

1-2 Chronicles

Kings vs. Chronicles: An Analysis

The books of Kings and Chronicles cover much of the same historical period — from the reign of Solomon through the fall of Jerusalem — yet they differ so markedly in emphasis, content, and theology that scholars have long recognized them as products of distinct authors, audiences, and ideological agendas.

Peter Enns put it this way:

And when we do pay attention to Chronicles, we will get a crash course on how Israel's ancient storytellers handled the past.

The two stories differ because they were written at different times to answer different questions. Samuel/Kings was written while the Israelites were in exile in Babylon (sixth century BCE) and probably edited and updated sometime after they came back to the land (late sixth to fifth century BCE).

The pressing question for this writer was, “How did we end up in Babylon, in exile from our homeland, when we thought God would stick with us no matter what? What did we do to deserve it?”

They were trying to wrap their heads around what happened. Chronicles was written much later, two hundred years or so, probably sometime in the fourth century BCE at least, after the Israelites had been back in the land for generations. This writer's question wasn't “What did we do to deserve this?” but “*After all this time, are we still the people of God? Is God ever going to show up and fix this mess? What is our future? Do we have a future?*”

These two agendas are galaxies apart, and they yielded two profoundly different stories of Israel's monarchy.

Both versions agree that Israel began as a united kingdom, with Saul, then David, and then Solomon on the throne. After Solomon's reign, however, somewhere around 930 BCE, the nation had a political dispute over labor and taxes (as we see in 1 Kings) and split into the northern and southern kingdoms. Henceforth, the north was referred to by several names, the two most common were (confusingly) “Israel” and “Ephraim,” the name of the main tribe that made up the northern kingdom. The south would be referred to as “Judah,” the name of the main southern tribe.

Eventually, the northern kingdom would meet its end in 722 BCE when the mighty Assyrians captured the capital of Samaria and relocated much of its population to Assyria. The southern kingdom of Judah remained intact, more or less, for another 136 years until 586 BCE, when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and took much of the population captive to Babylon.

My point is that each kingdom, north and south, had its own line of kings. The books of 1 and 2 Kings deal with all of them, *but the Chronicles author leaves the northern kings out of his story.*

Did he think no one would notice? Was he rushing to meet his deadline? No. He focused solely on the kings of the southern kingdom, the kingdom that went into Babylonian exile and came back—his people. By the time he wrote his version, the northern kingdom was already a distant memory, erased from the world scene by the Assyrians three hundred or so years earlier. Judah is all that's left and all that matters. **Judah is the future.**

So, as for differences, we can start by saying **Chronicles leaves out half the picture—which is pretty selective storytelling. It's like a southerner telling the story of the United States and never venturing north of the Mason-Dixon Line.**

And even in those places where Chronicles and Samuel/Kings cover the same exact ground, we almost always get very different points of view. For example, both versions have a scene where the prophet Nathan meets with King David (Israel is still one nation here) to give him the good news that God is absolutely on his side. According to 2 Samuel, God makes David this promise:

Your house and your king will endure forever before me. **Your throne** will be established forever.

That means David's dynasty-house, beginning with his son Solomon, will continue unbroken for a very long time (which is what "forever" means in Hebrew, not literally "eternity"). The writer of 1 Chronicles puts different words into Nathan's mouth:

I will set him over **my house and my kingdom** forever; his throne will be established forever.

What was David's dynasty in 2 Samuel ("your") now becomes God's dynasty in 1 Chronicles ("my").

You might think, "What's the big deal? Does it really matter whether Nathan said your throne or my throne?" Yes. Yes, it does.

For the writer of 2 Samuel, an unbroken line of descendants through David's son Solomon is still on the table—hence "your [David's] throne will be established forever." But by the time we get to 1 Chronicles, that unbroken line had been long gone for many generations. We can imagine the Judahites might have wondered whether the long dead line of David was a sign that God had indeed given up on them by now.

