

2 Chronicles

*This is part of an ongoing series of short articles designed to help us understand what scripture is and what is **in** each book of scripture. Previous articles can be found at www.openarms-communityofchrist.org.*

2 Chronicles is the second half of a long book that provided the original ending to the Hebrew Scriptures. This first third covers the reign of Solomon, presenting him as a somewhat idealized character. It begins with him summoning all the people together to worship before the Ark of the Covenant, and then that night asking God for the gift of wisdom and knowledge. Because he asked for that, God also granted him wealth and honor.

Chapters 2-7 deal with the building of the temple, providing specific information about the materials and the dimensions. This portion ends with the dedication of the temple and then moves more specifically into Solomon's reign, including the wives he married and his experience with the queen of Sheba, who came to see for herself this wise ruler.

The final two thirds of this book deals with the kingdom of Judah following Solomon's death. His son, Rehoboam, rejected the advice of Solomon's advisors and laid heavy burdens on his people. This caused a major split, and in a brief portrayal of the northern kingdom (Israel), the writer indicates that "Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day."

The next several kings tossed the kingdom to and fro. Some of the kings followed in the footsteps of Rehoboam, ignoring the law of God and becoming embroiled in multiple wars. Others broke down the idol groves but did not totally remove the idol worship.

Finally Hezekiah became king and brought the people fully back to the worship of God and the land prospered. However, after twenty-nine years, he died and his descendants again tended to waver between idol worship and worshipping God until Josiah, who became king when he was eight. He again brought the people back to the worship of God, but after his death, his descendants again tended to return to idol worship.

The people of Judah were eventually captured and taken to Babylon and the temple destroyed, but the book still ends with hope since King Cyrus of Persia issued an edict saying that "The Lord...has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people...let him go up."