**Survey Old Testament**

**2 Chronicles 1–9 The Kingdom Declines**

1. Most of the information in these chapters is also found in 1 Kings 1–11. Solomon began his reign in fellowship with the Lord, but gradually his heart turned away, and he began to worship the gods of his many foreign wives. Deuteronomy 17:14–20 warned the Hebrew kings not to multiply horses and chariots, wives, or gold, but Solomon did all three (1 Kings 10:14, 26, 28; 11:1–8).
2. While the years of Solomon’s reign were undoubtedly Israel’s greatest in terms of wealth, fame, and political power, they were also the worst in terms of spiritual devotion to the Lord. Yes, Solomon began his reign at the altar, sacrificing to the Lord and asking Him for wisdom, but that didn’t continue. Furthermore, the king lived in luxury because he collected food and taxes from the people. Solomon reorganized the twelve tribes into twelve tax districts, with each district responsible to provide his food one month (1 Kings 4:7–19). When you read the menu for each day, you can well understand why the people felt burdened by his yoke (1 Kings 4:22–25; 12:1–5).

**2 Chronicles 10–12 The Kingdom Divides**

1. Solomon’s son Rehoboam inherited the throne. When Rehoboam tried to go to war with Jeroboam and unite the tribes, God stopped the endeavor because the division was from Him. But both Rehoboam and Jeroboam sinned against the Lord. Rehoboam “forsook the law of the Lord” (12:1) because “he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord” (12:14). When God sent the Egyptian army to chasten the nation, it is to Rehoboam’s credit that he repented and sought the Lord’s help. But he didn’t lead the people back to the Lord.
2. Jeroboam, king of Israel (the Northern Kingdom), was afraid that the people would go back to Jerusalem to worship God, so he set up his own system of worship which was idolatrous. Israel never did come back to the Lord, and the kingdom was eventually swallowed up by Assyria.
3. The only reason God preserved the Southern Kingdom of Judah as long as He did was for the sake of His beloved servant David (1 Kings 11:34–39; 15:4). How much the people owed to David and to the longsuffering of the Lord!
4. From this point on (about 930 B.C.), the kingdom is divided: Judah and Benjamin form the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and the other ten tribes form the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

**2 Chronicles 13–36 The Kingdom Decays**

1. While the kings of Israel were ungodly, several kings in Judah were men of God who sought to bring the people back to the Lord. However, the infection of sin had already gotten into both kingdoms and it was only a matter of time before they would collapse.

**Asa (chaps. 14–16).**

1. Asa led the nation in two reforms as he removed the altars to the foreign gods and commanded the people to return to the Lord. God honored his efforts by giving the nation ten years of peace, during which the king fortified the cities. His victory over the Ethiopians and the message from the prophet Azariah motivated the king to gather all the people together to reaffirm their covenant with Him (15:12). Asa even deposed the Queen Mother and destroyed her idols!
2. How sad it is that in his latter years, Asa stopped trusting the Lord and robbed God’s temple to buy protection from a heathen king. When rebuked by the prophet Hanani, the king didn’t repent; then, when afflicted with an illness, he didn’t turn to the Lord. Good beginnings are no guarantee of good endings.

**Jehoshaphat (chaps. 17–20).**

1. In spite of the fact that he made some unwise decisions, he was one of Judah’s greatest kings. He not only sought God himself, but he sent the priests among the people to teach them the way of the Lord. His first mistake was to marry into the godless family of Israel’s King Ahab, a worshiper of Baal and the husband of wicked Queen Jezebel. It was a marriage of political convenience so that Ahab would be allied with Jehoshaphat. Solomon used this approach to secure treaty rights with other nations (1 Kings 3:1). By making peace with the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat compromised his position politically and religiously.
2. Jehoshaphat’s second mistake was to unite with Ahab in fighting Israel’s enemies. Ahab talked Jehoshaphat into wearing royal robes into battle, which made him a ready target, but God protected Jehoshaphat and saw to it that Ahab was slain.
3. His third mistake was to ally himself with wicked King Ahaziah in an attempt to gain wealth (20:35–37). God wrecked the ships and put the whole enterprise to an end. It’s unfortunate when godly people sometimes lack discernment and get themselves involved in alliances that can only help the enemy and bring disgrace to the name of the Lord.
4. When faced by a combined army of the Moabites and the Ammonites, two ancient enemies of Israel (Gen. 19:30–38; Deut. 23:3; Neh. 13:1), Jehoshaphat put his faith in the Lord, and God gave him a great victory. The combination of prayer (20:3–13), prophecy (20:14–17), and praise (20:18–22) brought him the victory. (We wonder how the choir felt about going out before the army. But worship is a great weapon against the enemy.) Note the words of Jehoshaphat to the Lord. “O our God, won’t you stop them? We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help.”

