

The Second Book of the CHRONICLES

[A combined introduction to 1 and 2 Chronicles is given immediately preceding the comment on 1 Chronicles.]

CHAPTER 1

1 *The solemn offering of Solomon at Gibeon. 7 Solomon's choice of wisdom is blessed by God. 13 Solomon's strength and wealth.*

1. Was strengthened. Or, "strengthened himself," or, "established himself."

Was with him. Compare 1 Chron. 9:20; 11:9. One of the most important lessons of the books of Chronicles is that the presence and blessing of the Lord grant men true success.

Magnified him exceedingly. Compare 1 Chron. 29:25.

3. Gibeon. A town 6 mi. (9.6 km.) northwest of Jerusalem. The earlier inhabitants worshiped at high places, and at times this term is employed for centers of the worship of God. According to 1 Kings 3:4 Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifice to God.

The tabernacle. Nearly 480 years (see 1 Kings 6:1) had passed since Moses, on the occasion of the Exodus from Egypt, constructed the wilderness tabernacle. This ancient and sacred structure, which had meant so much in the history of Israel, was still the center of worship for the people of God. It had been erected to serve as a place where God promised to meet with His people (Ex. 25:8, 22; Num. 17:4), and here they continued to come that they might draw close to the presence of the Lord.

4. But the ark. Contrary to the command of Moses, Israel had, in effect, two national centers of worship (Deut. 12:5, 6, 11, 13, 18; 16:2; 26:2; 31:11).

Tent. See 1 Chron. 15:1.

5. The brasen altar. See Ex. 27:1–8 for the directions given concerning the making of the brazen altar, and Ex. 38:1–7 for an account of the making of the altar.

Bezaleel. See Ex. 31:2; 35:30. For his genealogy see 1 Chron. 2:3–20. He descended from Judah through Hezron, Caleb, and Hur (1 Chron. 2:3–5, 18–20).

He put. Heb. *sam*. A number of Hebrew manuscripts read *sham*, an adverb meaning "there." If this reading is adopted the clause becomes, "was there before the tabernacle." The LXX agrees.

Sought unto it. This may also be translated, "sought unto him." In the Hebrew the antecedent of "it" may be either "altar" or "Lord." The LXX supports the reading of the KJV.

6. Before the Lord. The tabernacle built by Moses was God's sanctuary or dwelling place (Ex. 25:8). The altar stood before the entrance to the tabernacle (Ex. 40:6), and was thus regarded as standing before the Lord (see Judges 20:23, 26).

Burnt offerings. Compare 1 Kings 3:4.

7. Did God appear. The communication was in a dream (1 Kings 3:5).

8. Shewed great mercy. Compare the fuller statement of Solomon's reply in 1 Kings 3:6–9.

9. Thy promise. That is, the promise that David's house and that of Solomon should be established forever (1 Chron. 17:23–27; 28:7).

Like the dust. Compare the parallel statement, "a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude" (1 Kings 3:8).

10. Wisdom and knowledge. See on 1 Kings 3:9.

Go out and come in. That is, lead the people as a shepherd (Num. 27:17). Compare 1 Kings 3:7.

12. Wealth, and honour. Compare 1 Chron. 29:25. The abridged account here omits the conditional promise of long life mentioned in 1 Kings 3:14.

13. From his journey to the high place. The words “from his journey” are not found in the Hebrew, which reads simply, “And Solomon came to the high place that was in Gibeon to Jerusalem.” Obviously some explanatory phrase is needed or else, with the LXX, “from the high place” should be read instead of “to the high place.”

The record in Chronicles omits such details as Solomon’s awakening to discover that he had a dream, his coming to Jerusalem to offer up sacrifices at the sanctuary there (1 Kings 3:15), and the narrative of his judgment in the case of the two harlots and the child (1 Kings 3:16–28).

14. Chariots and horsemen. See on 1 Kings 10:26. The account of Solomon’s chariots and horsemen, his treasures of silver and gold, and his activities in the trading of horses and chariots between Egypt and the kings of the Hittites and Syria (2 Chron. 1:14–17) is almost identical with the account in 1 Kings 10:26–29.

15. Gold. This metal is not mentioned in the parallel statement of 1 Kings 10:27 or in 2 Chron. 9:27.

Sycamore trees. This is not the sycamore tree so common in America and England, but the sycamore fig (see 1 Chron. 27:28), which was common in the lowlands of Judah and in the Jordan valley.

16. Linen yarn. See on 1 Kings 10:28 for a full discussion of the parallel text.

17. Hittites. At the time of Solomon the Hittite empire had broken in pieces, but many minor Hittite kingdoms were still in existence in northern Syria, in the vicinity of the Euphrates.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 PK 32
- 2, 3 PK 27
- 11 PK 28
- 7–12 Ed 48; 3T 449; 9T 281
- 12 PK 29
- 15 PK 54
- 16 PK 56

CHAPTER 2

1, 17 *Solomon’s labourers for the building of the temple.* 3 *His embassy to Hiram for workmen and provision of stuff.* 11 *Hiram sendeth him a kind answer.*

1. Determined to build. Chapters 2–7 narrate the building and consecration of the Temple and are in general parallel to 1 Kings 5–8. In the record of Kings, Solomon’s determination to build a house for the Lord is expressed in his message to Hiram of Tyre (1 Kings 5:5).

Name of the Lord. Compare 1 Chron. 22:7, 10; 28:3; 29:16; 1 Kings 5:3, 5. See also Vol. I, pp. 170–173.

House for his kingdom. That is, the royal palace and its various buildings. These are described in 1 Kings 7:1–12, but are only incidentally referred to in 2 Chron. 2:12; 7:11; 8:1.

2. Told out. Literally, “numbered” (see Lev. 15:13), from the Heb. *saphar*.

Threescore and ten thousand. The information here given is repeated in v. 18. See on 1 Kings 5:15, 16.

3. Hiram. Spelled “Hiram” in Kings (1 Kings 5:1, 2, 7, 10, 18), but in Chronicles it is spelled “Hiram,” except in 1 Chron. 14:1.

Verses 3–16 deal with Solomon’s arrangements with Hiram of Tyre. This subject is dealt with in 1 Kings 5:1–18. The record in Kings mentions the envoys sent by Hiram to Solomon (1 Kings 5:1), a detail not found in Chronicles. It also includes as part of Solomon’s message, reference to David’s inability to build the Temple because of his wars (1 Kings 5:3). Solomon’s rest from war (1 Kings 5:4), and the Lord’s promise to David (1 Kings 5:5), three items that are not mentioned in the present chapter, but in 1 Chron. 22:8–10. Items found in Chronicles and not occurring in the record in Kings are: the dealings of Hiram with David (2 Chron. 2:3), the part of the sweet incense, continual shewbread, and morning and evening burnt offerings in the Temple services (v. 4), the greatness of the Temple as a house for God (vs. 5, 6), the request for a skilled worker in metal and cloth (v. 7), the kinds of trees desired (v. 8), and the payments to Hiram’s timber cutters (v. 10).

Even so deal with me. These words, not in the Hebrew, have been supplied by the translators. They are implied by the previous clause, “As thou didst deal with David my father.”

4. To the name of the Lord. The Temple was to be built as a dwelling place for Jehovah, that He might be present with His people (see Ex. 25:8) and that His name might be glorified in the earth. In it the various rites and ceremonies instituted for the tabernacle in the wilderness were to be performed.

Sweet incense. Compare Ex. 30:7, 8. The revelator saw the smoke of the incense accompanying the prayers of the saints into the presence of God (Rev. 8:3, 4). The incense represents the merits and intercession of Christ, His perfect righteousness, which alone makes the worship of sinful beings acceptable to God (see PP 353).

Continual shewbread. See on Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5–8. The shewbread pointed to Christ, the living bread (see John 6:33–35, 48–51; PP 354).

Burnt offerings. See on Ex. 29:38–41; Num. 28:3–10. The fire for these offerings was to burn continually, and was never to go out, day or night (see Lev. 6:9, 12, 13).

The solemn feasts. Compare 1 Chron. 23:31; Num. 28:16 to 29:39; see on Lev. 23.

5. Is great. The Temple itself was not to be great in physical dimensions, but it was to be a structure of matchless beauty and unrivaled splendor, bedecked with precious stones, adorned with burnished gold, and fitly representing the surpassing beauty of holiness that characterizes God and all things connected with Him.

Above all gods. Compare Ex. 18:11; Deut. 10:17; Ps. 77:13; 95:3; 135:5.

6. Cannot contain him. Solomon repeated this thought in his prayer at the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. 6:18; 1 Kings 8:27). No structure on earth can adequately represent the grandeur and glory of God. In writing to Hiram of Tyre, Solomon did not hesitate to extol God for His greatness and goodness. If God’s ancient people had not hesitated constantly to magnify the Lord, and had proclaimed His praises to the nations about, many of earth’s inhabitants would soon have come to acknowledge the true God and would have come to worship at His Temple in Jerusalem.

Who am I? At this point in his life Solomon was a man of deep devotion and marked humility. He recognized his own utter insignificance before the greatness of heaven and the splendor and greatness of God.

7. A man cunning to work. A skilled craftsman.

That can skill to grave. That is, skilled in engraving.

Did provide. Compare 1 Chron. 22:14, 15; 28:21.

8. Fir trees. Probably cypresses.

Algum. Spelled “almug” in 1 Kings 10:11, 12. These trees were brought by the ships of Hiram from Ophir and were used for making pillars for the Temple and the palace, also for manufacturing musical instruments (1 Kings 10:11, 12). This tree cannot now be positively identified, but it may have been sandalwood or a kind of juniper.

Timber. Compare 1 Kings 5:6.

10. I will give. The payment was in food. A measure, or cor, was 220 liters, 61/4 bushels; a bath, 22 liters—5.8 U.S. gallons. The arrangement entered into was mutually advantageous, for Hiram needed foodstuffs of which Phoenicia produced little, and of which Israel had an oversupply, and Solomon needed timber, of which he had little and Phoenicia had much.

11. In writing. That Hiram answered in writing is not explicitly stated in Kings.

Hath loved his people. Hiram had come to recognize that the Lord was with David and that the Israelites were indeed loved by Jehovah. David’s faithfulness in acknowledging the Lord must have created an impression upon the nations round about.

12. Blessed be the Lord. Hiram speaks with deference and respect for the God of the Hebrews, who had so greatly blessed David and his son, a further indication (cf. v. 11) that he had become deeply impressed with the religion of Israel.

Made heaven and earth. The Hebrew religion placed emphasis on the truth that God was the Creator of heaven and earth, and presented this fact as one of the outstanding characteristics that distinguished Jehovah from the gods of the nations about. The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath was designed to throw this characteristic into bold relief. Thus when Hiram spoke of Jehovah he significantly referred to Him as the Creator of heaven and earth and paid due respect to His exalted position and His holy name (see on 1 Kings 5:7).

13. Hiram my father’s. Some prefer to transliterate the entire phrase so as to read Huram-abi.

14. Daughters of Dan. According to 1 Kings 7:14 Hiram is said to have been a “widow’s son of the tribe of Naphtali.” This is not necessarily a contradiction, for the mother could have been of the tribe of Dan and the father originally a member of the tribe of Naphtali, who became a naturalized citizen of Tyre.

Skilful to work. These words, as well as all the rest of the verse, seem to apply to Hiram and not to his Tyrian father.

My lord David. The use of this term denotes subserviency, or at least extreme respect (see Gen. 32:4, 5, 18; 42:10; 2 Kings 8:12). David held in vassalage much of Palestine and Syria, from the borders of Egypt to the Euphrates.

15. Hath spoken of. See v. 10.

16. Flotes. That is, rafts.

Joppa. A city on the Mediterranean coast, about 35 mi. northwest of Jerusalem. It was the natural port of Jerusalem. Jonah took ship from here for Tarshish (Jonah 1:3).

When the Temple was rebuilt after the return from Babylonian captivity, rafts of cedar logs were again floated to Joppa from Tyre (Ezra 3:7). Joppa is now called Jaffa.

17. The strangers. Non-Israelites. This group doubtless consisted mainly of the descendants of the early Canaanite tribes who were not driven out by Israel (see Judges 1:21–36; 1 Kings 9:20, 21).

Numbered them. Probably the census alluded to in 1 Chron. 22:2 is here referred to. The native inhabitants were reduced to bond service at the time of the conquest (see on Judges 1:28, 30, 33, 35; cf. Joshua 9:27).

This section of Chronicles is parallel to 1 Kings 5:13–18, but with several variations. Nothing is said in Chronicles of the first levy of 30,000 men, of whom 10,000 served each month (1 Kings 5:13, 14). The total of 153,600 strangers is recorded, a detail not mentioned in Kings.

18. Threescore and ten thousand. These items are also recorded in 1 Kings 5:15.

Three thousand and six hundred. See on 1 Kings 5:16 for an explanation of the seeming discrepancy between this number and the 3,300 reported there. The 70,000 bearers of burdens, 80,000 hewers in the mountains, and 3,600 overseers give a total of 153,600 workers (see v. 17).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3PK 35

7 PK 63

13, 14 PK 35

14 PK 63

CHAPTER 3

1 *The place, and time of building the temple.* 3 *The measure and ornaments of the house.* 11 *The cherubims.* 14 *The vail and pillars.*

1. Mount Moriah. The place where the Temple was built is here identified as the mountain in the land of Moriah where Abraham proved his willingness to offer Isaac (Gen. 22:2, 9).

Threshingfloor of Ornan. See 2 Sam. 24:16–25; 1 Chron. 21:14–28. The appearance of the angel to David, the command of the heavenly messenger that David should build an altar for sacrifice on the threshing floor of Ornan, and the answer by fire may have been regarded as an indication that this was the site which the Lord had selected for Israel to sacrifice and worship (1 Chron. 22:1–5).

2. Second day. Compare 1 Kings 6:1. The text in Chronicles does not name the month, but in Kings it is identified and called by its ancient name, Zif. In post-exilic times this month was known by the name Iyyar, adopted from the Babylonian word *Aiaru*. Chronicles also does not mention that this was in the 480th year after the Exodus.

Solomon's 4th year may be tentatively placed at 967/66 B.C., autumn to autumn. Accordingly, the Temple was begun in the spring of 966 (see Vol. II, pp. 134, 159).

3. The first measure. On the value of the cubit in different periods of Israelitic history see Vol. I, p. 165.

Threescore cubits. Compare 1 Kings 6:2.

4. Twenty cubits. The porch in front of the house was equal in width to the width of the Temple, which was 20 cu. Its depth was 10 cu. (1 Kings 6:3).

An hundred and twenty. According to 1 Kings 6:2 the height of the Temple was 30 cu. Kings does not give the height of the porch, but the figure here given, 120 cu. or 175

ft. (53.3 m.) would provide a structure unlike anything else known in ancient architecture. A porch 20 x 10 x 120 cu. would be actually a tower of skyscraper dimensions. Perhaps 20 cu. is meant in harmony with several manuscripts of the LXX and the Syriac (see on 1 Kings 6:3).

5. The greater house. That is, the holy place, which was 40 cu. long (1 Kings 6:17).

Fir tree. Probably the cypress.

Overlaid with fine gold. The woodwork of the interior of the Temple was covered with gold. Compare 1 Kings 6:20–22.

6. Precious stones. The Temple was adorned with precious stones collected by David (1 Chron. 29:2). See also 1 Kings 10:11, which relates that Hiram's fleet brought precious stones from Ophir.

Parvaim. This place has not been identified. It is thought to have been in Arabia. The name Parvaim occurs only here in Scripture.

7. The house. The holy place. What is given here is a continuation of v. 5, the object being to explain how the entire chamber, including its beams, posts, walls, and doors, was entirely covered with gold (see 1 Kings 6:21, 22).

Cherubims. On these mural decorations see 1 Kings 6:29. The form "cherubims" is really incorrect, for "cherubim" is a transliteration of the Hebrew plural form and hence does not require the "s" to make a plural. The singular form is "cherub."

8. According to the breadth. The most holy place was a perfect cube, 20 cu. in length, breadth, and height (see 1 Kings 6:20).

Six hundred talents. This would be about 22 tons of gold (18 metric tons) if a talent is to be reckoned at 75.39 lb.

9. Fifty shekels. Since a shekel weighs 11.4 g., or about 0.40 oz. avoirdupois, 50 shekels would be about 1 1/4 lb. (.57 kg.). This would be an insignificant weight for all the nails used in the sanctuary. The reference here is probably to the weight of each individual nail. Some, on the basis of an emendation suggested by the LXX, translate the passage: "The weight of the nails was one shekel to fifty shekels of gold" (see RSV). The nails, possibly used to fasten the sheets of gold on the wood surfaces, would weigh about 900 lb. (410 kg.).

Chambers. See on 1 Chron. 28:11.

10. Two cherubims. See 1 Kings 6:23–28.

Of image work. The exact sense of this phrase is not clear. The LXX reads "of wood." According to 1 Kings 6:23 the cherubim were made of olivewood (see on Neh. 8:15).

11. Twenty cubits. That is, the total length of the wings of the two cherubim was 20 cu. Since the most holy place was 20 cu. wide, the outstretched wings of the two cherubim reached from one wall to the other. Each cherub thus covered 10 cu., with 5 cu. being the length of each wing. Thus the outer wing of each cherub touched one of the outer walls of the building, while the inner wing of each touched that of the other.

12. One wing. See on v. 11.

13. On their feet. The cherubim were in a standing position. Each was 10 cu. in height (1 Kings 6:26).

Inward. Literally, "toward the house." By "house" seems to be meant, "the holy place" (see vs. 5–7). If this be so, the cherubim in Solomon's Temple did not face each other with heads bent downward as was the case with those on the mercy seat (Ex.

25:20), but stood as guardians, one on either end of the ark, and both facing forward toward the holy place and the front of the building, which was toward the east.

14. Vail. This formed the partition between the holy place and the holy of holies. In 1 Kings 6:21 this veil is not mentioned, but reference is made to a “partition” and “chains of gold before the oracle.” The veil was probably suspended from golden chains.

Blue, and purple, and crimson. The colors in the veil of the tabernacle were “blue, and purple, and scarlet” (Ex. 26:31).

Wrought cherubims. Figures of heavenly cherubim were worked into the tapestry of the veil (see Ex. 26:31).

15. Two pillars. See on 1 Kings 7:15.

The chapter. The capital or uppermost member of a pillar.

16. An hundred pomegranates. There were evidently 100 pomegranates in an upper and 100 in a lower row on each pillar, a total of 400 pomegranates for both pillars (2 Chron. 4:13; 1 Kings 7:20, 42; cf. Jer. 52:22, 23).

17. Before the temple. “In the porch of the temple” (1 Kings 7:21). One pillar was set up on each side of the porch forming the entrance to the Temple.

Jachin. Probably meaning “He shall establish.”

Boaz. Probably meaning “In it [or him] is strength.”

CHAPTER 4

1 *The altar of brass.* 2 *The molten sea upon twelve oxen.* 6 *The ten lavers, candlesticks, and tables.* 9 *The courts, and the instruments of brass.* 19 *The instruments of gold.*

1. Moreover he made. Chapter 4 deals with the furniture, vessels, and utensils of the Temple.

Altar of brass. The construction of the brazen (or bronze) altar of burnt offering is not mentioned in the parallel record of 1 Kings 6 and 7, but is incidentally referred to in 1 Kings 8:64; 9:25. That the altar was located in the court before the Temple is clear from 2 Chron. 6:12 and 2 Kings 16:14. The brazen altar in the Temple described by Ezekiel rose in a number of steps or terraces (Eze. 43:13–17).

2. A molten sea. A great basin made of cast metal (for size, see on 1 Kings 7:23).

3. Similitude of oxen. Verses 2–5 agree almost verbatim with 1 Kings 7:23–26; however, where the former mentions two rows of “oxen” the latter reads “knops,” probably meaning gourds. The Hebrew word for “oxen,” *beqarim*, and “gourds,” *peqa'im*, are somewhat similar and may have been confused. Many commentators believe that the text of Chronicles should read as it does in Kings.

4. Twelve oxen. This verse is practically identical with 1 Kings 7:25.

5. An handbreadth. Compare 1 Kings 7:26.

Three thousand baths. In 1 Kings 7:26 the capacity is given as 2,000 baths. It may be that 2,000 baths was the amount ordinarily kept in the tank, but that filled to the brim it would hold 3,000 baths. A bath was 22 liters, about U.S. 5.81 gals. (see on 1 Kings 7:23; Vol. I, p. 167).

6. Ten lavers. Compare 1 Kings 7:38, 39. The ten bases upon which the lavers stood are described in detail in 1 Kings 7:27–37.

7. Candlesticks. Compare 1 Kings 7:49; Jer. 52:19. There were ten candlesticks in Solomon’s Temple. Perhaps the ten were in addition to the original candlestick of the

tabernacle (Ex. 25:31–39; Ex. 37:17–24). Whether or not they were patterned after it is not stated.

8. Ten tables. These ten tables were probably intended for the shewbread (ch. 4:19 and 1 Chron. 28:16 mention “tables” for shewbread), although 1 Kings 7:48 mentions only one table. There was only one table in the tabernacle (Ex. 25:23, 30; Ex. 37:10).

An hundred basons. These basins are mentioned in 1 Kings 7:50, although their number is not given there.

9. Court of the priests. Evidently the “inner court” (see 1 Kings 6:36 and 1 Kings 7:12) and probably the “higher court” of Jer. 36:10.

Great court. Compare 1 Kings 7:12. That the Temple had two courts is clear also from 2 Kings 21:5 and 23:12.

With brass. In the ancient Orient doors were at times covered with bronze. Shalmaneser’s palace at Balawat had great bronze-plated doors supposedly 22 ft. high, with each of the two leaves 6 ft. wide (6.7 m. by 1.8 m.; cf. 1 Kings 6:32).

10. Right side. The sea (v. 2) was set in the court at the southeast corner of the Temple. In Hebrew, directions are given from the standpoint of an individual facing east; thus the right side indicates the south. Compare 1 Kings 7:39. See on Gen. 23:19; Ex. 3:1.

11. Hiram made. Verse 11–18, which describe the items of brass, are parallel to 1 Kings 7:40–47.

The pots. Compare 1 Kings 7:40. The pots here mentioned were used for the boiling of flesh for sacrificial purposes (see 1 Sam. 2:13, 14).

12. Two pillars. Compare ch. 3:15–17.

Pommels. Or, “bowls” (1 Kings 7:41).

The chapiters. The capitals (see on ch. 3:15).

Wreaths. Or, “networks” (1 Kings 7:41). “Wreaths” and “networks” are variant renderings of the same Hebrew word.

13. Pomegranates. Compare 1 Kings 7:42.

14. Bases. There were ten of these for the ten lavers (1 Kings 7:43).

15. One sea. Compare 2 Chron. 4:2; 1 Kings 7:23, 24.

Twelve oxen. Compare 2 Chron. 4:4; 1 Kings 7:25.

16. The pots also. Compare Ex. 27:3. The word here rendered “pots” is there translated “pans.” The pans were used for receiving the ashes. The fleshhooks were forks for handling the flesh of the sacrificial offerings (see 1 Sam. 2:13, 14).

Hiram his father. See on ch. 2:13.

Bright brass. Polished or burnished bronze.

17. Succoth. A town east of the Jordan (Judges 8:4, 5), identified by some as *Tell Deir‘allā* 1 mi. (1.6 km.) north of the Jabbok, and 7 mi. (11.2 km.) northeast of *Tell ed-Dâmiyeh*. Others identify it with *Tell el-Aḥṣaṣ* in the same general area. Jacob built a house at Succoth with booths for his cattle, after his return from Mesopotamia (Gen. 33:17).

Zeredathah. The exact location of this town is not known.

18. Weight of the brass. The parallel passage in 1 Kings 7:47 reads: “And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out.” The weight of the brass vessels was thus not ascertained.

19. All the vessels. Verses 19–22 give a catalogue of the objects of gold (see 1 Kings 7:48–50).

The tables. The parallel passage in 1 Kings 7:48 reads “the table.” Also in 2 Chron. 13:11 and 29:18 only a single table is mentioned. The tabernacle had only one table of shewbread (Ex. 25:23, 30; 37:10). But 2 Chron. 4:8 mentions ten tables in the Temple; see comment there.

20. The candlesticks. See on v. 7.

They should burn. Compare Ex. 27:20.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

17, 19, 21 PK 36

CHAPTER 5

1 *The dedicated treasures.* 2 *The solemn induction of the ark into the oracle.* 11 *God being praised giveth a visible sign of his favour.*

1. Was finished. This verse belongs properly at the close of ch. 4, for it summarizes the material there discussed. In the parallel account it appears as the last verse of the chapter (1 Kings 7:51).

2. Assembled the elders. Chapters 5:2 to 7:22 are an account of the dedication of Solomon’s Temple. See comments on 1 Kings 8:1 to 9:9. 2 Chron. 5:2–11, 14 is an almost exact duplicate of the parallel text in 1 Kings 8:1–11. The record in Chronicles adds one important detail not found in Kings, namely, the circumstances under which the manifestation of God’s presence took place (2 Chron. 5:11–13).

City of David. The ark had been kept in a tent in the City of David (1 Chron. 16:1). The City of David was the lower, or southernmost, part of the city of Jerusalem—the old Jebusite stronghold of Zion captured by David, where he had his royal residence (2 Sam. 5:6–9; 1 Chron. 11:5, 7). The hill where the Temple was built was north of the Zion ridge. The ark had been brought to the City of David from the home of Obed-edom (2 Sam. 6:12, 16; 1 Chron. 15).

3. The feast. The Feast of Tabernacles, which was held following the dedication (see on ch. 7:8–10). This feast was a joyous occasion among the Hebrews (Lev. 23:39–43; cf. Neh. 8:14–18).

4. The Levites. The parallel passage reads, “the priests” (1 Kings 8:3). The record further states that “the priests brought in the ark” (2 Chron. 5:7). So “Levites” here must mean such Levites as were sons of Aaron and hence priests.

5. The tabernacle. The tabernacle was moved from Gibeon (see ch. 1:3; PK 38).

The priests and the Levites. The task of bearing the ark and the furniture of the tabernacle was assigned to the Kohathites (Num. 3:30, 31; Num. 4:4, 15). Aaron, whose sons were priests, was a descendant of Kohath (1 Chron. 6:2, 3, 54). See further on 1 Kings 8:3, 4.

6. Sacrificed sheep and oxen. The sacrifice on this occasion corresponded, on a grander scale, to the services on the occasion of David’s transfer of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to the City of David (2 Sam. 6:13; 1 Chron. 15:26).

7. Cherubims. See ch. 3:11–13.

9. Drew out the staves. See on 1 Kings 8:8.

Unto this day. If the entire book of Chronicles was compiled after the Exile (see Introduction to Chronicles, pp. 115–117), the compiler here preserves a statement written

before the destruction of the Temple (2 Kings 24:13; 25:9, 13–17) and the secreting of the ark in a cave (see PK 453).

10. *Nothing in the ark.* Only the two tables of stone containing the law of God were in the ark proper. The pot of manna and Aaron's rod were no longer there (see on 1 Kings 8:9).

Made a covenant. The law of God was the basis of the old covenant that God made with Israel at Horeb when they came out of Egypt (Ex. 19:5–8; 34:27, 28); and it was also the basis of the new covenant under which He promised to write His law upon the heart (Jer. 31:33, 34).

11. *For all the priests.* From this point onward, until the clause “for his mercy endureth for ever” (v. 13), the record is peculiar to Chronicles. Between the two clauses that form the halves of the short verse of 1 Kings 8:10 the record in Chronicles describes an important item, giving the exact details of the manifestation of the divine presence in the Temple.

Were sanctified. That is, they had ceremonially purified themselves so that they could take part in this solemn service (see 1 Chron. 15:12).

12. *Arrayed.* Compare 1 Chron. 15:27.

Cymbals. Compare 1 Chron. 15:28.

With trumpets. Compare 1 Chron. 15:24.

13. *Praising and thanking.* Music is a form of worship, and praise and thanksgiving are an important element of prayer. As the people raised their voices in joyous praise to God in grateful remembrance of His wonderful mercies to them, God drew near and a cloud filled the Temple.

14. *Filled the house.* Compare Ex. 40:35; Isa. 6:1–5; Luke 9:34.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–14PK 37–39

1–3PK 37

4–7PK 38

12, 13, 14 PK 38

CHAPTER 6

1 *Solomon, having blessed the people, blesseth God. 12 Solomon's prayer in the consecration of the temple, upon the brasen scaffold.*

1. *Then said Solomon.* Chapter 6 deals with Solomon's earnest prayer at the dedication of the Temple. There is a close agreement between the prayer as here given and the record of it in 1 Kings 1:8. The only important differences are the inclusion of the explanatory clause (v. 13), which is not found in Kings, and the closing words of the prayer, v. 40–42, which are quite different from the closing words as recorded in 1 Kings 8:50–53. See on 1 Kings 1:8.

Thick darkness. Compare 1 Kings 8:12. When God drew near to His people He veiled His presence lest they be consumed by the brightness of His glory (see Ex. 20:18–21; Deut. 4:11; Ps. 18:9, 11).

2. *Thy dwelling for ever.* It was not God's plan that the Temple should be destroyed (see PP 46) or that the nation of Israel should come to an end. If Israel had remained true to the Lord, keeping His commandments and sharing the knowledge of God with the nations about, light would have gone out over the whole world which would have brought to all the peoples of earth an opportunity of salvation. In such a case the Temple

would have been the world center of the worship of God and Jerusalem would have become the capital and metropolis of the world (DA 577).

5. *Neither chose I.* This sentence and the first half of v. 6 are not found in the parallel account in Kings.

6. *Chosen Jerusalem.* Being at the crossroads of the world, Jerusalem was ideally situated to become the world's leading city and a place of prayer for all men.

Chosen David. David is described as a man after God's own heart, who was chosen by God to fulfill all His will (Acts 13:22). David became king of Israel not because of personal ambition, but because of a direct call of God (1 Sam. 16:1).

7. *In the heart of David.* See on 1 Kings 8:17. There would be many more churches for the worship of God in the world today if only more of God's people had in their hearts a desire like David's to build stately temples for Him.

