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Journal of
HEBREW SCRIPTURES



VOLUME 21 | ARTICLE 3

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Articles in JHS are being indexed in the ATLA Religion Database, RAMBI, and BiBIL. Their abstracts appear in Religious and Theological Abstracts. The journal is archived by Library and Archives Canada and is accessible for consultation and research at the Electronic Collection site maintained by Library and Archives Canada.

ISSN 1203-1542 <http://www.jhsonline.org> and <http://purl.org/jhs>

THE TEMPLE CONTEXT FOR THE LAW IN CHRONICLES*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Scholars have long recognized the Chronicler's aim to show that Israel's God rewards positive behavior and punishes those who act sinfully, a doctrine commonly known as "Retribution Theology."¹ Ben Zvi has pointed out that this trend clearly does not apply to all actions in Chronicles since, for example, Hanani and Zechariah both suffered for their piety (cf. 2 Chr 16:7–10a; 24:20–22).² Although several have made proposals regarding why the Chronicler integrated the retribution theme into his work, they still have not come to consensus on precisely what types of behavior the Chronicler projects Israel's God to commend or to judge.

Earlier scholars such as Wellhausen and Noth suggested that the Chronicler shows divine blessing and punishment with respect to adherence to the Mosaic law, yet neither demonstrated this with a survey of the relevant texts.³ The "law" (תורה) and other related

* An earlier version of this essay was presented at the 2016 Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in San Antonio, TX and I would like to thank those who gave comments. I would also like to thank the anonymous JHS reviewers, whose comments and suggestions helped to improve the quality of this paper.

¹ B. E. Kelly has done the most comprehensive review of the research with regard to this topic in *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (JSOTSup, 211; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 29–110, and also his later essay "Retribution' Revisited: Covenant, Grace and Restoration," in M. P. Graham, S. L. McKenzie and G. N. Knoppers (eds.), *The Chronicler as Theologian* (JSOTSup, 371; London: T & T Clark, 2003), 206–27. See also S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (trans. A. Barber; BEATAJ, 9; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1989), 150–98.

² E. Ben Zvi, "The Book of Chronicles: Another Look," *JR* 31 (2002): 261–281 (264). Followed by R. W. Klein, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 11–12.

³ J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (trans. J. Sutherland Black and A. Menzies; New York: Meridian, 1957), 203; M. Noth, *The Chronicler's History* (trans. H. G. M. Williamson; JSOTSup, 50;

terms feature heavily in the evaluation of Israel's monarchs throughout the books of Kings, so it would be easy to assume that they play a similar role in Chronicles. However, of the nineteen times תורה occurs in Chronicles, the word has a parallel only four times.⁴ Additionally, the term for "commandment" (מצוה) occurs twenty-one times, yet only two of these have parallels.⁵ These insertions show that the Chronicler likely used the terms in his own distinctive way.⁶ Other relevant terms will be discussed later insofar as they shed light on the Chronicler's sense of the Mosaic law.

Recent research has demonstrated the central role of the temple, an institution of immense importance for post-exilic Israel, in the Chronicler's theology.⁷ By showing how Israel prospered when it took care of the temple and maintained its practices in the monarchic past, the Chronicler encourages his contemporary audience to preserve the rebuilt temple above any other priority.⁸ This promotion of the temple surfaces clearly in comparisons with parallels from the books of Samuel, Kings, and other canonical sources.⁹ Sometimes the Chronicler creates a completely different storyline by adding a new episode (or more) to the sequence of events. For example, in the account of Hezekiah's reign, he adds three chapters of extensive temple preparations before Sennacherib's attack to show how Judah placed all of its hope in their God, not a large army, to fend off such a formidable threat (2 Chr 29–32 // 2 Kgs 18–20). On a

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 98.

⁴ See 2 Chr 25:4 // 2 Kgs 14:6; 2 Chr 33:8 // 2 Kgs 21:8; 2 Chr 34:15, 19 // 2 Kgs 22:8, 11.

