Valley Baptist Fellowship / Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

11 Sept 2011 (Ten-Year Anniversary of 9/11) / 5 Aug 2012 Single Message

NIV 45 Minutes

**Faithful by a Thread**

Title

*2 Chronicles 21–23*

**Topic:** Faithfulness

**Subject:** How can we know whether God has abandoned us?

**Complement:** God judges idolaters but keeps His promises to those who worship Him.

**Purpose:** The listeners will trust in God’s faithfulness to fulfill His promises.

**Reading:** 2 Chronicles 22

# Introduction

### Interest: It was exactly 14 months ago today that I last preached at Crossroads—on 5 June 2011. Amazing. On that day, I also presented my resignation, not that I thought I would never preach here again—but that things would be different.

CIC

#### And they *are* different. Things for me have largely continued as before, though I certainly appreciated and needed the seven-month break from June to December last year. It had been an intense, almost four years of non-stop activity from 2008 to 2011, so Susan and I needed a break, both from CIC and Singapore Bible College, where I have now served on the faculty for 21 years. It’s been good to take some time off, though our months also included preaching at 8 of our supporting churches in the USA and visiting many supporters and family members.

1991 family

#### My sons continue to press ahead in their respective domains. Kurt (25) has worked in IT and marketing at Agros for 4.5 years; Stephen (23) is a co-pilot, flight instructor, and soon-to-be pilot; and John (19) begins his second year at Biola University this month. In these areas, life moves on, though differently.

Sons   
8 slides

#### *Harper’s* magazine estimated in August 2011 that 85% of those who graduated from college the previous year moved back in with their parents. This makes Susan and me grateful to God that our sons are employed. John is even a white-water raft guide this summer in Montana–so far off the beaten track that neither Susan nor I saw him in our travels over the summer! Susan returns to Singapore on Tuesday night.

#### Things are different for you at CIC, too. I don’t need to elaborate on the events of the past year from your perspective, as you are already aware.

CIC

#### But here we are, together once again. I have remained an elder at CIC during my absence, as I have not yet been replaced as a director/elder. The difference is that this is the first time I have spoken at CIC without being a pastor or teacher.

#### Lewis will return on August 24, so both of the church elders will once again be back in Singapore. We are in Skype discussions about our future.

### Need: Where are we headed as a church? Are you worried?

Direction

#### This depends upon who the leader of the church is. And *who* is this leader? The last time I looked at the body analogy of 1 Corinthians 12, Jesus Christ was the head of the church, and each of us was only a part of that body!

#### I don’t say that to minimize your own wondering, though. I know full well that transitions can be unsettling for us.

### Subject: I wonder if you feel some sense of emptiness, though, like the reflecting pools at the WTC. Has God abandoned us? How can we know whether God has abandoned us?

Abandoned?

### Background: Before we answer this in today’s text, let’s see two key background texts:

#### In Gen. 12, God told Abraham that he would bless him with land, a seed (or nation) to come from him, and that he would bless all peoples through him. This is more popularly known as the Abrahamic Covenant, which is further explained in three more covenants—the Land covenant (which I’m calling the Geographic Covenant), the Seed covenant (or Davidic Covenant), and the Blessing (or New) Covenant.

Chart

L-S-B

Gen 12:1-3

#### In this second covenant—the Davidic—God promised David amazing things 1000 years after Abraham: his house (dynasty), kingdom and throne would last forever!

2 Sam 7

##### In fact, 1 Chronicles explains how his line was established.

1 Chronicles  
Book Chart

##### Then 2 Chronicles, despite the kingdom split, shows his line was preserved.

2 Chronicles  
Book Chart

### Text: Even still, while God promised an eternal dynasty, with the kingdom split, things looked pretty grim by the time we come to today’s text some 160 years later. Today we will look at a three-chapter segment in 2 Chronicles 21–23.

2 Chronicles  
21–23

### Preview: These chapters contrast God’s response to two types of lives. So we’ll first see where idolatry leads and then where true worship leads.

• Idolatry  
• Worship

### Transition: So *has* God abandoned us? Well, let’s first see that…

# I. God ultimately defeats those who worship idols.

MP

[The Lord disciplines those who push him out of their lives—maybe not now but eventually.]

## God protected His covenant with David by defeating the idolatrous kings of Judah who almost destroyed their own line (2 Chron. 21–22).

### God killed Jehoram through an intestinal disease for killing all his brothers to become the final link in the promise to David (chap. 21).

Jehoram

#### Jehoram was blessed with the godly father Jehoshaphat and godly grandpa Asa. He was in the direct line of David himself and was granted the kingdom of Judah.