8. *Thou didst well.* See on 1 Kings 8:18.

9. *Thou shalt not build.* David did not become angry when the Lord disapproved of his purpose to build. Though disappointed, he reconciled himself to the divine purpose. Although not permitted to build the Temple himself, he continued his work of preparation as diligently as if he himself were to be the builder (see 1 Chron. 29:2–5).

11. *The covenant.* See on 2 Chron. 5:10; also on 1 Kings 8:21.

12. *Before the altar.* Solomon took his place before the altar, at first standing for the dedicatory address, but later kneeling for the consecration prayer (v. 13).

13. *Made a brasen scaffold.* This detail is not found in Kings. From this raised position Solomon would have a better view of the congregation, and the people, in turn, would have a better opportunity to view and hear their king.

Kneeled down. This detail is not mentioned in the account in Kings, but at the close of the prayer the record in Kings states that Solomon arose "from kneeling on his knees" (1 Kings 8:54). Though king of Israel, Solomon reverently bowed before the heavenly King. It was a mark of both the king's greatness and his humility thus publicly to acknowledge his lowly position before Him who is the great King of kings and Lord of lords.

14. *Keapest covenant.* Compare Deut. 7:9; Neh. 1:5; Ps. 89:2, 3; Isa. 55:3; Dan. 9:4.

15. *Hast fulfilled it.* By the time of the dedication of the Temple many of God's promises had already been fulfilled. The Lord had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and now those promises were beginning to be realized. A son had been promised to David to succeed him on the throne, and now that promise had been fulfilled. The future before Israel was bright with promise and glory. God had demonstrated what He would do for His people if they would be loyal to Him.

16. *Walk in my law.* Solomon understood the importance of loyalty to God and obedience to His holy law. He knew of the glory and peace that might be if Israel remained faithful to God, and he knew also the sad results that transgression would bring. Thus Solomon's prayer became a sermon, presenting to the people a solemn and stirring appeal ever to remember God and to walk in His ways.

17. *Be verified.* Compare the request of David in 1 Chron. 17:23.

18. *Dwell with men.* How often frail man has asked himself the question: Will the great God of heaven dwell with the peoples of earth? To Moses, God gave the promise, "Certainly I will be with thee" (Ex. 3:12). That same promise was given to Jacob (Gen. 31:3, 5; Gen. 48:15). The psalmist said with confidence, "Yea, though I walk through the

valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me” (Ps. 23:4). Jesus gave the promise, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20). To everyone who opens the door, God extends the promise: “I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20). In every part of the earth men have come to realize that God will indeed dwell with men. All who will, may right here in this world enjoy the companionship of Heaven.

Cannot contain thee. God is greater than all the universe He has made. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him! How much less a temple made with the hands of men! Man’s great need is to learn to be humble and still, and to walk before God in reverence and holy fear.

21. Thy dwelling place. Heaven is God’s true dwelling place, yet He deigned to dwell with men on earth. (Ex. 25:8).

Forgive. See Ps. 103:12; Isa. 43:25; 44:22; Jer. 50:20.

24. Put to the worse. Those who sin against God forfeit divine protection and are at the mercy of the enemy and the forces of darkness. Moses clearly foretold that if Israel sinned they would fall before their enemies (Lev. 26:14, 17; Deut. 28:15, 25).

26. No rain. See on 1 Kings 8:35; cf. Joel 1:18–20.

28. Pestilence. See on 1 Kings 8:37, 38.

31. Walk in thy ways. Solomon did not pray for judgments, but if these came, he asked the Lord that they might arouse the people and turn them from their evil ways. God allows judgments to come to bring men to righteousness (see Isa. 26:9).

32. The stranger. Solomon prayed not only for Israel but for strangers afar. It was God’s will not only that Israel be saved but that all the peoples of the earth come to know Him and to walk in the ways of righteousness.

33. All people. See on v. 32.

36. If they sin. The nation of Israel was now young, virile, and strong. But the possibility existed that someday the people might forsake the Lord and be carried away captive into some foreign land. Solomon prayed earnestly that God would remember them at such a tragic hour.

37. Bethink themselves. Both the spirit of wisdom and the voice of God invite sinners to bethink themselves. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord” (Isa 1:18).

38. If they return. God earnestly invites those who have strayed to return to Him. There are forgiveness and life for those who accept the divine invitation to return (see Rev. 22:17).

39. Then hear thou. The Israelites sinned and went into captivity, but God looked upon them in mercy, and promised a restoration on the basis of their repentance.

40. Now, my God. Verse 40 is similar to 1 Kings 8:52, but vs. 41, 42 are not found in the parallel record in Kings. The conclusion of Solomon’s prayer reported in Chronicles is different from that reported in Kings. Evidently both writers give the prayer of dedication in a somewhat abbreviated form, probably not verbatim, but in substance.

41. Arise, O Lord. This was a specific invitation for God to come and take up His abode in the house that Solomon had built.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–42PK 39–42

1–6PK 39

7 PK 65

13 PK 39; SR 194
14, 18–21, 24, 25 PK 40
26–33PK 41
33 PK 68
34–42PK 42

CHAPTER 7

1 *God having given testimony to Solomon's prayer by fire from heaven, and glory in the temple, the people worship him.* 4 *Solomon's solemn sacrifice.* 8 *Solomon having kept the feast of tabernacles, and the feast of the dedication of the altar, dismisseth the people.* 12 *God appearing to Solomon giveth him promises upon condition.*

1. Fire came down. God gave an outward token to signify that Solomon's prayer had been heard and that He would honor the Temple with His presence. On a number of previous occasions the Lord had made His presence manifest in a similar manner (see Lev. 9:24; Judges 6:21; 1 Chron. 21:26).

Filled the house. See on 1 Kings 8:10, 11.

3. Bowed. The Israelites were greatly impressed with the holiness and glory of God, and instinctively bowed before Him in adoration and praise.

His mercy endureth. Compare ch. 5:13. This refrain occurs also in David's psalm of praise sung when the ark was brought to Jerusalem (1 Chron. 16:34). Compare the song of the Levites and singers who went before the forces of Jehoshaphat against the enemy (2 Chron. 20:21).

4. Offered sacrifices. Verses 4–10, dealing with Solomon's sacrifices and the festival which followed, are parallel to 1 Kings 8:62–66.

5. Twenty and two thousand oxen. According to 1 Kings 8:63 this was a "sacrifice of peace offerings." Peace offerings were sacrificed on festive occasions, when priests and people united together in seasons of holy joy, giving thanks to God and praising Him for His goodness and blessing. The greater part of the animal sacrificed as a peace offering was eaten by the offerer, his family, and his friends.

6. Instruments of musick. Compare 1 Chron. 23:5.

7. Solomon hallowed. Since the brazen altar was not large enough to accommodate the large number of sacrifices, the entire middle of the Temple court was consecrated to serve as a huge altar.

8. The feast. This was the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted 7 days, normally beginning with the 15th day of the 7th month (see Lev. 23:34–36; PK 45).

Entering in of Hamath. See on 1 Kings 8:65.

9. The eighth day. The eight day from the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles, in harmony with Lev. 23:36, 39, was the 22d day of the 7th month (see on v. 10).

Seven days, ... seven days. If the 7 days of dedication lasted from the 10th to the 16th of the 7th month, inclusive, and if the observance of the feast for 7 more days ran from the 16th to the 22d (see 1 Kings 8:65), then the "eighth" day, following the second 7-day period, would be the 23d (see on v. 10).

10. Three and twentieth. Compare 1 Kings 8:66, where the statement is made that the people were sent away on the 8th day. Beginning the second 7 days with the 16th day of the month, the day after the Feast of Tabernacles normally began, the 8th day would be the 23d of the month, with which it is equated by these texts. In that case the prolonged

celebration of the dedication of the Temple would have embraced and extended beyond the normal period of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Into their tents. That is, to their homes. See on 1 Kings 8:66.

Glad and merry in heart. True religion brings joy. The Israelites had had a happy season together at the dedication of the Temple and at the Feast of Tabernacles. In singing praises to God and in remembering His loving-kindness to them, they experienced a type of joy that no pleasures of the world can ever bring. When a man truly loves God and worships Him in spirit and in truth, he finds fullness of peace and joy. It is well for a people and well for their rulers when they can find such happiness and contentment of heart. A king has little to fear when such is the spirit of his people. The solution of the problems of the world cannot be found so long as the people of the world do not find their peace and joy in the Lord. The best remedy for faultfinding or strife among brethren is for them to keep so close to the Lord that they will be constantly rejoicing in His mercies.

11. Finished the house. See on 1 Kings 9:1.

Prosperously effected. Solomon successfully accomplished all that he set out to do.

12. Appeared to Solomon. Verses 12–22 narrate the response of the Lord to Solomon’s prayer of dedication. Verses 13–15 are not found in the parallel narrative of 1 Kings 9:1–9. The account here is somewhat fuller than it is in Kings. According to 1 Kings 9:2 the Lord appeared to Solomon “the second time.” God first appeared to Solomon in a visit by night at Gibeon (2 Chron. 1:7; 1 Kings 3:5).

Have chosen. From this point on to the end of v. 15, Chronicles presents material that is not found in Kings. The site on Mt. Moriah, memorable as the place where Abraham made the supreme demonstration of his faith by his willingness to offer up his own son, and hallowed by the appearance of the angel to stay the plague upon Jerusalem (1 Chron. 21:15–18), was chosen as the place where the Temple should be built.

13. Shut up heaven. Compare 2 Chron. 6:26; Deut. 11:17. God supplies the earth with rain (Matt. 5:45). At various times, when men have turned away from God to serve false gods, He has removed His blessing and drought and famine have been the result (1 Kings 17:1; 2 Kings 8:1).

Locusts. Compare 2 Chron. 6:28; Ex. 10:14, 15; Joel 1:4.

Send pestilence. Compare 2 Chron. 6:28; Deut. 28:20–22; 1 Chron. 21:14; Jer. 24:10. Satan brings sickness and pain upon men when God permits (Job 2:4–7).

14. Humble themselves. God’s desire for sinners is that they should humble themselves, forsake their sins, and turn to Him and live. God takes no delight in the suffering and death of the wicked, and urgently calls upon sinners to repent and turn from their transgressions, that iniquity shall not be their ruin (Isa. 1:18–20; Jer. 25:5; Eze. 18:30–32; Hosea 6:1).

15. Shall be open. This is what Solomon had prayed for (ch. 6:40), and God’s answer follows the exact words of Solomon’s petition.

16. For ever. When God chose Jerusalem, it was with the purpose that His name might be there forever (see on 2 Chron. 6:2; 1 Kings 9:5). Because of human failure that purpose was thwarted. It will ultimately be fulfilled in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, descended to earth, where God will take up His abode with His people forever (Rev. 21:1–3).

17. If thou wilt. God is no respecter of persons. He desires obedience and blesses those who are faithful to Him. But His promises are conditional. God cannot bless those who refuse to walk in the pathway of blessing (see on Kings 9:4). Solomon well knew that the way of obedience to God's commands was the pathway of life (Prov. 3:1, 2).

18. Covenanted with David. See on 2 Sam. 7:12–16; cf. 1 Kings 2:4; 6:12.

20. Pluck them up. Compare Lev. 26:14, 24–33; Deut. 28:15, 36, 37, 64. The writer of Kings says, “Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them” (1 Kings 9:7). When Israel disobeyed the Lord, they brought desolation and woe upon themselves, and were taken away as captives to Assyria (2 Kings 17:20–23) and to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:17–20).

Out of my sight. The glorious Temple that Solomon had built would be cast away as something utterly worthless if Israel should forsake the Lord. Earthly glory rapidly fades. Israel failed, and the once-magnificent Temple was sacked and thrown down (2 Kings 25:9).

A proverb. The parallel passage reads: “And Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people” (1 Kings 9:7). These prophecies concerning the house and the people have had a remarkable fulfillment. Solomon's Temple has disappeared and is only a proverb today, and the sad fate suffered by the nation of Israel is striking testimony to the tragic effects of sin.

22. Brought them forth. It was base ingratitude and treachery for Israel to turn away from the Lord, who had wrought such a marvelous deliverance for them in Egypt and who had established them in the Promised Land. Israel foolishly turned from a God who was everything and could do everything for His people to gods who were nothing and could do nothing (see on Kings 9:9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–22PK 45–47

1 PK 335

1–5, 8–10PK 45

11 PK 37

12–18PK 45

13, 14 PK 128

14 PK 335

16 SR 195

20, 22 PK 47

CHAPTER 8

1 *Solomon's buildings.* 7 *The Gentiles which were left Solomon made tributaries; but the Israelites rulers.* 11 *Pharaoh's daughter removeth to her house.* 12 *Solomon's yearly solemn sacrifices.* 14 *He appointeth the priests and Levites to their places.* 17 *The navy fetcheth gold from Ophir.*

1. It came to pass. Chapter 8 deals with Solomon's building activities, his offerings, priestly appointments, and ships at Ezion-geber. The parallel, though not identical, record of Solomon's enterprises is found in Kings 9:10–28.

Twenty years. Solomon began to build the Temple in his fourth year; the task occupied 7 years (1 Kings 6:1, 38). The following 13 years Solomon devoted to the task of the construction of his palace (1 Kings 7:1).

2. Hiram had restored. Solomon gave Hiram 20 cities in Galilee in return for timber and gold, but Hiram was displeased with the payment (see on 1 Kings 9:11–13). It is thought that he may have returned the cities to Solomon, and that these are the cities Solomon now rebuilt.

To dwell there. The cities, being on the border of Tyre, were chiefly inhabited by Gentiles, but Solomon now colonized them with Israelites.

3. Hamath-zobah. Hamath was an important country north of Zobah and Damascus. David had previously smitten this region “as he went to establish his dominion by the river Euphrates” (1 Chron. 18:3). Solomon’s conquest of Hamath is not mentioned in 1 Kings 9.

4. Tadmor. This may have been the important city of Palmyra, in the Arabian Desert; however, see on 1 Kings 9:18.

The store cities. These were probably fortified by Solomon and provided with stores for troops, to serve as outposts against hostile peoples in the north. They would constitute an advance supply base.

5. Beth-horon. The two Beth-horons were twin towns in the pass to the central highlands between the Valley of Ajalon and the city of Gibeon (see on 1 Kings 9:17).

6. Baalath. see on 1 Kings 9:18. This town has not yet been identified.

The account in Chronicles does not mention such places as Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, where Solomon carried on important building activities, or such items as Solomon’s forced levy for the building of the Temple and the palace, and his work on Millo and the wall of Jerusalem. For these items see on 1 Kings 9:15–17. On the other hand, Chronicles mentions some items that are not found in the account in Kings.

7. That were left. Verses 7, 8 deal with the question of the forced labor Solomon imposed upon the Canaanites (see on 1 Kings 9:21).

8. Tribute. This tribute was paid in labor. When the land was first taken by the Israelites, the inhabitants of the land were placed under tribute and were kept under subjection as long as Israel was strong (Judges 1:28). David placed many of the non-Israelite inhabitants under forced labor to serve in his preparations for the building of the Temple (1 Chron. 22:2).

9. Make no servants. See on 1 Kings 9:22.

10. Two hundred and fifty. For an explanation of the seeming discrepancy between this figure and the 550 “chief of the officers” reported in Kings see on 1 Kings 9:23.

11. Daughter of Pharaoh. Solomon’s marriage to the Egyptian princess was in direct violation of the command of God (Deut. 17:17). The fact that she was converted and that she joined her husband in the worship of God (see PK 53) did not justify the disregard for the divine requirements. The seemingly advantageous alliance thus formed with Egypt led to more alliances with surrounding nations. Marriages were entered into with heathen princesses that finally led Solomon away from God and into idolatry. More and more he wandered into the ways of the world, seeking for grandeur and glory, and forsaking the principles of righteousness. From a wise, God-fearing king, Solomon degenerated into a foolish, ambitious, oppressive tyrant. On the removal of the residence of the daughter of Pharaoh from the vicinity of the Temple see on 1 Kings 9:24.

12. Offered burnt offerings. There is no reason to suppose that Solomon personally acted as priest in offering burnt offerings to the Lord (see on 1 Kings 9:25). The king evidently went no further than any of the common people and permitted the priests to

perform such functions as were exclusively theirs according to law (Lev. 1:7, 8, 11; Lev. 2:2, 9, 16; Lev. 3:11, 16; Num. 16:1–7, 17–40).

14. Order of David. Compare 1 Chron. 24.

The man of God. This phrase is the common designation in Kings for a prophet (1 Kings 12:22; 13:1, 26; etc.). In Chronicles the expression is found less frequently but is applied to Moses (1 Chron. 23:14), David (2 Chron. 8:14), and an unnamed prophet (2 Chron. 25:7, 9).

15. Of the king. That is, of David. David had established the regulations concerning the priests, Levites, singers, and treasury (1 Chron. 24:1 to 26:32).

16. Unto the day. The LXX Syriac, and Targums read “from the day.” The word translated “prepared” may also be translated “set up,” “established,” “arranged,” or “settled.” The translation of the KJV, supported by the Hebrew, suggests that Solomon’s work of preparation was divided into two periods, namely, the preparations that were made before the foundation of the Temple, and the preparations made from that time to the completion of the Temple.

17. Ezion-geber. Solomon extended his activities as far as this port at the head of the Gulf of Aqabah. He built and operated a navy based there (see on 1 Kings 9:26).

18. Hiram sent. See on 1 Kings 9:27, 28.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4, 5 PK 71

18 Ed 49, 54; PK 72; 7T 217

CHAPTER 9

1 *The queen of Sheba admireth the wisdom of Solomon.* 13 *Solomon’s gold.* 15 *His targets.* 17 *The throne of ivory.* 20 *His vessels.* 23 *His presents.* 25 *His chariots and horse.* 26 *His tributes.* 29 *His reign and death.*

1. Queen of Sheba. Verses 1–12 deal with the visit of the queen of Sheba. The narrative is parallel to 1 Kings 10:1–13, with only slight variations in the two accounts. Modern archaeologists now generally place Sheba in southern Arabia (see on 1 Kings 10:1).

4. Ascent. Heb. *‘aliyyah*, “a roof chamber.” However, the reading should probably be *‘olah* as in 1 Kings 10:5. *‘Olah* may be translated “burnt offering.” Since *‘olah* is, literally, “that which goes up,” some think that a causeway may be indicated, such as one providing the king with a private way from his palace to the Temple (see 1 Chron. 26:16; see on 1 Kings 10:5).

7. Thy servants. When masters are servants of the Lord of heaven, those who are in their service will find happiness. At this time Solomon had not yet forsaken the Lord, but was devoted to His service. He loved God and had compassion on men. With the peace of God in his heart, Solomon was kind, patient, and considerate. Men close to him felt the spell of his influence. The great need of today is for leaders who reflect the spirit of Heaven, that those under their guidance may find true joy and lasting happiness.

8. Blessed be the Lord. See on 1 Kings 10:9. After Solomon told the queen of Sheba the secret of his wisdom, peace, and prosperity, she was led to extol not the king but God. If Solomon had always remained true to the Lord, his influence would have continued to go out to the world for good, and many who had not known God would have been led to

give honor to Him. From Jerusalem a light might thus have gone out to all the world which would have brought men out of all lands from darkness to light.

God loved Israel. The queen of Sheba had learned of God's love for His people from the witness that came from Solomon's lips. No doubt Solomon related to the queen the history of God's marvelous dealings with Israel, and she returned to her native land with a deep impression on her heart of the greatness of Israel's God.

9. Hundred and twenty talents. If these were talents of about 75 lb. (34 kg.; see Vol. I, p. 164), the weight of gold would be 4.5 tons (4.1 metric tons); however, we cannot be sure what scale of weights was here used. The earthly treasure that the queen of Sheba left with Solomon was of small moment as compared with the heavenly treasure that had opened to her.

10. Servants also of Hiram. The parallel passage in 1 Kings 10:11 reads, "The navy also of Hiram."

Gold from Ophir. See on 1 Kings 10:11.

11. Algum trees. These trees cannot now be identified with any degree of certainty (see on ch. 2:8).

Terraces. Heb. *mesilloth*, "highways." The parallel passage (1 Kings 10:12) has *mis'ad*, "pillars," which should perhaps be read here also (see on 1 Kings 10:12).

12. Which she had brought. The parallel passage (1 Kings 10:13) reads instead, "which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty." Solomon gave to the queen return presents. The giving was not all on one side. Solomon was as generous as his visitor, and gave gifts to her, perhaps of a value equal to or even greater than those which she had given to him.

13. Six hundred and threescore and six. For an attempted evaluation of this amount see on 1 Kings 10:14. Verses 13–28 deal with Solomon's income, treasures, foreign trade, horses, and chariots. The parallel section is 1 Kings 10:14–29; 4:26.

14. Chapmen. Heb. *'anshe hattarim*, translated "merchantmen" in 1 Kings 10:15.

Tarim is from *tur*, which means "to seek out," "to spy out," "to explore," and probably denotes a merchant as one who seeks out or explores. The word translated "merchants" is from a root meaning "to travel about."

15. Targets. Heb. *šinnah*, large shields (see on 1 Kings 10:16).

Six hundred shekels. Possibly about 15 lb. (6.8 kg.). Shields of gold would probably not be used for protection in battle, but for display. Gold was extensively employed for display in the ancient Orient. The king of Ur had a helmet of gold. In Egypt royal coffins were made of gold.

16. Shields. Heb. *maginnim*, shields, evidently smaller than the *šinnah* (v. 15). There is a suggestion that the royal bodyguard in later years comprised 500 men in the fact that 5 "captains of hundreds" are mentioned who were presumably in command of the palace guards (ch. 23:1). That these guards were divided into two groups, one of 200 men and another of 300 men, is hinted in 2 Kings 11:5–7, 9, 10, where three parts, or companies, are named as those "that enter in on the sabbath," or were on guard on the Sabbath, and two were those "that go forth on the sabbath." If these deductions are correct, the 200 "targets" and the 300 "shields" may have been worn by the royal bodyguard at certain state functions. Solomon's personal bodyguard is described as consisting of 60 men on a

particular occasion when the king's litter was carried through the streets of Jerusalem in magnificent display (S. of Sol. 3:7–10, margin).

Three hundred shekels. Probably about 7 1/2 lb. (3.4 kg.).

House of the forest. The golden shields were evidently not often used and on normal occasions were hung in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

17. Throne of ivory. See on 1 Kings 10:18–20.

18. Stays. Presumably arms at the sides of the throne, which were possibly supported by lions.

20. Vessels of the house. The fact that there were such vessels of gold in the house of the forest of Lebanon has led some to believe that this building was used for banqueting purposes. For a description of this building see on 1 Kings 7:2–6.

None were of silver. Compare v. 27.

21. Tarshish. See on the parallel passage, 1 Kings 10:22, which reads: "For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish."

22. Riches. See on 1 Kings 10:23.

23. All the kings. See on 1 Kings 10:24.

24. A rate year by year. The kings who were in vassalage to Solomon (v. 26) were required to bring a fixed annual tribute (see on 1 Kings 10:25).

25. Stalls. See on 1 Kings 4:26.

26. Over all. See on 1 Kings 4:21.

28. Out of Egypt. See on 1 Kings 10:28; 2 Chron. 1:16.

29. Rest of the acts. Verses 29–31 close the narrative of Solomon's reign. The statements concerning Solomon's many wives, his wandering after strange gods, the adversaries whom the Lord stirred up against him, and the prediction of the disruption of his kingdom found in 1 Kings 11:1–40 do not appear in Chronicles.

Are they not written? A number of important records that dealt with the life and times of Solomon are here named. These sources doubtless contained many items that were not incorporated in a summary history such as Chronicles.

Ahijah the Shilonite. For incidents in the life of this prophet see 1 Kings 11:29–39; 14:2–18.

30. Forty years. Compare 1 Kings 11:42.

31. Slept with his fathers. Verses 29–31 exhibit a typical official closing formula henceforth used in the records of the various kings (see on 1 Kings 11:43).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 66

2–6PK 67

21 Ed 49; PK 54; 7T 217

23 PK 47, 67

27 PK 54

28 PK 56

CHAPTER 10

1 *The Israelites, assembled at Shechem to crown Rehoboam, by Jeroboam make a suit of relaxation unto him. 6 Rehoboam, refusing the old men's counsel, by the advice of young men answereth them roughly. 16 Ten tribes revolting kill Hadoram, and make Rehoboam to flee.*

1. Rehoboam went. Chapter 10 deals with the revolt of Jeroboam. The comparable record is 1 Kings 12:1–19. The differences in the two accounts are few and unimportant.

Shechem. On the possible reason for Rehoboam's choice of the city of Shechem as the place for his coronation see on 1 Kings 12:1.

2. Who was in Egypt. The chronicler had not previously referred to Jeroboam's flight to Egypt (see 1 Kings 11:26–40), and that is probably why he did not say that Jeroboam "was yet in Egypt," as did the writer of Kings.

3. Called him. Some think that this means that he was called, not from Egypt, since he had already returned (see v. 2), but from Ephraim (see on 1 Kings 12:3). He was called to Shechem, where the tribes had assembled to consider making Rehoboam king.

4. Grievous servitude. The people had just reason for complaint, for Solomon's extensive program of public works had produced a heavy weight of taxation and an unwelcome draft of forced labor (1 Kings 5:13, 14). The request was entirely fair, and both justice and prudence called for the new king's giving due consideration to the matter now set before him.

7. If thou be kind. There is no better rule of government than kindness. In the home and in the school, in the shop and in the field, kindness warms the heart and makes friends. If Rehoboam had treated his people kindly, showing them that as their king he was there only to serve them and look after their welfare, he would have won their hearts and saved his kingdom.

8. The old men. Wisdom increases with years and experience. Young men need the counsel of their elders and invite trouble and disaster when they despise the sound counsel of the hoary head.

10. The young men. The counsel of Rehoboam's young advisers came not from kind hearts or wise heads. The reply they suggested was couched in severe and uncompromising terms that could only invite retaliation and revolt.

11. Scorpions. These small animals with stings in their tails that inflict severe pain seem here to be used as a figure of a whip probably provided with sharp pieces of metal that made its use particularly painful and cruel. Thus Rehoboam was telling the people that he would treat them with greater severity than his father. Throughout the ages there have been those who thought that government must be by power rather than by kindness and mercy and that peoples can be held in subjection by brute force. But the verdict of history has always been to the contrary.

13. Roughly. The king showed no consideration for the feelings of his subjects and displayed none of the Spirit of Christ, but spoke as a hardened Oriental despot. The purpose was, of course, to make a show of strength, but in effect he was giving only a pitiful demonstration of weakness and folly. Harsh words lead to harsh acts, while kind words from kind hearts lead to submission and obedience, to cooperation and tranquillity.

15. Of God. See on ch. 11:4.

16. Would not hearken. Wise kings have ears that are attuned to the voices of their subjects. When Rehoboam took the throne his first task should have been to ascertain the needs of his people and to endeavor to right previous wrongs. By his unwillingness to hearken, the king invited revolt and made himself responsible for the rebellion that followed.

The son of Jesse. Only a few short years before, David had been a national hero. Now, because of the folly of his offspring, his name was detested in Israel, and the northern tribes were determined to go their own way, independent of the south.

Thine own house. The tribes were saying in effect, “And now, David, take care of your own affairs in your own country, and we will take care of ours.” These were words of defiance and revolt. The die had been cast. The house of David was henceforth to rule over only a section of the country—chiefly over David’s own tribe of Judah, and Benjamin—while the bulk of the tribes would go their own independent way under their own rulers.

17. The cities of Judah. In view of the fact that Rehoboam was of the tribe of Judah it would only be natural that under circumstances such as these, where the other tribes rejected his leadership, his own tribe should remain loyal to him. Whether or not Solomon may have spared his own tribe a measure of the heavy taxes and forced labor he levied upon Israel as a whole, is not known. If so, this would have provided them with an additional incentive to support him.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–19PK 87–91

1, 2 PK 87

3–7PK 89

4 PK 55; 4T 628; 7T 218

CHAPTER 11

1 *Rehoboam raising an army to subdue Israel, is forbidden by Shemaiah. 5 He strengtheneth his kingdom with forts and provision. 13 The priests and Levites, and such as feared God, forsaken by Jeroboam, strengthen the kingdom of Judah. 18 The wives and children of Rehoboam.*

1. Judah and Benjamin. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin now constituted the southern monarchy, which is usually called the nation of Judah. The tribe of Benjamin had formerly been more closely allied with the tribe of Ephraim, but it seems that the establishment of the capital at Jerusalem, on the border of Benjamin, was at least one factor influencing Benjamin to cast in its lot with Judah (see on 1 Kings 12:21).

Hundred and fourscore thousand. This is a moderate number, and probably represents the available trained men of war in the two southern tribes. At the time of the entrance into Canaan, Judah had 76,500 men, and Benjamin, 45,600 (Num. 26:22, 41), or a total of 122,100 males of military age. In David’s time Judah had 500,000 men (2 Sam. 24:9). The military forces of the kingdom of Judah as given in Chronicles numbered 400,000 at the time of Abijah (2 Chron. 13:3), 580,000 under Asa (ch. 14:8), and 1,160,000 under Jehoshaphat (ch. 17:14–18).

2. Shemaiah. A prophet of Judah during the reign of Rehoboam (see ch. 12:5–8, 15).

3. All Israel in Judah. The reference here is possibly to members of northern tribes now dwelling in the territory of Judah and Benjamin, but not necessarily (see on 1 Kings 12:17).

4. Done of me. See on 1 Kings 12:15. It was not, of course, God’s will that David’s kingdom should be divided into two monarchies. God’s will was that the Israelites should walk in His ways and continue to grow until by their missionary efforts they had proclaimed His name to all the earth. But when the Israelites walked in their own ways and forsook the Lord, His protecting hand was withdrawn, and forces of disruption

inevitably had their way. It was to this extent that the division of the kingdom was from God (see Ed 173–177).

5. Cities for defence. Verses 5–12 deal with Rehoboam's building of cities of defense in Judah. This material is not found in Kings. The cities mentioned are in the southern and western part of the country, which suggests that they were fortified as a protection against Egypt. Aggressive policies under Shishak (see 2 Chron. 12:2–9; 1 Kings 14:25, 26) were responsible for these defensive measures.

