

Seven Bible Studies 2017

History

September 19: 2 Chronicles 1-5 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 2 Chronicles 1-5

Solomon asks for wisdom and offers a thousand burnt offerings (1 Kings 3) on the most important high place. We are told in this book (but not in 1 Kings) that the altar is made of bronze. He asks God for wisdom and God which grants him and more.

In chp 2, Solomon prepares to build the temple. "He conscripted 70,000 men as carriers and 80,000 as stonecutters in the hills and 3,600 as foremen over them. (v2)" An incredible amount of material and skilled laborers go into the making of this temple. I think it's the first time I've ever noticed the word "design" used. In the NIV version, it says of Hiram-Abi, "he is experienced in all kinds of engraving and can execute any design given to him."

I am curious as to if anyone has a theory as to why Solomon taking a census in chp 2 v17 seems alright but the one taken by David was evil. My theory is the intent behind it- Solomon's census was to know the number of foreigners so he can put them to work for God's house vs. David's for greedy warfare but I am open to hearing others thoughts about it.

Chp. 3-4 Solomon builds the temple (1 Kings 6) and it goes into deep detail of the furnishings and the temple's aesthetic appeal... even down to the weight of the gold nails — 1.25lbs — (chp3v9).

Finally, the ark is brought to the temple (1 Kings 8) on long rods with trumpeters, musicians, and singers joining in praise and song to the ark being placed in its beautiful [yet temporary] home.

Comment:

Joyfully Nellie:

I have always thought of it as the motive behind the census before... would like to hear if there are other thought as well.

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

I agree it was behind the motive. 1 Chronicles 21:1 says that Satan inspired David to take the census. His action was motivated by pride in knowing the size his empire had acquired. God wanted the children of Israel numbered only so that they would know how much to give to the Lord. David just wanted to know, with Satan's influence, how big his army was; he was putting his trust in his military might rather than in the promises of God.

Here is an example for a census during the days of Moses:

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou

numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. [Exodus 30:11-15 KJV]

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

This census seems to have occurred before Solomon began to do things that displeased GOD, but I would also like to hear other's thoughts.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thanks, Nick!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

"He is good! His love endures forever!"

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

My favorite points of this reading:

- 1.) Temple built on Mount Moriah which Abraham had named "The Lord will provide"
- 2.) One of the pillars was named Boaz, perhaps after Solomon's twice great grandfather.
- 3.) The diameter of the basin was 10 cubits and the circumference 30 cubits. $30/10$ gives us π to one sig fig which is 3.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Love reading Kings & Chronicles! Good summary, Nick. One thing that caught my eye was the ark only had the tablets in it. I suppose the jar of manna and Aaron's staff were lost when the Philistines had possession of it.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Ginger, the rod and jar may indeed have been lost, but they had not been inside the ark. They were "before the Lord" (Ex 16:33, Num 17:4, 10, 20:8-11). My impression is that the rod of Aaron was the rod of Moses and was also called the rod (staff) of God (Ex 4:20, 7:17, 19, etc). That staff used by Aaron at Moses's direction would have been a shepherd's walking stick, surely too long to fit into the ark (external length 2 1/2 cubits, 40 inches). The idea of those objects being inside the ark comes from a misreading of Heb 9:3-5 which speaks of items connected with the most holy place.

Nick, I think you are right, the intent and scope of Solomon's census was practice in nature, utilitarian, which doesn't seem to have been David's motive.

Isn't it interesting how Gibeon, the home of the Canaanites who tricked Israel into a covenant became the home of the tabernacle after the destruction of Shiloh?

Good point, Marc, especially the connection from Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac to David's sacrifice in the same place after the prior census to the temple being built on that place where the Lord provided, and would provide.

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

Wow. I've been teaching that wrong for years to many children. 😞 I did teach it from Hebrews 9. NIV must be a very poor translation. Thx for the prod. What exactly does, "before the Lord" mean?

Charles Fry:

Ginger Hermon Think of the mercy seat as a throne with the cherubim on each side (this is a very Biblical picture). God would be enthroned between the cherubim, in the midst of his people, and "before the Lord" would be in front of the mercy seat, in front of the ark it rested on, in front of the tablets of the testimony that were in the ark, under the mercy seat. See Ex 30:6 for example.