• Asa & Jehoshaphat

#### But what did Jehoram do with all this godly background and blessings?

##### He married Athaliah, a daughter of the wicked king Ahab & Jezebel of the pagan Sidonians—watch out whom you marry! More on her later…

• Athaliah, Ahab & Jezebel

##### He killed all six of his younger brothers to secure the throne (21:1-4). This made him the last living male heir in David’s line—God’s promise of an eternal kingdom came down to just one man—an evil one at that!

• 21:1-4

##### Then Jehoram “led the people of Jerusalem and Judah to worship idols, just as King Ahab did in Israel” (21:13).

##### But God struck him with a terrible intestinal disease so that his bowels came out and he died in agony (21:19).

(Yet God, true to his promise, didn’t end Jehoram’s line. He had a son named Ahaziah…)

### But God killed Ahaziah through Jehu for his evil reign (22:1-9).

Ahaziah

#### Once again, the line of David came down to a thread with all of Jehoram’s sons getting killed—all except one—Ahaziah (22:1).

• 22:1

#### But…“Ahaziah also followed the evil example of King Ahab’s family [= idolatry], for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong” (22:3).

#### At Ahaziah’s death, every single other male on the way to Jezreel was also killed by Jehu so that none of the other relatives who could rule still lived (22:8-9).

• Killed by   
Jehu arrows

(Yet God, true to his promise, was faithful by a thread. He didn’t blot out Ahaziah’s line—despite his mother because…)

### God opposed Athaliah’s execution of all her descendants by saving Joash (22:10-12).

• Joash

#### “When Athaliah, the mother of King Ahaziah of Judah, learned that her son was dead, she began to destroy the rest of Judah’s royal family” (22:10). Imagine! Her goal was to kill all of her grandchildren!

• 22:11

#### But God arranged that, though the descendants of David would be killed, not all of them died. Why? The Davidic Covenant! Let’s read verses 11-12.

#### God is faithful to his promises–even by a thread. Three times! Three generations!

Faithful by a Thread

(So God disciplined kings in David’s line who became idolaters, but what about today?)

## God still disciplines idolaters today.

Discipline Today

### God is disciplining the USA now in numerous ways.

No Prayer

#### Americans told God that we didn’t want him anymore. Ken [Ham](http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2011/08/29/do-you-understand-happening-church-culture) documents this:

In God We Trust?

##### In 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled school prayer unconstitutional.

• 1962   
Prayer

##### In 1963, Bible reading in public schools was also ruled unconstitutional.

• 1963   
Bible

##### In 1973, restrictions on [abortion](http://www.answersingenesis.org/get-answers/topic/abortion-euthanasia) were lifted, and abortion has killed over 55 million Americans (after the *Roe v. Wade* decision by the Supreme Court).

• 1973   
Abortion

##### In 1985, nativity scenes in public places were ruled to violate the so-called “separation of church and state.”

• 1985   
Nativity

##### In 2003, laws against homosexual sodomy were ruled unconstitutional.

• 2003  
Sodomy

##### In 2004, a federal court held it was unconstitutional for a school to teach [intelligent design theory](http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab2/intelligent-design-movement-christian) as an alternative to evolution.

• 2004  
Intel. Design

##### New York and 5 other states recently legalized [gay “marriage](http://www.answersingenesis.org/get-answers/topic/family-marriage).” The list goes on!

• 2011

Gay marriage

#### In response, God has given us the freedom to live without him:

##### The US aviation industry drastically reduced after 9/11.

Aviation

##### The housing market has plummeted.

Foreclosure

##### The US dollar has the least value ever, and the US credit rating, for the first time in history, lost its AAA rating last year.

DXY

Dollar

##### California, the “Golden State,” now has the 49th-best education system in the US.

• 49 Educ

##### California's [unemployment](http://www.newgeography.com/content/002415-the-golden-state-is-crumbling) again nudged up to 12 percent, second worst in the nation behind its evil twin, Nevada.

• 49 Employ

##### In 2010 the Golden State ranked 50th in the US in creating new businesses.

• 50 New Bus

##### One [writer](http://www.newgeography.com/content/002415-the-golden-state-is-crumbling) notes, “California created the greatest water-delivery system since the Roman Empire, bringing water from the ice-bound Sierra Nevada Mountains down to the state's dry but fertile valleys and to the great desert metropolis of Southern California. But now, [*crops are dying in the fields and 80,000 Californians out of work thanks to the liberal judge who turned the irrigation water off to supposedly save the delta smelt–a bait fish.*](http://kingwoodtps.wordpress.com/2009/08/02/epa-created-drought-in-ca/) Even in the current "wet" cycle, California's agricultural industry, which exports roughly $14 billion annually, is slowly being decimated. Unemployment in some Central Valley towns tops 30 percent, and in cases even 40 percent.”

