

2 Chronicles

David's Line Preserved					
Solomon			Davidic Dynasty		
Chapters 1–9			Chapters 10–36		
Temple Constructed			Temple Destroyed		
Royalty			Ruins		
40 Years			393 Years		
971-931 BC			931-538 BC		
Wealth & Wisdom 1	Temple Construction 2–7	Successes & Death 8–9	Kingdom Divides via Rehoboam 10–12	7 Bad, 8 Good Kings 13–35	4 Bad Kings then Judah Falls 36
1 Kings 1–11			1 Kings 12–22	2 Kings 1–25	

Key Word: Preservation

Key Verse: “As for you [Solomon], if you walk before me as David your father did, and do all that I command, and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a man to rule over Israel’” (2 Chronicles 7:17-18).

Summary Statement:

The spiritual perspective on the *preservation* of David's line despite the fall and exile of Judah admonishes the remnant to *proper temple worship*, not the idolatry of the past.

Stealing from the temple and leaving it in disrepair (12:9; 16:2-3) is contrasted with replenishing (15:18) and repairing it (24:4-14).

Application:

Humble yourself when the LORD exalts you lest you yourself become your own idol:

“Success is never final;
Failure is never fatal;
It is ~~courage~~ [no, humility] that counts.”

–Winston Churchill, adapted

2 Chronicles

Note: The Introduction and Argument sections repeat the information in the 1 Chronicles notes. However, the contrast chart (Characteristic C.) between 1 and 2 Chronicles is new.

Introduction

- I. **Title** Like the Books of Samuel and Kings, so the Books of Chronicles originally comprised one scroll. The Hebrew name (דברי הימים *Dibre Hayyamim*) translates "The Words (Accounts, Events) of the Days," which in modern idiom means "The Events of the Times." The book was divided in the 250 BC Septuagint with the name *Paraleipomenon*, "Of Things Omitted," referring to data lacking in Samuel and Kings. However, this title wrongly implies that Chronicles merely supplies omissions in Kings, which does not explain the parallel accounts and different emphases. The English title "Chronicles" is perhaps best. It stems from Jerome's Latin Vulgate (ca. AD 395) as he felt it chronicles the entire sacred history.

II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** The Talmud maintains that Ezra the priest authored the work, while some Talmudists believe Nehemiah completed the genealogical tables (1 Chron. 1–9).
- B. **Internal Evidence:** The content verifies Ezra's authorship since it emphasizes the temple, the priesthood, and David's kingly line in Judah. The style is very similar to the Book of Ezra, and both share a priestly perspective: genealogies, temple worship, priestly ministry, and obeying the Law (*TTTB*, 100). Ezra's authorship is especially supported by the fact that Ezra 1:1-3 repeats the closing verses of 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 almost identically.

III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** References to Judah's deportation (1 Chron. 6:15; 9:1) show that the work was compiled after 586 BC, but another key passage shows the books were compiled after the return from Babylon. This passage (1 Chron. 3:17-24) reveals that the latest person recorded in Chronicles is Anani (v. 24) of the eighth generation from Jehoiachin (v. 17), who was taken captive to Babylon in 598 BC. Assuming 25 years for each of these eight generations places Anani's birth ca. 425 to 400 BC. However, Ezra authored the work, and his ministry in Scripture does not stretch beyond ca. 445 (cf. Neh. 12:36). Therefore, the best estimate of the compilation time is between 450-425 BC. The record of the Return (2 Chron. 36:22-23) also argues for a postexilic date.
- B. **Recipients:** Using the above date of 450-425 BC for compilation, the original readers must have been Jews who had been back in the land for about a century and probably had recently experienced the reconstruction of the Jerusalem walls under Nehemiah.
- C. **Occasion:** The Book of Kings mainly covers the same period as Chronicles, which had been written a century earlier (ca. 550 BC) and would undoubtedly have been deposited in Jerusalem. Jews already had the book of Kings, so why did Ezra rewrite the nation's history in Chronicles? The answer lies in his focus on the temple, designed to prevent the people from ever returning to the high places. Thus, Kings records the history from a political/ethical standpoint, but Chronicles provides the spiritual/priestly view. It reminded the people that David's royal line remained to encourage the small remnant that had returned and built a meager temple compared to Solomon's (cf. Hag. 2:3). Thus, Chronicles was recorded to bolster the hopes of those who saw only a vague reminiscence of the glory of former days.

IV. Characteristics

- A. "All the books of the Bible, thus far, from Genesis to II Kings have pursued a chronological succession of events, right from Adam's creation to Judah's captivity; but now with the Chronicles we come to a writing which does not carry us forward . . . but goes back and reviews the whole story in order to derive and apply a vital lesson, namely, that *the nation's response to God is the decisive factor in its history and destiny*" (J. Sidlow Baxter, 2:179). Technically, 2 Chronicles 36:21-23 does carry the account forward, but these three verses cover only 48 more years to the return from exile under Cyrus.

- B. Chronicles covers the same period of Jewish history as 2 Samuel (=1 Chron.) and stretches past 2 Kings (= 2 Chron.). This kingdom period appears as such:

		1 Chronicles	2 Chronicles					
<i>Books</i>	1 Samuel	2 Samuel	1 Kings	2 Kings				
<i>Kings</i>	Saul	David	Solomon-Ahaziah	Ahaziah-Zedekiah				
<i>Dates</i>	1043	1011	971	852	852 560	722	586	538
<i>Kingdom</i>	-----United-----		-----Divided-----		-Surviving-		-Returned-	

- C. Some contrasts between the two books of Chronicles may prove helpful:

	1 Chronicles	2 Chronicles
History Covered	Creation to Solomon enthroned	Solomon to Return from Exile
Dates Covered	4143-971 BC	971-538 BC
Length	3172 years	433 years
Kings	Saul-David (2 kings)	Solomon-Zedekiah (21 kings)
# of Chapters	29	36
General Content	Success of Davidic kingdom	Success of Davidic kingdom (cont'd)
Judgments	No major ones	Judah (586 BC)
Temple	Preparations for Building	Built, then ruined 380 yrs. later
Beginning/end	Begins with genealogies and David's obedience	Ends with judgment for Davidic kings' disobedience

- D. If one includes the genealogical section (1 Chron. 1–9; beginning 4143 BC, see p. 84) with the narrative (1 Chron. 10–2 Chron. 36; concluding 538 BC) the original single book of Chronicles ***covers more time*** than any book of Scripture (3606 years!).
- E. Chronicles contains the ***largest genealogy*** in the Bible (1 Chron. 1–9).
- F. The Book of Chronicles ***appears last*** in the Hebrew Bible (p. 51).

Argument

The central idea in Chronicles that unifies the entire account is the temple. The author emphasizes the temple to encourage the returned remnant with the spiritual/divine view that while the Davidic *throne* is not among them, the Davidic *line* and *God Himself* is (1 Chron. 1–9); consequently, the people should learn from the judgment of their ancestors' idolatry and worship him correctly with the temple as the center of the nation's worship. The chief matter in David's reign is his abundant preparations for building the temple (1 Chron. 10–29), a significant part of the account of Solomon's reign is the construction and dedication of the temple (2 Chron. 1–9), and the remainder of the book includes only the kings of Judah as the northern kingdom is not related to the temple and the Davidic line (2 Chron. 10–36). Thus, temple worship in Jerusalem alone is emphasized to re-establish proper worship after many years of idolatry at various worship places.

Synthesis

David's line preserved

1–9	Solomon
1	Wealth/Wisdom
2–7	Temple construction
2	Preparation
3:1–5:1	Building
5:2–7:22	Dedication
8–9	Successes
8:1–11	Political
8:12–16	Spiritual
8:17–9:28	Economic
9:29–31	Death
10–36	Davidic dynasty (good kings in bold print)
10–12	Rehoboam
13	Abijah (Abijam)
14–16	Asa
17–20	Jehoshaphat
21	Jehoram
22:1–9	Ahaziah
22:10–23:21	Athaliah
24	Joash
25	Amaziah
26	Uzziah (Azariah)
27	Jotham
28	Ahaz
29–32	Hezekiah
33:1–20	Manasseh
33:21–25	Amon
34–35	Josiah
36:1–3	Jehoahaz
36:4–8	Jehoiakim
36:9–10	Jehoiachin
36:11–14	Zedekiah
36:15–21	Fall of Jerusalem (586 BC)
36:22–23	Return under Cyrus (538 BC)

Outline

Summary Statement for 2 Chronicles

The spiritual view on the *preservation* of David's line despite Judah's fall and exile admonishes the remnant to *proper temple worship*, not the idolatry of the past.

