his father, nor did he take the northern soldiers into battle with him. Aside from these moments of restraint, the Chronicler does not record any acts of faithfulness for Amaziah. Far from a scene of repentance, Amaziah appears concerned more with money than with pleasing Yahweh when he released the Israelite forces. Even in the battle itself, he never actively "sought" Yahweh either. The complete absence of the Chronicler's particular vocabulary for faithful kings (or even repentant wicked kings) further demonstrates that he gives Amaziah the most minimal of positive evaluations for this early period. He refrained from committing evil and gained victory in war, but the Chronicler does not attribute to him anything else.

#### ***5.4.2. Amaziah's Idolatry (2 Chr 25:14-28)***

The Chronicler's irony sets in when he reports that Amaziah took the gods of the defeated Edomites and installed them as his first cultic act (25:14). While one would expect

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<sup>121</sup> This reading follows LXX<sup>L</sup> VL Tg Vg. Though Klein (2 *Chronicles*, 352) may argue correctly that the MT reading "You have struck down..." represents the original as the *lectio difficilior*, the אָמַרְתָּ הִנֵּה before it shows that the northern king claimed to be quoting Amaziah and that the latter had called attention to what he did ("Behold!").

most kings to praise Yahweh after he gives them a victory in battle (e.g. 2 Chr 20:26-28), some might act foolishly after seeing divine intervention up close (e.g. 16:1-6), but the Chronicler presents Amaziah as the only king to commit outright idolatry immediately after a victory.<sup>122</sup> His emphatic syntax stresses Amaziah's surprising devotion to the foreign gods, with the frontloading of the object, "And *before them* he would bow down and *to them* he would make an offering."<sup>123</sup> Amaziah clearly expressed more devotion to the Edomite gods than he ever showed to Yahweh as can be seen in the words of the ensuing prophetic rebuke against him in v 15, "Why have you sought (שָׁרַד) the gods of a people who did not deliver their own people from your hand?" The Chronicler never records that Amaziah ever sought or even worshiped Yahweh in the first half of his reign, which makes Amaziah's worship of other gods who have demonstrably less power than Judah's God all the more surprising.

The narrative grows more ironic when the Chronicler inserts Amaziah's confrontation with the northern king Joash (vv 17-24 // 2 Kgs 14:8-14). Although Amaziah had released the northern troops so that the extra help would not weaken his army, his adoption of the Edomite gods made him even weaker than the idolatrous northern kingdom. His own idolatry left Judah vulnerable to attack so that the northern king Joash could defeat and capture Amaziah at Beth-shemesh, a blow that forced all the Judeans to flee. The northern king then conquered Jerusalem and broke down the wall of the city. Finally, he seized a large amount of spoil from the temple ("all the gold and silver and all the vessels") and from the king's treasuries, along with hostages. By this point, Amaziah had fallen to a

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<sup>122</sup> Dillard (2 *Chronicles*, 201) may be right to say that kings often face great temptation to take another nation's gods after a victory, but the Chronicler still puts forth Amaziah as the only one to succumb to this.

<sup>123</sup> The Hebrew reads, "וּלְפָנֵיהֶם יִשְׁתַּחוּ וּלְהֶם יִקְטֹר".

much worse position than had he simply integrated the northern troops into his army earlier. The northern army that he had released from the campaign against Edom struck Judah with possibly their worst defeat up to this point in the Chronicler's history.

Throughout this negative period, the Chronicler uses his typical phraseology to emphasize that Amaziah provoked this judgment with his idolatry. He explains the reason for Amaziah's loss to Joash with his insertion, "But Amaziah did not listen, for it was from God in order that he might give them into the hand of their enemies because they had sought (דרש) the gods of Edom" (v 20). As devastating as Joash's attack was, Amaziah himself underwent even more punishment with his assassination by conspirators (v 27 // 2 Kgs 14:19).<sup>124</sup> Again, the Chronicler links this personal sentence to his earlier idolatry with the insertion, "And from the time that Amaziah turned away from Yahweh, they made a conspiracy against him..." From Israel's attack on Judah as a whole to an assault on the king himself, Amaziah's abandonment of Yahweh provoked divine judgment.

### **5.5 Uzziah (2 Chr 26)**

The Chronicler gives a very simple structure to Uzziah's reign that borrows many of the themes already introduced with previous kings. First, similar to Joash, he states that Uzziah stayed faithful as long as a particular mentor remained at his side, "He set himself to seek (דרש) God in the days of Zechariah... and as long as he sought (דרש) Yahweh, God made him prosper" (2 Chr 26:5). At no point does the Chronicler record any remarkable acts of devotion for Uzziah, but his use of the word דרש here serves that general purpose. It

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<sup>124</sup> Graham ("Aspects," 86) detects irony in this event also. Just as Amaziah had not executed the descendants of his father's conspirators, so he himself does not die on account of his father's sins but for his very own.

vaguely characterizes him as a good king with a faithful orientation towards the cult so that the Chronicler can describe how he prospered (צלח).

Second, the Chronicler portrays Uzziah's success in terms very similar to David through the use of two key words, עזר and חזק, each used three times in vv 6-15. He first describes how God helped (עזר) Uzziah defeat several nations on his southern border (v 7) and his fame reached the border of Egypt because he was very strong (חזק, v 8). In v 9, he built many towers in Jerusalem and fortified (חזק) them, likely repairs from the damage done by the northern king Joash in 25:23. The Chronicler describes the large, powerful army that he amassed and equipped in vv 11-14, who could help (עזר) him against his enemies. At the end of this list of Uzziah's achievements, the Chronicler notes, "And his fame went out far, for he was marvelously helped (עזר) until he was strong (חזק)" (v 15). In Chapter 2.1.1, we noted how the Chronicler first developed the theme of help at the very beginning of David's reign (cf. 1 Chr 12:1, 18, 19, 22, 23), all of which made him very strong (11:10). Other lexical connections to David's reign also appear in the way that Uzziah burst through (פרץ) the camp of the Philistines (v 6; 1 Chr 14:11) and his fame (שם) went out into all the lands (vv 8, 15; 1 Chr 14:17). The Chronicler has shown Uzziah to prosper with all these endeavors because the king sought Yahweh (v 5; cf. 1 Chr 13:3).

Third, on a less positive note, the many building projects and accumulation of a large army cast him in a similar light to other kings in this chapter such as Asa and Jehoshaphat. The latter in particular valued the prestige of international fame more than his strict allegiance to Yahweh to the point that he pursued an alliance with the wicked Ahab. Even David had a moment when he sought the blessing more than the God who blessed

him, especially with regard to the size of his army (1 Chr 21). As for Uzziah, the Chronicler asserts that his many rewards led to his fall, “But when he became strong (עָדָה לְהַשְׁחִית) <sup>125</sup> until he acted corruptly (גָּבַהּ לְבוֹ) <sup>126</sup> and acted unfaithfully (מָעַל) <sup>127</sup> against Yahweh his God” (v 16a). The root חָזַק, so prominent in vv 6-15, now binds the two halves of Uzziah’s reign together to show that, like Jehoshaphat, his strength suddenly became his weakness. His reign presents another case that the great strength gained from piety, manifested frequently in large armies and/or buildings, almost always led quite ironically to a prideful fall.

Fourth, the Chronicler’s Uzziah had a sudden stop to his success much like Asa. While neither of these kings lost a war for their scandal, each received a sudden illness that put an end to their conquests. Although Uzziah had won several wars and spread his dominion throughout a large stretch of land, he later entered into the temple so that he could try to burn incense. The Chronicler categorizes this cultic offense as מָעַל (see above on v 16a, but also v 18). Rather than him suffer attack for his sin, Yahweh struck him with leprosy so that he needed to remain isolated in a separate house until the day of his death (2 Chr 26:21).<sup>128</sup> His son Jotham then reigned in his place and did all the positive things that his father had done, continuing with the conquests that the latter had not finished (27:5).

<sup>125</sup> Earlier, the Chronicler had claimed that Jehoshaphat “grew proud in the ways of Yahweh (וַיִּגְבַּהּ לְבוֹ בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה)”, which was his clever way of describing one king’s pious response to Yahweh’s blessing (17:6). Later, Hezekiah also grew proud after his miraculous escape from the Assyrian army; nevertheless, he immediately humbled (כָּנַע) himself according to the mandate given at the temple dedication (32:25-26; cf. 7:14).

<sup>126</sup> For the translation “acted corruptly”, Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 885) has correctly pointed out that the intransitive use of this verb gives it a different meaning than the Chronicler’s other uses of it (see also 27:2). For its use in the transitive with the sense of “destroy” see 2 Chr 12:7; 21:7; 24:23; 25:16.

<sup>127</sup> See Chapter 1 for discussion of the root מָעַל in Chronicles.

<sup>128</sup> See P. C. Beentjes, “‘They Saw That His Forehead Was Leprous’ (2 Chr 26:20): The Chronicler’s Narrative on Uzziah’s Leprosy,” in *Purity and Holiness: The Heritage of Leviticus* (eds. M. Poorthuis and J.

## 5.6. Josiah (2 Chr 34-35)

As is well known, the books of Kings depict Josiah as the greatest of all the kings, more devout than even David or Hezekiah (cf. 2 Kgs 23:25). Following fifty-seven years of the worst idolatry Judah had ever seen with Manasseh and Amon, he had plenty of opportunity to reform the religious atmosphere of the country. Even so, Josiah himself appears to have waited until his eighteenth year to try to improve the situation (22:3). Despite his complacency, over the course of some initial temple renovations, the Book of the Law emerged after having been lost for many years. When the book was presented before the king, he immediately tore his clothes and set in motion many far-reaching reforms throughout the land according to its presumed precepts. In something of a surprising finish, the narrative still asserts that the sins of Manasseh cannot be overturned and that Yahweh will remove Judah from the land (23:26-27). Immediately after this note, it records a very obscure death for the righteous king Josiah (vv 29-30).

The Chronicler places all this data into his usual framework of cult reforms and war, with his customary alterations to the details. Though he could not rewrite Josiah's tragic ending, he does make the earlier stretch of his reign as positive as any other king in Israel's history. Some scholars look for a punishable reason for his sudden death in this period of reforms (see below), but the following survey shows how the Chronicler portrays Josiah as even more faithful throughout the early part of his reign than the account in 2 Kgs 22-23.

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Schwartz; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 61-72, who translates בית הצפיות in v 21 as "house of constraint". See also W. Rudolph, "Ussias 'Haus der Freiheit'," ZAW 89 (1977): 418.