But the writer of Chronicles says, "No. You see, it's not really David's dynasty, anyway. It's God's. Times have been hard for us, no doubt. We still don't have a son of David on his rightful throne in Jerusalem, and we can't wait for that to happen. But we shouldn't get discouraged about that, or lose focus on the truly big picture. When all is said and done, it's really God's throne and he'll get it done—in time."

Expending energy to clean up this little mess and make both versions report Nathan's words the same way is not only futile (just read the words, for heaven's sake), but misses an important lesson to be learned here. Nathan's prophecy is just one small example in one verse that illustrates a big principle: these stories are not giving us history "straight" but history as the writers see it—better, history as they want their readers (which now includes us) to see it.

They weren't trying to pull a fast one, nor were they sloppy. That's modern thinking relying on modern rules of history writing. These two biblical storytellers shaped the past—created it to a certain extent—because their present circumstances demanded it. You might even say, for these writers, the past serves the needs of the present.¹

David Carr's *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* offers one of the most influential modern explanations for why ancient Israel's scribes preserved, edited, and transmitted the traditions that eventually became the Hebrew Bible. Carr argues that the Bible was not produced in times of national prosperity, but in response to repeated experiences of war, exile, destruction, and cultural collapse. Faced with these collective traumas, Israel's scribes gathered older traditions, interpreted their nation's suffering through the lens of covenant, and created a sacred history that preserved both their identity and their faith. In Carr's view, the Hebrew Bible is both a record of Israel's past and a testament to the resilience of a people who found meaning, hope, and purpose amid catastrophe. Understanding this historical context helps explain not only why these records were written, but also why they have continued to speak so powerfully to generations of readers confronting suffering and loss.



1. Authorship and Historical Context

Kings is widely regarded as part of the Deuteronomistic History (DH), a term coined by Martin Noth (pronounced Note = long "o.") in 1943.² This refers to a unified editorial work spanning Joshua through Kings, shaped by the theological framework of Deuteronomy. **The core edition is thought to have been compiled during the reign of Josiah** (late 7th century BCE), with a **later exilic edition** added after 586 BCE to explain the catastrophe of the Babylonian destruction

¹ Peter Enns, *The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It*, p. 91-94.

² In 1943, Noth published *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* ("Studies in the History of Tradition"). In this book, he introduced the term "Deuteronomistic History." He argued that Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings were edited into a single, unified historical work by a Deuteronomistic historian (often abbreviated Dtr). This editor shaped Israel's history according to the theology and language of Deuteronomy.

(this is the typical DTR1 and DTR2 model). The authors wrote from within the trauma of potential or actual exile.

Chronicles, by contrast, is attributed to the Chronicler — a priestly writer or school writing in the post-exilic period (roughly 400–350 BCE), after the Babylonian exile had ended and the community had returned to Judah under Persian rule. **Chronicles is closely linked to Ezra-Nehemiah, likely forming a single historical work.** The Chronicler wrote for a restored community trying to reestablish its identity around the Temple and Levitical institutions.

2. Scope and Source Material

One of the most telling structural differences is what each book chooses to include or omit.

Kings begins with the death of David and the succession of Solomon, then traces both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah in parallel, interweaving their histories until the fall of Samaria (722 BCE) and ultimately Jerusalem (586 BCE).

Chronicles essentially ignores the northern kingdom of Israel almost entirely. After nine chapters of genealogies (1 Chr 1–9) tracing humanity from Adam to the post-exilic community, the narrative jumps to the death of Saul and the reign of David. The northern kings receive almost no treatment — a striking omission that reflects **the Chronicler’s exclusive focus on Judah, Jerusalem, and the Davidic dynasty as the sole legitimate heirs of Israel’s covenant.**

Both works cite earlier sources — “the book of the annals of the kings of Israel/Judah” — but the Chronicler also references sources like “the midrash of the book of Kings” (על-מדרש ספר המלכים) (See: 2 Chr. 24.27) and prophetic records (1 Chr. 29.29, 2 Chr. 9.29), suggesting a different archival tradition or a creative reinterpretation of existing texts.

3. The Portrayal of David and Solomon

Nowhere is the theological divergence sharper than in the depiction of the monarchy’s two founding figures.