6. Beth-lehem. A town about 5 mi. (8 km.) south of Jerusalem (see on Gen. 35:19).

Etam. A town about 21/2 mi. (4 km.) southwest of Bethlehem.

Tekoa. A town 5 mi. (8 km.) south of Bethlehem (see 1 Chron. 2:24; 4:5; 2 Sam. 14:2, 4, 9; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 1:1).

7. Beth-zur. A town in the hill country of Judah (Joshua 15:58), 4 mi. (6.4 km.) north of Hebron.

Shoco. A town about 14 mi. (22.5 km.) west-southwest of Bethlehem (see 2 Chron. 28:18; Joshua 15:35; 1 Sam. 17:1).

Adullam. A fortress, mentioned in the times of David (1 Sam. 22:1), and again at a later period (Neh. 11:30; Micah 1:15). Adullam bordered on the Shephelah.

8. Gath. A city in the Philistine country and usually under Philistine control (1 Kings 2:39–41; Amos 6:2).

Mareshah. A town in the Shephelah (see Joshua 15:44). It was here that Asa defeated Zerah the Ethiopian (see on 2 Chron. 14:9, 10).

Ziph. A place in the south of Judah (see Joshua 15:24).

9. Adoraim. Probably to be identified with *Dûrā*, hill village about 5 mi. (8 km.) west of Hebron.

Lachish. An important town in the lowland of Judah (see Joshua 15:39; 2 Kings 14:19; 18:14; Micah 1:13), about 25 mi. southwest of Jerusalem.

Azekah. A town northeast of Lachish, in the Shephelah of Judah (see Joshua 10:10, 11; 1 Sam. 17:1; Neh. 11:30).

10. Zorah. A town in Dan (see Joshua 15:33; 19:41; Judges 13:2, 25; 16:31; 18:2, 11; Neh. 11:29).

Aijalon. A town 14 mi. (22.4 km.) northwest of Jerusalem. It was originally assigned to Dan (Joshua 19:42), and was designated as a Levitical city for the Kohathites (Joshua 21:20, 24).

Hebron. An important city about 19 mi. (30.4 km.) south-southwest of Jerusalem (see Gen. 23:2; 1 Chron. 3:1; 6:55, 57; 11:1).

11. Store of victual. Not only were these cities fortified: they were supplied with stores of food so as to be ready to withstand a prolonged siege.

13. Priests and the Levites. Evicted from their office, the priests and Levites forsook the northern kingdom and made their way to the south, where they could participate in the worship of Jehovah in His Temple.

14. Suburbs. That is, the grazing lands around the cities (see Lev. 25:34; Num. 35:2–5, 7; see on Joshua 14:4).

Their possession. Compare Lev. 25:29–34.

Cast them off. As a matter of policy Jeroboam established a service of religion, with centers of worship, that would be entirely distinct from the service of Jehovah in

Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:26–33). Thus he hoped to wean his subjects away from their attachment to the capital in the south.

15. Ordained him priests. By the appointment of priests of his own, Jeroboam cut off the Levites from their services in connection with the worship of Jehovah and struck a direct blow at the Levitical order and all that it stood for in helping to maintain the worship of God (see PK 101).

High places. Dan and Bethel were the two chief centers of worship in the northern kingdom (1 Kings 12:29–31), but there were also high places throughout the land where the rites of the new religion were carried on (see 1 Kings 13:32).

For the devils. God regards the base forms of idol worship as the worship of demons (see Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37, 38; 1 Cor. 10:20). Jeroboam's religious policy opened the way for corrupt forms of idolatry to be introduced into Israel which debased the people and led them even further away from God.

16. After them. That is, after the priests and Levites who went to Judah and Jerusalem (vs. 13, 14).

Came to Jerusalem. These people moved their residence to Judah. Their purpose in leaving Israel and going to Judah was that they might have the opportunity of worshipping at Jerusalem. It was Jeroboam's policy to prevent visits to Jerusalem for purposes of worship. At the time of Asa there again was a migration of faithful worshipers of Jehovah to the southern kingdom (ch. 15:9).

17. Strengthened the kingdom. The influx of the priests and of devout worshipers of God into Judah doubtless had the effect of bringing about a greater earnestness in the religious life of the southern kingdom, and contributed to the moral strength of the nation.

Three years. The exodus of worshipers of Jehovah from the northern kingdom took place during the first three years of Rehoboam's reign, while he was faithful to the principles of right (see ch. 12:1).

18. Jerimoth. He is not elsewhere named among the sons of David's wives (2 Sam. 3:2–5; 5:14–16; 1 Chron. 3:1–9; 14:4–7). But he may have been the son of one of David's concubines (1 Chron. 3:9).

Daughter of Eliab. Probably the granddaughter. The Hebrew word for daughter may also stand for more distant descendants (see on 1 Chron. 2:7). The daughter of David's eldest brother (1 Sam. 17:13) could hardly have become the wife of David's grandson.

20. Daughter of Absalom. Maachah was probably the granddaughter (see on v. 18) of Absalom, since Tamar was his only daughter (see on 1 Kings 15:2).

23. Dealt wisely. By dispersing his sons throughout Judah, where they no doubt filled positions of responsibility and developed local interests apart from the throne, Rehoboam wisely furthered the interests of his realm.

Desired many wives. A numerous harem was regarded as one of the marks of royalty and wealth. It was nevertheless disapproved of God (Deut. 17:17).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–17PK 91–93

5 PK 92

11, 12, 16, 17 PK 93

CHAPTER 12

1 *Rehoboam, forsaking the Lord, is punished by Shishak. 5 He and the princes, repenting at the preaching of Shemaiah, are delivered from destruction, but not from spoil. 13 The reign and death of Rehoboam.*

1. Forsook the law. This evidently occurred after Rehoboam's third year (ch. 11:17). The evils of Rehoboam's reign are set forth in greater detail in Kings. There it is stated that the people established high places, images, and groves, and that other abominations, such as the degrading practices of the sodomites, were encouraged (see on 1 Kings 14:22–24).

2. Shishak. Verses 2–12 give the account of Shishak's invasion in much fuller form than the parallel account in 1 Kings 14:25–28. Shishak has left his own account of this invasion on the wall of the great temple to Amen at Karnak in which he lists names of cities of Judah and Israel (see on 1 Kings 14:25).

3. Twelve hundred chariots. These interesting details as to the size and composition of the Egyptian army are not mentioned in Kings.

Lubims. Or Libyans, inhabitants of a territory in North Africa, west of Egypt. The people of this region frequently infiltrated into Egypt, mingled with the Egyptians, and served as mercenary troops. Shishak, or Sheshonk I, was the first king of a dynasty of Libyan kings who ruled over Egypt probably about 950–750 B.C. The Libyans are also mentioned in 2 Chron. 16:8; Nahum 3:9; Dan. 11:43 (see Vol. II, p. 50).

The Sukkiims. These people have not been identified. They seem to have been some minor North African tribe.

Ethiopians. Literally, Cushites. Cush was the general name for the region lying south of Egypt proper corresponding roughly to the Sudan, or Nubia. In the classical period the term Ethiopia was applied to this region. This identification must not be confused with modern Ethiopia, which is farther to the south and east.

4. The fenced cities. The towns that Rehoboam had fortified seem to have been among those that fell to Shishak. The names of only two of these, Socoh and Aijalon (ch. 11:7, 10), are now legible on the Karnak inscription (see on v. 2).

5. Shemaiah. The narrative of Shemaiah's message to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah does not appear in Kings. The writer of Chronicles frequently points out the sad results of transgression and the blessings of obedience.

Gathered together. As the smaller cities were being taken, the princes of Judah fell back to Jerusalem.

Left you. This statement reveals the method by which the Lord frequently deals with transgression. When His people forsake Him and fall into sin, the Lord withdraws His protecting hand, and the forces of evil are permitted to do their part in bringing judgment upon evil (see PP 428, 429).

6. Humbled themselves. When threatened with judgment, proud Nineveh humbled itself and was accorded mercy by the Lord (Jonah 3:5–10). So also judgment brought Judah to its knees and to repentance.

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (2 Ch 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

The Lord is righteous. The people acknowledged that the Lord was just in permitting the judgments they deserved to come upon them.

7. When the Lord saw. The Lord does not delight in the suffering that transgressors bring upon themselves, but is ever watching to see whether they will turn themselves from their iniquities so that the threatened judgments may be removed (see Eze. 18:30–32).

Some deliverance. Judgment in considerable measure had already fallen. The Lord would now grant deliverance to a remnant, and would not bring upon them the complete destruction that their iniquities deserved (see 2 Chron. 12:12; Ezra 9:13; Isa. 1:9).

Upon Jerusalem. Because the people repented, the threat of immediate destruction of Jerusalem was withdrawn. However, the menace of destruction still hung over the city, and would ultimately be carried out if the people persisted in iniquity.

8. May know my service. That is that they might know the difference between having the Lord as a Master and having the hand of some heathen king over them. The Lord wanted them to experience the terrible tyranny into which a man sells himself when he wanders away from God and enters the pathways of sin.

9. Took away the treasures. The Temple treasures gathered by David and Solomon and dedicated to the Lord now fell into the hands of a heathen king. By their sin the professed children of God brought reproach not only upon themselves but also upon God.

10. Chief of the guard. The shields of gold were presumably for the use of the royal bodyguard (see on ch. 9:16), and the shields of brass were now committed into the hands of the chief of the guard. The word for “guard,” *raṣim*, literally means, “runners.” It is translated “footmen” in 1 Sam. 22:17, and the phrase in which it appears is rendered “men to run” in 1 Kings 1:5. In each instance the men referred to seem to have belonged to the bodyguard.

13. Strengthened himself. These words indicate Rehoboam’s recovery from the results of Shishak’s invasion.

One and forty years. Since Solomon reigned 40 years (ch. 9:30), Rehoboam was probably born the year before Solomon came to the throne.

14. Prepared not his heart. These words explain the reason for Rehoboam’s iniquities. From this point on, as the various successors to the throne are discussed, the reigns will be characterized as either good or evil (see chs. 14:2; 20:32; 21:6; etc.).

15. Book of Shemaiah. Compare ch. 9:29. Verses 15, 16 constitute the closing formula of Rehoboam’s reign. It is typical of the form employed for the ending of the accounts of the reigns of the kings (see chs. 13:22; 14:1; 16:13, 14; 21:1; etc.). The parallel section is 1 Kings 14:29–31.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–16PK 93–96

1 PK 93

2–5PK 94

6–12PK 95

14, 16 PK 9

CHAPTER 13

1 *Abijah succeeding maketh war against Jeroboam. 4 He declareth the right of his cause. 13 Trusting in God he overcometh Jeroboam. 21 The wives and children of Abijah.*

1. Eighteenth year. This verse is almost identical with 1 Kings 15:1. In the books of Kings the account of each reign of the monarchs of both Judah and Israel is regularly begun with a cross synchronism with the year of the monarch then reigning in the neighboring kingdom, but this is the only such synchronism found in Chronicles. It should be noted that Chronicles deals primarily with the nation of Judah, mentioning Israel only incidentally. For the probable meaning of “the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam” see on 1 Kings 15:1.

Abijah. Spelled “Abijam” in Kings (1 Kings 15:1; etc.).

2. Michaiah the daughter of Uriel. The parallel account reads: “Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom” (1 Kings 15:2). According to 2 Chron. 11:20–22 Abijah was the son of “Maachah the daughter of Absalom.” It thus seems evident that “Michaiah” is another form of “Maachah.” If Maachah was the granddaughter of Absalom, and a daughter of Tamar, who was the daughter of Absalom (see on 1 Kings 15:2), then Uriel of Gibeah must have been the husband of Tamar.

There was war. Compare 1 Kings 15:7, where this war is mentioned in the closing formula of Abijah’s reign.

3. Four hundred thousand. Compare the numbers here given with the numbers in David’s census, 470,000 men of military age in Judah and 1,100,000 in Israel (1 Chron. 21:5), and with the totals as recorded in 2 Sam. 24:9, of 500,000 fighting men in Judah and 800,000 in Israel.

4. Mount Zemaraim. The exact location of this mountain is not known.

5. Gave the kingdom. Abijah upbraided the people of Israel for their revolt, asserting that they had no right to an independent existence apart from Judah, for God gave the kingdom to David forever.

Covenant of salt. A firm and inviolable compact (see on Num. 18:19).

6. The servant of Solomon. See 1 Kings 11:26–28.

7. Children of Belial. Literally, “sons of worthlessness” (see on Deut. 13:13; Judges 19:22; 1 Kings 21:10).

Young and tenderhearted. In the sense that he was inexperienced. Rehoboam was 41 years of age when he began to reign (ch. 12:13).

8. Kingdom of the Lord. Since the nation of Judah was a continuation of David’s kingdom, which had been established by the Lord, Abijah reasoned that resistance against Judah constituted resistance against God.

Golden calves. Abijah derided Israel for venturing to stand up, with only the assistance of the golden calves that Jeroboam had made, against Judah, which had the help of Jehovah.

9. Cast out the priests. See ch. 11:14.

Whosoever cometh. In Israel it was possible for anyone to become a priest, whereas the Lord had ordained that only the descendants of Aaron should officiate in that capacity (see Num. 18:1–7).

10. The Lord is our God. Judah was still formally loyal to the service of God, although Abijah himself was not wholehearted in serving the Lord (1 Kings 15:3).

11. We keep the charge. To engage in the observance of the ritual services of the sanctuary was regarded as keeping the charge of Jehovah (see Lev. 8:35; Num. 3:7; 9:19; 18:3–5). However, truly to keep the charge of the Lord involved not only an outward

observance of the services of religion but also an obedience to all the commands of the Lord (see Deut. 11:1; 1 Kings 2:3).

12. *Our captain.* The comfort and strength that Judah claimed was that God was with them, to fight their battles and direct their ways (see ch. 32:7, 8).

Sounding trumpets. See Num 10:8, 9.

Against the Lord. No man who fights against God can hope ultimately to prosper.

13. *An ambushment.* Jeroboam relied upon superior tactics, but but Judah put its trust in the Lord. Regardless of the potential success that these tactical moves involved, they could not bring victory against God.

15. *Smote Jeroboam.* The victory achieved was won not by men but by God. Men, however, were the instruments in the hand of the Lord to carry out His will.

16. *Into their hand.* Without the help of God the forces of Israel were powerless before the people of Judah. Israel, with its idols and calves of gold, fell into the hands of the people of Judah, who placed their trust in the Lord.

18. *Because they relied.* The record repeatedly calls attention to the real reason for Judah's success. Man's great need is to recognize his dependence upon the mighty hand of the Lord, and to live and work in such a way that the divine presence can be with him. In the last days the faithful remnant who put their confidence in the Lord will not be ashamed (Dan. 12:1).

19. *Beth-el.* A city about 11 mi. (17.7 km.) north of Jerusalem. The towns here mentioned did not long remain in the possession of Judah, for according to 1 Kings 15:17–21, Baasha of Israel started to fortify Ramah only a few years later. Ramah was 5 1/2 mi. (8.8 km.) north of Jerusalem.

Jeshanah. Probably *Burj el-Isâneh*, northwest of Baal-hazor, not far north of Bethel.

Ephrain. This town has thus far not been definitely identified. Some think that it was the NT Ophrah, *eṭ-Taïyibeh*, about 5 mi. (8 km.) northeast of Bethel.

20. *Struck him.* No information is available to indicate the precise nature of the stroke.

21. *Waxed mighty.* Feeling himself strong and secure after his victory over Jeroboam, Abijah gave himself to luxurious living (see 1 Kings 15:3).

22. *Story of the prophet Iddo.* Compare ch. 12:15, where a work of Iddo on genealogies is mentioned.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

19, 20 PK 107

CHAPTER 14

1 *Asa succeeding destroyeth idolatry. 6 Having peace, he strengtheneth his kingdom with forts and armies. 9 Calling on God, he overthroweth Zerah, and spoileth the Ethiopians.*

1. *Quiet ten years.* Compare v. 6. This point is not mentioned in Kings, where the record simply states that “there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days” (1 Kings 15:16). The statement does not mean that there were open hostilities between Israel and Judah throughout Asa's long reign of 41 years (2 Chron. 16:13 cf. 1 Kings 15:10; on the reckoning of the reign see Vol. II, p. 137) but that there was no real peace between the two nations.

2. *That which was good.* The parallel record adds, “as did David his father” (1 Kings 15:11).

3. Took away the altars. This verse presents a picture of the terrible idolatry into which the nation had lapsed since the reign of David. The record of Asa's reformatory movement in 1 Kings 15:12 begins with the statement that "he took away the sodomites out of the land," a revelation of the sad pass to which the nation had come.

High places. Compare 2 Chron. 15:17 and 1 Kings 15:14. The high places removed by Asa were evidently those devoted to the worship of idols, for they are mentioned in that connection. However, Asa either permitted the unauthorized local sanctuaries dedicated to the worship of Jehovah to continue, or, if his campaign was directed against all high places, it was not completely successful, for "the high places were not taken away" (see on 2 Chron. 15:17; 1 Kings 15:14).

Images. Heb. *maṣṣebot*, literally, "pillars." These were sacred stones that were common in Palestine in those days and formed part of the corrupt forms of religion native to Palestine. Moses commanded the destruction of the *maṣṣebot* (see on Deut. 12:3; 16:22). Some think these "pillars" were phallic emblems.

Groves. Heb. *'asherim*, wooden poles, or sacred trees, emblems of the Canaanite goddess of fertility (see on Judges 3:7). The *'asherim* are frequently mentioned in connection with the worship of Baal (Judges 6:25, 28). Moses forbade the Israelites to place a "grove" near an altar for the Lord and commanded that such idolatrous emblems be destroyed (see on Deut. 7:5; 16:21).

5. High places. See on v. 3.

Images. Heb. *chammanim*, a different term from the one translated "images" in v. 3. *Chammanim* may be from the root *chamman*, "to be warm." Hence the word has been applied by some to sun pillars; however, the prevailing opinion now seems to be to interpret *chammanim* as "incense altars" *Chammanim* occurs also in Lev. 26:30 and Isa. 27:9.

6. Built fenced cities. Compare ch. 11:5–12.

7. Build these cities. A general system of defense is referred to, both in the south against Egypt and in the north against Israel. Asa did all that was in his power to strengthen his kingdom and to prepare for dangers that were certain to threaten, so that his people might not suffer from the aggressions of hostile neighbors.

8. Targets. Large shields (see on 2 Chron. 9:15; 1 Kings 10:16).

Three hundred thousand. Compare ch. 13:3. Probably this was not the size of Asa's standing army but constituted the number of males in the nation, capable of bearing arms, who would be available in case of emergency.

9. Zerah the Ethiopian. As yet we have not been able to identify Zerah from contemporary records. Since there were Cushites in western Arabia and eastern Africa bordering on the Red Sea (see Gen. 10:6), Zerah may have been from that region. He may have had Libyan auxiliary forces in his army, from Egypt, where a Libyan dynasty ruled. Asa had done what he could to build up the national defenses and train an army (2 Chron. 14:6–8). So when Zerah struck, Judah was ready.

A thousand thousand. Some think that this symmetrical number expresses the thought of a very large host in the same way as we today speak of a "myriad" without intending to convey the idea of exactly or even approximately "ten thousand," the literal meaning of the term. Those who hold this opinion point out that a million men would be

entirely out of proportion. Be that as it may, Zerah's forces were obviously an overwhelming "multitude" to Asa and his army. See pp. 122, 123.

Mareshah. One of the fortresses that Rehoboam had built (ch. 11:8). It was located in the lowland of Judah, about 25 mi. southwest of Jerusalem.

10. Valley of Zephathah. Northwest of Mareshah is a broad wadi opening up into the Philistine plain. This is probably the region referred to. With the arrival of Asa's forces, Zerah doubtless drew off into the wider expanse of the wadi, where he could make use of his chariots.

11. Cried unto the Lord. Asa had prepared cities of defense and he had a large and well-equipped army. But his trust was not alone in arms or men, but in God. As he faced the enemy, he did so in the name of the Lord and as a representative of God.

Against thee. Facing Zerah in the name of the Lord, Asa felt that his own defeat would be a defeat for the Lord.

12. The Lord smote. The Lord enabled Asa to gain an amazing victory. Judah had powerful enemies, both to the north and to the south. Left to herself she would quickly have succumbed before the superior might of the forces arrayed against her. But with God's help she was invincible. The attack of Zerah was the last serious threat that Judah was to meet from the south. Henceforth her enemies were from the north—first, Assyria under Sennacherib, and then Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, who brought the nation down in ruin.

13. Gerar. A city about 11 mi. (17.7 km.) southeast of Gaza, on the route to Egypt.

His host. The army of Asa. God's people were instruments in His hands to perform His work.

14. Smote all the cities. These cities around Gerar were Philistine cities. No doubt they had helped Zerah.

The fear of the Lord. When God manifests His mighty power in behalf of His people, a divine fear seizes the enemy, and there is no longer courage or strength to resist (see ch. 17:10).

15. Camels. Gerar was on the border of the southern desert between Palestine and Egypt, and the inhabitants of that region would therefore have many camels (see 1 Sam. 27:9; 30:17).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–15PK 110–112

2–9PK 110

11–13PK 111

CHAPTER 15

1 *Asa with Judah and many of Israel, moved by the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded, make a solemn covenant with God.* 16 *He putteth down Maachah his mother for her idolatry.* 18 *He bringeth dedicated things into the house of God, and enjoyeth a long peace.*

Azariah. This prophet is unknown except from this chapter. The following is peculiar to Chronicles and is an important contribution to the history of Judah. The facts here recorded are of interest in a study of the religious experience of God's people and reveal the great influence of those who have the Lord with them in their works.

2. To meet Asa. Azariah met Asa on his return from his great victory over Zerah the Ethiopian (see ch. 14:9–15).

While ye be with him. Compare James 4:8. Asa had sought God and had done everything he could to walk in His ways and to do His work (2 Chron. 14:11). Thus the Lord was with him in a mighty way to guide and to bless.

Found of you. Compare 2 Chron. 15:4, 15; 33:12, 13; 1 Chron. 28:9; Jer. 29:13; Matt. 7:7.

3. Long season. Verse 3 literally translated reads, “And many days to Israel without the true God and without teaching priest and without law.” The passage contains no verb; hence the determination of tense is a matter of interpretation. There is great difference of opinion as to whether this section is a prophecy of the future history of Israel, or whether it is a survey of general Israelitic history of the past, or whether it has specific application to the immediate present, that is, the period since the disruption of the kingdom. The observation of the prophet is true of any of these periods. Compare the apostasies in the time of the judges (Judges 2:11–19; 3:7–10, 12–14; 4:1–3; 6:1–6; 8:33–35; 10:6–9).

Teaching priest. The priests were the religious instructors of the people, teaching them the word of God and the law of the Lord (see Lev. 10:11; Deut. 17:9, 11; 24:8; 33:10; Ezra 7:25; Jer. 18:18; Eze. 44:23).

4. Did turn. When in their straits the people turned to God, He heard their prayers and was gracious to them, delivering them from the hands of their enemies (see Ps. 106:44; 107:6).

6. Nation was destroyed. The LXX may be translated, “And nation shall make war against nation and city against city, because God has confounded them with every affliction” (see Isa. 19:2). A typical example may be drawn from the period of the judges, a time of great unrest and weakness, not only in Palestine, but throughout the Near East. Egypt, which had been a strong power, grew progressively weaker, until a very low ebb was reached during the Twentieth and Twenty-first dynasties, c. 1200–c. 950 B.C. (see Vol. II, pp. 28, 29, 48–50). Forces of disruption were everywhere in evidence, royalty lost its respect, workmen were starving, and general disorder pervaded the land. Assyria had not yet risen to its great power and Babylon was weak (see Vol. II, pp. 55–57). The Hittite empire, which during the early part of this period had been a powerful state, collapsed under the onslaughts of the invading Sea Peoples (see Vol. II, pp. 27, 32–34) and broke up into a large number of petty states. The prophet gives a vivid and remarkably accurate description of the situation that prevailed in the Near East in the latter part of the second millennium B.C., though his description also fits other periods (see on v. 3).

7. Be ye strong therefore. The prophet’s counsel was, in effect, “Be strong in the Lord, continue firm in your allegiance to Him, and take courage as you face the future.” Azariah was encouraging Asa to continue in the aggressive measures that he had taken against idolatry and in his firm policy in behalf of Judah’s national interests.

Shall be rewarded. Having taken such a strong stand for the Lord, Asa would not be forsaken, but would be allowed to reap the reward of his labors.

8. The prophecy of Oded. The Hebrew of this phrase cannot correctly be thus translated, the construction being such as not to allow the use of the preposition “of” to show the relationship between the two nouns. However, without the “of” the sentence is lacking in coherence. Evidently something is missing from the Hebrew text. It seems highly likely that the Alexandrian manuscript of the LXX and the Syriac have preserved

the correct reading, for they supply the name “Azariah” (v. 1) so as to support the reading, “the prophecy which Azariah the son of Oded spake.”

Abominable idols. Few reformatations are ever complete reformatations. Asa had put forth earnest efforts to cleanse the land of its abominations, but his work had evidently been only partially successful. Encouraged by the words of Azariah, Asa now renewed his efforts to rid the land of every form of evil.

From mount Ephraim. Compare ch. 17:2. Although Asa had not engaged in open war with Israel, he was strong enough to take from the northern kingdom a number of frontier cities.

Renewed the altar. A similar expression is employed in ch. 24:4 concerning Joash. It would thus appear that the altar had become defiled and was now cleansed and reconsecrated to the Lord.

9. The strangers. These were members of the tribes constituting the northern kingdom. During the reign of Rehoboam a similar influx of citizens of Israel into Judah took place (ch. 11:16).

Out of Simeon. Although Simeon lay within the boundaries of the southern kingdom (Joshua 19:1), many members of this tribe probably took their abode within the territory of Israel at the time of the division.

When they saw. When many of the people of Israel observed that God was with Asa and was blessing him, large numbers came down from the northern kingdom henceforth to live in Judah.

10. Fifteenth year. This gathering at Jerusalem in the 15th year of Asa fixes the victory over Zerah likewise in that year or in the preceding year. If the war with Zerah, the return to Jerusalem, the influx from the northern tribes, and the calling of the assembly at Jerusalem could all have taken place within three months, then the war with Zerah was fought in Asa’s 15th year. Otherwise, and more probably, it was in the 14th year.

11. Offered. These large offerings were probably peace offerings in which the people participated in a general feast of rejoicing and thanksgiving to God. Compare 1 Kings 8:63–66, which reports that Solomon offered large numbers of peace offerings at the dedication of the Temple.

12. Into a covenant. This was in effect a solemn renewal of the national covenant entered into between God and His people at Sinai (Ex. 19:5–8; 24:3–8). This covenant was reaffirmed between God and Israel at various times in the history of the Jews, usually following periods of apostasy (see 2 Kings 23:3; 2 Chron. 34:31; Neh. 10:28–39).

With all their heart. Compare Deut. 4:29, where a similar phrase is used.

13. Should be put to death. As the national covenant with Jehovah was renewed, it was determined that the whole nation should be included, and that all who would not take their stand for God should be put to death. In the time of Moses the death penalty was prescribed for those who might be found guilty of “transgressing his covenant” by worshiping any other god (Deut. 17:2–7; cf. Ex. 22:20; Deut. 13:6–10, 12–15).

14. Sware unto the Lord. By a solemn oath the covenant with God was renewed.

16. Maachah. With vs. 16–18 compare 1 Kings 15:13–15. The variations are few and unimportant.

Mother of Asa. Actually the grandmother, for Maachah was the mother of Abijah (see 2 Chron. 11:20; see on 1 Kings 15:10; 1 Chron. 2:7).

Idol. Heb. *miphlešeth*. This word indicates some horrible idol (see on 1 Kings 15:13).

In a grove. Literally, “for Asherah.”

17. Not taken away. Some high places were taken away (ch. 14:3, 5), evidently centers of idol worship. The high places that were allowed to remain were probably unauthorized local sanctuaries for the worship of Jehovah. These may have persisted despite Asa’s efforts to eliminate them.

Out of Israel. These words are not found in the parallel passage of 1 Kings 15:14. The southern kingdom is evidently meant, for Asa could hardly have undertaken the task of removing the high places from the northern kingdom.

18. Father had dedicated. Probably items taken from the spoils of Abijah’s great victory over Jeroboam (ch. 13:16–19).

That he himself had dedicated. These were presumably part of the booty from the victory over Zerah (ch. 14:13–15). Efforts were no doubt put forth to replace the Temple treasure that had been taken by Shishak during the reign of Rehoboam (ch. 12:9).

19. There was no more war. The word “more” is not in the Hebrew, and the clause simply reads, “there was no war” (see below).

Five and thirtieth year. Presumably the 35th year of the southern kingdom (see on ch. 16:1), which would be the 14th year of Asa’s actual reign. In the light of this calculation it would be incorrect to translate the first part of the verse “no more war,” since the 14th year probably marked the beginning of hostilities in Asa’s reign.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2, 7–12, 15PK 112

CHAPTER 16

1 *Asa, by the aid of the Syrians, diverteth Baasha from building of Ramah. 7 Being reproved thereof by Hanani, he putteth him in prison. 11 Among his other acts in his disease he seeketh not to God, but to the physicians. 13 His death and burial.*

1. Six and thirtieth year. Except for this date, vs. 1–6 run parallel with 1 Kings 15:17–22. Baasha began to reign in the 3d year of Asa, reigned 24 years, inclusive, and was succeeded by his son in Asa’s 26th year (1 Kings 15:33; 16:8). That would make impossible a war between Asa and Baasha in Asa’s 36th year. But there is no contradiction if the reference here (and probably that in 2 Chron. 15:19) was actually to the years, not of Asa’s personal reign, but of his kingdom, namely Judah. The 35th year of the southern kingdom, counted from Rehoboam’s accession, would be the 14th year of Asa, the year when the conflict with Zerah probably took place, or at least began (see on 2 Chron. 15:10); and in that case 2 Chron. 15:19 would provide the information that “there was no war” in Asa’s reign till that year. The following year, the 36th year since the founding of the monarchy of which Asa was king, would be the year when Baasha began to fortify Ramah.