### 5.6.1. Josiah's Reforms (2 Chr 34:1-35:19)

Rather than wait for his eighteenth year, the Chronicler stresses Josiah's eagerness from a very young age to reform the temple cult from its decayed state. As was noted for Hezekiah, the borrowed introductory remarks that compare Josiah's good behavior to David should not be passed over too quickly since they are the only kings to receive such a commendation (34:2; cf. 29:2). In the same way that David eagerly sought to establish the temple cult in his new capital Jerusalem (cf. 1 Chr 13:3) and Hezekiah hastened to rally all Israel back to it from the very beginning of his reign (cf. 2 Chr 29:3; 30:1-2), so did Josiah ignite a massive reform movement as soon as he could. The Chronicler asserts that already in the eighth year "he began to seek (דַּרַשׁ) the God of David his father" (2 Chr 34:3). Additionally, the phrase "while he was still a boy (נֶעַר)" in the same verse affirms that Josiah did not waver at all as in 2 Kgs 22-23, but that his true piety emerged as he matured.<sup>129</sup>

Along these same lines, the Chronicler also illustrates how Josiah's faith turned into action as he conducted extensive cult reforms throughout the land of Israel in his twelfth year. Two inclusios marked by where he conducted these reforms illustrate the thoroughness of Josiah's work. The first reads "he began to cleanse (טָהַר) Judah and Jerusalem" in v 3b and then concludes "and (so) he cleansed (טָהַר) Judah and Jerusalem" in v 5. The use of the verb טָהַר occurs only 7 times in Chronicles, three times for Josiah and four times for Hezekiah, casting the former's work even more in the very positive image of the latter.<sup>130</sup> In between the two references to Judah and Jerusalem, the Chronicler provides

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<sup>129</sup> Of course נֶעַר does not necessarily refer to youth, but that is the intent here.

<sup>130</sup> For Josiah, see 34:3, 5, 8, and for Hezekiah, see 29:15, 16, 18; 30:18.

a long list of the various idolatrous cult centers that Josiah removed so that he could free the people from every potential snare in the areas closest to the temple.<sup>131</sup>

Another inclusio in vv 6-7 captures Josiah's broader reforming work to the further reaches of the northern kingdom. The Chronicler avers that he eliminated more idolatrous centers from cities in the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and Naphtali in the front end, then describes this same piece of geography at the end of v 7 with "throughout all the land of Israel". This report portrays the expansive aims of Josiah, much like the most faithful kings (i.e. David, Solomon, and Hezekiah) who aspired to rally all Israel around the temple.<sup>132</sup> The final concluding statement, "And he (Josiah) returned to Jerusalem" marks the end of Josiah's initial, large scale reforms in 2 Chr 34:7, much as it did in 2 Kgs 23:20. However, while the reforms in the latter appear as a pious reaction to the hearing of the book of the law, the Chronicler uses them here to show the early enthusiasm of another devout king to direct as much of Israel as possible back to the temple in Jerusalem.

When the Chronicler does come to Josiah's eighteenth year, he makes the king's temple reforms the final step in his larger plan to cleanse the whole land, "Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, in order to cleanse (טָהַר) the land and the temple, he sent... to repair the house of Yahweh his God" (v 8).<sup>133</sup> The Chronicler also changes the text at other points to portray Josiah's temple work as a continuation of his earlier piety. He identifies

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<sup>131</sup> The inner part of the inclusio seems to link the cultic items removed by Josiah as those installed by Manasseh. As we will see later, the specific items listed in 33:1-9 (i.e. altars to the Baals, Asherahs, etc.) do not appear in Manasseh's own reforms later in his reign. On another note, Amon presumably deserves some of the blame for this too, though he only reigned two years, since v 22 states that he also used the false cult that his father installed.

<sup>132</sup> Also much like the slightly less faithful Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Joash who pursued similar reforms.

<sup>133</sup> Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 489) and Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 320) follow the suggestion in BHS to insert כָּלֹות before לְטָהַר based on LXX<sup>Aal</sup>, "... after/when he cleansed the land and the temple..." Even if this is correct, my point still stands.

the “keepers of the threshold” from 2 Kgs 22:4 as Levites and avers that they collected the money for the temple from “Manasseh, Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (2 Chr 34:9). This addition suggests that the earlier work of eliminating idolatrous centers in vv 3-7 also included gathering funds for work on the temple. As opposed to the kings who had let the temple go to ruin (v 11b), the workers under Josiah did their job faithfully (באמונה) (v 12a).<sup>134</sup> This also contrasts with the account in 2 Kgs 22:3-7, which only describes the mandate for the mission. Hence, the Chronicler stresses Josiah’s diligence in carrying out his ambitious objective.

In one sense, the discovery of the book of the law serves as a reward for Josiah’s efforts in these early reforms. The temporal nuance of the infinitive construct in v 14 makes this connection: “And when they were bringing (וּבְהוֹצִיָאם) out the money... Hilkiah found...” The Chronicler’s addition to Shaphan’s report later also makes the link between Josiah’s pious initiative and the discovery, “All that was committed to your servants, they are doing...” (v 16). In light of this, the Chronicler does not suggest that Josiah (through his workers) only stumbled onto the law when he cleaned out the temple as implied in 2 Kgs 22. Rather, he received it as a divine blessing for prioritizing cult reforms, conducting them from the farthest reaches of his kingdom to the very temple itself.

From another perspective, the Chronicler also uses the discovery of the book of the law as a catalyst for Josiah to do even more reforms.<sup>135</sup> We may first note several of the

<sup>134</sup> The adverb באמונה also describes the diligent workers in Hezekiah’s reforms (cf. 2 Chr 31:12, 15, 18).

<sup>135</sup> D. A. Glatt-Gilad (“The Role of Huldah’s Prophecy in the Chronicler’s Portrayal of Josiah’s Reform,” *Bib* 77 [1996]: 16-31) argues that Huldah’s prophecy serves as a corrective reinforcement rather than a fatalistic foreboding as in 2 Kgs 22, but the evidence put forward above demonstrates that Josiah acted completely

Chronicler's favorite expressions already in this repentance scene, beginning with his reaction to the judgment awaiting Judah, "Go, inquire (דרש) of Yahweh..." (v 21 // 2 Kgs 22:13). The prophet Huldah described the wrath awaiting Judah, "Because they have abandoned (עזב) me..." (v 25 // 2 Kgs 22:17), yet commended Josiah since he humbled himself (כניע) at the hearing of God's words (v 27 [2x] // 2 Kgs 22:19). Furthermore, Josiah made a covenant before Yahweh to follow him "with all his heart (לבב) and all his soul" (v 31 // 2 Kgs 23:3). The Chronicler reports the act of covenant-making for several other earlier kings also (e.g. Asa, 15:12). On a final note, though the Chronicler does not borrow the full report of how Josiah eradicated the many idolatrous centers in the land from 2 Kgs 23:4-20 (after all, he recorded something similar in vv 3-7, see above), he summarizes, "And Josiah removed all the abominations from all the lands that belonged to the Israelites" (34:33a). Thus, the Chronicler gladly transfers all of these themes to portray (even in his own terms) Josiah as a faithful king.

Additionally, the Chronicler goes beyond the 2 Kgs 22-23 account in two ways. First, he characterizes Josiah as a king who won complete support of the people, "And (Josiah) made all who were present in Israel (נמצא בישראל) serve Yahweh their God. All his days they did not turn away from following Yahweh, the God of their fathers" (34:33b). Though the parallel in 2 Kings 22-23 in no way contradicts this (see 23:3), the Chronicler has modeled Josiah's great achievement after the other great reforms in his effort to rally

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faithfully in his initial reforms. Perhaps Josiah does a better job at involving the people after the prophecy, as Glatt-Gilad points out, but the contrast does not seem quite as stark as the difference between the first and second reforms of Asa and Jehoshaphat as he also supposes. As another comparison, we may note how the Chronicler has Hezekiah cleanse the temple before bringing the people to it (2 Chr 29-30), just as Josiah. With this in mind, the Chronicler uses Huldah's prophecy to inform Josiah of the judgment awaiting Judah for past sins (cf. 2 Chr 34:25), not any negligence on his own behalf.

all Israel to Yahweh. The phrase *בְּמִצַּח* does not detract from this theme, but merely reflects the imminent exile (see below). More support for it appears later in the Passover, where the Chronicler notes that at this time the Levites taught all Israel (35:3) and that “all Israel and Judah who were present and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem” observed the Passover (35:18).

Second, the Chronicler underscores how Josiah not only rallied the people, but led them to worship *at the temple*, another feature similar to David, Solomon, and Hezekiah. The name “God of their fathers” in 34:33 implies this much,<sup>136</sup> yet the Chronicler highlights the temple theme more explicitly with his greatly expanded version of Josiah’s celebration of the Passover (35:1-19 // 2 Kgs 23:21-23). Josiah appointed the priests to their offices and encouraged them in the service of the “house of Yahweh” (35:2). He commanded the Levites to stand in “the Holy Place” so that they could slaughter the Passover lamb and consecrate themselves (vv 3-6). In addition to the Passover lamb, they offered burnt offerings at “the altar of Yahweh” (v 16). At the end of the service, the Chronicler notes that the singers and gatekeepers were also in their designated spaces (v 15). While one could suppose the Passover took place at the temple in 2 Kgs 23:21-23, the account never mentions it. The Chronicler, on the other hand, highlights this critical aspect of the ceremony.

The Chronicler uses many of his characteristic themes and vocabulary to pattern Josiah’s work after the revival in Hezekiah’s reign, such as the eager start, the broad scope of the reforms, the removal of idolatry, the repairing (*קָרָא*) of the temple, and the proper use of the Levites. Aside from this, he shows how Josiah surpassed his predecessor in various

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<sup>136</sup> See the discussion on 2 Chr 19:4 in Chapter 5.2.3.

ways. To begin with, the Chronicler notes how Josiah conformed the service to past precedent, “according to the writing of David king of Israel and according to the writing of Solomon his son” (v 4), “as it is written in the book of Moses” (v 12), “according to the rule” (v 13), and “according to the command of David” (v 15). Presumably, Hezekiah had not strictly kept the rules so that he could have as many people as possible worshipping at the temple as quickly as he could.<sup>137</sup> The Chronicler’s Josiah still performed better on this account since he observed the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month (35:1), not the second month as Hezekiah (30:2). Though Josiah did not observe the feast until the eighteenth year of his reign (v 19), he presumably did not know of the need to observe it until the discovery of the law in that same year (34:8). For this reason, the Chronicler can assert that no king had observed the Passover as did Josiah inasmuch as he conducted it according to the established rules (v 18).

Despite all this acclaim, Mitchell finds fault with Josiah in this reforming period when she argues that he formalizes the rituals Hezekiah put forth in his haste.<sup>138</sup> She claims that the Chronicler uses this *mistake* to serve as the cause of his death later, but the Chronicler at no point gives any hint that Josiah should have done anything different until this point. Ristau has astutely observed the pall that hangs over the Chronicler’s account of Josiah’s reign through various features such as the lack of joy and blessing paradigms.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> See Chapter 3.4.1.

