

Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

Week 20: 2 Chronicles 13-36 *From Abijah to the Exile*

Welcome to Week 20 of the Bible reading coach podcast. My name is Karl Vaters and I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks.

This week, we're going to finish up the retelling of Israel's history from its height to its collapse. As we start the reading this week in Second Chronicles, Israel has been torn into two nations. In the north, they're still called Israel. And that's 10 tribes in the south, they're now called Judah, which is the main of the two big tribes, and they are called Judah or the southern kingdom. So northern kingdom, Southern Kingdom, Israel, Judah, from this point on, when we hear the name Israel, we're not referring to the entire nation anymore. We're just referring to the northern kingdom. And what we're referring to Judah, we're referring to a kingdom about the same size and power in the south where Jerusalem is its capital.

So as a reminder, again, unlike how we heard the story already, and first and second, Samuel imprisoned Second Kings, the Chronicles focus almost exclusively on the southern kingdom of Judah from this point on these books First and Second Chronicles again, were written after the exile when they were coming back and wanting to rebuild it. They were written during the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, which will be coming up right after this week. And it's written as an encouragement to those who are reestablishing the nation during the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.

So again, that kind of sets the table for what we'll be reading this week, so that when you have *deja vu* one more time, the same events, you'll know why. So let's take a look at what we'll be seeing this week. First of all, and Second Chronicles, we'll be starting with verses with chapters 13 through 17. And we're going to see a series of kings of Judah, who mostly did what God asked, and the kingdom did well, whenever they did what God asked, I want you to also note, you've probably seen this already, and maybe wondered about it. So let me point it out to you. Every so often, you're gonna see a verse like Second Chronicles 13:22, which reads this, "The other events of Abijah's reign, what he did, and what he said are written in the annotations of the Prophet Iddo." You'll see that or a different place that it was also written in and you may wonder, what are they talking about? There's another book that should be in the Bible? No, no. There were other record books that were kept at the time, these records were kept in different places so that they would be secured and not be lost. These other records were not written as scripture. And so they've been lost to history. But just because it was referenced doesn't mean the other thing is scripture, it just simply means it also was written down there, as well.

Another thing to note, as you go through these is you'll see verses like this, a Second Chronicles 14:2. "Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of his God." Notice every time it says a king was good, notice the good things that followed. Every time you read a king was evil, notice the bad things that followed. It's a pattern that we see repeated over and over and over again. So even when we get to the point where it's one king after another and your eyes want to glaze over, don't lose sight of that pattern, that pattern matters.

Okay. Then we move to Second Chronicles 18 through 20. And the reign of a king named Jehoshaphat. That was always one of the names that when we were kids anytime that was read about we had some giggles, right Jehoshaphat was one of those funny names for

kids. This is one of the few times in the Chronicles that we will see events in the north. What happens is Jehoshaphat, the southern king goes to the northern king and he wants to have an ally. He wants to make an ally of them. But the northern kingdom is so far away from God that he has to this happens in Second Chronicles 18:6, "But Jehoshaphat asked 'Is there no longer a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?'" Think about this, Jehoshaphat the king from the south goes to the north, when he's in the north to try to make an ally to try to make a treaty between the two kingdoms that used to be one kingdom. They want to pray to God, the northern King brings in only pagan priests and Joseph that looks around and goes, isn't there even like a single prophet of God left? Is that how evil you've become? And the answer, of course, is yeah, that's how bad that's how bad they've gotten to it's really extraordinary.

We then see in Second Chronicles 21, through 22, how bad kings begin to arise even in the southern kingdom, Jehoram and a desire, they come along and they act more like the northern pagan kings, and things start going really bad even in the southern kingdom. We then get to chapters 23 and 24. And these are two chapters that we know less about than we should so let me quickly overview the story for you so you can look forward to it when you read it this week.

The mother of an evil king kills all the legitimate heirs to the throne or so she thinks so that she can take over after her son dies. I mean think about this, you're killing your own family members because you want to be queen so bad. So after her son dies, she becomes queen right? One legitimate heir is spared in secret as a baby and is hidden in the temple for six years, they grab one of the babies who is a legitimate heir and hide the baby in the temple for six years. And then at seven years of age, they bring him out, they crown him. The aides to the seven year old King kill the usurper to the throne. And this seven year old turns the nation back to God. The seven year old is known as Joash. He turned the nation back to God. Sadly though, as we'll read this turning back to God doesn't last very long. He ended up turning back to idols. Again, a prophet warns him that this is bad, and they ended up killing Joash. So there's a little bit of glimmer, and then it fades again.

We then have Second Chronicles 25 and 26, where we're going to see two kings who turn bad, you're gonna see this happen a lot in both the Bible and in history. When they humble themselves to God, God blesses them. Then because of God's blessings, they get filled with pride, thinking, hey, we did this. And then they have to get brought low. Again, it goes up and down, up and down. A humility, pride, humility, pride, it happens. It's just a human thing that we see recurring all the time, we'll then go to Second Chronicles, 27, and 28, where we'll see a good king, and a bad king. And at this point, as you're reading through, some of it may all blur together.