- I. God blessed Solomon's reign through his obedience in building the temple to show Israel proper worship (2 Chron 1–9).
 - A. God blessed Solomon's proper worship with wisdom and wealth to show his blessing on all who honor him (2 Chron 1).
 - B. God approved Solomon's building and furnishing the temple by filling it with his Shekinah glory (2 Chron 2–7).
 1. Solomon prepared to build the temple by hiring 153,600 workers and ordering timbers and artisans from Hiram of Tyre to make the best possible temple (2 Chron 2).
 2. Solomon made the temple and filled it with new furnishings (plus excess gold and silver for the treasures) in anticipation of the ark's arrival (3:1–5:1).
 3. After the placing of the ark and Shekinah glory, Solomon dedicated the temple with a message and prayer that met both God's and the people's approval (5:2–7:22).

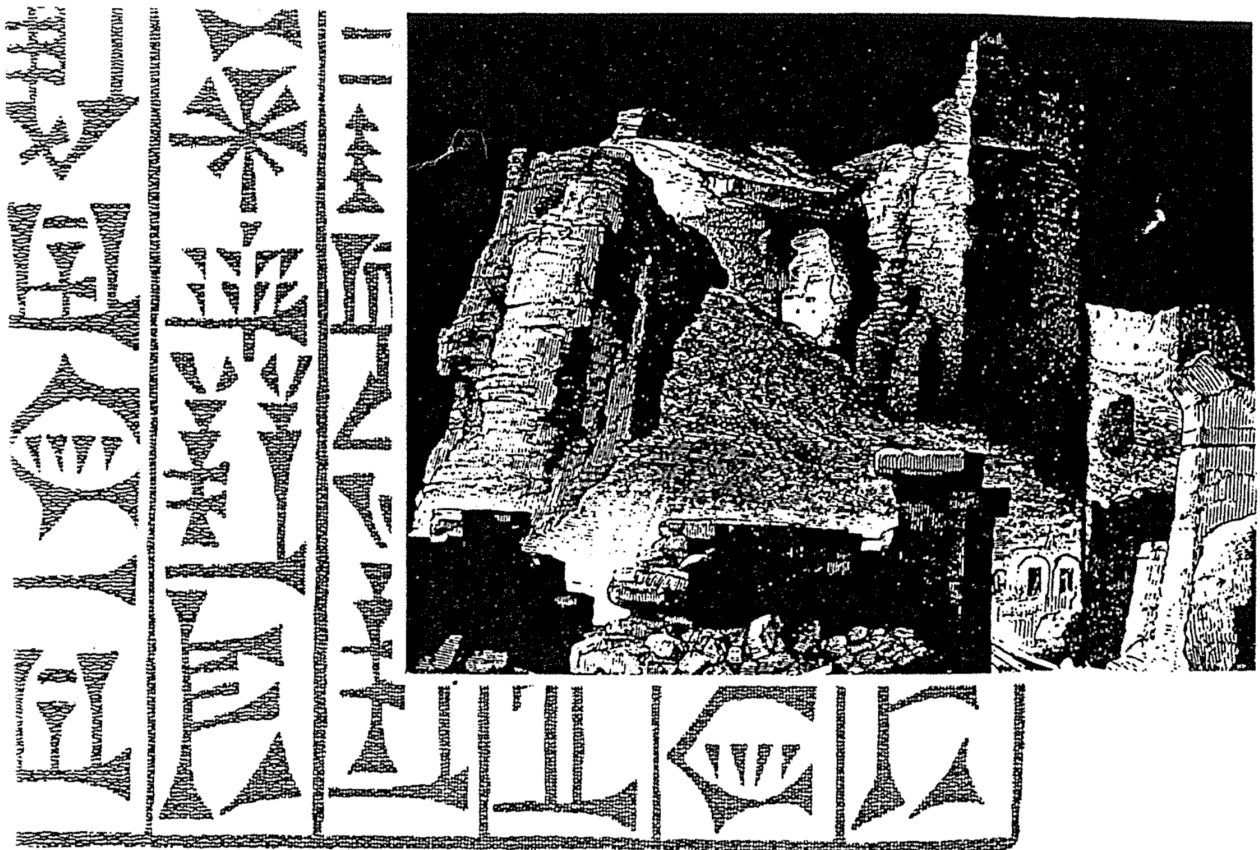
Parallels Between David's and Solomon's Transfers of the Ark

	<u>David</u> (1 Chron.)	<u>Solomon</u> (2 Chron.)
<i>Ark location before transfer</i>	Kiriath Jearim	City of David
<i>Ark location after transfer</i>	House of Obed near the City of David	Temple on Moriah (former threshing floor of Araunah)
<i>Consultation with Israel's leaders & national procession</i>	13:1-5	5:2-3
<i>Transports the ark correctly</i>	15:1–16:3	5:2-10
<i>Celebration of praise at arrival</i>	16:7-36	5:11-14
<i>System of regular worship set up</i>	16:4-6, 37-42	8:12-16
<i>Divine revelation given</i>	17:1-15	7:12-22
<i>Prayer by the king</i>	17:16-27	6:12-42

- C. Solomon's political, spiritual, and economic successes show God's blessing on his honoring the temple (2 Chron 8–9).
 1. God gave Solomon **political** success, including his building several cities, conscripting Canaanites as slaves, and marriage to Pharaoh's daughter (8:1-11).
 2. God gave Solomon **spiritual** success in his keeping Israel's ordinances and feasts with the Levitical divisions that David appointed (8:12-16).
 3. God gave Solomon **economic** success in ships, gold, the queen of Sheba's visit, gold temple shields, an ivory and gold throne, wisdom, horses, chariots, silver, etc. (8:17–9:28).
 4. Solomon's death after a 40-year reign introduces the rest of the book to show what happened to the temple (9:29-31).