<sup>138</sup> C. Mitchell, “The Ironic Death of Josiah in 2 Chronicles,” *CBQ* 68 (2006): 421-435 (430-431). She follows Wright with the observation that Yahweh is not present in the narrative to give his approval, but this is an argument from silence; cf. J. W. Wright, “Beyond Transcendence and Immanence: The Characterization of the Presence and Activity of God in the Book of Chronicles,” in *The Chronicler as Theologian* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.), 240-267 (264).

<sup>139</sup> K. A. Ristau, “Reading and Rereading Josiah: The Chronicler’s Representation of Josiah for the Postexilic Community,” in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives* (eds. G. N. Knoppers and K. A. Ristau; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 219-247 (224-227); see also B.

Nevertheless, the ominous tone seems to carry over from the time of Manasseh and, hence, has nothing to do with anything that Josiah actually did.<sup>140</sup> It is important to note that Huldah still said (despite Josiah's penitent heart) that Yahweh would execute judgment on Judah because they had abandoned him and worshiped other gods (2 Chr 34:24-28), so this fact likely served as the reason for the slightly darker air in the narrative. In the end, the Chronicler gives no evidence of misbehavior by Josiah before 35:20 that would warrant any individual judgment on him. Rather, he simply emphasizes Josiah's diligence at the end, "Thus was prepared *all* the service of Yahweh on that day... according to the command of Josiah" (v 16). Throughout the entire account, the Chronicler's Josiah acted faithfully.

#### **5.6.2. Josiah's Fall (2 Chr 35:20-27)**

The description of Neco's campaign further demonstrates that the Chronicler does not consider any aspect of Josiah's reforms worthy of judgment.<sup>141</sup> First of all, he notes that Neco went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, not any particular part of Israel (v 20b). All other assailants, when sent by Yahweh for punitive measures, had taken their aim at some specific geographical area endangering the people in the land of Israel. Secondly,

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Halpern, "Sacred History and Ideology: Chronicles' Thematic Structure: Indications of an Earlier Source," in *The Creation of Sacred Literature: Composition and Redaction of the Biblical Text* (ed. R. E. Friedman; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 35-54 (40-41).

<sup>140</sup> Hence, I follow those that acknowledge at least some corporate and cumulative guilt in Chronicles; cf. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 108-109. This does not mean that the Chronicler uses intergenerational sin as the reason for Judah's exile (see Chapter 4.5).

<sup>141</sup> Williamson has cast doubt on how much of the Chronicler's editing appears in this last episode in H. G. M. Williamson, "The Death of Josiah and the Continuing Development of the Deuteronomic History," *VT* 32 (1982): 242-248, where he argues that it contains a later redaction of 2 Kings that the Chronicler mostly borrows. In a later article, C. T. Begg put forward several counterarguments in "The Death of Josiah in Chronicles: Another View," *VT* 37 (1987): 1-8, to which Williamson responded in "Reliving the Death of Josiah: A Reply to C. T. Begg," *VT* 37 (1987): 9-15. Through it all, Williamson's point stands that parts of the episode may have already existed in the Chronicler's 2 Kings *Vorlage*, even if not in the MT of 2 Kings. I will try to show how other parts came from the Chronicler's hand based on larger themes seen elsewhere in his history.

Neco even sent envoys to Josiah explaining that he had no intention of attacking him, but that God had commissioned him for a distinct purpose (v 21).<sup>142</sup> Neco clearly had no intention of attacking Josiah in the Chronicler's narrative.

At the same time, Josiah had no reason to leave the safety of Jerusalem to challenge Neco who wanted merely to pass through the land. The Chronicler's introductory verse ("After all this, when Josiah had prepared the house [בית], Neco king of Egypt went up to fight..." [v 20a]) not only emphasizes the greatness of Josiah's work with regard to the temple (בית), but also foregrounds Josiah's foolish move. It links the battle account to the preceding reforms thematically (as the Chronicler does so frequently in his narrative) to affirm that he had brought Judah to a position of safety.<sup>143</sup> If Josiah felt threatened, he could have called upon Yahweh in the temple according to the precept established at the dedication of the temple (i.e. 7:14-15) as previous kings had done. Neco's message to Josiah may contain some irony to this effect, "I am not coming against you this day, but against *the house with which I am at war*" (v 21). Though the precise referent of the phrase בית מלחמתי (translation italicized) might be unclear, for Josiah's purposes it likely contrasts with the temple (בית) that he had earlier finished preparing (cf. v 20).<sup>144</sup> While Neco had no intention of attacking Judah or even offending the house of Yahweh as past invaders (cf.

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<sup>142</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 1056) avers that the deity with Neco in v 21 is a statue, but that v 22 refers to the God of Israel. I agree with Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 526) that the references in both vv 21-22 refer to Israel's God.

<sup>143</sup> By a simple comparison of time markers it becomes clear that the Chronicler skips forward thirteen years to Josiah's confrontation with Neco since he performed the reforms in his eighteenth year (35:19) and died in his thirty-first (34:1).

<sup>144</sup> A. Malamat ("Josiah's Bid for Armageddon: The Judean-Egyptian Encounter in 609 BC," *JANES* 5 [1973]: 267-279 [277]) argues that בית מלחמתי refers to a "fortified base" or a "garrison city" at Carchemish, Riblah, or possibly even Megiddo itself.



32:10-19), Josiah apparently did not have the protection of these as his sole aim either. For reasons unstated, Josiah left his home in Jerusalem to confront Neco.

The ultimate irony of Josiah's death comes through in the Chronicler's later commentary, "He did not listen to the *words* of Neco *from the mouth of God...*" (v 22).<sup>145</sup> This statement represents quite a bold interpretation of Josiah's demise from the Chronicler since 2 Kgs 22-23 does not portray Josiah simply as just a good king, but as the greatest king for his obedience to Yahweh's "words" in the book of the law (22:18-19). As we saw above, the Chronicler does not disregard the importance of Josiah's penance at the hearing of the law, but magnifies it by making it a part of a greater reform movement. Perhaps the Chronicler juxtaposes these two episodes to show that a king needed to remain faithful in battle as much as any other time in his reign.<sup>146</sup> As piously as Josiah had acted throughout the first 31 years of his reign, he at no point sought Yahweh in this confrontation with Neco. Moreover, the Chronicler even claims that Yahweh warned him through the words of Neco that he should not try to intervene. Though Josiah responded flawlessly to Yahweh's words in his reforms, he ignored the words of Yahweh in the equally critical time of war.<sup>147</sup>

Other literary features also put Josiah's behavior from this episode into a bad light. First, the Chronicler pictures Josiah's campaign as just as inglorious as the most wicked of

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<sup>145</sup> E. Ben Zvi discusses the Chronicler's tendency to "Israelize" foreign monarchs, particularly in their speeches, Sennacherib representing the lone exception; cf. "When the Foreign Monarch Speaks," in *The Chronicler as Author* (eds. M. P. Graham and S. L. McKenzie), 209-228.

<sup>146</sup> Z. Talshir ("The Three Deaths of Josiah and the Strata of Biblical Historiography [2 Kings XXIII 29-30; 2 Chronicles XXXV 20-5; 1 Esdras I 23-31]," *VT* 46 [1996]: 213-236 [215]) notes the unlikelihood that anyone could have seen the account in 2 Kgs 23:29-30 as reporting a war.

<sup>147</sup> Ristau ("Josiah," 236), following Mitchell ("Ironic Death," 424-425), contends that Josiah does not receive punishment for refusing to listen to Neco, but that the justification for his death can be found in the *telos* of God's will. However, it is hard to imagine the Chronicler reporting the carelessness of a king in starker terms.

the northern kings, Ahab, in several ways. Each one disguised himself (התחפש),<sup>148</sup> was hit by an archer's arrow, uttered the phrase "for I am wounded", then was brought back home on a chariot as he was dying (vv 22-24; 18:28-34).<sup>149</sup> Second, the Chronicler makes Josiah's faithless act the model after which the last generation in Judah follows to the point of their exile. We saw in Chapter 4.5 how each of the last four kings would not turn to Yahweh in their times of crisis (cf. 36:13). Beyond this, the Chronicler notes specifically of the last king, Zedekiah, "He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke *from the mouth of Yahweh*" (36:12). He also characterizes the last generation as those who "kept mocking the messengers of God, despising *his words* and scoffing at his prophets" (36:16). For the Chronicler's history, Josiah's sin marked the beginning of the end for Judah.

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<sup>148</sup> Cf. R. J. Coggins, "On Kings and Disguises," *JSOT* 50 (1991): 55-62.

<sup>149</sup> This resemblance could have been in a 2 Kings version later than MT, but we should note that the Chronicler has a greater need to show the faults of Josiah in this episode to explain his death. For a different view, see Williamson, "Death of Josiah," 245-246.

## Chapter 6

### Unfaithful Kings Who Repent

As with the faithful kings of the previous chapter, the Chronicler integrates a touch of irony for Rehoboam and Manasseh, but this time with an upward trend. The Chronicler shows how not even two of the worst rulers in Judah's history lost their chance to make use of Yahweh's provision at the temple dedication when they humbled themselves (כנוע, cf. 7:14). However, though many scholars categorize these monarchs as surprisingly "good" in the Chronicler's final estimation, such an assessment fails to see how he actually makes them much worse to emphasize this theme of the repentant king.