Ramah. Most probably Ramah of Benjamin, a city about 5 1/2 mi. (8.8 km.) north of Jerusalem (see on Joshua 18:25).

Let none go out. This would logically refer to the exodus from Israel to Judah after Asa’s great victory over Zerah (ch. 15:9). Since the gathering at Jerusalem in celebration of this victory was held in Asa’s 15th year (ch. 15:10), it must have been at that time that the exodus from the northern kingdom was taking place and that the necessity arose for Baasha’s building of a stronghold on the border “to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa.” If this building of Ramah did not take place until Asa’s 36th year

of reign, 21 years would have elapsed since the exodus to Judah before measures were taken to stop it. But since the death of Baasha took place in Asa's 27th year, Baasha could not have built Ramah in Asa's 36th year. If the 36th year is understood as that of Asa's southern kingdom of Judah, then the supposed discrepancy disappears and the events fit perfectly into the 14th and 15th years of Asa.

2. *Silver and gold.* The Temple and palace treasures, depleted after Shishak's raid (ch. 12:9), had only recently been replenished by the spoils of war (ch. 15:18), but now they were taken away again, and this by a voluntary act of the king. Asa had previously gained a great victory as a result of placing his confidence in God and crying to Him for help (ch. 14:11, 12); now his faith failed him and he turned to a heathen king for assistance. Even men with long records of faithful service may mar their records by looking at the difficulties of the present and failing to place their trust in God.

4. *Smote Ijon.* The places smitten were on the northern frontiers of Israel, near Syria. For further details concerning the cities here mentioned see on 1 Kings 15:20.

5. *Left off building.* Asa had succeeded in his immediate purpose of putting a stop to the threat of Baasha, but his action in appealing to Benhadad for aid was not in line with what should have been expected from a child of God under the circumstances. The king's lack of faith gave the heathen neighbors the opportunity to cast reproach upon the name of God, since it was probably known that Jehovah had earlier been exalted as the source of Judah's military victories.

6. *Geba and Mizpah.* For the location of these cities see on 1 Kings 15:22. Note that the identification of Mizpah as *Tell en-Naşbeh* locates the city about 8 mi. (12.8 km.) north of Jerusalem, at the place that some have identified as the site of Ataroth (see on 2 Kings 25:23).

7. *Hanani the seer.* The record of vs. 7–10 is not found in Kings. Nothing beyond what is here told is known of Hanani, unless he was the father of Jehu, the seer who prophesied against Baasha (1 Kings 16:1–4, 7) and Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 19:2).

Because thou hast relied. This reliance on a heathen king displayed Asa's lack of faith in God. Hanani's rebuke of Asa is in line with the messages of other prophets of God (see Isa. 30:1, 2, 7, 15–17; 31:1, 3; Jer. 17:5; Hosea 5:13; 7:11; 12:1).

Escaped. Although Asa had hired Benhadad as an ally, Syria was still an enemy of Judah rather than a friend. No doubt Asa had been fearful that Benhadad would assist the Israelites in their measures against Judah, and in this he was unquestionably correct. By his politic act he had turned away the king of Israel, but by faith in God he might have won a victory over the combined forces of Israel and Syria. It was not the Lord's purpose that His people should be at the mercy of their enemies, and it was only when they turned against the Lord or displayed lack of confidence in Him that they suffered defeat. If the faith and courage of Asa had not failed on this occasion, his kingdom might have been greatly enlarged and the name of the Lord magnified among the nations of earth.

8. *The Ethiopians and the Lubims.* The Lubims, or Libyans, were at this time the rulers of Egypt. Zerah was an "Ethiopian" (see on ch. 14:9).

Rely on the Lord. The prophet is citing Asa's own experience in the victory over Zerah as an evidence of the truth of his words.

9. *Run to and fro.* God's eyes are everywhere, always searching for those who are wholehearted in service, that through them He might reveal His great power and perform His wondrous works. Through the deeds of righteous men the world becomes acquainted

with the nature and power of God. Asa did an injustice not only to himself and his nation but also to God by failing to display faith in the Lord. At the hour when God was seeking for someone through whom He could reveal Himself to the nations, and when the king of Judah appeared to be the one through whom this might be done, Asa failed. If only he had been strong and courageous, moving ahead in the name of the Lord, the reformation he had begun in Judah might have extended to other lands, and many among the heathen would have come to know God and take their stand with Him and with His people.

Foolishly. From the point of view of both God and man the action of Asa had been foolish. The king had only temporarily removed a threat from one enemy, but in order to accomplish this he had greatly strengthened another. The original problem was only partially solved, and new problems were created.

Thou shalt have wars. The peace secured by Asa's foolish policy of bribing a heathen king was neither real nor permanent. Hanani's prediction was verified over and over again in the later history of Judah. Asa had the opportunity of striking a telling blow at two opponents. Although there is no specific account of any future wars in which Asa himself was involved, the record is that "there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days" (1 Kings 15:16, 32).

10. Wroth with the seer. Hanani had acted as a messenger for God, passing on to Asa the word of the Lord concerning the foolish course the king had taken. But instead of accepting that message, Asa became angry and took out his wrath upon the prophet of the Lord. One foolish act led to another. Judah's reformer became Judah's tyrant and oppressor. Folly led to cruelty, ingratitude and gross injustice.

11. The acts of Asa. Verses 11–14 present the conclusion of Asa's reign. The parallel account is found in 1 Kings 15:23, 24.

12. Thirty and ninth year. Since Asa reigned 41 years (v. 13), he must have been seriously ill during the last two years of his reign. The chronological pattern of the reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat indicates that during the last three or four years of Asa's reign, Jehoshaphat was reigning jointly with him. Asa's illness may have caused the king to associate his son with him on the throne.

To the physicians. Not only in war and national policies did Asa place an undue dependence upon the aid of man, but in sickness as well. How weak the faith of him who had once been so strong! One victory is never a certain guarantee of another. Strength today is no assurance of strength tomorrow. On the occasion of his great victory over Zerah, Asa was strong in faith and mighty in deed. But it is such men of strength who become the main targets of the enemy. Instead of growing in strength and courage, Asa declined, till he spent the last few years of his life sick, disappointed, and embittered, with little faith in God and receiving little help from man.

13. The one and fortieth year. This item, which comes here at the conclusion of the account of Asa's reign, appears in 1 Kings 15:10 at the beginning of the account. Chronicles apparently places less emphasis upon chronology than Kings.

14. In his own sepulchres. The particulars of Asa's burial found in this verse are peculiar to Chronicles. The plural "sepulchres" probably indicates a family tomb containing a number of cells. Burial in Palestine was common in chambers hewn from the rock (see Isa. 22:16; Matt. 27:60; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:53).

Sweet odours. This was in harmony with the custom in Palestine (cf. John 19:39, 40).

A very great burning. This was not cremation, since such a practice was not followed by the Hebrews. Perhaps the burning of incense and spices is referred to (see on ch. 21:19).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7–10, 12PK 113

9 PK 376

CHAPTER 17

1 *Jehoshaphat, succeeding Asa, reigneth well, and prospereth. 7 He sendeth Levites with the princes to teach Judah. 10 His enemies being terrified by God, some of them bring him presents and tribute. 12 His greatness, captains, and armies.*

1. And Jehoshaphat. Chapters 17–20 deal with Jehoshaphat and his reign. The summary of his reign in Kings is brief (see 1 Kings 22:41–50). The present chapter is peculiar to Chronicles.

Against Israel. By his foolish policy of purchasing the aid of Syria against Israel, Asa had left his son a legacy of trouble. As soon as Jehoshaphat came to the throne he was forced to take measures of defense against his northern neighbor. All this was in the early part of his reign, and evidently before the time that he made an alliance with Ahab (ch. 18:1).

2. The cities of Ephraim. Compare ch. 15:8.

3. With Jehoshaphat. The greatest satisfaction and joy that can come to the heart of man is to know that he has the presence of the Lord with him. Both material and spiritual blessings came to Jehoshaphat and the nation as a result of the Lord's presence and blessing.

First ways. The first ways of both David and Jehoshaphat were better than their latter years. Prior to his adultery with Bath-sheba and the murder of her husband (2 Sam. 11), David had lived a life that left an influence for good. Asa displayed a trust in God and a loyalty to principles of justice and right that was not evident in his later years (see ch. 16:2–10).

Sought not unto Baalim. During the time that Jehoshaphat reigned the worship of Baal secured a strong hold upon the northern kingdom. He was a contemporary of Ahab and Jezebel, and lived during the time that Elijah raised his voice in loud protest against the terrible apostasy then sweeping the northern kingdom (see 1 Kings 16–22). Chronicles makes only one brief reference to this prophet (ch. 21:12–15). The Baalim were local aspects of the Canaanite male fertility god (see Vol. II, p. 40). So common had their worship become that Jehoshaphat is singled out for commendation in that he did not follow the regular practice of his age.

4. Sought to the Lord. The great issue in the minds of many during this time was whether Jehovah or Baal would prevail (see 1 Kings 18:21). Jehoshaphat was firm in his allegiance to God, in striking contrast to the course of the contemporary king of Israel.

6. His heart was lifted up. This expression is usually employed in a bad sense (see Deut. 8:14; 2 Chron. 26:16; Eze. 28:2, 17), but here it has an entirely different meaning. The heart of Jehoshaphat was lifted up in God and in His ways. The king found both satisfaction and joy in his experience with God. Emboldened by a sense of divine favor resting upon him, he took heart to venture upon further reforms and to encourage his people in the ways of the Lord. His great aim in life was to exalt, not himself, but God.

Took away the high places. He continued, the work of reform begun by his father (ch. 14:3, 5). Not only did Jehoshaphat not seek after the Baalim, but he also did away with their centers of worship. There were, however, other high places that were local centers of the worship of Jehovah (see 1 Kings 3:2, 4; 1 Chron. 16:39; 2 Chron. 1:3), and these presumably he permitted to remain (1 Kings 22:43).

7. Sent to his princes. The king sent to the princes in various parts of the land and directed them to arrange for the instruction of the people, presumably by the Levites and priests. They themselves did not do the actual preaching (see PK 191).

9. Book of the law. Moses had given important instruction which, if heeded, would mean much to the nation. Jehoshaphat understood that the prosperity of his nation depended upon obedience to the commands of the Lord. He therefore did all that was in his power to see that the people became acquainted with the divine requirements, that they might put away sin and walk fully in the ways of the Lord.

Throughout all the cities. Jehoshaphat's measures were not halfhearted. Throughout the country the priests were sent with the commission to instruct the people in the law of the Lord and the ways of righteousness. A spiritual awakening in all parts of the nation was the result of the king's earnest efforts for his people. He became Judah's first great reforming king.

10. No war. This was in harmony with the plan of God. The Lord does not delight in war, and intended that His people should abide in peace.

11. Brought Jehoshaphat presents. Probably as tributaries of Judah (see 2 Sam. 8:2).

Brought him flocks. Some of the tribes who lived in the northern Arabian Desert to the east of Judah became tributaries of Jehoshaphat and paid their tribute in kind. Compare the tribute of Mesha of Moab, the king who paid a large assessment in kind to Ahab, the contemporary king in Israel (2 Kings 3:4).

12. Waxed great exceedingly. Because Jehoshaphat followed faithfully in the ways of the Lord, God was with him and caused him to go on from strength to strength and from one success to another.

Castles. That is, fortresses.

13. Men of war. God gave Jehoshaphat peace and placed "the fear of the Lord ... upon all the kingdoms" round about (v. 10). However, these blessings did not prevent Jehoshaphat from preparing himself for any emergency.

14. Of their fathers. The men were mustered according to their families or clans, with the result that men of the same stock fought side by side with their kindred.

The chief. Presumably the commander in chief, since Adnah is mentioned first and had the larger corps or perhaps the largest (see below under "three hundred thousand").

Three hundred thousand. The first two numbers, 300,000 and 280,000, follow exactly the figures of the forces of Judah and Benjamin at the time of Asa (ch. 14:8), and provide a total of 580,000. If the next three numbers, 200,000 under Amasiah, 200,000 under Eliada, and 180,000 under Jehozabad, are additional, they provide another total of 580,000, or a grand total of 1,160,000 in the service of the king, besides those who were in "the fenced cities throughout all Judah" (v. 19). Someone has estimated that an army of this size would imply a population for Judah and Benjamin of between 1,500 and 2,000 per sq. mi., which is far in excess of the most densely populated country of our modern world. Since the total of the last three numbers equals exactly the sum of the first two, it may be the figures for the first two officers represented the total number of men

and the other three numbers the size of subordinate divisions. The total may also refer to the total male population of military age. It is doubtful that an army of this size was ever mustered at one time for the defense of Jerusalem.

The word here translated “thousand,” *’eleph*, does not always denote the literal number 1,000 (see on Ex. 12:37). For example, *’eleph* is translated “family” in Judges 6:15. It is thought that *’eleph* may stand at times for smaller units than 1,000. There is insufficient data to determine its exact designation in every instance.

There is some doubt also as to the translation of certain Hebrew expressions for numbers (see on Esther 9:16; see also pp. 122, 123). We cannot, therefore, be certain of the exact size of these forces.

16. *Willingly offered himself.* Compare Judges 5:9. This might refer to some particularly valorous deed at some time of crisis, or it might mean a dedication to a particular service for life.

18. *Ready prepared.* That is, trained and equipped for service, but not necessarily forming a standing army (see on v. 14).

19. *In the fenced cities.* No numbers of the forces in these cities are given, but undoubtedly a large number of men would be needed for the defense of the strongholds throughout the land.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–19PK 190–192

3–5PK 190

5–9PK 191

10–19PK 192

CHAPTER 18

¹ *Jehoshaphat, joined in affinity with Ahab, is persuaded to go with him against Ramoth-gilead. 4 Ahab, seduced by false prophets, according to the word of Micaiah, is slain there.*

1. *Joined affinity with Ahab.* This chapter is parallel to 1 Kings 22:2–35. In Kings the incident appears in connection with the account of the reign of Ahab, while here it occurs in connection with the account of the reign of Jehoshaphat. The word translated “joined affinity” means to form a marriage alliance. The verb is translated “make marriages” in Gen. 34:9; Deut. 7:3; Joshua 23:12. The alliance between the kings was sealed by the marriage of Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, to Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat (see 2 Chron. 21:6; see on 2 Kings 8:26).

2. *After certain years.* That is, “in the third year” (1 Kings 22:2). This was the third and last year of a three-year period of peace between Israel and Syria (1 Kings 22:1). It was the year of Ahab’s death, 853 B.C., according to the chronology based on the Assyrian limmu list (see Vol. II, p. 159). The alliance between Jehoshaphat and Ahab was probably made in 863 B.C., or shortly before, because Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram and Athaliah (see on v. 1), was 22 years old in the 12th year from Ahab’s death and Joram’s accession (2 Kings 8:25, 26).

Killed sheep and oxen. Ahab overwhelmed Jehoshaphat with hospitality as part of a deliberate plan to win the participation of the king of Judah in the projected campaign against Syria.

3. Said unto Jehoshaphat. This verse is similar to 1 Kings 22:4. From here on the accounts in Chronicles and Kings differ only slightly (see on 1 Kings 22).

My people as thy people. The parallel account adds, “my horses as thy horses” (1 Kings 22:4). Chariots played an important part in the impending battle. At the battle of Qarqar, from which Ahab had just returned, Israel had provided, according to the Assyrian account, 2,000 chariots and 10,000 infantry, while Benhadad of Syria had 1,200 chariots, 1,200 cavalry, and 20,000 infantry.

4. Word of the Lord. Jehoshaphat had rashly agreed to go with Ahab against the Syrians, but now it seems his conscience told him that he should first ascertain the will of the Lord.

5. Prophets four hundred. These were false prophets.

6. Prophet of the Lord. Jehoshaphat was interested not so much in a favorable report as in a true report. He had no confidence in the word of the 400 false prophets of Samaria.

7. Never prophesied good. The prophet of the Lord did not prophesy good concerning Ahab because there was nothing good to prophesy. He delivered messages to Ahab as they were given to him by God. Ahab hated Micaiah because he hated the truth and despised the Lord. Truth is truth, whether it is appreciated or not. What the prophet of the Lord said, would come to pass, whether Ahab desired it or not.

10. Horns of iron. Horns were often used as symbols of strength or power (Deut. 33:17; Jer. 48:25; Amos 6:13).

11. Go up. The prophets prophesied as they did because this was the message that Ahab desired. They were in the service of the king of Israel, not in the service of the Lord of heaven. In telling Ahab to go up to Ramoth-gilead they were telling him to go to his death (see v. 34).

12. Speak thou good. Ahab’s messenger was endeavoring to instruct a prophet of the Lord as to the kind of message he should deliver. But God’s prophets are spokesmen for Heaven and receive their messages from God, not men. Men must have a low regard for a prophet of the Lord when they think they can influence the message he is to deliver.

13. What my God saith. To Jeremiah the Lord said, “Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jer. 1:9). A true prophet speaks not for himself but for the Lord.

14. Go ye up. See on 1 Kings 22:15. Micaiah seems here to be speaking in dramatic irony, simply repeating the false message of the false prophets (v. 11). Evidently his tone made that clear, as is shown by Ahab’s response (v. 15).

16. No shepherd. The king will fall and the people will be left without a leader.

17. Did I not tell thee? Ahab was a wicked king and knew that he could not expect a good message from the Lord. But he should have known that the Lord’s message was nevertheless a true message. Ahab’s failure to accept it as such cost him his life.

18. I saw. This is a parabolic vision and must be interpreted as such. In it God is represented as doing that which He does not restrain. God does not coerce the will. When evil men willfully choose to follow deception He does not intervene.

Since God is supreme, His refusal to restrain the forces of evil is often represented as though He directly sends the evil. An example may be found in the incident of the fiery serpents (Num. 21:4–9). According to the narrative as related by Moses, “the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people” (Num. 21:6). However, these “fiery serpents” were not suddenly created or miraculously transported from some other region for the occasion;

they already infested the wilderness area through which the children of Israel were traveling and would have been a source of real danger and the cause of frequent deaths had not God, by miracle, subdued these venomous reptiles. But when the people turned against the God who protected them from the many hazards of the desert, God simply withdrew His protection, and death was the result (see PP 429). Thus it was in the case of Ahab. Satan was already at work through the agency of the false prophets, and God simply did not prevent the course the king had chosen for himself.

21. *Do even so.* The divine command in the parabolic vision represents divine permission. Satan desired to bring about the death of Ahab, and the Lord did not prevent him. As long as God's restraining hand is stretched out, Satan is not permitted to kill, but when God's hand is removed, then Satan goes forth in his work of death and destruction (see GC 614).

22. *The Lord hath put.* Micaiah, as the prophet of the Lord, is explaining the real nature of the false prophets of Samaria. They speak lies, not truth. Their counsel leads to death, not life. God did not put this lying spirit into the mouths of the false prophets (see on v. 18); He simply permitted these emissaries of Satan to carry out their own ends, because at this time He would do nothing to prevent the death of Israel's wicked king.

23. *Smote Micaiah.* This insult to the prophet of the Lord well reveals the spirit of the evil one. In one way or another Satan portrays his nature in the spirit of his emissaries.

24. *Thou shalt see.* The emissaries of the evil one would themselves see the results of their evil. Zedekiah would soon be forced to seek refuge from the coming disaster by hiding in some inner chamber, where he would have opportunity to reflect upon whether he or Micaiah had told the truth.

26. *Return in peace.* Ahab was endeavoring to put on a brave front. He tried to show his contempt for Micaiah's message and was himself assuming the role of a prophet by predicting his return in peace. But he failed both as prophet and as king.

27. *If thou certainly return.* The prophecy would be tested by its fulfillment (see Deut. 18:22). The death of Ahab (2 Chron. 18:34) was the vindication of the prophet Micaiah.

28. *So the king.* Jehoshaphat found himself in strange company and in strange circumstances. He had asked for a prophet of the Lord, and that prophet had come and given his message. The failure of the projected campaign had been clearly and emphatically foretold. If Jehoshaphat had now accepted that message and refused to accompany Ahab, he might have been the instrument in sparing the life of Israel's king and preventing a disastrous and humiliating defeat. Jehoshaphat carried a solemn responsibility on this occasion, but he failed. Good men are not always good and wise men are not always wise.

29. *Disguise.* By hiding his identity Ahab probably thought that he might escape the evil foretold by Micaiah.

31. *The Lord helped him.* This detail is not found in Kings. Except for the Lord's intervention, Jehoshaphat would also have lost his life on this occasion. He had engaged in a foolish venture in which he knew the Lord would have no part. He placed himself on the enemy's ground, and as a result almost lost his life. But in spite of his foolish mistake, God was merciful, and intervened to save his life.

33. *At a venture.* The man who shot the arrow that killed Ahab did not know at whom he was shooting, nor did he know that he was fulfilling a prophecy from a messenger of

the Lord. But God had foreseen the drawing of that bow and the flight of that arrow, and as the Lord had foretold, so it came to pass.

34. Stayed himself up. That is, he propped himself. Ahab made a brave attempt to carry on, that his forces might go on to victory. He also hoped that he himself might not meet the fate Micaiah had predicted. He had occasion to think seriously of the prophet he had commanded to be shut up in prison till his safe return. But all was in vain. As God had said it would be, so it was. Ahab's bravery could not atone for his folly in not believing a message from God. At even he died. Although Micaiah was in prison his prediction had been vindicated.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–34PK 192–196

1 PK 192

2 PK 195

3 PK 196

3–6PK 195

28, 33, 34 PK 196

CHAPTER 19

1 *Jehoshaphat, reprov'd by Jehu, visiteth his kingdom. 5 His instructions to the judges, 8 to the priests and Levites.*

1. And Jehoshaphat. Chapter 19 contains materials not appearing in the record of Kings. It includes such items as the prophetic rebuke of Jehoshaphat after his return from Ramoth-gilead (vs. 1–3), the king's personal efforts at religious reformation (v. 4), and his reform of the judicial system (vs. 5–11).

Returned. Ahab and Jehoshaphat had been unsuccessful in their efforts to retake Ramoth-gilead. The troops returned to their homes, and the enterprise was presumably abandoned (see 1 Kings 22:36). The record implies that the Syrians had successfully repulsed the attack, but had made no attempt to follow up their success. Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem sound and unhurt, a sadder but wiser man.

2. Jehu the son of Hanani. Hanani was the name of the prophet who had rebuked Asa for relying on the king of Syria rather than on the Lord, and who had been thrown into prison for his rebuke (ch. 16:6–10), and Jehu was the prophet who boldly rebuked Baasha for his iniquity (1 Kings 16:1–7). Jehu was also the historian of Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Chron. 20:34).

To meet him. Jehoshaphat was rebuked at a most auspicious time when, downcast and dispirited, he approached his capital. At such a moment the prophetic message could do a most telling work on his heart.

Help the ungodly. From a human standpoint, the conduct of Jehoshaphat in joining with Ahab in an attack on Syria might have appeared wise. Syria was growing in power, a menace to both Judah and Israel. The Hebrews had a right to recover the cities across the Jordan that Syria had taken from them. Probably Jehoshaphat had carefully appraised the situation and may have felt that his undertaking against Syria was sound. But the venture did not have divine sanction and in carrying it out Jehoshaphat was associated with a man whom the Lord could not bless. Ahab was a base idolater, while Jehoshaphat had been endeavoring to wipe out idolatry. There was little in common between the two, and Jehoshaphat had no right to join himself to so base a man. He would have been much better off and would have been surer of success if he had gone against Syria alone. With

God's help and blessing he could have succeeded, even without the assistance of the forces of Ahab. Human help can prove to be more of a curse than a blessing, if it does not have the benediction of Heaven.

Wrath upon thee. God was not pleased with Jehoshaphat's course, and made His displeasure known by an open rebuke. The following chapter mentions a great attack upon Judah by the forces of Moab, Ammon, and Mt. Seir and the wrecking of Jehoshaphat's navy.

4. From Beer-sheba to mount Ephraim. That is, all of Judah, from Beersheba in the extreme south to Mt. Ephraim and the borders of Israel on the north. Compare the expression "from Dan even to Beersheba" employed of all Judah and Israel (1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Sam. 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 15; 1 Kings 4:25; 1 Chron. 21:2; 2 Chron. 30:5).

5. Set judges. Jehoshaphat revised the judicial system by establishing and maintaining efficient courts of justice, with a court of appeal at Jerusalem (see PK 197).

Fenced cities. There were probably local judges in the smaller villages, where minor cases could be decided. The local elders may have served as judges in the rural areas. Jehoshaphat appointed judges in the larger courts in the more important cities.

6. Take heed. Jehoshaphat urged the new judges to consider the importance of their work. They were to administer justice impartially to all classes, to the poor as well as the rich.

For the Lord. The judge was primarily a servant of God. He was to be fearless and impartial in all his decisions (see Deut. 1:17; Ps. 82:1-4; Eccl. 5:8).

With you. God is interested in justice and is present in the courtroom. He marks every impartial verdict and notes every breach of justice.

7. Fear of the Lord. The man who has the responsibility of administering justice constantly faces the task of deciding cases, and he must do his work in recognition of the fact that the eyes of the Lord are upon him. He must constantly settle matters in dispute, and in so doing he must remember that every decision he makes is registered in the books of heaven.

No iniquity. It is a comfort to remember that the great Judge of the world is a righteous judge and therefore His every decision is true and righteous (see Deut. 32:4; Ps. 9:8; 67:4; 96:13; Rev. 19:11).

Nor respect of persons. A righteous judge decides every case on its merits rather than according to the personalities involved. Altogether too often there is "respect of persons" in the matter of rendering decisions. Personal friends are favored, and those in a position to return favors are shown special considerations. Such judgments are neither impartial nor righteous, nor do they bring the blessing of Heaven. The Lord of heaven is no respecter of persons (Deut. 10:17; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9; 1 Peter 1:17), and His followers are to be like Him. The practice of flattering and favoring men of wealth and position while despising and defrauding those who are poor and humble, later brought down upon the leaders of Israel some of the most emphatic denunciations found anywhere in the writings of the prophets.

Nor taking of gifts. The justice of Heaven is not for sale, but that is not always the case with the justice of men. Decisions are often influenced by gifts. Presents are not always given from worthy motives, and favors received often anticipate favors in return. Bribery does not necessarily involve silver or gold. Many an individual in a position of trust has been bought off by accepting some seemingly innocent token. Every man faced

with the responsibility of making decisions must ever be on the alert that he does not allow a gift of any nature to be the determining factor in the verdict rendered.

8. In Jerusalem. A superior court or high court of appeal was established in the capital (see on v. 5).

Of the Levites. David had previously appointed 6,000 Levites as officers and judges (1 Chron. 23:4). Moses had decreed that priests and Levites should serve as judges (Deut. 17:8, 9).

Chief of the fathers. These were the heads of families or clans (see Deut. 1:15–17). Their age and experience would help them to render just and wise decisions.

When they returned to Jerusalem. A change in vowel pointing permits this clause to be translated “and they dwelt in Jerusalem.” The LXX implies a further change when it renders the second part of the verse, “and to judge the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” The court here under consideration was a central high tribunal at the nation’s capital which could function in both religious and civil cases (see PK 197).

9. Charged them. Jehoshaphat showed sincere concern over the matter of an impartial administration of justice and did everything within his power to set before the new judges the solemn responsibility that was theirs, encouraging them to be absolutely just and above reproach in carrying out their high commission.

Fear of the Lord. Compare v. 7 and 2 Sam. 23:3.

10. What cause soever. That is, the cases that might come before the central court at Jerusalem from other cities of the nation. It is clear from this passage that this court at the capital was a supreme court of appeal (see on v. 8).

Between blood and blood. Cases concerning bloodshed (see Deut. 17:8; 19:4–13; Ex. 21:12–15; 22:2; Num. 35:11–33).

Between law and commandment. That is, questions concerning the interpretation and application of the various laws and regulations that made up the Hebrew legal code.

Warn them. Jehoshaphat had admonished the judges to serve faithfully and with a perfect heart, in the fear of the Lord (vs. 6, 7, 9), and now he admonished them that they in turn should admonish the people who came before them to refrain from evil in order that they might not bring judgment upon the nation.

11. Amariah. According to 1 Chron. 6:8–11, Amariah was the fifth after Zadok, the high priest of David’s time (2 Sam. 17:15). Since Jehoshaphat was the fifth from David, the same Amariah is indicated in both instances.

Matters of the Lord. The high priest was the natural head of the high court in the matter of religious cases.

The king’s matters. Zebadiah was to be the head of the high court in all civil or criminal cases.

With the good. Jehoshaphat was expressing his faith that God would be with those who would be true to Him and upright in their service. The word for “shall be” should be translated as a wish, thus making the last sentence a benediction or prayer: “And may the Lord be with the good.”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–11 PK 196–198

1 PK 196

2 FE 295

2, 3 PK 196

CHAPTER 20

1 *Jehoshaphat in his fear proclaimeth a fast.* 5 *His prayer.* 14 *The prophecy of Jahaziel.* 20 *Jehoshaphat exhorteth the people, and setteth singers to praise the Lord.* 22 *The great overthrow of the enemies.* 26 *The people, having blessed God at Berachah, return in triumph.* 31 *Jehoshaphat's reign.* 35 *His convoy of ships, which he made with Ahaziah, according to the prophecy of Eliezer, unhappily perished.*

1. The children. The narrative of vs. 1–30 is not found in Kings. Verses 31–37 are parallel to 1 Kings 22:41–49.

Other beside the Ammonites. Literally, “from the Ammonites.” Instead of Ammonites the LXX reads “Mehunim,” the same people mentioned in ch. 26:7. Since the Ammonites have already been referred to in the earlier part of the verse, Mehunim is probably the correct reading here. The Mehunim (Meunites, RSV) are believed to have inhabited *Ma‘ân*, 19 mi. (30.4 km. southeast of Petra, and seem to have occupied the country in the vicinity of Mt. Seir (v. 10).