⁵ See 2 Chr 7:19 // 1 Kgs 9:6; 2 Chr 34:31 // 2 Kgs 23:3.

⁶ Several scholars have noted the Chronicler's inclination to use paradigmatic vocabulary throughout his narrative to portray kings concisely, either positively or negatively. See D. A. Glatt-Gilad, "The Root *kn'* and Historiographic Periodization in Chronicles," *CBQ* 64 (2002): 248–257; T. D. Cudworth, "The Davidic 'Heart' in Chronicles," *CBQ* 81 (2019): 204–216; Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 51–63. L. C. Jonker analyzes several key terms that he asserts the Chronicler uses to convey proper participation in cultic functions, "What Do the 'Good' and the 'Bad' Kings Have in Common? Genre and Terminological Patterns in the Chronicler's Royal Narratives," *JSem* 21 (2012): 340–73 (364).

⁷ M. Lynch, *Monotheism and Institutions in the Book of Chronicles* (FAT, 64; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 72–136; S. Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia in Chronicles* (LHBOTS, 442; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 132–75.

⁸ T. D. Cudworth, *War in Chronicles: Temple Faithfulness and Israel's Place in the Land* (LHBOTS, 627; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016).

⁹ For the view that the Chronicler used the books of Samuel and Kings, even if it was not identical to the MT of these books, see R. W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 30–37; G. N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 12A; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 66–71. A. G. Auld argues that the authors of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles share a common source, *Kings without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994).

much smaller scale, the Chronicler adds his brief, stinging commentary toward Asa in the form of a prophetic rebuke for his decision to seek help from Ben-hadad of Aram against the encroaching northern king Baasha (2 Chr 16:7–9). The same episode in 1 Kgs 15:17–22 does not seem to portray Asa negatively.¹⁰ As the seer Hanani explains, Asa sought Yahweh’s help in his previous battle against Zerah’s much more numerous army based on the provision in 2 Chr 7:14–15 for all who call on Israel’s God in the temple (see 14:7–14, esp. v. 10).¹¹

This paper will argue that the Chronicler’s many allusions to the law with words such as *תורה*, *מצוה*, and other related terms most often show the divine rewards and punishments for kings based on their actions towards the temple. The next section will show how the law refers primarily to a prohibition from idolatry in the books of Kings. The subsequent sections will then focus on the Chronicler’s adaptation, which makes adherence to the law a matter of turning to the temple and observing its rites and practices.

2. THE LAW IN THE BOOKS OF KINGS

References to the law appear at several watershed moments in the books of Kings to urge the people of Israel, and especially its kings, to abstain from idolatry. This theme begins with David, who first admonishes Solomon to keep the charge of Yahweh “as it is written in the law (*תורה*) of Moses” so that his descendants can always rule over Israel (1 Kgs 2:3).¹² Yahweh reiterates to Solomon that he must keep all his commandments at different points in his reign (see 3:14; 6:12) and Solomon himself prays that he and the people would do the same (8:58, 61). Although none of these verses specify what an adherence to the law entails,¹³ Yahweh’s words to Solomon in 9:3–

¹⁰ P. S. Evans, “The Function of the Chronicler’s Temple Despoliation Notices in Light of Imperial Realities in Yehud,” *JBL* 129 (2010): 31–47 (33–34); Cudworth, *War in Chronicles*, 122–23.

¹¹ Verse numbers follow the Hebrew Bible. Several have stressed the importance of 2 Chr 7:14–15 to the Chronicler’s theology, see H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982), 225–226; R. B. Dillard, “Reward and Punishment in Chronicles: The Theology of Immediate Retribution,” *WTJ* 46 (1984): 164–72; G. N. Knoppers, “Jerusalem at War in Chronicles,” in R. S. Hess and G. J. Wenham (eds.), *Zion, City of Our God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 57–76 (63).