#### 6.1. Rehoboam (2 Chr 10-12)

The account of Rehoboam's reign in 1 Kgs 14:21-31 does not give a direct assessment of his rule but of the people's behavior in general, "And *Judah* did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh..." (v 22). It also records an invasion from Shishak that devastated Jerusalem and even plundered the temple (vv 25-28). Nevertheless, the Chronicler still finds enough here (and perhaps other source material as well) to show Rehoboam's unfaithfulness towards the cult. As can be expected, the Chronicler blames Rehoboam for the people's actions so that the attack serves as punishment (2 Chr 12:1-2).<sup>1</sup>

Scholars have found more difficulty assessing how the Chronicler views Rehoboam's role in the division of the kingdom. Solomon clearly deserved most of the blame in 1 Kings since that account explicitly links the northern secession to his idolatry at

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<sup>1</sup> The Chronicler has frequently transformed foreign attacks found in the books of Kings into acts of divine judgment. See earlier discussion on Jehoram, Joash, Amaziah, Ahaz, and the discussion on Manasseh later.

the end of his reign (11:1-9). It is true that Rehoboam seemingly had the opportunity to listen to the older, wiser counsellors in order to keep the north and south together (12:13-14), but even there the account presents the split as an inevitable turn of events because of Solomon's sin (v 15). The Chronicler, on the other hand, keeps a narrow focus on Solomon's faithfulness to complete the temple project so that he cannot still receive the blame for the division of the kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Knoppers argues that now Jeroboam plays the culprit for challenging the divinely instituted Davidic kingship, but within the reign of Rehoboam itself he can only point to very slim textual evidence.<sup>3</sup> Japhet suggests that the people provoked the aspiring king with an accusation that has no basis since Solomon did not enforce harsh labor on them in Chronicles. However, the analysis below shows that Japhet's argument fails to account for the Chronicler's integration of his "all Israel" theme developed throughout the united monarchy. This adaptation by the Chronicler increases Rehoboam's guilt from mere carelessness in 1 Kgs 12 to a temple cult transgression.<sup>4</sup>

#### **6.1.1. Rehoboam Splits All Israel (2 Chr 10:1-11:4)**

Though the Chronicler changes little from the account in 1 Kgs 12:1-24, by far his most important change to the episode concerns his use of the phrase "all Israel" (כל־ישראל)

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<sup>2</sup> Contra Y. H. Jeon, *Impeccable Solomon? A Study of Solomon's Faults in Chronicles* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2013), 272-273.

<sup>3</sup> Although Jeroboam plays the same role in 2 Chr 10:1-19 (MT) as with 1 Kgs 12:1-19 (MT), Knoppers asserts that other textual witnesses reveal how Jeroboam likely did not appear in the Chronicler's Vorlage at 1 Kgs 12:2, 3, 12; cf. Knoppers, "Rehoboam in Chronicles," 434-435. Though he does not mention any one witness in particular, he likely refers to the longer version of these events in 3 Kingdoms (LXX). However, he gives no reasoning for what the Chronicler may have had as his Vorlage here or why he would not have borrowed more if he had it. Many scholars acknowledge that the supplement at 3 Kgdms 12:24 depicts an increased role for Jeroboam in the split (cf. Frisch, "Jeroboam and the Division of the Kingdom," 22-23), so the omission of such material argues against the presumably intensified role of Jeroboam in 2 Chr 10. Too much research on the text of the supplement exists to list here, but for recent discussion, cf. C. S. Shaw, "The Sins of Rehoboam: The Purpose of 3 Kingdoms 12.24A-Z," *JSOT* (1997): 55-64. Knoppers (437-439) makes a more substantial argument from Abijah's speech in 2 Chr 13:4-12, but see my analysis in chapter 3.2.1.

<sup>4</sup> Whereas the account in the books of Kings seeks to address the problem of the high places created largely by Solomon (1 Kgs 11:1-13), the Chronicler must find a way to explain the severance of "all Israel".

at several points (2 Chr 10:1, 3, 16 [2x]; 11:3). Of these five occurrences, the Chronicler borrows the phrase in two instances (10:1, 16) and modifies the text in the other three (10:3, 16; 11:3). His removal of the term in another verse (1 Kgs 12:18 // 2 Chr 10:18)<sup>5</sup> combined with the retention of a different phrase for the people (e.g. “the people of Israel” in 10:17, 18) and the *specification* of all Israel in another place (cf. 11:3, “all Israel *in Judah and Benjamin*”) reveal that he does not use this term haphazardly.<sup>6</sup> Rather, the Chronicler integrates it into the narrative here as the continuation of a theme he develops consistently throughout the united monarchy, beginning as early as the genealogies.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the general hyperbolic sense the phrase carries in other parts of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Josh 3:7, 17; 4:14, etc.), the Chronicler attributes to it three particular nuances that impact its meaning in 2 Chr 10:1-11:4.

First of all, the Chronicler presents the gathering of all Israel to the worship of Yahweh *as the ultimate goal for the nation*. In the opening genealogies the Chronicler shows how Israel’s God elected them from among all the peoples of the earth (1 Chr 1) and prospered the individual tribes with numerous descendants and a place in the land (1 Chr 2-8). But then, immediately following, he concludes the genealogies with a section that expresses the hope that this “all Israel” would once again repopulate the land even after the

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<sup>5</sup> He also removes two occurrences in 12:20, but seemingly for other reasons that do not concern the term itself.

<sup>6</sup> That is to say, he does not use the phrase everywhere, so it likely has a different connotation than “the people of Israel”.

<sup>7</sup> Quite surprisingly, I have found no scholar who has greatly investigated this theme as it pertains to 2 Chr 10:1-11:4 and only Japhet has given much attention to the phrase theologically in the books of Chronicles as a whole; cf. Japhet, *Ideology*, 267-77 (though of course, for the different uses of Israel in Chronicles, see Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*, 87-140).

exile (1 Chr 9, cf. v 1).<sup>8</sup> After he sets this as the target for the contemporary community in post-exilic Yehud, he then also projects it back to Israel's kings. Accordingly, the Chronicler portrays David as the pioneer in this endeavor who holds it as his main objective throughout 1 Chr 11-16.<sup>9</sup> This central facet to Israel's religious atmosphere proves as integral to Solomon's establishment of the temple cult as the provision of materials for construction (cf. 2 Chr 1:2; 7:3, 5). Long after the division of the kingdom, the Chronicler revisits this theme once again in the reign of Hezekiah who not only reopened the temple but also sought to regather all Israel for worship there (cf. 2 Chr 30:1-9).

As a second nuance, the Chronicler puts forward the support of all Israel *as a reward to faithful kings*. Looking again at the example of David, we see that he gained the people's support on account of his faithfulness to Yahweh at an early point in his career (12:18), while Amasai's response reveals that they joined with David "because your God helps you" (v 19). His desire to retrieve the ark merited even greater support from the people (13:1-5). While David's sinful command to take a census resulted in the fragmentation of all Israel (cf. 21:4-6), his renewed focus on the temple with extensive preparations (1 Chr 22-29) once again unified all Israel just before the transfer of the kingship to Solomon (29:23-26). The Chronicler also marks the faithfulness of Solomon in completing the temple project with the presence of all Israel at the dedication ceremony (2 Chr 7:3, 5). Much later, the appearance of all Israel in 2 Chr 31:1 appears as the reward to

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<sup>8</sup> Certainly the clause "So all Israel was recorded in genealogies..." in 9:1 summarizes and even idealizes all the data before it (1 Chr 1-8), yet it also evokes the sense that this hope, encapsulated by the Chronicler's favorite moniker for the united people used for the first time here, will come to fruition once again.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 2.1.

Hezekiah for reestablishing the temple and its cult in the religious life of Israel (2 Chr 29-30). Not only does this occurrence follow along the lines of David and Solomon, it reverses the circumstances created by Ahaz whose idolatrous actions led to “the ruin of all Israel” (2 Chr 28:23).

A third nuance for the Chronicler’s use of the phrase “all Israel” can be derived from the first two. If the above survey shows that (1) good kings seek to rally the entire nation to Yahweh by their faithfulness and (2) they consequently receive the people’s unwavering support for such devotion, then (3) we can expect all Israel to behave in a faithful, trustworthy manner whenever they act together. Not only does he show this for the reigns of David, Solomon, and Hezekiah, but also with other less noteworthy kings such as Asa (2 Chr 15:8-15), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20, cf. vv 18-30), and Joash (2 Chr 24:4-14), to name only a few. For these kings, the Chronicler does not use the phrase “all Israel”, but does depict them generally as the masses. While the people often reacted against an unfaithful king (e.g. 2 Chr 21:19-20; 24:25) and such a wicked king could lead them astray (2 Chr 36:11-16), the Chronicler nevertheless shows throughout his narrative that they always supported a king who acted faithfully. Moreover, he would never show them instigate a turbulent period since they always followed and even complied with a good king.<sup>10</sup>

In this light, Japhet’s charge that the people made their request for a lighter workload only as an excuse for rebellion has little basis. To begin with, the Chronicler certainly describes them within his predominant theme of all Israel since the term appears

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<sup>10</sup> Jotham may appear as an exception, but really Uzziah deserved the blame for their corrupt practices (שחית, v 2; cf. 2 Chr 26:16). Moreover, the Chronicler never shows them acting against Jotham, but insinuates that they simply kept their idolatrous ways. See Chapter 3.3.

twice at the beginning of the episode (10:1, 3).<sup>11</sup> While he takes the first as a direct borrowing from 1 Kgs 12:1, he must change the second from the phrase “all *the assembly of Israel*” in v 3 to keep his theme consistent. So even though this group of people likely represents disgruntled delegates from the northern tribes in 1 Kings 12, the Chronicler avers that the group embodies all Israel.

Further to the point, the rest of the episode makes absolutely no sense unless all Israel made a legitimate claim.<sup>12</sup> First of all, Rehoboam certainly would not have given consideration to a false accusation, especially if they represented only a small number of people (as Japhet supposes) and the majority were on his side (v 5).<sup>13</sup> Second, nowhere did he deny the harsh conditions set by Solomon, yet the older (i.e. wiser) counsel confirmed that the good thing for him to do would be to please the people (v 7).<sup>14</sup> Third, instead of making any attempt to appease the people, he incited them to anger by promising even more oppressive measures than his father (v 11). Lastly, after the northerners had completely cut their ties to the south, Rehoboam still made one final attempt to carry out his plan by sending Hadoram, the taskmaster over the forced labor (v 18). Hence, even if the people’s claim were illegitimate, this would have effectually made Rehoboam worse

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<sup>11</sup> The same use of this phrase a mere two verses earlier at the end of Solomon’s reign (9:30) also makes this meaning clear. The Chronicler uses the phrase “all Israel” in Abijah’s speech to the northern kingdom later (cf. 13:4), but this becomes obvious only because the kingdom has divided by that point.

<sup>12</sup> E. Ben Zvi (*History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles* [Oakville: Equinox, 2006], 117-143) would rather say that these details simply make no sense in the Chronicler’s narrative. Note the aporetic subtitles in this chapter, “The Prominence of the Seemingly Unexplainable in the (Hi)story of the Secession in Chronicles” and “Explaining the Seemingly Unexplainable and Imagining the Deity”. See also De Vries, *I and 2 Chronicles*, 278; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 653; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 153.

<sup>13</sup> Japhet refers to them as a small group in light of 2 Chr 13:7, but the phrase “*all Israel*” seems to imply that it represented the majority. With this in mind, it is even less likely that such a large group would act together in a lie.

<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, the Chronicler’s retention of the word עָזַב (vv 8, 13; “he *abandoned* the counsel of the old men”) places Rehoboam squarely into one of his dominant themes for unfaithful kings. See later at 2 Chr 12:1, 5.



since he would then have been the *initiator* of oppressive reforms. Rather than call all these features inconsistencies, it seems easier to say that the Chronicler renders the people a legitimate claim, just as the text in 1 Kgs 12.