Canal

Congress   
Dust Bowl

### God disciplined some people I know through the housing bust.

#### Tom borrowed against his home to buy five more homes. At first it was great. The first year each home appreciated about $50,000, but then the housing market went bust. He not only lost all five homes, but all the equity in his own home. Keeping his own home was due to God’s mercy, despite the discipline.

Tom

Foreclosure

+50,000

#### Tom just barely escaped “Foreclosure Drive.” Why?

#### God is faithful to his promises––even if by a thread.

Faithful by a Thread

MP I

(Both in Athaliah’s time and today, man’s evil often has the upper hand until God defeats or disciplines those who worship idols. But there is another side to balance the picture…)

# II. God keeps His promises to those who worship Him.

MP

[The Lord fulfills all the blessings he has said he will do to his people.]

## God rewarded the temple restoration of Jehoiada and Joash for acting according to God’s promise to David (2 Chron. 23).

Family Righteousness

### I already noted that God raised up three key people to preserve the line of David for Joash—Jehoiada the priest, his wife Jehoshebah, and the unnamed nurse (22:11-12).

Joash   
Crowned

### Jehoiada the priest installed Joash as king (23:1-3) and killed Athaliah (23:11-15).

Athaliah

Killed

### The people returned to worshipping the Lord (23:16).

### They destroyed Baal worship (23:17).

### They restored the temple leaders and sacrifices (23:18-19).

### Joash assumed the throne (23:20).

### Peace and rejoicing resulted from Athaliah’s death (23:21).

### God is faithful to his promises––even if by a thread.

Faithful by a Thread

## God still keeps His promises to those who worship Him today.

Promises Today

### Those of us who have placed our faith in Christ have the blessings of salvation now—eternal life! Forgiveness of every sin!

Salvation Blessings

### God will still keep his promises to us after salvation too:

#### God promises to meet all of our needs in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19).

Phil.  
4:19

#### God promises that elders will cast their crowns before Christ and the Great Commission will definitely be fulfilled with people from every nation, tribe and language (Rev. 7:9). We’re on the winning side!

Rev. 7:9  
Tribes

Rev. 7:9  
Elders

### He’s kept his promise of David’s lineage all the way to a king who would reign forever.

#### This is what we see in the three-part genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1.

3-part genealogy

#### Matthew traces God’s kingdom even before David, all the way back to Abraham 14 generations to David—then from Solomon to the Exile, and even from the Exile when no Davidic kings reigned to Jesus Christ.

Kingdom in Matt 1

### We also have the promise of his righteous rule on the earth after he returns! Isaiah 11 says the wolf will dwell with the lamb—and all creation will be restored!

Isaiah 11

(2 slides)

Rom 8:19-21  
Liberated

### [Chick-fil-A]

Chick-fil-A

#### How many of you have heard of the Chick-fil-A controversy of the past weeks? This chicken restaurant is known for its creative advertising where cows encourage people to eat chicken, excellent service, nice atmosphere, good chicken, and being closed on Sundays. That’s because the CEO, Dan Cathy is a Christian who wants to encourage his 61,000 employees to go to church. Critics said years ago that his business could never survive without Sunday patronage, but many good people proved them wrong. It’s a $4 billion business with 1608 outlets. Since the first Chick-fil-A® restaurant opened in 1967, the company has posted 44 consecutive annual sales increases!

biblical

cows

#### Well, Dan Cathy made [this](http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=38271) statement to the Baptist Press last month… and this…

judgment

#### The backlash from the Left has been filled with lies like the restaurant will not serve homosexuals, they’re anti-gay, etc.

The Left

#### But former Governor Mike Huckabee called August 1 “Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day” and asked people to “eat more chikin” last Wedneday. The result? The Family Research Council reported…

FRC

##### “It was the slowest fast food anyone had ever had--and customers were [**never happier to wait**](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2012/08/chick-fil-a-appreciation-day-long-lines-few-complaints.html). There were reports of restaurants running out of food, 1,884 Google results for "long lines at Chick-fil-A," and special deliveries to [**congressional offices**](http://thehill.com/blogs/twitter-room/other-news/241615-gop-feasting-on-chicken-for-chick-fil-a-day-). There also were poignant stories, of people in San Diego ushering military members to the front of the 200-person line and bursting into applause; of customers circling up to pray; of CEO Dan Cathy [**calling Rick Warren**](http://hotair.com/archives/2012/08/01/rick-warren-chick-fil-as-owner-told-me-they-set-a-new-world-record-in-sales-today/), stunned that the company had set a world record for sales.

