



Reading the book of 2 Chronicles

DID YOU KNOW?

1. In the original Hebrew, the second book of Chronicles begins with the conjunction “and”, which marks the continuation of the historical narrative which began in the first book. Moreover, in the ancient Hebrew Bible, 1 and 2 Chronicles were one book. 2 Chronicles records several reforms, and the most complete account of the famous revival in biblical history, which took place under Hezekiah. (2 Ch. 29 – 31)
2. King Solomon selected workers for his construction project as an army recruits soldiers (2 Ch. 2:2). His policy of forced labor sowed discord in the kingdom, especially among the revolting northern tribes. Staying true to its goal of moral uplift, 2 Chronicles has little to criticize Solomon for.
3. When Solomon said that “for our God is greater than all other gods” (2 Ch. 2:5), he meant that the God of the people of Israel was not a regional, national or land-based God, but the Creator God of the universe.
4. The fact that the king of Tyre placed at king Solomon’s disposal certain skilled men from his kingdom, full of intelligence and knowledge for all kinds of works for the construction of the temple, is a proof of the good political and diplomatic relations that king Solomon had with this kingdom. (2 Ch. 2)
5. As in the Tabernacle, a curtain in the temple separated the holy place from the holy of holies (2 Ch. 3:14). This curtain symbolized the distance between God and the people. Even the priests were forbidden to go beyond this curtain into the presence of God, except on the Day of Atonement. When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain was miraculously torn in two, which meant that Christ opened the way to God. (He. 9 :7-12)
6. The two names: Jakin and Boaz, given to the two (2) pillars in the front of the temple are very significant (2 Ch. 3:17). Jakin, placed on the right, signifies “God will establish”, while Boaz, placed on the left, signifies “in Him is strength”.
7. Until their invasion by Babylon, the Israelites had a visible sign of their treaty or “covenant” with God. It remained in the Ark, Israel’s most sacred piece of furniture that was placed in the city of David before the temple was built. But the Ark was lost during the Babylonian captivity – and could never be found.

8. Solomon's prayer in 2 Chronicles 6 and God's answer in chapter 7 mark a decisive point in Israel's existence as a nation. As one, the Israelites gathered before the shiny new temple. They saw fire coming down from heaven and the glory of God filling the temple. Later, after its destruction, Ezra led a campaign to rebuild it. But the extraordinary scene of the coming down of God's glory is not repeated.
9. Solomon kept Pharaoh's daughter, a foreign heathen, completely away from the Jewish holy places (2 Ch. 8:11). Yet, as the book of Kings shows, he eventually allowed his foreign wives to bring their idols, whose consequences on Israel were disastrous.
10. The personal visit of the queen of Sheba (2 Ch. 9:1-12), who traveled many miles, proves that Jerusalem was an architectural landmark in the Middle East. She was probably on an important diplomatic mission. Solomon's kingdom posed a serious threat to her country, which previously held a commercial monopoly on the route to Israel.
11. The division of God's people into northern and southern kingdoms began with the fall of Rehoboam who would rule only two tribes: Judah and Benjamin; and the rise of King Jeroboam who ruled over the other 10 tribes (2 Ch. 10).
12. 2 Chronicles pays little attention to the rebellion of the ten tribes against the two of Judah (2 Ch. 10:19). As the book of Kings shows, the two kingdoms were neighbors, and the North, Israel, was often more powerful than the South. But Chronicles, written for the survivors of the South, virtually ignores the history of the North. In fact, it often uses the word Israel to refer to the South.
13. After Jeroboam's rebellion, Israel and Judah fought a civil war. Israel was far more numerous, but Judah had an important unifying factor: the temple of God in the city of Jerusalem. Many of Israel's kings had erected idols on the high places as alternative places of worship to dissuade their citizens from making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But when a southern king named Asa initiated a religious revival, members of the northern tribes sometimes came to Jerusalem. (2 Ch. 15 :9)
14. King Asa had a serious illness that some scholars believe was leprosy. The Bible criticizes the fact that he consulted physicians because at that time these "physicians" were pagan healers who used rituals contrary to the law of God. (2 Ch. 16:12)
15. The word "seer" in the biblical context is sometimes used interchangeably with prophet. For example, Hanani was called a seer. (2 Ch. 16:7)
16. Jehoshaphat did not simply follow the way of the Lord but sent people to teach the people the law of the Lord (2 Ch. 17). Jehoshaphat, in establishing the judges over Jerusalem, was reminding them of the laws God had given to Moses even though he did not reference them directly.

17. The book of 2 Chronicles contains two insightful prayers: Salmon's in chapter 6 and Jehoshaphat's in chapter 20. Commentators have always regarded these as models of prayer. Jehoshaphat begins with worship, continues by reminding God of his promise, then states his problem and ends with his request. Confidently, Jehoshaphat thanked God even before receiving his answer.
18. Athaliah, Jezebel's daughter, introduces the worship of Baal and comes close to wiping out David's royal lineage. Conditions have become so difficult in Judah that a priest named Jehoiada has the courage to arm the Levites to overthrow the queen (2 Ch. 23). They then place Joash, the legitimate heir, on the throne, who was only seven years old at the time.
19. The expression "following the ways of the kings of Israel" means walking in disobedience against the law of the Lord. Just as the expression "walking in the ways of the house of Ahab" means to practice idolatry. (2 Ch. 21:13)
20. Joash proved to be equal to his commitments in the early years of his reign. But, like many other kings, he could not tolerate the blaming words of one of God's prophets. The murder committed at his command drew in enemy armies, inspired a plot against him and ruined his reputation forever (2 Ch. 24:17-27). Hundreds of years later, Jesus may have been referring to this incident when he alluded to a murder. (Luke 11 :51 ; Mt. 23 :35)
21. King Uzziah in his pride would personally offer sacrifices in the temple of God, which was contrary to the law of the Lord, which stated that only the priests should perform this function. For usurping the position of the priests, he suffered from a skin disease, which is leprosy, for the rest of his life. (2 Ch. 26:16 – 21)
22. King Hezekiah continued in the same way as King David by restoring the functions of the priests, the singers in the temple of God (2 Ch. 29). He asked the people to pay the offerings according to what was commanded in the law of God so that the priests could live on their duties.
23. Although King Manasseh is described in the Bible as the most ungodly and wicked king of the kings of Judah, when he humbled himself before God, he was forgiven. (2 Ch. 33: 12-13)
24. Some historians believe that the Valley of Megiddo was the scene of more battles and bloodshed than any other place in the world (2 Ch. 35:22). This valley, which overlooks the main trade route of Canaan linking the North to the South, is of strategic importance. It is reported in the book of Revelation that the last battle of this generation, Armageddon, will take place there. (Rev. 16 :16)

25. For nearly 70 years, the Jews had no temple (2 Ch. 36:18-19). The first local synagogues and meeting places probably arose during this period. The Jews could go there to hear the words of the Old Testament and to pray. The very last verses of Chronicles announce a moment of hope after the reconstruction of the temple. These verses are taken from the beginning of the book of Ezra. Many scholars believe that Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one book.