In the record contained in Kings, David gets the typical treatment we see when we discuss his life in our Sunday School meetings:

David, though honored, is portrayed with full human complexity. His adultery with Bathsheba, his orchestration of Uriah’s death (2 Sam / 1 Kgs), his failures as a father (Amnon, Absalom), and the political chaos of his final years are all narrated in detail.

Solomon is celebrated for his wisdom and Temple-building, but Kings also records his fatal flaw: he took foreign wives who “turned his heart after other gods” (1 Kgs 11.4), and this apostasy is given as the direct theological cause of the kingdom’s division.

In Chronicles we see a different story:

David is idealized almost beyond criticism. The Bathsheba affair is entirely absent. Absalom's rebellion is omitted. David emerges as a flawless liturgical organizer, and his primary role is preparing for the Temple: assembling materials, organizing the Levites, composing psalms, and laying out the architectural plans God gave him.

Solomon's apostasy and foreign wives are likewise completely omitted. His reign is presented as a golden age of undivided devotion to God and Temple worship. The kingdom's later division is not attributed to Solomon's sins but rather to political rebellion.

This reflects a priestly-liturgical agenda: **the Chronicler is less interested in moral biography than in establishing the legitimacy of Temple worship and the Levitical order.**

4. Theological Frameworks: Retributive Theology

Both books operate within a framework of divine retribution — obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings punishment — but they apply it differently.

Kings and the Deuteronomistic Framework:

The operative theological lens is covenant fidelity to the Torah of Moses, especially the prohibition of worship at unauthorized “high places” (*bamot*).

Every king is evaluated by a single criterion: did he remove the high places or not? Even relatively good kings like Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah are noted to have left the high places standing.

The ultimate punishment, the Exile, is interpreted as the inevitable consequence of generations of covenant violation, especially the sins of Jeroboam, who established the golden calves in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and Manasseh for Judah. In Kings, Manasseh's sins are so awful that even Josiah's reforms cannot avert the catastrophe (2 Kgs 23.26–27).

Chronicles and Immediate Retribution:

The Chronicler applies a more individualized and immediate retributive logic. Good deeds are rewarded quickly; sin brings swift punishment within a single reign.

A striking example is Manasseh: in Kings he is the arch-villain whose sins doom Judah with no redemption (see 2 Kings 21.1-16 and 2 Kings 23.26; 24.3-4). In Chronicles (2 Chr 33), Manasseh is taken captive to Babylon, repents sincerely, is restored by God, and enacts religious reforms. His punishment and restoration fit neatly into the Chronicler's tidy moral calculus.

This difference is crucial: **Kings uses Manasseh to explain the collective, delayed punishment of a nation**; Chronicles uses him to illustrate personal repentance and individual restoration — a theology far more relevant to a post-exilic community seeking to understand their own return from exile.

Theme	Kings (2 Kings 21)	Chronicles (2 Chr 33)
Manasseh's sins	21:1–9	33:1–9
Sorcery, child sacrifice	21:6	33:6
Idols in the temple	21:4–7	33:4–7
Prophetic judgment	21:10–15	33:10
Cause of exile	23:26; 24:3–4	<i>Not emphasized</i>
Capture by Assyria	<i>Absent</i>	33:11
Repentance	Absent	33:12–13
Restoration	Absent	33:13
Reforms	Absent	33:14–17
Extra sources	<i>None</i>	33:18–19

5. The Role of the Temple, Levites, and Worship

For the Chronicler, the Temple and what goes on there is the gravitational center of all history.

Enormous space is devoted to Temple construction, liturgical organization, the roles of priests and Levites, musical guilds, and proper sacrificial procedure. These details are passed over or omitted in the book of Kings.

The Levites receive far more positive attention in Chronicles than in Kings. Where Kings marginalizes or ignores them, Chronicles elevates them as indispensable mediators of proper worship. This likely reflects the Chronicler's own priestly mindset and the post-exilic need to reestablish Levitical authority.