Rick Warren

corner

Parking lot

##### “But above all, there was hope. In every corner of America, people seemed to say, "You are not alone!" Across parking lots and food courts, customers were high-fiving, striking up conversations, and snapping photos with people they had never met. On this day, there were no strangers--only allies. And in one simple gesture, ordering a meal, they showed the world a strength that no poll ever could. It was the resounding confirmation of a values movement that is not only surviving the pressure--but *thriving* under it.

Car line

##### “Even Gov. Mike Huckabee, who designated Wednesday as Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day, was almost speechless. It went "beyond anything I could have imagined," [**he said**](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/08/02/huckabee-chick-fil-appreciation-day-beyond-anything-could-have-imagined/?intcmp=trending). "You know, for all the talk, 'we need to be tolerant and have diversity,' I'm all for that," Gov. Huckabee told reporters. "But let's include Christians in that, let's include people who believe in old-fashioned biblical values. Those folks are Americans too. And if Dan Cathy wants to say something, fine. Other people say something quite the opposite. I don't go around trying to put them out of business over it."

Huckabee

(Basically, what I believe these three chapters we have looked at today say this…)

# Conclusion

### God judges idolaters but keeps His promises to those who worship Him (Main Idea).

Main Idea

### God is faithful to his promises––even if by a thread.

Faithful by a Thread

### The key points we have seen today are that…

MP I

#### God ultimately *defeats* those who worship *idols*, but …

#### God *keeps* His promises to those who worship *Him*.

MP II

### Application: Let me leave you with two questions to ponder:

#### Do you worship idols?

Idols?

##### Is your *newspaper* an idol? Your *computer* emails, blogs, or news sites? We often have time for these idols in our lives, but no time for God’s Word.

##### *Time* can be an idol too—we have time to help ourselves but no time for others.

##### *Anything*—especially good things—can become idols instead of trusting God.

#### Do you trust God for your future?

Future?

##### Judah saw in Joash one last hope to fulfill the promise to David. Jehoiada, Jehoshebah, and an unnamed nurse acted courageously on God’s promise.

##### Do you trust God for your future? Financially? Relationally? At CIC?

Rubble

### Among the World Trade Center rubble was a strange site—a perfectly shaped cross, rising above the wreckage. This was mounted as part of the memorial. It reminds us both to focus on the cross instead of idols, and to look to our fantastic future with hope.

• Cross

• Standing

### Prayer

Black

Valley Baptist Fellowship Dr. Rick Griffith

11 Sept 2011 (Ten-Year Anniversary of 9/11) Single Message

NLT 35 Minutes

**Faithful by a Thread**

Title

*2 Chronicles 21–23*

**Topic:** Faithfulness

**Subject:** How can we know whether God has abandoned us?

**Complement:** God judges idolaters but keeps His promises to those who worship Him.

**Purpose:** The listeners will trust in God’s faithfulness to fulfill His promises.

**Reading:** 2 Chronicles 22

# Introduction

### Interest: Today is a sad day in America as we remember the clear blue Tuesday morning in New York with 2947 people murdered at the Twin Towers, Pentagon, and on a field where a fourth plane crashed. In a recent poll of 1,500 people, an amazing 95% remembered where they were and what they were doing when the news of the attacks reached them. I don’t know where you were, but it was 12 hours later in Singapore when I saw the towers fall. I remember telling my two older sons, “The world just changed.”

8 Slides on 9/11 (auto)

### So where are we now, ten years later? The tenth anniversary of 9/11 today can cause us to doubt God’s faithfulness.

Ten years later

#### A 13-story mosque is supposed to be dedicated today 600 feet from Ground Zero—built by those of the same religion as the terrorists—so many have protested against it. The Imam in charge of it has terrorist ties but investigation of him and the $100 million to build the mosque has been prohibited. It is named “Cordoba House” after a Muslim victory in Spain in 711 where a trophy mosque was erected. Some imagine non-Muslims doing the same to Cordoba House as was done on 9/11. Why? One [commentator](http://jimsconservativecommentary.blogspot.com/2010/08/cordoba-mosque-controversy.html) noted, “Every Islamist in the world recognizes Cordoba as a symbol of Islamic conquest—a sign of their contempt for Americans and their confidence in our historic ignorance that they would deliberately insult us in such a manner.”

Protests

• Plane into Mosque

Cordoba House

#### Meanwhile, pastors and prayer are prohibited in today’s ceremony—along with the firemen and other first responders!

No Prayer

#### By God’s grace, my two older sons have jobs and our youngest, John, is at Biola. But my middle son, who has had ambitions of becoming a pilot, now looks at a potential of starting at only $35,000 in his entry-level commercial pilot job, which could average [$65,000](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aviator#cite_note-autogenerated1-0) a year. Even if he got the higher tier airline pilot position, he would make $111,000 yearly instead of the nearly $200,000 yearly salary for commercial pilots characteristic of about ten years ago in [2003](http://www.airliners.net/aviation-forums/general_aviation/read.main/1155723/).

