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A SECOND ADAM, THE ANTI-IMAGE OF GOD, AND THE REVERSAL OF THE
EXODUS: THE DISMAL END TO JOSIAH'S GLORIOUS REIGN

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Josiah is the final good king in Judah before the Babylonian exile.¹ He reformed the nation (2 Chr 34:1–7; 2 Kgs 23:1–20), observed an unsurpassed Passover (2 Chr 35:1–19, esp. v. 18; 2 Kgs 23:21–25), reestablished the temple (2 Chr 34:8–21; 2 Kgs 22:3–7), and turned to Yahweh with all his heart (2 Kgs 23:25), thus fulfilling the Deuteronomic requirement of Yahweh on His people (Deut 4:29).² Though hopes abounded that Josiah might finally be the Messiah the people of God had long hoped for (Deut 18:15),³ Josiah failed and was killed on the battlefield (2 Chr 35:23–24).⁴ 2 Chr 35:20–25 reveals Josiah was not only opposing a foreign king but opposing his own God and abandoning His presence. In doing so, he provokes God’s wrath against himself. Josiah’s death is a dramatic and terrifying blow to the people of Judah whose former historic and glorious Egyptian deliverance (Exodus) is reversed as their king falls to Pharaoh Necho. Josiah is not the Messiah, but he is a messianic figure whose life provides real hope that Yahweh is not yet done with Abraham’s children. Nonetheless, Josiah’s death is marked by three essential failures: (1)

¹ Josiah was not the final king of Judah, but the remaining four kings each did evil in the eyes of Yahweh (2 Kgs 23:32; 2 Chr 36:5, 9, 12).

² Cf. Deut 6:5; 10:12; 11:1; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6. Solomon is also to have loved Yahweh and walked in the ways of David his father (1 Kgs 3:3), but two details reveal the Deuteronomic requirement is not fulfilled: (1) Josiah is said to have turned to Yahweh with *all* his heart (בְּכָל־לְבָבָו אֶל־יְהוָה שָׁב) (אֶת־יְהוָה שָׁלֹמָה וְאֶת־אֱלֹהִים) whereas Solomon merely “loved Yahweh” (בְּכָל־מְאֹדוֹ וּבְכָל־גַּפְשׁוֹ); (2) Solomon’s love for Yahweh is qualified with the phrase, “except he sacrificed and burned incense at high places.” This qualification explains why the simple word “all” lacks in the description of Solomon. He was double-hearted—and this was his ultimate downfall.

³ It is unnecessary—and anachronistic—to import every nuance of the Christian conception of a messiah on Old Testament texts. “Messiah” simply means “one who is anointed” and is applied to kings (1 Sam 26:9), priests (Lev 4:3), and prophets (1 Chr 16:22) in the OT (citations randomly selected using a search for the word פָּשָׁח on Step Bible: Tyndale House, “Step Bible,” n.d., <https://stepbible.org/>). While a deliverer was promised as early as Gen 3:15, OT believers did not have a full conception of what the ultimate messiah (i.e. Jesus Christ) would be: fulfilling each of the three offices (prophet, priest, king). This is not a systematic or biblical-theological study of the concept of a messiah in the history of Judeo-Christian thought, thus further comment is necessarily limited. Herein, “(the) messiah” (lowercase ‘m’) will be used in its broadest terms as “one who is anointed/anointed one.” The Messiah (capital ‘M’) will refer to the ultimate messiah who came in the person of Jesus Christ. For a discussion of the theology of the Messiah throughout Jewish history culminating in Jesus Christ and the view of Jesus as Messiah in the NT, see: Darrell L. Bock, “Messiah/Messianism,” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 503–6.

⁴ Granted, the text seems to indicate Josiah died in Jerusalem. However, this is not precisely clear and, in my view, I see no contradiction between Josiah being killed on the battlefield (as the accounts in Kgs seems to indicate: 2 Kgs 23:29–30) and Huldah’s prophecy that Josiah would die in peace (2 Kgs 22:14–20; 2 Chr 34:22–28). See fn. 93 for more on this.

failure as a Second Adam; (2) bearing the anti-image of God; and (3) reversing the exodus. In these three things, Jesus Christ, the final King of Israel succeeded, once again delivering His people through a greater Exodus, restoring the image of God, and perfectly extending the dominion of Adam.⁵

Introduction to Chronicles⁶

In order to understand the meaning of the individual stories making up the Book of Chronicles⁷ one must understand the overall nature of the book.⁸ In a sentence, Chr is a historical book⁹ written

⁵ All Scripture quoted herein is my own translation unless otherwise stated. My translation justification of 2 Chr 35:20–25 can be found in Appendix B.

⁶ More introductory matters are covered in Appendix D.

⁷ Hereafter, simply “Chr”. “The Book of Chronicles” (and therefore Chr) refers to the two books of Chronicles as one united work. This does not necessarily imply unity of authorship for the entirety of the book (though I will argue the book was written primarily by one author) but it does imply that 2 Chr 35 is meant to be read in light of 1 Chr 1–2 Chr 34 and 2 Chr 36 following.

⁸ This includes the theology, message, author, composition, historical setting, original audience, etc. Here, purpose and historical setting are briefly discussed, which necessarily includes a brief divergence into consideration of the genre of Chr. Most commentaries and many survey works offer helpful analyses of the Books of the Bible like this. One I found particularly helpful was Richard L. Pratt Jr., “1-2 Chronicles,” in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised*, ed. Miles V. Van Pelt (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 525–41. Overall I am in agreement with Pratt, though I find his comments concerning authorship a bit too certain.

⁹ The term “historical” is a term of abject debate when it comes to many books of Scripture—Chr is no exception. It does not help that the Hebrew canon places Chr as the final book among the so-called “Writings” (including books like Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes as well as books the English canon considers to be historical—like Ruth or Chr—or prophetic—like Daniel). However, the separation between Chr and Josh, Jdgs, Sam, and Kgs is not to carry too much weight in determining whether or not Chr is historical. Applying the term “historical” is often considered anathema by modern scholarship, which requires a “historical” work to adhere to strict secular notions of what “a history ought to be.” This includes three primary things. Redditt helpfully describes these scholars: “Such historians do three things. (1) They work critically. That is, they evaluate texts and narratives for contradictions. If contradictions are found and cannot be resolved, historians typically challenge the historicity of the accounts. (2) They work on the principle of analogy. That is, if something cannot happen now (e.g., people walk on water or fly through the air), it did not happen in the past. (3) They work on the basis of human or natural causality; they do not attribute events to divine causation.” Paul L. Redditt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2020), 26. Needless to say, a Christian worldview—and the Hebrew worldview in which Chr was written—do not adhere to these standards, though we also do not want contradictions.

sometime during the postexilic era (post-538 BCE)¹⁰ with the intended purpose of explaining (1) why the exile occurred in the first place and (2) what that means for the covenant member who had returned to the land following Cyrus' decree (2 Chr 36:22–23).¹¹ This means, while recording history, the historical accounts contained within Chr are written from a particular perspective, with a particular bias, intending to provoke a particular response. We can, then, consider Chr to be “historiography.”¹² Nonetheless, the historical account of Chr is trustworthy both for

¹⁰ There is little agreement concerning the date of Chr. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to conclude the book was written prior to the Hellenistic age (which began in the late 300s BCE). It is often claimed that the earliest date Chr could have been written is 515 BCE due to the reference to a *daric* (1 Chr 29:7), which was a Persian coin not minted until that year. Paul K. Hooker, *First and Second Chronicles*, 1st ed., Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 4. However, it is possible that the word refers to a Greek *drachma* coin rather than a Persian *daric* which would keep the earliest date at the year of Cyrus' decree in 538. That Chr was written prior to the Hellenistic age is concluded on the basis of little to no Greek influence or language. “[W]e do not find a single probable Greek loanword in the Chronicler’s work, and only one even possible one.” W. F. Albright, “The Date and Personality of the Chronicler,” *JBL* 40.3/4 (1921): 107. Kalimi affirms this as well. Isaac Kalimi, “1 and 2 Chronicles,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible*, ed. Michael David Coogan (New York: Oxford University, 2011), 125. Nonetheless, this is in contradiction to some important scholarship on Chr. E.g., Japhet believes the book was most likely written in the early Hellenistic age. Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 28. It is reasonable to agree with Pratt who offers a 125 year range for production of Chr: 515–390. Richard L. Pratt Jr., *1 and 2 Chronicles*, Mentor Commentary (Fearn: Mentor, 1998), 11. Nonetheless, an earliest date in the post-exilic period is likely due especially to the lack of material covering the postexilic age. A fuller discussion of this can be found in Appendix D.

¹¹ It is also fair to say Chr was written with the intention of learning from the past how to behave in the present. That is, if the exile was brought on by x , y , and z but would have been prevented if α , β , and γ were done and that is made clear by the stories contained in the historical work (which it is), then α , β , and γ ought to be done in the present. Other postexilic works include Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and (a bit later) Malachi.

¹² While he is writing concerning the Book of Kings rather than Chr, William Fullilove’s comments on this phenomenon are fitting. “Historical writing is of necessity selective and of necessity imposes an order and a theme (or themes) upon its material. This observation implies that the modern historical writer is ideological, just as the author or compiler of Kings [and Chronicles!] would have been. No author, modern or ancient, gives an unmediated take on events, but instead, all are ideological in some way or ways. The implication of this point is important: if in favor of an alternative take on the history of Israel and Judah, one cannot simply dismiss the claims of Kings as ‘ideologically biased’ without further argument, for the modern historian is also ideologically biased, just possibly in a different way.” William B. Fullilove, “1-2 Kings,” in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised*, ed. Miles V. Van Pelt (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 225. So also Walton: “[A]ny given historical record will

understanding historical doctrine, the history of Israel as a whole, and the historical postexilic Jewish conception of what it means to be a covenant member.¹³

Historical Context¹⁴

The historical context of 2 Chr 35:20–25 is a time of tumult, fear, and upheaval. Occurring in the late seventh century BCE, the once dominant Assyrian Empire was quickly losing control of the

represent a particular perspective about the events of the past and will inevitably be a reflection from the narrator's present. The shape of one's historiography is determined by the questions the compiler is seeking to answer. In this light *any* historiography should, by rights, be referred to as 'perspectives on events of the past.' Any historiography must, in some sense, be viewed as an editorial column." John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, Second edition. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 190. A. H. Sayce also wisely counsels thus: "Let this accordingly be the rule of the historian: to believe all things, to hope all things, but at the same time to test and try all things. And the test must be scientific, not what we assume to be probable or natural, but external testimony in the shape of archaeological or geographical facts. The history of the past is not what ought to have happened according to the ideas of the critic, but what actually did happen. Such a manner of treating our authorities does not, of course, exclude our recognition of what the literary critics call their several 'tendencies.' No history, worthy of the name, can be written without a 'tendency' of some sort on the part of the writer, even though it be not consciously felt... The historian cannot help writing with an object in view; the necessities of the subject require it. That the historical books of the Old Testament should have been written with a 'tendency' is therefore normal... If we compare the books of Chronicles with those of Samuel and Kings, the contrast between them strikes the eye at once. The interest of the Chronicler is centered in the history of the Jewish temple and ritual, of its priests and Levites, and the manifold requirements of the Law. His history of Israel accordingly becomes a history of Israelitish ritual; all else is put aside or treated in the briefest fashion. The incidents of David's reign narrated in the books of Samuel are subordinated to elaborate accounts of his arrangements for the services in the tabernacle or temple... 'Tendencies' there are, therefore, in the historical writings. of the Old Testament; they would not be human productions if there were not. The authors have had one great object in view, that of showing from the past history of the people that sin brings punishment with it, while a blessing follows upon righteous action." A. H. Sayce, *The Early History of the Hebrews* (London: Rivingtons, 1897), 139–41.

¹³ Chr stands "at the heart of the transition" between living in Exile to being welcomed back in their homeland. R. K. Duke, "Chronicles, Books Of," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 162.

¹⁴ The historical context discussed here is concerning the historical context of 2 Chr 35:20–25, not the historical context of the composition Chr as a whole. The historical context of Chr was discussed somewhat above but more can (and ought) to be said about it, which can be found in Appendix D.

ANE.¹⁵ As politics dictate, any vacuum of power leads to widespread difficulty and the rise of ambitious leaders, which in this case meant the rise of the especially problematic Babylonian Empire.¹⁶ In a dramatic turn of events, the once rival empires of Assyria and Egypt formed an alliance against the increasingly threatening Babylonians.¹⁷ In an effort to aid the Assyrians in a last stand battle against the behemoth force and cruelty of the Babylonians, Pharaoh Necho brought

¹⁵ The precise reason for this is uncertain, but it is, at the very least, due to a series of incapable kings. Assyria, which had absorbed Babylon in 689, was facing pressure from the former Babylonian Sealand dynasty who was asserting independence, was seeking to secure treaties for peaceful coexistence with the Medes in the East, and was losing control of Egyptian territory it had previously conquered. As would be seen in time, Babylon proved to be the greatest threat. Merrill's summary of ANE drama at this time is rather helpful. Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 449–54.

¹⁶ Dillard states, “the day of the Assyrian empire induced the resurgence of two great powers that had long been held subject to Assyria (Egypt and Babylon); each sought to reestablish its ancient spheres of influence and territorial claims. These events were full of ominous portent for Judah.” Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, WBC, ed. David Allen Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 291.

¹⁷ We do not know exactly when Egypt and Assyria formed an alliance, but we know they formed one from both biblical and extrabiblical texts. 2 Chr 35:20–21 makes clear that Necho, the Pharaoh of Egypt at this time, was traveling north to engage in some sort of war at Carchemish. 2 Kgs 23:29 states that Pharaoh “went up to the King of Assyria.” While it is possible to read this as a hostile venture *against* the King of Assyria, it is not mandated by the text. (Japhet notes that Necho going against the King of Assyria in war used to be the standard interpretation of this story. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1056. Some more recent authors still consider the Kgs text to be “misleading.” Zipora Talshir, “The Three Deaths of Josiah and the Strata of Biblical Historiography (2 Kings XXIII 29-30; 2 Chronicles XXV 20-5; 1 Esdras I 23-31),” *VT* 46.2 (1996): 213; H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 408. “Misleading” is not necessarily a *wrong* label, but it is a misleading label. Kgs is only “misleading” if the text is read in the traditional, assumed manner—the grammar of the text does not require the misleading interpretation.) This is where extrabiblical material is helpful. The Babylonian Chronicle records the battle between Babylon and the Egyptian-Assyrian alliance. It reads, “[The twenty-first year]: The king of Akkad stayed home (while) Nebuchadnezzar (II), his eldest son (and) the crown prince, mustered [the army of Akkad]. He took his army’s lead and marched to Carchemish which is on the bank of the Euphrates. He crossed the river [*to encounter the army of Egypt*] which was encamped at Carchemish. [...] They did battle together. The army of Egypt retreated before him. He inflicted a [defeat] upon them (and) finished them off completely.” Albert Kirk Grayson, “Chronicle 5: Chronicle Concerning the Early Years of Nebuchadnezzar II,” in *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 99. This can also be read online (in an unofficial version) here: “ABC 5 (Jerusalem Chronicle) - Livius,” n.d., <https://www.livius.org/sources/content/mesopotamian-chronicles-content/abc-5-jerusalem-chronicle/>.

his troops northward to take up arms in the Assyrian-held city of Carchemish.¹⁸ However, in order to do so, Necho had to pass by Josiah's territory¹⁹ in the Valley of Megiddo.²⁰ Josiah, however, sought to oppose Necho.²¹ Unfortunately for the Judahites Josiah was killed immediately, Necho was able to reach his destination,²² and the people of Judah rejected their Lord,²³ resulting in a plunge into exile just as their Northern sister kingdom had been a century and a half prior.²⁴

¹⁸ Undoubtedly, this was not a selfless act on the part of Necho. As Frost reminds, Necho may have marched northward “ostensibly to help Assyria in her troubles, but no doubt also to protect and indeed to further his own interests.” Stanley Brice Frost, “The Death of Josiah: A Conspiracy of Silence?,” *SBL* 87.4 (1968): 371.

¹⁹ It is unclear whether or not Necho was passing by or passing through Josiah's territory as we do not know who held Megiddo at this time in history. Malamat makes a convincing case for Egyptian dominance of Megiddo, which seems to be the predominant scholarly opinion based on his work. Abraham Malamat, “Josiah's Bid for Armageddon: The Judean-Egyptian Encounter in 609 BC,” *JANES* 5 (1973): 267–79. However, Frost believes Megiddo was held by neither power, rather being left vacant by the Assyrians some years earlier. Frost, 371.

²⁰ Necho had to venture northward through the Shephelah, a hilly region with “numerous broad valleys.” Megiddo, where Josiah ultimately met Necho (v. 21), was the emerging point from a range of low-lying mountains, standing as an important and narrow pass through the mountains. John D. Currid and David P. Barrett, *Crossway ESV Bible Atlas* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 171.

²¹ We also do not know exactly why Josiah sought to oppose Necho as neither Kgs nor Chr directly state the motivation behind his action. Scholars have proposed various opinions. Dillard notes it may have been due to Josiah's anti-Assyrian bias. Dillard, 291. This is very possible, as Assyria had pestered the Israelite people (Israel and Judah) for nearly two and a half centuries and had demolished the Northern Kingdom of Israel a century earlier in 722 BCE, deporting all of the people into far away lands never to be seen again. With Josiah's reign, the Assyrian threat was fading and, if opposing Egypt weakened Assyria, it was a savvy political move on behalf of the Judahite king. Frost, 370. A further encouragement to Josiah may have been Egypt's defeat on the Euphrates in recent memory, as well. Malamat, 274.