¹² All translations are my own. The words *תורה* (2 Sam 7:19) and *מצוה* (1 Sam 13:13) each occur only once in the books of Samuel. Neither occurrence appears relevant to this study.

¹³ Admittedly, the mention of statutes, ordinances, and commandments in 1 Kgs 6:12 appears in the context of the temple, at the conclusion of its construction. However, this literary placement does not suggest that the content of the law consists of temple rites or maintenance (which is the Chronicler’s theme, as will be seen later), but rather cautions the king that the divine presence in the temple is conditioned on obedience.

9 directly relate keeping the law to not serving other gods (especially vv. 4–6). The summarizing statement at the end of Solomon’s reign also centers the law on idolatry. In 1 Kgs 11:10, it avers that Yahweh became angry with Solomon because Yahweh “had commanded (צוה) him about this matter, that he should not follow other gods, but he did not observe what Yahweh had commanded (צוה).” By referring to what Yahweh commanded earlier, this verse places the emphasis from previous allusions to the law and commandments in Solomon’s reign more squarely on idolatry.¹⁴

Immediately after Solomon, the books of Kings suggest that his servant Jeroboam had the same opportunity for a long-lasting kingdom, “And if you will listen to all that I command you, walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes (חקה) and my commandments (מצוה) as David my servant did . . . I will build you an enduring house” (1 Kgs 11:38).¹⁵ However, neither did he succeed because he set up the golden calves, “Yet you have not been like my servant David who kept my *commandments*. . . but have done evil above all who were before you and have gone and made for yourself other gods and cast images” (14:8–9). Again, the account associates obedience to the law with abstention from idolatry.

The books of Kings condemn several later kings for “walking in the way/sins of Jeroboam,” phrases that allude to the idolatrous centers he established in the northern kingdom.¹⁶ The account in 1 Kgs 16:25 states that Omri did more evil than all who were before him, then explains in v. 26, “For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and in the sins that he made Israel to sin, provoking Yahweh, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols.” A few verses later, it states that his son Ahab did even more evil than him. In addition to walking in the sins of Jeroboam, he also married the Sidonian king’s daughter Jezebel, who led him to worship Baal (vv. 30–31). The prophet Elijah relates these charges to the law when he calls Ahab the troubler of Israel because he has “forsaken the *commandments* of Yahweh and followed the Baals” (18:18).

The connection between the law and the idolatrous centers Jeroboam installed also occurs in the account of Jehu’s reign. In 2 Kgs 10:29 it states, “But Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin, the golden calves that were in Bethel and Dan.” The account restates the accusation slightly differently two verses later, but this time connects his sin to

¹⁴ The evaluation in 1 Kgs 11.1–9 states that Solomon followed other gods because of his many foreign wives. V. Fritz argues that only Deuteronomical law generally forbids marriage with non-Israelites (Deut 7:1–4); *1 & 2 Kings: A Continental Commentary* (trans. Anselm Hagedorn; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 131.

¹⁵ The word חקה/קח occurs two times in Samuel, nineteen times in Kings, and nine times in Chronicles with three parallel texts (1 Kgs 9:4, 6 // 2 Chr 7:17, 19; 2 Kgs 23:3 // 2 Chr 34:31).

¹⁶ Cf. 1 Kgs 15:30, 34; 16:2, 19, 26, 31; 22:52; 2 Kgs 3:3; 10:29, 31; 13:2, 11; 14:24; 15:9; 18, 24, 28; 17:22.

the law, “But Jehu was not careful to walk in the *law* of Yahweh, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam, which he made Israel to sin” (10:31). Hence, Jehu’s neglect of the law meant that he led the people into idolatry with Jeroboam’s golden calves.