**Joash (chaps 23-24)**

1. Joash was a miracle boy because his evil grandmother Athaliah had killed all of his siblings, and he alone had survived. The future of David’s line and the messianic promise rested on that little boy! How often in Jewish history Satan tried to kill those who were a part of God’s plan (Gen. 3:15). The godly high priest, Jehoiada, protected Joash and then installed him as king. At the same time, Jehoiada saw to it that Athaliah and her followers were put out of the way. Through the continued spiritual influence of Jehoiada, the king brought about many reforms, especially the restoring of the temple. When the high priest died, however, the king made the same mistake that Rehoboam made in listening to worldly counsel. Joash ended up killing Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, instead of heeding his message from the Lord, and repenting.
2. Joash is a warning to all that we must continue steadfast to the end.

**Uzziah (chap. 26).**

1. He is also called Azariah. After a long and prosperous reign, he ended up trying to become a priest, and God struck him with leprosy. “God helped him” (v. 7) and he went from victory to victory. “He was marvelously helped, till he was strong” (v. 15). Overcome by pride, he intruded into the ministry of the priests in the temple, something forbidden by God. Jesus Christ is the only King-Priest that God will accept. Uzziah is a warning to all of us not to become proud and seek to get involved in things that are outside the will of God.

**Hezekiah (chaps. 29–32).**

1. He was one of Judah’s greatest kings and most devoted spiritual leaders. He repaired the temple and restored the true worship of Jehovah on a scale not seen before. He called the whole nation—Israel and Judah—to observe the Passover together, and he cleansed the land of idols.
2. You would think that such devotion to the Lord would have kept him from problems, but not so. Second Chronicles 32:1 reads, “After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah” (NIV). Obedience sometimes leads to greater testing, for our good and the glory of God. See the notes on 2 Kings 18–20, and read Isa. 37–39.

**Josiah (chaps. 34–35).**

1. Manasseh followed the great King Hezekiah and led the nation into abominable sin. He rebuilt everything evil that his father had destroyed, and destroyed the good things his father had restored. However, in his latter years, Manasseh did repent, and God forgave him. He was followed by Amon, who reigned only two years. Then Josiah came to the throne. If Hezekiah is faulted for his son Manasseh, he certainly must be praised for his grandson Josiah. At the age of sixteen (34:3), Josiah sought the Lord and began to reform the nation and wipe out idolatry. He repaired the temple and restored the Book of the Law. He too celebrated a great Passover and sought to lead the people back to the Lord their God. Unfortunately, King Josiah meddled with a war that was not his concern, and he was wounded in battle and went home to Jerusalem to die. His pride got the best of him, and he thought he could defeat the king of Egypt.
2. After Josiah’s death, the kings of Judah were spiritual weaklings.  The last king was Zedekiah, and then the nation fell to Babylon in 586 B.C.

**The Fall of Judah**

1. Why did Judah decay? Because the people turned from the Lord and worshiped false gods. At first, their godless worship was in secret: they worshiped the Lord in the temple, but also worshiped Baal and other gods in secret. Then they openly turned from the Lord to worship the gods of their enemies. When the Lord sent chastening to them, they repented for a time, but soon they went back to their evil ways. Whenever the Lord would raise up a godly king, his influence didn’t last, because the people “reformed” but didn’t repent and turn to God with all their hearts. Whatever the king did was the popular thing to do, so they did it.
2. The church today must beware of the same kind of spiritual decay. Are we proud of our buildings and budgets and statistics? Is there evidence of true holiness and a fear of God in our worship? Are we dependent on the spiritual leaders God gives us? Are we experiencing success because the Lord is with us or because we cooperate with the world? Do we think that because we have the Bible and church buildings and “successful ministries” that God will overlook our sins and stay His hand of discipline? “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God” (1 Peter 4:17).
3. At any time during those centuries of spiritual decay, the people of Judah could have met the conditions of 2 Chron. 7:14, and God would have healed their land. But they would not turn back to God, so God had to turn against them. What a lesson for God’s people today!