Worship reform episodes are greatly expanded in Chronicles. Hezekiah's Passover celebration (2 Chr 29–31) is treated in three full chapters; Kings gives it a few verses. Similarly, Josiah's reforms are contextualized within elaborate cultic renewal ceremonies.

6. Prophecy and Its Function

Both books use prophets, but differently.

In Kings, prophets like Elijah and Elisha are central, towering figures whose narratives occupy large swaths of the text (1 Kgs 17 – 2 Kgs 13). They operate as agents of divine confrontation with the monarchy, often in the northern kingdom.

In Chronicles, Elijah appears only in a single letter (2 Chr 21.12), and Elisha is entirely absent. The Chronicler's prophets tend to be lesser-known figures who deliver brief oracles justifying punishment or validating kings — they function more as theological commentators than

independent narrative actors. This again reflects the northern-kingdom blind spot: since Elijah and Elisha operated primarily in Israel, the Chronicler has little use for them.

7. Attitude Toward the Northern Kingdom

This is perhaps the most structurally consequential difference.

Kings treats the northern kingdom as a legitimate, if apostate, part of Israel's story. Its kings are given full regnal formulas, and events in Israel are woven into the narrative alongside Judah.

Chronicles essentially writes the north out of history. There is no parallel history of Israel's kings. When northern kings interact with Judah, they appear only as antagonists or as cautionary examples. The Chronicler's "all Israel" is a theological category centered on those loyal to Jerusalem and the Davidic house — not a geographic description of the northern tribes.

Some scholars argue this reflects a genuine hope that northerners would reunite with the Judahite community under proper worship, while others see it as simply reinforcing Judahite superiority. The debate continues. Like I always say, "I don't know. I wasn't there!" But you get to decide!

8. The Ending: Exile vs. Hope

The contrasting endings are symbolically powerful.

Kings ends in exile and shadow: the last image is Jehoiachin eating at the Babylonian king's table (2 Kgs 25.27–30) — a small mercy, but not the restoration that the author would have liked! The tone is one of cautious optimism at best.

Chronicles ends with a brief account of Cyrus of Persia's decree permitting the Jews to return and rebuild the Temple (2 Chr 36.22–23). This is an explicitly hopeful, forward-looking conclusion, addressed to a community that has already experienced restoration and is being called to participate in it.

Outline of 1-2 Chronicles

1 Chronicles

I. Genealogies and the Story of Israel's Origins (1 Chr. 1–9)

1. Adam to Abraham (1.1–27)
2. Descendants of Abraham (1.28–54)
3. Tribes of Israel (2–8)
 - a. Judah's line, including David (ch. 2)
 - b. David's family (ch. 3)
 - c. Other tribes: Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Asher

4. Returned exiles in Jerusalem (ch. 9)
 - a. Priests, Levites, gatekeepers

II. The Reign of King Saul (1 Chr. 10)

1. Saul's death in battle
2. The theological reason for his downfall: unfaithfulness (1 Chr. 10.13-14)

III. The Reign of King David (1 Chr 11–29)

A. David's Rise and Consolidation (11–12)

1. David anointed king
2. Capture of Jerusalem
3. Mighty warriors and supporters
4. No mention of David's sin with בַּת-שֶׁבַע Bathsheba! She is called בַּת-שֻׁוּעַ "Bath-shua" in 1 Chr 3.5

B. The Ark and Worship Reforms (13–16)

1. Attempt to bring the Ark to Jerusalem
2. Uzzah's death (1 Chr. 13.7-11)
3. Successful transport of the Ark
4. David's psalm of thanksgiving

C. God's Covenant with David (17)

1. Davidic Covenant (1 Chr. 17.8-15)
2. Promise of an eternal dynasty

D. David's Military Victories (18–20)

1. Defeat of Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and others
2. Capture of Rabbah

E. Census and Its Consequences (21)

1. David's census
2. Plague
3. Purchase of Ornan's threshing floor, the Temple site (1 Chr. 21.15-29)

F. Preparations for the Temple (22–29)

1. David's charge to Solomon
2. Organization of Levites, priests, musicians, gatekeepers
3. Leaders' offerings for the Temple