2. The sea. The Dead Sea. Ammon and Moab were east of this sea and Seir was to the south.

On this side Syria. Literally, “from ‘Aram.” One Hebrew manuscript reads *‘Edom*, “from Edom,” and this is probably the original reading, inasmuch as the invaders approached *from* the south, around the southern end of the Dead Sea, where they would naturally be described as coming from Edom. In consonantal Hebrew the words for Syria and Edom are sometimes confused, since they differ in only one letter, and the two letters are very similar in appearance (see on 2 Sam. 8:12).

Hazazon-tamar. A city in the Dead Sea area (see Gen. 14:7).

En-gedi. A fountain and town near the middle of the west shore of the Dead Sea. The spring bursting from a cliff creates an oasis with a rich vegetation (see on Joshua 15:61).

3. Jehoshaphat feared. It is not wrong to fear when face to face with danger, but it is wrong to succumb to fear. Strong and courageous men are often afraid, but in spite of their fears they go forward to do resolute deeds.

Seek the Lord. Jehoshaphat had for years been building up the strength of his nation by equipping armies and fortifying cities (ch. 17:12–19). But at this time of crisis he placed his trust, not in men, but in God.

Proclaimed a fast. Compare Judges 20:26; 1 Sam. 7:6; Ezra 8:21; Joel 2:12–14; Jonah 3:5–9.

4. Help of the Lord. Judah faced a threat to its very existence, and the nation met that threat by gathering together and unitedly seeking help from God. In the not-far-distant future the children of God will face a similar threat from their enemies, and they too will find comfort and help by turning to God (Rev. 12:17; 13:15; 17:14; GC 619).

5. House of the Lord. This term in its more extended sense includes the Temple courts.

Before the new court. There were two courts in Solomon's Temple (2 Kings 23:12; 2 Chron. 4:9; Jer. 36:10); one of these may have been recently renovated, perhaps by Jehoshaphat or his father, and thus would be termed “the new court.”

6. Over all. Compare 1 Chron. 29:12; Ps. 47:2, 8; Dan. 4:17, 25, 32. Jehoshaphat knew that God ruled over all the earth, and he also knew that if the enemies of God

should now triumph it would bring reproach upon the name of the Lord. Hence he called upon God to vindicate Himself before the heathen.

7. Abraham thy friend. This is the first use of this term in the Scriptures. It occurs again in Isa. 41:8 and in James 2:23.

8. For thy name. Compare ch. 6:5–8. God's name signifies His character.

9. If, when evil cometh. This is a condensation of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple (ch. 6:24–30). God had heard the prayer of Solomon and gave him a token to this effect (ch. 7:1–3). Jehoshaphat now claimed the answer to that prayer.

10. Mount Seir. This expression seems to be parallel to the Mehunim (Meunites, RSV) of v. 1 (see comments there).

Wouldest not let. See Deut. 2:4, 5, 9, 19; also Num. 20:14–21. Israel was commanded to spare the Edomites (see on 2 Chron. 20:2), for they were the children of Esau, and the Moabites and the Ammonites, for they were the children of Lot.

11. To cast us out. Since this was the objective of the enemy, it was an attack not only on the people of God but on God Himself.

12. Upon thee. Jehoshaphat was saying in effect, "We are utterly helpless and at the mercy of our enemies unless Thou dost come to our rescue; we know not which way to turn for help, but we are looking to Thee" (see Ps. 25:15; 123:2; 141:8).

15. But God's. God identified Himself with His people. The enemies of Judah were God's enemies, and the battle that was to follow was the Lord's battle.

16. Cliff of Ziz. Generally identified with the *Wadi Ḥaṣāṣah* north of En-gedi, about 12 mi. southeast of Bethlehem.

Wilderness of Jeruel. The exact location of this site is unknown, but it must have been somewhere in the vicinity of the cliff of Ziz, probably near Tekoa.

17. Not need to fight. This was the Lord's battle, not man's. The enemies of Judah were fighting against God, and He would intervene in behalf of His people.

Stand ye still. These words are almost identical with those that Moses employed at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:13), immediately before the Lord destroyed the armies of Pharaoh. Now, as then, the victory would be entirely from God, with men acting as witnesses of His mighty power in their behalf.

18. Bowed his head. Jehoshaphat and the people returned thanks to God for the promised victory. The battle had not yet begun, but the Lord's promise was accepted. God is honored when His people show sufficient faith to thank Him for promised blessings and victories.

19. To praise the Lord. This was a striking offering of praise before, rather than after, the victory. The people gave thanks to God as soon as He gave the promise of victory.

20. The wilderness of Tekoa. Tekoa is about 10 mi. south of Jerusalem.

Believe. There is nothing that provides greater confidence and security for man than to believe in the Lord. No man is truly established till he is established in God.

So shall ye prosper. In the ancient Jewish economy this was true materially as well as spiritually. God sent His prophets primarily that they might bring spiritual regeneration to the hearts of men. But the deeper the spiritual prosperity of a nation, the more certain was its continued material prosperity.

21. Before the army. As the armies of Judah advanced against the enemy the singers constituted the vanguard, shouting, not a cry of battle, but praises to God.

22. *Began to sing.* Seldom has the world seen such a battle as this—men singing hymns of praise to God as the attack is about to begin. The people were living their faith, and God saw fit to honor it. The Lord had promised victory, and the people took Him at His word. Victory was theirs because they claimed it.

Set ambushments. The nature of these is not disclosed, but the result was that the forces sent against the Hebrews mutually exterminated each other (see v. 23).

23. *To destroy another.* Compare Eze. 38:21; Zech. 14:13.

24. *The watch tower.* The scene of battle was a wild, desolate region, in which a watchtower would be used to observe the approach of an enemy.

26. *Valley of Berachah.* Literally, “valley of blessing.” This valley has been identified with the *Wadi el-‘Arrûb*, south of Tekoa. Jehoshaphat thus names the site in commemoration of the remarkable deliverance God granted His people from their enemies. What might have been a valley of death became a valley of life, and what might have been a place of cursing became a place of blessing.

29. *On all the kingdoms.* This may have been the time when the Philistines brought “presents and tribute silver” and the Arabians brought their gifts to Jehoshaphat and when “the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about” (ch. 17:10, 11). Certain of the main features of Jehoshaphat’s reign have been summarized in ch. 17.

31. *Jehoshaphat reigned.* Verses 31–37 present a number of closing notices concerning the reign of Jehoshaphat. They are closely parallel to 1 Kings 22:41–49, the entire account of Jehoshaphat’s reign that is given in Kings. The parallel passage adds that Jehoshaphat began his reign in the 4th year of Ahab (1 Kings 22:41).

32. *He walked.* Jehoshaphat was one of the few kings of Judah of whom it could be said that he followed the example of a good king. But in the northern kingdom of Israel the rulers who followed Jeroboam in point of time also followed his unworthy example of apostasy.

34. *Rest of the acts.* The parallel passage includes the following remark, “and his might that he shewed, and how he warred” (1 Kings 22:45). This statement apparently refers to such items as Jehoshaphat’s building activities (2 Chron. 17:12, 13), the strength of his armies (ch. 17:14–19), and his victory over Moab, Ammon, and Mt. Seir (ch. 20).

36. *Ships to go to Tarshish.* The parallel passage reads, “ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold” (1 Kings 22:48). This Tarshish was probably not the city identified with Tartessus in Spain (see on 1 Kings 10:22). Ophir was probably Punt (see on Gen. 10:29; 1 Kings 9:28).

37. *Eliezer.* This seems to be the only Biblical reference to this prophet.

Mareshah. A town in the Shephelah (see 2 Chron. 11:8; Joshua 15:44; Micah 1:15).

Joined thyself. The record in Chronicles places emphasis on the mistake of Jehoshaphat in associating himself with the king of Israel (v. 35), whereas the writer of Kings refers to this alliance only incidentally (1 Kings 22:48, 49).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–30PK 198–203

1, 2 PK 198

1–4, 12Ed 163

3–12PK 199

13 PK 200

14–17Ed 163
14–21PK 201
17 PK 203
20 Ed 163; ML 42
22–24PK 202
27–30PK 203
2

CHAPTER 21

1 *Jehoram, succeeding Jehoshaphat, slayeth his brethren.* 5 *His wicked reign.* 8 *Edom and Libnah revolt.* 12 *The prophecy of Elijah against him in writing.* 16 *Philistines and Arabians oppress him.* 18 *His incurable disease, infamous death, and burial.*

2. *Israel.* Though this is the term generally applied to the northern kingdom, it is sometimes used, also, for the southern kingdom (see chs. 21:1, 6; 21:4; 28:19, 27).

3. *Great gifts.* Compare the policy of Rehoboam in the endowment and settlement of his sons (ch. 11:23).

With fenced cities. Jehoshaphat made his sons rulers of important cities, thus giving them power and influence in the domain, and made them, in a degree, rivals of their brother Jehoram.

Jehoram. Jehoram received the kingdom while Jehoshaphat was still alive (2 Kings 8:16), becoming coregent in the 17th year of Jehoshaphat's reign (see on 2 Kings 1:17; 3:1).

The firstborn. This was the usual rule (see Deut. 21:15–17). But there were exceptions, as in the case of Solomon (1 Chron. 28:5), Abijah (2 Chron. 11:18–22), and Jehoahaz (ch. 36:1; cf. vs. 2–5).

4. *Was risen up.* This was presumably after the death of Jehoshaphat, as soon as Jehoram had gained control of the situation and felt himself secure.

Slew all his brethren. They had probably come to exercise considerable influence in the cities their father had given them, and Jehoram no doubt felt that they were a threat to his security on the throne. His wife Athaliah, who later slew all the seed royal (ch. 22:10), may have influenced him in the perpetration of this drastic deed.

Also of the princes. This would imply that Jehoram's brothers had found sympathizers and supporters among the leading men of the country.

5. *Thirty and two years old.* Verses 5–10 are parallel to 2 Kings 8:17–22, which passage, plus the opening and closing formulas, constitutes the entire record of Jehoram's reign that appears in Kings.

Eight years. This seems to have been the length of his sole reign, though he reigned an additional period as coregent (see Vol. II, pp. 148, 150).

7. *Because of the covenant.* "For David his servant's sake" (2 Kings 8:19).

8. *The Edomites revolted.* During the reign of Jehoshaphat, Edom had no king (1 Kings 22:47), and the country seems to have been under the control of Judah, for Jehoshaphat based his navy at Ezion-geber (2 Chron. 20:36), south of Edom.

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (2 Ch 12:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

9. Smote the Edomites. This is evidently a report, not of a victory, but of Jehoram's desperate escape by cutting his way out of an encirclement by Edomite forces. In the parallel passage, 2 Kings 8:21, the detail is added that "the people fled into their tents." Jehoram did not succeed in reducing Edom but was fortunate to be able to make his escape.

10. Unto this day. Amaziah later gained a measure of success in Edom (ch. 25:11–15), but this seems not to have been permanent. Under John Hyrcanus, in the 2d century B.C., the Edomites (then living in southern Judah) were once more reduced to vassalage.

Forsaken the Lord God. This detail is not found in the parallel passage of 2 Kings 8:22, which states merely that Libnah revolted. Libnah was in the lowland of Judah near Makedah and Lachish (Joshua 10:29–31), near the Philistine border, but its site is uncertain. It is probably to be identified with *Tell es-Şâfi*. Its revolt was no doubt aided by Philistine attacks on Judah under Jehoram (2 Chron. 21:16, 17).

11. Made high places. Jehoram's predecessors, Asa and Jehoshaphat, had removed the high places (chs. 14:3; 17:6).

To commit fornication. Under the influence of his wife Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Jehoram encouraged the worship of heathen gods in Judah. Such worship involved participation in the immoral practices of the native Canaanite cults (see Vol. II, pp. 38–41).

12. From Elijah. This is the only reference to Elijah in Chronicles. A full record of the prophet's work is found in 1 Kings 17–19, 21; 2 Kings 1, 2. Elijah was a prophet of the northern kingdom, and since the narrative in Chronicles is concerned primarily with the history of Judah, he receives only incidental mention. The account of Elijah's translation is recorded in 2 Kings 2, but the account of Jehoram's reign does not occur till 2 Kings 8. Biblical events are not always related in strict chronological sequence.

Thou hast not walked. This phrase makes it clear that Elijah's words were a personal message addressed directly to Jehoram, and that Elijah had not yet ascended (see PK 213).

13. Hast slain thy brethren. It does not seem likely that Jehoram would have slain his brethren till after his father's death. It is thus indicated that Elijah had not yet ascended when Jehoram began his sole reign; however, see on v. 12.

14. With a great plague. Transgression invites disciplinary penalty (see on 2 Kings 9:8). In this instance both king and people were to suffer because both were guilty. The stroke fell primarily upon the king (2 Chron. 21:15), because the greatest measure of guilt was his, but it also fell upon the nation in the form of an invasion by the Philistines, Arabians, and Ethiopians (v. 16).

15. Great sickness. See vs. 18, 19 for the fulfillment of this prediction.

16. The Lord stirred up. Compare 1 Kings 11:14, 23. There is no notice in Kings of this raid into Judah by the Philistines, Arabians, and Ethiopians. Israel's neighbors were always her traditional enemies and were ready to attack her whenever the opportunity afforded.

17. All the substance. The language may be interpreted as describing a sack of Jerusalem, but that is not necessarily the case. The king may have been reduced to such desperate straits as to have bought off the invaders by the payment of a heavy ransom, including the palace treasures. Certain members of the king's family may have found themselves outside the capital when overtaken by the sudden attack (see ch. 22:1).

Jehoahaz. Elsewhere called Ahaziah (2 Chron. 22:1; 2 Kings 8:24–26), and in one place Azariah (2 Chron. 22:6). Basically Jehoahaz and Ahaziah are equivalent names, composed of the same elements (“Jehovah” and “Ahaz”), with the divine name in the one case coming at the beginning (Jeho-ahaz) and in the other (Ahaz-iah) at the end of the name.

19. Made no burning for him. They did not show Jehoram the usual honor in the burning of aromatic woods and spices, which was usual at the funerals of kings (see 2 Chron. 16:14; Jer. 34:5).

20. Without being desired. So wicked had he been and so little good had he accomplished that the nation experienced no regrets at his departure.

Not in the sepulchres. A mark of dishonor (see ch. 24:25).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5, 6 PK 192

6, 11 PK 212

12–19PK 213

CHAPTER 22

1 *Ahaziah succeeding reigneth wickedly. 5 In his confederacy with Joram the son of Ahab, he is slain by Jehu. 10 Athaliah, destroying all the seed royal, save Joash, whom Jehoshabeath his aunt hid, usurpeth the kingdom.*

1. Ahaziah. This section (vs. 1–9) is parallel to Kings 8:25–29.

To the camp. The limited details presented leave the situation obscure. The royal princes were apparently in some camp away from the capital when they were beset by a marauding band of Arabs, and were captured and slain.

2. Forty and two. This figure is given as 22 in 2 Kings 8:26. Ahaziah could not have been 42 years old when he took the throne, because his father died at 40 (2 Chron. 21:5, 20). Two explanations of this have been offered. One is that an error in transcription is responsible for the word “forty” instead of “twenty.” The other is that the Hebrew phrase “a son of 42 years” refers not to Ahaziah’s age at his accession, but to the number of years from the founding of the dynasty of Omri, since Ahaziah was a “son” of that dynasty through “Athaliah the daughter of [Ahab, son of] Omri.” That Ahaziah was under the tutelage of that royal house is evident from vs. 3–5 and from 2 Kings 8:27, where he is called a “son in law of the house of Ahab.” It should not be surprising to find a fragmentary reference to an era reckoning from Omri, since Omri was so important a ruler that other nations continued long after to call the land of Israel the land of Omri, and the kings of Israel sons of Omri (see on 2 Kings 8:26). From the beginning of Omri’s reign to the accession of Ahaziah was about 42 years.

The daughter of Omri. Actually the granddaughter of Omri, since Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab (ch. 21:6), who was the son of Omri. Omri is mentioned instead of Ahab because Omri was the founder of the house. On the use of son as grandson see on 1 Chron. 2:7.

3. Ways of the house of Ahab. Compare Chron. 21:6, 13; Micah 6:16.

His counsellor. This item is not found in Kings. Athaliah was a forceful woman, much like her mother Jezebel, and would naturally do much to introduce the worship of Baal into the southern kingdom (see on 2 Kings 11:18).

4. They were his counsellors. His mother Athaliah (v. 3) and her brother Jehoram, or Joram (vs. 5, 6), seem to be intended.

To his destruction. Giving heed to evil counselors was Ahaziah's moral undoing that ultimately brought death upon him.

5. Went with Jehoram. As Jehoshaphat had gone with Joram's father Ahab (ch. 18), so Ahaziah became a close partner of Joram and joined him in his expedition against the Syrians. No good can be expected from association with evil men.

6. Hazael. See on 2 Kings 8:28.

Azariah. Fifteen Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, and the Syriac read, Ahaziah. The parallel passage (2 Kings 8:29), which is practically identical with Chronicles, also reads Ahaziah.

7. Of God. This statement is not found in Kings. Chronicles explains how the working out of divine providence was involved in the death of Ahaziah. The king's untimely death was interpreted as a judgment upon him for his idolatry. Ahaziah's visit to Jehoram (or Joram) of Israel came at the exact moment of Jehu's revolt, whence it happened that Joram, Jezebel, and Ahaziah all met their doom.

Son of Nimshi. That is, the grandson of Nimshi. Jehu was the son of Jehoshaphat, who was the son of Nimshi (2 Kings 9:2. On the usage of "son" for "grandson" see on 1 Chron. 2:7).

Anointed to cut off. Jehu was appointed to execute civil penalty upon the house of Ahab (1 Kings 19:16; 2 Kings 9:1–10).

8. Judgment. Jehu was carrying out a divine commission (2 Kings 9:7–9).

God works in various ways to punish sin. If men could carry out their lawless deeds with impunity they would be greatly emboldened in their iniquity. The purpose of civil penalty is to put a deterrent upon the transgressor. God Himself dictated the civil penalties to be meted out to the transgressors of Israel's ancient code. The governments of the nations that today impose civil penalty do so under the charter of Heaven, so that whosoever "resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" (Rom. 13:2; cf. Rom. 13:1, 3–7).

Because of the limitations of civil government, God sometimes works through other means to punish sin. Sometimes the natural consequences of evil acts are in themselves sufficient punishment, and no other action is necessary. At other times God removes His restraining hand in a measure from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances arises that will punish sin with sin (see PP 728). Then, again, He intervenes directly as in the case of Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:7), and of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11), or appoints certain individuals to carry out sentences upon evil, as in the case of Jehu.

The fact that the commission to Jehu to punish the wicked crimes of Ahab and his house came from Heaven does not mean that Heaven sanctioned all the details of the procedure by which Jehu carried out the command. Likewise, when God removes His restraining hand and permits sin to punish sin, it must not be concluded that He prompts the wicked acts that follow (PP 739). See further PP 324–326.

Sons of the brethren of Ahaziah. See on 2 Kings 10:13, 14. If these were the sons of the king's literal brothers, they were small children escorted by these "princes of Judah." But it is probable that the term "brethren" is here employed in a broad sense to include such relatives as cousins as well as nephews of the king. There were 42 persons in this group who were slain.

9. Sought Ahaziah. Ahaziah was wounded by his pursuers at "the going up to Gur," near Ibleam (2 Kings 9:27), while evidently fleeing south toward Jerusalem. He changed

his course, for he was taken in hiding, but was apprehended and taken to Jehu. On the possible route of his flight see on Kings 9:27.

Buried him. His burial was “in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David” (2 Kings 9:28). It thus seems that Ahaziah was buried in the sepulchers of the kings, unlike his father Jehoram, to whom this final honor was refused (2 Chron. 21:20).

To keep still. Better, “to retain.” There was none of Ahaziah’s posterity who was able to rule the kingdom. He was only about 23 years old at his death (see 2 Kings 8:26) and thus would have no sons old enough to take the throne. This observation forms the introduction to the narrative of Athaliah’s usurpation of the crown.

10. When Athaliah saw. Verses 10–12 describe Athaliah’s seizure of the government. The parallel record is found in 2 Kings 11:1–3 (see comments there).

Destroyed. Heb. *dabar*, literally, “spoke,” which some have interpreted as “plotted against,” or “pronounced sentence.” More likely, with a number of Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, the Syriac, the Targums, and Kings 11:1, we should read *’abad*, “destroyed.”

11. Daughter of the king. That is, of King Jehoram (2 Kings 11:2).

The wife of Jehoiada. This information is not found in Kings. The fact that Jehoshabeath was the wife of Jehoiada the priest helps to explain her loyalty to the seed of David and also shows how she was in a position to hide the infant prince for so long a time.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–12PK 214, 215

1–4PK 214

8–12PK 215

CHAPTER 23

1 *Jehoiada, having set things in order, maketh Joash king.* 12 *Athaliah is slain.* 16 *Jehoiada restoreth the worship of God.*

1. In the seventh year. This chapter deals with the fall of Athaliah and the succession of Joash. It is parallel to Kings 11:4–20. The two accounts are essentially the same, although there are important points of difference. For further information, see on 2 Kings 11.

Strengthened himself. Took courage and braced himself for the ordeal with Athaliah.

The captains of hundreds. Five men are named. Their names are not given in Kings, where, however, the information is given that Jehoiada “fetches the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard” (2 Kings 11:4). The five men were probably captains of the 500 men comprising the bodyguard of Athaliah. The primary responsibility of the royal bodyguard was, of course, to guard the life of the king. The parallel passage in 2 Kings 11:4 adds the interesting detail that Jehoiada “took an oath of them in the house of the Lord, and shewed them the king’s son.” Having seen the real king, the captains of the bodyguard now entered into a covenant with Jehoiada that their loyalty henceforth would be pledged to him.

2. All the cities. A large number of Levites and other trusted individuals were brought to Jerusalem, probably under color of some religious festival, where they could support the high priest in the coming test of strength with the queen.

3. All the congregation. That is, all the assembly of Levites, the leading men of the nation, and the captains of the royal guard (2 Kings 11:4).

4. *Ye shall do.* The narrative in Chronicles gives the instructions that were issued to the priests and Levites. The writer of Kings gives the orders that were issued to the palace guards (2 Kings 11:5–8). There is a certain correspondence in the orders issued to the two groups, but they are not exactly parallel. The Levites were to be divided into three groups.

5. *King's house.* In 2 Kings 11:5 the “king’s house” seems to apply to the palace, where a part of the royal guard would be expected to be on duty. In Chronicles, however, the term may have been applied to the quarters where the young king was concealed in the Temple precincts. For a group of the Levites to have been stationed at the palace to keep watch on developments there might have created instant suspicion and given Athaliah the opportunity to take effective retaliatory measures against the conspirators.

Gate of the foundation. The location of this gate is not known.

In the courts. This was the usual procedure. None except the most trusted individuals were to be allowed in the vicinity of the new king at the time of his coronation.

6. *Save the priests.* This directive further emphasizes the foregoing instruction (v. 5). It was of vital importance that no unauthorized individual should have access to the Temple premises.

8. *All Judah.* That is, the officials of Judah represented there.

On the sabbath. See on 2 Kings 11:5, 7.

Dismissed not the courses. The courses of priests and Levites who had completed their duties and would normally have been dismissed were retained for the present emergency to assist those who were just beginning their duties. On these courses of priests and Levites see 1 Chron. 24, 25.

9. *Spears.* Compare 2 Kings 11:10.

10. *Along by the altar.* See on 2 Kings 11:11.

11. *Brought out the king's son.* The young prince was brought out of the Temple, where he had been kept in hiding.

The testimony. Probably a copy of the law (see on 2 Kings 11:12).

God save the king. See on 2 Kings 11:12.

12. *When Athaliah heard.* Verses 12–15, which describe the fate of Athaliah, are almost identical with 2 Kings 11:13–16. See comments there.

16. *Made a covenant.* Verses 16–21, dealing with the renewal of the covenant with Jehovah, the abolition of the worship of Baal, and the setting of the king upon his throne are parallel with 2 Kings 11:17–20.

Between him. The parallel passage reads, “between the Lord” (2 Kings 11:17). In this instance Jehoiada represented the Lord, for the covenant that was made was between the Lord on the one side and the king and the people on the other.

There was also a covenant between king and people (see on 2 Kings 11:17).

17. *To the house of Baal.* See on 2 Kings 11:18 for the destruction of this temple.

18. *Appointed the offices.* This verse and the following are an expansion of the brief notice in 2 Kings 11:18: “And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord.” A description is here given of the restoration of the regular services of the Temple that had been seriously neglected during Athaliah’s reign (2 Chron. 24:7).

The priests the Levites. The ancient versions read, “the priests and the Levites.” This construction seems required, since it was the duty of the priests to offer the burnt

sacrifices (Num. 18:1–7) and of the Levitical musicians to praise the Lord with song (1 Chron. 23:5; 25:1–7).

Had distributed. David had divided the priests and Levites into various courses (1 Chron. 23:6; 24:3; 25:1).

Singing. The Pentateuch does not contain a record of the musical services to be performed in the sanctuary, and it appears that these were first established by David (see 1 Chron. 16:4–6, 37, 41, 42; 23:5; 25:1, 6, 7; 2 Chron. 29:25, 26).

19. Porters. That is, gatekeepers.

None which was unclean. Compare v. 6, and Lev. 5:2, 3; Deut. 24:1.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

8 PK 215

12–17, 21 PK 216

CHAPTER 24

1 *Joash reigneth well all the days of Jehoiada.* 4 *He giveth order for the repair of the temple.* 15 *Jehoiada's death and honourable burial.* 17 *Joash, falling to idolatry, slayeth Zechariah the son of Jehoiada.* 23 *Joash is spoiled by the Syrians, and slain by Zabad and Jehozabad.* 27 *Amaziah succeedeth him.*

1. Joash. This chapter dealing with the reign of Joash is parallel with 2 Kings 12. The same general order prevails, but here important details are added (vs. 3, 7, 15–22).

Seven years old. This detail occurs as the last item of the preceding chapter in the record in Kings (2 Kings 11:21). The other details of the verse are the same as in 2 Kings 12:1, with the exception that the synchronism of the accession of Joash in the 7th year of Jehu is found only in Kings.

2. All the days of Jehoiada. “All his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him” (2 Kings 12:2).

4. To repair the house. This statement implies that during the reigns of the previous apostate rulers—Jehoram (ch. 21:6), Ahaziah (ch. 22:3, 4), and Athaliah (ch. 22:10)—when the service of Baal was encouraged (v. 7), the Temple had been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair.

5. Gather of all Israel money. Compare 2 Kings 12:5: “Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance.” It seems that a general collection was to be taken for the Temple throughout the country, with each Levite taking it locally, of the people of his acquaintance.

From year to year. The repair of the Temple was a major affair, and the collections would cover a number of years.

Hasten the matter. In its state of disrepair the Temple was a reproach to the people and an insult to Jehovah. A devoted priesthood and a consecrated people should have made the repair of the Temple their first business.

Hastened it not According to 2 Kings 12:6 the Temple had not yet been repaired in the 23d year of the reign of Joash. It is implied here that the Levites were responsible for the delay.

6. Called for Jehoiada. It was evidently the king who was primarily concerned about the work of repair on the Temple. As chief priest, Jehoiada should have made this his major concern, but the priests had probably become more interested in their own affairs than in the work of the Lord.

The chief. That is, head of the priests.

Commandment of Moses. These regulations assigned a half-shekel tax for the service of the sanctuary (Ex. 30:13–16). According to 2 Kings 12:4 moneys received from “the dedicated things”—from individuals who had made vows to the Lord or who had dedicated certain animals or objects to Him (see Lev. 27:2–28)—had also been assigned to this project. In addition there were freewill offerings. According to 2 Kings 12:7, 8, the priests had been receiving money from the people but had not turned it over for the work of Temple repair.

7. Broken up the house. This item is not found in Kings. It seems that during their father’s reign Ahaziah and his elder brothers had carried out their mother’s designs against the Temple.

Upon Baalim. It was evidently the purpose of Athaliah to do away with the worship of Jehovah and to substitute in its place the worship of Baal. That a temple for Baal had been built is evident from ch. 23:17.

10. All the princes. It appears that the leading promoters of this project were princes and other secular leaders rather than priests. When once the people caught the spirit of the work, they found joy in giving for so worthy a cause. In this work they were engaged in the service of God, and the joy of the Lord filled their hearts.

11. At what time. Whenever the chest was full, it was brought by Levites to a royal office, where it was emptied in the presence of the high priest or his deputy and a royal scribe. The money was then weighed and placed in bags (see on 2 Kings 12:10, 11).

12. The king and Jehoiada. It is clear from this that the final supervision of the proceedings was in the hands of the king and the high priest. Both appeared to be men of uprightness and integrity, who could be counted upon to see that the money was properly handled, without irregularities.

Masons and carpenters. It is evident from these varied categories of workmen that the Temple must have been in need of extensive repairs. It had probably been partially demolished to provide materials for the temple of Baal (see v. 7 and ch. 23:17).

14. The rest of the money. So much money had been gathered that it was not all needed for the repair of the building. The king and the high priest again were consulted as to the disposition to be made of the surplus funds.

Chronicles makes no mention of the fidelity of the trusted deputies, of whom no accounting was asked, or of the fact that the priests continued to receive certain moneys assigned to them (2 Kings 12:15, 16).

Vessels for the house. See on 2 Kings 12:13.

Offered burnt offerings. The usual Temple ritual continued till the death of Jehoiada.

15. But Jehoiada waxed old. This section (vs. 15–22) dealing with the death and burial of Jehoiada and of the apostasy of Joash after the aged priest’s death, is not found in Kings.

An hundred and thirty. From the days of the Exodus downward, the Bible contains no record of anyone’s having reached an age equal to that of Jehoiada. Since Joash reigned 40 years (v. 1), Jehoiada must have been over 90 years old when the plot against Athaliah was carried into execution and Joash placed on the throne.

16. Among the kings. This was an unusual honor. It was doubtless due in part to the respect in which he was held for his religious devotion, to his services to the nation in connection with the overthrow of Athaliah and the placing of Joash upon the throne, to his connection with the royal family through his young wife (ch. 22:11; cf. ch. 22:2), and

to the fact that he must have practically held the office of king for some 10 or 12 years, till Joash became old enough to reign.