So here's again, something else to point out as you're going through this, it's easy to forget the passage of time that happens, especially when the story is told so quickly. So in 27, and 28, as an example, we have two kings, Joseph, and Ahaz. And we know very little about them. We know that Joseph is good, we know that Ahaz is evil. But take a look at the numbers. They both reigned 16 years for a total of 32 years, which is more than half of an average lifespan at the time. And when you take a look at all of Second Chronicles, the entire book of Second Chronicles. The amount of time that we zip through in Second Chronicles is over 400 years. From where we are reading it now that's back to the writing of the King James Version. That's back to the landing of the Mayflower. Okay, so we read through Second Chronicles and

we think zip zip. It's from the Mayflower till today. That's how long we're, that's the span of time we'll be reading about in Second Chronicles.

So that's why the timestamps matter it can be challenging to read, but when you put the timestamps together, and you realize how long it takes, it's important from a historical perspective, to realize how long the bad things happened and how a merciful and patient God was when we're not talking a generation or two, or even, you know, a century or two, we're talking over four centuries, that God was patient with them as they continued to do evil things. Okay, so just pay attention to that. That's why the timestamps matter.

Then in Second Chronicles, 29, through 32. We have King Hezekiah. Here's a funny little note about King Hezekiah. If, if you told a roomful of Christians turn to the Book of Hezekiah. A whole lot of them would try to, Hezekiah is one of those names that sounds like it should be a Bible book, but it's not he was a king and he had a great reign, he actually cleansed the temple of idol worship that he has before him had allowed. And then Jerusalem was attacked by Assyria. But they prayed to God, God actually sent angels to attack Syria and to protect them, and they ran home defeated. It's one of those almost forgotten but really fascinating stories out of Scripture.

We then in chapter 33 of Second Chronicles will see the reign of Manasa, who ruled for 55 evil years. Yeah, Hezekiah's son Manasa became King when he was 12. He reigned for 55 years, which is the longest reign of any king of Israel or Judah. And he was one of their worst kings Israel. He was so bad the Babylon put him in chains. And then amazingly, we'll see him as he repents and is restored. Here's one of the spots that Second Chronicles tells it differently than Second Kings or add something Second Kings didn't have in Second Kings, we only see the bad about Manasa. Second Chronicles tells us that, in fact, he repented and restored at the end, and then Amman became king in Amman was so bad that his own people will kill him and think you know what, we're just going to put his eight year old son in charge because an eight year old kid will do better than this guy.

And that's when we get to chapters 34 and 35 of Second Chronicles and we'll read about the kingship of Josiah and we have the one last glimmer of hope. He is the last great king of Judah, he starts to clean everything up. Everything had become so bad for such a long period of time, that they had actually lost the Bible. They lost the scriptures. They had no idea it was anywhere. They fight as he's cleaning the temple up because they're just been pagan worship for so long. They find the scrolls that contain the Bible. They read it, it causes them to repent when they read what they have and what has been written in scriptures. They celebrate the Passover for the first time in decades and decades. And then finally Josiah is killed in battle against Pharaoh Neco of Egypt. And after this, Judah comes under Egypt's rule.

We then have Josiah's sons who lead until the exile and that's where the last chapter of Second Chronicles will take us, we're going to see the final four kings. And they're really just mouthpieces of Egypt, who's really in charge, and then they become mouthpieces of Babylon, who are really in charge. Josiah's sons are three of the final four kings of Israel, two of them rule for just a couple months. And then Zedekiah becomes the last king until the Persian Empire takes over. And after this date, which is 586 BC, we know the date because of the record keeping on both sides on in both kingdoms here.

After this date, 586 BC, Israel will always be ruled by other kings for the rest of their history, with two exceptions, which we talked about earlier. But let me remind you of them again,

from 586 BCE. Until today, Israel has always been ruled by somebody else with two exceptions, what's called the Hasmonean era of 80 years between the Testaments. And since 1947, until today, which is 75 years so far. So except for those two seasons, and who knows how long this season will last for all the rest of that time, from 586 until today, so we're talking 2600 years of history, Israel has only been independent and free of outside reign for just a little over 150 years, and counting.

So as we read this week, what are we going to pay attention to. First of all, pay attention to the long passage of time, how long they are evil, and how long God is patient with them. And take a look that there is hope, even in the long periods of bad decisions that God eventually does, restore them back. Again, there's hope, even in the middle of trial, even in the middle of a long season to trial, take a look for that today. We'll need it, because it'll be a challenge otherwise, but there's also such great stuff. So lean into it, take a look at it. Note those things that I pointed out for you. It'll help it to really come alive for you because there's great stuff this week. All right, we'll see you next time.

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