An even more significant item the Chronicler should have removed appears in the remarks of divine determinism (10:15; 11:4). Williamson cites these verses as evidence that the northerners likely had good reason for their separation from Judah since, consonant with the evidence presented above, this event runs contrary to the “all Israel” theme the Chronicler painstakingly establishes.<sup>15</sup> Beyond this, the Chronicler makes adaptations to these texts so that they continue to develop his theme of all Israel.

He binds the first (10:15) to the verse after it by removing the verb ראה and thus attaches the conjunction *waw* directly to כל־ישראל (10:16; cf. 1 Kgs 12:15-16).<sup>16</sup> With this change, Ahijah no longer commanded Yahweh’s prophetic word to only Jeroboam but also to all Israel (cf. 1 Kgs 11:29-39). To this may be added that, by removing ראה from the sentence, the Chronicler also changes the כִּי clause after it (“the king did not listen to them”) so that it no longer gives the *content* of what all Israel saw, but the *reason* for the ensuing conflict, “Because (כִּי) the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king... and all Israel went to their tents” (v 16). In other words, rather than merely narrate the unfortunate course of events, the Chronicler explicitly makes the fallout a result of Rehoboam’s foolish decision. This last use of all Israel to denote the unified, idealized

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<sup>15</sup> Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*, 110-14.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Williamson, *Israel in Chronicles*, 108, followed by Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 152. Though BHS lists witnesses (e.g. Mss, Syr, Tg, VL) that show no change from 1 Kgs 12:16, LXX reads the same as MT for 2 Chr 10:16. Also, while one might expect the insertion of another preposition אֶל before כל־ישראל, several cases exist where the preposition is not repeated (“preposition override”); cf. B. K. Waltke and M. P. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 222-23.

people concludes and brings cohesion to the literary unit 10:1-16,<sup>17</sup> wherein Jeroboam and all Israel presented the word of Yahweh to Rehoboam (v 3), but the latter foolishly squandered his dominion over them by rejecting this *prophetic* word (vv 15-16a).<sup>18</sup> This second reference to the prophecy of Ahijah (see also 10:29), carefully crafted by the Chronicler to suit his purposes, both legitimizes the claim of all Israel and consequently condemns Rehoboam for his faithlessness.

The second note of divine determinism comes after two futile attempts by Rehoboam to regain his rule over all Israel in 10:17-19 and 11:1-4. In the former, the Chronicler changes the now obsolete name “all Israel” of v 18 to read “the children of Israel”. This allows him to juxtapose the “the children of Israel” in the south, over whom Rehoboam reigned (v 17), and the “the children of Israel” in the north, who rejected his authority by stoning his emissary Hadoram (v 18); thus, the idealized “all Israel” has formally been cut into two pieces. The Chronicler then makes another statement about “all Israel” in Rehoboam’s second effort to restore the north to his dominion (11:1-4). After fleeing to Jerusalem from the angry northerners, Rehoboam mustered up an army in the south. However, the prophet Shemaiah warned the king and “all Israel in Judah and Benjamin” that the kingdom split had come at the directive of Yahweh. By using this

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<sup>17</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 658) claims that this final occurrence of “all Israel” in v 16 *undoubtedly* refers to the northern tribes since she sees them as the referent in vv 1, 3, and in the other references to Israel in v 16. Williamson (*Israel in Chronicles*, 103) likewise appeals to common sense for this deduction, though he avers that the references in vv 1 and 3 are to all the tribes based on the analogy of its previous occurrences in the reigns of David and Solomon and the omission of any hint of the division of the kingdom. While I concur with these latter arguments of Williamson, I still take his argument further that all Israel in v 16 must be regarded in the same way as in vv 1 and 3 based on the tight inclusio it forms. The addition of “all” in v 16 and the removal of “all” in v 18 further supports that this structure is the thought of the Chronicler. McKenzie (*Chronicler’s Use of the Deuteronomistic History*, 99-100) seems to argue that the southern kingdom could not be displeased with Rehoboam’s actions in v 16 so that it must refer to only the northern tribes.

<sup>18</sup> In this light, the Chronicler has patterned Rehoboam after Saul (cf. 1 Chr 10:13-14).

expression for the southern kingdom, a much more concise phrase than in 1 Kgs 12:23,<sup>19</sup> the Chronicler refers to the southern kingdom in terms similar to the old theme. The fact that they represent “all Israel” *in essence* confirms that Rehoboam did not cause Judah to fall completely, yet since the separation came from Yahweh this group did not embody “all Israel” *in toto*. As with the prophetic word of Ahijah in 10:15, so Shemaiah also supported the actions of Jeroboam and the northern kingdom in seceding from the southern kingdom.

With respect to this last unsuccessful attempt to reclaim the kingdom (11:1-4), Japhet maintains that Rehoboam displayed a remarkable turnaround.<sup>20</sup> She explains that the Chronicler changes the depiction of Rehoboam in 1 Kgs 12 from one of the most sinful monarchs of Judah to a king with courage, flexibility, and humility. The formerly cowardly king has now taken initiative with the military and has also yielded immediately to the “word of God” by sending the army home.

However, to see him as a valiant military leader does not capture the point. The Chronicler retains this story in his history to show precisely that Rehoboam could not win a battle against the northern tribes because he was guilty of neglecting the sincere plea of his people. He offers no hint that this aspect of Rehoboam’s abortive attempt to regain the kingdom differs at all from the account in 1 Kgs 12. In addition, Rehoboam did not stand out in any way as penitent in the event. Shemaiah prophesied to him and “all Israel in Judah and Benjamin” with the result that “*they* listened to the word of Yahweh and returned and did not go against Jeroboam” (all plural verbs) (2 Chr 11:3). Rehoboam himself did not send them home as a great leader in control of the situation, but faded into

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<sup>19</sup> The account in 1 Kgs 12:23 reads, “... and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people...”

<sup>20</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 660.

the background of all (southern) Israel acquiescing to the divine verdict. The Chronicler does have a particular way of describing true penance for a king as seen in his later additions to Rehoboam's reign (cf. כָּנַע in 2 Chr 12:6, 7, 12), but that terminology does not appear here.<sup>21</sup>

To summarize, the Chronicler accentuates Rehoboam's complicity in the division of Israel into two separate kingdoms with the integration of his "all Israel" theme into 2 Chr 10:1-11:4. This phrase represented the idealized unity of the entire nation, one of the most critical components of the temple cult's operation. While David won the full support of all Israel by means of his faithfulness to Yahweh (cf. 1 Chr 12:17-19) and Solomon maintained it throughout his reign with his pious devotion (cf. 2 Chr 1:1-6; 7:4-10), Rehoboam's poor decisions condemned him more in Chronicles. Since he did not seek the welfare of all Israel, his callousness became the chief reason why they split.

#### ***6.1.2. A Period of Reform? (2 Chr 11:5-23)***

Knoppers has taken another line of argument with his analysis of the different episodes in 2 Chr 11:5-23. He claims that though Rehoboam may not have made the right decisions in the Shechem council and its aftermath (i.e. 10:1-11:4), the Chronicler portrays him as more of a victim than a villain who could finally perform the basic operations of other good kings once the northern tribes had left.<sup>22</sup> To bolster his argument, he points to the many building projects that Rehoboam undertook (11:5-12), the observance of the proper cult (vv 13-17), and his accumulation of wives and progeny (vv 18-23), all common themes in the Chronicler's history. Japhet views these individual episodes in the same

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<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>22</sup> Knoppers, "Rehoboam in Chronicles," 430-437. He also suggests that Jeroboam took advantage of the weak king in Shechem, but see above.

positive light, but adds the helpful literary observation that each one serves as an antithesis to Jeroboam with reports of his building activity (1 Kgs 12:25), religious reforms (12:26-13:14), and family (14:1-18).<sup>23</sup> However, though the Chronicler certainly uses these episodes to show a period of recovery and perhaps even prosperity for the southern kingdom at this time, a deeper investigation demonstrates that they do not necessarily reflect quite so positively on Rehoboam himself.

As a first note, the building projects cannot signify a reward as they did in the reigns of Asa (14:5-6), Jehoshaphat (17:12b), or Uzziah (26:9-10). The above survey of 10:1-11:4 has shown that the Chronicler in no way portrayed Rehoboam as being as faithful as these three kings, each of whom sought (שָׁרַץ) Yahweh (14:6; 17:4; 26:5). Moreover, as we saw in their reigns, the Chronicler does not have blessing as his primary purpose for the building projects even with them, but to show how those kings became preoccupied with their defense systems as opposed to placing their trust in Yahweh's presence in the temple. The accumulation of a large military accompanied the records of building fortresses for each of these kings to strengthen this point (14:7; 17:2, 13b-19; 26:11-13). The lack of any report of a large army for Rehoboam likely reveals that Yahweh did not bless him with one. Yet even though he had far less prosperous circumstances than the kings listed above, he still had the same preoccupation with building his defenses to keep Judah safe and secure (cf. לְמִצּוֹר in v 5, "for defense").<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 663.

<sup>24</sup> T. R. Hobbs ("The 'Fortresses of Rehoboam': Another Look," in *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in Memory of H. Neil Richardson* [ed. L. M. Hopfe; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994], 41-64) argues that the Chronicler intended these centers as cities of restraint for internal purposes and not for defensive measures, but see the arguments of Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 172.

As another comparison, according to Ben Zvi, the Chronicler has argued that Rehoboam built up more sites than Jeroboam since he faithfully obeyed the man of God in 11:1-4,<sup>25</sup> but we have already seen how that passage does not really praise Rehoboam. Moreover, the Chronicler's adaptations in 10:1-11:4 as a whole have (if anything) depicted Jeroboam positively as the one who stood with all Israel, unlike the unfaithful Rehoboam. Furthermore, Jeroboam's acquisition of Shechem (probably for a capital) and Peniel in Transjordan represent expansive measures for his new kingdom, whereas Rehoboam's carelessness confined him to the southern part of the country.<sup>26</sup> Rehoboam's shrunken rule over only Judah and Benjamin (11:12) marks a dramatic decline from the halcyon days of Solomon whose rule extended from the Euphrates to the border of Egypt (9:26).

In a similar vein, Knoppers argues that the Chronicler portrays Rehoboam's first three years as a time of fidelity through several uses of the root *חזק* (vv 11, 12; for v 17, see below),<sup>27</sup> but this theme mainly shows up in contexts where a king does pious acts for the temple (e.g. 24:5; 29:3). In other contexts, it can show blessing (i.e. as opposed to the faithfulness that merited it, e.g. 1:1; 17:1), or even appear ominously as I will show for Rehoboam below (see also 12:1; 21:4; 26:16).