Family

Aviation

Stephen

### Need: Where are we headed as a nation? Are you worried?

#### The US dollar has devalued significantly and the debt is skyrocketing. The confidence index this month dropped from 59% down to 44%. In only one month, another 15% have lost faith in where we are heading.

Dollar Devaluation

#### The government predicted last week that employment increased in August by 93,000 jobs. But hours later, when the actual report came out, it showed a 0% increase! Not even one job created! Yet they still maintained that the unemployment rate was still 9.1%! I guess no one lost a job in August! No, they actually stopped counting those who have been unemployed so long that they stopped looking for work—people like my brother who, after a year and a half, stopped trying to find a job. If these people are included, the true unemployment rate becomes 20%. That’s one in 5 Americans out of work! The rate for black youth is the highest—a 40% unemployment rate.

The Economy

#### *Harper’s* magazine last month estimates that 85% of those who graduated from college a few months ago have moved back in with their parents!

### Subject: Has God abandoned us? How can we know whether God has abandoned us?

Abandoned?

### Background: Before we get into today’s passage, let’s see two key background texts:

#### God told Abraham in 2000 BC that he would bless him with land, a seed (or nation) to come from him, and that he would bless all peoples through him. This is more popularly known as the Abrahamic Covenant, which is further explained in three more covenants—the Land covenant (sometimes called the Palestinian Covenant), the Seed covenant (or Davidic Covenant), and the Blessing (or New) Covenant.

Chart

L-S-B

Gen 12:1-3

#### In this second covenant—the Davidic one—God promised David 1000 years later amazing things: his house (dynasty), kingdom and throne would last forever!

2 Sam 7

##### In fact, 1 Chronicles explains how his line was established.

1 Chronicles  
Book Chart

##### Then 2 Chronicles, despite the kingdom split, shows his line was preserved.

2 Chronicles  
Book Chart

### Text: Even still, while God promised an eternal dynasty, with the kingdom split, things looked pretty grim by the time come to today’s text some 160 years later. Today we will look at a three-chapter segment in 2 Chronicles 21–23.

2 Chronicles  
21–23

### Preview: These chapters contrast God’s response to two types of lives. So we’ll first see where idolatry leads and then where true worship leads.

• Idolatry  
• Worship

### Transition: So *has* God abandoned us? Well, let’s first see that…

# I. God ultimately defeats those who worship idols.

MP

[The Lord disciplines those who push him out of their lives—maybe not now but eventually.]

## God protected His covenant with David by defeating the idolatrous kings of Judah who almost destroyed their own line (2 Chron. 21–22).

### God killed Jehoram through an intestinal disease for killing all his brothers to become the final link in the promise to David (chap. 21).

Jehoram

#### Jehoram was blessed with the godly father Jehoshaphat and godly grandpa Asa. He was in the direct line of David himself and was granted the kingdom of Judah.

• Asa & Jehoshaphat

#### But what did Jehoram do with all this godly background and blessings?

##### He married Athaliah, a daughter of the wicked king Ahab & Jezebel of the pagan Sidonians—watch out whom you marry! More on her later…

• Athaliah, Ahab & Jezebel

##### He killed all six of his younger brothers to secure the throne (21:1-4). This made him the last living male heir in David’s line—God’s promise of an eternal kingdom came down to just one man—an evil one at that!

• 21:1-4

##### Then Jehoram “led the people of Jerusalem and Judah to worship idols, just as King Ahab did in Israel” (21:13).

##### But God struck him with a terrible intestinal disease so that his bowels came out and he died in agony (21:19).

(Yet God, true to his promise, didn’t end Jehoram’s line. He had a son named Ahaziah…)

### But God killed Ahaziah through Jehu for his evil reign (22:1-9).

Ahaziah

#### Once again, the line of David came down to a thread with all of Jehoram’s sons getting killed—all except one—Ahaziah (22:1).

• 22:1

#### But…“Ahaziah also followed the evil example of King Ahab’s family [= idolatry], for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong” (22:3).

#### At Ahaziah’s death, every single other male on the way to Jezreel was also killed by Jehu so that none of the other relatives who could rule still lived (22:8-9).

• Killed by   
Jehu arrows

(Yet God, true to his promise, didn’t blot out Ahaziah’s line—despite his mother because…)

### God opposed Athaliah’s execution of all her descendants by saving Joash (22:10-12).

• Joash

#### “When Athaliah, the mother of King Ahaziah of Judah, learned that her son was dead, she began to destroy the rest of Judah’s royal family” (22:10). Imagine! Her goal was to kill all of her grandchildren!