I don't really blame the NIV, lots of people have drawn the same conclusion from Heb 9 reading the KJV or almost every English translation. But the NIV is too helpful in supplying "this ark contained" rather than "in which was" (NASB). Note that the writer in 9:2-5 puts things in relation to the two "tents", distinguishing the holy place from the most holy place, and associates the lamp, table and bread with the first, while associating the golden altar, the incense, the ark, the jar, the staff, the mercy seat and cherubim with the second. While the golden altar was located in front of the curtain, in the holy place, it was placed in relation to the inner room, to present incense before the throne and smoke on the day of atonement to obscure the throne. I think if we take the first "in which" in Heb 9:2 (NASB) and note that it is referencing the room, and the second "in which" in 9:4 and think of that also as referencing the (second) room, it works out. Most people though read it in every English version I know of just as you read it in the NIV.

Ginger Hermon:

Charles Fry: thank you! I will definitely study this more!

September 26: 2 Chronicles 6-10 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 2 Chronicles 6-10

"But will God really dwell on earth with humans? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!" (6:18)

What powerful words of Solomon in his dedication of the temple to God. And sure enough, we know Solomon's question is answered. God did dwell on Earth (John 8:58) and continues to dwell (Ephesians 2:19-22)

So the promise of God made to David is fulfilled- David's son, Solomon, builds the temple. His prayer of dedication may sound familiar to some people- "Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven or on earth")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9Gi94AbkkA>
“Covenant of Love-Training”

The rest of chp. 6 is instructions on the temple, how to handle bad situations, enemies, and non-believers. I think some of these instructions can correlate to our life’s focus and how we act around others even today.

Chp. 7: Give thanks to the Lord for “He is good; his love endures forever.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFWCH60nJ-A>

God Appears to Solomon and tells him, “This temple will become a heap of rubble” if Israel turns and forsakes His commands and decrees.

Chp. 8 lists Solomon’s other activities including: building up Tadmor in the desert, rebuilding Upper and Lower Beth Horon, and “whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.”

250 officials supervising, Pharaoh’s daughter couldn’t live in the palace, festivals were held

Chp 9: The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon and is impressed by his wisdom and splendor so she gifts him many fine items.

Some other fascinating physical things about his kingdom:

—>Solomon’s throne was covered in ivory and overlaid with pure gold, six steps, a footstool of gold attached to it, armrests with a lion standing beside each of them. Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step

—>All of King Solomon’s goblets were gold

—>Solomon had a fleet of trading ships that would return every three years carrying gold, silver, ivory, apes and baboons

—>Four thousand stalls for horses and chariots w/ twelve thousand horses

—>Silver became as common in Jerusalem as stone, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees

“Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon’s day.”

Then Solomon dies

Chp, 10 Israel rebels against Rehoboam because of nonsensical decision to follow the advice of his young peers instead of the wise elders.

Comment:

Butch O’Neal:
Thanks, Nick!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

I feel like the Queen of Sheba. Amazed! I'll forever sing these songs with a new understanding and level of love. Another great reading. Thanks, Nick!

Comment:

Suzanne Ingle Harvey:
Beautiful song! Thanks for sharing it and for your thoughts!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:
Sweet! I'm married to the Queen of Sheba! Honey, we need a new car.

October 3: 2 Chronicles 11-15 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 2 Chronicles 11-15

Rehoboam prepares an army of 180,000 soldiers but is told by God to not attack Jeroboam. Instead, he fortifies Judah and and priests and Levites side with him. He has 18 wives and 60 concubines but he loves Maakah, daughter of Absalom more than all of them combined. With all those women, he has a whopping 28 sons and 60 daughters... it is kind of fascinating looking up those who have the most children. This would put him on the list although it still doesn't compare to some people.... 😊

Shishak, king of Egypt, attacks Jerusalem because Rehobam and Israel fell away. Rehoboam humbled himself (12v6) and God shows mercy to him. His son Abijah succeeds him as king.

Chp 13-15 revolves around Asa and Abijah

Abijah takes an army of 400,000 to take on Jeroboam's army of 800,000. He gives a battle speech on how the Lord is on their side and they rally to win- inflicting 500,000 casualties on Israel.