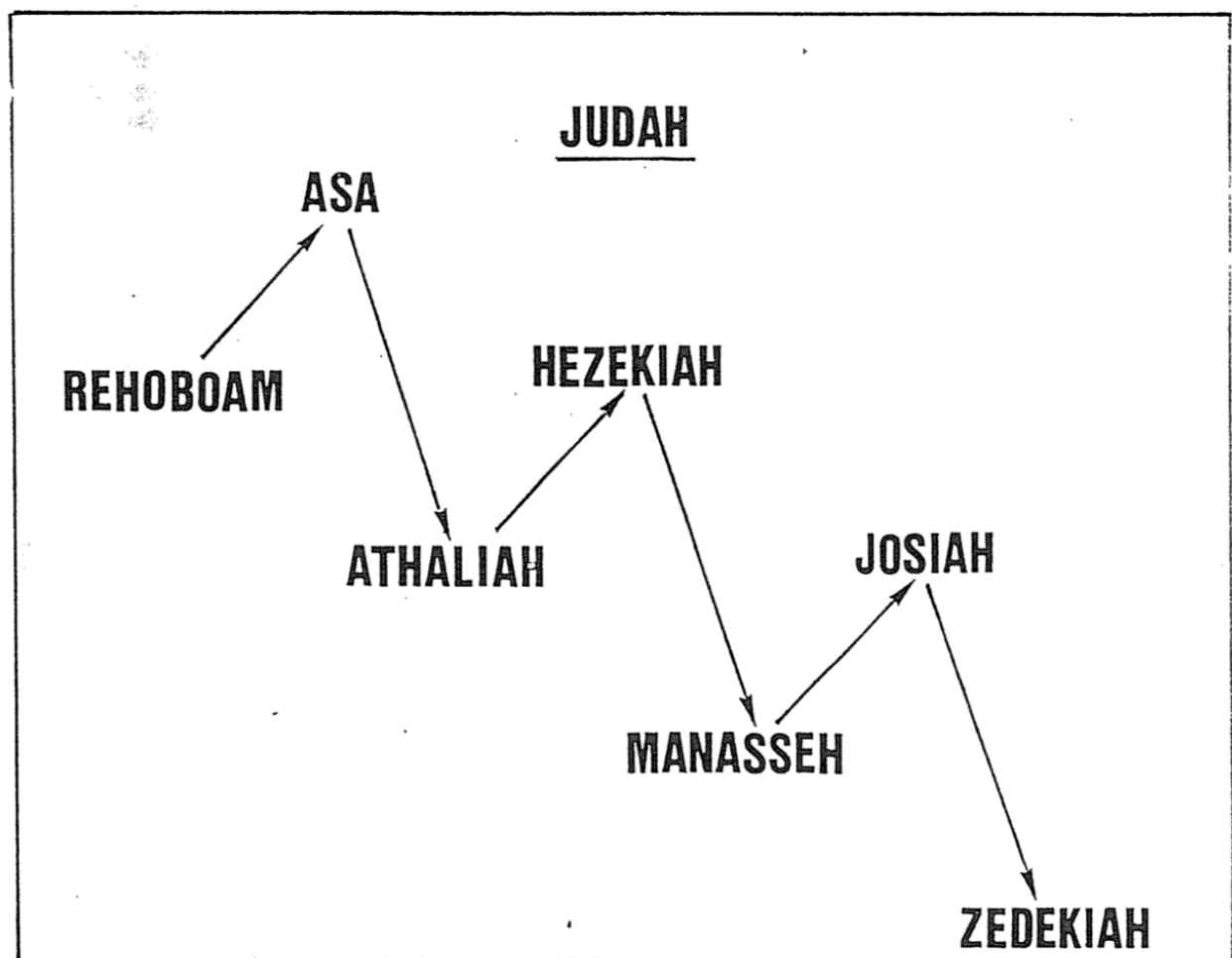
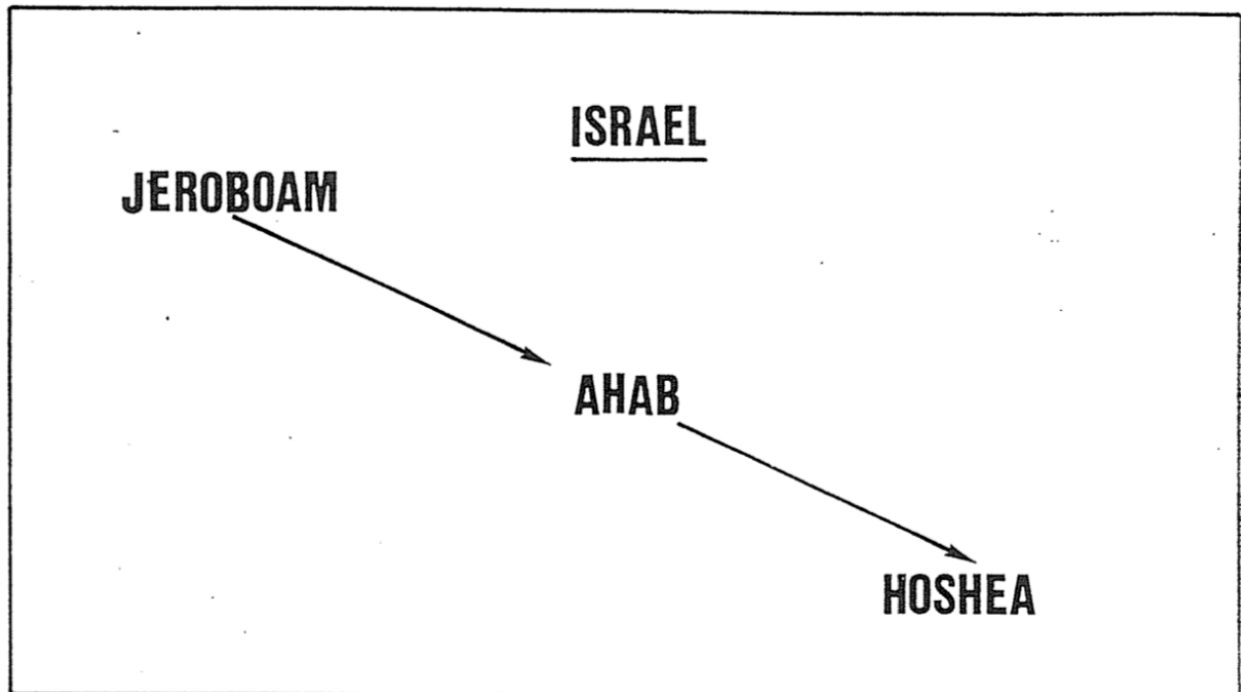
- II. God judged the Davidic kings in Judah for despising the temple by destroying it to teach post-exilic Israel proper worship in its new temple (2 Chron 10–36).**
- A. Rehoboam's division of the kingdom and invasion by Egypt for raiding the temple exhorts true worship in the new temple and the results of disobedience (2 Chron 10–12).
 - 1. The kingdom was divided because Rehoboam threatened to overwork the people to show that God blesses righteous leadership but punishes evil (2 Chron 10).
 - 2. Rehoboam's strong fortifications and large family reveal God's initial blessing on the kingdom of Judah by strengthening it (2 Chron 11).
 - 3. God weakened Judah after Rehoboam gave Egypt the fortified cities and temple treasures to show that he was a better Master, so Rehoboam repented (2 Chron 12).
 - B. Abijah's (Abijam) evil reign seen positively by defeating Jeroboam of Israel shows God's blessing upon David's line and the faithful priests (2 Chron 13; cf. 1 Kings 15:1-8).
 - C. Asa removed idolatry from Judah but robbed the temple to pay Aram to defeat Baasha of Israel, so God gave him a foot disease so all would respect God's house (2 Chron 14–16).
 - D. Jehoshaphat reformed even more than his father by appointing godly judges and had victory over a foreign alliance, but sinned by allying himself with Israel (2 Chron 17–20).
 - E. Jehoram's evil marriage to Ahab's daughter Athaliah saw victory over Edom but the loss of every relative except his son Ahaziah and a painful death (2 Chron 21).
 - F. Ahaziah's evil reign, due to his wicked mother Athaliah, saw Jehu kill him and Ahab's entire line, but Ahaziah's line endured due to God's promise to David (22:1-9).
 - G. Athaliah's evil reign destroyed the entire royal family except her one-year-old grandson Joash, but Athaliah was executed due to God's promise to David (22:10–23:21).
 - H. Joash rebuilt the temple while Jehoiada the priest lived, but Aram executed him for replacing the temple with idolatry to promote temple worship (2 Chron 24).
 - I. Amaziah executed his father's murderers and refused troops from Israel, but followed Edom's idolatry after defeating them, and Jehoash of Israel defeated him (2 Chron 25).
 - J. Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah had 52 militarily strong years but was judged with leprosy and life in a separate house for disrespecting proper temple worship (2 Chron 26).
 - K. Jotham reigned based on the Law by not entering the temple and became powerful over Ammon as God's blessing for his respect for the temple (2 Chron 27).
 - L. Ahaz of Judah broke 105 years of good Judean kings by sacrificing his son, idolatry at the high places, and trusting Assyria instead of God (2 Chron 28).
 - M. Hezekiah reorganized the temple priests, so God defeated Sennacherib, but then God judged Hezekiah's pride, so Hezekiah repented and died (2 Chron 29–32).
 - N. Manasseh's 55-year reign (the longest of any king) reinstituted the paganism destroyed by Hezekiah, but after an Assyrian exile, he restored true worship (33:1-20).
 - O. Amon's evil reign repeated Manasseh's mistakes, but he never repented and was assassinated, leading to rule by his son Josiah (33:21-25).
 - P. Josiah's good reign ended paganism and recovered the Book of the Law, so he renewed the Law but died defending Babylon against Pharaoh Neco (2 Chron 34–35).
 - Q. Jehoahaz's reign ended in exile and death in Egypt by Pharaoh Neco after only three months and led to rule by his son Eliakim, whom Pharaoh named Jehoiakim (36:1-3).

- R. Jehoiakim's evil reign led to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon deporting him with citizens such as Daniel (cf. Dan. 1:1-7) along with some temple articles (36:4-8; 605 BC).
- S. Jehoiachin was deported to Babylon after three months in Nebuchadnezzar's second attack (597 BC), who took more temple treasures and made his uncle Zedekiah king (36:9-10).
- T. Zedekiah's 11-year evil reign spurned Jeremiah's warnings and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, encouraging idolatry that defiles the temple (36:11-14).
- U. Israel's refusal to repent led to Nebuchadnezzar's third and last siege (586 BC) that destroyed the temple and began a 70-year captivity for the land to enjoy its Sabbath rests (36:15-21).
- V. Cyrus' decree (538 BC) to rebuild the temple fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy (cf. Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10) and encouraged returnees that God had not forgotten his house (36:22-23).



Decline of the Kingdoms

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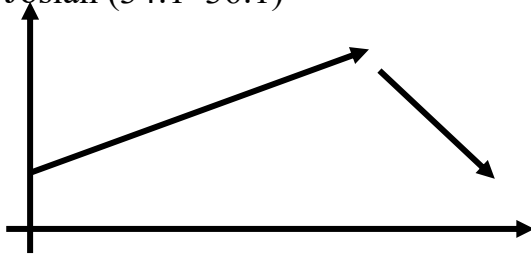


Patterns of Judean Kings' Rule

The writers of both Kings and Chronicles deem every king in the northern nation of Israel as evil. However, with the southern nation of Judah, it becomes more complicated. Although the writers give an “evil” or “righteous” summary for each reign, it is difficult to categorize every king as either *totally* “good” or “bad.” This is because some began well but ended poorly, or vice versa. Essentially, these twenty-two kings (including David and Solomon) fall into four types. (Scripture references below refer to 2 Chronicles unless otherwise noted.)