17. Came the princes. They came for the purpose of asking some particular favor of the king. The next verse clearly reveals the nature of their petition.

18. Left the house of the Lord. Jehoiada had carried the nation with him in his religious revival, but for many the worship of Jehovah was only a form. Inwardly they were still devoted to idolatry.

Wrath came upon Judah. The Lord could not allow His blessing to rest upon His people when they apostatized from Him and worshiped idols. His protecting hand was therefore withdrawn, and judgments were allowed to overtake the nation.

19. Yet he sent prophets. In His goodness God endeavored to bring His people back to the ways of righteousness. Prophets were sent to make clear the results that would follow if the people continued their disobedience. Only one of these prophets, Zechariah (v. 20), is known by name.

20. The priest. That is, the high priest. Jehoiada was the high priest, and Zechariah was his son. It is a testimony to the fidelity of Jehoiada that he had a son upon whom the Lord could bestow the high honor of the gift of prophecy.

Stood above the people. In order better to gain the attention of the people, Zechariah had taken a position above them. When Ezra read the law to the people he stood upon a platform of wood made for this purpose (Neh. 8:4).

Why transgress ye? The question was one of rebuke. Why transgress when transgression will bring ruin (see Eze. 18:31)?

He hath also forsaken. God does not force His presence and blessing upon anyone. When men refuse His guidance the Lord withdraws His Spirit from them, and then they are left to the mercies of the cruel master whom they have chosen.

21. Commandment of the king. Jehoiada had saved the life of the infant king and elevated him to the throne, and now the king had so little gratitude for the kindness that had been shown him that he ordered the death of the son of his benefactor.

23. The end. Heb. *tequpah*, literally, “a period of change,” such as the equinox, and hence the end of the year (see Ex. 34:22).

Host of Syria. See on 2 Kings 12:17.

24. Small company. This verse is explanatory of v. 23. Only a small detachment of the invading army defeated a large army led by the princes of Judah. The princes were slain (v. 23), and judgment was thus meted out against the apostate national leaders (see v. 17).

With his faithful few Gideon had destroyed a great host of the Midianites (Judges 7). But when God’s people apostatized, the Lord’s protection was withdrawn and a great host of Hebrews fell into the hands of a small number of the enemy.

They executed judgment. The Lord permitted the enemies of Judah to mete out judgment upon Judah, as He later employed Assyria for a similar purpose (see Isa. 10:5–7; see on 2 Chron. 22:8).

25. When they were departed. Joash kept the invading army of Syrians from sacking Jerusalem itself by sending Hazael the treasures of both Temple and palace (2 Kings 12:18).

Great diseases. Joash had probably been seriously wounded by the Syrians.

Sons of Jehoiada. It seems that other sons of Jehoiada may have been involved in the fate of Zechariah.

Slew him on his bed. This was in the house of Millo (2 Kings 12:20). Millo was probably a strong fortified area in the City of David. David (2 Sam. 5:9; 1 Chron. 11:8) and Solomon (1 Kings 11:27) had worked on Millo.

Sepulchres of the kings. Joash, who had begun his reign with such great promise, was refused the honor of burial in the royal sepulchers. Compare ch. 21:20, which states that Jehoram likewise was refused burial in the sepulchers of the kings because of his evil deeds.

26. Jehozabad. See on 2 Kings 12:21.

27. The burdens laid upon him. That is, the prophetic messages spoken against him. The word here translated “burden,” *maśśa’*, comes from the root *naśa’*, which means “to lift up.” From the idea of lifting up the voice, *maśśa*, developed “utterance.” *Maśśa’* is frequently used of prophetic utterances (Isa. 15:1; 17:1; etc.) and is twice translated “prophecy” (Prov. 30:1; 31:1).

Story. Heb. *midrash*, an “exposition,” or “commentary.”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

20–22DA 619

CHAPTER 25

1 Amaziah beginneth to reign well. 3 He executeth justice on the traitors. 5 Having hired an army of Israelites against the Edomites, at the word of a prophet he loseth the hundred talents, and dismisseth them. 11 He overthroweth the Edomites. 10, 13 The Israelites, discontented with their dismissal, spoil as they return home. 14 Amaziah, proud of his victory, serveth the gods of Edom, and victory, serveth the gods of Edom, and despiseth the admonitions of the prophet. 17 He provoketh Joash to his overthrow. 25 His reign. 27 He is slain by conspiracy.

1. Amaziah. This chapter, dealing with the reign of Amaziah, is parallel to 2 Kings 14:1–20. The parallels are particularly close in vs. 1–4, which correspond to 2 Kings 14:2–6; vs. 17–24, which correspond to 2 Kings 14:8–14; and vs. 25–28, which parallel 2 Kings 14:17–20. However, there are a number of important items not found in Kings, particularly in vs. 5–10, 13–16.

2. But not with a perfect heart. “Yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did” (2 Kings 14:3). Of both Joash (2 Chron. 24:2) and Amaziah it is said that they did “that which was right in the sight of the Lord,” but neither of these kings was wholehearted in his service, at least not during his entire reign. Each portrayed outstanding weaknesses and had to pay the penalty for his shortcomings. The failure of Amaziah to remove the high places is not mentioned (cf. 2 Kings 14:4).

5. Gathered Judah together. Verses 5–13 discuss the military strength of the nation and an attack on Edom. For the most part this section is peculiar to Chronicles. In Kings the record of war with Edom constitutes a single verse (2 Kings 14:7).

Silencing Syrian Aggression Under Adad-Nirari



Three hundred thousand. Compare this number with the total under Jehoshaphat (ch. 17:14–18), of probably 580,000 (see on ch. 17:14), and the 580,000 warriors of Asa (ch. 14:8). Undoubtedly the manpower of the nation had greatly declined during the disastrous wars of Jehoram and Joash (see chs. 21:8, 16; 24:23, 24).

6. Hundred thousand. Only a short time before, the army of Israel under Jehoahaz is said to have numbered 50 horsemen and 10,000 infantry (2 Kings 13:7). This number evidently constituted, not the number of men available for war in Israel, but the standing army left after the disastrous war with Syria. The fact that Amaziah was compelled to hire a force to swell the size of his army clearly indicates that 300,000 constituted approximately the available manpower of Judah at this time (v. 5).

7. Go with thee. Numbers alone do not constitute strength. The forces of Judah with God would be far stronger than they would be with the addition of the contingent from Israel without the presence and help of the Lord.

All the children of Ephraim. This is added as an explanation, and shows that the term “Ephraim” is employed as a synonym for the nation of Israel (see Hosea 5:11, 14; 6:4).

8. If thou wilt go. The prophet was saying in effect, “but if you insist on going, thinking that in this way you will be strong, go ahead, employ all your strength, and you

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (2 Ch 21:2). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

will still not succeed.” God’s messenger endeavored to cause Amaziah to realize the folly of depending upon human help without the help of the Lord (see ch. 16:7–9).

Power to help. Some of the greatest defeats that have come to God’s people have resulted from their failure to remember that the Lord has power to help (see Num. 13:31–33; 14:1, 29–33).

9. For the hundred talents. This was a typical human reaction. Amaziah should have thought more of what was right or wrong than of the payment that had been made to the king of Israel, which would now prove to be a complete loss. But even if the men of Israel had accompanied him on the campaign to Edom, Amaziah would have been no better off. One foolish act can never be atoned for by another.

10. Greatly kindled. It could hardly have been otherwise. Amaziah could have told them the true reason for their dismissal, that the Lord was not with Israel (v. 7) and that their presence would bring defeat (v. 8). This, of course, would have angered them. Or, as was probably the case, he did not give a reason. This would lead them to suppose that they had been dismissed because their good faith had been questioned. The result would likewise have been anger on their part.

11. The valley of salt. The valley of salt (see 2 Sam. 8:13; 1 Chron. 18:12) was probably near the Dead Sea (see on 2 Kings 14:7). The record in Kings also states that they took Selah, which means “Rock.” This is probably the famous region of Petra, about 50 miles (80 km.) south of the Dead Sea. “Petra” is the Greek name for “rock.” Selah was probably the site of the Edomite capital at that time.

12. Top of the rock. This was probably some cliff overhanging the town of Petra. Edomite Selah lay on the steep mountain *Umm al Biara*, the only place where ancient remains of this period have thus far been found. This massacre of the prisoners is not mentioned in Kings, but is quite understandable in view of the savage warfare of those days (see 2 Kings 8:12; Amos 1:11, 13).

13. Samaria even unto Beth-horon. Neither of these places is on the line of march for an army returning from the road to Edom to the country of Israel, for Samaria was the capital of Israel lying 35 mi. north of Jerusalem, and the two Beth-horons lay 10 and 12 mi. northwest of Jerusalem. If the troops had been dismissed before the march to Edom began, the forces of Judah would have been in a position to counter the depredations of the dismissed Israelites. It is possible that after the Israelites had returned to their country they were sent out from King Jehoash in Samaria to institute a raid against Judah, whereupon the incensed soldiers fell upon the inhabitants of the border area around Beth-horon.

14. Brought the gods. This section (vs. 14–16) dealing with Amaziah’s worship of the Edomite gods is not found in Kings. It was common practice to carry off the gods of conquered countries, not necessarily for purposes of worship but as trophies of victory.

To be his gods. Such is the folly and perfidy of man. The Edomite gods had been unable to provide their people help against the attack from Judah, while Jehovah had given Amaziah a great victory over Edom, yet the king bowed himself in worship before these captured Edomite idols.

16. Be smitten. The prophet’s rebuke would result either in humble repentance if the message were accepted, or in anger and bitterness if it were rejected. Amaziah refused to listen to reason or the voice of God, and apparently was on the verge of ordering the prophet put to death.

Determined to destroy. It was revealed to the prophet that Amaziah's base defection would not be passed by with impunity and that divine judgment had been decreed against him.

17. Took advice. But not with God. Having forsaken the Lord, he turned for counsel to men whose advice was contrary to the divine will and which brought upon him the judgments God had determined. Verses 17–24, dealing with Amaziah's rash challenge to Jehoash and Amaziah's disastrous defeat, are parallel to 2 Kings 14:8–14 (see comments there).

Let us see one another. This was a challenge to war.

18. The thistle. See on 2 Kings 14:9 for this parable.

20. Of God. See on ch. 22:8. The king of Judah had judgment decreed against him because of his worship of the gods of Edom (v. 16), and the Lord chose this method of allowing judgment to fall.

21. Beth-shemesh. A town 15 mi. west of Jerusalem (see on 2 Kings 14:11).

23. Took Amaziah. See on 2 Kings 14:13.

24. With Obed-edom. For a Levitical clan by this name see 1 Chron. 26:4, 8, 15.

25. Fifteen years. This is an unusual chronological statement. Nowhere else (except in the parallel passage of 2 Kings 14:17) are we told that a certain king of Israel or Judah lived a certain number of years after the death of some other king. Some have assumed that although the Bible says that Amaziah "lived" after the death of Joash, it does not affirm that he reigned; that it is improbable that Amaziah was released immediately after his capture; that at this time the people of Judah probably placed Uzziah, the 16-year-old son of Amaziah, upon the throne (see on ch. 26:1); that Amaziah was probably not released till after the death of Joash, at which time he may have been allowed to return to his country, to live for 15 years. If this reconstruction is correct, it provides a reasonable explanation for a coregency at this time.

Verses 25–28, dealing with the close of the reign of Amaziah, are parallel to 2 Kings 14:17–20.

27. After the time. Or, "from the time." The LXX and the Old Latin versions support the reading, "in the time." No precise time can be fixed by the Hebrew preposition *min*, here translated "after," since it may denote any time after the beginning of the apostasy (see Gen. 4:3; Hosea 6:2; Judges 11:4; Isa. 24:22). Some assume that Amaziah turned away from the Lord (2 Chron 25:14–16) upon the occasion of his worship of the gods captured in the Edomite campaign; that it was at that time he sent his rash challenge to Joash and engaged in the foolhardy war that brought a disastrous defeat to his nation and resulted in his own capture (vs. 17–23); that it was at that time that there was formed against him the conspiracy which placed his 16-year-old son, Uzziah, upon the throne. Hence the brief record would appear to mean that his death followed almost immediately upon the beginning of the conspiracy; yet the time statement in v. 25 and the opening clause of v. 27 have led some to believe that his flight to Lachish, where he was slain, did not take place till 15 years after the death of Joash, hence even more than 15 years after the conspiracy began. However, that the conspiracy began this early cannot be definitely established from available information.

CHAPTER 26

1 *Uzziah succeeding, and reigning well in the days of Zechariah, prospereth. 16 Waxing proud, he invadeth the priest's office, and is smitten with leprosy. 22 He dieth, and Jotham succeedeth him.*

1. Uzziah. Nearly all of this chapter is additional to the record of Uzziah's reign found in 2 Kings 14:21, 22 and 15:1–7. The separation of the record of Uzziah's reign into these two sections in Kings, with the narrative of Jeroboam's reign coming in between (2 Kings 14:23–29), has led some to the conclusion that the items concerning Uzziah that are found in 2 Kings 14:21, 22 occur as an appendage to the account of Amaziah's reign, and that the second introduction of Uzziah's reign, coming after the account of Jeroboam II, may indicate that Uzziah had a period of coregency with his father, with the second entry referring to the beginning of his sole reign. The name Uzziah is used uniformly in Chronicles, except in 1 Chron. 3:12, where the name Azariah appears in a genealogy. In the Assyrian records the term Azriau, now generally identified as Azariah, is used. Except for the spelling "Azariah," 2 Chron. 26:1, 2 is identical with 2 Kings 14:21, 22.

2. Eloth. A city on the Gulf of Aqabah not far from Ezion-geber (see on 2 Kings 14:22).

3. Sixteen years. Verses 3 and 4 are parallel to 2 Kings 15:2, 3. The synchronism with Israel (2 Kings 15:1) is, as usual, not included in Chronicles, since the latter does not deal with the reigns of the northern kingdom.

5. Zechariah. This is the only mention of this prophet.

Sought the Lord. Such statements, which constantly point out the blessings of obedience and the bitter fruitage of transgression, are characteristic of Chronicles.

6. Against the Philistines. Verses 6–15 deal with Uzziah's military adventures, his public works, and his strength in arms. This section is found only in Chronicles and is an important contribution to information regarding the nature of Uzziah's reign. It is thought that "Azriau of Iauda" in the Assyrian records was Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah. If so, these records (see on 2 Kings 14:28; 16:5) confirm the picture given in the Bible of Uzziah's military importance.

7. Philistines. The Philistines and Arabians are also named together in chs. 17:11; 21:16.

Gur-baal. This place is unknown, though some think that it was probably a place in Edom.

The Mehunims. These were the people of Maon, in the vicinity of Mt. Seir (see on ch. 20:1).

8. The Ammonites. Compare ch. 20:1, where the Ammonites are mentioned as forming one group of a confederacy that attacked Jehoshaphat.

9. Towers in Jerusalem. Walls in Oriental cities still have great towers at the city gates. These are for the housing of troops and the storage of arms in times of emergency. The gate here mentioned was probably at the northwest corner of the city (see ch. 25:23).

The valley gate. This was probably the gate at the southwest corner (see Neh. 2:13; 3:13). See The Walls of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's Day.

Turning of the wall. Compare Neh. 3:19, 20, 25. Some think this tower was on the eastern side of Zion, at a bend in the wall, and thus served to defend both Zion and Mt. Moriah against attacks from the southeast.

10. In the desert. That is, in the grazing areas. The towers were for protection against marauding bands of Bedouins.

Plains. Heb. *mishor*, “level ground,” sometimes applied to the fertile tableland between the Arnon and Heshbon (see Deut. 3:10; 4:43; Joshua 13:9, 16, 17, 21; 20:8; Jer. 48:8, 21), but here a territory in Judah is evidently referred to.

Carmel. This word should probably be translated “orchards.” However, there was a place called Carmel in Judah 7 mi. south of Hebron.

13. An army. The size of the army, 307,500 men, is comparable to the size of Amaziah’s army of 300,000 men (ch. 25:5), but is considerably less than the armies attributed to Asa (ch. 14:8) and Jehoshaphat (ch. 17:14–18).

With mighty power. If Uzziah was the Azriau of the Assyrian inscriptions, he must have been the dominating figure in Western Asia during the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727). See on 2 Kings 14:28.

14. Slings to cast stones. Literally, “for stones of slings.” Perhaps stones for use in slings are meant.

15. Engines. These may have been similar to the later Roman catapult, or ballista.

Spread far abroad. Tiglath-pileser III has a number of references to “Azriau of lauda” (see on v. 13).

16. Transgressed against the Lord. Under ordinary circumstances only the priests were allowed to enter the Temple, and only they were permitted to offer incense on the golden altar before the veil (see Num. 18:1–7). Uzziah was guilty of presumption in his attempt to assume this sacred priestly prerogative.

17. With him fourscore priests. Uzziah had probably entered the Temple with a considerable retinue and might have made an endeavor to resist the high priest’s attempt to expel him, but Azariah was prepared to resort to force if necessary.

18. For thine honour. Transgression is never an honor but a shame. Uzziah marred his noble record by his sin in the latter part of his reign.

19. Was wroth. One sin almost invariably leads to another. The priests were doing their duty in endeavoring to restrain the king from offering sacrifice. But that he, the king, should be thus restrained filled him with violent wrath.

Leprosy even rose up. While the king stood before the Lord with his heart filled with wrath and rebellion, a visitation from God came upon him. Smitten with leprosy, he realized with horror that the hand of God had touched him.

20. Thrust him out. Seizing the smitten king, the priests were prepared to thrust him forcibly from the Temple. In terror Uzziah hastily withdrew.

21. Several house. That is, a separate house. Lepers were not permitted by Hebrew law to dwell with others, but must abide alone, anciently, “without the camp” (Lev. 13:46).

Cut off. Never again was the king permitted to enter the sacred precincts of the Temple.

Over the king’s house. Jotham became regent, ruling the country from the time that his father was stricken with leprosy.

22. Isaiah. Isaiah received his glorious vision of God “in the year that king Uzziah died” (Isa. 6:1). Since he seems to have continued his prophetic ministry up to the reign of Esarhaddon (Isa. 37:38), who came to the throne of Assyria in 681 B.C. he must have been a young man when he began his work about 740 (see PK 305, 310).

23. Field of the burial. “In the city of David” (2 Kings 15:7). The meaning is probably that Azariah was buried in a burial plot belonging to the kings, but not in the royal tombs themselves.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–23PK 303–305

15 PK 303

16–21PK 304

CHAPTER 27

1 *Jotham reigning well prospereth.* 5 *He subdueth the Ammonites.* 7 *His reign.* 9 *Ahaz succeedeth him.*

1. Jotham. This chapter, dealing with the reign of Jotham, is parallel to 2 Kings 15:32–38, but is more complete. Kings mentions one item not found in Chronicles, namely, the measures of Syria against Judah (2 Kings 15:37).

2. Into the temple. That is, Jotham did not illegally go into the Temple as his father had done before him (ch. 26:16–20).

Did yet corruptly. The writer of Kings further explains this item by stating that “the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places” (2 Kings 15:35). The utterances of the prophets of this period give evidence that there existed a deep-seated moral corruption that was sapping the strength of the nation (Isa. 1:4, 21–24; Hosea 4:1, 2; Micah 3:10–12).

3. High gate. Probably the gate in the northern wall of the Temple court (see Jer. 20:2; Eze. 9:2).

Ophel. The northern part of the southeastern hill of Jerusalem.

4. Built cities. Evidently for defense and protection against both Israel and Syria, and against the rising power of Assyria which, under Tiglath-pileser III (745–727), was at this time taking an active interest in the affairs of Western Asia.

Castles. That is, forts. Both Uzziah and Jotham displayed an unusual anxiety to fortify the country (see ch. 26:9–15). The prophets of the time denounced the popular confidence that was being placed in fortifications and human might (Hosea 8:14; Isa. 2:15; cf. 17:3, 4).

5. Ammonites. After the death of Uzziah the Ammonites probably refused the accustomed payment of tribute (ch. 26:8), but Jotham reduced them again to submission.

And the third. For three years Ammon continued to send tribute to Jotham and then presumably stopped. This is believed to have occurred at the time Ahaz took over the throne after Jotham’s sole reign (of probably only 4 years). The total length given for Jotham’s reign is 16 years (vs. 1, 8), but for the first period of it—quite likely for about 12 years—Jotham is believed to have been coregent with Uzziah. On Jotham’s 20 years versus his 16 years (2 Kings 15:30, 33), see Vol. II, p. 150.

6. Prepared his ways. Characteristically the chronicler points out the cause of prosperity—consecration to the LORD.

7. All his wars. In the latter part of his reign Jotham was forced to contend with encroachments from both Israel and Syria (2 Kings 15:37).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 PK 305

CHAPTER 28

1 *Ahaz reigning very wickedly is greatly afflicted by the Syrians. 6 Judah being captivated by the Israelites is sent home by the counsel of Oded the prophet. 16 Ahaz sending for aid to Assyria is not helped thereby. 22 In his distress he groweth more idolatrous. 26 He dying, Hezekiah succeedeth him.*

1. Ahaz. This chapter, dealing with the reign of Ahaz, is parallel to 2 Kings 16. The account in Chronicles is, on the whole, fuller than that in Kings, but does not mention a few details there given.

2. Images for Baalim. See on Judges 2:11; see also 1 Kings 16:31; 2 Kings 1:2; 2 Chron. 21:6; 22:3; 24:7.

3. Valley of the son of Hinnom. This valley was west and south of Jerusalem (see Joshua 15:8; 18:16). It was the scene of some of the most cruel and revolting rites, probably derived from Canaanite worship.

Burnt his children. Apparently sacrificed as burnt offerings to Molech (see on Lev. 18:21; 20:2; Deut. 18:10; 32:17). Human sacrifice was one of the most terrible abominations of Palestine, and in the period of Judah it became a not uncommon feature of religious worship (Jer. 7:31; 19:2–6; 32:35; Eze. 16:20, 21).

5. Delivered him. See on ch. 22:8.

6. Forsaken the Lord. When the protection of the Lord is withdrawn, man discovers to his sorrow that the master he has chosen can be exceedingly cruel. After such heavy losses, there was nothing to prevent Syria and Israel from besieging Jerusalem. However, they did not take it (2 Kings 16:5). It was the object of the allies to depose Ahaz and set up a new ruler of their own (Isa. 7:6). The panic of Ahaz is vividly described in Isa. 7:2.

7. Governor of the house. Evidently the chief officer of the palace (see 1 Kings 4:6; 18:3).

Next to the king. Compare 1 Sam. 23:17; Esther 10:3. The deaths of these three prominent personages are mentioned because of their close connection with Ahaz. The blow that struck them struck the king.

8. Two hundred thousand. These were women and children taken as slaves.

9. A prophet. This whole section (vs. 9–15), dealing with the return of the prisoners, is found only in Chronicles.

Wroth with Judah. The Lord desired Israel to know that it was not because of their prowess that they had been victorious in this campaign, but because of Judah's sin. God's protecting hand had been withdrawn from Judah; hence it was possible for Israel to triumph over her.

In a rage. The fact that the Lord's protection had been withdrawn from Judah did not justify Israel in the severe and cruel measures she had taken against her neighbor. The Lord is a God of infinite justice, "longsuffering, and of great, mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty" (Num. 14:18). The Lord allowed Assyria to be the instrument for the punishment of His people, but in turn predicted that He would "punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria" (Isa. 10:5–12; see on 2 Chron. 2:8).

10. Are there not with you? Do you not have trespasses of your own against the Lord which likewise merit judgment? Are you yourselves so completely guiltless that your indignation against your brethren can be justified in the sight of Heaven?

11. Deliver the captives. Through Moses the Lord had expressly forbidden the Israelites to reduce their brethren to bondage (Lev. 25:42–46).

Upon you. Israel had witnessed the fate that befell the people of Judah when the wrath of the Lord was upon them. The fact that God's wrath was now directed against Israel made some of the heads of the nation think seriously.

12. Heads. The patriarchal chiefs of the northern tribes here referred to as "Ephraim" (see Isa. 7:2, 5, 9; Hosea 5:9–14).

15. City of palm trees. Compare Deut. 34:3.

16. Kings of Assyria. Verses 16–21, dealing with the appeal of Ahaz for help from Assyria, are parallel to 2 Kings 16:7–9. See also Isa. 7, 8.

18. The Philistines. Having been smitten by Uzziah (ch. 26:6), the Philistines were evidently eager to retaliate. The cities they took were in regions often in dispute between Judah and Philistia.

They dwelt there. These were not merely minor border raids but serious attacks in which the areas seized were occupied and held for a time.

20. Tilgath-pilneser. This was Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.), one of the greatest conquerors among Assyrian emperors. According to the Assyrian Eponym Canon, or limmu list (see Vol. II, pp. 55, 155), he came against the Philistines in 734 and against Damascus in 733 and 732. It is possible that these campaigns were undertaken in response to Ahaz's urgent plea for help.

Strengthened him not. The king of Assyria was not interested in the welfare of Ahaz or the people of Judah. When he came against Philistia and Syria he sought to promote his own interests and those of his nation. The Assyrians were as ready to destroy the Hebrew nation as they were any other nation. This Ahaz and Hezekiah were soon to discover.

21. Helped him not. Ahaz learned to his sorrow that the rapacity of an Assyrian king was not easily satisfied, and that he had purchased to himself only sorrow and distress by his foolish course.

22. Trespass yet more. Instead of learning lessons from his distress, Ahaz became only more bitter and stubborn. From one evil he went on to another, leading his people down a path that could end only in ruin.

23. Gods of Damascus. Instead of coming to his senses and realizing that his distress was due to his forsaking the Lord, Ahaz became all the more angry and bitter against God, and followed a course that brought upon himself and his nation still severer judgments. When Tiglath-pileser captured Damascus, Ahaz went to that city to pay homage to the Assyrian king. While there he saw an altar of which he made a copy, and had it set up before the Temple in Jerusalem, moving the brazen altar from its place (see 2 Kings 16:9–16).

24. Cut in pieces. See on 2 Kings 16:17. There appears to have been a general destruction of the sacred vessels of the Temple.

Shut up the doors. Ahaz put a stop to the Temple services. The lamps were put out, the burning of incense ceased, and the sacrifice of offerings was discontinued (ch. 29:7).

Altars in every corner. The one great altar of burnt offering was a forceful method of impressing upon the minds of the people the doctrine of the one true God. Numerous altars in all parts of Jerusalem spoke unmistakably of the polytheism that Ahaz fostered.

25. High places. Compare vs. 2–4.

Provoked to anger. Compare Deut. 32:16, 17.

27. Sepulchres of the kings. Compare the treatment given to Jehoram, Joash, and Uzziah (chs. 21:20; 24:25; 26:23).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–27PK 322–330

2,3 PK 324

6–15PK 649

19, 22–24PK 330

CHAPTER 29

1 *Hezekiah's good reign. 3 He restoreth religion. 5 He exhorteth the Levites. 12 They sanctify themselves, and cleanse the house of God. 20 Hezekiah offereth solemn sacrifices, wherein the Levites were more forward than the priests.*

1. Hezekiah. The account of Hezekiah's reign covers four chapters, 29–32. The contrast with the parallel account in 2 Kings 18–20 is striking. In Chronicles the main emphasis is upon Hezekiah's religious reformation, to which three chapters (29–31) are devoted, while in Kings this topic is dealt with in a few verses (2 Kings 18:4–6). Only one chapter in Chronicles (2 Chron. 32) is devoted to a record of the civil affairs of the reign, while in Kings this is the subject of greatest emphasis (2 Kings 18:7 to 20:21). Thus 2 Chron. 29–31 is almost entirely new material, while ch. 32 is only a brief résumé of what constitutes practically the entire account of the reign in Kings.

Abijah. The shortened form “Abi” appears in 2 Kings 18:2.

3. First month. That is, Nisan, the first month of the sacred year, not the first month of his reign. On the numbering of the months and the method of counting the years of reign, see Vol. II, pp. 108, 109, 116, 138, 140.

Opened the doors. Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, had closed these doors and discontinued the Temple services (ch. 28:24).

4. The east street. The place of meeting was probably an open area outside the eastern, or front, gate of the Temple enclosure (see Ezra 10:9; Neh. 3:26; 8:1, 3).

5. Sanctify now yourselves. Compare vs. 15, 34; ch. 30:3, 15, 17. David ascribed the calamity that attended his attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem to the fact that the priests had not sanctified themselves. When next he was about to complete the removal he required that all the priests and Levites who took part in the ceremonies should sanctify themselves (1 Chron. 15:12–14).

Sanctify the house. This work included the removal of dirt and debris that had accumulated during the long period when the Temple was not in use (see vs. 15, 16).

The filthiness. In part mere dust and dirt, but it could also have included idolatrous objects (see 2 Kings 16:10–16).

8. Wrath. Compare ch. 24:18.

Delivered them to trouble. This Moses had foretold (see Deut. 28:15, 25, 37).

9. Fathers have fallen. See ch. 28:5, 6, 8, 17, 18.

10. A covenant with the Lord. An agreement that the nation would henceforth serve Jehovah. Such a covenant was entered into from time to time after periods of transgression (2 Chron. 15:12; 34:31; 2 Kings 23:3; Neh. 10:28, 29).

12. The Levites arose. See 1 Chron. 23:6 on the triple division of the Levites. This verse enumerates two members of each of the three great Levitical subtribes—Kohath, Merari, and Gershon.

13. Sons of Asaph. There was also a triple division of the Levites who were musicians (1 Chron. 25:1–6; 2 Chron. 5:12).

14. Sons of Heman. This verse names two Levites of each of the remaining musical guilds—the Kohathite Hemanites and the Merarite Jeduthites. These, with the preceding pairs, make up a total of 7 pairs, or 14 principal men, of the Levitical order (see 1 Chron. 6:18–47).

15. Gathered their brethren. As heads of their houses, they had the authority and responsibility of executing this task.

16. The inner part. The priests went into the most holy place as well as into the first apartment of the Temple to carry on the work of cleansing. Into these apartments the Levites might not enter.