In contrast to the building notices, the details of proper cult observance (11:13-17) and a larger family (vv 18-23) do reflect positively on Rehoboam, just not in the ways commentators have generally stated. The first of these reports how all the priests and

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<sup>25</sup> E. Ben Zvi, "The Chronicler as a Historian: Building Texts," in *The Chronicler as Historian* (eds. M. P. Graham, et al.), 132-149 (142-143). Followed by Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 172. See also McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 265.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Aharoni, et al., *Macmillan Bible Atlas*, 90.

<sup>27</sup> Knoppers, "Rehoboam in Chronicles," 435. He also mentions the occurrences in 12:1, 13; 13:7, 8, but does not explain how they all fit together.

Levites in all Israel came to Rehoboam early in his reign, yet not as a reward for anything that he did but because Jeroboam banished them from his kingdom when he set up his own false cult (11:13-15). Whereas 1 Kgs 12:26-13:14 describes Jeroboam's missed opportunity to have an everlasting kingdom blessed by Yahweh (cf. 11:37-39), the Chronicler tells how Rehoboam benefitted from that mistake. Of course, the underlying implication is that Rehoboam must have had an orthodox, functioning cult to receive the clergy, but the text does not stress that at all.

The next two verses describe how all the faithful in Israel followed the clergy to Jerusalem in order to offer sacrifices and strengthen the kingdom for three years (vv 16-17). The Chronicler praises this group of people with much of his favorite vocabulary, "those who set their hearts to seek (דרש) Yahweh," "to sacrifice to Yahweh, the God of their fathers," and "they strengthened (חזק) the kingdom" (vv 16-17). Quite remarkably, however, the passage still says nothing positive that Rehoboam himself did. He cannot be a part of the group that sought Yahweh since the text says that "they made Rehoboam secure..." (v 17). Hence, it cannot serve as evidence that this represents a "faithful" period in the Chronicler's structuring of his reign.<sup>28</sup> Rehoboam simply received this massive blessing on account of Jeroboam's idolatrous mistake. The Chronicler mentions this turn of events to mark the moment when the northern kingdom turned wicked, a watershed moment that would significantly affect Judah later.<sup>29</sup> He emphasizes the importance of the

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<sup>28</sup> *Contra* Ben Zvi, *History, Literature, Theology*, 126; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 168-169, 178; Knoppers, "Rehoboam in Chronicles," 435.

<sup>29</sup> The Chronicler needed to mention this in order to make the northern kingdom a negative paradigm. See Chapter 4.2.

temple cult for the strength of the kingdom, but instead of attributing pious acts to Rehoboam, he criticizes Jeroboam and praises the faithful among the people.

When the Chronicler moves into the details of Rehoboam's family (2 Chr 11:18-23), he still never mentions anything pious that Rehoboam did. In Chapter 2.1.2, we saw that the Chronicler used a text about David's growing family to show Yahweh's affirmation of his kingship despite extenuating circumstances, i.e. the first failed attempt to transfer the ark (cf. 1 Chr 13-14). This theme occurs for only two other kings, Rehoboam and Abijah, who reigned in similar circumstances (i.e. to each other).<sup>30</sup> Both ruled over a much smaller kingdom than David and Solomon before them, the latter two having the support of all Israel. For this reason, the Chronicler records the many wives and children for Rehoboam and Abijah to show the vitality of the Davidic kingship in the southern kingdom at this tenuous time, a stark contrast to the story of Jeroboam's sick son who died (1 Kgs 14:1-18). Rehoboam had the opportunity to insure a smooth transition for his son Abijah after him, which was remarkable since he did it in the first five years of his reign (cf. 12:2). Perhaps the large family serves in part as a blessing for welcoming all the faithful from the north into Judah, but Rehoboam has not done much else positive to this point. The absence of records for numerous wives and children after Abijah demonstrates that it cannot serve as a major theme of blessing for pious behavior.<sup>31</sup>

Even with this presumably positive note, the Chronicler concludes these family records with how Rehoboam placed his sons throughout the fortified cities he built earlier

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<sup>30</sup> Knoppers ("Rehoboam in Chronicles," 435) mentions two other texts (1 Chr 25:5; 26:4-5), but it does not seem likely that the Chronicler would develop this separate aspect of the theme apart from the accounts of the various kings if it were that important to him.

<sup>31</sup> One also wonders why the Chronicler would not include it also for Solomon since he portrayed him positively and certainly had source material with the necessary information (cf. 1 Kgs 11:1-9).



(11:23).<sup>32</sup> This notice resumes the topic after he introduced it at the beginning of the post-secession period (vv 5-12). Rehoboam perhaps received blessing in this period through minimal piety, but the Chronicler primarily stresses the point that the king concentrated his attention mainly on the construction of military outposts and his fortification of them. Such an ominous addendum makes a smooth transition to the attack by Shishak (12:1-2).

### **6.1.3. Near End and Repentance (2 Chr 12)**

As with so many of the previous chapter's kings, the Chronicler asserts that all this strength Rehoboam built up led to his prideful fall: "When the kingdom of Rehoboam was established and he became strong (כחזקתו), he abandoned (עזב) the law of Yahweh and all Israel with him" (12:1). This transition in the narrative resembles a comparable turn for Uzziah, who grew proud "when he became strong" (כחזקתו, 26:16). The Chronicler makes the attack from Shishak in 1 Kgs 14:25-28 explicitly a punishment to Rehoboam with his insertion at the beginning, "because they had been unfaithful (מעל) to Yahweh" (12:2 // 1 Kgs 14:25). The strength of the assault (1,200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen, and an innumerable army in v 3) demonstrates the certainty that Rehoboam would receive the full consequences for his actions. The Chronicler also notes in v 4 that the fortified cities in which Rehoboam invested his energy at the beginning of his reign did him no good in light of his sins (cf. 11:5-12, 23).

Though the Chronicler does not give specific details of Rehoboam's sin, he uses two of his paradigmatic words to imply that his transgression involved the temple cult.

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<sup>32</sup> Many translations render ויבן as "he acted wisely...", which would portray Rehoboam's action in a positive light. However, this would give a new meaning to the root בן. See K. Hognesius, *The Text of 2 Chronicles 1-16: A Critical Edition with Textual Commentary* (ConBOT 51; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003), 152-155.

First, the Chronicler gave the verb עִזַּב a certain cultic nuance with David's warning to Solomon of the harsh consequences that would come if he did not concentrate on temple construction: "If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake (עִזַּב) him, he will cast you off forever. See to it now, for Yahweh has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and do it!" (1 Chr 28:9b-10).<sup>33</sup> The use of a similar refrain from the mouth of Shemaiah a few chapters later reveals the pertinence of David's charge to Solomon: "Thus says Yahweh, 'You have abandoned (עִזַּב) me, so I have abandoned (עִזַּב) you to Shishak'" (2 Chr 12:5). One may object that the text in 2 Chr 12:1 states that Rehoboam abandoned "the law of Yahweh" (i.e. not the temple), but the law in Chronicles often has a specific application with respect to temple practices, such as the offerings the priests should make there as opposed to the high places (e.g. 14:2-3; 23:18; 31:3-4).

Secondly, the Chronicler explains that Shishak came to Jerusalem "because they (i.e. all Israel led by Rehoboam) had been unfaithful (מָעַל) to Yahweh" (12:2). We noted in Chapter 1 how this verb in the Hebrew Bible most often describes a breach in the relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel, and that the Chronicler has made the latter's temple duties their central obligation in this pact (cf. 1 Chr 9:1; 2 Chr 36:14). The Chronicler's mere placement of the word here intimates that Rehoboam had stopped his pursuit of these responsibilities.

Although Shishak's attack marks the lowest point for this king, who appears to receive as much judgment as any other king, the Chronicler claims that Rehoboam and his captains humbled themselves (כָּנַע) at Shemaiah's words (vv 6, 12; cf. 7:14). Their confession that "Yahweh is just" also acknowledged that they had not acted as they should.

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<sup>33</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 1.

For this reason, Yahweh's destruction stopped before Jerusalem (v 7). It is important to keep in mind how wicked the Chronicler has portrayed Rehoboam as being up to this point for his theme of repentance to have full effect. Solomon had left him a kingdom that stretched from the Euphrates to the border of Egypt (9:26), but Rehoboam through his refusal to listen to "all Israel" or even wise counsel lost ten of the tribes so that all he had were Judah and Benjamin (11:12). His kingdom was whittled down even further to only Jerusalem after he abandoned Yahweh and acted unfaithfully (12:1-13a).<sup>34</sup> The Chronicler's own final judgment of him speaks very harshly, "And he did evil, for he did not set his heart to seek Yahweh" (12:14).<sup>35</sup> Despite all this, the Chronicler uses this dreadfully harsh portrayal to affirm that one of Israel's most wicked kings could come through it all by humbling himself and turning to Yahweh.

## 6.2. Manasseh (2 Chr 33:1-20)

The theme of repentance also plays a central role in the Chronicler's reworking of Manasseh's reign, as scholars have generally recognized. The account in 2 Kgs 21 gives him possibly the worst assessment of all the monarchs in Judah since he committed so much idolatry (cf. vv 1-9) and led the people to do likewise (v 16). For this reason, Manasseh takes the final blame for Judah's eventual exile to Babylon (23:26-27; 24:3-4). However, during his own reign punishment never appears to come, but he only receives the

<sup>34</sup> Hence, the statement in 12:13 ("And King Rehoboam *strengthened himself* in Jerusalem...") does not portray Rehoboam in a positive light as many of the other occurrences of חִזַּק in the hithpael. See also 2 Chr 21:4.

<sup>35</sup> Welten (*Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung*, 14) avers that 12:14 must be a gloss since it stands in contradicts to the positive report found in 11:5-23, the repentance from his fall in 12:12, and the fact that the Chronicler says his kingdom was established in v 13. I have already responded to the first and third of these arguments, whereas the second fits into what I say above. Moreover, Welten's proposal seems too convenient for his interpretation and does not provide a reason why a glossator would even insert it. On the other hand, the vocabulary of 12:14 exhibits some of the Chronicler's favorite expressions involving דָּרַשׁ and לָב.

message of assured judgment from prophets (21:10-15). As the Chronicler did with Rehoboam, he goes beyond the account in 2 Kgs 21 to portray Manasseh as a thoroughly wicked king, who committed atrocious sin and also suffered judgment, before he transforms him into an unexpected penitent.

