

2 Chronicles

IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, ... the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the Second Book of the Chronicles using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to the Historical Books* will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don't miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church's criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God's unified plan.



Read Scripture in light of the Church's living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit's guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you'll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷but emptied himself,[†] taking the form of a servant,[‡] being born in the likeness of men.[§]And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.[¶]Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,^{||}that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,^{|||}and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.
14 Do all thi tioning,¹⁵that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

2:7 emptied himself: The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

2:8 death on a cross: The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

2:9 exalted him: By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

2:10 every knee should bow: An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven ... earth ... under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

2:11 confess: I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God's g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu **2:15 pervers** • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

A Thing to Harpagmos (G in the Greek O Occurrences of “robbery”. Its considerable d the leading vi (1) Some, like “something sel

Prepare

Read the Introduction to 2 Chronicles, paying particular attention to the *Content and Themes* of the book and the *Christian Perspective* on it. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of 2 Chronicles to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of 2 Chronicles, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.

Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on 2 Chronicles as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

For understanding

1. **Word Study: Sought (1:5).** What does the Hebrew verb *darash* mean? Sometimes, what is all that is meant by it? In other cases, how is the term connected with the moral and spiritual life? In what ways is *darash* almost a technical term in the spirituality of Chronicles? What assurance is given to all who seek the Lord? How is failure to seek the Lord an especially sinful disgrace for the kings of Israel?
2. **1:6.** How does Solomon act as a royal priest? How were the offices of king and priest in Israel ordinarily distinguished? What do the priestly actions of David and Solomon appear to have been linked to, and who did the daily sacrifices and incense offerings? To which pronouncements can the prerogatives of David and Solomon to act as priests be traced?
3. **1:10.** How does the Chronicler understand Yahweh's gift of wisdom?
4. **1:12.** What shows that Solomon's priorities are in line with God's priorities? According to St. John Chrysostom, what two things are required of the person who prays?

For application

1. **1:3–5.** Do you have a favorite place you like to go to seek the Lord? What is there about the place that attracts you? How do you go about seeking the Lord?
2. **1:7.** Why is it significant that God appears to Solomon at night? When is your most attentive time of the day? If God were to ask you what he should give you, what would you ask for?
3. **1:12.** Read the note for this verse, especially focusing on St. John Chrysostom's advice on how to ask in prayer. What do you typically ask for when you pray? What does it mean to ask God for what you *ought*?

Chapter 2

For understanding

1. **2:1–18.** What business deal does Solomon close with Phoenicia?
2. **2:6.** What does Solomon recognize about God in his omnipresence? What virtue does the question "Who am I?" express?
3. **2:10.** What unit of measurement is a cor? What unit of measurement is a bath?
4. **2:14.** What three reasons explain why the Chronicler lists Hiram-abi's mother's tribal affiliation rather than her place of residence? What do these parallels imply?

For application

1. **2:1.** When you desire to do "something beautiful for God", how carefully do you examine your motives? For example, in a project such as building a church or a parish, how much of what you do is for God's glory and how much for your own gratification? Granted that motives are usually mixed, how do you ensure that the motive primarily favors God?
2. **2:6.** When have you questioned your ability to fulfill religious duties or to take up religious responsibilities? How have you posed that question to yourself? How have you answered it?
3. **2:7.** When it comes to doing work on your home, when do you decide to do it yourself or hire an expert? What factors do you consider in making such a decision?

Chapter 3

For understanding

1. **3:1.** Where is Mount Moriah, and what happened to David there? Since Moriah is mentioned only here and in Gen 22:2, what are readers invited to see? In Genesis, what did the Lord command Abraham to do there, and what did the site become known as thereafter? What is construction of the Temple on this elevation thus tied to, and why? Who is Ornan the Jebusite?
2. **3:4–8.** What three chambers is the interior of the Temple divided into, and how is each described in the note?

3. **3:10.** What were the cherubim, and how are they distinguished from the ones on the ark?
4. **3:14.** What was the veil and its function? Where was it hung?

For application

1. **3:1.** Certain locations seem to be blessed with special spiritual power. What are some traditional ones that you can think of? What are some such places for you personally? What makes them significant to you?
2. **3:5–7.** Why should a church be beautiful? Because standards of beauty change over time, how would you describe what our culture regards as a beautiful building? What is the most beautiful church building you've seen, and what about it appeals to you?
3. **3:10–13.** What sorts of statuary does the church have that you regularly attend? Whom do the statues represent? What purpose do statues of Jesus and the saints serve? If your church has no statues, what sorts of artistic representations does it have?
4. **3:14.** Many Eastern Catholic churches have an iconostasis, a wall with three doors that separates the sanctuary from the nave of the church, usually adorned with icons. What purposes do these iconostases serve? What kinds of separation, if any, should there be between the sanctuary and the nave? What does the separation signify?

Chapter 4

For understanding

1. **4:1–6.** What stands in the outer courtyard of the Temple? Whom does the open expanse of the courtyard accommodate, but what area of it is off-limits to them?
2. **4:7.** What are the lampstands, and what do they look like? Together, for what area of the Temple did they provide light? How many lampstands flickered in the Tabernacle according to Ex 25:31–39?
3. **4:8.** For what are the ten tables used? How many tables stood in the Tabernacle?
4. **4:19.** What is the golden altar? Where does it stand?

For application

1. **4:1.** Why do altars in Catholic churches look like a table? What is the altar in your church made of, and what symbols (if any) adorn it? What do they represent?
2. **4:2–5.** The bronze sea, described in these verses, was for the use of the priests. For what is the largest container of water in your church used? Why do Catholic churches have holy water fonts near the entrances? What relationship do they have to the baptismal font or pool?
3. **4:7.** Read the note for this verse. What kind of candelabra does your church have that most closely resembles the lampstands described here? For what are these candelabra used?