Asa, Abijah's son, does what is right in the eyes of God. He tears down the high places, takes down the Cushites and other groups, and builds up an altar to God where they sacrifice 700 head of cattle. He establishes religious reform that is taken seriously with the oaths they proclaim. Chp 15 v17 states, "Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life"

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Nick!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thanks, Nick. Asa walked for many years with God. I love that he disposed Maacah as queen mother for building a repulsive Asherah pole (& Asa burned it). The Spirit of God gave good advice, "be strong and do not give up." Wish he kept the same courage & faith (defeating the Cushites) in year 36 & beyond.

October 10: 2 Chronicles 16-20 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 2 Chronicles 16-20

(16) While King Asa's heart was right with God, he still made the mistake of relying on the King of Aram. Because of this, a seer told him he will always be at war. Asa was so enraged he put the seer in jail and brutally oppressed some people. He was inflicted a disease on his feet but still was stubborn and turned to physicians instead of the Lord. Despite his mistakes late in life, people loved him and gave him the funeral worthy of a king.

(17) Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, becomes king of Judah. He followed after David and did not follow the practices of Israel. He removed the high places and Asherah poles from Judah and took the "Book of the Law of the Lord" to teach people in Judah.

(18) is a fun one- Jehosaphat acquires great wealth and honor and allied himself with Ahab by marriage. This seems like a dangerous thing to do, but he treads carefully. Ahab asks him to go to war alongside him but Jehosaphat tells Ahab to seek the counsel of the Lord. 400 prophets of Israel tell Jehosaphat to go to war but Jehosaphat requests a prophet of the Lord. Ahab is grumpy and tells him Micaiah son of Imlah never prophesies anything good about him. Micaiah tells Jehosaphat to go to war... but it seems like he may have done so in a sarcastic manner because Jehosaphat is able to tell that it is not a message from the Lord. Micaiah then tells him that Israel would be scattered and Ahab exclaims, "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me?!"

Ahab has Micaiah thrown in prison and orders him to only be given bread and water until he returns from war. Jehosaphat disguises as the king of Israel and cries out in fear as the chariot commanders go to attack him. They realize he isn't Ahab and God delivers Jehosaphat to safety. Ahab, on the other hand, isn't so lucky and is killed by an arrow shot at random. We don't have any word what happens to Micaiah after his prophecy from the Lord comes through.

(19) Jehosaphat is confronted by Jesu the seer for siding with the wicked, appoints judges and priests, and defeats Moab and Ammon

(20) An overwhelmingly large army of Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites prepare to attack Judah. Jehosaphat cries to the Lord for help and proclaims a fast over Judah. They all come together in Jerusalem and are told by God they will win against them. They are so victorious that it takes three days to carry the plunder. On the fourth day, they worshipped God and the fear of God came upon the surrounding kingdoms.

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Nick!

Comment:

Charles Fry:
There is power in praise. The story in chapter 20 is a favorite.

2 Chronicles 20:22 (NIV)

22 As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Good study! I like it when there is a good king, and Hey! Here is Tarshish again. I love this attribute of our Lord, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." Thanks, Nick. 😊

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

18:33 "But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor" God uses his providence here through an un-named soldier so that we clearly see this was the hand of God. Interesting though in 1 Kings 5:1 we read later, "Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because THROUGH HIM the Lord had given victory to Aram." Could be he was just the commander of the army but perhaps he was the random soldier that God used to take aim.

Comment:

Suzanne Ingle Harvey:

Good comments. We always find little pieces of stories that we know we have read before, but didn't let all the words "sink in". I had forgotten about the disease of the foot.

Comment:

Cherris Lehman:

Good stuff! The stories from the Bible are very intriguing! Thank you Nick!

October 17: 2 Chronicles 21-24 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 2 Chronicles 21-24

DESPITE THE EVIL OF MAN, GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

Jehoshaphat dies and his firstborn son, Jehoram, reigns as king of Judah. He does evil in the eyes of God by having his brothers and some officials put to the sword, marrying a daughter of Ahab, and following in the ways of Ahab.

But because of God's covenant with David that he would "maintain a lamp for him and his descendants forever," he does not destroy his lineage.

He does, however, strike everything he owns "with a heavy blow" and gives him with an incurable disease that makes his bowels fall out (causing him a painful death).

"His people made no funeral fire in his honor, as they had for his predecessors," (21:19) and "He passed away, to no one's regret" (21:20)

Only Ahaziah, Jehosaphat's youngest son, survives and is made king over Judah.