### **6.2.1. Manasseh's Sin and Punishment (2 Chr 33:1-11)**

For the early part of Manasseh's reign, the Chronicler does not lighten the charge against him at all, but records more sins for him than any other king (cf. 33:1-9 // 2 Kgs 21:1-9). As with Ahaz, his actions compare to the nations that Yahweh drove out before Israel (v 2; cf. 28:3). The Chronicler catalogs the many cultic abominations that Manasseh committed throughout his long fifty-five year reign (vv 3-6). Unlike the faithful kings who either built or repaired the temple, he notes the several illicit cult objects and centers that Manasseh built (בנה) to show his active role in both demolishing the progress made by Hezekiah and reviving the idolatry of Ahaz.<sup>36</sup> The Chronicler records Manasseh's most audacious act in v 7, where he installed an idol of his own making into the temple, an action that marked his complete turn away from Yahweh.<sup>37</sup> As a final note, the Chronicler avers that Manasseh's sinful actions also led astray Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem

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<sup>36</sup> Welten (ibid., 31-34) does discuss the building works of Manasseh, but only those after his repentance in vv 12-13 (see below). However, as opposed to the singular occurrence there, בנה occurs three times here to describe his idolatry. Moreover, of these two types of building activity, it is the idolatrous works that the Chronicler will highlight in Manasseh's final evaluation at v 19. Clearly, building activity could not have always been a positive activity. Why would not the Chronicler remove it here if this was such a significant *topos*?

<sup>37</sup> For a thorough analysis of how each of the borrowed offenses listed in vv 3-7 by the Chronicler fits in his larger narrative, cf. G. N. Knoppers, "Saint or Sinner? Manasseh in Chronicles," in *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes* (eds. J. Corley and H. van Grol; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 211-229 (220-224). For a discussion of the pagan cults in general, cf. J. W. McKay, *Religion in Judah under the Assyrians 732-609 BC* (SBT 26; London: S.C.M. Press, 1973), 20-27.

(v 9).<sup>38</sup> Though most of this material likely comes from his source, it still demonstrates that Manasseh warranted the same punishment as the other unfaithful kings before him with his transgressions against the cult and his deception of the people.<sup>39</sup>

All that remains for the Chronicler now is to illustrate the consequences for Manasseh's behavior. He only briefly mentions the warning of Yahweh sent to both king and people, but then quickly notes that they did not heed it (2 Chr 33:10, cf. 2 Kgs 21:10-15).<sup>40</sup> As a result, Yahweh mobilized the Assyrian army so that they could attack the vulnerable Judah (v 11). Though the assault clearly came on the whole nation,<sup>41</sup> the Chronicler focuses the punishment solely on its wicked leader, Manasseh. As Amaziah before him (25:23) and many of the people during Ahaz's turbulent tenure (28:5, 8, 17), Manasseh was captured by the oncoming invader.<sup>42</sup> The references to "hooks" and "chains of bronze", in addition to the remote destination of Babylon,<sup>43</sup> illustrate the severity of the punishment.<sup>44</sup> In this light, Manasseh received worse punishment than even Ahaz, who himself never suffered from the many attacks that came upon Judah in his reign.

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<sup>38</sup> The Chronicler combines the data from 2 Kgs 21:9, 16 to give the same idea in 2 Chr 33:9, but also puts his own touch on it with the phrase "Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem"; for this phrase, cf. 2 Chr 20:15, 18, 20; 21:11, 13; 32:33; 34:30, and many more with simply "Judah and Jerusalem".

<sup>39</sup> W. Johnstone argues that Manasseh committed even more evil than Ahaz in Chronicles; cf. *2 Chronicles 10-2 Chronicles 36: Guilt and Atonement* (JSOTSup 254; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 223-226.

<sup>40</sup> For the dual themes of warning and repentance that permeate Chronicles, cf. Japhet, *Ideology*, 176-191.

<sup>41</sup> Note the use of עליהם in v 11. It likely refers to the same group that received the warning in v 10.

<sup>42</sup> The Chronicler uses different verbs for each of these passages (חָפַשׁ, שָׁבַח, לָכַד), though they all appear to be synonyms aimed at the idea of captivity.

<sup>43</sup> Much discussion has focused on the historical probability of this detail. For discussion, cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 473-477.

<sup>44</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 1009) calls this a "mild reaction" from God using the punishment to Jehoram as a comparison (21:16-19), but it seems difficult to imagine much worse than deportation to Babylon. The sparseness of detail merely allows the focus to come directly upon the guilt of the perpetrator himself.

### 6.2.2. Manasseh's Repentance and Reforms (2 Chr 33:12-20)

Nevertheless, set against this chaotic background, the Chronicler depicts another glimmer of hope to even the greatest of offenders. He describes Manasseh's predicament in the fashion of earlier precarious scenarios with the verb צָרַר in the hiphil, "when he was in distress..." (v 12). The verb first appears in Solomon's temple dedication speech, where he pled with Yahweh to hear the penitent prayers from his people whenever the enemy might distress them and, accordingly, to forgive every sincere heart (6:28 // 2 Kgs 8:37).<sup>45</sup> The verb next occurs at the end of Ahaz's reign, after he and the people of Judah had already suffered multiple attacks for their rampant idolatry. The last of the attackers, not to mention the most formidable, the king of Assyria, came to afflict (צָרַר) Ahaz (28:20), but in the time of his affliction (צָרַר) he became even more faithless to Yahweh (v 22). In 33:12, the Chronicler uses this verb one last time to assert that Manasseh did not follow in the footsteps of his grandfather Ahaz, but "when he was in distress (צָרַר)... he humbled himself (כָּנַע) greatly before the God of his fathers" (v 12). For this good behavior, Yahweh immediately brought him back to Jerusalem to restore him in his own kingdom (v 13). Though he needed to be exiled to the distant Babylon, he *finally* submitted to Yahweh as his God.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Two uses of this verb in the qal also come at critical points in the Chronicler's narrative: David's plea in 1 Chr 21:13 and Azariah's prophecy at 2 Chr 15:4.

<sup>46</sup> Mosis (*Untersuchungen*, 192-194) has provided much insight into the Manasseh narrative as falling into a typological paradigm of exile and restoration, rather than a rigid doctrine of individual retribution, a pattern that emerges as early as 1 Chr 10:13-14. Mosis is followed by Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 389, and W. M. Schniedewind, "The Source Citations of Manasseh: King Manasseh in History and Homily," *VT* 41 (1991): 450-461 (451-455).

Of the judgment (vv 10-11) and repentance (vv 12-13) inserted by the Chronicler, scholarship has generally let the latter dictate how to interpret the rest of his reign.<sup>47</sup> Thus, when the Chronicler next illustrates the ways in which Manasseh took advantage of his second (perhaps even last) chance, some scholars draw attention to his building activities.<sup>48</sup> For example, as a first measure, Manasseh strengthened the nation's defenses by building a very high wall around the city of David and placing commanders in all the fortified cities (v 14). Welten argues that, despite the lack of expected theological terminology, these initiatives belong in his *topos* for *Bauen* simply for the fact that they are disconnected from military events and appear in the positive portion of the king's reign.<sup>49</sup>

However, the Chronicler does place the building notice into a military context with the note that the Assyrians just came with their "commanders of the army" to take Manasseh captive (v 11). Moreover, the text says nothing about any resolution between the two nations so that Judah still appears concerned over another attack.<sup>50</sup> It certainly would not make sense to read any type of truce or friendship between them in vv 12-13 since the Chronicler would never have Yahweh reward such behavior. After all, the Chronicler had

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<sup>47</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 1001) states that the Chronicler changes the one-sided depiction in 2 Kgs 21 to a reign with two eras, one with sin and one with repentance; Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 394) avers, "The influence of 7:14 on the preceding paragraph is quite evident." See also De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 398; McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 356.

<sup>48</sup> The Chronicler forges a thematic connection between the two pericopes (i.e. vv 12-13 and 14-17) with the preposition כִּן. See my discussion on this feature in the reigns of Jehoshaphat (18:2; 20:1, 35) and Hezekiah (32:1).

<sup>49</sup> Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung*, 33. Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 394) argues that this verse illustrates once more the blessing enjoyed by faithful kings. He cites 11:5-12 in conjunction with this, but see my discussion there.

<sup>50</sup> It is difficult to piece together the historical background (if any) for this episode. Though some Assyrian records show Manasseh as an obedient vassal to his Assyrian overlord (cf. *ANET* 291, 294), many details still remain unknown. E. L. Ehrlich ("Der Aufenthalt des Königs Manasse in Babylon," *TZ* 21 [1965]: 281-286) has supposed that the event could coincide with the widespread unrest throughout the Assyrian empire. Regardless of what might be an historical kernel, the Chronicler aims to show that Manasseh received judgment for his sins, then deliverance for his return to Yahweh. Nothing in the text intimates reconciliation with the Assyrian king.

just pictured the Assyrians as completely hostile to Yahweh in the reign of Hezekiah (32:10-19).<sup>51</sup> For this reason, Manasseh's return from captivity looks as miraculous as Judah's victory over the Assyrians in Hezekiah's time, when Yahweh sent an angel to kill their vast army (32:21). Similarly, though the Assyrians had Manasseh in very great distress, the Judean king essentially *turned to Yahweh* (i.e. did not submit to the Assyrians) who miraculously freed him from his predicament.<sup>52</sup>

With this in mind, the Chronicler does not attempt to show the blessing that Yahweh bestows upon Manasseh for his pious conversion in v 14, but the king's *anxiety* about another sudden assault.<sup>53</sup> The difference between Manasseh and his predecessor Hezekiah in this regard is striking. After seeing attack upon attack with much of Judah going into captivity throughout his father Ahaz's reign (cf. 28:5, 8, 16), Hezekiah made his first initiative upon becoming king to reestablish the temple service because he knew this would be the best way to restore the nation to the land (cf. 29:5-11; 30:6-9). He focused all his energy on carrying this reform movement as far as possible, only taking military measures at the last minute in the face of the quickly approaching Assyrian army. Juxtaposed with his father, Manasseh's construction of a tall defense wall and installation of army commanders in all the fortified cities (v 14) show the marks of a king with intense worry about the stability of his kingdom, not a period of blessing that abounds from a period of obedience.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> A change in the depiction of the foreign king will come with Neco (cf. 35:21), but this becomes apparent only when the Chronicler specifically says so. See the discussion in Chapter 5.6.2.

<sup>52</sup> Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 317) comes to a similar conclusion, "... schildert der Chr. nun freilich nicht als einen Gnadenakt Assurbanipals, sondern als einen Gnadenakt Jahwes."

<sup>53</sup> Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 1010) comments that these projects are of "military significance" and take their aim at the kingdom's "power to resist".

<sup>54</sup> Again, see the earlier discussion on Rehoboam who has a similar period of worry (11:5-12, 23).