The books of Kings finish their account of the northern kingdom with a description of its exile in 2 Kgs 17:7–23 and the foreign inhabitation in vv. 24–41. This text first explains how the people engaged in many different forms of idolatry such as “they feared other gods” (v. 7), “built for themselves high places” (v. 9), “set up for themselves pillars and Asherim” (v. 10), and “served idols” (v. 12). The following warning relates the previous behaviors to breaking the law, “Turn from your evil ways and keep my *commandments* and *statutes*, in accordance with all the *law* that I commanded your fathers and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets” (v. 13). The passage continues to make this connection a few verses later, “And they abandoned all the *commandments* of Yahweh their God and made for themselves cast images of two calves, they made an Asherah, worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal” (v. 16). The account reiterates the mandate one last time to those who would repopulate the northern kingdom in v. 37, “And the *statutes*, the rules (משפּט), the *law*, and the *commandment* that he wrote for you, you shall always be careful to observe. You shall not fear other gods.”¹⁷ As the books of Kings conclude their account of the northern kingdom, they assert that it could never shed the idolatrous ways of Jeroboam, which they place in the context of a failure to observe the law.

As for the southern kingdom, the law appears in the reigns of three kings that are relevant to this study.¹⁸ First, 2 Kings 18:6 states: “For he (Hezekiah) held fast to Yahweh. He did not depart from following him, but he kept the *commandments* that Yahweh commanded Moses.” The context for this law obedience comes earlier in v. 4, “He removed the high places, broke the pillars, and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan).”¹⁹ The passage also juxtaposes Hezekiah’s law observance with the exile of the northern kingdom that happened during his reign, a punishment they received because

¹⁷ The word משפּט occurs twelve times in Samuel, twenty-nine times in Kings, and twenty-two times in Chronicles with five parallel texts (2 Sam 8:15 // 1 Chr 18:14; 1 Kgs 8:45, 49 // 2 Chr 6:35, 39; 1 Kgs 9:4 // 2 Chr 7:17; 1 Kgs 10:9 // 2 Chr 9:8).

¹⁸ Amaziah obeys “the book of the law of Moses” when he put to death the murderers of his father the king, but he did not put to death their children (2 Kgs 14:5–6). This instance does not appear to involve idolatry. Analysis for this passage in the context of Chronicles will come later in this paper.

¹⁹ M. A. Sweeney suggests that the bronze serpent was probably a typical Canaanite fertility symbol adapted to the Judean religious context; *I & II Kings* (OTL; Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 2007), 403.

they did not follow “all that Yahweh’s servant Moses commanded” (v. 12). The earlier analysis for 2 Kgs 17:7–41 showed that the books of Kings related this law disobedience to the worship of other gods.

In contrast, the books of Kings later criticize Hezekiah’s son Manasseh because he “rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed” (21:3a). This passage continues with a long list of idolatrous practices that he set up in Judah (vv. 3b–7). In the conclusion to this detailed summary of his reign, it ties them to Israel’s inability to do “according to all the *law* that my servant Moses commanded them” (v. 8).

These idolatrous centers become the basis for Josiah’s later reforms. In 22:8, Hilkiah the high priest finds the “book of the law” in the temple and soon afterwards Shaphan the secretary reads it before Josiah (v. 11). Upon hearing its contents, Josiah gathers the people and makes a covenant with Yahweh “to keep his *commandments*, his testimonies, and his *statutes* with all his heart and all his soul” (23:3). Subsequently, the account provides a long list of idolatrous centers that Josiah removes in vv. 4–20, making a connection once again to the law. Verse 24 adds more to the list of idolatry that Josiah removes and his purpose in doing so, “And also the mediums, wizards, teraphim, idols, and all the abominations. . . Josiah burned in order (למען) to establish the words of the *law* . . .” For all his work to rid the land of idolatrous practices, the books of Kings give him unmatched praise in the wording of Deut 6:5, “Before him there was no king like him, who turned to Yahweh with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the *law* of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him” (v. 25).

In all these occurrences, the books of Kings focus the various words for the Mosaic law primarily on Israel’s mandate to worship Yahweh alone and not in addition to foreign gods. The Chronicler does not keep this emphasis found in the books of Kings, but he shows how law observance relates to proper worship at the temple. The following section will analyze texts that portray several kings favorably, other good kings less favorably, and then finally some kings negatively.