His mother, Athaliah encourages him to do evil and he does. But he only rules for a year because he is put to death by Jehu. Athaliah “proceeded to destroy the whole royal family” but “Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away.” She kept him hidden away for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

Chapter 23 is an exciting story of rebellion!

Jehoiada rallied the commanders of units of a hundred throughout Judah & Israel. Jehoiada brought them together at the temple and reminded them that it is the Lord’s promise that the king’s son, a descendant of David, is who is supposed to reign.

They devised a plan to establish Joash as king- 1/3 of priests and Levites were to watch the doors, 1/3 were to be at the royal palace & Fountain Gate, and 1/3 to be in the courtyards of the temple. The Levites were to be stationed around the king and put anyone to death that entered the temple.

They took the weapons of David from the temple in preparation and anointed and placed the crown on seven-year-old Joash yelling, “Long live the king!”

This grabbed the attention of Athaliah who “tore her robes and shouted, ‘Treason! Treason!’”

They seized her as she reached the entrance of the Horse Gate on the palace grounds and put her to death.

“Jehoiada then made a covenant that he, the people and the king[c] would be the Lord’s people” (23:16) and he tore down the temple of Baal, smashed the altars and idols, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal.

“All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was calm, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword” (v21).

Chp. 24- So Joash was only seven years old when he was made the king, but he reigned 40 years. He did right in the eyes of God all the years of Jehoiada the priest. He had a chest placed in front of the temple where people were to bring their annual taxes to be placed into it. People did so gladly and they used the money to pay the workers to restore the temple.

But when Jehoiada died at the ripe old age of 130 and things turn downhill.

Joash stopped listening to the advice of the priests and instead listened to his officials. They began worshipping Asherah poles and idols. God sent prophets to turn them back to Him, but they would not listen. Zechariah, son of Jehoiada came to him proclaiming that he was in the wrong for forsaking the Lord and Joash had him stoned to death.

The army of Aram marched against Joash and he was injured in battle. Interestingly, his officials conspired against him for the murder of Zechariah and he was not buried in the tombs of the kings.

Comment:

Butch O’Neal:
Thank you, Nick!

Comment:

Cherris Lehman:

The stories of the kings are so interesting!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Perhaps 24:22 is a Messianic parallel? "King Joash did not remember the kindness Zechariah's father Jehoida had shown him but killed his son." A major difference would be Zechariah's response as he was dying was, "Lord hold them to account for this" whereas the more perfect Son said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Great title, Nick! God always keeps His promises. What a roller coaster of emotions in these chapters. I couldn't help but think about the great cloud of witnesses/faith heroes we just read in Hebrews. Prophets were referenced as faith heroes and I couldn't help but think of this while reading Jehoiada's strength & Zechariah being put to death by stoning. Gives me chills to think we are surrounded by these "martyrs", Old Testament saints, who bore a noble testimony of God.

October 24: 2 Chronicles 25-28 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY 2 Chronicles 25-28

Chp 25- Follow God Wholeheartedly

Amaziah, the son of Joash, becomes king of Judah and has those who killed his father murdered but he kept within the law of Moses. He numbers those over 20-years-old who can handle a spear and he has 300,000 fit for battle. He hires 100,000 Israelites for 100,000 talents of silver but is told by a man of God to not use them since the Lord is not with Israel. He follows the instruction and sends the Israelite troops home to their dismay.

He is victorious but brings back the gods of the people of Seir. He is prideful of the win and arrogantly challenges the king of Israel to which he is disastrously defeated. King Jehoash captures Ahaziah and takes all the gold and silver of the temple.

Chp 26- Pride can cause leprosy 🤒

Uzziah, a 16-year-old, is made king in place of his father Amaziah. He built up a strong army, took on the Philistines, built towers and cisterns and vineyards, and reigns 52 years. His 2,600 family leaders were over 307,500 men trained for war. But much like his father, his pride led to his downfall.

He entered into the temple and Azariah with 80 other courageous priests confronted him. His forehead broke out in leprosy and everyone including himself ran out.

Chp 27- Learn from Dad's Mistakes

Jotham, son of Uzziah, becomes king at the age of 25. He only reigns 16 years and verse two sums it up- "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Uzziah had done, but unlike him, he did not enter the temple of the Lord"

Chp 28- Success can come to those in the wrong... so don't follow them!