Some of Manasseh's other reforms reveal the more pious side of the repentant king. The Chronicler first details Manasseh's work of undoing the idolatrous cultic arrangements that he made at the beginning of his reign, such as removing the foreign altars and the idol from the temple (v 15; cf. vv 3-9). In their place, he reinstated the altar of Yahweh there, offered sacrifices on it, and told Judah to serve Yahweh the God of Israel also (v 16).<sup>55</sup> Surely, this transformation surprises anyone who has read of Manasseh in 2 Kgs 21 since there he triggered the ultimate fall of the kingdom.

Nevertheless, on closer inspection, the good does not outweigh the earlier bad. As Japhet points out, Manasseh corrects none of the numerous idolatrous practices from v 6 in this reform, while v 17 explicitly states that the high places remained.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, the comparisons with the massive reforms of his father Hezekiah make this movement look even weaker. Hezekiah had orchestrated a thorough cleansing of the temple, organized a joyous Passover with all Israel reminiscent of the time of the united monarchy, and set up the cult for a long time to come, all in seven months (2 Chr 29-31). Though Manasseh did clean up the temple from some of his own corruption of it, he still failed to rally the people to his new cause. The exception in v 17 shows the willingness and pious desire of the people to worship Yahweh even though they did not have an adequate infrastructure to do it properly, a lack that could only be attributed to Manasseh.

Though these shortcomings reflect poorly on Manasseh, the Chronicler ultimately uses them to focus more acutely on the king's repentance. He criticizes Manasseh just as badly as the account in 2 Kgs 21 and, moreover, shows that this behavior warranted harsh,

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<sup>55</sup> Though somewhat positive, the phrase *וַיֹּאמֶר* hardly connotes a bold command as many of the translations suggest; cf. ESV, NRSV, NASB, and also Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 263; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 472.

<sup>56</sup> Japhet, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 1010.

divine judgment. This narrowed focus allows the Chronicler to illustrate *a fortiori* that not even the most wicked of kings could ever lose the opportunity to call out to Yahweh according to the precept for deliverance in 7:14.

## Chapter 7

### Summary and Conclusions

The Chronicler stresses the importance of temple faithfulness by illustrating its great benefits and consequences in war narratives throughout Israel's monarchic past. Israel's kings had the opportunity to express such piety through maintaining a functional temple cult and directing the people to it. The kings who pursued these ends consistently earned a firm place in the land by winning wars throughout the Chronicler's narrative, while those kings who did not suffered attack and saw the scope of their dominion diminish.

The dual themes of war and temple provide the best insight into how the Chronicler evaluates each of the kings. Because David pioneered the two most foundational elements of the temple cult (i.e. gathering all Israel [1 Chr 11-16] and providing the building materials [17-29]), the Chronicler sets him as the ideal for all the kings after him to follow. Solomon did this by completing the construction of the temple and gathering all Israel for worship at its dedication ceremony (2 Chr 6-7). The Chronicler presents Hezekiah much like David in the sense that the temple cult had completely stopped functioning before he began his reign. Despite these grim circumstances, Hezekiah revived its service and led a celebration there that brought a joy unseen since the time of the united monarchy (2 Chr 30:26). For this reason, all three of these kings brought rest to the land and achieved recognition from Israel's neighbors (cf. 1 Chr 14:17; 22:18; 2 Chr 9:26; 32:22-23).

The kings Abijah and Jotham receive far less attention, but the Chronicler still emphasizes primarily their ability to remain strong in the land because of their temple

faithfulness. He has Abijah articulate this principle clearly in the second half of his speech to Jeroboam (2 Chr 13:8-12). Even though the king did not even mention the temple specifically, he did affirm that the priests and Levites were at least performing the cult's basic functions, which distinguishes him from the apostate Jeroboam (cf. 11:14-15). As for Jotham, the Chronicler asserts that he did all the positive things that his father Uzziah did (using the plainest possible terms, cf. 26:5) without committing the same sin (27:2). As expected, both kings reaped their rewards on the battlefield for their acts of faithfulness toward the temple (13:15-19; 27:5).

In contrast, the Chronicler shows how the unfaithful kings constantly underwent attack because they never supported orthodox temple practices. While David prioritized the retrieval of the ark early in his reign (1 Chr 13-16), Saul never even tried (10:13-14; 13:3). Jehoram and Ahaziah chose the idolatrous cult of the northern kingdom over the pious practices of Asa and Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 21:12-13; 22:3-4), and Ahaz integrated the rites of those who inhabited the land before the Israelites into Judah's religious atmosphere (28:2-4) in addition to shutting down the temple (v 24). For all of this, Yahweh almost brought Judah to a complete end in each of their reigns with attack after attack from their neighbors (21:16-17; 22:7-9; 28:5, 17-18, 20). For Amon's brief reign, his idolatry led to an attack on the smallest of scales with his assassination by his own servants (33:24). Lastly, the Chronicler illustrates how the final four kings at no point turn to Yahweh for help (2 Chr 36:13; cf. 7:14) so that each of them suffer attack and even exile from the kings of Egypt and then Babylon. The people followed their leaders, polluting the temple and going into exile themselves (36:14-16).

The remaining kings all present mixed cases. None of the faithful kings from Chapter 5 belong in the group of the completely faithful kings since they all eventually commit some form of transgression against the temple cult. The Chronicler claims that Josiah conducted reforms greater than any other king before him (2 Chr 35:18), yet he failed to seek Yahweh when he perceived a potential threat to his kingdom (vv 20-24). Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Uzziah each saw (in varying degrees) how much Yahweh would bless them if they would simply seek him (14:2-6; 17:3-4; 26:5), but none of them could maintain that faithfulness throughout their long reigns. Though they did not die in battle, their successes came to a sudden halt. Asa and Uzziah no longer conquered Judah's neighbors, while Jehoshaphat saw his expansive commercial ventures fail. In contrast, Joash and Amaziah have a much stronger resemblance to the completely unfaithful kings who suffered far worse fates. Even though both had mildly positive starts, each eventually served other gods and provoked divine wrath as expressed through foreign attack and assassination (24:23-25; 25:20-24, 27). Thus, through the broad range of faithful kings who faltered, the Chronicler emphasizes the need for continual faithfulness to the temple cult and its practices.

In a similar vein, the two unfaithful kings discussed in Chapter 6 do not fit neatly into any of the other categories. The Chronicler not only maintains the negative depiction of Rehoboam and Manasseh from the books of Kings, he intensifies it. Although Yahweh sent the imposing armies of Egypt and Assyria as punishment for their immense sins, each of these kings humbled himself (כָּנַע) as a measure of last resort (12:6, 12; 33:12). For the Chronicler to aver that David and Hezekiah repented from their wrongdoing should shock

no one (1 Chr 21:8; 2 Chr 32:26), but to attribute such humility to two of the worst kings in Judah's history demonstrates that no one lies beyond the pale of Yahweh's forgiveness.

These findings have shown that the temple stands at the forefront of the Chronicler's literary intentions and scholars must give it primary consideration when interpreting his message. The completely faithful kings in Chapter 3 all excelled in this area, but that does not mean the Chronicler considered them perfect. Indeed, he maintains Solomon's statement that there is no one that does not sin (2 Chr 6:36). For the three kings he praises most (i.e. David, Solomon, Hezekiah), he even alludes to some of their worst mistakes (cf. 1 Chr 21:1-7; 2 Chr 9:29; 32:24-31). These concessions allow him to accentuate the type of faithfulness that he does regard the most. Other *topoi* such as building projects and military musters can show the blessings that come to certain kings, but more often reveal a temptation for them to put their trust in something other than Yahweh. A king's attitude toward the temple cult, on the other hand, represents the most important measure of his faithfulness.

Further to this point, the Chronicler does not only promote the temple with regard to the maintenance of the building, but also the extensive participation of the people in its service as a necessary component. The Chronicler shows this first in the reign of David, who rallied "all Israel" around the ark of the covenant for worship (1 Chr 13-16). Solomon maintained this ideal through the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 7:6, 8) and until the end of his reign (2 Chr 9:30). Hezekiah tried to revive this idealized gathering of the people (30:5) after Ahaz brought it to ruin (28:23). In addition to his use of the technical term "all Israel" itself, the Chronicler shows other faithful kings in the divided monarchy attempt to

gather Israelites to the temple from beyond the Judean border (e.g. Asa in 15:9). The people's solidarity in worship at the temple also spoke to his post-exilic audience. Although the Chronicler demonstrates the exclusivity of the one truly orthodox temple in Jerusalem, he also gives an inclusive message to all Israelites who are willing to come there for worship.

The Chronicler constantly illustrates the importance of temple faithfulness through war narratives for the different kings. The books of Kings do not stress this relationship, but even appear to contradict it in certain instances. For example, that account shows how Ahaz prospered for his constant idolatrous practices (2 Kgs 16:7-9) and never mentions how Manasseh himself actually received punishment for his wickedness (21:1-18). With each of these kings, the Chronicler claims that Yahweh punished them with sudden attacks for their acts of unfaithfulness (2 Chr 28:5, 17-18, 20; 33:11). The Chronicler also brings clarity to the reports of temple reformers who still suffered from outside attack such as Joash (2 Kgs 12:4-18) and Amaziah (14:3-14). He explains that they did not persevere in their temple faithfulness, but provoked punishment from Yahweh when they turned to other gods (Joash, 2 Chr 24:18; Amaziah, 25:14).

For those who succeeded in war, the Chronicler greatly emphasizes their attention to the cult as the key to their success. Through his tight rearrangement of texts from the books of Samuel, he shows how David conquered Jerusalem (1 Chr 11-12) and defeated the Philistines (1 Chr 13-14) because he sought to draw people to worship Yahweh, then subdued the rest of Israel's surrounding neighbors for his desire to build the temple (1 Chr 17-20). Solomon's successful completion of the temple (not his request for wisdom as in 1

Kings) enabled him to expand Israel's borders to a greater extent (2 Chr 9:26). In the divided monarchy, the Chronicler inserts war reports for Abijah (13:14), Asa (14:10), and Jehoshaphat (20:6-12) to illustrate how they all called upon Yahweh in the face of oncoming threat according to his prescription at the temple dedication (cf. 7:13-16). His extensive adaptation of Hezekiah's reign serves the same purpose (2 Chr 29-32; cf. 32:20). This reliance on Yahweh's presence in the temple allowed them to strengthen their position in the land (cf. 13:15-19; 14:11-14; 20:22-30; 32:21-23). Even the thoroughly wicked kings, Rehoboam and Manasseh, utilized this provision to preserve their kingdom when all hope appeared lost (12:1-12; 33:1-13).

These two themes of temple and war give the Chronicler's doctrine of retribution much more consistency and precision than scholars have recognized. Through his adaptation of the books of Samuel and Kings, the Chronicler demonstrates that temple faithfulness always brought Israel peace and security.



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