²² Necho reached Carchemish and, while he returned to Egypt soon after (taking a pass through Jerusalem to take over and install his own puppet king: 2 Chr 36:2–4), his armies battled for four years from 609–605. Jacob Martin Myers, *I and II Esdras*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 28. Ultimately, the Egyptians were defeated in 605 resulting in the demolition of the final Assyrian powers and the voiding of Egyptian power outside of her own lands. This also led to Babylon's encroachment on Judah—removing the Egyptian puppet king and installing a new, Babylonian puppet king over the Judahites (2 Chr 36:5–7). Cf. Jer 46:13ff.

²³ Jehoahaz's evil deeds bear witness to the less than total reform of the Judahites hearts. Cf. 2 Kings 23:26–27.

²⁴ The final phase of the Babylonian exile occurred in 586 BCE whereas Israel was defeated and sent into exile by the Assyrians in 722 BCE. However, as I will argue shortly, the exile essentially began as soon as Josiah was defeated by an Egyptian King: the very nation from whom the Covenant People had been delivered 600+ years prior (The Book of Exodus). Intriguingly, this view of the exile also perfectly fulfills the seventy years of rest for the land as prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer 29:10; 2 Chr 36:20–22).

Literary Context

Josiah's kingship is the last major reign of any Judahite king for the rest of history.²⁵ Naturally, then, it comes near the very end of Chr. Due to the nature of Chr, the reign of Josiah can be understood quite well even when taken on its own.²⁶ Nonetheless, it is a story progressing the history of Judah and must be understood in connection to the rest of Chr.²⁷

Chr begins with a genealogy recording the history of Israel from the very beginning (Adam: 1 Chr 1:1; cf. Gen 2:4–25) all the way through to genealogies of the postexilic peoples (1 Chr 9).²⁸ After this, Saul's genealogy is repeated and then the details of Saul's death are recorded.²⁹ Next,

²⁵ This, of course, excludes Jesus Christ—the King of Israel and of the world (Luke 23:3; 1 Tim 6:15). One may squabble with this statement since there were other kings—like Herod—who reigned over Judah/Israel. They, however, are not particularly significant as kings and their primary role in Scripture is antagonistic.

²⁶ Though, of course, this presupposes existing knowledge of things like who David was, who Yahweh is, the significance of the Temple, the Exodus, etc. A *full* knowledge of Josiah's reign requires the rest of Chr (as well as Kgs and the rest of the canon), but the story, more or less, teaches the same thing even without interacting widely with external material.

²⁷ The scope of this paper does not allow for a full exposition of the literary context of this story. Primary emphasis, therefore, will be given to establishing the context of this story in light of the immediately preceding context: the reforms of Josiah (2 Chr 34:1–35:19).

²⁸ Von Rad notes the genealogies of Chr boldly declare that all of history has taken place all for the sake of the postexilic community. “What can we say about the self-consciousness of a provincial cultic community tolerated by the Persian Empire which yet portrays history from Adam onwards as taking place all for her own sake! Of all the histories in the Old Testament it is the Chronicler's [the author's—who I herein refer to as the Historian; see fn. 30 for my reasoning] which embraces the longest time-span: it runs from Adam right up to the time after Nehemiah.” Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 347–48.

²⁹ This is another fact supporting the reality that the Historian (author of Chr) did not write Chr in order to replace Sam-Kgs but in order to supplement it. It reveals, once again, that the stories contained in Sam-Kgs are assumed to be well known to the target audience. For, whereas most of 1 Sam is taken up with the drama between David and Saul, Chr only details his death. It has been noted that the death of Saul is an odd place to start in Chr. William Riley has noted (following the lead of Ackroyd) it is significant for Saul to be the starting place of the Historian, for whereas we might expect the Historian to avoid mentioning Saul (a king who miserably failed to follow Yahweh) the Historian does not shy away from including the details of Saul's death. Riley goes on to explain that most think this is due to the “contrast between the black tragedy of Saul and the bright triumph of David.” Considering the overall place of Saul in the narrative of Chronicles, Riley concludes Saul is presented as the “antithesis of the ideal king who bears responsibility for the temple, whose kingship depends upon his fulfillment of that responsibility, and who ensures blessings for the land through his cultic concern.” Riley admits the intended application of the

the Historian³⁰ details the life of David, focusing especially on his contributions to the Temple of God (1 Chr 11–29).³¹ Solomon's reign is then described, culminating in the establishment—and God's indwelling—of the Temple (2 Chr 1–9).³² Following Solomon, Israel's glory drastically decreases as Israel divides into two kingdoms. Rehoboam takes over Judah³³ but forsakes the Law

Historian is uncertain, as various applications may be drawn—not least of which that many kings fail just like Saul. William Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History*, JSOT 160 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 40–53. It is the opinion of the present author that Saul was included in the narrative for just this reason. Saul failed to keep the covenant and had the Kingship—and therefore the possession of the land and the presence of Yahweh—utterly stripped away from him. Saul is paradigmatic for every king that followed—including David who likewise grievously sinned against Yahweh even though it is not contained within Chr itself (2 Sam 24:10).³⁰ “The Historian” is how I refer to the author, which is contrary to most of modern scholarship (which opts for “the Chronicler”). While “Chronicler” may seem apt due to the English title of the book, it fails to grasp what the author was doing. A chronicler is meant to record events without any bias or analysis, whereas an historian necessarily interprets, edits, and compiles. For example, the daily newspaper may be an example of work by a chronicler (for it generally simply records events) whereas a history of the United States of America is a work of history—or historiography. “Historian” simply reflects the work of the author better than “Chronicler,” which is a rather unfortunate way to refer to the author of Chr. In writing Chr, the author was intentionally reflecting on the history of God's Covenant People and drawing (Spirit-led) conclusions on the basis of those reflections. In doing so, the Historian was functioning not as a court stenographer but was, instead, an inspired interpreter. This places the Historian in a role similar to, though not identical to, the role of Moses in writing Deuteronomy. This view of the Historian's reflections is common (though some do not affirm the Historian's conclusions as Spirit-led). E.g. Childs, 655; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 409.

³¹ The focus on the temple of God is widely acknowledged as a persistent theme throughout all of Chr. For more on this theme see almost any commentary or OT introduction on Chr, but I found two to be rather helpful: Eugene H. Merrill, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 65–68; J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, NAC v. 9 (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 35–36.

³² While the details of both David's and Solomon's reign are largely positive, Chr does not present an idealistic version of Israel's history. David's great sin is recorded (1 Chr 21:1–17) and Solomon's failure is hinted at from the first chapter with the reference to importing Egyptian horses (1:16; this is condemned in Deut 17:16). Nonetheless, Solomon's reign is glorious. Furthermore, Yahweh's response to Solomon's prayer of dedication of the Temple foreshadows the response of Josiah to the law wherein Yahweh declares He will “hear from heaven and forgive” the sin of the people if they “pray and seek” the face of God, turning from their wicked ways (2 Chr 7:14). This is exactly what Josiah did. A few verses later, Yahweh also declares what the voice of the exilic people would be once His mercy ends and they are delivered into exile (7:21–22). Chr is a response to this cry.

³³ Some clarification of terms is necessary. Hereon, “Judah” refers to the Southern Kingdom whereas “Israel” refers to the Northern Kingdom, except when referring to nation before the split

of Yahweh, which quickly results in the Egyptians coming to plunder Jerusalem five years into his reign (2 Chr 12:1–4).³⁴ The story continually goes downhill as Yahweh remains faithful to His people only to be rejected time and time again.³⁵ To be sure, there are some high points in Judah's history, but the overall trajectory is downwards.³⁶

Eventually, Josiah's reign begins when he is just eight years old (2 Chr 34:1).³⁷ His reign comes on the heels of the wicked reign of King Amon (33:21–25). Contrary to his biological father Amon, Josiah follows in the ways of David, who is his true father (34:2). At the young age of sixteen, Josiah began to seek Yahweh and by twenty years old was purging Judah of the pagan high places that so many kings had neglected to tear down (34:3). Just as the prophecy of God had foretold (1 Kgs 13:2), Josiah tore down the altars of the Baals and burned the bones of the priests on the altars (34:4–7). Not only did Josiah tear down pagan altars, so also was the Book of the Law found during his reign (34:8–18)³⁸ which was then read aloud to Josiah who responded rightly in

of the kingdom. When seeking to speak specifically of those faithful to the Law of Yahweh, I will use either “True Israel” or “the Faithful Remnant”. “Covenant People” also refers to any of the people in Israel or Judah—those who are “of the circumcision.”

³⁴ This foreshadows Necho's defeat of Josiah (2 Chr 35:20–24) and his taking over of Jerusalem (2 Chr 36:1–4).

³⁵ For instance, see Asa's failure (16:7–8), Jehoshaphat's failure to tear down the high places (20:33), or Joash's abandonment of God (24:17–18). These three are but a sampling of the kings' failures to obey Yahweh's law.

³⁶ E.g. Jehoshaphat reformed Judah (2 Chr 19), but failed to tear down the pagan high places (20:33). Hezekiah's reign is great, but his reign ends in pride and the sharing of Judah's riches with Babylon (32:31).

³⁷ He is the second youngest king in Judah's history. Joash was seven years old (2 Chr 24:1).

³⁸ Many interpret the Book of the Law referred to here to be Deuteronomy. E.g. Pratt argues this based on five points: (1) the story is from Kgs which “depends heavily on Deuteronomy”; (2) the book is “called the Book of the Covenant (34:30), a designation that may have reflected the concentration of covenantal motifs in Deut”; (3) “Deut has lists of curses... which may explain the Chronicler's focus on the curses written in the book”; (4) “centralization of worship and the exclusion of high places are important themes” in Deut; (5) “The Passover is emphasized in Deut 16:1–8 as it was in Josiah's reforms.” Pratt, 483. Contrarily, Klein states that this was likely “something close to the present shape of the Pentateuch.” Ralph W. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, ed. Paul D. Hanson, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 11. Which of these two options is the historical reality is ultimately indeterminable, though I lean more towards the entire Pentateuch view. What is important is that it is Yahweh's law that is read. I reject the critical consensus that the Torah was invented during Josiah's reign in order to perpetuate his reforms. On the contrary, any similarities between Josiah's reforms and the stipulations of Deuteronomy/the Torah are due to Josiah having instituted reform and acted in accord with the Law prescribed by Moses.

the fear of Yahweh (34:19–33).³⁹ Josiah then held the greatest Passover in Judah’s history⁴⁰ and the people enjoyed thirteen years of peace before Josiah’s tragic end.⁴¹ It is on the heels of the glorious Passover that Josiah’s death is detailed.⁴² Josiah represents the greatest post-Solomonic peak in Judah’s history.⁴³ And yet, Josiah still fails to follow the Law of Yahweh perfectly.

³⁹ Prophetic word is sought from Huldah once the Book of the Law is read aloud to Josiah. Her prophecy declares that, because Judah has forsaken Yahweh, He will pour out His wrath on them unto their utter destruction (34:25). Nonetheless, because Josiah himself *heard* the Word of Yahweh, he would be spared and die in peace (vv. 26–28). There are two brief comments to say about this here. (1) The emphasis on Josiah’s hearing of the Word of Yahweh is important when reading the account of Josiah’s death (2 Chr 35:20–25), which is the main focus of this paper. (2) Huldah’s prophecy that Josiah would die in peace (v. 28) appears problematic when initially reading the story. However, Huldah’s prophecy remains true and Josiah’s death does not in any way contradict her prophecy. This will be delineated more below.

⁴⁰ It is done all according to “the Word of Yahweh by Moses” (2 Chr 35:6, 12).

⁴¹ That the years following the Passover were peaceful is mostly assumed, as there are no extant accounts detailing these thirteen years. Nonetheless, it is agreed upon by the vast majority of scholarship and fulfills the Deuteronomic blessings for obedience (Deut 28:1–14). Psalm 72 details the glory of a righteous king as well. He judges with righteousness (v. 2), defends the needy (vv. 4, 12), has widespread dominion (v. 8), righteousness abounds in his day (v. 7), and the people are blessed by him (v. 17). Josiah truly was a king like this despite his downfall.

⁴² This is important. The Historian could have detailed more of the years of peace, but this was not his intent. Writing in this way (i.e. detailing Josiah’s miserable death immediately after detailing his exalted and glorious Passover) forces redemptive history forward as the people of Josiah’s day and all subsequent readers (modern readers included) are forced to look forward to what was then a yet to come Messiah. Modern Christians, of course, shoot their eyes forwards to Christ—and to know Christ is the ultimate deliverer is a good thing that we ought never forget. But in order that the OT might be its fullest in our lives, we ought also to dwell on the tragedy of the failures of our faith’s ancestors.

⁴³ It is important to qualify this as post-Solomonic because Solomon, in many ways, was the greatest peak following David. While Solomon surpassed his father in wisdom and wealth (1 Kgs 4:30; 10:21), David is still the standard to whom all subsequent kings are compared (e.g. 2 Kgs 22:2). Indeed, Solomon’s poor leadership led the nation to split immediately following his reign. This is not detailed in Chr. However, the account in Kgs is remarkably clear that Solomon’s failure brought the division even though it was Rehoboam whose actions “were the straw that broke the camel’s back” (1 Kings 11:1–14; 12:1–24). The audience of Chr would have known this. It is widely accepted that Chr assumes knowledge of Sam-Kgs. As Childs states the author of Chr assumes “the whole tradition on the part of the readers to such an extent that his account is virtually incomprehensible without the implied relationship with the other accounts (cf. 2 Chron 12:19ff; 2 Chron 32:24–44).” Brevard S. Childs, “Chronicles,” in *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 646. Undoubtedly, Hezekiah’s reign was also great. Nonetheless, as Dempster notes, “[Josiah’s] birth is announced 300 years in advance and he is regarded as the restorer of true worship (1 Kgs 13:2)... [Josiah’s] kingship is presented as

The Dismal End

Necho's Obedience (vv. 20–21)

The Historian's account of Josiah's death begins with an important temporal phrase ("after all this"), which closely connects the death narrative with the temple narrative immediately prior.⁴⁴ The reader, then, is meant to keep in mind the glories of Josiah's reign. Josiah really did reestablish the temple and hold the nation's greatest Passover. Josiah really was a good king. Indeed, Josiah is a second Adam who has the opportunity to live faithfully to Yahweh, restoring hope, maintaining proper worship, and extending God's dominion in this world (Gen 1:28–31).⁴⁵ The temple narrative has provided the reader with the hope that Josiah is the prophet like Moses who would deliver the people once and for all (Deut 18:15, 18).

Yet, Josiah was not the Great King, the Moses-like prophet, or *the Second Adam*. Necho's advance northward caused a conflict for Josiah: trust Yahweh for deliverance or trust senses.⁴⁶

incomparable. Unlike any other person, including David himself, he serves God with 'all his heart, soul and capacity '(2 Kings 23:25). This was urged of Israel, but sadly no Israelite ever measured up to this standard. Josiah may have represented a messianic hope in a way that previous Davidic kings did not." Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT 15 (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 152–53.

⁴⁴ Japhet calls this a "literary bridge between the individual units" that "brings to the fore the theological problem with which the Chronicler is confronted in the story of Josiah." Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1055. Riley similarly states, "In this context it is noteworthy that Josiah goes to the scene of his death immediately after the narration of his Passover celebration. The scene begins with a significant phrase which calls attention to Josiah's contribution to the Temple (2 Chr 35:20) and contains the shocking attribution of his death to the fact that he did not listen to God speaking through the Egyptian king Neco... [Josiah's death is] thus portrayed... as an act of divine retribution., and linked to the fate of the Northern Ahab in 2 Chr 18:29–33." Riley, 138. The reader must remember that, historically, thirteen years have passed since the glorious Passover and Josiah's intent to engage Necho in war. Many things could have happened during this time. Though, as stated above, most agree that this was a time of widespread peace for Judah.

⁴⁵ "God put an indelible mark on the first couple to rule on his behalf, mediate on and enjoy his presence, and live in accordance with his law, reminding one another of his truths. To be anything less is to be unhuman." Benjamin L. Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church: A Biblical Theology of the People of God*, ESBT (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 21.

⁴⁶ Undoubtedly, this would be a hard decision. It is not often easy to trust Yahweh in the most trying of circumstances. Yet Josiah had thoroughly heard the Word of Yahweh and obeyed it. 2 Chr 34:26–27 states twice that Josiah heard Yahweh's Word—and it even states that Yahweh heard Josiah's pleas for mercy! Not only on the basis of the Book of the Law that was found (34:14–21), nor even only on the basis of the preceding kings who both prospered and were brought to nothing because of Yahweh (1 Chr 11:9; 14:10; 15:26; 17:8; 18:1–13; 29:12; 29:25; 2

Josiah opted for the latter and went out to oppose Necho in battle.⁴⁷ This, of course was shocking to Necho who was doing Yahweh's work (2 Chr 34:21).⁴⁸

Necho sent messengers to Josiah, urging with him to turn back, for Necho only wanted to pass by in order to get to Carchemish as soon as possible.⁴⁹ His emphatic warning to Josiah⁵⁰ is made up of four parts,⁵¹ each progressing the thought of the prior. First, Necho asks Josiah, "What have I to do with you, O King of Judah?" This is a rhetorical question meant to cause Josiah to see his error.⁵² Necho then declares the reality of his mission: he is not going against Josiah—for that would be absurd! There is no war between Necho and Josiah. Instead, Necho is simply passing

Chr 1:1; 6:34–35; 7:14, 19–20; 11:3–4; 12:6–8; 13:12, 14–15, 18; 14:7, 9–11; 15:9; 17:3, 10; 18:4, 31; 20:3, 9, 15, 17, 20, 29; 21:16–17; 24:20, 23–24; 25:4, 8, 20; 27:6; 28:19–20, 23; 30:7; 32:7–8, 20–21; 33:12–13), but also because Yahweh had directly told Josiah that He had heard him and He would gather him to his fathers in peace (34:28) should Josiah have realized Necho was no threat to him—if only Josiah trusted Yahweh.

⁴⁷ While not affirming the view, De Vries notes that some scholars have interpreted Josiah's going out to Necho as the humble and proper "protocol of a vassal to a recognized master." Simon J. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, FOTL v. 11 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 418. Such is decidedly not the case. This is made especially clear by (1) Necho's pleas to Josiah (v. 21); (2) Josiah's intent to disguise himself; (3) Josiah's refusal to listen to Necho's words (v. 22).

⁴⁸ That Necho is shocked by Josiah's actions is indicated by the verbiage and grammar of his message to Josiah. See Appendix B: Translation Justification for my argument.

⁴⁹ Malamat states that Necho may have sent a message prior to the account in Chr in order to request safe passage. Ironically, that may have been the very thing that informed Josiah of the whereabouts of Necho's journey. Malamat, 278.

⁵⁰ The emphatic nature of the speech is made clear by the Hebrew word order. The prepositional phrase "to him" (referring to Josiah) is fronted before the direct object "messengers." This is a standard way to mark the focus of an entity in a speech. C. H. J. Van der Merwe, J. A. Naudé, and Jan Kroese, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, Second edition. (New York: T&T Clark, 2017), 47.1. For more on the emphatic nature of this speech, see the translation justification in Appendix B.

⁵¹ Japhet helpfully discusses these. Though I differ slightly from her labels. Japhet states Necho's message is made up of (1) a rhetorical question (2) "a very concise statement of the true situation" (3) an imperative and (4) a threat. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1056. I find the word "warning" to be a better description of part (4) of Necho's message for a threat implies Necho is the agent of destruction whereas a warning implies God is the agent of destruction, which is the clear intent of Necho's comments.

⁵² It is possible that Josiah had been warned by prophets not to go out against Necho beforehand. Whether or not this was the case, though, does not matter. Josiah ought to have sought Yahweh's will before going out to oppose Necho just as David had. In failing to inquire of the prophets of Yahweh, Josiah neglected God's Word and will, setting out on his own self-enthused, ambitious mission. Yet Yahweh was gracious to speak through Necho; Josiah should have heard.

Josiah on his way to assist Assyria.⁵³ Josiah is utterly out of place. Necho then declares a fact that ought to have caused Josiah to realize the impossibility of his mission: the God of Judah is with Necho.⁵⁴ In other words Necho declares, “Josiah, you're doomed to fail.”⁵⁵ Indeed, the final point of Necho's message is a warning to Josiah. If he does not turn back then the God of Judah (whom Josiah had previously turned to with all his heart) would cut him down.⁵⁶

Josiah's Disobedience (vv. 22–24d)

⁵³ This was discussed above. In meddling in international affairs, Josiah made himself more like an ANE king than Yahweh's anointed, forgetting that he was nothing more than a vice-regent of Yahweh (1 Sam 8:7; Isa 44:6). The nation had long been troubled by international treaties and alliances, but Yahweh demanded the whole trust of His people. “Throughout his history he condemned the times when Judah joined with other nations in military alliances.” Pratt, 496.

⁵⁴ What **אֱלֹהִים** refers to on Necho's lips is intensely debated. Some claim that Necho was invoking the power of an Egyptian deity. Jacob Martin Myers, *II Chronicles*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 216 In fact, Japhet goes as far as to say Necho was warning Josiah against opposing the physical idol Necho had in his pocket or chariot. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1056. I am of the opinion that the God intended to be referenced here is the God of Israel. However, who Necho thought he was referring to when he invoked a deity is entirely irrelevant. Since we cannot get into the mind of Necho, we cannot declare with absolute certainty whether he claimed the name of the God of Judah or the name of his own personal Egyptian god. Necho's own existential awareness of what deity had commanded him is utterly meaningless, for Yahweh alone controls history (Ps 22:28). Merrill has a similar view of this. Merrill, *I & 2 Chronicles*, 596. The declaration that God is with Necho is of utmost importance, for this is never said of Josiah. David and Solomon are both declared to have had God “with” them, but this is declared of no subsequent Israelite or Judahite king. Klein summarizes, “There is no statement in Chr that Yahweh was with Josiah, as he had been with David (1 Chr 11:9; 17:2), Solomon (1 Chr 22:11; 28:20; 2 Chr 1:1), and Asa (2 Chr 15:2, 9). Yahweh had also been with Hezekiah, according to 2 Kgs 18:7, although that verse was not incorporated in the Chronicler's account.” Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 526.

⁵⁵ Based on the rest of the Scriptures, we understand that God is the one who fights the battles of his people. Josiah would have undoubtedly known the story of the Exodus and the conquest of the Promised Land at the very least. Even if he knew no other parts of his nation's history, these two stories alone would have caused him to realize—if he had heard Yahweh's word in this case—that he was doomed to fail. Selman notes that “sanctified common sense” should have kept Josiah away from the battlefield. Martin J. Selman, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 542. Similarly Stewart states, “Strategic analysis should have told Josiah to stay out of this quarrel between the Egyptians and the Babylonians. So too should the principles of God's Word.” Andrew Stewart, *A House of Prayer: The Message of 2 Chronicles* (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2001), 456.

⁵⁶ It is important to underscore a certain fact about vv. 20–21 before moving on: Necho is portrayed here as Yahweh's obedient servant (cf. Isa 44:28; 45:1). This fact would have been absolutely astounding in the minds of the contemporary Judahites or the postexilic community. Nonetheless, the Historian does not shy away from presenting Necho in this fashion and Judah's great king as one who has become disobedient just as all the prior kings had.

V. 22 is the crux of this entire passage. The Historian declares that Josiah refused to turn his face away from Necho,⁵⁷ choosing rather to disguise himself.⁵⁸ This disguising of himself is hauntingly reminiscent of both Saul (1 Sam 28:8)⁵⁹ and Ahab (2 Chr 18:29).⁶⁰ Josiah, then, is following after

⁵⁷ This is a common figure of speech in the Bible. It essentially declares that Josiah's heart was set—he was not going to change his mind no matter what was told to him. This reveals the hardheartedness of humanity, for Josiah had previously been receptive to Yahweh's Word. In a similar fashion, Jesus tells the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31). Here Jesus tells of a dead rich man who pleads with Abraham to appear to his living brothers, warning them of the wrath to come. Abraham declares that their hearts were set on their evil deeds: even if a dead man should rise from the grave and appear to these brothers of the rich man they would continue in their wicked deeds. Just so, Josiah's heart was set against hearing the Word of Yahweh: especially through the mouth of this pagan king Pharaoh Necho.

⁵⁸ Two notes on Josiah's disguise. (1) Some scholars have noted that who Josiah is hiding himself from is unclear—God or Necho? It is possible that Josiah is hiding from both. Pratt, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 496. (2) It ought to be mentioned that the LXX translators changed this verse to state that Josiah was strengthened rather than that Josiah disguised himself. The Greek translators of Chr were likely horrified by the similarity they saw concerning the parallel between Josiah the Righteous and Ahab the Wicked. That being the case, they set out to “correct” the portrayal of Josiah, ensuring that he was portrayed not as one who fell like Ahab, but one who valiantly went out to war, being strengthened by his God. Indeed, while the Greek translation conjures up theological problems (concerning the division of God's actions), the Hebrew text presents an equally problematic (though resolvable) situation: Josiah, the righteous king of Judah, fell in the same manner as Ahab, one of the most wicked kings in all of Israelite history. Nonetheless, the more difficult translation must be maintained. In this case, the MT stands. This is contrary to Lange who prefers the LXX reading, stating, “a literal disguise, such as that of Ahab, should in no case be thought of.” John Peter Lange, *Chronicles*, trans. Philip Schaff, Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1950), 274. Virtually all of modern scholarship rejects the LXX reading. In fact, I came across no modern author who affirms the LXX reading over the MT. Simply put, Lange is incorrect. Keil's interpretation of the disguise is interesting, stating Josiah's disguise consisted of disfiguring himself—“to undertake anything which contradicts one's character.” Keil, *The Book of Chronicles*, 506.

⁵⁹ This is the episode wherein Saul sought the advice of (dead) Samuel by means of a medium. Mediums were not allowed to live in the land of Israel and thus Saul disguised himself that (1) the medium might not know who he is and refuse to offer him her services and (2) that anyone looking on might not recognize Saul when he goes in to the medium. This did not go well for Saul (1 Sam 28:15–19).

⁶⁰ Ahab's disguising of himself is even more hauntingly similar than Saul's, for Ahab also disguised himself in order to go out to battle. The similarities are more than disguise, though! The similarities are: (1) disguise, (2) battle, (3) warning, (4) death by arrow, (5) requesting to be removed from the battlefield, and, of course (6) death. One may take the similarities one step further: neither Ahab or Josiah was to see the destruction of his cities in their days (1 Kgs 21:27–29; 2 Chr 34:28). Risau helpfully compares Saul, Ahab, and Josiah. Kenneth A. Ristau, “Reading and Rereading Josiah: The Chronicler's Representation of Josiah for the Postexilic Community,”

two of the worst kings in all of Israelite history.⁶¹ Indeed, the Historian goes further: “Josiah did not listen to the words of Necho which were from the mouth of God.”⁶² The God referred to here is the God of Judah—Josiah’s own God!⁶³ Josiah should have recognized his own God’s voice—the God whose voice he previously heard and heeded (2 Chr 34:26–27). Thus, whereas Josiah once heard the word of Yahweh and responded rightly, he rejects the Word of Yahweh and persists in

in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 234. This ought to serve as a warning to modern readers: former (great) faithfulness does not guarantee the blessing of obedience and safety in either the present or the future. Cf. Peter’s rejection of Jesus (John 18:25–27) and his failure to accurately represent the Gospel among Jews and Gentiles (Gal 2:11–21). Of course, we know that Peter was reinstated (John 21:15–19) and remained one of the Apostles. Nonetheless, this is due to grace, which must not be presumed upon (cf. Rom 6:1).

⁶¹ It is directly said of Ahab that there was “no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wicked in the eyes of Yahweh...he acted very abhorrently by following after idols as all the Amorites had done” (1 Kgs 21:25–26). Ironically, despite this, Ahab received the mercy of God who delayed bringing disaster upon his city (1 Kgs 21:29).

⁶² Even commentators who believe that Necho’s personal reference to אֱלֹהִים is a reference to some Egyptian god affirm that the God mentioned in this verse is the God of Israel. E.g. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1057. Necho, then, is portrayed as a prophet of Yahweh. Schneidewind is helpful in regards to Necho’s place as a “prophet.” Schneidewind calls individuals like Necho “inspired” and “messengers” rather than prophets since they are not given prophetic titles but clearly still deliver divine speech. In Necho’s case, “God commanded” functions as the prophetic formula. He describes the function of prophets thus: “A chorus of scholars has suggested that the prophetic speeches function to warn the king... The prophet’s role is to call to repentance, because God does not punish Israel without warning. For this reason, Chronicler inserts the prophets at crucial points in his history to warn and summon to repentance.” William M. Schniedewind, “Prophets and Prophecy in the Books of Chronicles,” in *The Chronicler as Historian*, ed. M. Patrick Graham, Kenneth G. Hoglund, and Steven L. McKenzie, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 238 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 204–24.

⁶³ The account in 1 Esdr changes the speaker of the word of God from Necho to Jeremiah the prophet, likely due to the apparent problem of having a pagan king declare God’s will (1 Esdr 1:26). There is no reason to think Jeremiah was the one to speak the warning to Josiah. While Zipora Talshir affirms that 1 Esdr is not the original account, she interestingly (and in my view, wrongly) states, “[T]he Chronicler may have wanted to condemn Josiah in as a moderate a way as he could. He states that Zedekiah did not listen to Jeremiah, but would not blame Josiah on the same grounds. It would be a great dishonor to this exemplary king to accuse him of deliberately defying the word of God’s prophet. Instead his mistake was in not recognizing the word of God spoken by the Egyptian king: not a sin that would castigate him forever in history, but an error of judgement that was nonetheless punishable.” Talshir, “The Three Deaths,” 232.

his hardheartedness⁶⁴ to march to Megiddo.⁶⁵ Josiah, then, is acting in accord with the anti-image of God:⁶⁶ following after the serpent, opposing God's will, and refusing to obey.⁶⁷

Once the two armies are within range of one another, archers⁶⁸ shoot toward Josiah who is promptly struck with a deadly blow (v. 23).⁶⁹ This was utterly shocking to the Judahites. Like Ahab, Josiah demands to be removed from the battlefield, explaining that he has been greatly wounded. Josiah's servants do exactly as he requests, placing him in a second chariot and bringing

⁶⁴ One may find the description of Josiah's actions here as "rejection" a bit harsh and prefer something more along the lines of "Josiah failed to heed." However, this latter opinion is not found in the text. Josiah is being portrayed as obstinate despite knowing Yahweh, whereas Necho is being portrayed as obedient despite being a pagan.

⁶⁵ Josiah's actions here are militarily strategic. As stated above, Megiddo was a narrow and important pass through which Necho had to march. Even though Josiah was acting unwise in opposing Necho, his actions had the appearance of wisdom based on the location at which he sought to oppose Necho. This is the way of an ANE king who does not follow the will of Yahweh. Some wisdom literature is fitting here. Cf. Prov 3:7; 12:15, 20; 14:12; 16:2, 25; 21:2; 26:12; Ecc 1:9. Interestingly, Megiddo may be the historical location behind Armageddon in Rev 16:16. Jon Paulien, "Armageddon," *ABD* 1:394–95. Cf. G. K. Beale and Sean M. McDonough, "Revelation," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1136.

⁶⁶ Bob Dylan's song *With God on Our Side* captures the presumptuous spirit of all those who believe God is for them without any biblical backing. Of course, at this point in his life, Dylan was not a Christian and wrote against the presumptuous American spirit. Bob Dylan, *With God on Our Side*, The Times They Are A-Changin' (Columbia, 1964).

⁶⁷ The idea of an "anti-image" of God is developed by Benjamin Gladd. He states, "The godly are those who enjoy a restored image, whereas the ungodly are those who have a perverted image or an 'anti-image.' The term *anti-image*... refers to an individual who is hostile to God and is the opposite of those who enjoy a restored image. The anti-image still retains all three offices of being in the image of God, yet it uses the offices for its own selfish ambition." Gladd, 27. *sic*.

⁶⁸ Archers play an ironic role in Chr. First, Saul is killed by an arrow (1 Chr 10:3). In the very next chapter, we learn that David's mighty men were known to be remarkable bowmen who could both shoot arrows and sling stones with either their right or left hand. Interestingly, they are also Saul's own kinsmen (1 Chr 12:2). Later, Ahab is killed by a random arrow (18:33). Finally, Josiah is killed by an arrow that seems to be shot at random as well (2 Chr 35:23). Cf. 2 Kgs 13:17; Ps 64:4, 7. This is not an observation I saw made by any other author.

⁶⁹ So much for a disguise, am I right? Whereas Chr seems to indicate that Josiah was shot by an archer and died sometime later, likely in Jerusalem (though I do not see how this is mandated by the text like most authors do), the account in Kgs states that Necho killed Josiah "as soon as he saw him" (2 Kgs 23:29; ESV). There is no real contradiction here. Kings are often attributed with the death tolls in a war. Similarly, one who is shot by an arrow can be said to have been killed instantly, for that was the deciding factor in their death, even if they did not bleed out until later.

him back to Jerusalem (v. 24).⁷⁰ Shocking though it was, Josiah dies prematurely, long before reaching old age.⁷¹ Unlike his ironic predecessors, though, Josiah was given an honorable burial in the tombs of his fathers.⁷² This assures us that, while Josiah failed to remain faithful for the duration of his life, he is remembered as a good king. He is a good king who points us forward to Jesus Christ—the One who did not, and cannot, fail His people.⁷³ Even still, the death of Josiah results in the people of God once again falling to the power of Egypt. The grand Exodus of six centuries prior was thus reversed as Judah’s king was killed by Egyptians and replaced by an Egyptian puppet king (2 Chr 36:1–4). Of course, this was only the beginning of the reversed Exodus for the people of Judah who would later be delivered into the hands of the Babylonians (36:5ff). The Babylonians deport the Judahites from their land, finalizing the tragic reversal of Israel’s Exodus.⁷⁴

The People’s Response (vv. 24e–25)

In response to the tragic death of Josiah, all of Judah and Jerusalem mourn (v. 24b).⁷⁵ This is a

⁷⁰ Here, Josiah’s death and Ahab’s death could not be more different in their similarities. Ahab also demanded to be taken off of the battlefield when he was struck with an arrow but his wish was not fulfilled (1 Kgs 22:34–37; 2 Chr 18:33–34). Likewise, as Stewart points out, “We know, of course, that Josiah did not die in the same spiritual condition as Ahab, but the details of his death show that he died like Ahab. He died as a sinner. His death reminds us that good men can fall, and forfeit some of the blessings that could be theirs.” Stewart, *A House of Prayer*, 459.

⁷¹ Josiah began reigning at eight years old and reigned for thirty-one years, putting him at thirty-nine years old when he died (2 Chr 34:1). While this was still a rather lengthy reign, David reigned longer than Josiah was even alive (1 Chr 29:27). Cf. Ps 90:10.

⁷² Neither Saul nor Ahab—both of whom were also killed by archers—were given proper burial (1 Chr 10:3–6; 2 Chr 18:33–34). Ristau, 236.

⁷³ More on this shortly below.

⁷⁴ This Exodus theme will be discussed later. It ought to be noted that while this is the reversal of the Exodus, the restoration to the land after Cyrus’ decree (36:22–23) is not the ultimate Second Exodus. Instead, the second exodus decreed by Cyrus is but a type and shadow of the Ultimate Exodus that would one day come in Jesus Christ.

⁷⁵ One author notes, “Ominously, Josiah’s mourners do not include representatives of the northern tribes,” which destroys the hopes of full reunification. Steven Shawn Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 242. Though, one wonders if this is because faithful Israel was, at this point, considered to be part of Judah rather than a separate entity. Amit notes that, according to Chr, “after the split of the kingdom into Judah and Israel, ‘all Israel ’dwelt in Judah, making the northern kingdom appear like a marginal entity.” Yaira Amit, “The Book of Chronicles: A Retelling of History?,” in *History and Ideology: Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible*, trans. Yael Lotan, BibSem 60 (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1999), 85.

proper response to the loss of a good king.⁷⁶ If any reader was uncertain of this, he should be assured of the proper response by Jeremiah's presence among the mourners (v. 25).⁷⁷ Indeed, the laments that are uttered are even written down and made a statute for the nation.⁷⁸ Interestingly, this is one of only two times in the entire book that the verb "to mourn" is used.⁷⁹ Despite the deaths of David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah—all of whom were considered to be good kings—Josiah is the only one for whom the nation mourns.⁸⁰ He is honorably buried in the tombs of his fathers.⁸¹ Josiah truly was a righteous king and the loss of his life is a tragedy for Judah, but hope remains.⁸²

Hope Remains

While it is tempting to read OT narratives of the reigns of kings as mere historical information, the kings' reigns contained in the Scriptures foreshadow Jesus Christ. Though ultimate hope was not to be found in Josiah of Judah,⁸³ hope would be found in one of his sons: Jesus Christ (Matt 1:10–11). In three key places that Josiah failed—(1) as a second Adam, (2) as the image of God, and (3) in obeying God and thus maintaining the Promised Land—Jesus Christ perfectly succeeded. The

⁷⁶ In another context Jeremiah warns against mourning the loss of the king (Jer 22:10). There is no contradiction between these two texts as the text in Jeremiah's prophecy is not condemning the mourning of the king's death outright, but declaring that the exile is far worse than the death of the king. Klein fails to recognize this. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 528.

⁷⁷ Thompson summarizes, "Some laments of Jeremiah are recorded in the Book of Lamentations, but the one for Josiah is lost. Jeremiah's prophetic ministry paralleled the reign of Josiah. In fact, Jeremiah was a prophet before Josiah's reforms and lived to see both the reforms of Josiah and his death. They apparently had a good relationship and Jeremiah truly mourned the passing of a great king. Jeremiah lived on through the fall of Jerusalem over twenty years later and witnessed the exile to Babylon" Thompson, 386. Jeremiah's view of Josiah can be found in a denunciation of Josiah's son Shallum (Jer 22:15–16).

⁷⁸ These laments are not the laments contained in the Book of Lamentations. Unfortunately, whatever book of laments is referred to here has been lost to history.

⁷⁹ The Hebrew word is אָבֵל. It is also used in 1 Chr 7:22.

⁸⁰ Klein notes, "Josiah is the only king who wept for his people (2 Chr 34:19, 27) and is the only king for whom all Israel enters into mourning." Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 528.

⁸¹ Bob Dylan once again captures the pride behind a heart that acts on his own self-assured will and power. "If your delusions of grandeur and your evil eye give you the idea that you're too good to die and then they'll bury you from your head to your feet from the disease of conceit." Bob Dylan, *Disease of Conceit, Oh Mercy* (Columbia, 1989). In his final acts, Josiah tragically fell to the disease of humanity: sinful pride and conceit, self-assured by his own political savviness.

⁸² Despite the tragic downfall of Josiah, hope remains for the people of God. Yahweh keeps His promises; every word of God proves true (Josh 21:45; Pro 30:5; 2 Sam 7:16).

⁸³ Neither was it to be found in any of the other kings of Israel or Judah.

Messiah did not come initially as expected—as a great Warrior King—but He came nonetheless in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14) to crush the head of the Serpent (Gen 3:15), succeeding where Israel failed, bearing the true and ultimate image of God, and delivering His people through a new and greater Exodus. Indeed, even delivering His people to a new and greater creation (2 Cor 5:17). These three themes, while distinguishable, are inherently connected.⁸⁴

Josiah, A Failed Second Adam

As king of Judah, Josiah functioned as a second Adam (who, intriguingly, functioned as a sort of king in the land of Eden).⁸⁵ “Adam and Eve were created as vice regents over the created order. Simply stated, vice regents rule on behalf of others; they do not rule independent of the supreme ruler. In Gen 1–2, Adam and Eve are to remain utterly dependent on God and extend his rule.”⁸⁶ Of course, Adam and Eve utterly failed in their task (Gen 3). Adam and Eve’s failure, while tragic, immediately launches the gracious progression of redemptive history in which God raises up “other Adam-like figures to whom his commission is passed on.”⁸⁷ Each of these “second Adams,” of whom Josiah is one, fail to fulfill the commission of God. Nonetheless, they remain God’s vice-

⁸⁴ Some overlap in the discussion of these three themes is necessary due to the nature of their close relation. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight each of the three themes in order to understand the failure of Josiah to the fullest degree. It will be seen that, when discussed in this order, each theme progresses well into the next. There are a myriad of ways in which one could apply the Josiah story to modern life. Indeed, oftentimes stories like this one are proclaimed as a model for modern believers to follow. While that is true, there is far more to gain from these stories than simply a role model. Such is why I am developing the idea that Josiah failed in three key ways that Christ succeeded. Josiah is a messianic figure, after all. However, I would be amiss if I did not mention some moral applications to the modern reader. Three obvious ones are: (1) Like Josiah initially, and unlike Josiah in the narrative currently being addressed, one must repent when he hears the word of Yahweh. This is not only for the glory of God but also for the good of the individual. (2) Mourn the loss of the righteous. Though we know those justified in Christ will live on an eternal life of joy, death is still a tragedy that ought to be mourned. (3) Do not abandon the presence of Yahweh. This is less obvious from the text but it is integral to understanding the passage. Josiah abandoned Yahweh’s presence (which was in the Temple) when he went out from Jerusalem in order to oppose Necho. Abandoning the presence of Yahweh results in misery.

⁸⁵ This is made clear by the command to extend dominion in Gen 1:26–28. “The function of human beings within God’s creation is a royal one that is patterned after the God who created them.” Richard P. Belcher, *Prophet, Priest, and King: The Roles of Christ in the Bible and Our Roles Today* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2016), 6. Gladd develops the idea of Adam and Eve as prophets, priests, and kings, but declares that the office of kingship is most dominant. Gladd, 12.

⁸⁶ Gladd, 12.

⁸⁷ G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 93.

regents in the world. Josiah's failure to fulfill the commission of God is evidenced by his opposition to Necho as found in the passage delineated above. None of Josiah's reign except the narrative of his death records any failure.⁸⁸ He is portrayed as a truly righteous king. Josiah offered real hope to the people of his day that he might finally be the one to properly extend Yahweh's reign in this world. However, his advancement against Necho proved that Josiah was, in fact, just another sinful Judahite king. The people had to wait yet longer for their true deliverer to come.

This deliverer came in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the Last Adam,⁸⁹ six hundred years later. Whereas the first Adam fell to the serpent's temptations, Jesus Christ overcame Satan (Matt 4:1–11). Just so, whereas Josiah failed to heed the Word of Yahweh and insisted on his own path (2 Chr 35:22), Jesus Christ is the Word of God made flesh (John 1:14) and does nothing apart from the Father (John 5:19; 8:28). Whereas Josiah was killed because of his disobedience to Yahweh's word, Jesus Christ willingly laid down his life (John 10:18) and by doing so conquered death itself (1 Cor 15:54–57; 2 Tim 1:10).⁹⁰ He is the King who, when he wages war at the end of time, will defeat all of his enemies with a breath (Isa 11:14).⁹¹ Indeed, there is more! Josiah accomplished great deeds concerning the Temple of Yahweh—this is the focal point of his reign (2 Kgs 22:3–23:20; 2 Chr 34:3–35:19). Yet Jesus Christ is the true temple of God (John 1:14), the one in whom the fullness of God dwells bodily (Col 2:9). While Josiah was a good king who reestablished the temple, Jesus Christ is the culmination of the temple. Indeed, in Christ we find the merging of King and Temple into one person (Rev 21:22). In Christ, the king no longer simply

⁸⁸ This ought to be a warning to the modern reader: former obedience does not guarantee present obedience. Make every effort to make your salvation sure (2 Pt 1:10).

⁸⁹ Until Jesus Christ, failure was certain. Reflecting on the OT period, Beale states, “Failure will continue until there arises a ‘Last Adam’ who will finally fulfill the commission on behalf of humanity.” Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 94. Brandon Crowe’s *The Last Adam* masterfully details the success of Christ as the Last Adam in both His active and passive obedience. Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017).

⁹⁰ “Though a suffering Messiah was to some degree anticipated, messianic suffering does not play a central role in the Old Testament. The vast majority of first-century Jews did not expect that the Messiah would be crucified, much less be seen as a glorious divine ruler actually exercising ruling power while being defeated.” Gladd, 86.

⁹¹ Elsewhere in Isaiah it is said of the Servant of Yahweh, “He made my mouth like a sharp word; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away” (Isa 49:2; ESV). In a grand reversal of Josiah’s fate—and the tragedy that Judah experienced in the loss of him—the Servant of Yahweh is described as a polished arrow in the quiver of God.

leads people to the Temple, but to Himself (John 12:32). Indeed, far from going away from the presence of God like Josiah did (2 Chr 35:20),⁹² Jesus Christ is “God with us” who sends His Spirit to dwell within man to be with him always (Matt 1:23; 28:20; John 16:7). Jesus, then, is the Ultimate and True Second Adam just as He is the ultimate and True King David (Matt 1:1).

Josiah, Anti-Image of God

In fulfilling the task of Adam, Jesus also perfectly represents the image of God to humanity, which is another place in which Josiah failed. In rejecting and opposing the word of Yahweh (2 Chr 36:22), Josiah acted in accord with the fallen nature of Adam. He, thus, behaved in a way that is contrary to the image in which he was made. This is what is meant by the ‘anti-image’ of God.⁹³ To act as the anti-image of God is to follow after the Serpent (Gen 3:4–7) and become children of the devil (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10). We do not know exactly why Josiah chose to oppose Necho,⁹⁴ but we do know that, in doing so, Josiah provoked the wrath of God against himself (2 Chr 35:22–24).⁹⁵ Josiah became an enemy of God (James 4:4) and condemned himself to a just death (Rom 6:23).

⁹² In leaving Jerusalem, Josiah left the city of God and His Temple behind in an embarkation that meant certain death.

⁹³ This idea is developed by Gladd. Gladd, 27.

⁹⁴ This is actually the matter of much scholarly debate. There is no certain reason as to why Josiah sought to oppose Necho. Dillard states that it “may have been the result of his own anti-Assyrian bias or of a coalition with Babylon or even his own desire to maintain Judean independence from Egyptian incursion.” Dillard, 291–92. This assessment is fair, as Josiah was the last king to reign over an independent nation of Judah. Nonetheless, the failure to heed the biblical principle of trusting Yahweh for deliverance was exceedingly problematic. Pratt corroborates Dillard’s thought, stating, “from the time of Hezekiah (see 32:31; 2 Kgs 20:12–15), Judah looked to Babylon as a potential source of help against Assyria. To keep the Egyptians from helping Assyria would have been in Josiah’s own self-interest.” Pratt, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 496. Whatever the intent of Josiah, it is clear that the text is representing Josiah as acting according to human wisdom just as the failed kings of the past and the ANE did. Josiah’s conflict with Necho is nothing less than a conflict with God and a failure to trust in Him as the sole deliverer and provider of the covenant people of Judah. Thus, just as the first Adam failed to rightly represent God in the world, Josiah acts in such a way that reveals his own anti-image of God.

⁹⁵ One may be curious about how Josiah’s death can be squared with Huldah’s prophecy that he would die in peace. Was Huldah’s prophecy wrong? Unlikely. Nearly all commentators agree that Huldah’s prophecy was still a true prophecy. Commentators resolve this disparity variously. One commentator notes that Josiah may have fallen into a peaceful coma until he was back in Jerusalem. Cyril J Barber, *2 Chronicles: God’s Blessing of His Faithful People* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2004), 283. While this is theoretically possible, nothing in the text indicates this. I find this

Jesus, far from being the anti-image of God, is God himself (John 10:30). Furthermore, the Scriptures indicate that Jesus is the image of the invisible God—the firstborn of all creation (Col 1:15).⁹⁶ Jesus Christ is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature (Heb 1:3). While Josiah miserably failed, Jesus did all things perfectly (Heb 5:8), bringing salvation to its completion and declaring from the cross “It is finished!” (John 19:30).⁹⁷ Gloriously, Jesus Christ was not only the perfect image of God to humanity, He also restores the image of God in man (1 Cor 15:49) and makes man into children of God (John 1:12). Once again, Jesus succeeded where all before him had failed—including Josiah.

Josiah and the Reversed Exodus

The reversal of the Exodus is intimately connected to Deuteronomic themes. In Deut 28, it is declared that faithful obedience to the voice of Yahweh will result in exaltation over all nations of the world (28:1). In Deut 28, the Exodus has already occurred and Israel is about to enter the Promised Land, fulfilling the promise declared to Abraham over four hundred years prior (Gen 12:1–9). However, their redemption requires a certain set of behaviors in response—namely,

explanation particularly unsatisfying. A coma may be “peaceful” in the sense that the individual feels and remembers nothing, but it is far from a peaceful reality. It is hard to believe, then, that a coma fulfills Huldah’s prophecy. Selman simply notes concerning v. 24: “Far from being embarrassed by Huldah’s prophecy, therefore, the Chronicler is at pains to stress that God kept his promises about Josiah’s peaceful burial and the exile’s continuing delay despite Josiah’s stupidity and violent death (cf. 34:28). Selman, 543. It is worth noting, however, what Huldah does not say. Huldah does not say, “You will not see any disaster or suffer any pain.” Instead she says, “your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place and its inhabitants” (ESV). Huldah’s prophecy, then, does not need to be interpreted as saying that Josiah would not face a difficult or painful death. In fact, the peace that Huldah refers to in v. 28 does not refer to Josiah’s own existential peace at all. Instead, it refers to the overall peace of the nation. This, after all, is Huldah’s focus. Huldah tells Josiah that he will not see the disaster that will come upon Jerusalem—which is fulfilled without question because Josiah dies long before Jerusalem is captured by Necho (2 Chr 36:1–4). I cannot see how being shot with an arrow and slowly bleeding to death could possibly be considered peaceful. Thus, if Huldah is, indeed, a true prophet, the peace she prophesies must refer to the nation of Judah rather than Josiah. This is completely allowable (indeed, stipulated) by her own words, “your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place and its inhabitants.” Dillard understands the text in a similar fashion. Dillard, 282.

⁹⁶ This text does not mean that Jesus is a creature as man is. It simply declares the primacy of Christ.

⁹⁷ And, ultimately and finally, Jesus Christ will crush all of His enemies beneath His feet (Gen 3:15; Rev 19:11–16). This is especially significant in connection to Josiah, for Jesus defeats His enemies at the battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:16–21), which many believe to be based on the Old Testament location of Megiddo. Paulien, 394–95.

obedience to God's law.⁹⁸ Deut makes clear those who fail to obey the voice of God will receive punishment for disobedience (Deut 28:15–68).⁹⁹ Indeed, defeat before enemies is one of the curses declared for disobedience (28:25). This is exactly the result of Josiah's disobedience.

Josiah's disobedience entailed three things: leaving the Promised Land (2 Chr 35:20), opposing a sojourner (35:20–22), and not listening to the word of God (35:22).¹⁰⁰ Fulfilling the Deuteronomic curse, Josiah is killed by his enemy, Egyptian Pharaoh Necho. Falling to Necho meant the re-enslavement of Judah to Egypt¹⁰¹ and the reversal of the Exodus, which is later extended by Judah's fall to Babylon.¹⁰² This is an egregious tragedy, for the “exodus [was] a momentous event for the fulfillment of God's promises to his people. These promises form the basis of his redemptive work for Israel, and the exodus is the means to bring it about.”¹⁰³ Reversing this grand event meant the abolishment of God's promises and the forsaking of His people.

Yet God did not forsake His people. While Josiah did not fulfill the promises of God for the people of Judah, Jesus Christ came to deliver the people of God once and for all (Heb 10:12). Jesus Christ came into the world not to establish a geopolitical nation, but in order to form a holy nation of royal priests (1 Pet 2:9). Verily, Jesus Christ does not deliver man from the power of

⁹⁸ This is made clear by the history of Israel but is also contained in the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments begin with exaltation of Yahweh and His salvation: “I am Yahweh your God who led you out from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery!” (Deut 5:6). Only after reminding the Israelites of their gracious salvation does Yahweh place any law on them: “You will have no other gods before me” (5:7). Redemption precedes law. Likewise, in the Pauline Epistles, indicative always precedes imperative. Indeed, for Paul, the “imperative always flows from and is dependent on the indicative.” Thomas R Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001), 254. Paul's formulations of the Christian life are built upon the law and structure of the Ten Commandments.

⁹⁹ These fifty-four verses are ample warning to the Israelites, whose own memories ought also to serve as a warning against disobedience. E.g. Exod 32.

¹⁰⁰ The final of these three things is a fitting summary of Josiah's overall disobedience.

¹⁰¹ This is made especially clear by Necho's return to Jerusalem and installment of his own puppet king on the Judahite throne (2 Chr 36:1–4).

¹⁰² That the fall to Babylon furthers the reversal of the Exodus is made more explicit by Isaiah's prophecies, which detail the return from Babylon as a new Exodus. E.g. Isa 43:2; 51:9–11; 52:12. Gladd's discussion of this is helpful. Gladd, 61–63. Of course, redemption from Babylon was only a foreshadowing of the Ultimate Exodus brought about by Jesus christ.

¹⁰³ Oren R. Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land: The Land Promise in God's Redemptive Plan*, NSBT 34 (Downers Grove: IVP, 2015), 81.

nations¹⁰⁴ but from evil (Col 1:13)—a much greater task. While in this world, Christians are sojourners (1 Pet 1:11) but can rest assured that their home is in heaven (Phil 3:20).

While Josiah failed and the exodus was reversed, such was just a small step in the redemptive history of Yahweh. The troubles of life may swell and the most righteous of men¹⁰⁵ are but one decision away from plummeting into darkness, Jesus Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12), the one in whom there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5), and the one to whom all Christians are united in an eternal bond (Rom 6:5; Eph 2:10). Nothing can put our hope to shame (Rom 10:11). *Soli Deo Gloria!*

¹⁰⁴ Though nations cannot stand before Him (Rom 8:38; Rev 19:11–16).

¹⁰⁵ Like Josiah.

Appendix A: 2 Chr 35:20–25—ESV, BHS, LXX

ESV

20 After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him. **21** But he sent envoys to him, saying, “What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you.” **22** Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo. **23** And the archers shot King Josiah. And the king said to his servants, “Take me away, for I am badly wounded.” **24** So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. And he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. **25** Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day. They made these a rule in Israel; behold, they are written in the Laments.

BHS

LXXX

20 Καὶ ἀνέβη Φαραὼ Νεχαὼ βασιλεὺς Ἀιγύπτου ἐπὶ τὸν βασιλέα Ἀσσυρίων ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν Εὐφράτην, καὶ ἐπορεύθη ὁ βασιλεὺς Ιωσιας εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῷ. **21** καὶ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀγγέλους λέγων Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, βασιλεῦ Ιουδα; οὐκ ἐπὶ σὲ ἡκω σήμερον πόλεμον ποιῆσαι, καὶ ὁ θεός εἶπεν κατασπεῦσαι με· πρόσεχε ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ μετ' ἐμοῦ, μὴ καταφθείρῃ σε. **22** καὶ οὐκ ἀπέστρεψεν Ιωσιας τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἡ πολεμεῖν αὐτὸν ἐκραταιώθη καὶ οὐκ ἡκουσεν τῶν λόγων Νεχαὼ διὰ στόματος θεοῦ καὶ ἥλθεν τοῦ πολεμῆσαι ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ Μαγεδών. **23** καὶ ἐτόξευσαν οἱ τοξόται ἐπὶ βασιλέα Ιωσιαν· καὶ εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς παισὶν αὐτοῦ Ἐξαγάγετε με, ὅτι ἐπόνεσα σφόδρα. **24** καὶ ἐξήγαγον αὐτὸν οἱ παῖδες αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄρματος καὶ ἀνεβίβασαν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρμα τὸ δευτερεῦον, ὃ ἦν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἤγαγον αὐτὸν εἰς Ιερουσαλημ· καὶ ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἐτάφη μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ. καὶ πᾶς Ιουδα καὶ Ιερουσαλημ ἐπένθησαν ἐπὶ Ιωσιαν, **25** καὶ ἐθρήνησεν Ιερεμιας ἐπὶ Ιωσιαν, καὶ εἶπαν πάντες οἱ ἄρχοντες καὶ αἱ ἄρχουσαι θρῆνον ἐπὶ Ιωσιαν ἔως τῆς σήμερον· καὶ ἔδωκαν αὐτὸν εἰς πρόσταγμα ἐπὶ Ισραηλ, καὶ ίδοὺ γέγραπται ἐπὶ τῶν θρήνων.

Appendix B: Translation Justification

20 After¹⁰⁶ all this¹⁰⁷, when¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ **After** (v. 20): The first clause of this section begins with a preposition (אַחֲרִי), which serves to orient the reader properly. While the word has various nuances (e.g. location, status, time), the present context makes clear that the preposition is marking time. While it may generally refer to a time after the previous events, here it refers more specifically to a time much later when the previous activities (i.e. the temple narrative/holding of Passover) have been completed. Reinier de Blois,

“Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew,” <https://semanticdictionary.org/semdic.php?databaseType=SDBH>. That is, the events that are taking place in the current section are not immediately after the Passover, but much later. This usage is found often in the Scriptures (e.g., this usage of the word is used nine times in Gen 5). A careful reading of Josiah’s reign as recorded in 2 Chronicles reveals that thirteen years have passed between the holding of the Passover in 2 Chr 35:1–19 and Josiah’s “battle” with Pharaoh Neco recorded in 2 Chr 35:20–25. That thirteen years have passed since 2 Chr 35:19 can be explained as follows. Josiah had a thirty-one year reign (2 Chr 34:1) and began reigning at eight years old (34:1). In the eighteenth year of his reign the book of the law was found and Josiah keeps Passover (34:8; 35:18; i.e. 26 years old). He died in his thirty-first year (34:1; 35:20–24a; i.e. 39 years old).

¹⁰⁷ **all this** (v. 20): As in English, this phrase is made up of two words: כל-זאת. These two words form a construct phrase. “All” modifies “this” and, as Hebrew grammar requires, the adjective precedes the demonstrative. Together, these words refer to the totality of the temple narrative. C. H. J. Van der Merwe, J. A. Naudé, and Jan Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, Second edition. (New York: T&T Clark, 2017), 36.5.1.2. This phrase, therefore, makes more clear the point made above regarding אַחֲרִי—that the prior events have been completed. While thirteen years have elapsed (as shown above), the “near” demonstrative **הַאֲזֶן** is used as opposed to the “distant” demonstrative (which in this case would be **אַזְּנָה**). This causes the reader to conceptualize the two discourses as one unit. For an analogy, we can consider the Passover narrative to be part one and the discourse we are dealing with now as part two of one play. The interlude may be thirty minutes or an hour in real time but may represent a much larger gap in the sequence of the play’s story. However, this is not intended to make any comment on the historicity of the events. While undoubtedly much has occurred in the thirteen years since Josiah first held the Passover, the reader only knows this temporal distance if he has read carefully. The two units, while distinct, are tightly bound together. Thus, the drama is heightened. After the glory of Josiah’s reforms and the holding of the Passover, one would expect another dramatic high point of Josiah’s career. It is also worth noting that **הַאֲזֶן** is singular rather than plural. The prior events, therefore, are conceptualized as one whole unit. **הַאֲזֶן** cannot refer solely to the Passover itself, for the Hebrew word for Passover (חַסְפָּה) is a masculine word whereas **הַתְּהִלָּה** is a feminine demonstrative. **הַתְּהִלָּה** must refer to the whole temple narrative.

¹⁰⁸ **when** (v. 20): The relative pronoun used here אֲשֶׁר has many uses and can be represented by various English glosses depending on its context (e.g., which, that, who, when, because). Given that the context signifies time as discussed above, it is best to translate the relative pronoun as “when.” Its antecedent is the temporal phrase just discussed (כל-זאת אַחֲרִי). Semantically, אֲשֶׁר is being used “non-restrictively” to provide additional information to the time reference. אֲשֶׁר and its components therefore function parenthetically. *BHRG*, 36.3.1.2.

Josiah had established¹⁰⁹ the temple^{110, 111} // Necho, the King of Egypt,¹¹² went up¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ **Josiah had established** (v. 20): The word translated into English with the pluperfect verbal phrase “had established” is הָכִין. It is a Hiphil perfect verb. If Speiser is correct and the Hiphil expresses “causative-elative” notions of a verb, then the verb here may be used to show the extent to which Josiah had established the temple—fully and entirely. E. A. Speiser, “The ‘Elative’ in West-Semitic and Akkadian,” *JCS* 6.2 (1952): 81–92. A helpful summary (and brief evaluation) of Speiser’s argument can be found in Benjamin J Noonan, *Advances in the Study of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: New Insights for Reading the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 4.3.3.4. While it could be translated with the simple past tense in English, the pluperfect tense better represents the elapsed time between this verse and the previous section. DCH offers the glosses “prepared,” “determined,” “established” or “accomplished.” David J. A. Clines, “כִּין,” DCH 4:374. “Established” has been used because it best conveys the sense that the work has been done for an elapsed time. The temple has not just been prepared for use, it has been fully established and already used as made evident by the Passover narrative (2 Chr 35:1–19). *HALOT* notes that this word is “especially frequent” in the two books of Chronicles. Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner, “כִּין,” *HALOT* 2:465.

¹¹⁰ **the temple** (v. 20): “The temple” (אֶת-הַבָּיִת) is the last word of the parenthetical phrase (אֶת-הַבָּיִת יְאַשְׁר הָכִין אֲלֵךְ) and the direct object of the verb הָכִין. It is marked off by the definite direct object marker (הַ) and is also definitized by the prefixed הָ. While the word translated “temple” (בָּיִת) can simply refer to a “house,” the context makes the translation “temple” fitting. It is very common for the temple of the Lord to be referred to by this word and poses no theological difficulty.

¹¹¹ **After all this, when Josiah had established the temple**, (v. 20): It is worth noting that the Greek version of 2 Chronicles 35:20 lacks this temporally orienting set of phrases. Instead, the Greek version simply begins with Necho’s ascent from Egypt. There are also four extra verses found after 1 Chronicles 35:19 (known as vv. 19a–19d) but these are irrelevant at present as there is no reason to consider them original to the Chronicles text. Concerning the translation of כל־אָהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָתָה יְאַשְׁר הָכִין אֲלֵךְ, Sara Japhet translates this nearly identically (interchanging only “prepared” for what I have rendered “established”). She helpfully describes these opening words of v. 20 as a “narrative formula [which] provid[es] a literary bridge between the two units.” Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 1055.

¹¹² **Necho, the King of Egypt**, (v. 20): In Hebrew, this forms a construct chain (נֶכֶם-מִצְרָיִם נֶכֶם). “Necho” is further described by the construct phrase “the King of Egypt.” This provides the reader with more information concerning both who Necho is and where Necho reigns. This is important because, prior to this, he had not been mentioned yet in Chronicles. נֶכֶם is definite (“the king”) because of the definiteness of the proper noun to which it is attached: מִצְרָיִם (Egypt). While the name is rendered differently in English (i.e. Neco, Neko, Necho) I have chosen “Necho” because it best represents the soft pronunciation of the נ found in the Hebrew spelling. One should note that the Greek version adds the Egyptian term “Pharaoh” before Necho’s name, rendering, “Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt...” (Φαραω Νεχω βασιλεὺς Αιγύπτου).

¹¹³ **Necho, the King of Egypt, went up** (v. 20): For the English reader looking at the Hebrew text, the verb here (עָלָה) is initially a bit ambiguous. The verb is a 3ms and, therefore, can conceptually be understood as referring to Josiah (this is particularly tempting for English readers who are used to SVO word order). However, the proper noun immediately following the verb (Necho, נֶכֶם) makes clear that the verb’s subject is not Josiah but Necho, the King of Egypt. This follows what is generally regarded to be standard Hebrew word order (VSO), though this is debated. Moshavi offers a convincing argument for VSO word order. Adina Moshavi, *Word Order in the Biblical Hebrew Finite Clause* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016). The clause is translated here following conventional English word order (SVO). “Went up” likely refers to the necessary trek over and through mountains when heading north from Egypt through the Shephelah, a hilly region with “numerous broad valleys” rather than his northward trajectory. Megiddo, where Josiah ultimately met Necho (v. 21), was the emerging point from a range of low-lying mountains. John D. Currid and David P. Barrett, *Crossway ESV Bible Atlas* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 21, 171.

to fight¹¹⁴ at Carchemish¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ **to fight** (v. 20): “To fight” (בַּיִלְבֹּם) is a *Niphal* infinitive construct verb prefixed with the **ל** preposition. The **ל** preposition and the infinitive construct are often paired together in order to demonstrate purpose. Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Second edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 84. Thus, here the infinitive construct shows the purpose for which Necho went up from Egypt. While the *Niphal* often carries reflexive or passive nuances, *Niphal* seems to be the standard form for this verb (בַּחֲמָר) and therefore is best translated simply as “fight” rather than “be fought.” See fn. 43 for more on **לְחַם**.

¹¹⁵ **at Carchemish** (v. 20): While some translations render this “against Carchemish” (e.g., KJV, NKJV, ASV), it is best to translate this prepositional phrase simply as “at.” It is not true that Necho’s battle was against the people of Carchemish. Rather, historically, Necho was battling the Babylonians who had not yet taken over Carchemish. It is therefore best to understand the **בְּ** preposition in the phrase **בְּכָרְכָמֵישׁ** as marking location rather than any opposition. Certain Hebrew texts, however, lack this phrase entirely, stating rather that Necho went up to fight “against the King of Assyria on (by) the river” (עַל-אָמָלָה אֲשֶׁר עַל-נָּהָר). The Greek states the same. This is likely a harmonization with the account in 2 Kings 23, which records who Necho went against rather than to where he went (2 Kgs 23:29). 2 Chronicles 35–36 contains a few discrepancies between its different versions, but there is no reason to consider any of the other versions as better than the MT. The MT is therefore maintained in this paper. For more information on the nature of these differences, see: Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 321.

which is on the Euphrates,¹¹⁶ // but¹¹⁷ Josiah went out¹¹⁸ to oppose him.¹¹⁹ // **21** So Necho sent¹²⁰ messengers¹²¹

¹¹⁶ **which is on the Euphrates**, (v. 20): The location of Carchemish is further specified by this prepositional phrase (על-פְּרָת). While “on” has been maintained in the translation of this verse, על clearly means “next to.”³³ It is not uncommon to refer to something as being “on” something else when what is really meant is that *x is beside y*. For example, someone may say “My house is on the border of the two states.” Most likely, though, what they mean is that their house is *right next to* the border rather than directly on top of the border. “On the Euphrates” is a figure of speech that translates perfectly into English. However, I have supplied the adjectival phrase “which is” in order to make the English read more smoothly. “Which is” also helps to show that על-פְּרָת further describes the location of Necho’s intended battleשְׁבָרֶכְמִישׁ. Clearly, “Euphrates” is the Greek name of the river on which Carchemish sits (Εὐφράτης; Heb: פְּרָת). In the Samaritan Pentateuch it is written as *fārāt* and in Akkadian as *Purattu*. Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner, פְּרָת, “HALOT 3:978.

¹¹⁷ **but** (v. 20): Here, “but” translates the *waw* of the *waw* consecutive beginning this clause (וְיִצְאֵ). Nearly every translation and commentary consulted simply uses “and”, presumably considering the *waw* consecutive to be merely carrying forth the narrative. This is fair—the *waw* consecutive does function this way. However, “but” helps to bring out the contrastive and oppositional element of Josiah’s actions. Indeed, “but” is simply a more specific nuance of the narratival function of the *waw* consecutive. BHRG, 21.2.1b; Matthew H Patton and Frederic C Putnam, *Basics of Hebrew Discourse: A Guide to Working with Biblical Hebrew Prose and Poetry*, ed. Miles V Van Pelt (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 69.

¹¹⁸ **but Josiah went out** (v. 20): While word order has been changed to meet English convention, it does not merit mention beyond that. While rather insignificant, it is worth mentioning that the Greek version adds the word “King” before Josiah’s name (ο βασιλεὺς Ιωσαή). This may highlight the two opposing national forces or remind the reader that Josiah is the Lord’s anointed at the time of the narrative. Or, it may simply harmonize with the account in 2 Kings. “Went out” refers to Josiah’s marching out from Jerusalem.

¹¹⁹ **to oppose him** (v. 20): The underlying Hebrew is an infinitive construct with a 3ms sfx. It is used as a complement to the *waw* consecutive. It reveals the purpose for which Josiah went out. This is the same usage of the infinitive construct as previously mentioned (fn. 9). The main syntactical difference between the two instances of the infinitive construct is that here the infinitive construct modifies a *waw* consecutive, whereas previously the infinitive construct modified a *Qal* perfect. A/C, 84. The word translated here is from קָרָא, which often simply means “to meet”. However, context makes clear that this is no ordinary, friendly meeting. Translating this word as “to oppose” brings out the hostility implied by the context. Holladay corroborates this as well, stating that the verb should be translated “to go against” in the context of war, usually with a verb of motion as well. William L. Holladay, אָרָק^{II}, “A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, 323.

¹²⁰ **So Necho sent** (v. 21): Translating the *waw* consecutive with “so” rather than “but” or “and” (as most translations offer) conveys the resultative nature of Pharaoh Necho’s response. While Necho’s response is certainly in opposition to Josiah’s actions (conveyed by the conjunction “but”), Necho would have had no need to send messengers if Josiah had not marched out from Jerusalem. Thus, his action is the consequence of Josiah’s actions. For more, see BHRG 21.2.1b; Patton and Putnam, 69. This verb is causative. That is, Necho’s orders caused the messengers to go before him to try to negotiate with Josiah. Reinier de Blois, חַלְשָׁ, “Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew, n.d., <https://semanticdictionary.org/semdic.php?databaseType=SDBH>. Kings often sent messengers ahead of them in times of war. “Necho” is absent from the Hebrew text. Instead, there is simply the *waw* consecutive verb with an implied subject by nature of the person, number, and gender of the verb. This makes the Hebrew syntax a bit ambiguous, but the message that the messengers carry make clear which of the two kings is sending messengers. In order to make the verse more clear from the start, “Necho” has been supplied in place of “he.” It is not problematic in Hebrew to lack a pronoun or proper noun identifying a clear subject.

¹²¹ **messengers** (v. 21): נְגִיד is a fairly common word in the Hebrew Bible. It refers to individuals who carry a message from one person to another. Messengers can be sent from a person (as here)

to him¹²² saying,¹²³ // “What have I to do with you,¹²⁴

or sent from God in the form of a prophet (Isa 44:26) or an angel (Gen 16:7). In this case, Necho is sending messengers to Josiah, but Necho is also functioning as a messenger from God. Cf. William M. Schniedewind, “Prophets and Prophecy in the Books of Chronicles,” in *The Chronicler as Historian*, ed. M. Patrick Graham, Kenneth G. Hoglund, and Steven L. McKenzie, JSOT 238 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 204–24. In his article, Schniedewind develops the understanding of prophets and prophecy in the book of Chronicles beyond the mere attribution of the title “prophet” itself.

¹²² **So Necho sent messengers to him** (v. 21): If directly translated, this clause reads “And he sent to him messengers.” Two differences are clear: (1) “Necho” has been supplied as stated in a previous footnote (fn. 15) and; (2) “Messengers” has been placed after “to him.” It is more conventional in English and Hebrew to place the direct object (messengers; מֶלֶךְ יִשְׁלָחַ) before the indirect object (“to him,” i.e. the recipient; אֲלֵיכֶם). The word order in the Hebrew text is considered “marked” word order. BHRG states that “unmarked word order when all the constituents are lexicalized is: Subject + object + indirect object + prepositional object + other complement/adjunct + complement/adjunct (place) + adjunct (time)”. Of importance here is the Subject + object + indirect object unmarked word order. In the Hebrew text, the indirect object comes before the direct object (אֲלֵיכֶם מֶלֶךְ יִשְׁלָחַ). BHRG, 46.1.3.2. The prepositional phrase “to him” (referring to Josiah) is fronted before the direct object “messengers.” “In Biblical Hebrew, fronting is one of the constructions used to signal that an entity or attribute of an entity is the focus of an utterance.” BHRG, 47.1. Josiah, then, is the focus of this utterance, not the messengers that Necho sent to him.

¹²³ **saying** (v. 21): “Saying” translates the infinitive construct לְאֹמַר. It has been translated into English as a participle, which is common among many translations (e.g. ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, NKJV, etc.).

¹²⁴ **What have I to do with you**, (v. 21): The underlying Hebrew here is rather ambiguous (מַה־בְּךָ־בְּנִי). If translated directly according to the Hebrew the English would read something like, “what to me and to you?” Clearly, this does not make much sense in the English language. Thus, English translations render this variously. Several examples: (1) “What quarrel is there, king of Judah, between you and me?” (NIV); (2) “What do you want with me” (NLT); (3) “What have we to do with each other” (ESV); (4) “What have I to do with thee” (KJV); (5) “What business do you have with me, King of Judah?” (NASB); (6) “What is the issue between you and me” (CSB); (7) “What have I to do with thee” (JPS); (8) “Why are you opposing me” (NET). The Greek version copies the Hebrew directly: “Τί ἔμοι καὶ σοί.” Commentators are also divided on how to translate the Hebrew: (1) “What quarrel is there between you and me?” Eugene H. Merrill, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 594; J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, NAC v. 9 (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 384. (2) “What is there between you and me?” Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, WBC, ed. David Allen Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 284. (3) “What do we have to do with each other?” Japhet, 1039. It is important to state that none of these translations are “bad” or “wrong”. Nonetheless, the translation offered herein is offered instead of another translation with reason. The reasons are: (1) The Historian could have recorded Necho’s comments with more description. If Necho had said more, or the Historian saw fit to include more (or even more precise language) then he could have done so. That is, if the Historian wanted to record Necho as saying blatantly and plainly “What quarrel do we have with each other?” then the Historian easily could have done so. There is a reason the Historian chose to do otherwise. Therefore, I have sought to leave out any direct mention of a quarrel (contra NIV, Merrill, and Thompson). It is for the same reason that mention of “business” or an “issue” has been left out (contra NASB and CSB). (2) There is also a reason the Historian recorded Necho’s comments without a verb. Certainly, Josiah is opposing Necho and therefore the translation offered by NET is understandable. However, the notion of opposition is merely implied, not stated. Furthermore, it is not clear that the notion of “opposition” is the intent of Necho’s message. In my translation I have supplied a verb phrase (“have to do”). This is necessitated by English grammar. Attempting to stick closely to the Hebrew, the translation offered is as simple and short as possible. In this way, the translation offered herein is similar to the KJV and JPS. That being the case, ESV, NLT, and Japhet are still viable. However, (3) the translation offered by each of these is simply too polite. Japhet and ESV both use the phrase “each other,” which implies some

O King of Judah?¹²⁵ // I am not coming up¹²⁶ against you¹²⁷

sort of mutual relationship and respectability. There is no indication of such in this context. In fact, the opposite is clear: Josiah is an intruder. Instead, Necho's comments indicate bafflement, particularly in light of what he goes on to say (that God told him to hasten, therefore "stop opposing God"). Likewise, the NLT puts too much emphasis on Josiah and his desires. "What do you want with me" too easily conveys willingness to turn aside, but there is no indication of this attitude. Instead, Necho's emphasis is on himself and the mission is conducting on behalf of God. As will be seen, Necho has no intention of stopping for a moment for King Josiah. Therefore, the translation offered herein is better than each of the above options (including the KJV and JPS given that they are an older style of English). "What do I have to do with you" accurately portrays the brevity of the Hebrew and the tone of bafflement from Necho.

¹²⁵ **O King of Judah?** (v. 21): This is a Hebrew vocative. Necho directly addresses Josiah (albeit, through his messengers).

¹²⁶ **I am not coming up** (v. 21): This whole clause (הַיּוֹם אַתָּה לֹא-עַלְּךָ) is verbless. It is not being translated herein as verbless, though. This is for three reasons. (1) More directly translating the text as "Not against you today" does not make much sense in English. Thus, inserting a verb is pragmatically important for English readers. (2) The use of the preposition עַל is often found in the presence of a verb of action (such as עָלָה). While עַל is absent from the immediate context, it is present in v. 20 (הַלְּךָ עַל-פְּרָת בְּכַרְכְּמִישׁ ?הַלְּחָם מִלְּמִצְרַיִם נָנוּ עַל—). "Necho, the King of Egypt, went up to fight at Carchemish which is on the Euphrates."). This leads into the next reason. (3) While there is not direct parallelism in these verses, Necho is clearly referring to his action of going up from Egypt mentioned in v. 20. In v. 20, הַלְּךָ had a complimentary infinitive (הַלְּחָם לְהַלְּחָם "went up to fight") as well as a prepositional phrase indicating location (שְׁלֵמִישׁ), but here there is only a prepositional phrase (עַלְּךָ), without a verb or an infinitive. Given that i. prepositional phrases cannot stand alone ii. this discourse is united and iii. going to war implies going against someone (as the use of the preposition indicates), "going up" is inferred in this context. Yet, it is rendered "coming up," which adds another layer of difficulty. This is answered simply. "Going up" seems more distant than "coming up." "Going" often implies a departure, or a venturing away from someone or something. Contrarily, "coming" most often refers to drawing nearer, which in the case of Pharaoh going up from Egypt is clearly the case in reference to Josiah. The verb used in v. 20 (הַלְּךָ) does not demand either "coming" or "going" and therefore it is best to base the translation on the intended meaning informed by context. "Coming up" shows Necho's actions as presently occurring--and becoming increasingly more threatening to Josiah, though Necho has no intention of coming against Josiah. All that being said, the subject "I" has also been supplied, which is necessitated by the addition of the verb phrase "coming up." "I" is indicated by the context: (1) Necho is the one speaking, (2) Necho is the one coming up, (3) Necho refers to himself with the first personal pronominal suffix in the next prepositional phrase. The Greek translators did not like the grammar of this particular text either. The Greek version supplies the verb ἤκω, which means "I have come."

¹²⁷ **Not... against you today** (v. 21): עַל is a preposition that indicates location. Often, it is used plainly as "on" or "to," but when used in the context of hostility, "against" is a fitting gloss. It is similarly used in Gen 34:27; Judg 18:27; 1 Kgs 20:22. HALOT 2:826. Suffixes to the preposition עַל is a second person singular pronominal suffix referring to Josiah—the "King of Judah" Necho has just addressed. "You" is the object of the preposition. In a way, Pharaoh is declaring that he is not coming against *Israel* since the King represented his nation, but the focus of the narrative is on the conflict between the two kings. This is made clear by the redundant (stand alone) second person pronoun הַלְּךָ. The doubling of the second person—in the form of a pronominal suffix and in the form of a pronoun—makes Necho's statement emphatic. Gesenius makes this same observation. GKC, 135g. Contrarily, J-M calls this a superfluous pronoun, but it is better to understand the construction emphatically. J-M, 146d. Similar to Necho's comments discussed above (וְלֹא מִהָּרָה), Necho's bafflement with Josiah's actions are on full display. In regards to הַיּוֹם, it is lit. "the day," but understood as "today" often. It often entails a demonstrative but it is not necessary.

today.¹²⁸ // On the contrary,¹²⁹ I am coming¹³⁰ to the house¹³¹ with which is my war¹³².¹³³ // Indeed¹³⁴ God had commanded me¹³⁵ to hasten.¹³⁶ // Stop opposing God¹³⁷ who is with me¹³⁸

¹²⁸ **I am not coming up against you today** (v. 21): As noted above, there is no verb or subject in this phrase. It is, therefore, incomplete. Nominal phrases are not uncommon in Hebrew and, most often, they are easily understood even if they require some thought and argumentation. These nominal phrases are always smoothed out in the English. Gesenius notes that these types of incomplete phrases are particularly common in Chronicles. *GKC*, 147a.

¹²⁹ **On the contrary** (v. 21): כִּי. *HALOT* notes that when כִּי follows a negative clause it is used contrastively (my description). Cf. Gen 3:4–5; 17:5; 24:3–4; Deut 13:9–10; Isa 7:7–8. “II כִּי,” *HALOT* 2:470–71. While I argue below that this usage is a bit dubious when understood merely as an adversative or contrastive, כִּי does sometimes precede information that contrasts the previous information. It is best not to see this as a simple or strict contrastive, but a type of further explanation concerning a negated statement. See fn. 39 for a much lengthier argument. “On the contrary” is a better adversative/contrastive than “but” as it also communicates that the subsequent information further explains the previous statement.

¹³⁰ **I am coming up** (v. 21): Supplied by context. See argument above for more detail (fn. 21). Yet, here it is simple to justify the supplying of this verb. The explanatory/contrastive notion of כִּי indicates that Necho is stating against whom he is coming instead of Josiah.

¹³¹ **to the house** (v. 21): This is a prepositional phrase with בַּיִת as the preposition and אֶל as the object of the preposition. אֶל does not directly indicate the location to which he is going but rather further describes “against whom” he is going up. Earlier (v. 20) he indicated he is going to Carchemish. Now, he states *against whom* he goes. “House” is not used here to refer to a literal building but is rather used as collectively to refer to the entire people against whom Necho is going. בַּיִת is often used this way. Cf. Gen 12:1, 17; Exod 1:1; 2:1, etc. For more explaining the use of בַּיִת in this manner, see Harry A. Hoffner, *בַּיִת* “Bayith,” in *TDOT*, trans. John T. Willis, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 107–16. Esp. sections VI. “Designation for Family, Clan, or Tribe.” (113–15) and VII. “Designation for Household, Estate, or Wealth.” (115).

¹³² **with which is my war** (v. 21): One could translate this phrase as “to the house of my war” (כִּי־לִילְתָּמָרְתִּי), but such a translation is less descriptive than is ideal. Thus, “with which is” has been added in order to help smooth out both the reading and the understanding of the comments.

¹³³ **I am not coming against you today. On the contrary, I am coming up to the house with which is my war.** (v. 21): It should be evident from the comments above that this portion of the verse is rather grammatically ambiguous. The Historian packs a lot into just a few words. Indeed, the English translation offered is almost three times longer than the Hebrew text (22 words as opposed to 8 words). One may ask the purpose of such concise language. A few comments. (1) Verbless clauses are common in Hebrew. They contain a lot of information in just a few words—they are therefore easy to use as addresses. While direct discourse may prefer lengthier sentences with clear verbs and subjects, declarations like this one do not require them. Indeed, the shortness of Necho’s comments may further amplify the shock that has already been mentioned above. (2) Necho’s comments may also be so precise because of the nature of delivering a message. Necho is sending messengers to ask Josiah why he is impeding Necho’s course. It could be that Necho’s comments are brief for the sake of the messengers’ memories. Practically speaking, times of hostility call for fewer words than times of peace. The message, to be heard, must be concise and to the point. Furthermore, brevity conveys directness and intention. One does not scold a child with lengthy prose but short commands. (3) Modern readers can take comfort that they are not alone in understanding the difficulty of this text. The Greek version entirely lacks כִּי־לִילְתָּמָרְתִּי. Instead, the Greek simply records Necho as having said, “I have not come against you to make war today” (my translation). Given the difficulty of the Hebrew alone, it is best to maintain the MT rather than the Greek.

¹³⁴ **Indeed** (v. 21): “Indeed” is a translation of the *waw* that renders the *waw* descriptively. That is, “indeed” shows that the *waw* (while carrying forth the narrative) is intended to provide further information to what Necho has just said. *BHRG* states that, at the clause level, the *waw* can introduce “background information necessary for understanding the previous clause better.” *BHRG* 40.23.4.2. Necho, then, grounds his reason for going up in the command of God.

¹³⁵ **God had commanded me** (v. 21): The perfect verb translated here is very common (רָאָה). It is also very common to find this verb in the simple *Qal* stem as it is here. While often translated simply as “say/said,” it is translated here as “commanded” because it is God who did the speaking. Often, the *Qal* perfect is translated into English with the simple past tense. However, here it has been translated as a pluperfect. This is in accordance with Zevit’s theory of “Anterior Construction” in the Hebrew language. Anterior construction is made up of a *waw* conjunction, a subject, and a *Qal* verb. Anterior construction indicates either the “pluperfectness” or “preperfectness” or any given action. In this case, it is the pluperfect that is indicated, for the action took place in the past. For more on the anterior construction see, Ziony Zevit, *The Anterior Construction in Classical Hebrew*, SBL Monograph Series 50 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998). While it is tempting to translate the verb as a present perfect (“has commanded”), it has not been done in order to maintain the “pluperfectness” indicated by the anterior construction. The temporally past point of reference for this comment is *before Necho left Egypt*. In other words, Necho is essentially saying, “Indeed God had commanded me *before I left Egypt* to hasten.” The prepositional phrase “*before I left Egypt*” is inferred, but provides understanding for the verse. The action of God’s command took place and ceased prior to Necho’s departure from Egypt. Nonetheless, since such specificity is not found in the Hebrew text it has not been added here either. This “God” should be understood as the God of Israel, not a god of Egypt. Necho is seeking to convince Josiah that there is an authority behind his actions that is greater than his own authority. Josiah has every right as the king of Israel to oppose the demands of foreign gods, but Josiah would have recognized that the God invoked here is the God of Israel.

¹³⁶ **to hasten** (v. 21): “To hasten” is a *Piel* infinitive construct from the word בָּהֵל. It is not a very common word (occurring only 39 times; “Step Bible,” <https://stepbible.org/?q=strong=H0926|version=ESV&options=VHNUG&qFilter=H0926.>) and generally carries one of two nuances: terror or haste. Interestingly, the two usages are never used within the same book, which may indicate different stages in the Hebrew language. *HALOT* states that the verb is primarily from Middle Hebrew. בָּהֵל, “HALOT 2:111. Also of interest, the hastening nuance occurs only in books that are considered “the writings” of the Hebrew Bible’s classical three-fold division (although, the terror nuance also occurs in the Psalms). There is no universal agreement on the two seemingly unrelated nuances. It may be that בָּהֵל is actually two words (i.e. homonyms). The two nuances are not tied to specific stems (i.e. *Qal* stem does not mean “to hasten” while the *Piel* stem means “to terrify”). There is little else to say about this, but it is clear that Necho has been commanded to be quick in his actions. One may conjecture that the verb is used intentionally to indicate that God commanded something terrifying. Indeed, terror often produces haste. Yet all is mere conjecture for now; further etymological study must be done before more can be said. The infinitive is prefixed by the *lamed* preposition, which functions here as a complement to the main verb אָמַר.

¹³⁷ **Stop opposing God** (v. 21): The clause is translated as an exclamatory because of the nature of what is said. Necho’s comments are not dull and calm, but rather an exclamatory command demanding Josiah to cease. There is authority behind Necho’s statements, not just because he is the King of Egypt, but because Josiah is opposing God by opposing Necho. The preposition with a second person pronominal suffix is an interesting addition. Gesenius labels this usage of the Dative as a *dativus commodi*, and, more particularly, a *dativus ethicus*, which gives “emphasis to the significance of the occurrence in question for a particular subject.” That is, the action that Necho commands is intended for Josiah, but it is not only intended for Josiah, it is also intended in Josiah’s own interest. The use of this type of dative, states Gesenius, is most often with the exact construction found here: לְךָ. GKC, 119s. The command to stop, though, is complemented by the prepositional phrase מִאֱלֹהִים, which, together, are directly translated as “Stop from God.” When the verb חָלַל is used with the לְ preposition, the verb carries the notion of desisting. חָלַל, “HALOT 1:292. The notion of opposing God must be inferred from the context. Josiah went out to meet Necho and prevent him from going to the battle he was intending to take part in. Since Josiah was opposing Necho and God was with Necho, Josiah was opposing God. Thus, the command to “stop from God” or “desist from God” does not mean to abandon God, but rather to stop opposing God and therefore, in a sense, “rejoin” God’s side.

¹³⁸ **who is with me** (v. 21): The relative pronoun (אֲשֶׁר) is very common and is here translated as “who,” supplying the copula “is” required by English grammar (Hebrew grammar does not require

so that He does not destroy you!¹³⁹ // 22 But¹⁴⁰ Josiah would not turn his face¹⁴¹ away from him¹⁴² for he disguised himself¹⁴³

the copula “is”). The preposition עַי indicates that God is favoring Necho’s actions. This is also made clear by the command that Necho received from God to go up to the war in the first place. ¹³⁹ so that He does not destroy you! (v. 21): Both GKC and J-M note that the Hebrew form here is unusual (וְאֵלִיְשָׁחַק). They note that this type of clause is generally negated with לֹא instead of לְאֵלָי. While the same as the imperfect form, the verb here is actually a jussive. J-M labels this usage a “purpose-consecution.” In the context, the purpose-consecution in this verse refers to the need for Josiah to stop with the purpose that God does not destroy him. Essentially, this text says, “Stop, but if you don’t, then God will destroy you.” Necho is warning Josiah against continuing on the path on which he has set out. GKC 109g; J-M 116j. It is worth mentioning that the verb here is in the Hiphil stem—a stem that is often considered to be causative in nature. However, as mentioned above, Speiser argues that the Hiphil is best understood as a “causative-elative.” It is easy to understand שָׁחַק in this way. God’s destruction is the highest destruction conceivable. It is worth noting as well that the entire quotation from Necho (וְאֵלִיְשָׁחַק מֶלֶךְ וְאֵלָי מֶלֶךְ) is made up of four parts. Japhet calls this a “rhetorical progression in four stages.” The four parts are (1) Vocative address + rhetorical question; (2) Statement of purpose; (3) A command; and (4) A warning (Japhet: “a threat”). Japhet, 105⁶

¹⁴⁰ But (v. 22): “But” translates the waw conjunction adversatively, which is a fairly common usage. The adversative notion is made clear by the context; that is, Josiah’s refusal to heed Necho’s words indicates an adversative clause. See A/C 4.3.3.

¹⁴¹ Josiah would not turn his face from him (v. 22): As expected, the perfect verb here is negated by לֹא. Scholars are somewhat divided concerning how to translate this negated verb. Some translations use the verb phrase “did not turn” (CSB, ESV, HCSB, NET) whereas others use the verb phrase “would not turn” (JPS, KJV, NIV, NKJV, NLT, NASB). While neither option is necessarily incorrect, the nuance of the Hiphil stem can be portrayed better than the simple past “did not turn.” The verb phrase “would not turn,” therefore, is preferable. Two reasons: (1) The Hiphil stem is often considered to be either causative or, as Speiser argues as mentioned above, causative-elative. Given that causation requires some aspect of volition and the English phrase “would not turn” portrays volition better than the simple past of “did not,” “would not” is preferable. (2) Portraying one’s volition in any given action causes the verb to come off stronger than a simple past or simple present. “Would not” is therefore stronger than “did not” and shows Josiah’s hardheartedness against the warnings of Necho. If that is the case, then “would not” portrays the elative notion of the Hiphil stem better than a simple past as well. That Josiah did not turn his face shows the volition of the entire person to march out on his campaign against Necho. To “turn the face” is a common idiom in Hebrew and does not need much explanation.

¹⁴² away from him (v. 22): This prepositional phrase (preposition+pronominal suffix; מִן) completes the thought of the verb “to turn.” מִן is a common preposition denoting both spatial and temporal emphases. While it does not fit cleanly into the category, the preposition here seems to indicate some sort of alienation: possibly “alienation of role.” BHRG 39.14.3. That is, Josiah would not turn away from the kingly role of protecting the Israelite homeland, which he perceived to be threatened. Indeed, Exodus 23:22 may be what he considered to be *biblical evidence* that he was justified in opposing Necho.

¹⁴³ for he disguised himself (v. 22): The choice to translate עָשָׂה as “for” is a lengthy argument and will be discussed in the next footnote. At present, the textual variant of this verse must be discussed. The MT (which has been maintained in this translation) has the verb שָׁחַק. This is a Hithpael perfect verb and is translated reflexively as “he disguised himself.” The Greek version of this text, on the other hand, reads ἐκράταιώθη. This is an Aorist passive verb and is translated passively as “was strengthened.” The Greek translation, then, takes much of the cause for Josiah’s actions off of Josiah himself and places it on whoever strengthened Josiah—whether it was his men or his God. The latter of these is problematic because it shows a God who is divided: one who is both strengthening Josiah to go out against Necho and one who is sending Necho up from Egypt with the power to cut down anyone who prevents him from marching to his intended destination. If the former is to be understood (i.e. Josiah was strengthened by his men) then the theological

to fight with Necho.¹⁴⁴ //

problem evaporates except insofar as Josiah is no longer portrayed as a strong king in himself but only as a king who is pushed to and fro by the whims of his people. This picture of Josiah is not found in the rest of the story of Josiah. However, the Hebrew text presents a problem to the reader as well. Josiah is described as disguising himself—the very same thing Ahab (the viciously wicked king whose reign comprises a large portion of 1 Kings) did when he was killed in battle (1 Kgs 22:29–40; 2 Chr 19:28–34). This is problematic because, whereas Josiah is described as one who was unique among all the kings before and after him who “turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might” (2 Chr 23:25) Ahab is described as one who was also unique, albeit in the opposite manner: “There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Abhab, whom Jezebel his wife incited. He acted very abominably in going after idols, as the Amorites had done” (1 Kgs 21:25–26). It is for this reason that the MT must be maintained. (This parallel between the two kings is the sole reason offered by Dillard as to why the MT is correct over against the Greek version. Dillard, 286) The Greek translators of Chronicles likely saw the parallel between Josiah the Righteous and Ahab the Wicked and were horrified by the similarity. That being the case, they set out to “correct” the portrayal of Josiah, ensuring that he was portrayed not as one who fell like Ahab, but one who valiantly went out to war, being strengthened by his God. Indeed, while the Greek translation conjures up theological problems (concerning the division of God's actions), the Hebrew text presents an equally problematic (though resolvable) situation: Josiah, the righteous king of Judah, fell in the same manner as Ahab, one of the most wicked kings in all of Israelite history. Nonetheless, the more difficult translation must be maintained. In this case, the MT stands.

¹⁴⁴ **for he disguised himself to fight with Necho.** (v. 22): This entire clause is difficult to translate. It is made up of a conjunction (וְ) followed by a Niphal infinitive construct + *bet* preposition with a 3ms suffix (לְנֹשֶׁם־בָּ) + a Hithpael perfect verb (שָׁמַרְתָּה). It is also not helpful that the Greek version of Chronicles has a completely different verb than שָׁמַרְתָּה. This variant is discussed in the previous footnote. Nearly every major translation translates the conjunction וְ as an adversative (“but”: ASV, ESV, JPS, KJV, NASB, NIV, NKJV; “instead”: CSB, HCSB, NLT) denoting “an antithetical statement after a negative clause.” A/C, 4.3.4. Translating the conjunction in this manner forces the reader to read the text as if Josiah disguised himself either (1) temporally following or at least as (2) a response to the messengers of Necho. This, however, is not necessitated by the Hebrew text itself. Furthermore, the apparent “adversative” category for this conjunction is a bit dubious. Among the examples of this category offered by the various grammars consulted, none of the contexts mandate an adversative notion, but can be equally well understood as further explaining the preceding statement. For example, BHRG and A/C both offer Genesis 17:15 as an example of an adversative use of the preposition וְ (A/C, 4.3.4; BHRG, 40.9.2.3). Following ESV, Genesis 17:15 reads “As for Sarai, your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.” It is reasonable to see an adversative notion here. However, a causal notion is also evident. This is due to the Lord Himself being the one renaming Sarai. In such a case the verse would rather be translated, “As for Sarai, your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, for Sarah shall be her name.” Other examples offered by A/C are Exod 19:13 and 1 Kgs 11:34. Neither of these must be understood only with the notion of an adversative. Whereas וְ may be understood in some sense as the “antithetical statement after a negative clause” (A/C) or as “a counter-statement after a negative statement” (BHRG—a better definition) in some cases, it must also be understood as further explaining the reason for the state of affairs. This understanding is further solidified if the reader is meant to see in the death of Josiah a parallel to the death of Ahab (something nearly all commentators agree upon). In the account of Ahab's death in 2 Chr 18, Ahab disguises himself to go into battle. Presumably, instead of wearing kingly attire, Ahab wore a normal soldier's suit of armor. Ahab's disguise is intended to prevent him from being seen by the enemy (i.e. the king of Syria: v. 30). Contrarily, Jehoshaphat continues wearing his kingly robes (v. 29). Ahab, then, is attempting to protect himself from being easily spotted as the king of Israel. Indeed, the king of Syria declares that his soldiers are to “fight with neither small nor great, but only with the king of Israel” and when they see Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, they all turned to fight against him (v. 30–31). Realizing that Jehoshaphat was not the king they were looking for, they withdrew from the fight (v. 32). Then the climax of the story comes with a man shooting at random

So¹⁴⁵ he did not listen to the words of Necho¹⁴⁶ which were from the mouth of God.¹⁴⁷ //

and hitting Ahab in between the plates of his armor (v. 33). Ahab then dies a bloody death (v. 34; cf. 1 Kgs 22:38). It is clear that Ahab disguised himself before he went out to battle so that he was not seen and immediately struck down. Things did not turn out very well for him and, as most commentators agree, the story of Josiah's death is a dramatic parallel. There is no definitive point to make that proves Josiah disguised himself before leaving Jerusalem, but the reader is certainly tempted to see the parallel as indicating such. Translating 'כִּי' as "for" rather than "but" better allows for this possibility. "But" seems to indicate a direct response to Necho's words, whereas "for" leaves open the possibility that disguise was Josiah's intention from the beginning. Furthermore, 'כִּי' highlights that the point of this verse is not that Josiah disguised himself in response to Necho's words, but rather that Josiah disguised himself and that *is the reason for* Josiah's neglecting of Necho's words of warning. Therefore, though it is contrary to every major English translation, it is best to translate 'כִּי' as "for" rather than "but".

¹⁴⁵ **So** (v. 22): "So" translates the *waw* conjunction as a resultative. In a more lengthy fashion, one could translate the text as following: "As a result (of having disguised himself) he did not listen to the words of Necho." When translating the *waw* conjunction as "so" *BHRG* labels it "apparently superfluous," citing 2 Sam 13:20 ("So Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom's house." ESV). Nonetheless, even in 2 Sam 13:10 the *waw* is not used superfluously. The *waw* in that text can also be understood as a resultative: "As a result (of the tragic story immediately preceding concerning the story of Amnon and Tamar), Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom's house." Indeed, one could argue that *not a single stroke* in any of the biblical text (or, any text, for that matter) is superfluous, but such is a debate for another context.

¹⁴⁶ **he did not listen to the words of Necho** (v. 22): To "not listen" (אָלַמְשָׁה) is to "not heed" or to "pay no attention to." This is a summary statement of Josiah's actions just described (אָלַמְשָׁה בְּכִי מְלָאָנוּ כִּי אָשִׁינוּ לְהַלְּקָה-בָּשָׁר), as Josiah's rejection of Necho's words has already been made clear. Interestingly, Josiah's failure to listen to the words of Necho is in direct contrast to his hearing the words of the Law earlier in his reign (2 Chr 34:19). That we are to see these two events in opposition to each other is made clear by the next comment in the text that these words were God's words. It is also worth noting again that Necho's words came through messengers, but still bore the stamp of Necho's authority. This is important for the next point.

¹⁴⁷ **which were from the mouth of God** (v. 22): "Which were" is not found in the Hebrew text (אֲלֵהֶם מִפְּנֵי), but is supplied in order to smooth out the English reading. Directly translated, the verse would read simply, "he did not listen to the words of Necho from the mouth of God." While this still makes sense in English, it is less clear. Here, Necho is represented as a messenger of God. Just as Necho sent his own messengers to Josiah who bore the authority and voice of Necho, so also Necho is presented as one who carries a message from an authority greater than himself: from the God of Israel. Some commentators understand the God mentioned here to be the God of Egypt, but such is not required by the text. Nor does understanding Necho's comments as words from the gods of Egypt lessen the theological difficulties of this text. Instead, just as above, an authority that Josiah recognized (the God of Israel) is being invoked.

Thus he went to fight in the valley of Megiddo.¹⁴⁸ // 23 So¹⁴⁹ the archers shot¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ **Thus he went to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.** (v. 22): There are a few points to make about this clause. (1) The *waw* consecutive is translated as the result of the previous actions. This is a similar translation to the translation of וְלֹא אָלַדְבָּרִי שָׁמָע וְלֹא above. Although, the previous translation was not an imperfect *waw* consecutive but rather a conjunctive *waw* preceding a negated Qal perfect verb clause. Josiah's movement to fight with Necho in the Valley of Megiddo is presented as the logical conclusion and result of i. Going out from Jerusalem; ii. Refusing to turn away from battle; iii. Disguising himself; and iv. Failing to heed the word of God through the mouth of Necho. (2) The Valley of Megiddo was an important passage through the mountains. Josiah is thus portrayed as a skilled, tactical, and strategic warrior king. Currid and Barrett, 171. (3) The infinitive translated "to show himself to fight" is a verb in the Niphal stem (לְהַלְל). It is most often in the Niphal stem. Whereas the Niphal stem is generally categorized in basic grammars as the passive version of the Qal stem (albeit with nuance—even including the idea that "Some verbs in the Niphal stem are translated with an active voice just like the Qal stem. This is frequently the case with verbal roots that are common in the Niphal stem but are not attested (or rarely attested) in the Qal stem." לְהַלְל is one such verb. Gary Davis Pratico and Miles V Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 264. It may be better to understand the Niphal as a stem carrying middle voice. More particularly, as a "medio-passive". Summarizing Ernst Jenni's work, Benjamin Noonan states, "[Jenni] argues that the Niphal marks an event experienced by (rather than affected by) the subject. [Jenni] expresses the basic meaning of the Niphal as 'to show oneself as something' (*sich als etwas erweisen*).". Noonan, 95. In such a case, the verb in question here (להַלְל) can be understood as "to show himself to fight." It is ironic, then, that Josiah has taken the time to disguise himself. This, however, is not particularly helpful in English reading and is therefore translated simply as "to fight." Instead, this ought to be brought out in exegesis. (4) This clause בְּבִקְעַת הַלְלָם וַיַּבָּא (מְגַדֵּו) forms an inclusio with the clause above translated as "But Josiah would not turn his face away from him for he disguised himself to fight" (לְהַלְלָם בְּזֶבֶד מְלֹא כָּלִיל אֲשֶׁר וְלֹא הַסֵּבֶל). An inclusio is a literary-rhetorical divide used to highlight a particular theme. Todd J. Murphy, *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of Biblical Hebrew* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 90. In this case, Josiah's rejection of the words of God through Necho's mouth is bracketed between two statements indicating Josiah's intent to oppose Necho. This highlights an important theological purpose in the Historian's telling of this story: God's absolute sovereignty over all nations and His intent to bend and use all nations to the furtherance of His glory. Thus, while Josiah was a righteous king, he failed to heed God's warning—a warning that came from the mouth of a pagan king—and thus stood in opposition to God. This helps the reader to understand why a king as righteous as Josiah could be shot down like any nameless warrior on the battlefield—before the battle had even begun.

¹⁴⁹ **So** (v. 23): "So" once again translates the *waw* consecutive as a consequential. It is arguable that the *waw* consecutive here is used simply to continue the story (i.e. "sequential"; A/C 3.5.1a.), but it is better to see this verb as a direct result of Josiah's actions (therefore, "consequential"; A/C, 3.5.1b.) Indeed, if Josiah had heeded Necho's words and not gone out to battle with him then the archers could not have shot at Josiah in the first place.

¹⁵⁰ **the archers shot** (v. 23): In reality, the underlying Hebrew here is the same verb twice in a row. The first occurrence of the verb is a Hiphil imperfect *waw* consecutive (וְיָרַא) that is understood as "So they shot." Who "they" are is answered by the second occurrence of the verb, which is a Qal participle (הַיָּרָא). The participial form of the verb functions as the subject of the clause. Indeed, one could translate this clause with some alliteration as "So the shooters shot."

toward King Josiah¹⁵¹ // and the king commanded¹⁵² his servants¹⁵³, “Take me away¹⁵⁴ for I am greatly wounded.”¹⁵⁵ // 24 Thus¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ **toward King Josiah** (v. 23): Translating the *lamed* preposition as “toward” rather than “at” conveys the aspect of chance that is evident in this context. Most translations simply neglect to translate the *lamed* preposition, which is acceptable since it does not need to be translated into English for the meaning to be clear and sensible. Nonetheless, in the present translation, it is maintained. *BHRG* describes the *lamed* preposition thus, “[it] has a very unspecialized meaning... [indicating] a very general relationship between two entities that can at best be described as ‘x as far as y is concerned’.” Fair enough. Indeed, this highlights even more the “chance aspect” of a nameless archer shooting down Josiah “as soon as he saw him” (2 Kgs 23:29; though in the Kings account the killing is attributed to Necho, presumably because he was the leader of his army). The *lamed* preposition here likely indicates the intended goal of the shooting (hitting Josiah). *BHRG* 39.11.1. Furthermore, translating the *lamed* preposition as “toward” rather than “at” (which would be more properly represented with ְ) helps to bring out the possibility that the archers didn’t know exactly who to shoot at since Josiah had “disguised himself” (v. 22). Pratt makes a similar observation about the message of the text (not about the preposition): “The similarities [between Ahab’s death and Josiah’s death] make it likely that the Historian expected his readers to treat 35:23 as an elliptical description of a similar scenario [to Ahab’s chance death].” Richard L Pratt, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, Mentor Commentary (Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor, 1998), 497. That Josiah is repeatedly referred to as “King Josiah” or “the King” emphasizes the tragedy of the story’s outcome.

¹⁵² **and the king commanded** (v. 23): The “king” referred to here is clearly Josiah. “Commanded” is a fitting translation of ְרָמַךְ since it is Josiah who is speaking. This is similar to the point made above concerning God’s speaking to Necho (see fn. 30).

¹⁵³ **his servants**, (v. 23): I have intentionally neglected to translate the *lamed* preposition prefixed to ְרָמַךְ. The *lamed* preposition is often used to indicate to whom speech is referred and therefore does not require further comment. *BHRG*, 39.11.1d. His “servants” are likely military officers. Paul L. Redditt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2020), 432.

¹⁵⁴ **“Take me away** (v. 23): The verb here generally means something like “to pass over,” but in the Hiphil stem (as here) it carries a more causative notion, such as “bring away” or “take away.” It is thus translated accordingly. Here, the verb is a second person plural Hiphil imperative directed at the servants just mentioned. This is the same verb that is used to describe Josiah’s servants’ actions in response to his command (fn. 52). “Me” is indicated by the pronominal suffix on the end of the word. While it is impossible to know the emotion behind Josiah’s order, one can use a bit of imagination. Surely Josiah would have been shocked, thus the imperative form here may, in reality, land somewhere between a barked command and a pitiful request of a dying man. Nonetheless, the Historian represents Josiah’s command simply with one word and its explanation.

¹⁵⁵ **for I am greatly wounded** (v. 23): Here, ְזִבְעָנָה is used to base the “motivation for [the] directive action” of Josiah on what has just occurred. It is thus translated “for,” providing the reason for his command. *BHRG* 40.9.2.2. The verb ְלִלְלָה often refers to sickness. Since, in this context, Josiah has just been shot at by archers, it is best to understand the verb as “wounded” or “injured.” The Hophal stem used here to describe Josiah’s wound also fits well with Speiser’s “causative-elative” notion of the Hiphil stem, since the two are closely related (the Hophal often being considered the passive form of the Hiphil). The emphatic notion is furthered by the additional adverb ְלִלְלָה ending the sentence. Indeed, the thought of the verb is not complete until the adverb is read alongside of it. Josiah is not just injured, he is *greatly* injured; indeed, he is injured “unto death.” Continuing, whereas the verb is a perfect and therefore often translated in the simple past, it is translated here as a present passive. It would also be fitting to translate this as “for I have become wounded,” denoting a change in Josiah’s state. Nonetheless, the meaning is essentially the same: the whole action is summed up quickly and concisely with the emphasis on the results rather than on the process. Cf. Ahab’s comments when he was also dying from a random arrow (2 Chr 18:33).

¹⁵⁶ **Thus** (v. 24): “Thus” is absent from the Hebrew text (i.e. there is no ְכֵן or ְכֵן). “Thus” is inferred on the basis of the *waw* consecutive form of the verb. Arnold and Choi describe this type of translation as a “consequential” use of the *waw* consecutive form. A/C, 3.5.1b. This is similar to the translation offered above of ְזִבְעָנָה in v. 23.

his servants brought him down from the chariot¹⁵⁷ // and carried him¹⁵⁸ on his second chariot.¹⁵⁹ // Then, they brought him to Jerusalem¹⁶⁰ //

¹⁵⁷ **Thus his servants brought him down from the chariot** (v. 24): The verb translated here as “brought him down” is the Hiphil *waw* consecutive form of עָבַר. The translation adopted here is offered by *HALOT*. עָבַר, “,” *HALOT* 2:778–81. Some explanation is as follows: עָבַר is a fairly common verb in the Scriptures and often carries the notion of “passing over.” This leads DCH to offer some variation of “to cause to pass” as the translation of the Hiphil form as found here. However, the idea of being caused to pass over is less than helpful. David J. A. Clines, עָבַר, “,” *DCH* 6:233–42. More helpfully, *TDOT* describes this word as indicating “a purposeful change of location or position from A to B.” H.F. Fuhs, עָבַר, “,” in *TDOT*, trans. Douglas W. Stott, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 409. This description from *TDOT* helpfully reveals the accuracy of *HALOT*’s translation which offers an accurate and contextually fitting gloss of the verb. The נִבְנָה prefixed to the verb necessitates the preposition “from” following the verb. “Down” is inferred based on the context of bringing Josiah out of (and therefore, down from) the chariot. The verb used here is also the same verb that Josiah used to command these servants. The servants, then, do exactly as Josiah commanded.

¹⁵⁸ **and carried him** (v. 24): The English translation offered here is a bit different than the underlying Hebrew. Indeed, the translation here has sought primarily to understand the sense of the clause rather than the direct meaning of the words themselves. If directly translated, this clause would be translated something like, “And they caused him to ride on the second chariot which was his.” KJV, NIV, and NLT all state that Josiah was “put in his other chariot” (though with slight variation; the important part is the verb “put”). “Put”, however, is too static. When one “puts” something somewhere, the focus is on the act of placing and the object’s new static position. The underlying verb here, though, is a verb of motion. The verb is רָכַב, a verb used to indicate someone riding on a horse or chariot (indeed, it is the very same root [רָכְבָּה] as the noun translated “chariot” in this context). Given that the verb in this context is not in the Qal stem but rather in the Hiphil stem, it is necessary to nuance the meaning a bit and give it a more causative meaning. Thus, “to cause to ride” is fitting, but it does not sound right in English speaking ears. Instead, the underlying idea is that Josiah was *carried* in another chariot. If person A causes person B to ride in a chariot, then they are causing person B to be brought somewhere else. Person B is therefore passive and the idea of being carried is fitting. Both ESV and NASB offer a similar translation of this verse. The *waw* consecutive notion of the verb is, arguably, also carrying consequential ideas (i.e. His servants brought him down from his chariot and *therefore* carried him on his second chariot). However, it is best to translate the *waw* consecutive with the simple “and” conjunction, tying the two actions of “bringing down” and “carrying” together in one thought. The two verbal ideas cannot be divorced from one another.

¹⁵⁹ **on his second chariot** (v. 24): The syntax here is a bit strange, as mentioned briefly in the previous footnote. The Hebrew here is: אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־הָעִשָּׂנָה רָכַב עַל. The Hebrew makes perfect sense, but it requires a bit of thought for rendering into English. Directly translated the text reads something like “on chariot, the second one, which was to him.” Though, the *lamed* preposition does not have to be translated with “to” and thus “to him” is naturally understood as “his.” Basic grammar helps to smooth this out a good bit to “on the second chariot which was his.” Since English speakers never talk like this, it has been rendered even more simply as “on his second chariot,” which is clearly what the Hebrew text is saying, albeit in a way that is unusual to English readers.

¹⁶⁰ **Then, they brought him to Jerusalem** (v. 24): Translated here is another Hiphil verb (the fifth one in immediate context, sixth if you include its passive Hophal form). The verb is נָשַׂל, which is a standard verb of movement in the OT. While translated often as “went” or “walked” in the Qal stem, the Hiphil stem and the passivity of Josiah necessitate the translation “brought” as found here. The preposition “to” is not found in the Hebrew text (וְ) but is inferred by the context since Jerusalem could not be brought to Josiah. “Then” represents the idea of the *waw* consecutive verb. It is simply a continuation of the narrative. The logical progression of these Hiphil verbs is clear. (1) Josiah was shot at (וַיָּרַא); (2) Josiah demanded to be taken away from the battlefield (הָעֲבִירָה); due to an injury (וְהַלְכָה); (3) Josiah’s men began to bring him from the battlefield by taking him out of his chariot (וְיַעֲבִרְתָּה); (4) Josiah’s men brought him from the battlefield (וְיַרְכְּבָה); (5) Josiah is brought back to Jerusalem from where he came (וְיַוְלִיכָה). The entire scene can be summed up

and he died.¹⁶¹ // And he was buried¹⁶² in the tombs of his fathers.¹⁶³ // Thus¹⁶⁴ all Judah and Jerusalem were mourning¹⁶⁵ for Josiah.¹⁶⁶ // 25 And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah¹⁶⁷ // and all the

by these five Hiphil verbs (plus one Hophal verb describing the reason for Josiah's command). It is also worth mentioning that Josiah is only directly mentioned following the initial statement that he was shot at (נִירָוּתְּאָשָׁרְתָּה לְאַלְמָנָה). Every subsequent mention of Josiah is in the form of a pronominal suffix.

¹⁶¹ **and he died** (v. 24): The life of Judah's last great king is concluded by a single word marking his death (נִירָוּתְּ). There are few occurrences of such an anticlimactic (and devastating) moment.

¹⁶² **And he was buried** (v. 24): The combination of the verbs מִתָּה and קָבַר are common in the Scriptures. E.g. Gen 35:8, 19, 29. The two ideas taken together sum up the end of a person's life; death is naturally followed by burial.

¹⁶³ **in the tombs of his fathers.** (v. 24): "Tombs" is the nominal form of the verb "buried" (קָבַר; קָבָר). It could be understood as "burial place" as well. This is a simple construction. It is important for understanding the text that he was buried with his fathers, but this merits no translation explanation.

¹⁶⁴ **Thus** (v. 24): Translating the *waw* conjunction at the start of this verse. Here, it "alludes to the result of the content of the preceding clause." *BHRC*, 40.23.4.2.

¹⁶⁵ **all Judah and Jerusalem were mourning** (v. 24): While the Hithpael stem often carries a reflexive notion, the subsequent prepositional phrase (עַל-אֲשֶׁר) rejects the idea that Judah and Jerusalem were mourning for themselves (see next footnote). That the verb here is a plural participle emphasizes the mourning of every individual within Judah and Jerusalem. *HALOT* indicates that this verb, in the Hithpael stem as it is here, indicates the observation of mourning rites. אָבֵל "I," *HALOT* 1:7. *DCH* indicates a similar thing stating that the verb means "to be in mourning" rather than simply "to be mourning." אָבֵל "I," *DCH* 1:108. The translation offered above follows neither of these and offers the continuous past tense "were mourning" instead. This differs from the major English translations, which nearly universally state that Judah and Jerusalem "mourned" (ASV, CSB, ASV, JPS, KJV, NET, NIV, NKJV, NLT; some lesser used translations offer the participle "mourning" such as Young's Literal Translation and the Literal Standard Translation). The translation offered herein neglects to state "were observing mourning rites" because no specific mourning rights are mentioned other than lamenting in the next verse (cf. Gen 37:34). "To be in mourning" emphasizes the state of mourning more than the activity of mourning and has therefore been neglected as well. Translating the verb as it has been translated herein is helpful because (1) the translation is easily understood and (2) the translation indicates the continuous nature of the mourning, which is made clear by the extension of the description of mourning in the subsequent verse.

¹⁶⁶ **for Josiah** (v. 24): The preposition translated here (לְ) as "for" is a rather common preposition. However, it is only "seldom" used in the manner in which it is used in this context. *BHRC* explains, "[לְ]y] indicates a focus of attention... The vantage point is the trajector *x* and the landmark *y* is the focus of attention. This is typical with activities of speech... and the expression of emotions by a trajector *x*." Cf. Gen 37:34. *BHRC* 39.20.

¹⁶⁷ **And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah** (v. 25): Whereas the mourning of "all Judah and Jerusalem" was described with a Hithpael participle, Jeremiah's mourning is described with an imperfect *waw* consecutive. This places Jeremiah's particular mourning in the foreground of the narrative. *BHRC*, 21.2.1.1. Verse 25, then, focuses the description of mourning from the previous verse. Not only all Judah and Jerusalem were mourning, but so also Jeremiah himself lamented. The prepositional phrase translated "for Josiah" is the same as the prepositional phrase mentioned in the previous footnote. The verb here (לְקַנְתָּה) is a Piel verb and may, therefore, indicate that Jeremiah lamented intensely. Generally, the verb indicates the singing of a dirge. *HALOT* states the verb means to "sing a funeral song." קַנְתָּה, "HALOT 3:1096–97. "Lamented" has been selected given the context of pervasive mourning, which does not seem to be taking place merely "at Josiah's funeral."

singing men and singing women¹⁶⁸ sang¹⁶⁹ their laments¹⁷⁰ for Josiah until this day.¹⁷¹ // And they made them¹⁷² a statute¹⁷³ over Israel¹⁷⁴ and behold¹⁷⁵ it has been written in laments.¹⁷⁶

A/C: n/a

BHRG: n/a

GKC: 119s; 135g; 147a

IBHS: n/a

J-M 116j; 146d

¹⁶⁸ **and all the singing men and singing women** (v. 25): “Singing men” and “singing women” in the Hebrew are both participles from the word שִׁיר, which means “to sing.” The nouns “men” and “women” are indicated by the gender of the participles, which are masculine and feminine respectively. Another way to understand this is as “all the male singers and all the female singers.”

¹⁶⁹ **sang** (v. 25): Just as אָמַר is translated above as “commanded” (v. 22) when it refers to the speaking of God, so here context demands that the word for uttered speech be translated as “sang” rather than “spoke.” This is clear from the previous two participles (לְפָנֶיךָ שְׁרָוֹת בְּלִדְבָּרִים) as well as the context of laments (קִנְחָה), which were often sang.

¹⁷⁰ **their laments** (v. 25): The underlying Hebrew word is the nominal form (קִנְחָה) of the verb (קִנֵּה) explaining Jeremiah’s response to Josiah’s death translated above as “lamented.” HALOT indicates that this word refers to lamentations spoken by Jeremiah and subsequently written down (in the Book of Lamentations). “קִנְחָה,” HALOT 3:1097.

¹⁷¹ **for Josiah until this day** (v. 25): This is made up of two prepositional phrases (1. “for Josiah” and 2. “until this day”). The phrase “for Josiah” has been explained above. It occurs three times (including this occurrence) in the immediate context. “Until this day” translates עד־הַיּוֹם. This phrase indicates that the Historian is writing at some point later in the history of the people of Israel than the actual historical occurrences of the events.

¹⁷² **And they made them** (v. 25): בָּנָה is fairly common in the Hebrew Bible and often carries the notion of setting something in place or giving something. Here, it is translated as “made” due to the legal context. The 3mp suffix refers back to the laments that have just been made.

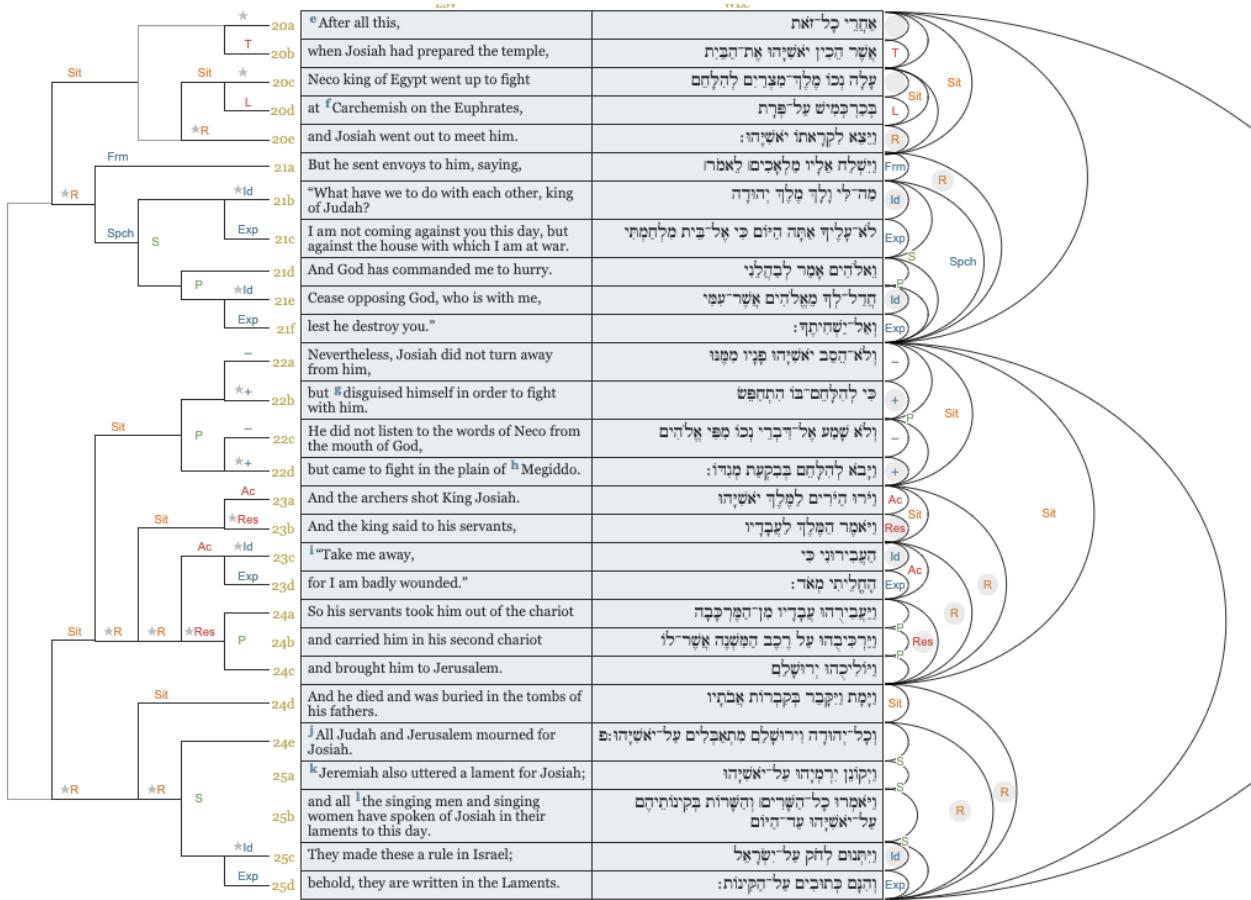
¹⁷³ **a statute** (v. 25): This word (קָנָה) has a somewhat ambiguous *lamed* preposition prefixed. It is possible to see this simply as an accusative marker. “,” HALOT 2:510. Though, A/C has a category they label “product,” which “indicate[s] a thing that is made, or a person who is altered, either in status or in form.” