



## *The Book of 2 Chronicles* *Discussion/Reflection Questions*

### **2 Chronicles 1**

1 Chronicles ends with the death of King David. Solomon, his son, has now inherited the powerful kingdom of Judah from his father and is now beginning his reign as the new king. Israel had reached its pinnacle of greatness and power under King David, who had laid the groundwork for a solid and successful kingdom. King Solomon did not just inherit greatness by becoming the new king of the glorious land of Israel, but it was God who made King Solomon great.

When Solomon began his reign, he was in a right relationship with God. Upon becoming king, he went to the tabernacle of meeting and offered a thousand burnt offerings to God. After this, God appeared to him and promised to give him whatever he asked for. Solomon did not ask for riches or fame, but for wisdom and knowledge to govern God's people. What would you have asked for if God had asked you this question? What is the greatest desire of your heart right now? Remember, Jesus told us that our greatest desires should be for heavenly treasures.

### **2 Chronicles 2**

Solomon is now beginning to build the temple his father David had wanted to build for the Lord. This was not to be just any temple; it was going to be a *great* temple! We gain insight into Solomon's understanding of God when he says in verse 6, "*But who is able to build him a house, since heaven, even highest heaven, cannot contain him?*" Solomon understood that no matter how big or great a temple may be, it could never contain God because God cannot be contained.

Solomon was aware of the presence of God that was with him everywhere, not just in the temple. It is no different today. Nothing that man creates can contain God. So, while we go to church to worship God, his presence is always with us because not even the highest heaven can contain him. He is with us while we're driving our kids to sports and while we're grocery shopping. He is with us while we're washing dishes and folding laundry. He is with us as we kiss our sleeping kids' foreheads at night and fall into bed. Wherever we are, he is with us. What comes to mind when you think about God presence always being with you? How often are you aware of God's presence in your life? Take some time throughout today to periodically focus

your mind on the fact that God's presence cannot be contained by earthly buildings but is with you wherever you are.

### **2 Chronicles 3**

The construction of the temple has begun, and Solomon is sparing no expense. Not only are the materials extravagant with gold, precious stones, and fine linen, but he is paying the laborers a fair wage. While he understands that the temple does not contain God, he is not going to build a place of worship and sacrifice to God that is second-rate. He is not going to give something to God that costs him little or nothing.

What is significant about the site of the temple is that it was built on Mount Moriah, a place where another man was prepared to sacrifice everything in worship to God. It is where Abraham led Isaac to be sacrificed. It is where God provided a ram. Even more significant is that it is where Jesus became the final sacrifice for our sins. While we no longer bring a sacrifice for our sin, we still bring a sacrifice of praise to God. Abraham, Solomon, and Jesus spared nothing in their sacrifice. What does your sacrifice of praise cost you? Is there anything in your life that you have been holding back from him?

### **2 Chronicles 4**

The temple is built and is now being furnished with the altar, the sea, lampstands, tables, pots, basins, and other furnishings that would be used in worship and sacrifice to God. The furnishings for the temple were made with a specific purpose and function and were not to be used for any other purpose. These particular furnishings were dedicated for temple use alone, and to use them for everyday use would defile them.

Just like the furnishings of the temple in the Old Testament, we were made for a specific purpose, dedicated and set apart for a divine use. We are the temple of God, created to live lives of worship and sacrifice to him in all that we do. Wherever you go, whether to the store or to work; to church or to your child's sport's practice, you are carrying God's presence with you. What do you believe is one unique purpose for which God has created you? Share below one place where you will be carrying God's presence with you today.

### **2 Chronicles 5**

Dedication day for the temple had come. All the furnishings for the temple were brought in and put into place. The priests had sanctified themselves and were ready for the special ceremony. They brought the Ark of the Covenant into the temple the way God had commanded Moses. The Levites began to worship and praise God. Suddenly, the temple was filled with a cloud as God's glory filled the house of the Lord.

God's glory did not fill the temple because Solomon had followed David's instructions carefully. His glory did not even fill the temple because the Ark of the Covenant had been brought in and put in the Most Holy Place. God's glory filled the temple as the Levites began to praise and worship the Lord. His presence was already with them, but the splendor of his presence was felt by them as they worshipped him. When was the last time you sang and worshipped God? Do you spend time privately worshipping him? If it's been a while since you set aside time to sing and worship God, do that today.

## **2 Chronicles 6**

After Solomon blessed the people, he knelt before the altar and prayed a prayer of dedication to God. In his prayer, he contrasts God's faithfulness with our tendency to wander. He cries out, "*There is no God like you, in heaven or on earth keeping covenant*" and then pleads with God that he would hear their prayers of repentance when they stray. Solomon foresaw the disobedience, and even exile of the Israelites and called on God's faithfulness to his covenant, knowing that after a season of discipline they would return to him seeking forgiveness for their unfaithfulness.

Solomon was able to call on God's faithfulness with confidence because he could trust in the covenant God had made to his forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was able to look back on the many times his people had been unfaithful to God and had experienced the consequences for their actions. He knew when they returned to God in sincere repentance and sorrow for their sin, God faithfully kept his promise to forgive and restore. God's faithfulness isn't contingent on our ability to keep a perfect track record of obedience. His faithfulness is contingent upon his promise to forgive us and cleanse us. Is there an area of your life where you know you've been unfaithful to God? Perhaps you feel like you've been in a season of "exile", but you want to be welcomed back into a close and fulfilling relationship with God. He is faithful to his promise to forgive and restore you. All you need to do is call out to him in sincere repentance. He will forgive you! He loves you! Take some time today to kneel before him in prayer and ask him to forgive you, cleanse you, and make you new.

## **2 Chronicles 7**

God appears to Solomon once again with a promise and a warning. He promises to answer Solomon's prayer for restoration when his people are unfaithful and come under discipline. However, he follows this promise with a strong warning to Solomon to remain faithful and serve him alone as God. He promises to reward his faithfulness by establishing his throne but warns him that there will be calamity if he begins to serve other gods.

There is a tendency at times to want to place a greater emphasis on God's promise of forgiveness and restoration, than on his expectation of our obedience. God promises to answer Solomon's prayer for forgiveness and restoration when Israel sins but ends the

chapter with a solemn warning that if Solomon, as the country's leader, was unfaithful, it would have far-reaching consequences for the whole country. Do you pray for your country's leaders on a regular basis? They need God's divine wisdom, as their decisions have far-reaching effects beyond their own borders. Take some time today to pray for your country's leaders; that God would give them divine wisdom and understanding and that his people would come together in unity and humble repentance so that healing restoration can be poured out on your land!

## **2 Chronicles 8**

King Solomon carefully built the house of God according to all of the instructions his father David had laid out. He was also careful to bring all the appointed sacrifices and to observe all the feasts. He was diligent to appoint the priests and Levites according to their specific purpose. Everything was done exactly as commanded and the priests and Levites did exactly as they were commanded by Solomon. But was it enough?

We learn in other books of the Bible that although Solomon carefully did what he was commanded to do, he had a flaw. We read that he was taking the daughter of Pharaoh for his wife. The problem was she was unholy and unable to live in the dwelling Solomon had built because the ark of the Lord had been there. This moral flaw of Solomon's would prove to be his downfall. We can check all of the appropriate boxes in serving God, but if we fail to surrender even one part of our life to God, it will lead us astray. Is there an area of your life that you have not yet surrendered to God? Perhaps you have already seen how this one area has become a wall between you and the Lord. Respond now, don't wait. Take some time today to kneel before God and surrender to him that area of your life.

## **2 Chronicles 9**

The queen of Sheba had heard about Solomon's great wisdom and wealth and came to see for herself. She quickly discovered that, in fact, it was much greater than she had heard. Solomon's wisdom and abundant wealth took her breath away. She recognized that God's delight in Solomon had resulted in him becoming the wisest and richest king on earth. But sadly, King Solomon's reign lasted only 40 years.

God had promised to lengthen his days and establish the throne of his kingdom; but this promise came with a condition that Solomon walk in the ways of the Lord and keep his commands and statutes. Unfortunately, Solomon's weakness for women led him to take 1,000 wives, many of whom were pagan and led him into idolatry and impurity. Not long after his death, we see a quick decline and division of Israel. He himself had warned in Proverbs 4:23 that we should protect our hearts with all diligence because from it springs our source of life. Have you been careful to guard your heart? Have you

allowed the Holy Spirit freedom to reveal areas in your heart that are vulnerable to darkness? What can you learn from Solomon's life about the importance of placing a guard over your heart?

## **2 Chronicles 10**

Solomon died and his son Rehoboam became king and there were problems right from the start. King Rehoboam consulted with elders that had served his father Solomon, then consulted with his peers. He chose to reject the wisdom given to him by the elders and instead chose to listen to his young peers, which led to a rebellion in Israel and a division of the kingdom. Rehoboam's kingdom then consisted of only the southern tribes of Benjamin, Judah, and Levi and was renamed Judah, while the remaining ten northern tribes of Israel split and made Jeroboam king.

Before Rehoboam had consulted with his peers, he had already chosen not to listen to the elders who had served King Solomon. In other words, King Rehoboam chose to surround himself with yes men who would give him the advice he wanted to hear. Refusing to heed wise counsel always leads us on a path to destruction. But the verse says, "*...for it was a turn of affairs brought about by God that the Lord might fulfill his word.*" God had already warned Solomon of the consequences of not doing all that God had commanded. What is the last thing God has commanded you to do? Have you done that thing, or have you set it aside for now? If we want to walk in God's blessing, we must be faithful to do all that he commands. Share below the last thing that God has told you to do, and if you haven't yet begun walking that out, pray a prayer of commitment to God and purpose to begin today.

## **2 Chronicles 11**

A civil war is about to break out between Judah and Israel. Rehoboam wanted to reunite Judah and Israel as one kingdom under his rule. But God spoke through the prophet Shemaiah to warn him to not to go to war against Jeroboam. To Rehoboam's credit, he listened to the prophet Shemaiah and all of his army returned home. They chose, instead, to focus on increasing their storehouses of food and weaponry.

When God spoke through the prophet Shemaiah and warned Rehoboam not to go to war against their relatives, he said one very important thing. "*...for this thing is from me.*" Because Solomon had not obeyed God's command, God divided the kingdom of Israel. Whether it was because Rehoboam feared God too much to go against what God had designed, or whether he feared a loss, we don't know. But Judah obeyed what God commanded. While Judah kept their high places and idol worship, they also continued to sacrifice to God and walk in a way that pleased him for three years. This was unfortunately cut short because of Rehoboam's tendency to idolatry and ungodly living. There is a huge lesson here in that God expects us to live lives of singular worship. We cannot worship him and engage in idolatry at the same time without our hearts being led astray. Is there an area of your life that has become an idol to you? If

you find it hard to let go of something that you know God has put his finger on, it's a pretty good indication that thing has become an idol. Take some time today and release that to him, and then share with a friend or write below, as a way of fully dedicating yourself to living a life of singular worship.

## **2 Chronicles 12**

Rehoboam struggled with the same thing a lot of Christians struggle with today, and that is consistently staying faithful to God and his commands. He started out by rejecting wise counsel, then he heeded God's command to not go to battle against Israel and although he continued in his idolatry, he also continued to worship God at the same time. This would lead to his downfall, because he walked away from God's law and took his kingdom with him. The punishment for that was God sent the king of Egypt to invade Judah. But he also sent the prophet Shemaiah with another word for Judah. That word was that God had left them to the Egyptians king's devices because they had forsaken him.

When Judah heard this, they humbled themselves and repented before God, and God relented – to a degree. Instead of being utterly destroyed by Egypt, they would become servants of Pharaoh so that they would understand the difference between serving Almighty God and serving a pagan ruler. Rehoboam's downfall was that he never really made a solid decision to serve God. He served God when it suited him. When we don't make a resolute choice to serve God alone, we will be led astray by distractions, worries, and cares of this life. Jesus warned about this very thing in the parable of the sower. When we set our heart to seek the Lord, the soil of our heart is ready to receive the seed of his word and bear fruit. But when we fail to resolutely set our heart to seek him, the word is choked out by distractions and cares of this life. Have you set your heart to seek the Lord, or can you see where you've become distracted with all of the noise in our culture? Perhaps worries and cares have burdened you down and are keeping you from truly seeking God. Identify those areas of your life that are keeping you from fully committing to God today.

## **2 Chronicles 13**

Abijah has become king of Judah and war has erupted with Israel. Jeroboam is still king and has come against Judah with an army twice the size of Abijah's. As both armies are in formation, Abijah knows it's not looking good for him. He stands up and begins addressing Jeroboam and his men. He reminds them of God's promise to David and the failures of Solomon that led to the division of Israel. He also reminds Jeroboam that while Judah has not forsaken the Lord, Israel has cast out the priests and dove headlong into rampant idolatry.

While Abijah was speaking, Jeroboam sent troops to sneak behind Judah to ambush them from in front and behind. Judah was not only outnumbered but surrounded. Do you feel that the enemy's been ambushing you lately? Do you feel that you're

surrounded by trouble on every side, outnumbered, overpowered, and helpless against the attacks of the enemy? Judah did not surrender. They cried out to the Lord, and their cry of faith resulted in God defeating Israel. They were surrounded, outpowered, and outnumbered but they had God on their side. If you're feeling surrounded by trials today, cry out to God in a prayer of faith below.

## **2 Chronicles 14**

Abijah passed away and his son Asa took the throne and brought reform to Judah. He destroyed the idolatrous altars, high places, and images to other gods. Then, he called on all of Judah to seek God and obey his commands. As a result, Judah entered into a season of rest from war. During this time, they strengthened and fortified the land of Judah. But - after this season of rest, Ethiopia attacked Judah with an army that was significantly larger. Ethiopia had an army of one million against Judah's five-hundred eighty thousand. And yet, Asa's faith in God remained unshakable.

Because Judah rested in God, they were confident that God would win this battle for them, and he did. Ethiopia was defeated and Judah's plunder was great. We too can rest in God and trust in his mighty hand to fight for us. He will defeat the enemy, if we choose to remain faithful to him alone and rest in his mighty power to save. Where is the enemy attacking you in your life right now? Do you feel the attack is greater than you have the strength to fight? How do you see the hand of the Lord helping you right now?

## **2 Chronicles 15**

Asa and his men were returning from Ethiopia, rejoicing in the success of their victory, when the prophet Azariah met them on the way with a warning from God. He warns that if they seek God, they will be found by him, but if they forsake him, he will forsake them as well. Surely, having just seen God win a great victory for them, they couldn't imagine forsaking him. They could have dismissed this warning, thinking that after the great victory God had won for them, they would always serve him alone. Instead, they took it to heart and set to remove the remaining idols from the land and restored the altar of the Lord.

Clearly, Asa hadn't removed *all* of the idols from Judah; and God gave him a clear warning that unchecked idolatry is a trap that will capture your heart and cause you to walk away from the Lord. Then, the prophet ends by encouraging Asa to courageously follow through on eliminating all idolatry in the land and to not allow weakness to prevent them from following through because God will reward their diligence. Have you failed to surrender any places in your heart? Are you afraid to walk away from something for fear of rejection or being made fun of? Take courage, dear sister! Do not allow weakness to prevent you from fully surrendering every area of your life to Christ. If you follow through, God will reward you.

## 2 Chronicles 16

Asa had started out so well in his reign in Judah. He had removed the idols and brought the land of Judah back to the worship of the one, true God. As a result, they had rest and when Israel and Ethiopia came against Judah -- with significantly larger armies -- God defended Judah and conquered their enemies. But here is Asa now, after a long season of rest from war, making a huge error. Israel was blocking the main route into Judah, cutting off supplies and people from entering there. But rather than trusting in God to save them, Asa formed a treaty with Syria using treasuries from the house of the Lord.

At first glance, it seems that Asa's plan worked as Israel abandoned their plan. However, Asa was about to learn a tragic lesson about compromise. The prophet Hanani went to Asa with a word from the Lord telling him that because Asa had chosen this time to trust man, and not God, his compromise had cost him his true enemy. You see, Asa supposed that his enemy was Israel, when in reality the larger enemy was Syria. Sadly, his compromise cost him greatly, and he died a different man than when he began. I am wondering today, is there an area of your life where you have been compromising? Compromise distorts our vision and prevents us from seeing where true danger lies; it prevents us from walking in true victory. If there is an area where you've been living in compromise, take some time today, sit before God, and repent. Ask him to show you how you can return to living devoted only to him.

## 2 Chronicles 17

Asa's son Jehoshaphat inherited the throne of Judah, and not only did he immediately begin strengthening Judah against the very real threat of Israel, but he walked in the ways of the Lord and removed the high places and wooden images from Judah. Because Jehoshaphat courageously tore down the high places and wooden images and then sent out men throughout the whole kingdom to teach the people God's law, great fear of the Lord fell on their border countries. They did not seek to attack Judah. Instead, these countries gave gifts to Jehoshaphat.

God made Jehoshaphat a powerful king, and Judah a powerful kingdom. Jehoshaphat's courage to eliminate idolatry, and then teach the entire land of Judah God's law, brought blessing upon them and he strengthened them as a nation. How well do you know God's word? It is one thing to know *about* God's word, but entirely another to really *know* his word. David said that he hid God's word in his heart so that he would not sin against God (Psalm 119:11). God's word is a great defense against Satan's trap. Do you have God's word hidden in your heart? We can all do more to know God's word. Take some time today to meditate on today's verse consider making memorization of God's word a daily habit. If you do, I know that just as King Jehoshaphat and the land of



Judah were blessed and strengthened by learning and delighting in God's law, you will see greater blessing and delight in the Lord as you make this a daily habit.

## **2 Chronicles 18**

Jehoshaphat had been blessed by God but he made an unwise alliance with King Ahab through marriage and that nearly cost him his life. He went down to visit Ahab, and Ahab asked him to go to battle with him against Syria. Jehoshaphat immediately agrees, but then asks that they inquire of the Lord, whether it is his will. Ahab has many prophets who, filled with a lying spirit, prophesy only what he wants to hear. Sensing that something isn't quite right, Jehoshaphat asks if there is a prophet of the Lord in Israel. Ahab admits that there is one, whom he hates because the prophet never prophesies anything positive.

Micaiah, the prophet of the Lord, is called. He is warned by the king's servant to speak only positive things; but he boldly proclaims that he will only speak what God speaks through him. He prophesied that Ahab would die in battle; and once again, Ahab doesn't like the word the Lord gave. Nevertheless, Ahab and Jehoshaphat go to battle where Ahab is, indeed, killed. We are living in a time when truth is a commodity because so many believers only want to speak what the world wants to hear. God's Word is still absolute truth, even when culture does not want to accept it as truth. As salt and light, we have an obligation to boldly speak that truth, even when it isn't positive or acceptable because God's truth is the power unto salvation. Do you find it hard, or even intimidating, to stand for the truth? When is a time when you wish you had spoken up or did speak up? What happened? Pray and ask God to fill you with boldness so that like Micaiah, you can boldly speak God's word.

## **2 Chronicles 19**

Jehoshaphat returned to Judah from the battle in which Ahab was killed and was met by the prophet Hanani. The prophet warned him that God was angry with him for creating an alliance with the most ungodly and perverse king of Israel - Ahab, and for joining with him in battle against Syria. However, God did see that despite this very big flaw in Jehoshaphat, he did sincerely love and honor the Lord and had been diligent to remove idolatry from the land.

Jehoshaphat went on to send judges throughout the whole country to set up a just legal system that judged based on God's law. He commanded the judges and Levites to fear the Lord and judge for him, not for man. Solomon said that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. How well do you walk in the fear of the Lord? Are you living your life wisely? In today's culture, living in the fear of the Lord requires courage, and just as Jehoshaphat encouraged the judges and Levites to deal courageously with their judgements, so we need to courageously let the fear of the Lord guide in our decision

making. It may not always make us the most popular among our friends, but the Lord will be with us as we live uprightly in wisdom and righteousness.

## **2 Chronicles 20**

Three nations allied together to come against Jehoshaphat and all of Judah. Instead of responding out of fear, Jehoshaphat turned to God in faith and called on the whole nation to fast and pray. They cried out to God, and as Jehoshaphat prayed a prayer declaring God's supernatural strength to save them, Jahaziel spoke out. He reminded them that they do not need to be afraid or discouraged because of the threat from these nations, for this was God's battle, and he would fight for them.

The interesting thing we see in this story is, although this battle was God's battle, Judah still showed up. Verse 20 says that they rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness. They were not passive in their faith, they were active. The army lined up, and Jehoshaphat sent out the singers and worshippers to go before the army in faith knowing that even though the battle wasn't won yet, it would be won because God said it would. Are you in a battle right now? Does it feel like the forces fighting against you are numerous? God has already promised that the fire will not consume you and the flood will not overtake you (Isaiah 43:2). He will fight for you. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Keep showing up each day, spending time with the Lord in the word and in prayer, perhaps even fasting is needed for this battle.

## **2 Chronicles 21**

We read today about the severe consequences of compromise. Jehoshaphat was a godly man, but he compromised by not only forming an alliance with Ahab, king of Israel, but also giving his oldest son in marriage to Ahab's wicked daughter. After Jehoshaphat's death, his son Jehoram killed all of his brothers to ensure that no one would steal his throne. Judah deteriorated at an alarming rate, with Edom's revolt and then Libnah's. Following that, the Philistines and the Arabians came and raided his house, taking his wife and children – leaving only his youngest behind. Jehoram reigned for only eight years, died in agony, and was not mourned by anyone. What a tragic story!

If Jehoshaphat had been given a glimpse into the future to see the consequences of his compromise surely, he would have chosen differently. But God does not give us that luxury. We have to trust that when he warns us to make no alliances with those who hate him, he sees what we cannot see. While to everyone else around us, yoking ourselves with those who dishonor God seems like the most logical choice, God warns that it won't end well. Obedience to his commands is greatly rewarded. Have you been tempted to compromise, just because it seems to make sense? Or have you already made a compromise that you regret? Pray and commit yourself to following God's commands, even if it doesn't make sense right now. God did not destroy the house of

David because of his covenant. He is always faithful to keep his covenant, even when we're not faithful; and this is how we know we can trust him, even when we cannot see the end from the beginning. He is faithful and true!

## **2 Chronicles 22**

The consequences for Jehoshaphat's compromise with Ahab have now reached to the second generation, as Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, ascends to the throne. His greatest adviser was his mother Athalia, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, who gave him wicked advice. Because of King Ahaziah's close ties with the house of Ahab, that is still ruling in Israel, he went to visit Jehoram (*the son of Ahab, also named Jehoram*) to comfort him as he recovered from being wounded in a battle against Syria. During this time, Jehu was rebelling against Jehoram and killed him. Ahaziah, in fear for his life, hid in Samaria; but Jehu and his men found him and killed him also.

King Ahaziah's mother, wicked Athaliah, saw a golden opportunity for herself and killed all potential heirs to ensure that her reign would not be overthrown. All, that is, except one: Little baby Joash. His nurse took him and hid him in the temple for six years. It may have seemed to some at the time, that evil was completely overtaking Judah. Now the house of Ahab was ruling both the northern and southern kingdoms, and their wicked influence was continuing from generation to generation. But God had made a covenant with David, a covenant that would not be broken. God always has a plan to save and redeem. Do you see patterns of sin in your family being passed down from generation to generation? Are you worried that these patterns may be repeated in your own children or grandchildren? God's power can break those patterns and replace them with righteousness and godliness, as we are about to see in the chapters that follow. These patterns do not have to continue, they can stop with you. Spend some time today, and in the days to come, praying that God would cut off the patterns of wickedness in your family and replace them with patterns of righteousness and the fear of the Lord.

## **2 Chronicles 23**

Athaliah had ruled Judah for seven years when Jehoiada the priest gathered the captains together and revealed the fact that one of Ahaziah's children escaped Athaliah's assassinations. God had orchestrated events so that his covenant with David would stand – that his throne would be established. Athaliah was not one of David's descendants, but Joash was. So, a great ceremony commenced as they crowned 7-year old Joash, king of Judah. Athaliah realized that she was being dethroned and cried out, "Treason! Treason!" The captains of the people grabbed her and carried her out of the temple and executed her. A great revival occurred as they tore down the temple of Baal, the altars, and images, and began restoring the house of the Lord and worship in Judah.

Because Joash was still a child, Jehoiada oversaw the restoration of the house of the Lord. God had reserved for himself a remnant in Judah who had remained faithful to him, even in a time when great wickedness and rampant idolatry were overtaking the

land. The six years that Joash was hidden away, Jehoiada mentored him in the ways of the Lord. Righteousness ruled in the land of Judah once again. Are you discouraged by the amount of sin and evil in our culture today? Are you concerned, or even fearful, about the impact it can have on your children? God always reserves for himself those who will remain righteous and faithful, even in a culture of rampant wickedness and idolatry. He wants you to be one of those people. As you pray today, make a commitment to him that you will be one of the faithful, who will live in righteousness and fidelity to his word and then pray a wall of protection around your children to protect them from the ungodly influence of the world.

## **2 Chronicles 24**

The sons of Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, had raided the temple and taken instruments consecrated to the worship of God, and used them for idol worship to the Baals. The temple was in shambles, but Joash and Jehoiada began to restore the house of God and make new instruments of worship that would be consecrated for holy use. Finally, worship was restored and burnt offerings were once again offered to God. But this lasted only as long as Jehoiada the priest was alive. Once Jehoiada passed away, so did Judah's faithfulness to God.

Sadly, we see the decline of King Joash's faithfulness to God as well. In fact, he descended so far into wickedness that he ignored the several prophets God sent to Judah to warn the people of their unfaithfulness. God sent Jehoiada's son Zechariah to tell them that God had forsaken them. Instead of repenting before God, they conspired together and stoned Zechariah. As a result, Syria came to attack Judah and God delivered them into the hands of the much smaller Syrian army. This defeat must have been humiliating for Judah, since by all accounts they should have soundly defeated Syria, but God allowed them to be defeated by their enemies because of their wickedness in serving other idols and killing of his faithful prophets. While King Joash began his reign with righteousness and justice, he ended his reign in wickedness and idolatry. He did not finish well. How are you running your race of life? Are you floundering? Maybe you feel weak and tired of fighting. Isaiah reminds us that when we wait on the Lord, our strength is renewed. Jesus instructed us to come to him when we are weary and heavy laden, and we will find rest. Have you made resting and waiting on the Lord a daily habit in your Christian walk? It is essential that we find our strength and rest in the Lord if we want to finish well. Do not be like Joash, who started well, but finished shamefully. Purpose in your heart today to develop a daily habit of waiting on God and resting in him, to find strength and stamina for your Christian walk, and make the determination to finish well.

## 2 Chronicles 25

Joash's servants killed him and now his son Amaziah has taken the throne. Just like his father, he started off well by living in a way that pleased God. When going to war against the Edomites, he had originally hired troops from Israel. After being warned by the prophet to not allow the army of Israel to fight with Judah, he heeded God's warning and sent the troops back home and chose to trust the arm of the Lord instead. God gave them a great victory and Judah defeated the Edomites. However, following this great victory, Amaziah stepped right into a trap.

After God gave Amaziah a great victory against the Edomites, he took their gods back with him, burned incense to them, and bowed down before them. This angered the Lord, because it was God who had given him the victory. The prophet came and chastised him, but in pride and arrogance, the king shut up the prophet. This pride drove him to a battle. The King of Israel warned King Amaziah to not assume too much, but Amaziah wouldn't listen. So, Israel defeated Judah, took Amaziah captive, broke down the walls of Jerusalem, and raided the temple of its treasures. Later Amaziah was assassinated, just like his father. Have you ever experienced defeat after a great victory? The Bible warns us to be cautious when we think we're standing strong, because we have the tendency to trust our own strength instead of God's, which will lead us to fall. If this has happened to you, think back to that moment when you began trusting in your own strength to stand, repent for your pride in that moment, and then ask the Lord to help you come back to a place of humility and trust in the arm of the Lord and not the arm of flesh.

## 2 Chronicles 26

Uzziah was one of the longest ruling kings of Judah, and God truly blessed his reign. He made Judah strong by strengthening its defenses and inventing new weapons. He gained the trust and confidence of the people of Judah and was well-known far and wide as a good and powerful king. Sadly, in the strength that he built as a ruler, his heart was filled with pride. One day, he went into the temple and began burning incense before the Lord. Azariah the priest, and eighty other priests with him, confronted King Uzziah but he refused to listen. Instead of repenting for his overstep, he grew furious with them and was struck with leprosy and had to live out the rest of his days as a ruler in isolation, while his son took over his duties.

The Bible says that as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper. Jesus reiterated this in Matthew 6:33 when he said that we should seek God's kingdom and righteousness first, and all these things will be added to us. King Uzziah's demise began when pride filled his heart, and as a consequence for his pride, he lived the rest of his days in humiliation and isolation. Do you see an area of pride in your life? Do you see where your pride is causing you to miss out on God's blessings? Pride is a universal struggle. There isn't a person on planet earth that doesn't struggle with pride on some level. The anecdote for pride is to humble ourselves before God and seek him

with our whole heart. How can you surrender yourself and humble yourself before him today?

## **2 Chronicles 27**

King Uzziah died and his son Jotham took over the throne. The Bible doesn't tell us a lot about Jotham, except that at a time when the people of Judah were behaving corruptly, he did what was right in the Lord's eyes. Instead of settling for the status quo, King Jotham stood alone and did what pleased God.

Many kings of Judah began their reign righteously but ended poorly; but we don't see that with Jotham. From the little we read about him in the Bible, it seems he was the quiet, steady type, seeking God's face, strengthening Judah, extending the kingdom into the mountains, and forests, and understanding that his position of king didn't overshadow the duties of the priest. He stood alone in a time of great corruption in the land, kept his eyes fixed on the Lord, and walked with determination and humility. When your time on earth is finished, what would you like to be said of you? How would you like people to describe the way you lived your life? So often we get caught up in the details of life that we forget the big picture, and we lose sight of what is truly important. Jesus told us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. When you look back over your course of your life, what will stand out to those around you? Will you leave a legacy of one who sought the Lord and was willing to stand alone? Take some time today to share below a fresh prayer of dedication to God and a promise to live in a way that leaves a legacy as a woman who rejected the status quo and ordered her ways before the Lord her God.

## **2 Chronicles 28**

King Ahaz is now on the throne of Judah and is perhaps one of the most wicked kings of Judah. Judah is entering its final stage before being completely carried away into captivity. King Ahaz angered the Lord to the point that God delivered many of the people of Judah into the hands of the Syrians. Israel also came against Judah and carried off 200,000 women and children along with much spoil. However, the people of Israel were Judah's brethren and had the law of God. So, God sent Oded the prophet to warn them to return Judah's captives and the spoil, because they were no better than Judah. They, too, had sinned against God.

When we see a brother or sister in Christ fall into sin, it is very easy to join those condemning them by pointing the finger and calling them out for their sin, forgetting that we have all failed God at some point in our life. In the end, Israel clothed the naked, gave them food and drink, and placed the weak on donkeys, and sent them back home. They gave them grace. Has one of your sisters in Christ fallen recently? How can you show her grace and the love of Christ? Spend some time today praying and asking him for wisdom and direction, and for your sister to come to a place of restoration.

## **2 Chronicles 29**

It is interesting that from one of the most wicked kings of Judah, comes one of the godliest kings, King Hezekiah. In 2 Kings 18, we read that he did something even most of the godly kings of Judah didn't have the courage to do – he tore down all of the high places and the sacred pillars. The temple of God had been abandoned because it hadn't been used during the reign of his father King Ahaz. King Hezekiah was about to change all of that. He ordered the priests and Levites to sanctify themselves, repair the temple, cleanse it, and sanctify each part. Worship to God was about to take place once again! After the debris was removed, the temple and utensils cleansed and sanctified, the priests and Levites let Hezekiah know that the temple was ready for worship once more. They began by bringing a sin offering of repentance. Then, they began to worship and offer the burnt offering, consecrating themselves to the Lord once again.

Revival began in the land of Judah. Paul urges us in Romans 12 to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God because this is our spiritual act of worship. Consecration means to be set apart for holy use. If God expects us to give him our bodies for holy use, which is pleasing to him and a spiritual act of worship, we must ask ourselves: how consecrated are we? Are we like the temple during the days of Ahaz or the temple during the days of Hezekiah? Has your temple been neglected and gathering debris, or is it maintained and consecrated for holy use? If you've been neglecting your temple lately, take some time today to sit in God's presence, allow him to cleanse your heart, and then purpose to live your life consecrated to God in holiness and worship.

## **2 Chronicles 30**

The temple was dedicated to the Lord and the people of Judah have repented for turning their backs on God. Now, King Hezekiah wants to celebrate Passover in a way that hasn't been celebrated for many, many years. In fact, he is so passionate about celebrating Passover, that he invites the remnant of northern kingdom of Israel that hadn't been taken captive by the Assyrians. He sent his messengers throughout all of Judah and Israel, calling the people to humble themselves and return to the Lord. For if they would return to the Lord, he would not reject them. He would be gracious to them.

Sadly, these messengers were met with mocking by most of the northern kingdom of Israel. A portion of those left in Israel did come to celebrate with Judah, and what a celebration it was! There hadn't been a Passover like this since the time of Solomon. Not only was this the first Passover celebrated in many years, but it was being celebrated by both kingdoms of Israel! They kept the feast for seven days, and when those seven days were over, they agreed to go on for another seven days! The enthusiasm they showed for hearing the teaching of the Levites, worshiping God, and celebrating him together was tremendous. When was the last time you came before God with such great enthusiasm that you didn't want to leave? If it has been a while since you felt such a longing for God's presence that you wanted to continue to linger

with him, take some time today to do as King Hezekiah instructed the people of Judah and Israel: yield yourself to him, enter into his presence, and spend time worshiping him. If you do, he will not turn from you, he will meet you with grace and abundant joy!

## **2 Chronicles 31**

The Passover was finished; but instead of immediately returning to their normal lives, they first went out and destroyed all the pillars, altars, and images that were used for idolatry. King Hezekiah then reinstated the divisions of the priests and Levites that David had set forth and the offerings and feasts were once again observed. Judah was in a state of spiritual renewal.

What was important in this time was that King Hezekiah did not allow his people to coast on one encounter with God. He continually kept pushing Judah to devote themselves completely to returning to the Lord God with all of their heart. Are you guilty of having Sunday encounters with God, but failing to follow through with them Monday through Saturday? Lasting change happens when we follow up a God-encounter with intentional steps forward every day. When is the last time you truly encountered God? Did you follow it up with intentional steps forward, or did you simply return to life as normal?

## **2 Chronicles 32**

Judah was in a state of great spiritual restoration. They had eradicated all the idolatry in the land and reinstated the feasts and sacrifices. The priests and Levites were once again faithfully performing their duties before the Lord; and now a terrifying enemy comes against them. The Assyrians were the most terrifying force at that time. They were not only threatening an invasion, but they were also taunting the inhabitants of Judah by blaspheming God saying that all of the gods of every other nation they'd invaded were unable to save them, so why would Almighty God save Judah?

We read this account in great detail in the book of Isaiah, who was the prophet at this time. God spoke through Isaiah to King Hezekiah not to trust in foreign alliances but to simply trust that God would deliver them from the hand of the Assyrians. And that is exactly what God did. As Judah remained bold and strong, trusting the power of God over the arm of flesh, God miraculously delivered them from the forces of the Assyrian army and Sennacherib was assassinated by his own children. Many times, at our greatest moment of spiritual growth comes our greatest spiritual battle. The enemy will do all he can to keep you from consistently moving forward in your walk with God. Has the enemy been coming at you with his lies and paralyzing you with his supposed strength? If God is for you, who can stand against you? Be strong. Be courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged by this attack of the enemy. God has already defeated him. What do you need to do today to stand strong in your faith and trust that God has gone before you and already won this battle? What promise of scripture will you stand on today to keep your heart encouraged and strengthened against the lies and discouragement of the enemy?



## 2 Chronicles 33

King Hezekiah died and his son Manasseh became king, at only twelve years of age. He was so wicked that 2 Chronicles 33:9 says that he enticed Judah to do more evil than even the pagan nations God had destroyed, had done. He brought back all of the idolatry his father had destroyed, and more. He even went so far as to make an idol and set it up in the temple of God! God spoke to the king and the people of Judah and warned them, but they would not listen. So, God sent the Assyrian army, that he had defeated while his father was king, and they took King Manasseh captive. Manasseh humbled himself, cried out to the Lord, and God delivered him. He then went back to Judah where he destroyed the idols and altars to false gods and returned to the Lord. Judah, however, continued in its wickedness, and after Manasseh died, his son Amon ascended to the throne and did exactly what his father did. He brought back all the idols and altars to false gods. However, he did not humble himself before God and was assassinated by his servants in his own house.

While the Bible says that Manasseh led the nation of Judah into more wickedness than even the pagan nations God had destroyed, he did humble himself and God heard his cry. Have you been away from God in any areas of your life? Perhaps you have been disobedient to God and a wall has been built between you and God. Have you felt distant and cold because of an area of compromise in your life? If God would hear wicked King Manasseh's humble prayer when he was in distress, he will surely hear your prayer if you will simply humble yourself before him. His word promises that if will humble ourselves and turn from our sin, he will hear our prayer. Kneel before him today in repentance, and ask him to restore you. He loves you and he will answer your cry.

## 2 Chronicles 34

King Amon's reign was very short, only two years, but it was enough to lead Judah deep into idolatry. They worshiped many different kinds of idols, as we see in 2 Kings 23:4-5. After he died, young Josiah ascended to the throne; and soon he began to, once again, purge the land of idolatry. His campaign of cleansing reached even into Israel. Once Israel was purged of idolatry, he began restoration of the temple, just as King Hezekiah had done. At some point during the restoration of the temple, the high priest found the book of the Law given by Moses. He brought it to King Josiah and began reading it. When King Josiah heard the words of the Law, he was horrified at the sin of his people and the judgement that was sure to come. He tore his clothes, and humbly wept before God for their sin. Then he sent representatives to Huldah the prophetess to see what God had to say regarding the state of Judah. The Lord spoke through her saying that God's wrath could no longer be held back. Judah's sins had crossed every boundary and his judgement was coming; however, because Josiah had repented with tears, he would hold back his judgement on Judah for as long as Josiah reigned.

God's grace and mercy is so much greater than we can imagine. He was willing to hold back his judgment for the sake of one righteous person. You see, he knew that Judah's

repentance was superficial and would only last for as long as Josiah was king, but he knew Josiah's commitment to him was deep and lasting, and he would not pour out judgement as long as Josiah lived. Is your commitment to God deep and lasting? Are you willing to be the one righteous person who stands in the gap for others, as you pray for God's mercy and grace? Go to him now in prayer for others.

## **2 Chronicles 35**

The temple has been restored, the book of the Law has been found, and now the Ark of the Covenant has been put back in its rightful place. King Josiah instructs the Levites to prepare themselves to celebrate Passover. This time, all of Judah and Israel are present for the celebration, and this time it exceeded even the Passover celebration of King Hezekiah! 2 Chronicles 35:18 says that there had been no Passover like it since Samuel the prophet was alive.

## **2 Chronicles 36**

King Josiah passed away, and his son Jehoahaz was made king by the people but reigned for only three months. What followed was a line of Babylonian kings who led the people into idolatry and sin. God sent messengers to warn them of God's coming judgement, but they refused to listen. Instead, they despised the warnings and mocked the prophets until they reached a point of no return. The king of the Chaldeans came and attacked and did not hold back. He killed the people without mercy, and then raided the temple before burning it. Once the house of God was burned, he broke down the wall and burned all the palaces. Finally, those who managed to survive the killing spree were taken captive to Babylon where they were made servants.

This was exactly what God had warned his people would happen if they failed to keep his commandments. They would be carried away into captivity and be made servants to their enemies. The Bible tells us that God is longsuffering and that his mercy and love are unending. But God is also righteous, just, and must punish sin. While we see that both Israel and Judah pushed God's hand to the point where he had to bring judgment upon them, that is not the end of the story. Redemption would come. And so, the story of Israel and Judah is a lesson in the importance of remaining faithful to God. As we close out our study in the book of 2 Chronicles, purpose to remain faithful to God and write below a prayer of fresh commitment and surrender to him. He loves you so!