• 22:11

#### But God arranged that, though the descendants of David would be killed, not all of them died. Why? The Davidic Covenant! Let’s read verses 11-12.

#### Athaliah’s own demise came as God’s judgment too, as we’ll see in chapter 23.

(So God disciplined kings in David’s line who became idolaters, but what about today?)

## God still disciplines idolaters today.

Discipline Today

### God is disciplining our nation now in numerous ways.

#### We told God that we didn’t want him anymore. Ken [Ham](http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2011/08/29/do-you-understand-happening-church-culture) documents this:

In God We Trust?

##### In 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled school prayer unconstitutional.

• 1962   
Prayer

##### In 1963, Bible reading in public schools was also ruled unconstitutional.

• 1963   
Bible

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• 2004  
Intel. Design

##### New York and 5 other states recently legalized [gay “marriage](http://www.answersingenesis.org/get-answers/topic/family-marriage).” The list goes on!

• 2011

Gay marriage

#### In response, God has given us the freedom to live without him:

##### Our housing market has plummeted.

Foreclosure

##### The US dollar has the least value ever—and the US credit rating, for the first time in history, lost its AAA rating last month.

Dollar

##### California, the “Golden State” now has the 49th best education system in the US.

• 49 Educ

##### California's [unemployment](http://www.newgeography.com/content/002415-the-golden-state-is-crumbling) again nudged up to 12 percent—second worst in the nation behind its evil twin, Nevada.

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Congress   
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### God disciplined some people I know through the housing bust.

#### Tom borrowed against his home to buy five more homes. At first it was great. The first year each home appreciated about $50,000, but then the housing market went bust. He not only lost all five homes, but all the equity in his own home. Keeping his own home was due to God’s mercy, despite the discipline.

+50,000

Tom

#### Phil made less than $100,000 but bought a $650,000 home in San Bernardino.

Phil

##### I asked him why he did it, since traditionally banks would not approve of loans for a home more than three times one’s annual salary. “That meant you should have qualified for only a $300,000 home, right?” He answered, “Well, the banks fudged with some numbers to get me the loan.” Some help the bank was! Soon the $650,000 home was worth $300,000 itself, but he owed $350,000. Not being able to pay, he walked away from it and lost $300,000 in equity!

##### But God, despite his discipline, also showed his grace. Phil was able to buy a smaller home from someone else that foreclosed on his home.

Faithful   
By A Thread

MP I

(Both in Athaliah’s time and at the World Trade Center, man’s evil often has the upper hand and God defeats or disciplines those who worship idols. But there is another side to balance the picture…)

# II. God keeps His promises to those who worship Him.

MP

[The Lord fulfills all the blessings he has said he will do to his people.]

## God rewarded the temple restoration of Jehoiada and Joash for acting according to God’s promise to David (2 Chron. 23).

### I already noted that God raised up three key people to preserve the line of David for Joash—Jehoiada the priest, his wife Jehoshebah, and the unnamed nurse (22:11-12).

Family Righteousness

### Jehoiada the priest installed Joash as king and killed Athaliah (23:1-15). Read 1 & 11-15.

Athaliah

Killed

Joash   
Crowned

### The people returned to worshipping the Lord (23:16).

### They destroyed Baal worship (23:17).

### They restored the temple leaders and sacrifices (23:18-19).

### Joash assumed the throne (23:20).

### Peace and rejoicing resulted from Athaliah’s death (23:21).

## God still keeps His promises to those who worship Him today.

Promises Today

### Those of us who have placed our faith in Christ have the blessings of salvation now—eternal life! Forgiveness of every sin!

Salvation Blessings

### God will still keep his promises to us after salvation too:

#### God promises to meet all of our needs in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19).

Phil.  
4:19

#### God promises that elders will cast their crowns before Christ and the Great Commission will definitely be fulfilled with people from every nation, tribe and language (Rev. 7:9). We’re on the winning side!

Rev. 7:9  
Tribes

Rev. 7:9  
Elders

### He’s kept his promise of David’s lineage all the way to a king who would reign forever.

#### This is what we see in the three-part genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1.

3-part genealogy

#### Matthew traces God’s kingdom even before David, all the way back to Abraham 14 generations to David—then from Solomon to the Exile, and even from the Exile when no Davidic kings reigned to Jesus Christ.

Kingdom in Matt 1

### We also have the promise of his righteous rule on the earth after he returns! Isaiah 11 says the wolf will dwell with the lamb—and all creation will be restored!

Isaiah 11

(2 slides)

Rom 8:19-21  
Liberated

(Basically, what I believe these three chapters we have looked at today say this…)

# Conclusion

### God judges idolaters but keeps His promises to those who worship Him (Main Idea).

Main Idea

### The key points we have seen today are that…

MP I

#### God ultimately *defeats* those who worship *idols*, but …

#### God *keeps* His promises to those who worship *Him*.

MP II

### Application: Let me leave you with two questions to ponder:

#### Do you worship idols?

Idols?