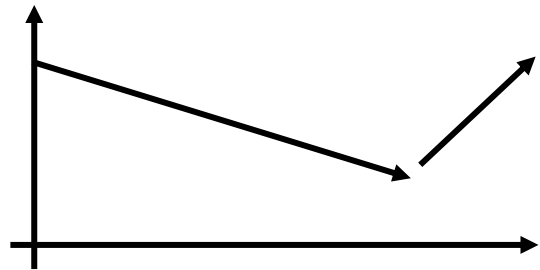
Good with a Bad End (8)

Solomon* (1:1; cf. 1 Kings 11:6),
Asa (14:2), Jehoshaphat (17:3; 20:37),
Joash (24:22), Amaziah (25:19, 27),
Uzziah (26:16), Hezekiah (32:25),
Josiah (34:1–36:1)



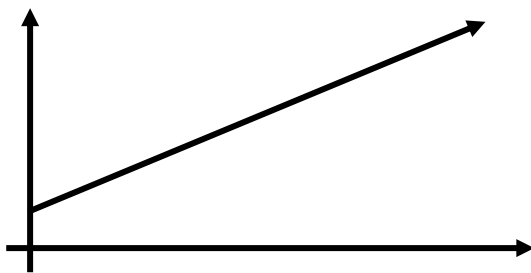
Bad with a Good End (3)

Rehoboam (12:6-7, 12), Abijah**
(=Abijam; 13:10; 1 Kings 15:3),
Manasseh (33:12, 19)



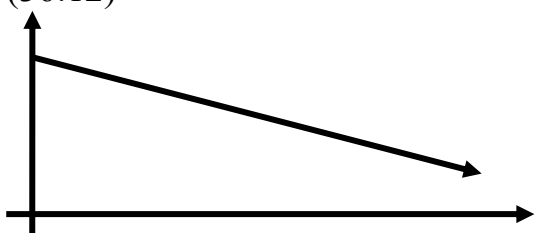
Good to Better (2)

David (1 Kings 3:6),
Jotham (27:6)



Bad to Worse (9)

Jehoram (21:6, 11-12), Ahaziah
(20:35; 22:3), Athaliah (22:10), Ahaz
(28:22), Amon (33:20-25), Jehoahaz
(36:1; cf. 2 Kings 13:2), Jehoiakim
(36:5), Jehoiachin (36:9), Zedekiah
(36:12)



* Although Solomon was noted as rich and wise “for the LORD his God was with him and made him exceedingly great” (2 Chron. 1:1 NIV), the writers seem to avoid categorizing him as either “evil” or “good.”

** Abijah (= Abijam) is deemed evil in 1 Kings 15:3 but the Chronicler notes only his trust in the LORD (2 Chron. 13:10). His placement in the “bad with a good end” category above seeks to represent both views.

Revivals in 2 Chronicles

Revival #	1	2	3	4	5	6
Chapters	15	20	23–24	25	29–31	34–35
Kings	Asa	Jehoshaphat	Joash (via Jehoiada)	Amaziah	Hezekiah	Josiah
Actions						
Results						

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Israel's Later Eastern Neighbors

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 72

MOAB			AMMON			EDOM		
930—At the time of division, all were subjugated to the nation of Israel								
925—Revolted during reign of Jeroboam and gained freedom			925—Declared freedom from Jeroboam			Remained under the control of Judah		
877—Subjugated by Omri			853—Baasha of Ammon allied with Ahab and others against Assyria at Qarqar					
Coalition against Jehoshaphat in 853 defeated at En-gedi (2 Chron 20:1)								
850—King Mesha revolted against Jehoram of Israel and gained freedom (2 Kings 3:4-27)			Retained freedom			845—Revolted against Jehoram of Judah and gained freedom (2 Chron 21:8-10)		
						794—Defeated by Amaziah (2 Chron 25:11-13)		
780—Uzziah and Jeroboam II subjugated all three								
Remained subjugated			738—Gained freedom from Jotham (2 Chron 27:5)			735—Gained freedom from Ahaz (2 Chron 28:17)		
732—All became Assyrian tributaries								
711—Conquered by Sargon			Remained as Assyrian tributaries					
690—Rebellion suppressed by Sennacherib								
612—Gained partial freedom with fall of Nineveh—607—Raided Judah for Babylon								
605—Subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar 581—Rebelled and was conquered			581—King Baalis rebelled and was conquered			601—Became and remained Babylonian tributary		

Nebuchadnezzar's Six Deportations to Babylon

Sequence & Size	Date	King of Judah	Number Taken	Key Captives	Results/ Comments
1 Minor	605 BC	Jehoiakim	Few (Dan. 1:3)	Daniel, his 3 friends, & other nobility & royalty	Tribute imposed. Egypt powerful.
2 Moderate	598 BC	Jehoiakim	3,023 (Jer. 52:28)	—	Minor deportation before the 597 BC deportation
3 Major	597 BC	Jehoiachin	10,000 (2 Kings 24:14)	Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:12b), Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:2), Mordecai (Esther 2:6)	Large deportation. Jehoiachin replaced with his uncle Zedekiah.
4 Minor	587 BC	Zedekiah	832 (Jer. 52:29)	—	Minor deportation before the 586 BC destruction
5 Major	586 BC	Zedekiah	ca. 10,400* (2 Kings 25:11)	Zedekiah	Jerusalem & temple destroyed after 30 month siege
6 Minor	582 BC	—	745 (Jer. 52:30)	—	Four years after Jerusalem's destruction

* Jeremiah 52:30b says that 4600 people went into captivity during the minor deportations (598, 587, and 582 BC). However, assuming the total captives reached about 25,000 (Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 471), since the 597 BC deportation took 10,000 captives (2 Kings 24:14) then the fall in 586 BC must have included about 10,400 exiles (25,000 - 10,000 - 4600 = 10,400).

STUDY GRAPH

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BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

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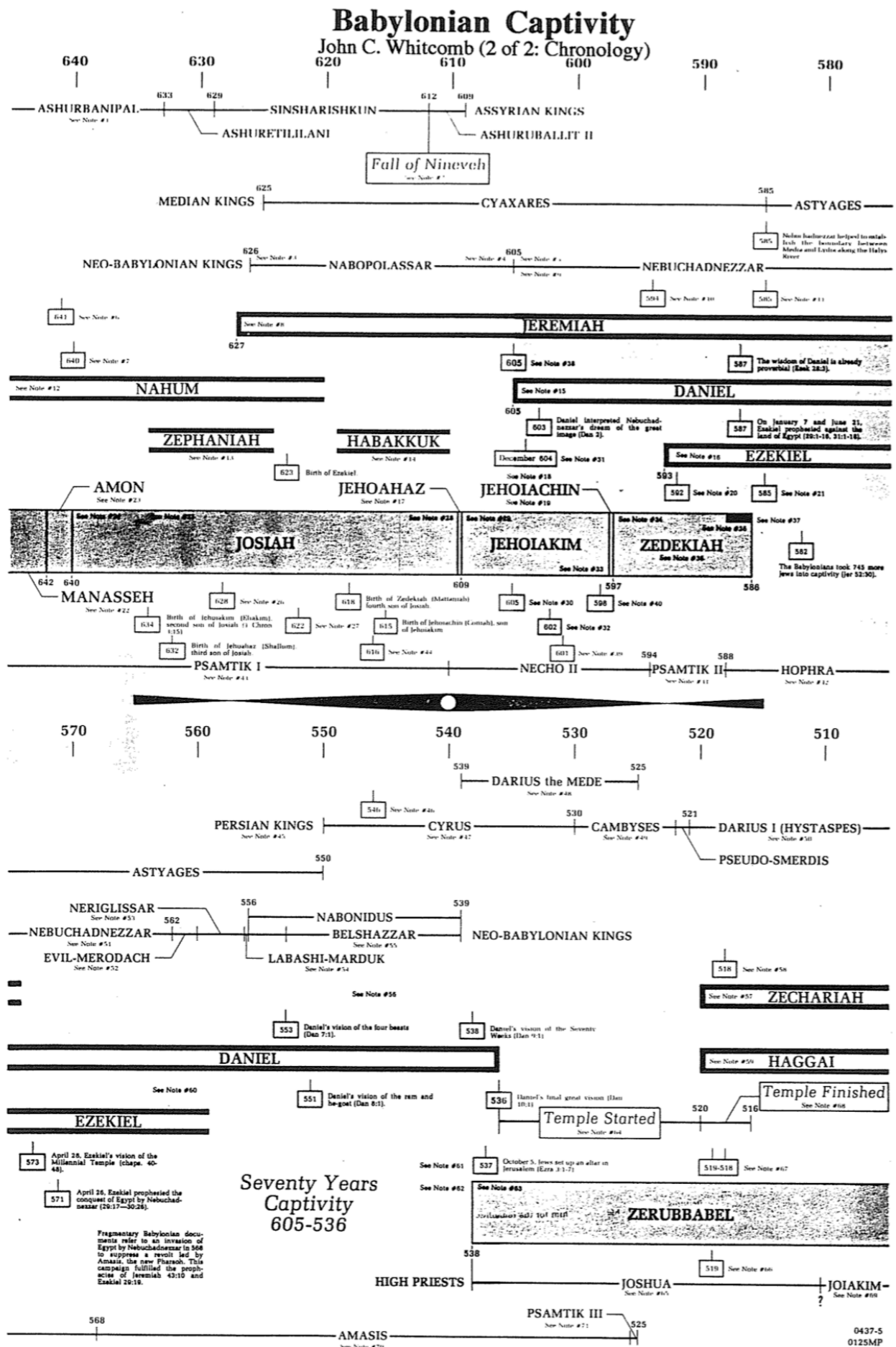
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NOTES