Chapter 5

For understanding

1. **5:1.** After how many years of construction is the Temple finished? Similar passages describe the completion of what? What had David dedicated to the Temple? What were the treasuries?
2. **5:2—7:10.** What do these verses describe, and how long did it last? What were its high points? Although the Chronicler follows the account in 1 Kings 8, how does he expand it?
3. **Topical Essay: Theology of the Temple.** How is the Temple more than an architectural wonder, and from what is this meaning derived? How is the theology of the Temple implied first of all in its role as a model of the world created by God? How do the Temple's iconography and orientation also call to mind the Garden of Eden, and what do they imply for the meaning of the Temple? How does the Mosaic Tabernacle signify the *exclusivity* of the Mosaic covenant, whereas the Temple signifies the *inclusivity* of the Davidic covenant? According to the New Testament, how is the Temple a prophetic sign that anticipates God dwelling with his people in the person of the Messiah? Finally, how does the Temple point beyond creation to something celestial and transcendent?
4. **5:13.** What does the cloud that filled the Temple signify, and how is it known in rabbinic theology? What does the event signal? How does Christian tradition understand the cloud?

For application

1. **5:1.** What do you know about how your parish church was built? How involved were parishioners in its design and construction? What are the benefits for the parish of parishioners being involved in these things, rather than simply leaving them to an architectural firm?
2. **5:3.** Read the note for this verse. What is the holiest month in the Christian liturgical calendar? What do we celebrate then?
3. **5:10.** What is the purpose of the Tabernacle in a Roman Rite Catholic church? What is kept in it? Why is it reserved there?
4. **Topical Essay: Theology of the Temple.** The essay says that “the Temple is a spiritual and theological sign.” The same can be said of a Catholic church building. Even if you know nothing of theology, how would you describe a church building as a spiritual sign? To what does it point? How does it speak of God’s presence among his people? How does the shape of your church communicate the relationship between God and the people who worship there?

Chapter 6

For understanding

1. **6:14–40.** What two general petitions and seven specific petitions does Solomon offer? Basically, what does Solomon ask for in the beginning?
2. **6:18.** What does Solomon affirm about God? How does the Lord dwell in the Temple?
3. **6:20.** What tradition does the expression “toward this place” begin? How does the definition of this “place” expand, and what does it include?
4. **6:32.** What does Solomon envision regarding foreigners? Theologically, what spirit does the Temple embody? What process does his request to heed the prayers of the Gentiles begin?

For application

1. **6:3.** Traditionally, members of the congregation stand at some points during Mass, such as at the proclamation of the Gospel, recitation of the Creed, and the blessing at the end of Mass. What is the significance of standing at such points? How is standing during worship different in meaning from sitting?
2. **6:12–13.** Gestures with the hands also have significance during worship. For example, what does spreading the hands with palms up signify? What about joining the palms of the hands together in prayer?
3. **6:16.** Notice the “if” in this verse. What condition does Solomon acknowledge that God is making in his promise? In all the promises that God makes both in Scripture and in the spiritual life, what is the principal condition for their fulfillment?
4. **6:20–32.** The *direction* toward which one faces is important in many religions, including Christianity. Why, for example, are churches supposed to be oriented toward the east, if possible? Why pray toward the east as opposed to facing west?

Chapter 7

For understanding

1. **7:1.** Of what is the fire from heaven a sign? What other sacrifices did fire similarly consume? What event gives the closest parallel to this event? How is the glory of the Lord represented?
2. **7:8–10.** With what do these verses deal? How are the events that take place throughout the seventh month distributed in terms of days?
3. **7:8.** What territory does the expression “the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt” cover?
4. **7:14.** On what does Israel’s welfare depend? What else can humbling oneself include?

For application

1. **7:1–4.** The dedication of a church building is an impressive liturgical ceremony. Even if you have never seen a dedication liturgy, why do you think the opening of the doors of a new church would be an important part of the liturgy? Why is the altar anointed with the same chrism used at Baptism? What role does incense play in any liturgy?

2. **7:6.** The note for this verse lists the instruments that would have been used at the dedication of the Temple. What instruments are used for worship at your parish? Which instruments would you consider appropriate for fostering worship, and which would be inappropriate? Why?
3. **7:17–22.** Why do God's promises to Solomon and the kingdom depend so heavily on Solomon's fidelity? What moral responsibility does a leader have for the welfare of his country, and how is his personal responsibility different from that of ordinary citizens?
4. **7:19.** Read the note for this verse. Does idolatry pose a similar threat to our nation, our land, or our sanctuaries? What prompts you to agree or disagree?

Chapter 8

For understanding

1. **8:1–16.** By what was completion of the Temple and palace in Jerusalem followed? Of what are public works a sign?
2. **8:8.** What is mandated for Canaanite survivors of the Conquest? From what kind of service is it distinct? Canonically, what is the basis of the enslavement of the Canaanites?
3. **8:12–15.** Whose ordinances is Solomon observing? For the Chronicler, who are Moses and David?
4. **8:18.** By whom is a fleet of merchant vessels manned? Why does Solomon initiate maritime trade? Where was Ophir probably located, and what was it renowned for in biblical times?