3. LAW-OBSERVANT KINGS IN CHRONICLES

Whereas the books of Samuel and Kings rarely mention the law or commandments in the context of David’s life, David repeatedly stresses their importance to Solomon throughout the Chronicler’s large addition in 1 Chr 22–29.²⁰ In 22:6–11, David explains why he

²⁰ Several scholars have acknowledged these chapters as a place where the Chronicler particularly imports his own theology. Cf. R. Braun, “Solomon, the Chosen Temple Builder: The Significance of 1 Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Theology of Chronicles,” *JBL* 95 (1976): 581–90. See the very thorough treatment by G. N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 12B; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 765–966. R. W. Klein compares David’s speeches in these chapters

himself could not build the temple and then charges his son to do it. He next gives him the warning in vv. 12–13a, “Only, may Yahweh grant you discretion and understanding, that when he gives you charge over Israel you may keep the *law* of Yahweh your God. Then you will prosper if you are careful to observe the *statutes* and the *rules* that Yahweh commanded Moses for Israel.” David then reiterates in 22:13b–16 that this observance of the law relates directly to Solomon’s commission to build the temple.

In a later speech, at the beginning of 1 Chronicles 28, David gives a similar explanation to the people as to why he cannot build the temple, but that Solomon must do it. He then explains in vv. 7–8 that Yahweh will establish Solomon’s kingdom forever, “if he continues strong in keeping [Yahweh’s] *commandments* and *rules* as he is today,” and also encourages the people to “observe and seek out all the *commandments*” so that they can prosper too. David again elucidates what such law observance entails in the conclusion of this speech at v. 10, where he gives Solomon a final charge to build the temple.

David repeats this theme one more time in his final prayer to Yahweh (29:10–19). It ends with the supplication, “Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your *commandments*, your testimonies, and your *statutes*, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision” (v. 19). In each of these speeches, David urges Solomon and the people to keep the law, but at no point does he warn them to refrain from building high places or worshiping other gods, even if the Chronicler would agree that those are worthy ideals. Rather, the speeches aim to focus Solomon and the people directly on the construction of the temple and the references to the law (and related terms) make the most sense as stipulations within this greater mandate.

An insertion by the Chronicler in the account of Solomon’s reign confirms this interpretation. In Solomon’s temple dedication speech, immediately after he finished construction, he reiterated the condition for the promise Yahweh made to him. In 2 Chr 6:16 Solomon prays, “Now therefore, O Yahweh, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons keep to their way, to walk in my *law* as you have walked before me.’” The parallel in 1 Kgs 8:25 has the phrase “before me” instead of “in my law.”²¹ Then, in the next verse, Solomon speaks as though he has just fulfilled this stipulation, “Now therefore, O Yahweh, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed” (v. 17).

with his “last words” in the books of Samuel and Kings, “The Last Words of David,” *CurTM* 31 (2005): 15–23.

²¹ 2 Chr 6:16 LXX has “in my name,” but *ὀνόματί* may have simply been miswritten from *νόμῳ*. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 82.

For the Chronicler's Solomon, to walk in Yahweh's law meant finishing the construction of the temple.²²

With the temple now built, later insertions of the "law" and related words show that certain kings maintained orthodox temple practices. Starting with Solomon, the Chronicler states in 8:13 that he offered up burnt offerings on the new altar "according to the *commandment* of Moses."²³ This contrasts with the books of Kings, which do not mention much that he did with regard to the temple after its dedication.²⁴

Hezekiah accomplished more than any other king for the temple in the divided monarchy and the Chronicler describes his efforts as fulfilling the law on several occasions. The first three chapters of his reign (2 Chr 29–31) show how he revived the temple cult after his father Ahaz had shut it down (28:24). The Chronicler concludes Hezekiah's reforms with a summarizing statement, "And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the *law* and the *commandments*, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and he prospered" (31:21). In the reforms themselves, the priests and Levites take their accustomed posts "according to the *law* of Moses" (30:16). Later on, Hezekiah contributes to various burnt offerings "as it is written in the *law* of Yahweh" (31:3). He then commands the people of Jerusalem to give to the priests so that they can "devote themselves to the *law* of Yahweh" (v. 4). Each of these verses equates law observance with supporting the function of temple routines.