##### Is your *newspaper* an idol? Your *computer* emails or blogs or news sites? We often have time for these idols in our lives but no time for God’s Word.

##### *Time* can be an idol too—we have time to help ourselves but no time for others.

##### *Anything*—especially good things—can become idols instead of trusting God.

#### Do you trust God for your future?

Future?

##### Judah saw in Joash one last hope to fulfill the promise to David. Jehoiada, Jehoshebah and an unnamed nurse acted courageously on God’s promise.

##### Do you courageously trust God for your future? Financially? Relationally?

Rubble

### Among the World Trade Center rubble was a strange site—a perfectly shaped cross, rising above the wreckage. This was mounted as part of the memorial. It reminds us both to focus on the cross instead of idols, and to look to our wonderful future with hope.

• Cross

• Standing

### Prayer

Black

# Study Questions (Step 1)

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### There was only one surviving descendant of David left:

#### Jehoshaphat was a godly king, but…

#### King Jehoram was a bad choice for king by his father Jehoshaphat, for Jehoram soon killed all of his brothers (2 Chron. 21:1-4).

### However, God didn’t kill any of these final kings for their wickedness, as each was the last hope for the Davidic dynasty to continue in fulfillment of God’s promise not to destroy David’s line (2 Chron. 21:

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### It continues and heightens the theme of only one surviving descendant of David left:

#### “But when Jehoram had become solidly established as king, he killed all his brothers and some of the other leaders of Judah” (21:4).

#### “Then the people of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, Jehoram’s youngest son, their next king, since the marauding bands who came with the Arabs had killed all the older sons” (2 Chron. 22:1).

#### At Ahaziah’s death, every single other male on the way to Jezreel was also killed by Jehu so that none of the other relatives who could rule still lived (2 Chron. 22:8-9).

#### This gave his mother Athaliah the opportunity to destroy the rest of Judah’s royal family (22:10), so that every heir to David’s throne was again killed—all except the infant Joash (22:11).

### Therefore, it reminds us that God is faithful to keep his promises—no matter how dismal it might seem.

### And since he is faithful, our natural response should be one of worship! The whole book of Chronicles is about worship.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### God had promised 160 years earlier that King David’s descendants would continue to have sons until it resulted in a King who would rule forever (2 Sam. 7:12-14). What a wonderful promise!

### God had already shown himself faithful to his promise despite the godlessness of many of these kingly descendants of David. Up to this point, 5 kings had ruled and only 2 were deemed to live a godly life like David did.

### In fact, things had gotten so bad that Baal worship was imported from Phoenicia into Israel and Judah through the dynasty of Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel. Their daughter was Athaliah, who is the focus of today’s text.

### Of course, there were many attempts to destroy David’s dynasty, but the one in today’s passage is the most amazing.

# Questions

### Is the focus of this text on worship, in line with the theme of Chronicles?

#### Yes, it is, for the message of 2 Chronicles must be seen as a whole with each passage contributing to it.

#### Also, the wickedness noted in this passage relates to worship of idols:

##### Jehoram had “led the people of Jerusalem and Judah to worship idols, just as King Ahab did in Israel” (21:13).

##### “Ahaziah also followed the evil example of King Ahab’s family [=idolatry], for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong” (22:3).

##### Athaliah is not specifically deemed to be an idolater, but her destruction of the entire royal family essentially put herself up as an idol (22:10).

### Since Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab, how could she have assumed Judah’s throne when she was not a descendant of David? Wasn’t the promise to David then invalidated?

#### No, though she was not in the line of David and ruled six years, the line was never broken since Joash was still living.

#### A similar situation occurred when Joash was only 7 years old and Jehoiada the priest essentially ruled the kingdom. Jehoiada wasn’t in the line of David, but the Davidic ruler was still among the people.

### Was it legitimate that Joash be hidden in the temple since he wasn’t a priest—and presumably his nurse wasn’t either? Weren’t only priests allowed to enter the temple?

#### David ate the consecrated bread that only the priests were allowed to eat, for the Law allowed a concession to protect a life (1 Sam. 21:4; Matt. 12:3-4).

#### God is more concerned with life than with laws.

#### Joash was not hidden in the temple sanctuary where the priests ministered daily. He was obviously in one of the side rooms that were not prohibited to non-priests.

Outlines (Steps 2-5)

**Faithful by a Thread**

*2 Chronicles 21–23*

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# Exegetical Idea (CPT): The way God faithfully kept the Davidic covenant despite Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah attempting to destroy this promise was by their demise in contrast to the temple restoration under Joash.