1. Ashurbanipal (669-633) was famous for his campaigns against Egypt and Elam and for his interest in culture and education. In 1863, archaeologists uncovered the library of his royal palace which contained thousands of cuneiform tablets, some containing copies of the Babylonian flood and creation stories (discovered by George Smith at the British Museum, 1872). Soon after his death, the Assyrian Empire collapsed.
2. Nineveh had been under siege by the armies of Cyaxares the Mede. Final destruction (612) was produced by the combined attack of Cyaxares, the Scythians, and Nabopolassar of Babylon. The Medes took the regions east and north of the Tigris, and the Babylonians took the regions to the west and south. Sinsarishkun died in Nineveh, but a remnant of Assyrians held out in Haran under Ashurbanipal II until 609 and in Carchemish until 605.
3. Shamash-rum-ukin (brother of Ashurbanipal) was made ruler of Babylon (669) by his father, Esarhaddon. He led a revolt (651) against his Assyrian overlords, but was defeated by his brother (648) and committed suicide. The Assyrian province of Babylonia was then ruled by Kandalanu (648-627). Nabopolassar, his successor, took advantage of Assyria's increasing troubles to gain independence for Babylonia and establish the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He assisted Cyaxares the Mede in destroying Nineveh (612).
4. In May 605, Nabopolassar (in poor health) sent his son Nebuchadnezzar against the Egyptians at Carchemish. He died (August 15) while his son was in battle.
5. Hearing of his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar took the short route across the Arabian Desert, sending his prisoners (including Daniel) the long route (Josephus, Ant. 10:11:1). He was crowned king (September 6, 605), beginning his first official year the following spring (April 2, 604).
6. Elam revolted against the Assyrians, but Ashurbanipal crushed the Elamites, either killing or deporting them (cf. Ezra 4:9). Their territory was taken over by the Persians, who were still subject to the powerful Medes.
7. Western kings who took advantage of the Elamite revolt to withhold their tribute were crushed by the Assyrians. Possibly Amon was murdered by an anti-Assyrian party in Jerusalem. The "people of the land" sought to avoid Assyrian retaliation by executing his murderers (2 Kings 23:24-25).
8. Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah (not the high priest who discovered the Book of the Law), was born in Anathoth, near Jerusalem. He was of the rejected line of Ithamar priests (1 Kings 2:26), who had lived in Anathoth since the days of Solomon, but God made him one of the greatest prophets (Dan 9:2; Matt 16:14). Called by God at an early age (Jer 1:7), he encouraged Josiah in his reformation, boldly denounced and suffered under the last four kings of Judah, survived the destruction of Jerusalem (586), and finally ministered to apostate exiles in Egypt.
9. After defeating the Egyptians under Necho II at the Battle of Carchemish (May-June 605), Nebuchadnezzar "conquered all of the Hatti country" (Syria and Palestine) and besieged Jerusalem. Among the captives were Daniel and his three brothers (Dan 1:1-2) and his nephew Jehoiachin, who was bound and carried to Babylon (2 Chron 36:6), but who was probably released after giving assurance that he would be a loyal vassal of Babylon.
10. An army revolt in Babylon was crushed by Nebuchadnezzar. Such revolts have fostered plots among western kings (including Zedekiah) to regain their independence, in spite of the warnings by Jeremiah (Jer 27-28).
11. Nebuchadnezzar began a partially successful thirteen-year siege of Tyre (Ezek 26:28; cf. 29:18). This island fortress was not captured until Alexander the Great (332) had built a giant causeway from the mainland.
12. Nahum prophesied the destruction of Nineveh, using the destruction (663) of No-amon (Thebes) as an example (3:8-10). His prophecies were fulfilled when Nineveh fell (612), never to rise again (2:13, 3:19).
13. Early in Josiah's reign, Zephaniah preached against the sins of Judah (1:1-2:3, 3:1-7) and prophesied the fall of Nineveh (2:12-15).
14. Habakkuk foresaw the rise of Babylonia as a world power (1:5-11), but was so shocked at the thought of this wicked nation being God's instrument for chastening Israel that he prayed for further light on this problem (1:12-2:1). God replied that the righteous remnant in Israel would live by faith, but wicked people and nations would be judged (2:4-20).
15. Daniel and his three friends were taken to the court of Babylon for intensive training (fall 605).
16. Ezekiel saw in Babylon (July 31, 593) the vision of the four cherubim and the wheels (1:1-3), and the vision (September 17, 592) of the abominations in the Jerusalem Temple and the departure of God's glory (chaps. 8-11).
17. Jehoahaz (Shallum), a younger son of Josiah, was anointed king by the people, but after three months was deposed and taken to Egypt by Necho II.
18. Jehoiachin (also named Coniah and Jeconiah), a son of Jehoahaz, was eighteen when his father died. He reigned only three months and ten days.
19. Jehoiachin was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar (March 16, 597). He left Jerusalem (April 22) to begin exile with ten thousand others, including Ezekiel.
20. A Babylonian tablet lists Jehoachin and his five sons among those who received regular rations in Babylon. Later, however, he was treated more harshly (Jer 52:31-34).
21. Word reached Ezekiel (January 8) in Babylon that Jerusalem was destroyed (33:21). From March 3 to 17, he uttered lamentation over Pharaoh and the Egyptians in Sheol (chap. 32).
22. Though very wicked during most of his fifty-five-year reign, Manasseh repented when Ashurbanipal carried him off to Babylon in chains. His last days were occupied with rebuilding Jerusalem and removing its idols.
23. Amon, the wicked son of Manasseh, was murdered by his servants, who were then slain by the people of the land.
24. Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign. His father, Amon, was twenty-four when he was assassinated, so Josiah was born when Amon was sixteen.
25. Josiah began "to seek after the God of David his father" at the age of sixteen.
26. Josiah (aged twenty) began to purge Jerusalem, Judah, and the northern provinces.
27. Hilkiah (high priest) discovered the Book of Law in the Temple, and that year the greatest Passover since the days of Samuel was celebrated.
28. Josiah was killed (spring 609) by Necho II at Megiddo when he attempted to block Egypt's attempt to aid the Assyrians at Carchemish. He was mourned by Jeremiah (2 Chron 35:25; cf. Zech 12:11), and was followed on the throne by three sons and a grandson.
29. Eliakim (elder brother of Jehoahaz) was made king by Necho II, who changed his name to Jehoiakim.
30. Jehoiakim became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar.
31. Jehoiakim cut Jeremiah's scroll and threw it into the fire.
32. After serving three years, he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.
33. Jehoiakim died in Jerusalem (December 10, 598) and was given a disgraceful burial as prophesied (Jer 22:18, 36:30).
34. Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, was made king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, and his name was changed to Zedekiah. In spite of Jeremiah's warnings (chaps. 27-28), he plotted against Babylon.
35. When Jerusalem fell, Zedekiah tried to escape to Jordan. He was captured at Jericho, carried to Riblah, blinded after seeing his sons slain, and deported to Babylon, where he died.
36. The siege of Jerusalem lasted from January 15, 588, to July 18, 586.
37. One month after the fall of Jerusalem, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, burned the city and Temple (Jer 3:16), looted Temple treasures, and brought Seraiah (high priest) and others to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah for execution (2 Kings 25:8-21). Gedaliah was appointed governor of the land, and Jeremiah remained with him at Mizpah, the new capital (Jer 40:1-12). The hopes of this remnant were dashed when Gedaliah was murdered by Ishmael, a renegade Jew. Fearing reprisals from the Babylonians, they fled (under Johanan) to Egypt, taking Jeremiah along against his wishes (Jer 40:13-44:30).
38. In 605, Jeremiah prophesied the seventy-year captivity of Judah (chap. 25). That same year his scribe, Baruch, complained of his hard lot (chap. 45).
39. Necho II banded Nebuchadnezzar to a standstill on the border of Palestine and Egypt.
40. Nebuchadnezzar captured 3,023 Jews in a preliminary campaign (Jer 52:8).
41. Psamtik I attacked Phoenicia (590) to harass Nebuchadnezzar.
42. Pharaoh Hophra (Apries) came to the aid of Zedekiah, causing Babylon to lift its siege of Jerusalem temporarily (Jer 37:7, 11). This may have been the time of the captivity of the 832 Jews (Jer 52:29).
43. Psamtik I, the first pharaoh of the twenty-sixth (Saitic) Dynasty, was put into power by Ashurbanipal in 663, following the Assyrian conquest of Egypt (667). He broke from Assyrian control in 654, and a revival of Egyptian culture followed.
44. In order to have a buffer state between Egypt and its potential enemies, Psamtik I moved north to support the tottering Assyrian Empire against the advancing Medes and Babylonians.
45. Until 550, Persian kings were vassals of the Medes. One vassal, Cambyses I (600-559) married Mandane, a daughter of Astyages, and their son was Cyrus II, the Great. Amytis, another daughter of Astyages, was a wife of Nebuchadnezzar. Her homesickness caused him to construct the famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon.
46. Croesus, the wealthy king of Lydia, refused to acknowledge the sovereignty of Persia. Cyrus defeated him and absorbed his kingdom into the empire. For the next six years, Cyrus prepared to conquer Babylon.