4. David's final prayer and death

2 Chronicles

I. Solomon's Reign (2 Chr. 1–9)

A. Solomon's Wisdom and Prosperity (1)

1. Solomon asks for wisdom
2. Wealth and influence

B. Construction of the Temple (2–7)

1. Preparations and alliance with Hiram
2. Building the Temple
3. Dedication ceremony
4. God's appearance to Solomon (2 Chr. 7.11–22)

C. Solomon's Achievements (8–9)

1. Building projects
2. Administration and trade
3. Visit of the Queen of Sheba
4. Solomon's death

II. The Kings of Judah (2 Chr. 10–36)

(Chronicles focuses only on Judah, not the northern kingdom.)

A. Rehoboam 930-913 BC (10–12)

1. Division of the kingdom
2. Rehoboam's reforms and failures

B. Abijah 913-911 BC (13)

1. War with Jeroboam
2. Victory attributed to reliance on God

C. Asa 911-870 BC (14–16)

1. Religious reforms
2. Victory over Cushite army
3. Later reliance on foreign alliances

D. Jehoshaphat 870-848 BC (17–20)

1. Strengthening Judah
2. Alliance with Ahab
3. Deliverance from Moab and Ammon

E. Jehoram 848-841 BC (21)

1. Wicked reign
2. Judgment and downfall

F. Ahaziah (22.1–9)

1. Short reign
2. Death at hands of Jehu

G. Athaliah 841-835 BC (22.10–23.21)

1. Usurpation
2. Preservation of Joash
3. Restoration of the Davidic line

H. Joash 835-796 BC (24)

1. Temple repairs
2. Later apostasy

I. Amaziah 796-767 BC (25)

1. Victory over Edom
2. Defeat by Israel

J. Uzziah (Azariah) 792-740 BC (26)

1. Prosperity and strength
2. Pride and leprosy

K. Jotham 750-732 BC (27)

1. Faithful reign

L. Ahaz 732-716 BC (28)

1. Idolatry
2. Defeat by Aram and Israel
3. Appeal to Assyria

M. Hezekiah 716-687 BC (29–32)

1. Temple purification
2. Passover celebration
3. Assyrian invasion and deliverance

N. Manasseh 687-643 BC (33.1–20)

1. Extreme wickedness
2. Repentance and restoration

O. Amon 643-641 BC (33.21–25)

1. Wicked reign

P. Josiah 641-609 BC (34–35)

1. Religious reforms – greatest guy ever according to 2 Kings 23.25
2. Discovery of the Law
3. Passover – unparalleled Passover – see 2 Chr. 35.18
4. Death in battle

Q. The Fall of Judah (36)

1. Jehoahaz (609 BC), Jehoiakim (609-598), Jehoiachin (598-597), Zedekiah (597-586)
2. Destruction of Jerusalem (2 Chr. 36.17-21)
3. Cyrus's decree allowing return (2 Chr. 36.22-23)

Key Dates:

United Monarchy under David & Solomon – 1010-930 BC

David – 1010-970 BC

Solomon 970-930 BC

First Temple built 950 BC

Divided Kingdom 930-721 BC

Capture of Israel by Assyria & scattering of the 10 Tribes – 721 BC

Assyrians fail to conquer Jerusalem – 701 BC

Destruction of the First Temple by Babylon – 586 BC

Cyrus defeats Babylon – 539 BC

Return of the Jews – 537 BC

Second Temple built – 516 BC

First & Second Chronicles is written – 400-300 BC

Things Covered in Come Follow Me

2 Chronicles 14-20; 26; 30

2 Chronicles 20

The Kingdom of Judah was surrounded. Armies from three powerful enemy nations were all advancing at once, prepared for battle. In this desperate moment of need, Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, turned to the King of heaven and earth. Jehoshaphat gathered his people at the temple and prayed. He acknowledged their human weakness and pleaded for deliverance. In response, the Lord promised His protection: “Fear not, nor be dismayed” (2 Chronicles 20:17).

We might not have an invading army at our doorstep threatening to destroy us, but sometimes we do feel surrounded by adversity and evil. Our path to deliverance is the same one Jehoshaphat sought, and our prayer can be like his too: “O our God, ... we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee” (2 Chronicles 20:12).

In 2 Chronicles 14–30, you will read about Jehoshaphat and other kings in Judah. Consider how their faith-driven reforms, victories, and challenges can apply to your own life.

2 Chronicles 14-15 – Asa trusts God

2 Chronicles 14–16

Trusting in God will bring me peace.

When Asa was the king of Judah, he faced many challenges—just like we all do today. As you read about the trials he faced, notice where he put his trust and how that changed over time.

Reference	Challenges Asa faced	Where Asa put his trust
2 Chronicles 14:9–12		
2 Chronicles 15:1–8		
2 Chronicles 16:1–10		

Why do we sometimes stop trusting the Lord? What else do you learn from Asa’s life?

What is going on with the discrepancy between Oded and Azariah the son of Oded in 2 Chronicles 15?

The discrepancy between “Azariah son of Oded” (2 Chr 15:1) and “Oded the prophet” (2 Chr 15:8) is best explained as a scribal omission in the Masoretic Text. Ancient versions (LXX, Syriac, Arabic) preserve the fuller reading, “Azariah son of Oded,” which modern translations follow. Most commentators conclude that Azariah is the prophet who delivered the message, and Oded is simply his father.³

2 Chronicles 18

I can defend the truth, even when it’s unpopular.

The prophet Micaiah must have felt a lot of pressure to predict success for the kings Jehoshaphat and Ahab in their war against Syria. Look for evidence of that pressure in 2 Chronicles 18:1–12. What evidence do you find of Micaiah’s courage and integrity in verses 13–27? (Note that in verse 14, Micaiah gives a sarcastic response; his real answer is in verse 16.) How are Micaiah’s words fulfilled in verses 28–34?

What are some situations in which you might face pressure like Micaiah faced? What gives you courage to stand up for the Lord and His teachings?

³ *The Jewish Study Bible*, 1790.

What's going on with the “lying spirit” in 2 Chronicles 18.22?

The “lying spirit” in 2 Chronicles 18 is part of a prophetic vision showing how God’s judgment on Ahab will be carried out. Most commentators agree that God has already decreed Ahab’s death, and the lying spirit is permitted to deceive Ahab’s false prophets so that Ahab goes into battle and dies. Some see the spirit as symbolic, others as an evil spirit, and others (like Michael Heiser) see this false spirit episode as a depiction of the divine council acting under God’s command. Here, a member of the divine council works to deceive Ahab so that he dies. The Chronicler uses the scene to emphasize God’s sovereignty, the reliability of true prophecy, and the danger of rejecting God’s word.

From Michael Heiser we get the following explanation:

This passage, specifically verses 19–22, describes a meeting between God and his divine council. Verse 20 tells us plainly that God had decided it was time for Ahab to die. God then asked the host of heaven standing in attendance how Ahab’s death should be accomplished. God had decreed Ahab was going to die at Ramoth-Gilead, but the means of his death was not decreed. The council debated the matter until one of the spiritual beings came forward with a proposition (vv. 21–22): “I will go out and I will be a false spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.” Upon hearing this, God said (paraphrasing), “Good. I know that will work—go get it done.” There are other glimpses of this kind of divine decision making, where God’s decree and genuine participation on the part of his council are both evident...

The takeaway is that God rules over the heavenly realm and the earthly realm with the genuine assistance of his imager-representatives. He decrees and they carry out his commands. These points are clear. What is perhaps less clear is that the way God’s will is carried out and accomplished is open—imagers can make free decisions to accomplish God’s will. God decrees the ends, but the means can (and apparently are at times) left up to the imagers.⁴

2 Chronicles 20: Three Nations Attack Jerusalem



In the days of King Jehoshaphat, three nations attacked Jerusalem.

As you read 2 Chronicles 20:1–12, look for what King Jehoshaphat did when multiple nations came to attack Judah. How could you apply his actions in the challenging circumstances you face?

The Lord’s response to Jehoshaphat’s prayer is found in verses 14–17.

⁴ Michael Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, 37

What phrases do you find there that could comfort you or someone you know during difficult times?

The following day, the people of Jerusalem went out to meet the opposing army. As you read 2 Chronicles 20:20, look for the message Jehoshaphat gave to the people of Jerusalem. How were his words fulfilled? (see verses 22–23). How has God blessed you for believing in Him and following His prophets?

2 Chronicles 26: Uzziah's Pride

As with many other kings of Judah, Uzziah's reign began with great accomplishments but ended with tragedy. Look for this pattern in 2 Chronicles 26. What would you say was the turning point in Uzziah's life?

As you read verses 16–23, keep in mind that at this time, only priests were allowed to burn incense in the temple. Why do you think King Uzziah disobeyed God? What do you learn from this tragic experience?

2 Chronicles 29-30: Hezekiah Does Good

In 2 Chronicles 30, Hezekiah was the king of Judah. He invited the rival Kingdom of Israel to gather in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover—something the Israelites hadn't been able to do for many years (see verses 1–12). What impresses you about the invitation and how it was received—both by the Israelite guests and by their hosts in Judah?

Because it had been so long, some visitors to Jerusalem were not familiar with the details of how to participate in Passover. As you read 2 Chronicles 30:18–27, what do you learn from Hezekiah's response and the results of his response?

Chronicles doesn't tell us specifics about what was pulled out of the temple in Hezekiah's reign, but Kings does. Why is this? What is the point of skipping over these details?

2 Kings 18 tells us that Hezekiah removed specific idolatrous objects—high places, sacred pillars, Asherah poles, and the bronze serpent. *2 Chronicles 29, however, does not list these items.* Instead, it describes the Temple as defiled and focuses on the removal of “uncleanness” and “filth.” Chronicles intentionally shifts the emphasis from the destruction of idols to the purification of the Temple and the restoration of proper worship. The Chronicler's post-exilic audience needed a model of liturgical renewal, not a catalog of the so-called pagan objects, so he highlights priestly action and ritual cleansing rather than the specific items removed.

Interesting enough, the Nehushtan, or bronze serpent that Hezekiah pulls from the temple, seen so negatively by the historian recording the events in Kings, is seen differently from the authors of the Book of Mormon, who four times refer to the Nehushtan in positive terms.

In the Hebrew Bible, the Nehushtan, or the bronze serpent Moses made in Numbers 21, seems to have eventually become an object of idolatry. By Hezekiah's time, the Deuteronomistic

Historian informs us that people were burning incense to it, so Hezekiah destroyed it (2 Kings 18.4). This historian calls it Nehushtan, meaning “a mere piece of bronze,” emphasizing its degraded status.

The Book of Mormon, however, consistently treats the bronze serpent positively, as a symbol of faith, healing, and Christ’s saving power. It never mentions the later idolatrous misuse. Instead, it preserves the original, wilderness-era meaning of the serpent: a divinely appointed symbol that heals those who look upon it. This creates an alternate interpretive trajectory—one that highlights the serpent’s theological value rather than its later corruption.

The Book of Mormon consistently presents the bronze serpent (Nehushtan) in positive terms, drawing on the original wilderness narrative in Numbers 21 rather than the later negative evaluation in 2 Kings 18. It references the serpent four times—1 Nephi 17.41, 2 Nephi 25.20, Alma 33.19–20, and Helaman 8.14–15—always as a symbol of faith, healing, and Christ’s redemptive work. This reflects an alternate interpretive trajectory in which the serpent remains a divinely appointed type of Christ rather than an object of idolatry. The Book of Mormon authors emphasize the theological meaning of “looking to Christ” and do not engage with the later Deuteronomistic critique of Nehushtan, producing a distinct and consistently positive portrayal of the serpent raised up by Moses as an important type of Christ.