Ahaz becomes king of Judah at the age of 20 and a bad king he is indeed. He made idols, sacrificed children, and engaged in detestable practices. The Arameans capture them and the prophet Oded confronts the soldiers about the plunder and prisoners they've taken.

King Ahaziah thinks that since the Arameans were so successful in taking them captive that they're gods are the true god(s). This leads to an even greater downfall of him and Israel and he is not buried in the tombs of the kings

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

So many lessons from these kings. Thanks for the excellent summary and faithfulness to this study, Nick!

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Nick!

October 31: 2 Chronicles 29-32 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 2 Chronicles 29-32

Yes, there actually are some good kings...

(29) ACTIONS OF CHILDREN AREN'T ALWAYS REFLECTIVE OF THEIR PARENTS

We left off last week with Hezekiah, son of the evil Ahaz, taking over as king of Judah.

Unlike his father, he does what is right in the eyes of the Lord. He opened the doors of the temple and repaired them, told the priests and Levites to remove the defilement in the sanctuary, and makes sacrifices to God.

(30) DO THE BEST YOU CAN UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES

Even though they were not able to celebrate the Passover at the regular time because the priests had not been consecrated, they decided to celebrate it as soon as they were able to do so.

"There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem" -verse 26

(31) EVERYONE SHOULD GIVE GENEROUSLY

They destroyed the Asherah poles, high places, and altars. Hezekiah assigns priests and Levites to divisions and orders citizens to give to them. They give so generously that they have an overabundance. Likewise, even king Hezekiah gives of his own possessions.

(32) GOD DEFENDS HIS PEOPLE

When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, saw how successful Judah was, he laid siege to the fortified cities. He threatens Jerusalem and mocks them that the gods of other countries have never been able to defend them against their army. An overwhelming underdog, Hezekiah reassures his people, "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the

vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.”

King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah cried out in prayer about this and “the Lord sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the commanders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king.”

Like many before him, King Hezekiah became sick and died. He was buried on the hill in the tombs of David’s descendants and all the people of Jerusalem honored him.

Comment:

Butch O’Neal:
Thank you, brother Nick!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
That was quite a letter in chapter 30! I really enjoy reading testimony of the good kings. Thanks, Nick.

November 7: 2 Chronicles 33-36 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 2 Chronicles 33-36

Today, we finish the book of Chronicles and I find the dictionary’s definition very fitting:

chron·i·cle

noun

plural noun: chronicles

1. a factual written account of important or historical events in the order of their occurrence

So continuing on in Chronoicl(ogical) order... we start off in chapter 33 where Manasseh takes over as King of Judah as a 12-year-old. He reigns 55yrs and does not follow in his father Hezekiah’s ways, but instead in his grandfather’s ways by doing evil. He rebuilds the high places & altars to Baals, sacrifices children, and consults mediums and spiritists.

“But Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites” (v9).

After a rough start, he gets hooked on the Assyrians and realizes he needs to get hooked on God instead.

He humbles himself and removes the foreign gods he built. But his son, Amon, who rules after him, follows in his footsteps but does not humble himself as Manasseh did.

34-35 THE POWER OF THE BOOK

Eight. Years. Old... when he became king. At 16, he decides to follow in the ways of God. At 20, he purges Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles, and idols. At 26, he purifies the land and orders repairs for the temple.

They find the book of the law in the temple and Shaphan takes the book to the king and reads it to him. Josiah tears his clothes and orders that the word of the book is to be known throughout Judah. He establishes religious reform and, “removed all the detestable idols from all the territory belonging to the Israelites, and he had all who were present in Israel serve the Lord their God. As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the Lord, the God of their ancestors” (v33).

They celebrate the Passover which “had not been observed like this in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel.” There are some interesting points made here about how they follow the Book of Moses.

Unfortunately, he chooses to engage in a battle (in which he should have had no part in) with Necho king of Egypt. He disguises himself and is shot by archers from which he dies.

36- THE FALL OF JERUSALEM & DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

We then have a series of bad kings: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah as leaders under the Babylonian rule of king Nebuchadnezzar. As you may remember, God said the temple will last until his people fall away and this is where it happens.

“He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the Lord’s temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. 19 They set fire to God’s temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there” (v18-19).

Comment:

Butch O’Neal:

Thank you, brother Nick!