For application

1. **8:7–9.** What is a second-class citizen? What differentiates that class of citizenry from so-called first-class citizens? What expectations apply to the former that do not apply to the latter? Who are the second-class citizens where you live?
2. **8:11.** Why did Solomon refuse to let Pharaoh's daughter live in David's palace? What does holiness mean, in relation to a place? What do you think of when you enter a place that is regarded as a holy site, such as a location where Jesus walked or Mary appeared?
3. **8:13.** The liturgical calendar is marked by different kinds of celebrations, each with its own liturgical requirements: solemnities, celebrations of mysteries (such as the Trinity), saints' feasts, and ordinary times. What do you notice about changes in the liturgy from one kind to another? What most impresses you? Given the holiness of the Mass, why should one celebration be more important than another?

Chapter 9

For understanding

1. **9:1.** Where do many locate Sheba? What kind of empire was it in biblical times? What was the likely purpose of the queen's historic visit, and what did it underscore about Solomon? Beyond this, how does it serve as a paradigm of Israel's hope for the future? According to Jesus, what does the queen of Sheba exemplify, and what does Solomon's wisdom foreshadow?
2. **9:13.** If each talent weighs 75 pounds, how much does the annual influx of 666 talents of gold equal? Remarkably, what does this figure not include? What might the number 666 in Revelation allude to (besides the number of the beast who persecutes the Church), and what would it represent? With what else does Revelation connect this number?
3. **9:15–16.** What kind of production does Solomon commission? In contrast to these decorative items, with what were combat shields normally covered?
4. **9:17.** Where is the great ivory throne placed? How is it decorated?
5. **9:26.** Over what does Solomon sit enthroned? To what does its geographical reach correspond?

For application

1. **9:3–4.** Why do heads of state put on great receptions for other visiting heads of state? How do you prepare when someone you wish to entertain comes to your home? What kind of impression do you wish to make?
2. **9:5–8.** According to the queen of Sheba, what is the reason God gave Solomon his wisdom (hint: see v. 8)? Given this understanding, how would you describe what his wisdom encompassed? How might such wisdom apply to your own life?

3. **9:13.** Read the note for this verse, especially the part about the apparent link in the Book of Revelation between the tonnage of Solomon's wealth and his wisdom. What does it suggest to your mind? What makes the pursuit of wealth unwise?

Chapter 10

For understanding

1. **10:1—36:23.** What do these chapters cover? What are these chapters punctuated by, theologically? At the same time, to whose needs do they speak?
2. **10:1—19.** When does the division of Solomon's empire occur? What do the northern tribes of Israel do? To what does the golden age of the united monarchy give way? What are the northern tribes in the eyes of the Chronicler? For this reason, to what does he give most of his attention?
3. **10:10.** What do these inflammatory words accomplish? What may the Hebrew expression literally mean?
4. **10:15.** What does the Chronicler assume about his readers? Given this backstory, what can the dividing of the kingdom be seen as?

For application

1. **10:6—8.** Why do you think King Rehoboam would forsake the counsel of his father's advisors and turn to the young men with whom he had grown up? What does it say about his character? When have you sought the advice of peers and ignored more mature counsel? What was the outcome?
2. **10:14.** How secure in his kingship do you think Rehoboam felt in making such a harsh reply to his people (hint: see v. 18)? When a new manager takes authority over a group of subordinates, should he start by being stern or by being friendly to them? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?
3. **10:16.** Have you ever been involved in a split in a community, such as a family, a parish, or a group of friends? How did the split and ensuing separation come about? How difficult has it been to repair the split? What does your experience say about the difficulty of repairing the separations among Christian groups, such as the Catholic and Protestant communions?

Chapter 11

For understanding

1. **11:1—12:16.** What theme do these chapters underline? What is an example of how this theme is treated?
2. **11:13—17.** Why does an exodus of northern Israelites stream south into Judah? What is the Chronicler's interest?
3. **11:15.** What is wrong with the priests Jeroboam appoints? What are "high places"? What are the satyrs and the calves?

For application

1. **11:4.** The prophecy of Shemaiah counsels against fighting "against your brethren". When division and separation occur within a community, what is the attitude one should have toward those who separated? If Catholics and other Christians are "brethren", how should we treat one another?
2. **11:13—14.** Stories frequently circulate about clergy from other Christian communions being received into the Catholic Church, even though such conversions often mean for them loss of friends and livelihoods. What motivates such sacrificial conversions? How should the Catholic community respond?
3. **11:16—17.** "Cradle Catholics" sometimes complain about the zeal of converts to the Catholic faith. What might be some of the bases for their complaints? On the other hand, how do zealous converts strengthen the Catholic faith, including that of "cradle Catholics"?

Chapter 12

For understanding

1. **12:2.** Who is Shishak? What did he do in Jerusalem? What inscription celebrates his campaign in Palestine?
2. **12:5.** According to a spiritual law of the covenant, what happens when covenant people turn away from the Lord? What do the blessings and curses of the covenant always involve? How is the possibility of divine withdrawal balanced?
3. **12:7.** In humbling themselves, what do the people acknowledge? What happens as a result?
4. **12:16.** Who is Abijah? What does the Chronicler stress about him? How else does his name appear?

For application

1. **12:1.** How strong is a person's faith likely to be if it is based on need rather than love? What often happens to it when the need passes?
2. **12:8.** Have you ever been the recipient of some "tough love"? What were the circumstances? What were you supposed to learn from the experience? How well did the experience succeed in its objective?
3. **12:14.** Many people who depart from Christianity maintain that they do not fear God's judgment because they are good people. How do you answer them? What does Scripture say?

Chapter 13

For understanding

1. **13:5.** In a "covenant of salt", what does salt symbolize? What is the basis for this belief about the Davidic covenant? What is the same expression used for in Num 18:19?
2. **13:8–12.** What does Abijah reason that God will do? What contrast is he making?
3. **13:8.** What is the "kingdom of the Lord"? What are the golden calves? Though treated as gods, what are they in reality?