# I. Judgment for Idolatry: The way God protected His promise against the idolatrous kings of Judah who almost destroyed their own line against the Davidic Covenant was by causing their own demise (21:1–22:12).

## God killed Jehoram through an intestinal disease for killing all his brothers to become the final link in the promise to David (chap. 21).

## God killed Ahaziah through Jehu for his evil reign (22:1-9).

## God opposed Athaliah’s rampage to kill off all her descendants by saving Joash (22:10-12).

# II. Blessing for Worship: The reason God rewarded the temple restoration of Jehoiada and Joash was for acting according to God’s promise to David (23:1-21).

## Jehoiada the priest installed Joash as king and killed Athaliah (23:1-15).

## The people returned to worshipping the Lord (23:16)

## They destroyed Baal worship (23:17).

## They restored the temple leaders and sacrifices (23:18-19).

## Joash assumed the throne (23:20).

## Peace and rejoicing resulted from Athaliah’s death (23:21).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will trust in God’s faithfulness to fulfill His promises.

**Sermon Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)—Steps 5-6

# Subject: How can we know whether God has abandoned us?

# Introduction

### Interest: [The 10th anniversary of 911 today can cause us to doubt God’s faithfulness.]

### Need: Where are we headed as a nation? Are you worried? Has God abandoned us?

### Subject: How can we know whether God has abandoned us?

### Background: God promised David an eternal dynasty, but with the kingdom split, things looked pretty grim.

### Text: Today we will look at a three-chapter segment in 2 Chronicles 21–23.

### Preview: These chapters contrast the results of two types of lives, so we’ll first see where idolatry leads and then where true worship leads.

### Transition: So *has* God abandoned us? Well, let’s first see that…

# I. God ultimately defeats those who worship idols.

## God protected His covenant with David by defeating the idolatrous kings of Judah who almost destroyed their own line (2 Chron. 21–22).

### God killed Jehoram through an intestinal disease for killing all his brothers to become the final link in the promise to David (chap. 21).

### God killed Ahaziah through Jehu for his evil reign (22:1-9).

### God opposed Athaliah’s rampage to kill off all her descendants by saving Joash (22:10-12).

## God still disciplines idolaters today.

# II. God keeps His promises to those who worship Him.

## God rewarded the temple restoration of Jehoiada and Joash for acting according to God’s promise to David (2 Chron. 23).

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# Conclusion

### God judges idolaters but keeps His promises to those who worship Him (Main Idea).

### Main Points

#### God ultimately defeats those who worship idols.

#### God keeps His promises to those who worship Him.

### Application

#### Do you worship idols?

#### Do you trust God for your future?

# Discussion Questions:

# Tentative Theme/Thrust Statements (Step 5)

Text

# Possible Illustrations (Step 6)

### Interest: [The tenth anniversary of 911 today can cause us to doubt God’s faithfulness.]

### Need: Where are we headed as a nation? Are you worried?

### God disciplined through the housing bust.

#### Tom & Lora

#### Phil made less than $100,000 but still bought a $650,000 home in San Bernardino.

# Possible Applications (Step 6)

### We must trust that God will still keep his promises to us too:

#### God promises to meet all of our needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19).

#### God promises that the Great Commission will definitely be fulfilled with people from every nation, tribe and language (Rev. 5:9).

Worship Planning Completed Outline

Title: Faithful By A Thread

Text: 2 Chronicles 21–23

Date: September 11, 2011

Introduction

### How do you respond to the 10th anniversary of 9/11 today?

### How can we know whether God has abandoned us?

# I. God ultimately defeats those who worship idols.

## God protected His covenant with David by defeating idolatry (2 Chron. 21–22).

### God killed Jehoram through an intestinal disease for killing all his brothers to become the final link in the promise to David (chap. 21).

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## God still disciplines idolaters today.

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## God rewarded Jehoiada and Joash for their temple restoration (2 Chron. 23).

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# Conclusion

### God judges idolaters but keeps His promises to those who worship Him (Main Idea).

### Questions to Ponder

#### Do you worship idols?

#### Do you trust God for your future?

Sermon Date: September 11, 2011

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### How do you respond to the 10th anniversary of 9/11 today?

### How can we know whether God has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us?

# I. God ultimately \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ those who worship \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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### God judges \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ but keeps His promises to those who worship Him (Main Idea).

### Questions to Ponder

#### Do you worship \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

#### Do you trust God for your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

 Rick Griffith

5 August 2012

**Faithful by a Thread**

*2 Chronicles 21–23*

# Introduction

### How do you respond to transitions?

### How can we know whether God has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us?

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#### Do you worship \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

#### Do you trust God for your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?