As for Josiah, the books of Kings present him as the paragon of law observance since he removed idolatry on a large scale when he heard from the book of the law for the first time (2 Kgs 23:4–20, see above).²⁵ The Chronicler mentions similar reforms in the same place very briefly (2 Chr 34:33), but asserts that Josiah does most of

²² This survey of texts does not include 2 Chr 7:19, which relates turning aside from the commandments with worshiping other gods. The Chronicler borrows this verse with very little adaptation from 1 Kgs 9:6 since the larger passage allows him to maintain an important theme, namely, that there will be consequences for Israel if they do not turn to the temple in repentance after they sin (7:12–22, especially vv. 14–15). See S. M. McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 250.

²³ I. Kislev argues that the Chronicler emphasizes the altar, no longer the ark, as the agent that draws the divine presence into the temple, "The Role of the Altar in the Book of Chronicles," *JHS* 20 (2020): 1–16 (16).

²⁴ L. C. Jonker points out that the parallel text in 1 Kgs 9:25 gives a much more concise description to the offerings Solomon made to the altar in the temple. He suggests that Pentateuchal texts such as Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28–29, which describe similar festivals, could have provided some of the details to the Chronicler's more detailed account; *1 & 2 Chronicles* (Understanding the Bible Commentary Series; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 196.

²⁵ The books of Kings mention the temple several times in this passage, but every time it describes how Josiah removed idolatry (2 Kgs 23:4, 6, 11, 12).

this work *before* the discovery of the book of the law (see vv. 3–7). This literary adaptation brings Josiah’s hearing of the law in much closer proximity to his observance of the Passover (35:1–19), an event the books of Kings record with very little detail (2 Kgs 23:21–23).²⁶ The Chronicler, on the other hand, expands it greatly to show that Josiah celebrated the Passover at the temple (v. 2) and that he took care to perform the service according to what was written in the book of Moses (see vv. 6, 12 and also the phrase “according to the *rule*” in v. 13).²⁷ Additionally, many of the details in the episode focus on the actions of the priests, Levites, and the ceremonial offerings.

Two final examples may be added to show the temple’s connection to adherence to the law. First, although not a king, Jehoiada also aimed to keep the law through temple reforms. The Chronicler states that, after he removed the Baal cult from Judah, he reestablished oversight for the temple to the Levites, so that they could “offer burnt offerings to Yahweh, as it is written in the *law* of Moses” (23:18). Secondly, even before David had expressed his desire to build the temple (1 Chr 17), the Chronicler portrays him as law-observant for his support of the temple’s precursor. After David had finally transferred the ark to Jerusalem, the text says in 16:40 that he left the priests in front of the tabernacle at Gibeon so that they could do “all that is written in the *law* of Yahweh that he commanded Israel” (see also 15:15). All these additions by the Chronicler demonstrate that he used observance of the law and commandments to assess the kings. In each occurrence, he points out how the king obeys the law by supporting orthodox temple (cultic) practices rather than, as in the books of Kings, removing idolatry.

4. LESS POSITIVE LAW-OBSERVANT KINGS IN CHRONICLES

The above survey can shed light on why some ostensibly good kings did not prosper as much as it seems they should have. For example, the Chronicler borrows the introductory material for the reign of Amaziah that commends him for punishing only his father’s conspirators and not their children, “according to what is written in the *law*, in the book of Moses” (see 2 Chr 25:4 // 2 Kgs 14:6). Since this law observance has nothing to do with the temple and its practices, the Chronicler does not reward it as he does the pious behavior of other kings. At best, he categorizes it as mediocre, “And he did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, *yet not with a whole heart*” (2 Chr

²⁶ I. Provan notes that the books of Kings provide this (brief) account of the event to show how Josiah fulfilled the stipulations of Deut 16:1–8, especially v. 6; cf. *1 and 2 Kings* (NIBCOT; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 274.

²⁷ For the Chronicler’s use of literary-chronological proximity to bind texts, see I. Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 18–35.

25:2; with the last clause not appearing in the parallel at 2 Kgs 14:3). The Chronicler continues to illustrate Amaziah's half-hearted devotion in the following episodes and then shows how he eventually adopts Edomite gods and worships them (v. 14).²⁸

The Chronicler's presentation of Asa's reign provides another example of a king who has a positive evaluation (2 Chr 14:1 // 1 Kgs 15:11), in part for his observance of the law. In 14:3 the text states that Asa commanded Judah "to keep the *law* and the *commandment*," and the surrounding verses show that this meant he set out to remove idolatrous centers. The broader context, however, does not show any reward. The *rest* that Judah enjoys at the beginning of Asa's reign comes from the faithfulness of Abijah before him since **טקש** typically follows after success in battle.²⁹ Asa's building projects and accumulation of a large army do not represent reward either, but show how he trusted more in his tangible, physical defenses rather than Yahweh.³⁰ Asa does eventually receive reward, but only for his actions toward the temple. First, he cried out to Yahweh for help (instead of relying on his own forces) in the face of Zerah's immense army, according to Yahweh's promise to hear prayers made at the temple in 7:14–15, so Yahweh provided deliverance (14:11). Later, 2 Chr 15:8–14 tells how Asa called upon the people to take part in a temple reform and so in v. 15 Yahweh gave them rest on all sides.

Finally, the Chronicler notes that Jehoshaphat "walked in his (God's) *commandments*" in that he did not seek the Baals as the northern kingdom did but removed the high places and the Asherim out of Judah (17:3–6). It then reports that he sent officials throughout Judah to teach, "having the book of the *law* of Yahweh with them" (vv. 7–9). While the Chronicler certainly does not criticize these actions, he does not show that he received much reward (if at all) for them either. The following verses note that the surrounding kingdoms did not attack him (v. 10) and even brought him tribute (v. 11), blessings that certainly flow from Jehoshaphat's resistance to idolatry. However, the scene ultimately demonstrates that his adherence to the law still fell short. The Chronicler shows that Jehoshaphat used this period of peace and prosperity to build his defenses rather than do anything on behalf of the temple (vv. 12–19) and he also made an alliance with the idolatrous northern king Ahab (18:1–34). Although Jehoshaphat tries more legal reforms afterwards (19:5–11), he still does nothing for the temple and so he finds no reward. In

²⁸ The Chronicler also characterizes the next episode as weak obedience, where Amaziah at first enlists some from the apostate northern kingdom into his army, but he then eventually lets them go after a prophetic rebuke (v. 7). Some scholars claim that this text highlights Amaziah's repentance; e.g. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 327. However, the greater emphasis appears to lie with Amaziah's near folly; see Cudworth, *War in Chronicles*, 148–52.

²⁹ Note the occurrence in Josh 11:23 at the end of the conquest, or the several occurrences in the book of Judges (3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28).

³⁰ See Cudworth, *War in Chronicles*, 115–63.

contrast, 2 Chronicles 20 tells how, when a large coalition of armies comes to threaten Judah, Jehoshaphat finally leads the people to seek their God in the temple (see especially vv. 3–19).³¹ For this pious act, Jehoshaphat and Judah find deliverance from their enemies in vv. 20–23 and further reward from Yahweh in vv. 24–30.