For application

1. **13:4–12.** Read the note for vv. 8–12. Given that understanding, what does Abijah hope to accomplish with his speech to the enemy soldiers? Why do certain sports figures (such as boxers) taunt their opponents before the fight begins?
2. **13:14.** When you feel yourself surrounded by difficulty, what part does prayer play in your response to the situation? What form does the prayer take: praise and thanks, repentance and forgiveness, or a panicky prayer for help? Is your prayer informed by a sense of trust or an undertone of worry?
3. **13:18.** The Chronicler indicates that the men of Judah prevailed because they relied on the Lord. When you succeed in overcoming a difficulty, to what agency do you typically credit your success: luck, divine Providence, your own skill, or others' mistakes? How quickly do you remember to give thanks to God?

Chapter 14

For understanding

1. **14:1.** Who is Asa? Overall, why does the Chronicler approve of his reign? Nevertheless, what did his lack of trust in God result in? What is the "rest" mentioned here, and what does it allow?
2. **14:3.** To which territory are Asa's efforts to rid the land of idolatry confined? What are the pillars that are mentioned? What are Asherim?
3. **14:9–15.** When does victory come for Asa? What happens when he shifts his focus to human alliances? What is the lesson?

For application

1. **14:3–5.** As king, Asa completes several external religious reforms, including commanding obedience to the Law of God. How difficult would the *internal* reforms be? What would need to change for his reforms truly to take hold?
2. **14:11.** St. Paul writes that God's power is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 12:9). By confessing his weakness, how would Asa expect God's power to be made perfect in his situation? How would God's power be made perfect when you are confronted with your own weakness?
3. **14:14.** According to the note for this verse, the text speaks of a paralyzing fear of the Lord. What kind of fear is the fear of the Lord that Scripture recommends? Rather than spiritual paralysis, what does a proper fear of the Lord give you?

Chapter 15

For understanding

1. **15:2.** What conviction is central to the theology of Chronicles? According to St. Jerome, what are we told in the Scriptures? If we could be immersed in the waters of Baptism continuously, what would happen to us?
2. **15:9.** Why did some members of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh flee south to Judah? What happened later to these migrants from the northern tribes? Why is the southern tribe of Simeon mentioned here?

3. **15:12.** In this covenant renewal ceremony, to what do Israel and its king recommit themselves? Which other kings in Chronicles tried to lead the nation in this way?

For application

1. **15:2.** How do you go about seeking the Lord? How do you know when you have found him? How far can you trust your feelings in such matters? What are some better standards of judgment than feelings?
2. **15:12.** Of what use is a covenant renewal ceremony? How often have you renewed the promises of your Baptism or your marriage? What has been the effect of such renewals on your determination to observe the promises?
3. **15:14.** According to CCC 2150–51, why is taking an oath such a serious matter? What sin does one commit if he fails to keep the promise sworn under oath (CCC 2152)?

Chapter 16

For understanding

1. **16:1.** Why does the number of the thirty-sixth year of the reign of King Asa appear to be problematic? Although no decisive solution to this discrepancy has been found, what is one possibility that might explain it? Who was Baasha? What does he hope to do by fortifying Ramah? What does the problem of southbound traffic confirm about the Chronicler's report?
2. **16:7–9.** Why is King Asa rebuked for his military alliance with Syria? Beyond this, how does the king show blatant disrespect for the Lord? When are hopes for Asa's repentance dashed? In what form does divine discipline follow?
3. **16:14.** To what does the "great fire" refer? What indicates that cremation was not in view? Why?

For application

1. **16:2–4.** Why is bribing someone or taking a bribe considered immoral? Of the Ten Commandments, which does bribery violate?
2. **16:10.** As you review the career of Asa in this and the preceding chapters, does his treatment of Hanani the seer fit with his character or is it out of character? What part of Hanani's word infuriates the king? Why do people become angry when they are confronted with evident wrongdoing?
3. **16:12.** Does the Chronicler imply in this verse that seeking help from doctors indicates a lack of faith in God? What is Asa's sin in this case? Why are seeking medical help and relying on God for help not contradictory?

Chapter 17

For understanding

1. **17:1.** As the fourth king of Judah, for what is Jehoshaphat praised? Despite his piety, for what is he criticized? Historically, what is it probable that Jehoshaphat spent the initial years of his kingship doing?
2. **17:7–9.** What does Jehoshaphat commission royal and religious leaders to do? Why is this needed? Who are supposed to be the primary instructors in the faith?
3. **17:9.** To what book is the "book of the law" probably a reference?

For application

1. **17:6.** In our culture, how might one demonstrate courage in the ways of the Lord? Why would the practice of the faith require some level of moral courage?
2. **17:7–9.** Read the note for these verses. How would you describe the need for adult catechesis in our culture? How do you think that need is being met? Who is mainly responsible for this catechesis?

Chapter 18

For understanding

1. **18:1–34.** What happens with the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel and Judah in these verses? If a political reunion of the tribes is not envisioned here, what is?

2. **18:1.** To whom is Jehoshaphat's first-born son, Jehoram, married? When will the consequences of this union prove disastrous? Who is Ahab? For what does Scripture indict him and his wife, Jezebel, on numerous counts? For what is Jehoshaphat later rebuked?
3. **18:7.** What is the prophet Micaiah summoned to do? Why is he imprisoned even though he is the only true prophet among the 400?
4. **18:18–21.** About what is Micaiah's vision? To whom is access to the divine council given? What does this vision reveal about Ahab's prophets? Why is God himself not guilty of deception?

For application

1. **18:5–6.** Why do you think Jehoshaphat distrusts the word of 400 prophets of Ahab's kingdom and asks for verification from someone else? For what kind of prophet is the king of Judah looking?
2. **18:12–13.** Have you ever been asked to go along with the majority opinion, despite having a contrary view about a course of action? What did you decide to do? Afterward, what did you think of your decision?
3. **18:18–22.** Micaiah's parable describes how the Lord directs a lying spirit to enter Ahab's court prophets. What does that say about Ahab? about his prophets? about the Lord himself?

Chapter 19

For understanding

1. **19:3.** What is to King Jehoshaphat's credit? What is St. Basil the Great's advice to someone witnessing his neighbor committing sin, and what does that have to do with Jehoshaphat?
2. **19:5–11.** How does Jehoshaphat implement legal reforms in line with Deuteronomy? Who has primary jurisdiction over religious and civil matters, respectively?
3. **19:7.** What is the standard of justice in the courts? Thus, whom do judges represent, and to whom are they accountable? Interestingly, what does the name Jehoshaphat mean in Hebrew?

For application

1. **19:3.** Read the note for this verse, especially the commentary by St. Basil that is quoted. What do you think of St. Basil's advice? What do you dwell on when you see people committing what you know is objectively sin? What are you entitled to judge, and what must you avoid judging?
2. **19:6–7.** Jehoshaphat commands judges to avoid three things; what are they? On what basis are judges to give sentence? If a judge is a Christian, what part does fear of the Lord play?
3. **19:9–10.** What is the educational function of the law? What purpose is the instruction supposed to serve? Who is responsible for exercising it?

Chapter 20

For understanding

1. **20:12.** What is Jehoshaphat humbly confessing? What is one of the virtues that made Jehoshaphat a model of godly kingship?
2. **20:17.** To what other incident does Jahaziel's appeal to "stand still and see" harken back? What does Yahweh become when people place their faith in him?
3. **20:21.** What is "holy splendor"? What do others suggest it describes about the Lord?
4. **20:26.** What is the Hebrew meaning of the name Beracah? For whom is the valley named, and why?

For application

1. **20:12.** How do you approach God when you face a problem or a relationship that you do not know how to resolve? How difficult do you find it to trust in God at such times? What is your prayer like at such times?
2. **20:17.** When we are in trouble, the Lord advises us in Psalm 46:10 to "be still, and know that I am God." What kind of stillness does the psalm advise? How is that stillness an advantage when you face trouble?
3. **20:22.** Often, soldiers in ancient armies sang as they went into battle. How would singing affect them in the fight? When you are worried or frightened, what can singing to the Lord do for you?

Chapter 21

For understanding

1. **21:1–20.** With what is Jehoram, the fifth king of Judah, charged? In response, with what does the Lord chastise him?
2. **21:7.** To what does Jehoram's killing spree bring the Davidic dynasty? What is the only thing that prevents it from happening?
3. **21:12.** In what two respects is Elijah's appearance in this passage unique?
4. **21:19.** What was the fitting punishment for the king's monstrous crimes? What honors is Jehoram denied?

For application

1. **21:3.** Read Lk 12:13. How do you relate to the brother who complained to Jesus about his brother sharing the inheritance? How does your family handle distribution of possessions as an inheritance? How well do those entitled to family possessions accept this method of distribution?
2. **21:7.** On what basis does the endurance of the Church to the end of time rest? How does that give you hope for her future?
3. **21:18.** Jehoram's incurable disease developed as part of God's judgment. What is the most serious illness you or members of your family have had? How do you view God's hand in it? How does your opinion affect your trust in his love for you?

Chapter 22

For understanding

1. **22:1.** How else is Ahaziah, the sixth king of Judah, known? What makes his short reign an evil one?
2. **22:2.** What makes Ahaziah's age, given in this verse, possibly a scribal error? Who is Athaliah? Driven by a perverse ambition for power, what does she try to do? What does Chronicles' omission of its customary enthronement and obituary notices for Athaliah imply?
3. **22:11.** Who is Jeho-shabe-ath? Who is the sole survivor of David's royal line, and through whose shrewd thinking did he survive? When will he come to the throne, and how long will he reign? What does Jehoiada the priest orchestrate, and what will he become?

For application

1. **22:3.** From which of your parents did you receive most of your formation in discerning right from wrong? What were some of the moral principles he or she taught you? How united were your parents with each other in your moral formation?
2. **22:7.** What seems to be a mere coincidence (Ahaziah's visit to Joram) is viewed by the Chronicler as ordained by God. As you look back on your life, what apparent coincidences proved to be major turning points directed or at least allowed by God? How did they influence the direction of your life?

Chapter 23

For understanding

1. **23:1.** Who pledges support for Joash? Whom do the loyalists include?
2. **23:11.** Of what is the royal crown a sign? What is the covenant? What does the anointing symbolize? In Israel, for whom was the rite of anointing performed?
3. **23:17.** What is the house of Baal? Who must have commissioned its building? On what authority do the people slay the priest of Baal?

For application

1. **23:1.** How does Jehoiada's decision to delay action against Athaliah for six years demonstrate the virtue of patience? How have you practiced similar patience in your own pursuits?
2. **23:11.** Read the note for this verse. What was the purpose of giving the seven-year-old king a copy of Deuteronomy? When people assume a political or civic office, where do they learn about the duties and limitations of their office?
3. **23:16.** Look up Deut 17:14–20. What are the king's responsibilities as enumerated there? What does the requirement that the king read the Law daily say to you about why you should become intimate with Scripture?

Chapter 24

For understanding

1. **24:1.** How does Joash, the seventh king of Judah, behave as long as Jehoiada the priest is alive? What happens to his reign when the priest dies? What does the Lord do in response to this radical turnaround?
2. **24:4.** What is needed for Solomon's Temple, constructed more than 120 years before Joash came to the throne? What is set aside to finance the project? Who first undertakes the work of restoration, and what does the king do to complete the task after a prolonged delay?
3. **24:20.** Who is the Zechariah named here? Who is responsible for his stoning in the Temple? What two kinds of act is this execution? What was Zechariah's father careful to avoid doing in the Lord's house?

For application

1. **24:5.** Among the six precepts of the Church enumerated in CCC 2041–43 is the law that Catholics are to “provide for the material needs of the Church” (CCC 2043). How often does the church in your area request monies for parish or diocesan needs? How promptly are these requests met? How urgent do you think these needs are?
2. **24:8–11.** How does your diocese raise money from various parishes for its needs? For what are the funds thus collected used? To what extent are these funds used to help the parishes themselves?
3. **24:12–14.** What repairs or remodeling projects have been completed for your parish church in recent years? What do you think is still needed? Upon completion, how have these repairs or remodeling projects influenced the conduct of the liturgy?
4. **24:22.** How do Zechariah's last words compare or contrast with those of Jesus on the Cross? What would you like your last words to be?

Chapter 25

For understanding

1. **25:1.** How is Amaziah, the eighth king of Judah, commended, and for what is he faulted? What do chronological factors suggest about how he reigned?
2. **25:8.** What makes Israel invincible on the battlefield?
3. **25:17.** What does Amaziah of Judah mean when he invites the king of Israel, “Come, let us look one another in the face”? What is he about to learn?
4. **25:23.** How much of Jerusalem's north wall is dismantled by Joash of Israel? Between which city gates is the breach made?

For application

1. **25:2.** Note the Chronicler's judgment of Amaziah. What does it mean to serve the Lord with a “blameless heart”? If sanctification is the will of God for you (1 Thess 4:3), how do you pursue it within your state of life? Where do you look for help in your pursuit of holiness?
2. **25:9–10, 13–16.** Why do you think that Amaziah, who obeyed one prophet, turned away from the Lord and refused to listen to another? Why do people sometimes get angry at God? What other sins can such anger lead one into?
3. **25:20.** How is it God's doing when we refuse to listen to good advice and suffer the consequences? Does God *cause* or *allow* us to fall victim to our own pride and imprudence and their consequences?

Chapter 26

For understanding

1. **26:1.** What kind of king is Uzziah, ninth king of Judah, in some regards, and so what does the Lord do with him? However, what brings divine judgment on him and in what form? Chronologically, with what do the first years of Uzziah's reign overlap?
2. **26:16.** In what two ways does Uzziah encroach upon the domain of Israel's ordained clergymen? For these offenses, how is he stricken, and whom does this recall? How does the *Apostolic Constitutions* apply this incident as a lesson to

Christian laity? Why should no one dare to thrust himself into the priesthood who has not received that dignity? Where does the altar of incense stand in the Temple?

3. **26:21.** What does the Mosaic Law require regarding lepers in the community of Israel, and where are they barred from going? What does “over the king’s household” mean in terms of Jotham, Uzziah’s son?
4. **26:22.** Which prophet is Isaiah? However, since the canonical text of Isaiah says nothing about the actions or achievements of Uzziah, to what work must the Chronicler be referring?

For application

1. **26:5.** What is the connection between seeking the Lord and prosperity? What kind of prosperity does the Gospel promise?
2. **26:16.** In a dictionary, look up the word *arrogance* and the companion verb *arrogate*. What are the conditions that led up to Uzziah’s arrogance? What did he arrogate to himself? How might arrogance manifest itself in the spiritual life of people who otherwise honestly seek the Lord?
3. **26:18–20.** Why would anyone want to arrogate to himself the functions of the priesthood? If the penalty for someone who does that is not a physical disease, what would it be?

Chapter 27

For understanding

1. **27:1.** Which king of Judah is Jotham? What happens to him in his major undertakings?
2. **27:3.** Why is the upper gate called the Benjamin Gate? What is the Ophel?

For application

1. **27:2.** In general, how should a leader be held responsible for subordinates’ misdeeds? What conditions or circumstances might excuse the leader from failure to correct them?
2. **27:3–4.** Building projects seem to be a prime component of a leader’s legacy. What sorts of building should pastors of churches do? What should be the criteria of their pastoral success?

Chapter 28

For understanding

1. **28:1.** As the 11th king of Judah, how is Ahaz remembered? What do his most deplorable actions include? What else is he faulted for in addition to his religious apostasy?
2. **28:3.** Where is Hinnom? What kind of sacrifice was practiced in the pagan cult of Molech?
3. **28:11–15.** What happens to the war captives from Judah? For what did the kindness of the “good Samaritans” provide partial inspiration? What do both Jesus and the Chronicler refer to regarding the care of the distressed victims?
4. **28:24.** What does Ahaz do to the gates of the Temple and to Mosaic religion? In its place, what does he promote?

For application

1. **28:1.** Read the note for this verse. What might the catalogue of deplorable actions tell you about the personality of someone like Ahaz? For example, how confident in himself does he seem to be? What does he hope to gain by resorting to human sacrifice and idolatry? What does anyone hope to achieve by exchanging one religion for another?
2. **28:5–6.** Notice the causality stated in these verses by the words “therefore” and “because”. To what cause does the Chronicler assign these defeats? How would a modern secular interpreter evaluate their cause? As a Christian, which interpretation do you think is more reasonable, and on what grounds?
3. **28:9.** When has your anger carried you too far in responding to its cause? What made you recognize that you had gone too far? What did you do about it?
4. **28:11–15.** Read the note for these verses and compare them with Lk 10:30–37. What episodes in the history of your country can you recall when the military acted in a similar manner toward defeated captives? What military or political considerations motivated this treatment?

Chapter 29

For understanding

1. **29:1.** For what does Chronicles applaud King Hezekiah? What was significant about his reign? What did Hezekiah struggle with at the end of his life? Historically, what do the days of Hezekiah bring to mind? Chronologically, when would his independent reign have begun?
2. **29:12–19.** What do these verses discuss? Who carries out the task of re-consecration?
3. **29:17.** What is the Hebrew name of the first month? What does cleansing the Lord's Temple at the start of the new liturgical year signify? What does it perhaps also recall?
4. **29:34.** What did Moses appoint Levites to do? In Hezekiah's day, what does a temporary shortage of priests necessitate?

For application

1. **29:6.** Notice the language Hezekiah uses about the body in this verse. What does turning one's face to or away from another communicate? What does turning one's back to someone usually signify? In prayer, in what direction does the Church usually ask God to turn his face? Where should we turn ours?
2. **29:11.** How might Hezekiah's address to the Levites be applied to you? How has God chosen you to stand in his presence in our day and age?
3. **29:12–19.** According to the *Catechism* (CCC 1181–86), what must a church building accomplish in the hearts of worshipers? When a church that has been desecrated has been restored for worship, why must it be rededicated or re-consecrated? What is the purpose of the rededication?
4. **29:34.** The Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, approved the restoration of the permanent diaconate as part of the threefold hierarchy of Holy Orders instituted by Jesus Christ (LG 29). Why is it inadequate to say that the diaconate alleviates the shortages of priests? What does the *Catechism* say about the functions of deacons (CCC 1570)?

Chapter 30

For understanding

1. **30:1–27.** In what way is the great Passover of Hezekiah a theological landmark in the history of the divided monarchy? In whose times will all Israel be restored to a common faith and fellowship?
2. **30:2.** When does Passover normally fall? What caused a delay this time? What provision does the Torah allow for Passover?
3. **30:17.** Who normally kills the lamb, and who collects the blood of the sacrifice?
4. **Word Study: Gladness (30:21).** What does the Hebrew noun *simḥah* mean? With what outward actions does it sometimes indicate joy, and with what is rejoicing in this way often associated? What can the term also mean as an interior gladness of heart? As a recurring theme in Chronicles, how is joy expressed especially in liturgical assemblies?

For application

1. **30:1.** What does Passover celebrate? Why should it be celebrated in groups, either by large numbers of people or by families? What is the "Christian Passover"? How does the Church celebrate it?
2. **30:9.** What has the mercy of God meant to you personally? How have you experienced it? How have you shared this mercy with others?
3. **30:18–19.** Contrast these verses with the scene in Mt 22:10–13. What excuses the pilgrims that Hezekiah prays for but does not excuse the man without a wedding garment in Jesus' parable? If people approach the Eucharist with a casual attitude about spiritual cleanliness, what is the probable result (1 Cor 11:27–29)?

Chapter 31

For understanding

1. **31:1.** How far does Hezekiah's reform push out, and in what way? What are the pillars? What are the Asherim?
2. **31:7.** What are the third and seventh months like? What do they constitute?
3. **31:16.** What happens with children at three years of age? For what would distributors of freewill offerings have to account? Though textual evidence is lacking, why do some scholars think the number was miscopied during transmission?

For application

1. **31:1–19.** What was Hezekiah's reform trying to accomplish? What should any reform of the liturgy try to accomplish? What is the difference between reform and revision?
2. **31:4.** St. Paul thought that Church leaders had a right to be paid for their work of preaching the gospel, though he refused payment himself (1 Cor 9:7–11). For the typical parish priest, what does that work involve? What might the priest need in order to do that kind of work? How much should he be paid for it?
3. **31:5–6.** What is the purpose of the tithe in these verses (hint: see v. 10)? What is the purpose of tithing in the modern Church? Although tithing in the strict sense is not required in the Catholic Church, why is it still a good idea to practice tithing?

Chapter 32

For understanding

1. **32:1.** Who is Sennacherib? What did he do in 701 B.C. before threatening to march on Jerusalem? What was the purpose of his military assault?
2. **32:7.** In addition to being an encouragement to his people, on what is the king's confidence based?
3. **32:9–19.** In what kind of warfare does Sennacherib engage? What do these tactics include? What is his hope for Jerusalem?
4. **32:21.** What was the angel sent to do? How did the enemy soldiers die? When did Sennacherib's assassination take place?
5. **32:30.** What did Hezekiah do to the waters of the Gihon Spring? How was the tunnel cut, and how long is it? What have archaeologists discovered?

For application

1. **32:7–8.** The *Catechism* says that “the solicitude of divine providence is *concrete* and *immediate*” (CCC 303; emphasis in original). How confident does Hezekiah sound in his message to his commanders in the face of such grave danger? How confident are you in God's concrete and immediate care for your needs? To what experiences of it can you point?
2. **32:9–19.** According to the note for these verses, what is the objective of Sennacherib's messengers? What is their fundamental attitude toward the God of Israel? How is that attitude similar to expressions of contempt for faith that you have heard? What is your answer to it?
3. **32:25.** Of what kind of “return” is the Chronicler thinking? How can expressions of gratitude to God help protect one from the sin of pride?
4. **32:31.** What usually seems to happen when God leaves us to ourselves? How do we make ourselves vulnerable on such occasions? What ought we to learn about ourselves?

Chapter 33

For understanding

1. **33:1.** As the 13th king of Judah, what is Manasseh infamous for? Under his corrupt leadership, what happens in Judah? Nevertheless, despite the enormity of his crimes, what does Manasseh experience and try to do? What do ancient sources indicate about Judah under the kingship of Manasseh?
2. **33:6.** What did Manasseh do to his sons? What are soothsaying and augury?
3. **33:12.** What prayers did Solomon ask the Lord to hear? What does the example of Manasseh show about God? For whom does the exile and return of Manasseh from Babylon serve as a lesson?
4. **33:21.** Why was Amon, the 14th king of Judah, assassinated? What may have been a factor in the coup?

For application

1. **33:4–5.** Some Eastern religious and New Age practices, such as meditation techniques, have attracted a certain Christian interest. What reservations should a Christian have about using them? For example, why should a Christian be wary of practicing yoga? What are the ultimate objectives of Eastern prayer practices as opposed to Christian ones?
2. **33:6.** According to the *Catechism* (2116–17), why are sorcery and consultation of mediums forbidden? What about the type of magic that one sees in stage performances?
3. **33:10.** How has the Lord spoken to our culture in this modern era? What heed have we given him?

4. **33:12–13.** God sometimes uses danger, distress, and suffering to bring us to repentance. How has he used these tools in your life? To what extent were your troubles self-imposed, and to what extent were they caused by circumstances? At what point did you come to realize your need for the Lord and turn to him?

Chapter 34

For understanding

1. **34:1.** How does Scripture remember Josiah, the 15th king of Judah? What zealous crusade does he sponsor? Sadly, despite an exemplary life, what happens to him?
2. **34:5.** On what teaching is using bones to desecrate cultic objects based?
3. **34:14.** What is the book of the law that Hilkiah, the high priest, found? Most likely, what happened to the scroll? What do some scholars claim about Deuteronomy without sufficient warrant? Apart from the silence of the narrator regarding the book's composition, why is this unlikely?
4. **34:24.** What are the curses spoken of by the prophetess? How will they be manifest?

For application

1. **34:3.** Young people in their teens and early 20s are often full of passion and zeal for causes. What causes have most inflamed your zeal? What activities have you engaged in to promote them? How has your enthusiasm translated into zeal for the gospel?
2. **34:19.** Hebrews 4:12 says that Scripture is “living and active”. What passages of Scripture have spoken most powerfully to you? Which of them have provided needed correction? Which have provided the most encouragement?
3. **34:24–28.** Read the note for these verses. If you were to be told a combination of bad and good news, which would you rather hear first? Why?

Chapter 35

For understanding

1. **35:1–19.** What do these verses discuss? Why is it one of the crowning moments of Josiah's kingship? Once again, in whom does the Chronicler display a marked interest? Why does he admire Josiah?
2. **35:20.** Who is Neco? Evidently, what does he ride out to do? What happens when Josiah unwisely interferes?
3. **35:21.** Ironically, who acts according to the will of God, and who acts against it? According to one Jewish tradition, what did the prophet Jeremiah urge Josiah to do? According to St. Jerome, why are many people called righteous in the Scriptures despite their faults? How does this apply to Josiah?

For application

1. **35:1–19.** The note for these verses points to the Chronicler's interest in liturgy. Why should Christians be concerned with liturgy done well? Why is the Church adamant that no one change the liturgical celebrations on his own initiative (see CCC 1140–44)?
2. **35:1.** Read the note for this verse. What is the first month of the liturgical year in the Catholic Church? Why does the liturgical year begin then? What is the central feast of that year?
3. **35:10–15.** What is the largest and most impressive liturgical event you have ever attended? What made it so impressive? Which ministers were involved in this celebration? What roles did the laity play?
4. **35:21.** Read the note for this verse, especially St. Jerome's commentary. Why, in recent years, have certain saints such as John Paul II and Junipero Serra been canonized despite criticism of their various faults? What does the Church primarily look for in the characters of those it proposes for veneration? What does that standard suggest about their shortcomings?

Chapter 36

For understanding

1. **36:5.** As the 17th king of Judah, what does Johoiakim witness? What do the names of Neco's puppet king mean?
2. **36:11.** Who is Zedekiah? What triggers the demise of Judah and Jerusalem? How many of Josiah's sons wore the Davidic crown, and who were they?

2 Chronicles

3. **36:17–21.** How does the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem begin, and how does it end? How long will Judah spend exiled in Babylon? Since national catastrophe and exile are covenant curses that come with continued defiance of God's Law, what is their aim? In the design of Providence, what is the role of Babylon?
4. **36:21.** The prophet Jeremiah prophesied that Judah would spend 70 years in exile, but since the return from exile began only 48 years after the final collapse of Judah, what do the words of Jeremiah seem to cover? To what span of time do some scholars relate the prophecy? What does it mean that "the land had enjoyed its sabbaths"?

For application

1. **36:4.** Read the note for v. 5, which mentions the name change of the king. Why did Jesus change Simon's name to Peter (Mt 16:18)? Even if the meaning of the name is slight, as in the case of Eliakim/Jehoiakim, what does it mean when the superior assigns a new name to the inferior?
2. **36:9.** The Chronicler's judgment of an eight-year-old king who reigned less than four months seems unduly harsh. Who was more likely doing the evil the child king is accused of? Who is often at least morally responsible when a child commits a serious crime? All the same, at what age does the Church believe that a person has attained the "age of discretion"?
3. **36:16.** In his First Letter to the Thessalonians, St. Paul urges Christians not to despise prophecy (1 Thess 5:20). Apart from despising the prophetic message, how else can one despise prophesying? Why is that easier than despising the prophecy itself?