47. Cyrus II succeeded his father as king of the small Persian kingdom of Anshan (559). Soon he began to foment rebellion against his grandfather, the corrupt Astyages. He was encouraged by Nabonidus, the new king of Babylon. Astyages tried to crush the revolt, but his general, Harpagus, whom he had previously wronged, deserted him and brought his army over to Cyrus. The Median king was soon seized by his own men, and the Persians took the capital city of Ecbatana (550) without a battle. From then on, the Medes and Persians fought together under the leadership of Cyrus.
48. Darius the Mede, probably the "Gubaru" of the Nabonidus Chronicle, was a subordinate of Cyrus who appointed governors in Babylon (e.g., Daniel: Dan 6:1-3) on October 29, after Ugarhu took the city. He was sixty-two (Dan 5:31), and the tablets indicate that he ruled Babylon, Syria, and Palestine until 525.
49. From 539 to 530, Cambyses lived in Sippar, representing his father, Cyrus (who was busy extending the eastern frontiers), at the New Year's festivals in Babylon. He was also to prepare for a great expedition against Egypt, which he conquered in 525, five years after his father's death.
50. Darius I—Hystaspes (521-486) is known as Darius the Great because of his brilliant achievements in restoring the Persian Empire amidst the chaos following the death of Cambyses. Cambyses died (suicide?) while returning from the conquest of Egypt upon hearing that a pretender (who claimed to be Smerdis, another son of Cyrus whom Cambyses had secretly murdered for suspected disloyalty) had taken the throne of Babylon. The Achaemenid dynasty of Persia would have ended with Cambyses had not Darius, son of Hystaspes, retained the loyalty of the Persian army. In two months he captured and killed the pseudo-Smerdis (whose real name was Bardiya or Gaumata, and who ruled Babylon from March to September 522), and during the next two years he defeated nine kings in nineteen battles. His own account of those victories is recorded in a large trilingual cuneiform inscription (Old Persian, Babylonian, Elamite) on the face of the Behistun Rock. He is most famous for reorganizing the empire into satrapies and for his ill-fated efforts against the Greeks (493 and 490).
51. After building the city of Babylon and subduing his enemies, Nebuchadnezzar was punished by God for his pride. If the "times" of Daniel 4:32 refer to years (cf. 7:25), he was mad for most of the last seven years of his reign.
52. Evil-Merodach (Amer-Marduk), son of Nebuchadnezzar, lifted Jehoiachin out of prison April 2, 561, and honored him for the remainder of his life (Jer 52:2 Kings 25).
53. Nergal-shar-usur, a son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar, murdered Evil-Merodach and seized the throne in August 560. A newly published tablet tells of his campaign to Cilicia (557). He was probably the Nergal-sharzer who held the office of robe mag at the siege of Jerusalem in 586 (Jer 39:13).
54. Labashi-Marduk, son of Neriglissar, reigned but two months (May-June 556), and was murdered by some conspirators including Nabonidus, a Babylonian noble and son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar.
55. From 553 to 539, while he attempted to build a commercial center at Tema in Arabia, Nabonidus left the administration of Babylon to his profligate son Belshazzar. That he had incurred the wrath of the official Marduk priesthood by concentrating his favors on the cult of the moon god Sin may explain his desire to live as far from Babylon as possible. When Cyrus threatened invasion, Nabonidus came to Babylon for the New Year's festival of April 4, 539, and sought divine protection for the city by bringing the images of Babylonian gods in from surrounding towns. It was to no avail. In September, the armies of Cyrus, commanded by Ugarhu, defeated the Babylonians at Opis. On October 10, Sippar (thirty miles north of Babylon) was taken without a battle, and Nabonidus fled. Two days later, Ugarhu's troops entered Babylon and killed Belshazzar.
56. For over two thousand years, the book of Daniel contained the only known historical reference to Belshazzar. In the late nineteenth century, some cuneiform tablets that refer to Belshazzar (Bel prociat the king) as "son of the king" (mor-sharri) were unearthed. In the early twentieth century, a tablet was published stating that Nabonidus "entrusted the kingship" to his son when he went to Arabia, indicating that he was the de facto king of Babylon when it fell. It is significant that Belshazzar's highest office to make him "third ruler of the kingdom" (Dan 5:7, 16, 29). On October 12, 539, Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall and "in that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain" (Dan 5:30).
57. In October 539, Nabonidus fled, just after work on the Temple had been resumed. Zedekiah began his ministry (1:1-6). On February 14, 539, he saw the eight night visions pertaining to Israel (1:7-8:6).
58. A delegation of Jews came from Bethel to Jerusalem to ask the priests and prophets about the need of continuing their mourning and fasting in commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem. This became the occasion for an important message from God through Zechariah (chaps. 7-8).
59. On August 29, 520, Haggai began to exhort Jews to resume work on their Temple, which work had been left unfinished since 535 because of opposition from pagan neighbors (cf. Ezra 4:1-5). So effective was his ministry that the Jews under Zerubbabel and Joshua began to work again on September 20 (1:12-15; Ezra 5:1-2). On October 17, Haggai gave more words of encouragement to the workmen (2:1-9) and on December 18, he gave his final prophecies, including promises of great blessing for Zerubbabel, faithful governor of Judah (2:10-23).
60. That Ezekiel dated his prophecies according to the year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezek 1:1-3) indicates that Zedekiah, was considered by the exiles to be the legitimate king of Judah. They also knew that the monarchy as they remembered it was at an end, for Jeremiah had said that no physical descendant of Jehoiachin could ever sit on the throne (Jer 22:30). This not only excluded his grandson Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:2; 1 Chron 3:19) from royal privileges, but also required that Jesus (Jer 23:5) be adopted legally by Joseph rather than be begotten by natural generation.
61. In spite of the initial bitterness of their captivity (cf. Psalm 137), the Jews settled down to a comparatively peaceful and prosperous life, as God had instructed (Jer 29:4-7). The majority were content to remain in Babylonia and to give of their wealth to the remnant of fifty thousand who returned to Jerusalem in 537 (Ezra 1:6).
62. Cyrus the Great entered Babylon (October 29, 539) and presented himself as a gracious liberator and benefactor. He reversed the cruel Assyrian and Babylonian policies by permitting transplanted populations to return to their homelands. Cyrus permitted and encouraged the Jews to return to Palestine and rebuild their Temple (2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4). About one hundred and fifty years before this, Isaiah had prophesied that Cyrus would be God's chosen instrument for liberating the Jews and initiating the restoration of the Temple (Isa 44:28; 45:1-7, 13). Cyrus was not a true believer (Isa 45:4-5) though he probably recognized the God of Israel as one of the chief deities, especially if Daniel showed him these prophecies of Isaiah, as Josephus claims (Ant. 11:1:11).
63. Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the second Temple (Ezra 3:2; Zech 4:9); but in an official letter to Darius I, a Persian governor claimed that "Sheshbazzar" did this (Ezra 5:16). Thus, Zerubbabel's name in Babylon was Sheshbazzar (Ezra 1:8), even as Daniel's name was Belteshazzar. His father was Shealtiel (Ezra 3:2), but in 1 Chronicles 3:19 he is listed as a son of Shealtiel's younger brother, Pedaiah. This means Shealtiel died childless and Pedaiah contracted a levirate marriage with his brother's widow. Because Shealtiel was the firstborn son of the exiled king Jehoiachin, Zerubbabel was a Messianic link between David and Joseph (Matt 1:12).
64. In April or May 536, the foundation of the second Temple was laid amid great celebration. Many of the older men who had seen the first Temple before its destruction in 586 wept aloud because of the sad contrast in both size and design (Ezra 3:8-13).
65. Joshua (Jeshua) was in the direct line of the high priests. His father, Jozadak (Ezra 3:2), was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar (1 Chron 6:15); his grandfather Seraiah was slain at Riblah (2 Kings 25:18-21); and Seraiah's grandfather Hilkiah discovered the Book of the Law in the Temple (2 Chron 34:14) in 622. In one of Zechariah's visions (519), Joshua was seen as representing the nation before God (Zech 3:2-9); but he did not possess the Urim and Thummim to inquire of God (Ezra 2:63).
66. Joshua was crowned by the prophet Zechariah to symbolize the dual priest-king office that would be held someday by Messiah (Zech 6:9-15).
67. Tattenai, a Persian governor, wrote to Darius I to challenge the rebuilding of the Temple. Darius found the decree of Cyrus in the library at Ecbatana and commanded Tattenai to help the Jews.
68. The completion of the Temple in February or March 516 may be considered the end of a special seventy-year captivity for Jerusalem (Isaiah 48:13, 25).
69. Jojakim, son of Joshua, is mentioned in Nehemiah 12:10-12, and Zechariah is listed as a contemporary (Neh 12:16).
70. As Necho II had tried to bolster the tottering Assyrian Empire for a buffer against Babylon, so Amasis tried in vain to hinder the growth of Persian power by alliance with Croesus of Lydia and Nabonidus of Babylon. He saw both of those allies destroyed, and a few months after his own death, Egypt fell before the Persians.
71. Psamtik III reigned only six months before Persia, under Cambyses, attacked him. His Egyptian army was defeated at Pelusium (525), and Cambyses took the throne as the first king of the twenty-seventh Dynasty. The Persian rule of Egypt continued until Alexander the Great conquered it in 332. After his death in 323, Egypt was ruled by the Ptolemies (six are mentioned in Daniel 11:2-23) until the death of Cleopatra (30 B.C.), when the Romans took over.