Brook Kidron. This seems to have been used as a place for casting refuse (see 1 Kings 15:13; 2 Kings 23:12; 2 Chron. 15:16; 30:14).

17. Eight days. It seems that the first eight days were spent in cleaning the outside and the second eight days in cleansing the Temple itself. Thus by the 16th of Nisan the work of purification had been completed. It is clear that in this short period of only 16 days no major repairs of the Temple could have been effected. Such were evidently not needed at this time, for the Temple itself had probably not been allowed to fall into disrepair but had only become defiled by neglect.

18. Altar of burnt offering. Ahaz had removed this altar from its regular position and profaned it (2 Kings 16:14, 15).

Shewbread table. Only one table is here mentioned (see 2 Chron. 4:8, 19; cf. 1 Chron. 28:16; see on 1 Kings 7:48).

19. Did cast away. Compare 2 Chron. 28:24; 2 Kings 16:14, 17.

21. Seven bullocks. The various animals were apparently for both burnt and sin offerings (see 2 Chron. 29:23, 24; cf. Lev. 1:2, 3).

23. Laid their hands. Compare Lev. 4:4, 15, 24, 29.

24. To make an atonement. Compare Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35.

25. He set the Levites. He stationed the Levitical musicians in the Temple, restoring the ancient choral worship originally established by David (1 Chron. 25:1).

Of Gad. The information is not given elsewhere that the musical service of the Temple was established at the injunction of the prophets Gad and Nathan; but it is of interest to know that this important part of the Temple service was instituted in accord with the divine will as expressed by the prophetic messengers.

26. Instruments of David. Compare 1 Chron. 23:5; Amos 6:5.

With the trumpets. Compare Num. 10:8; 1 Chron. 5:24; 2 Chron. 5:12.

30. Asaph the seer. Asaph's name appears in the introduction to several of the psalms (Ps. 50; 73–83).

31. Ye have consecrated yourselves. Literally, “You have filled your hand,” the “hand” presumably being the symbol of service.

Thank offerings. In the peace offerings and thank offerings the greater part of the victim belonged to, and was consumed by, the worshiper, his family, and friends in a joyous festival of thanksgiving (see Lev. 7:11–21). The burnt offerings were wholly consumed on the altar (Lev. 1:3–17).

34. Flay. Heb. *pashaṭ*, “to strip off”; used of an animal, “to skin.”

More upright. It is probable that the priests as a class were more deeply involved in the corruptions introduced during the reign of Ahaz than were the Levites.

35. In abundance. Another reason why the priests could not flay all the burnt offerings. They were also doubtless busily engaged with their many other activities, such as burning the fat of the peace offerings (see Lev. 3:3–5) and taking care of the drink offerings for the burnt offerings (Num. 15:3–5).

36. Rejoiced. David and the people rejoiced greatly over the offerings brought in for the building of the Temple (1 Chron. 29:9), and the people returned to their homes “joyful and glad of heart” after the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8:66). “All the princes and all the people rejoiced” when offerings were brought in to restore the Temple in the days of Joash (2 Chron. 24:10). There is no deeper and holier joy than that which comes from a participation with God in His service.

Prepared the people. They rejoiced over what God had done for the people in preparing their hearts for participation in the worship of that occasion and for bringing about a restoration of the Temple services, which for some years had been discontinued.

Done suddenly. Hezekiah had only recently taken the throne, and there had been little time to bring about a change from the apostasy of Ahaz to the present loyalty to Jehovah. The hand of God was seen in the sudden turn from indifference and hostility to joyous participation in the worship of God. This was truly ground for great joy.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–36PK 331–335

1–4PK 331

5 PK 332

6 PK 331

7 PK 332

8 PK 328

10, 11, 15 PK 332

16–19, 24, 29 PK 333

30 ML 238

36 PK 333

CHAPTER 30

1 *Hezekiah proclaimeth a solemn passover on the second month for Judah and Israel. 13 The assembly, having destroyed the altars of idolatry, keep the feast fourteen days. 27 The priests and Levites bless the people.*

1. Sent to all Israel and Judah. This shows Hezekiah’s concern not only for Judah but also for Israel. Having restored the worship in the Temple, he sent letters throughout the territory of Israel inviting its people to come to the Passover service.

To Ephraim and Manasseh. These were the principal tribes in the territory of the northern kingdom not yet carried into captivity. The tribes east of the Jordan and the northern tribes had earlier suffered deportation (2 Kings 15:29; 1 Chron. 5:26).

2. The second month. The work of cleansing and sanctifying the Temple was not completed till the 16th day of the 1st month (ch. 29:17), and the Passover service ordinarily began on the 14th day of the 1st month (Ex. 12:2, 6; Lev. 23:5). But in cases of emergency the law permitted individuals to observe the Passover on the 14th day of the 2d month (Num. 9:6–11).

3. At that time. That is, at its usual time, the 14th of Nisan.

5. Proclamation. Heb. *qol*, literally, “a voice.” The government of Judah decreed that word should be sent to the inhabitants of Israel inviting them to the Passover. The narrative does not imply that the proclamation itself was of the nature of an official decree. Hezekiah could hardly have made an official proclamation in Hoshea’s kingdom without the cooperation of the Israelite king, and the narrative indicates no such cooperation.

From Beer-sheba even to Dan. A similar expression had been in use during the judges period (Judges 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20) and during the period of the united monarchy (2 Sam. 3:10; 17:11; 24:2; 1 Kings 4:25; 1 Chron. 21:2), but after the division of the kingdom this is the first occasion of its use in the narrative.

Of a long time. In the days of Rehoboam of Judah many of the faithful in Israel forsook their nation that they might worship the Lord at Jerusalem (ch. 11:16, 17), and in the days of Asa many Israelites again joined their brethren in Judah (ch. 15:9). Jeroboam had established the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan to keep his people from going to Jerusalem to worship (1 Kings 12:27–33), and Baasha fortified Ramah, near the border, to prevent the Israelites from falling away to Judah (2 Chron. 16:1). But now again, after so long a time, the situation was open for an invitation to worship at Jerusalem. Hoshea, a puppet of Assyria (see on 2 Kings 17:1), ruling over an already partly dismembered kingdom, was probably either too weak or too indifferent to interfere with Hezekiah’s messengers.

6. The posts. Literally, “the runners.”

That are escaped. When these words were written, the eastern and northern parts of the kingdom of Israel had already fallen into the hands of Assyria. Tiglathpileser III had come up against Israel in the days of Pekah, and had taken Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and Gilead (2 Kings 15:29). Further, he had carried off the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and “the half tribe of Manasseh” (1 Chron. 5:26). The feeble remnant that had escaped was given one more opportunity to repent (see PK 287–291) before the coming of Shalmaneser, who imprisoned Hoshea and began the final siege of Samaria (2 Kings 17:4–6; 18:9, 10).

10. Unto Zebulun. Reuben and Gad are not mentioned; possibly they had been deported more completely than the other tribes.

They laughed. The attitude of the northern tribes was, as a whole, one of hostility to God and His worship.

11. Divers of Asher. In spite of the general hostility, some from the northern tribes responded to Hezekiah’s gracious invitation and came to Jerusalem for the Passover service. No matter how widespread apostasy may be, the Lord always has a faithful few who remain loyal to Him (see Rom. 9:27; Rom. 11:3, 5).

12. Also in Judah. In Judah, in contrast with Israel, the people responded to the movings of the Holy Spirit and with one heart accepted the invitation to attend the Passover.

13. Unleavened bread. This feast, like the Passover, was normally observed in the first month, in the seven days following the Passover (Ex. 12:18; Lev. 23:5–8; Num. 28:16, 17).

14. Took away the altars. These were the altars that Ahaz had erected “in every corner of Jerusalem” (ch. 28:24). In the first year of his reign Hezekiah removed these altars devoted to false gods.

Into the brook Kidron. See on (ch. 29:16).

15. Were ashamed. It appears that up to this point many of the priests had neglected to purify themselves (ch. 29:34; 30:3), but now, shamed by the general ardor, they sanctified themselves by the purification ritual so as to be ready for participation in the paschal ceremonies.

16. Law of Moses. There are numerous references to the law in Chronicles (see ch. 23:18; 24:6; 14:4; 17:9).

Sprinkled the blood. Compare Lev. 1:5, 11, 15; 3:2, 8, 13.

17. Were not sanctified. The people from the northern tribes were for the most part involved in some sort of moral defilement from which they had not had the opportunity to cleanse themselves (v. 18).

Killing of the passovers. The Passover lambs were to be slain by “the congregation of Israel” (Ex. 12:6). However, in this instance they were slain by Levites in behalf of those members of the congregation who had not yet purified themselves.

18. Many of Ephraim. The enumeration of these tribes indicates the wide area covered by the messengers of Hezekiah in inviting members from the territory of the northern kingdom to attend the Passover at Jerusalem.

Otherwise than it was written. Those who were not purified were not permitted to eat the Passover at the regular season, but were permitted to eat it one month later (Num. 9:6, 7, 11). In this instance the Passover had already been postponed to the second month, so a special dispensation was made to the unpurified members of the northern tribes who were permitted to partake of the Passover offerings.

19. Prepareth his heart. This was the important item, rather than mere ceremonial purity. Everything was not done according to the strict letter of the law, but, circumstances having made that impossible, the spirit of the law was followed. God is reasonable, and true servants of His are men of reason and prudence. Everyone engaged in the work of the Lord will find that circumstances sometimes do alter cases, and extreme situations may arise where judgment and reason must replace a strict observance of the letter of the law. This is no excuse for laxity, but emergencies must be met as the circumstances require.

20. Hearkened to Hezekiah. The fact that the Lord heard Hezekiah’s prayer shows that spiritual sincerity in the sight of God is preferred to a cold and formal adherence to strict legal prescriptions.

Healed the people. The Lord pardoned the sins of those who truly sought Him (see Ps. 41:4; Jer. 3:22; Hosea 14:4).

21. Seven days. In accord with the Mosaic requirements (Ex. 12:18; 23:15; Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:17).

With great gladness. True religion brings to its devotee true joy and gladness. The services of religion should contribute to the happiness and satisfaction of all who participate in them. The Hebrew religious festivals were of such a nature as to bring holy pleasure to the people.

Loud instruments. Compare 2 Chron. 5:12, 13; 1 Chron. 15:28.

23. Other seven days. This was a voluntary addition to the requirements of the law, giving the people a two-week festival rather than the usual seven days. The additional feast was a result and sign of the abounding zeal and joy occasioned by the first seven days of festivities.

25. All the congregation. There were three classes of people present at this festival: (1) inhabitants of Judah, including common people, priests, and Levites; (2) inhabitants of Israel; (3) proselytes, both from Israel and from Judah.

26. Since the time of Solomon. The last previous occasion when it was possible for the people of both Israel and Judah to join in such a festival in Jerusalem was at the time of Solomon, when the kingdom was still united. After the disruption no common religious services that would include the citizens of both nations were possible, except as Israelites left the northern kingdom to migrate to Judah. Now the northern nation was so weakened that it again was possible for the Israelites who desired, to come to Jerusalem for worship.

27. Blessed the people. Probably with the priestly blessing commanded by Moses (Num. 6:22–27).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–27PK 288–291, 335–338

1, 2 PK 335

5–9PK 288

10, 11 PK 336

10–13PK 291

12, 21–23PK 337

26, 27 PK 338

CHAPTER 31

1 *The people is forward is destroying idolatry.* 2 *Hezekiah ordereth the courses of the priests and Levites, and provideth for their work and maintenance.* 5 *The people's forwardness in offerings and tithes.* 11 *Hezekiah appointeth officers to dispose of the tithes.* 20 *The sincerity of Hezekiah.*

1. When all this was finished. When the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed it, were over.

All Israel. The entire body of worshipers who were present, including those from the territory of the northern kingdom as well as Judah.

The images. Literally, “pillars,” common among the native Canaanite cults (see on Gen. 28:18).

The groves. The Asherim, or sacred trees. They were emblematic of physical fertility (see on chs. 14:3; 33:7).

In Ephraim. This blow against idolatry was struck in “all Judah and Benjamin,” and in addition, “in Ephraim also and Manasseh,” probably not as completely in the latter, inasmuch as the word “all” is used in connection with the territories of Judah. The question may be raised as to why such strong measures against the idolatrous system of religion were permitted in the apostate nation of Israel. These measures no doubt would have been impossible some years earlier. But Israel was now only a shadow of its former greatness. The major part of its territory had already been overrun by Assyria and multitudes of its people taken away captive; and now the weakened remnant of the nation was facing its final doom.

The judgments that had already fallen and the messages of the prophets had made their impression, even though the people had not been weaned from their idolatry (see PK 287, 336). But under these conditions there was possibly enough fear or apathy in the

population to weaken their opposition to the zealous minority who returned from Jerusalem, destroying altars and images wherever they went.

Another possibility is that “all Israel that were present,” including the hosts of Judah and Benjamin, after going through the cities of the southern kingdom, were invited by the Israelite minority in attendance to extend the crusade to Israel. If groups from such a spontaneous popular rising had made flying raids on a number of high places in Ephraim and Manasseh, their success would not be surprising under the conditions existing at that time in the northern kingdom. Details are lacking, however, as to how the destruction of the Israelite idolatrous shrines was accomplished, and there is no indication that Hezekiah actually took any official action outside of his own kingdom, for “thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah” (v. 20).

2. Appointed the courses. Hezekiah restored the system of service in rotation, as originally instituted by David (see 1 Chron. 23:6; 24:1; also 2 Chron. 8:14).

3. King's portion. The reference is to the king's contribution toward the regular offerings of the Temple (see 1 Chron. 23:31) commanded by Moses (Num. 28, 29). Amid the general neglect of the Temple this system of services had been discontinued, and the king now renewed it, taking the lead in encouraging the people by himself assuming a full proportion of these offerings as his own responsibility.

4. Portion of the priests. The people were instructed to give to the priests and the Levites the tithes and first fruits (v. 5) commanded by Moses (Num. 18:12–30).

Might be encouraged. Heb. *chazaq*, meaning basically “to be strong,” “to be firm.” Here it seems to have the meaning, “to fulfill strictly.” With adequate support the priests and Levites would have no necessity of engaging in worldly pursuits (see Neh. 13:10–14).

5. Brought in abundance. Verses 5, 6 describe the response to the commandment issued by Hezekiah (v. 4).

Firstfruits. See Num. 18:12–18; Deut. 18:4.

The tithe. See Gen. 14:20; 28:22; Lev. 27:30–32; Num. 18:21–24; Neh. 10:37; 13:12; Mal. 3:8–12; Matt. 23:23; Heb. 7:5–9.

6. The children of Israel. The inhabitants of the northern kingdom who had migrated into Judah and settled there (see chs. 10:17; 11:13, 14, 16; 30:25).

7. Seventh month. The people began to bring in their tithes in kind in the third month (which began in May or June), when the grain harvest was finished, and continued to the seventh month (which began in September or October), when the harvest of the orchards and vineyards was over. The seventh month was the time that the Feast of Ingathering, or Tabernacles, was normally held (Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:34), after all the fruits had been gathered in and the vintage was over.

9. With the priests. What Hezekiah questioned the priests about may probably be ascertained from the answer given in v. 10. Hezekiah was surprised at the large amount of produce that had been brought in, and may have wondered whether what he saw represented the total amount that had been brought or whether the priests had already been supplied for their needs.

10. Azariah. If this was the brave priest by this name who resisted Uzziah (ch. 26:17, 18), he must have been out of office for some time, possibly deposed by the idolatrous Ahaz, for Ahaz' priest was the more docile Urijah (2 Kings 16:10–16).

House of Zadok. The priesthood of this line, descended from Eleazar (1 Chron. 24:3), is to be distinguished from that of the house of Ithamar, which lost the high priesthood to the house of Zadok when Abiathar was deposed by Solomon (1 Kings 2:26–35). At the close of Judah's history the priesthood was of the house of Zadok (Eze. 44:15).

The Lord hath blessed. When the people were faithful in bringing in their tithes, God blessed them by giving them an abundant harvest (see Mal. 3:10).

11. Chambers. The contributions of first fruits and tithes that had been brought in were so large that special provision had to be made for their storage.

13. Under the hand. Cononiah and Shimei were to be in charge of the tithes that were brought to the Temple, with a number of subordinates under them.

14. The freewill offerings. These were voluntary offerings, in distinction from the first fruits and tithes (Deut. 12:6).

Most holy. The meat offerings, sin offerings, and trespass offerings were thus designated (Lev. 2:3; 6:25; 7:1, 6).

15. Cities of the priests. The cities in Judah and Benjamin originally given to the priests are listed in Joshua 21:9–19.

16. Genealogy of males. The meaning may be that the Levites on duty in the Temple and whose names were registered as such, along with their male children of three years old and upward, were provided for by the daily portion from the sanctuary itself. Thus they were not to share with others who lived in the Levitical cities and had no share of the Temple sacrifices.

17. From twenty years old. Registration of the Levites was according to their offices and divisions (see 1 Chron. 23:24).

18. Genealogy of all. The names of all were written in the official registers, including wives and children, both sons and daughters. In this way every individual of the priestly families received his just share, and no one suffered from neglect or discrimination.

19. In the fields. Officers were also appointed to distribute portions to such priests and Levites as lived in the rural areas, outside the priestly cities (see Lev. 25:34; Num. 35:2–5; Joshua 14:3, 4; Joshua 21:2).

Expressed by name. In the various cities officers were designated by name to make distribution among the rural priests and Levites. Thus no one was to be neglected, not even those who lived in districts where they were likely to be forgotten.

20. That which was good. Hezekiah gave evidence that he was fair and upright, a man of justice and integrity, who carried out his duties to the best of his ability.

21. Prospered. The best insurance for prosperity was righteousness, justice, and integrity. Hezekiah was faithful to God and fair with his people, and as a result he prospered, and the nation prospered with him.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–21PK 338, 339

1, 20, 21 PK 338

21 MYP 149

CHAPTER 32

1 Sennacherib invading Judah, Hezekiah fortifieth himself, and encourageth his people. 9 Against the blasphemies of Sennacherib, by message and letters, Hezekiah and Isaiah pray. 21 An angel destroyeth the host of the Assyrians, to the glory of Hezekiah. 24 Hezekiah praying in his sickness, God giveth him a sign of recovery. 25 He waxing proud

is humbled by God. 27 His wealth and works. 31 His error in the embassy of Babylon. 32 He dying, Manasseh succeedeth him.

1. Sennacherib king of Assyria. This chapter is parallel for the most part with 2 Kings 18:13 to 20:21, and with Isa. 36 to 39. Verses 2 to 8, describing Hezekiah's preparations for defense, are almost entirely supplementary.

Thought to win them. Sennacherib largely succeeded in accomplishing his purpose (2 Kings 18:13). In his annals he claims to have taken 46 of the fenced, or walled, cities of Judah and to have carried away captive 200,150 people, besides a large amount of booty. This campaign was in the 14th year of Hezekiah's sole reign (not of his probable coregency). The year was 701 B.C., according to the generally accepted dating of Sennacherib's record. On the question as to whether the narrative of this chapter describes one campaign or two, see on 2 Kings 18:13.

2. Against Jerusalem. Sennacherib purposed to come against Jerusalem, but he was bought off for the time being by tribute (see on 2 Kings 18:14–16). It is noteworthy that in his record of the campaign Sennacherib does not claim that he captured Jerusalem.

3. Took counsel. The object was to discuss plans for the strengthening of the city against a later attack. Certainly all the preparations made by Hezekiah could hardly have been effected during the course of one summer's campaign by Sennacherib against Judah. Evidently these were long-range measures to strengthen the nation's defenses for a future assault.

To stop the waters. Hezekiah had in mind a double purpose—he proposed to cover the springs outside the city so that the Assyrians would not have a convenient water supply, and to convey the water through a tunnel into the city to increase his own supply during the siege (2 Chron. 32:30; see on 2 Kings 20:20).

4. All the fountains. The principal spring that Hezekiah stopped was the Gihon (v. 30), the present Virgin's Spring, on the south slope of the hill on which the Temple was built. It was in a cave outside the city wall, and its waters originally flowed into the Kidron Valley, where it would have been a source of supply to the Assyrian invaders. The Jebusites, before the capture of Jerusalem by David, had cut a conduit, bringing the waters from the spring to a place where the supply could be reached through a shaft from within the city (see 2 Sam. 5:8). Later an aqueduct let this water into the Old, or Lower, Pool (Isa. 22:9, 11). Hezekiah made a new aqueduct, the Siloam tunnel (see 2 Chron. 32:30; see on 2 Kings 20:20), that carried the waters to a new reservoir, the Pool of Siloam (see Neh. 3:15; John 9:7), and probably built a new wall that placed the new pool inside the city (see on v. 5). Thus the fountains outside the city were diverted for use within the walls.

5. The wall that was broken. Isa. 22:9, 10 mentions many breaches in the wall of the City of David, which were repaired by breaking down houses and using the materials to strengthen the wall.

Another wall without. This was probably an additional wall outside the aqueduct and the City of David, that enclosed the Pool of Siloam. Isa. 22:11 mentions the "ditch between the two walls."

Millo. The exact nature of Millo is not known, but it must have been a part of the fortifications of Jerusalem, probably a particularly strong place of defense within the ancient city (see 2 Sam. 5:9; 1 Kings 9:15, 24; 11:27).

Darts. Heb. *shelach*, “something let loose,” or “something sent.” The term may properly mean any weapon that is cast, whether “darts,” spears, or other missiles.

6. Street. Heb. *rechob*, “an open place,” hence the open place before the gate (see on ch. 29:4).

Spoke comfortably to them. Literally, “he spoke to their hearts.”

7. Be strong and courageous. Having done all that human power could do to strengthen the defenses of the city, Hezekiah encouraged the people to place their trust in God. Regardless of the power of the enemy, the man who trusts and reveres the Lord always has reason for courage, for the battle is not his but God’s (see ch. 20:15).

There be more with us. Compare 2 Kings 6:16.

8. With us is the Lord. Compare Isa. 14:24–27; 40:9–17, 28–31.

9. Send his servants. Compare 2 Kings 18:17. The previous submission of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:14–16) is not mentioned in Chronicles.

10. Thus saith Sennacherib. Compare 2 Kings 18:17–21. The account in Kings is more detailed.

12. His high places. Compare 2 Kings 18:22. The Assyrians had a wrong impression of the nature of Hezekiah’s reform, for it was the altars, not of Jehovah, but of the heathen gods introduced by Ahaz, that were taken away by Hezekiah (see chs. 28:23, 25; 31:1); and the high places, even though used for the worship of Jehovah, were at least semipagan.

13. Know ye not? The interesting details of 2 Kings 18:23–32 are not mentioned in Chronicles. Instead, the record comes directly to the point where the envoys endeavor to establish the claim of Assyrian invincibility by pointing to their past successes and the inability of the gods of other nations to help them against Assyrian might (see 2 Kings 18:33, 34).

14. Among all the gods. Compare 2 Kings 18:35.

15. Deceive you. This passage continues the argument of 2 Kings 18:29, 30. A similar argument is also found in 2 Kings 19:10–13.

17. Letters to rail. This refers to the message sent by Sennacherib when the envoys had returned to Libnah after leaving Lachish, and the word had come of the approach of the Egyptian armies under Tirhakah to aid Hezekiah (see on 2 Kings 19:8–14).

18. Jews’ speech. After having mentioned the letter sent by the envoys on their second trip to Jerusalem, the chronicler now either returns to an incident that occurred early in the first visit (2 Kings 18:28), which he gives in a greatly abbreviated form, or mentions a second propaganda attempt “to affright them, and to trouble” the people.

20. The prophet Isaiah. After the first attempt of the Assyrian envoys to discourage the people of Jerusalem, Hezekiah had sent a message to Isaiah urging him to pray to the Lord, and had received from the prophet the answer that the Lord would send a blast upon Sennacherib and cause him to return to his land (2 Kings 19:1–7). Then after the return of Rabshakeh to Sennacherib at Libnah, the envoys made their second visit (2 Kings 19:9–14), with further taunting messages from Sennacherib. Hezekiah took the letter into the Temple and earnestly besought the Lord for help, whereupon he received word from Isaiah that his prayer had been heard, that God would defend the city for David’s sake, and that Sennacherib would return home without laying siege to Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:14–34).

21. *Sent an angel.* Compare 2 Kings 19:35, 36 and Isa. 37:36, 37, which are parallel accounts of the destruction of the Assyrian hosts and of the departure of Sennacherib from Judea for Assyria.

Slew him. According to 2 Kings 19:37 and Isa. 37:38, Sennacherib was slain by his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer, who thereupon fled into Armenia. Sennacherib's death took place in 681 B.C., according to the chronology based on the Assyrian records.

24. *In those days.* Compare 2 Kings 20:1–11 and Isa. 38. This was 15 years (2 Kings 20:6) before the end of his 29-year reign (2 Kings 18:2). Therefore it was in the 15th year of Hezekiah's reign, if the 15 additional years were counted inclusively, as was commonly done; otherwise it was in his 14th year, the year when Sennacherib came against the fenced cities of Judah (2 Kings 18:13).

A sign. This sign consisted of the recession of the shadow on the sundial (2 Kings 20:8–11).

25. *Was lifted up.* For the account of Hezekiah's pride on the occasion of the visit of the Babylonian envoys and the expression of the Lord's displeasure, see 2 Kings 20:12–19 and Isa. 39.

26. *Came not.* Upon receiving Isaiah's rebuke, Hezekiah humbled himself and accepted the will of the Lord. This repentance is not recorded in Kings or Isaiah, but the consequent deferment of the sentence that had been pronounced is recorded, together with Hezekiah's grateful response (2 Kings 20:19; Isa. 39:8). As a result of Hezekiah's repentance the blow from Babylon did not fall till the days of Nebuchadnezzar, a century later.

27. *Riches and honour.* Compare 2 Kings 20:13 and Isa. 39:2.

28. *Corn, and wine, and oil.* These are repeatedly mentioned together as the outstanding fruitage of the land and the tokens of the blessings of Heaven (2 Chron. 31:5; Num. 18:12; Deut. 7:13; Neh. 5:11; Jer. 31:12; etc.; cf. Rev. 6:6).

29. *For God had given.* God gives men power to get wealth and opens His bountiful hand that they may share of His treasures (see Gen. 24:35; 1 Chron. 29:12; Job 42:12; Prov. 10:22).

30. *Stopped the upper watercourse.* See 2 Chron. 32:4 and 2 Kings 20:20.

31. *The ambassadors.* Compare 2 Kings 20:11–13; Isa. 39:1, 2.

To enquire of the wonder that was done. The recession of the shadow on the sundial (2 Kings 20:11; Isa. 38:8) was a matter of special interest to the astrologers and astronomers of Babylonia and must have been a subject of special inquiry on the part of the envoys. The occurrence of this miracle presented Hezekiah with an unusual opportunity to bear witness to the power and goodness of God. If Hezekiah had been faithful and had told the representatives from Merodach-baladan exactly how this incident had taken place, and how God had performed a miracle both of healing and of nature, these men could have gone back to Babylonia with a message that would have acquainted many in that idolatrous land with the true nature of God. The way would thus have been opened for bringing many to the knowledge and worship of the God who made heaven and earth.

To try him. The test was not for God's information but for Hezekiah's benefit. The pride that led to the king's failure had already taken root in his heart, and if unchecked, would have led to his ruin. In mercy God permitted circumstances to arise that revealed to Hezekiah the true condition of his heart. The experience illustrates God's manner of

working in the development of human character. Men are often not aware of the defects of their natures. Only when they are confronted with various tests do these weaknesses become apparent.

If a test accomplishes its purpose, so that the soul is duly “exercised” (Heb. 12:11), no further test upon that particular point may be necessary. If the soul rebels under the rebuke, further tests and trials may be sent, until either reformation results or the case is abandoned as hopeless (Hosea 4:17). The Christian may thus take courage in trial. The fact that he is called upon to endure trial proves that the Lord sees in him something precious that He is seeking to develop. If there was nothing in him that might glorify God’s name, He would not spend time in refining him (see 7T 214). Compare Job 23:10.

32. *Vision of Isaiah.* This was the title given by the prophet Isaiah to his prophecy (Isa. 1:1).

33. *Chieftest.* Heb. *ma’aleh*, “a going up,” “an ascent” (Num. 34:4), the meaning of which is not entirely clear. It may refer to an upper location, so that Hezekiah was buried in a higher part of the royal tombs, above the sepulchers of the kings who had preceded him upon the throne of Judah.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–23PK 349–362

3–6PK 350

7, 8 PK 349

8 ML 32; PK 351; 5T 195

17 PK 355

20 PK 354

21 GC 512; PK 361

25 PK 346

26 PK 347

31 PK 346

CHAPTER 33

1 *Manasseh’s wicked reign.* 3 *He setteth up idolatry, and would not be admonished.* 11 *He is carried into Babylon.* 12 *Upon his prayer to God he is released, and putteth down idolatry.* 18 *His acts.* 20 *He dying, Amon succeedeth him.* 21 *Amon reigning wickedly is slain by his servants.* 25 *The murderers being slain, Josiah succeedeth him.*

1. *Manasseh.* Chapter 33 deals with the reigns of Manasseh (vs. 1–20) and Amon (vs. 21–25) and is parallel to 2 Kings 21. The order and contents of both chapters are similar, but there are a number of differences. Kings includes (1) the names of the two queen mothers, (2) Manasseh’s shedding of innocent blood, (3) the words of warning from the Lord, and (4) the detail concerning the burial place of Amon. There are important additions in Chronicles, including (1) the account of Manasseh’s captivity, (2) his repentance and return to Judah, (3) his building activities, (4) his efforts against idolatry and his restoration of the worship of the Lord, and (5) the records of his reign found in “the sayings of the seers” (v. 19). Verses 11–19 constitute a section that is almost entirely new. The reign of Manasseh is important in the history of Judah in that it witnessed a revival of heathen worship and a severe persecution of innocent worshipers of Jehovah.

3. *Baalim.* The plural form of Baal. The parallel passage in 2 Kings 21:3 has the singular “Baal” (see on Judges 2:11).

4. Shall my name be. Compare ch. 7:16. The parallel passage has, “will I put my name” (2 Kings 21:4).

6. His children. These children seem to have been sacrificed as burnt offerings to the gods.

Valley of the son of Hinnom. This explanatory item is not found in Kings. See on ch. 28:3.

Witchcraft. Manasseh resorted to satanic agencies, employing various types of divination, necromancy, and sorcery, whereby the powers of evil made known their will and directed the nation’s affairs.

7. A carved image. According to 2 Kings 21:7 this was an Asherah, or grove (see on 2 Chron. 14:3). Judah had sunk so low that this female emblem of fertility was placed in the sacred Temple precincts. Josiah later “brought out the grove from the house of the Lord, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it” (2 Kings 23:6).

8. Remove the foot of Israel. This verse clearly indicates that Israel’s inheritance of the land of Canaan was conditional upon obedience to the laws that God had given through His servant Moses (see Jer. 18:7–10).

9. Worse than the heathen. The heathen peoples who originally inhabited the land of Canaan were destroyed before Israel because of their iniquities, but now the professed people of God went further into sin than the heathen around them.

10. The Lord spake. “By his servants the prophets” (2 Kings 21:10). See further 2 Kings 21:11–15, which describes the prophetic message. The writer of Kings adds the further detail that “Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another” (2 Kings 21:16).

11. Which took Manasseh. This section dealing with Manasseh’s captivity and repentance and his restoration and reforms (vs. 11–17) is peculiar to Chronicles. Esarhaddon (681–669 B.C.) and Ashurbanipal (669–627? B.C.) both list Manasseh among the kings of Western Asia who were their vassals.

Thorns. Heb. *chochim*, which some interpret as thorns put through noses or cheeks of captives to lead them on a rope. Assyrian reliefs picture distinguished captives as being led away by hooks passed through their lips or nostrils (see Isa. 37:29; cf. Amos 4:2). Others interpret *chochim* as “hollows,” “recesses.”

Carried him to Babylon. Babylonia was part of the Assyrian Empire, and a number of Assyrian kings with the title of king of Babylon reigned over it as well as over their own nation of Assyria (see Vol. II, pp. 61, 156, 157). It was thus that an Assyrian king could take a king of Judah captive to Babylon rather than to Nineveh. The king who took Manasseh to Babylon could have been either Esarhaddon, who ruled Assyria and Babylon throughout his reign, or Ashurbanipal, who took the title for a short time, although during most of his reign Babylon was governed by a separate king under Assyrian supervision.

13. Prayed unto him. The Lord is kind and merciful, ready to forgive those who call upon Him in sincerity of heart.

To Jerusalem. If it was Ashurbanipal who returned Manasseh to his throne, the treatment parallels that which the same Assyrian king meted out to Necho I of Egypt, who was taken to Assyria and released to return home as a vassal of Assyria.

14. He built a wall. The construction of such a wall could indicate either (1) a change of attitude on the part of Manasseh toward his Assyrian overlord and preparations for

revolt, or (2) preparations made, as Assyria's vassal, for defense against Egypt. The latter part of Ashurbanipal's reign was beset by many invasions and revolts, for Assyria was approaching its doom. If Manasseh's strengthening of the fortifications extended from the west side of Gihon (on the east of Jerusalem), to the Fish Gate (on the north), and on to make a circuit of Ophel (the northern part of the southeastern hill), the work probably included much of the entire wall. Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah had previously done considerable work on various parts of the wall of Jerusalem (chs. 26:9; 27:3; 32:5).

15. The idol. This seems to have been the Asherah that Manasseh himself had placed in the Temple (see 2 Chron. 33:7; cf. 2 Kings 21:7). It must be that the idol was restored by his son Amon (see v. 22), for his grandson Josiah removed "the grove" (Asherah) from the Temple and burned it at the brook Kidron (2 Kings 23:6).

16. Repaired the altar. Ahaz had moved the brazen altar (2 Kings 16:14); Hezekiah had reconsecrated it (2 Chron. 29:18). Manasseh may also have removed it and desecrated it, allowing it to fall into disrepair.

17. High places. Earlier in his reign Manasseh had restored the high places that his father had broken down (v. 3; ch. 31:1).

Their God only. The high places were not necessarily centers for the worship of idols, for Jehovah was also worshiped at such places (see on ch. 17:6). God had commanded the Israelites when they entered Canaan to destroy the heathen high places (Num. 33:52) and to offer their sacrifices to God only in "the place which the Lord your God shall choose" as His habitation (Deut. 12:2–14). Yet during the unsettled conditions when a central sanctuary was not available, sacrifices offered at local altars were allowed. Samuel offered sacrifice at a "high place" that was evidently not idolatrous, and God commissioned him to offer a local sacrifice at Bethlehem (see 1 Sam. 9:12; 16:2). The danger in permitting such worship in high places was that the Israelites often took over the old Canaanite shrines, and thus were subjected to constant temptations to idolatry and to the abominations practiced at such places by the pagans.

However, even after the establishment of the Temple service the high places remained, and were still used up to the time of Hezekiah (see on 2 Kings 18:4; 2 Chron. 31:1). The people continued to worship God at these places even when they did not also worship idols (see on 1 Kings 3:2, 3; 2 Kings 12:3). Hezekiah removed these high places, but after his death they were restored by Manasseh, first for heathen rites (v. 3), then later for the worship of Jehovah.

18. His prayer unto his God. There is an Apocryphal "Prayer of Manasses" purporting to be the prayer Manasseh uttered in captivity. The work is by an unknown author sometime before the third century B.C. and must be considered spurious.

20. In his own house. That is, "in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza" (2 Kings 21:18). It was common in ancient times to build houses next to the street, with inner courtyards. A king's house could easily have a garden within its enclosing walls, and thus the garden could be said to be "in" the house.

21. Two and twenty years. Verses 21–25, dealing with the reign of Amon, are parallel to 2 Kings 21:19–26. The parallel passage names Amon's mother, Meshullemeth and gives her parentage. Amon was only 16 years old at the birth of Josiah (see 2 Chron. 34:1).

22. His father had made. This statement seems to indicate that Manasseh had not destroyed, but had merely cast aside, the images he had made, unless the chronicler is

merely expressing the fact that the images that Amon worshiped were those of the same gods that were worshiped by his father. The history of Judah has now become a mere succession of reforms and relapses, with each king following in the steps of one of his predecessors.

23. *Humbled himself.* This statement is not found in Kings. The writer of Kings did not mention Manasseh's repentance, so he had no occasion to contrast the experience of the son with that of the father.

24. *Conspired against him.* Amon seems to have been slain in a general uprising. Some think that the facts thus briefly recorded reflect a bitter conflict between a party of religious reform and one of religious reaction, in which the latter was worsted for the time being. Others believe that the murder of Amon was inspired by an anti-Assyrian group. The province of Samaria seems to have participated in an anti-Assyrian revolt at some time during the reign of Ashurbanipal (called "Asnaper" in Ezra 4:10), and to have been punished in the usual Assyrian manner by a transfer of citizens of rebellious states to other localities.

25. *Slew all them.* This indicates a general reaction of the common people against the conspirators and may reflect an attitude of quiet and contented vassalage on the part of the populace toward Assyria.

The record here does not give the closing formula usually used to indicate the close of a reign. For the customary statement see 2 Kings 21:25, 26.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-25PK 381-383

9 PK 381

11-13, 21-25PK 383

CHAPTER 34

1 Josiah's good reign. 3 He destroyeth idolatry. 8 He taketh order for the repair of the temple. 14 Hilkiah having found a book of the law, Josiah sendeth to Huldah to enquire of the Lord. 23 Huldah prophesieth the destruction of Jerusalem, but respite thereof in Josiah's time. 29 Josiah, causing it to be read in a solemn assembly, reneweth the covenant with God.

1. *Josiah.* Chapters 34 and 35 describe the reign of Josiah. For the most part the same order is preserved as in 2 Kings 22 and 23. The writer of Kings enlarges upon the moral and religious reformation following the finding of the book of the law (2 Kings 23:4-20, 24-27), and mentions briefly the repair of the Temple (ch. 22:3-7), the celebration of the Passover (ch. 23:21-23), and the battle with Necho (ch. 23:29, 30). 2 Chronicles, however, mentions briefly this reformation of the 18th year (ch. 34:33), but tells of the earlier campaign against idolatry in the 12th year (ch. 34:3-7), gives a few additional details concerning the repair of the Temple and the war with Necho, but dwells at length on the celebration of the Passover (ch. 35:1-19). Both writers give almost identical accounts of the finding of the law and the renewal of the covenant (2 Chron. 34:14-32; 2 Kings 22:8 to 23:3). 2 Kings 22:1 adds the name of Josiah's mother, Jedidah.

2. *Neither to the right hand.* See also 2 Kings 22:2. This is the only ruler concerning whom this statement is made. Thus Josiah fulfilled the specifications laid down by Moses for Israel's future king (Deut. 17:20; cf. Deut. 5:32; 28:14).

3. *The eighth year.* Josiah was only 16 years of age (see v. 1) when he began to consider seriously his responsibility.

The twelfth year. The record does not place the entire reformation in the 12th year, but only its beginning. The first campaign resulted in the destruction of idolatrous objects throughout the country, but the reform was not complete. The 18th year found idolatry still firmly entrenched in the popular mind (see PK 392, 397, 398, 400, 401).

High places. See on ch. 33:17.

4. Brake down. The narrative of Josiah's measures against idolatry in the 12th year is similar to the account of 2 Kings 23, which, however, places the events in the 18th year. Perhaps the Kings account covers the whole period of reform since its beginning in the 12th year.

Made dust of them. As was also done to the golden calf set up by Aaron in the wilderness (Ex. 32:20).

5. Of the priests. Not necessarily of all the idolatrous priests; for many seem to have been left till Josiah's 18th year, when the king moved the priests of Judah to Jerusalem and slew the priests of Israel (2 Kings 23:5, 8, 9, 19, 20). The latter were not Levites (2 Chron. 11:14, 15).

6. Cities of Manasseh. Josiah was at this time exercising a measure of control in the former territory of the northern kingdom, where Assyrian power had begun to weaken. Before Josiah's 18th year Assyria was in the last stages of decline, and Babylon had become an independent state. Josiah destroyed the altar that had been set up at Bethel and the high places in Samaria (2 Kings 23:15, 19).

With their mattocks. Probably literally, "in their ruins." The meaning of the Hebrew is not clear. The LXX reads "in their places." The whole verse should perhaps be connected with the following verse, thus: "even unto Naphtali, with their ruins [regions] round about, he broke down the altars and the Asherim." Much of the northern nation must at this time have been in a state of ruin, having fallen to Assyria in the early part of Hezekiah's reign (2 Kings 18:9–11).

8. The eighteenth year. This year, reckoned back from the fourth year of Jehoiakim as the first of Nebuchadnezzar and from Josiah's death in his 31st year, in 609 B.C. (date based on the new Babylonian chronicle; see Vol. II, p. 95), was 623/22.

Purged the land. After cleansing the Temple Josiah was ready to begin his work of repair.

Sent Shaphan. Shaphan was the scribe (2 Kings 22:3, 10), one of the chief officers of the king. The other officers here listed are not mentioned in the parallel account in Kings.

9. Of the hand. Levites had collected funds for the repair of the Temple from the inhabitants of the territory of the former northern kingdom as well as from those of Judah.

10. Amend the house. Evidently the Temple had suffered much from neglect.

12. Faithfully. According to 2 Kings 22:7 no reckoning was made of the funds that had been delivered into their hands, because they did their work faithfully.

14. Book of the law. During the apostasy that took place in the reign of Manasseh, the Temple copy of the book of the law had been lost sight of. Possibly it had been lost through indifference, or hidden by some faithful priest during Manasseh's persecution (see 2 Kings 21:16).

15. To Shaphan. The parallel passage adds, "and he read it" (2 Kings 22:8).

17. Gathered together. Literally, "poured out." They poured out the money that was found in the chests.

19. *Rent his clothes.* Josiah was deeply stirred as he listened to the word of the Lord. The law pointed out that only in the pathway of obedience would blessing be found, and that disobedience would bring desolation and ruin. Well did he know that his nation by its transgressions had brought itself face to face with doom.

22. *To Huldah.* See on 2 Kings 22:14.

Wardrobe. Literally, “garments.” Perhaps the vestments of the priest, or the royal garments, are referred to.

The college. Literally, “second,” probably the second quarter of the city. The translation “college” is obtained from the Targums (see on 2 Kings 22:14).

23. *Answered them.* Concerning Huldah’s message, see on 2 Kings 22:16–20.

28. *In peace.* This prophecy was conditional, and because Josiah did not heed the warnings given, but rashly insisted on war with the king of Egypt, he died, not in peace, but of battle wounds (2 Chron. 35:20–24; see EGW, Supplementary Material on 2 Kings 23:29, 30). Nor was it the privilege of his successors to pass their years in peace: Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt, where he died a captive (2 Kings 23:34); Jehoiakim was to be “buried with the burial of an ass,” to be “cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem” (Jer. 22:19); Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon, where he was released from prison in the 37th year of his captivity (2 Kings 25:27); and Zedekiah saw his sons slain before his eyes, and was then blinded and carried to Babylon (2 Kings 25:7).

29. *Gathered together* See on 2 Kings 23:1–3, with which 2 Chron. 34:29–31 is almost identical.

30. *And the Levites.* The parallel passage has “and the prophets” (2 Kings 23:2). Evidently Josiah was accompanied by priests, Levites, and prophets, with Chronicles mentioning the priests and Levites, Kings, the priests and prophets.

32. *Jerusalem and Benjamin.* The usual phrase is “Judah and Benjamin” (chs 11:3, 23; 15:2, 9; etc.).

33. *Took away.* The parallel passage is more complete (see 2 Kings 23:4–20).

All his days. Josiah accomplished much good through his reformation. During his lifetime his faithful example and his inspiring and energetic leadership caused the people outwardly to walk in the ways of the Lord. Actually, however, there was no lasting reform. Evil had become so deeply rooted in the lives of the people that they refrained from open apostasy only as long as the king himself was present to set the right example. In the 13th year of Josiah (Jer. 1:2), Jeremiah began his ministry, calling upon the people to follow the Lord, but they would not hearken. They did not turn unto the Lord with a “whole heart, but feignedly” (Jer. 3:10).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–33DA 216; PK 384, 392–401

3–5PK 396

6, 7 PK 397

14–19PK 393

21 PK 398

23–28PK 399

29, 30 DA 216

29–31PK 400

32, 33 PK 401

CHAPTER 35

1 *Josiah keepeth a most solemn passover.* 20 *He, provoking Pharaoh-necho, is slain at Megiddo.* 25 *Lamentations for Josiah.*

1. Kept a passover. Chronicles gives a long and detailed account of Josiah's Passover (vs. 1–19), whereas the parallel section in Kings is very brief (2 Kings 23:21–23).

There is no need to find, as some do, a difficulty in the narrative because so many activities of the 18th year of Josiah took place before the 14th of the 1st month of that year. It is obvious that 13 days is an impossibly short time to take away “all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel”—to say nothing of slaying all the Israelite priests and moving those of the high places of Judah to Jerusalem—and to prepare for the greatest Passover ever held in the kingdom, even if, as some suggest, the long account in Kings includes some of the events of the earlier reform that began in the 12th year. It has been suggested that the campaign against idolatry of the 18th year did not begin until after the feasts of the Passover and of the Unleavened Bread. The sequence of the narratives seems to be against this, as is also the statement that the local priests of Judah were brought to Jerusalem to “eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.”

But even if the campaign against idolatry is placed subsequent to the Passover, there is still insufficient time for the other events recorded to have taken place between the 1st and 14th day of the same month. The money had been counted and paid out to the contractors before the book was delivered to the king; then came the formal consultation with Huldah, the convening of a large assembly to make the covenant of obedience, and then preparations for a major festival by people unaccustomed to the procedure but determined to observe it according to all the regulations. The lambs (more than 30,000 were used) were normally set aside on the 10th of the month, and Temple arrangements needed to be made for these and for the thousands of other offerings; also multitudes of worshipers must travel to Jerusalem and find accommodations before the 14th. Even without the reform campaign the timing is impossible.

But attempts to crowd all these events into such a short period are unnecessary. The obvious solution lies in the fact that the month Abib (later Nisan), which was always numbered the first, was the first of the religious year, but not of the civil year (see Vol. II, pp. 109, 110, 116). Obviously the 18th regnal year of Josiah did not begin two weeks before the Passover, but had begun six months earlier with the 1st of Tishri (the 7th month), the autumn New Year (see Vol. II, pp. 106, 109, 134, 146).

The events leading up to this Passover may be summarized from 2 Kings 22 and 23; 2 Chron. 34 and 35, as follows:

1. In the 18th year of his reign Josiah sent Shaphan the scribe to tell the high priest to “sum the silver” (2 Kings 22:4) collected by the Temple doorkeepers and to make arrangements for repairing the Temple.
2. “When they brought out the money” (2 Chron. 34:14) the book of the law was found.
3. Hilkiah the priest gave the book to Shaphan, who read it.
4. Shaphan came before the king, announced that the money had been gathered and delivered to those who had oversight of the repair work, and then he read the newly found book to the king.
5. The king sent high officials to inquire of Huldah the prophetess.

6. Josiah summoned to the Temple “all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem” and “all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” as well as “all the people, great and small” (2 Chron. 34:29, 30) and read the book to them, whereupon the people made a covenant with the Lord to obey what was written in the book.

7. Josiah “took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel” (2 Chron. 34:33). The campaign was thorough and extensive (2 Kings 23:4–20).

8. Josiah commanded the people to keep the Passover “as it is written in the book of this covenant” (2 Kings 23:21).

9. The Passover was kept, the greatest ever held in the kingdom, on the 14th of the 1st month of the same 18th year (2 Chron. 35:1, 19).

The fourteenth day of the first month. Moses directed that this was the date on which the Passover should be observed (Lev. 23:5); it was not a delayed feast in the second month, as was Hezekiah’s (2 Chron. 30:2, 13). The “first month” referred to the beginning of the religious year, and was called Abib (later Nisan), and came in the spring (see Vol. II, p. 105).

2. In their charges. The priests were appointed to their various offices to discharge their proper duties.

Encouraged them. Compare ch. 29:4–11.

3. Taught all Israel. It was the responsibility of the Levites to instruct the people in the law and in the things of God (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 33:8, 10; cf. Neh. 8:7; 2 Chron. 17:7–9).

Which were holy. These Levites had been separated and sanctified to the work of the Lord. “Holiness to the Lord” was the inscription on Aaron’s miter (Ex. 28:36).

Put the holy ark in the house. This command indicates that the ark had previously been removed from the Temple and was now to be restored to its proper place. There is no Biblical record as to when and by whom the ark may have been removed from its regular place in the Temple. One suggestion is that it was removed in order to make the Temple repairs.

Not be a burden. Compare Num. 7:9; 1 Chron. 15:2.

4. After your courses. According to the written directives prepared by David and Solomon concerning the divisions of the priests and Levites assigned to the Temple services (see 1 Chron. 23, 24).

6. So kill the passover. Since these words were directed to the Levites (v. 3), it appears that on this occasion the Levites again had the responsibility of slaying the Passover lambs (see ch. 30:17). Originally the Passover lambs were slain by the people themselves (Ex. 12:6).

Sanctify yourselves. Compare 2 Chron. 29:5, 15; 30:3, 15; Ezra 6:20.

Prepare your brethren. Better, “prepare for your brethren.” They were to prepare the Passover for their brethren among the laity.

7. Josiah gave. Hezekiah had made similar but smaller gifts of animals to the people (ch. 30:24).

Three thousand bullocks. These were for peace offerings in which the people participated in the sacrificial feasting (v. 13).

8. Hilkiah. The high priest (ch. 34:9).

Zechariah and Jehiel. Probably the second and the third priests in rank. They were evidently men of wealth and importance, and able to contribute liberally to the people.

11. Sprinkled the blood. Compare ch. 30:16.

12. Removed. The LXX reads, “prepared.” The burnt offerings were to be treated in an entirely different manner from the Passover offerings. The Passover lamb was to be roasted whole (Ex. 12:8, 9), while the burnt offering was to be cut in pieces (Lev. 1:12) and burned entire. The peace offerings were to have certain parts removed for the priest (Lev. 7:29–34).

13. Roasted the passover. See on Ex. 12:8, 9; Deut 16:7.

Sod. Heb. *bashal*, “cooked” or “boiled.” These were the peace offerings, which were slain during the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Deut. 16:1–8) following the 14th of Nisan.

15. Might not depart. Neither the singers nor the gatekeepers needed to depart from their posts of service to prepare their own offerings, for these were prepared for them by the Levites.

17. Kept the passover. The Passover was kept on the 14th of Nisan, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was observed from the 15th to the 21st days of the month (Ex. 12:18; Lev. 23:5–8; Num. 28:16, 17).

18. From the days of Samuel. The parallel passage reads, “from the days of the judges that judged Israel” (2 Kings 23:22). Samuel was the last of the judges.

All Judah and Israel. By Israel is meant the territory of the former kingdom of Israel, now apparently under Josiah’s control, at least to some extent (see on ch. 34:6; also Vol. II, p. 88).

20. After all this. This was 13 years after Josiah’s Passover in his 18th year (v. 19), since he reigned 31 years (ch. 34:1). The history of Judah for this 13-year period is almost a complete blank. Some idea of conditions during this period may be gained from such contemporary prophetic books as Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.

When Josiah had prepared the temple. This clause is explanatory of the preceding phrase “after all this,” that is, the events to be narrated happened after the time that Josiah had prepared the Temple, not at the time of the preparation, as the English translation may be interpreted.

Against Charchemish. This section dealing with Josiah’s death in battle against Necho (vs. 20–27) is parallel to 2 Kings 23:29, 30. The Chronicles account contains more details than the account in Kings. Necho’s object was to aid the Assyrians against the Babylonian forces that had moved west, threatening both Syria and Palestine, for ultimately those forces would become a menace to Egypt. For further details on the situation at that time see on 2 Kings 23:29.

21. Meddling with God. These words are remarkable in that they come from a heathen king to a king of Judah who was a servant of the living God. In this instance God was speaking to Josiah through Necho, as is shown by v. 22 (see EGW, Supplementary Material on 2 Kings 23:29, 30). It was an occasion where prudence would have been the better part of valor, and where Josiah would have shown himself a wiser man had he recognized in the words of Necho a message from God (see on v. 22).

22. Disguised himself. Compare the similar conduct of Ahab in war against Syria (1 Kings 22:30).

From the mouth of God. God speaks to man in many ways, and it is always the part of wisdom to be alert to the voice of Heaven, whether it come from layman or prophet, from one's own countryman or from a messenger from lands afar. Of course Josiah might have justifiably questioned whether the words were of God, but he had available prophetic guidance by which the matter could be certified. In fact, he should never have gone on this venture without the approval of Heaven. By refusing to hearken to the words of Necho, Josiah refused the voice of God, and thus brought death upon himself.

24. The second chariot. Such a chariot was possibly heavier and more comfortable than a war chariot.

And he died. The account here apparently contradicts the account of Josiah's death in 2 Kings 23:29, 30, which seems to imply that the king died at Megiddo. The incident may be understood in two ways: (1) Josiah died at Megiddo, and the statement "and he died" (2 Chron. 35:24) may be taken as opening a new sentence summarizing the incident described in the previous verses. (2) Josiah died at Jerusalem, as 2 Chron. 35:24 seems to imply, and the statements "slew him at Megiddo" and "dead from Megiddo" (2 Kings 23:29, 30) may be taken in their literal meaning, "caused him to die at Megiddo" and "dying from Megiddo." The participle *meth*, translated "dead" in 2 Kings 23:30, may also refer to one who must die, as in Deut. 4:22 and possibly also in Gen. 20:3.

One of the sepulchres. "In his own sepulchre" (2 Kings 23:30), which was evidently in one of the family tombs of his ancestors.

25. Jeremiah lamented. Jeremiah began his ministry in the 13th year of Josiah (Jer. 1:2) and thus had carried on his prophetic work for 18 years before Josiah's death (2 Chron. 34:1). There is no evidence that this lament of Jeremiah for Josiah was written out—if it was, it has been lost.

In their lamentations. Minstrels in their dirges sang of the untimely death of Judah's last good king. Jeremiah requested that men weep not for Josiah but for his successor Shallum (Jer. 22:10–12), that is, Jehoahaz (see on 1 Chron. 3:15), who, after a reign of only three months, was taken to Egypt (2 Kings 23:30–34).

Written in the lamentations. This was a book of dirges which was probably still extant in the chronicler's day.

26. His goodness. Literally, "goodnesses," that is, his good acts. According to 2 Kings 23:25 there was no king like unto him "that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

24, 25 PK 405

CHAPTER 36

1 *Jehoahaz succeeding is deposed by Pharaoh, and carried into Egypt. 5 Jehoiakim reigning ill is carried bound into Babylon. 9 Jehoiachin succeeding reigneth ill, and is brought into Babylon. 11 Zedekiah succeeding reigneth ill, and despiseth the prophets, and rebelleth against Nebuchadnezzar. 14 Jerusalem, for the sins of the priests and people, is wholly destroyed. 22 The proclamation of Cyrus.*

1. Jehoahaz. Also called Shallum (Jer. 22:11). He was not the eldest son of Josiah (see 2 Chron. 36:2, 5; see on 1 Chron. 3:15). Thus he would not normally have succeeded his father on the throne. The people must have had some reason for preferring Jehoahaz to Jehoiakim, and the reason may be that Jehoiakim belonged to a pro-Egyptian group.

2. Twenty and three years. The parallel passage gives the name of Jehoahaz' mother and her parentage (2 Kings 23:31).

3. Put him down. According to 2 Kings 23:33 "Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath." Riblah was in Syria, on the Orontes River. Necho possibly summoned Jehoahaz to Riblah and there put him in bonds.

4. Eliakim. See on 2 Kings 23:34.

Carried him to Egypt. See Jer. 22:10–12 for Jeremiah's reference to Jehoahaz' being taken to Egypt, and his prediction that he would not return from exile.

5. Twenty and five years. He was thus older than Jehoahaz (see v. 2). The parallel passage adds the mother's name 2 Kings 23:36).

6. Bound him. See on 2 Kings 24:5.

8. The acts. Compare 2 Kings 24:5.

Abominations. Compare Jer. 22:13–19.

9. Jehoiachin. See on 2 Kings 24:6.

Eight years old. This is obviously a scribal error. The Syriac, several versions of the LXX, and 2 Kings 24:8, read "eighteen" (see on Jer. 22:28). Jehoiachin was married and already had five children in 592, five years after going to Babylon, as we know from cuneiform records excavated in Babylon.

10. When the year was expired. Literally, "at the return of the year" (see on 1 Kings 20:22). This was Nisan, the spring New Year, "the time when kings go forth to battle" (2 Sam. 11:1).

Brought him to Babylon. See 2 Kings 24:10–16 for a fuller account of the siege and the deportation to Babylon.

The goodly vessels. Some of these had already been taken to Babylon in the campaign of the third year of Jehoiakim (Dan. 1:1, 2).

Zedekiah his brother. "Brother" here is equivalent to "kinsman" (see on 1 Chron. 2:7), since Zedekiah was the uncle of Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:17) and a son of Josiah (1 Chron. 3:15).

11. Zedekiah. For the parallel account see 2 Kings 24:18 to 25:21.

12. Before Jeremiah. Compare Jer. 21:1–7; 24:1–10; 27:12–22; 32:3–5; 34:1–22; 37:1, 2; 38:4–6, 14–28.

13. Against king Nebuchadnezzar. Compare Jer. 52:3; Eze 17:13, 15, 18, 19.

14. Moreover. This section (vs. 14–16) deals with the sins that resulted in the downfall of Judah. Compare 2 Kings 17:7–23 for a much longer account, giving the reasons for the downfall of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Chief of the priests. Compare the vision of Eze. 8:11, 12.

All the abominations. Compare Ezekiel's vision in which are portrayed some of these abominations that brought the Lord's fury upon the nation (see Eze. 8:3, 10, 14, 16; cf. Jer. 7:11, 17, 18, 30). There seem to have been few of the terrible abominations of the heathen that were not then practiced by the professed people of God within the sacred Temple courts. With such a situation the day of doom could not be long delayed.

15. By his messengers. These included such men as Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. Compare Jer. 7:25, 26; 25:3, 4; 35:15; 44:4. Jeremiah made it clear that judgments were already beginning to fall and that a refusal to hearken could end only in complete destruction (Jer. 7:12–16, 32–34; 25:29–31).

16. Mocked the messengers. Compare Jer. 5:12; 17:15; 20:8; 26:20–23; 37:15–21.

17. Therefore he brought. When Israel sinned the Lord allowed the Assyrians to bring judgments against them (Isa. 10:5, 6), and now He permitted the Chaldeans to bring judgment upon a people “more righteous” than themselves (Hab. 1:6–13).

18. All the vessels. Compare 2 Kings 25:13–16 and Jer. 52:17–20.

19. Burnt the house of God. See 2 Kings 25:9; cf. Ps. 74:3, 6, 7.

20. Carried he away. The Hebrews were not all carried to Babylon at one time. The earliest captivity probably took place in 605 B.C. (see on 2 Kings 24:1; cf. Dan. 1:1–6). Other captivities were in Nebuchadnezzar’s 7th year, 598 B.C. (Jer. 52:28), his 8th year, 597 B.C. (2 Kings 24:12–16), his 18th year, 587 B.C. (Jer. 52:29), his 19th year, 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25:7, 8, 11), and his 23d year, 582 B.C. (Jer. 52:30).

21. Threescore and ten years. See Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10.

22. First year. Not the first year counted from the conquest of Media, c. 553. The Babylonians and the Jews did not count his reign as beginning until after he took control of Babylon. Verses 22, 23 are repeated in Ezra 1:1, 2 (see pp. 115, 116).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–4PK 412

6, 7 PK 422

9, 10 PK 438

9–19PK 422

10 PK 439

12, 13 PK 447

13 PK 451

14 PK 449

14–161T 280

15, 16 GC 19; ML 285

19–21PK 459

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⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (2 Ch 25:6). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.