5. BAD KINGS IN CHRONICLES

The Chronicler faults three kings for not observing the law. Although Joash starts out well and even receives a positive evaluation (2 Chr 24:2), he eventually behaves like a bad king. With the help of the priest Jehoiada at the beginning of his reign, he decides to restore the temple (vv. 3–16). However, when the priest dies, several princes of Judah influence him so that “they abandoned (עזבו) the house of Yahweh” (vv. 17–18). Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, comes to them with the rebuke, “Why do you break the *commandments* of Yahweh so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken (עזבו) Yahweh, he has forsaken (עזבו) you” (v. 20). The word עזבו links the people’s law disobedience with their neglect of the temple.

The Chronicler portrays the other two kings negatively until they humble themselves (כנעו) and turn to Yahweh in the temple as prescribed in the divine response to Solomon’s temple dedication prayer (2 Chr 7:14–15).³² First, he borrows the episode of Pharaoh Shishak’s attack against Judah from 1 Kgs 14:22–24 and explains that this came as punishment because Rehoboam “abandoned (עזבו) the *law* of Yahweh” (v. 1). The next sentence clarifies this reference to the law a little more when the Chronicler also characterizes Rehoboam’s transgression as מעל (“unfaithfulness”), a word that generally describes a covenantal breach but that the Chronicler applies specifically to neglect of the temple (v. 2).³³ After the punishment has come, Rehoboam brings relief to Judah when he humbles himself (כנעו) before Israel’s God (vv. 6, 7, 12). His repentant response, a positive gesture towards the temple, utilizes the provision for deliverance that Yahweh gave Israel at the temple dedication.

Second, the Chronicler borrows a text that condemns Manasseh for not keeping “all the *law, statutes, and rules* given through Mo-

³¹ Knoppers shows the critical function of the temple in Jehoshaphat’s victory in “Jerusalem at War,” 61–64. See also, Cudworth, *War in Chronicles*, 133–38.

³² For the importance of the word כנעו to the Chronicler’s history, see Glatt-Gilad, “The Root kn’,” 248–57. Also, see footnote 11 for the importance of 2 Chr 7:14–15 for the Chronicler’s theology.

³³ See especially 1 Chr 9:1 and 2 Chr 36:14, where the Chronicler mentions temple-cultic sins, described as מעל, for his explanation of the exile, or 2 Chr 28:19, 22; 29:6, 19; 30:7 for the description of Ahaz’s sin. See also 2 Chr 26:16, 18; 33:19. For the use of מעל in the OT, see H. Ringgren, “מעל,” *TDOT* 8:460–463 and J. Milgrom, “The Concept of Ma’al in the Bible and the Ancient Near East,” *JAOS* 96 (1976): 236–47. Knoppers notes that the Chronicler uses this word to characterize profound infidelity and disobedience, *I Chronicles 1–9*, 523.

ses” (2 Chr 33:8 // 2 Kgs 21:8). Since the Chronicler has not changed any details in the immediate context from the books of Kings, Manasseh’s law violations still appear to involve idolatry, as discussed earlier. However, as with Rehoboam, the Chronicler again inserts a scene of repentance in 2 Chr 33:12–13 that uses terminology from 7:14–15. In addition to the description that Manasseh “humbled himself (כנע),” the Chronicler intensifies that action with the adverb מאד (“greatly”) and uses another verb פלל (“prayed”) to strengthen the link to Yahweh’s response to Solomon at the temple dedication. By showing both Manasseh and Rehoboam find relief when they pray to the temple, the Chronicler elucidates what their neglect of the law entailed.

6. CONCLUSION

The Chronicler’s aim to stress the importance of the temple cult appears in his frequent reference to the law (תורה) and other related words. For the most notable kings such as David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah, he portrays their diligence to establish (or reestablish) the temple cult as observing the law. For the three kings who observe the law in ways that do not promote the temple (Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Amaziah), he withholds his praise. Finally, he asserts that even the bad kings who neglect or abuse the temple can turn to Yahweh in the temple to find relief according to the divine provision in 2 Chr 7:14–15. Whereas the books of Kings described law observance as the removal of idolatry, the Chronicler uses it to emphasize the blessings that come to those who support the temple and its practices.