If I Forget Thee: Does Jerusalem Really Matter to Islam?

Daniel Pipes (1997)

The architects of the Oslo peace accords understood Jerusalem's power. Fearing that even discussing the holy city's future before less combustible issues are resolved would detonate the fragile truce between Israelis and Palestinians, they tried to delay this issue to the end. But they failed: riots met the opening a new entrance to an ancient tunnel last September and now the building of apartments on an empty plot in eastern Jerusalem has brought the negotiations to a halt. As it becomes clear that the struggle for Jerusalem will not wait, the outside world must confront the conflicting claims made by Jews and Muslims on the city that King David entered three millennia ago.

When they do, they will no doubt hear relativistic clichés to the effect that Jerusalem is "a city holy to both peoples," implying a parallel quality to the Jewish and Islamic claims to Jerusalem. But this is false. Jerusalem stands as the paramount religious city of Judaism, a place so holy that not just its soil but even its air is deemed sacred. Jews pray in its direction, mention its name constantly in prayers, close the Passover service with the wistful statement "Next year in Jerusalem," and recall the city in the blessing at the end of meals.

What about Jerusalem's role in Islam? Its significance pales next to Mecca and Medina, the twin cities where Muhammad lived and which hosted the great events of Islamic history. Jerusalem is not the place to which Muslims pray, it is not once mentioned by name in the Qur'an or in prayers, and it is directly connected to no events in Muhammad's life. The city never became a cultural center and it never served as capital of a sovereign Muslim state. Jerusalem has mattered to Muslims only intermittently over the past 13 centuries, and when it has mattered, as it does today, it has done so because of politics. Conversely, when the utility of Jerusalem expires, the passions abate and its status declines.

In AD 622, the Prophet Muhammad fled his hometown of Mecca for Medina, a city with a substantial Jewish population. On arrival, if not earlier, he adopted a number of practices friendly to Jews, such as a Yom Kippur-like fast, a synagogue-like house of prayer, and kosher-style dietary laws. Muhammad also adopted the Judaic practice of facing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem during prayer; "He chose the Holy House in Jerusalem in order that the People of the Book [i.e., Jews] would be conciliated," notes At-Tabari, an early Muslim commentator on the Qur'an, "and the Jews were glad." Modern historians agree: W. Montgomery Watt, a leading biographer of Muhammad, interprets the prophet's "far-reaching concessions to Jewish feeling" as part of his "desire for a reconciliation with the Jews."

But Jews criticized the new faith and rejected Muhammad's gestures, leading Muhammad to eventually break with them, probably in early 624. The most dramatic sign of this change came in a Qur'anic passage (2:142-52) ordering the faithful no longer to pray toward Syria but toward Mecca instead. (The Qur'an and other sources only mention the direction as "Syria"; other information makes it clear that "Syria" means Jerusalem.)

This episode initiated a pattern that would be repeated many times over the succeeding centuries: Muslims take religious interest in Jerusalem because it serves them politically and when the political climate changes, their interest flags.

In the century after Muhammad's death, politics prompted the Damascus-based Umayyad dynasty, which controlled Jerusalem, to make this city sacred in Islam. Embroiled in fierce competition with a dissident leader in Mecca, the Umayyad rulers sought to diminish Arabia at Jerusalem's expense. They sponsored a genre of literature praising the "virtues of Jerusalem" and circulated accounts of the prophet's sayings or doings (called hadiths) favorable to Jerusalem. In 688-91, they built Islam's first grand structure, the Dome of the Rock, on top of the remains of the Jewish Temple.

In a particularly subtle and complex step, they even reinterpreted the Qur'an to make room for Jerusalem. The Qur'an, describing Muhammad's Night Journey (*isra'*), reads: "[God] takes his servant [i.e., Muhammad] by night from the Sacred Mosque to the furthest mosque." When this Qur'anic passage was first revealed, in about 621, a place called the Sacred Mosque already existed in Mecca. In contrast, the "furthest mosque" was a turn of phrase, not a place. Some early Muslims understood it as metaphorical or as a place in heaven. And if the "furthest mosque" did exist on earth, Palestine would have seemed an unlikely location, for that region elsewhere in the Qur'an (30:1) was called "the closest land" (*adna al-ard*).

But in 715, the Umayyads built a mosque in Jerusalem, again right on the Temple Mount, and called it the Furthest Mosque (*al-masjid al-aqsa*, or Al-Aqsa Mosque). With this, the Umayyads not only post hoc inserted Jerusalem into the Qur'an but retroactively gave it a prominent role in Muhammad's life. For if the "furthest mosque" is in Jerusalem, then Muhammad's Night Journey and his subsequent ascension to heaven (*mi'raj*) also took place on the Temple Mount.

But, as ever, Jerusalem mattered theologically only when it mattered politically, and when the Umayyad dynasty collapsed in 750, Jerusalem fell into near-obscure. For the next three and a half centuries, books praising the city lost favor and the construction of glorious buildings not only stopped, but existing ones fell apart (the Dome over the rock collapsed in 1016). "Learned men are few, and the Christians numerous," bemoaned a tenth-century Muslim native of Jerusalem. The rulers of the new dynasty bled Jerusalem and its region country through what F. E. Peters of New York University calls "their rapacity and their careless indifference."

By the early tenth century, notes Peters, Muslim rule over Jerusalem had an "almost casual" quality with "no particular political significance." In keeping with this near-indifference, the Crusader conquest of the city in 1099 initially aroused a mild Muslim response: "one does not detect either shock or a sense of religious loss and humiliation," notes Emmanuel Sivan of the Hebrew University, a scholar of this era.

Only as the effort to retake Jerusalem grew serious in about 1150 did Muslim leaders stress Jerusalem's importance to Islam. Once again, hadiths about Jerusalem's sanctity and books about the "virtues of Jerusalem" appeared. One hadith put words into the Prophet Muhammad's mouth saying that, after his own death, Jerusalem's falling to the infidels is the second greatest catastrophe facing Islam.

Once safely back in Muslim hands after Saladin's reconquest, however, interest in Jerusalem dropped, to the point where one of Saladin's grandsons temporarily ceded the city in 1229 to Emperor Friedrich II in return for the German's promise of military aid against his brother, a rival king. But learning that Jerusalem was back in Christian hands again provoked intense Muslim emotions; as a result, in 1244, the city was again under Muslim rule. The psychology at work here bears note: that Christian knights traveled from distant lands to make Jerusalem their capital made the city more valuable in Muslim eyes too. "It was a city strongly coveted by the enemies of the faith, and thus became, in a sort of mirror-image syndrome, dear to Muslim hearts," Sivan explains.

The city then lapsed back to its usual obscurity for nearly eight centuries. At one point, the city's entire population amounted to a miserable four thousand souls. The Temple Mount sanctuaries were abandoned and became dilapidated. Under Ottoman rule (1516-1917), Jerusalem suffered the indignity of being treated as a tax farm for non-resident, one-year (and so very rapacious) officials. The Turkish authorities raised funds by gouging European visitors, and so made little effort to promote Jerusalem's economy. The tax rolls show soap as the city's only export item. In 1611, George Sandys found that "Much lies waste; the old buildings (except a few) all ruined, the new contemptible." Gustav Flaubert of *Madame Bovary* fame visited in 1850 and found "Ruins everywhere." Mark Twain in 1867 wrote that Jerusalem "has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a pauper village."

In modern times, notes the Israeli scholar Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, Jerusalem "became the focus of religious and political Arab activity only at the beginning of the present century, and only because of the renewed Jewish activity in the city and Judaism's claims on the Western Wall." British rule over city, lasting from 1917 to 1948, further galvanized Muslim passion for Jerusalem. The Palestinian leader (and mufti of Jerusalem) Hajj Amin al-Husayni made the Temple Mount central to his anti-Zionist efforts, for example raising funds throughout the Arab world for the restoration of the Dome of the Rock. Arab politicians made Jerusalem a prominent destination; for example, Iraqi leaders frequently turned up, where they demonstrably prayed at Al-Aqsa and gave rousing speeches.

But when Muslims retook the Old City with its Islamic sanctuaries in 1948, they quickly lost interest in it. An initial excitement stirred when the Jordanian forces took the walled city in 1948 as evidenced by the Coptic bishop's crowning King `Abdallah as "King of Jerusalem" in November of that year but then the usual ennui [boredom] set in. The Hashemites had little affection for Jerusalem, where some of their most devoted enemies lived and where `Abdallah himself was shot dead in 1951. In fact, the Hashemites made a concerted effort to diminish the holy city's importance in favor of their capital, Amman. Jerusalem had served as the British administrative capital, but now all government offices there (save tourism) were shut down. The Jordanians also closed some local institutions (e.g., the Arab Higher Committee) and moved others to Amman (the treasury of the Palestinian waqf, or religious endowment).

Their effort succeeded. Once again, Arab Jerusalem became an isolated provincial town, now even less important than Nablus. The economy stagnated and many thousands left Arab Jerusalem. While the population of Amman increased five-fold in the period 1948-67, Jerusalem's grew just 50 percent. Amman was chosen as the site of the country's first university as well as of the royal family's many residences. Perhaps most insulting of all, Jordanian radio broadcast the Friday prayers not from Al-Aqsa Mosque but from a mosque in Amman.

Nor was Jordan alone in ignoring Jerusalem; the city virtually disappeared from the Arab diplomatic map. No foreign Arab leader came to Jerusalem between 1948 and 1967, and even King Husayn visited only rarely.

King Faysal of Saudi Arabia often spoke after 1967 of yearning to pray in Jerusalem, yet he appears never to have bothered to pray there when he had the chance. Perhaps most remarkable is that the PLO's founding document, the Palestinian National Covenant of 1964, does not even once mention Jerusalem.

All this abruptly changed after June 1967, when the Old City came under Israeli control. As in the British period, Palestinians again made Jerusalem the centerpiece of their political program. Pictures of the Dome of the Rock turned up everywhere, from Yasir Arafat's office to the corner grocery. The PLO's 1968 Constitution described Jerusalem as "the seat of the Palestine Liberation Organization."

Nor were Palestinians alone in their renewed interest. "As during the era of the Crusaders," Lazarus-Yafeh points out, many Muslim leaders "began again to emphasize the sanctity of Jerusalem in Islamic tradition," even dusting off old hadiths to back up their claims. Jerusalem became a mainstay of Arab League and United Nations resolutions. The formerly stingy Jordanian and Saudi governments now gave munificently to the Jerusalem *waqf*.

As it was under the British mandate, Jerusalem has since 1967 again become the primary vehicle for mobilizing international Muslim opinion. A fire at Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969 gave Faysal the occasion to convene twenty-five Muslim heads of state and establish the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a United Nations for Muslims. Lebanon's leading Shi'i authority regularly relies on the theme of liberating Jerusalem to inspire his own people to liberate Lebanon. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran's 1-rial coin and 1000-rial banknote have featured the Dome of the Rock. Iranian soldiers at war with Saddam Husayn's forces in the 1980s received primitive maps marking a path through Iraq and onto Jerusalem. Ayatollah Khomeini decreed the last Friday of Ramadan as Jerusalem Day, and the holiday has served as a major occasion for anti-Israel harangues.

Since Israeli occupation, some ideologues have sought to establish the historical basis of Islamic attachment to Jerusalem by raising three main arguments, all of them historically dubious. First, they assert a Muslim connection to Jerusalem that predates the Jewish one. Ghada Talhami, a scholar at Lake Forest College, typically asserts that, "There are other holy cities in Islam, but Jerusalem holds a special place in the hearts and minds of Muslims because its fate has always been intertwined with theirs."

Always? Jerusalem's founding antedated Islam by about two millennia, so how can that be? Ibrahim Hooper, national communications director for the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations explains: "the Muslim attachment to Jerusalem does not begin with the prophet Muhammad, it begins with the prophets Abraham, David, Solomon and Jesus, who are also prophets in Islam." In other words, the central figures of Judaism and Christianity were really proto-Muslims.

Second, and equally anachronistic, is the claim that the Qur'an mentions Jerusalem. Hooper (and others) argue that "the Koran refers to Jerusalem by its Islamic centerpiece, al-Aqsa Mosque." But this makes no sense: a mosque built a century after the Qur'an was delivered cannot establish what a Qur'anic verse originally meant.

Third, some Muslims deny Jerusalem any importance to Jews. `Abd al- Malik Dahamshe, an Arab member of Israel's parliament, flatly stated last month that "the Western Wall is not associated with the remains of the Jewish Temple." A fundamentalist Israel Arab leader went further and announced that "It's prohibited for Jews to pray at the Western Wall." Or, in the succinct wording of a protest banner: "Jerusalem is Arab."

Despite these deafening claims that Jerusalem is essential to Islam, the religion does contain a recessive but persistent strain of anti-Jerusalem sentiment. Perhaps the most prominent adherent of this view was Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328), one of Islam's strictest and most influential religious thinkers. (The Wahhabis of Arabia are his modern-day successors.)

In an attempt to purify Islam of accretions and impieties, Ibn Taymiya dismissed the sacredness of Jerusalem as a notion deriving from Jews and Christians, and from the long-ago Umayyad rivalry with Mecca. More broadly, learned Muslims living in the years following the Crusades knew that the great publicity given to hadiths extolling Jerusalem's sanctity resulted from the Countercrusade—that is, from political exigency—and treated it warily.

Recalling that God once had Muslims direct their prayers toward Jerusalem and then turned them instead toward Mecca, some early hadiths suggested that Muslims specifically pray... away from Jerusalem, a rejection

that still survives in vestigial form; he who prays in Al-Aqsa Mosque not coincidentally shows his back precisely to the Temple area toward which Jews pray.

In Jerusalem, theological and historical claims matter, serving as the functional equivalent of legal documents elsewhere. Whoever can establish a deeper and more lasting association with the city has a better chance of winning international support to rule it. In this context, the fact that politics has so long fueled the Muslim attachment to Jerusalem has two implications. First, it points to the relative weakness of the Islamic connection to the city, one that arises as much from transitory considerations of mundane need as from the immutable claims of faith.

Second, it suggests that the Muslim interest lies not so much in controlling Jerusalem as it does in denying control over the city to anyone else. Jerusalem will never be more than a secondary city for Muslims.

In contrast, Mecca is the eternal city of Islam, the place where Muslims believe Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac's brother Ishmael and toward which Muslims turn to pray five times each day. Non-Muslims are strictly forbidden there, so it has a purely Muslim population. Mecca evokes in Muslims a feeling similar to that of Jerusalem among Jews: "Its very mention reverberates awe in Muslims' hearts," writes Abad Ahmad of the Islamic Society of Central Jersey. Very roughly speaking, what Jerusalem is to Jews, Mecca is to the Muslims. And just as Muslims rule an undivided Mecca, so Jews should rule an undivided Jerusalem.

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Though this essay is substantially longer than the typical IRIS mailing, we believe its content is well worth the exception.

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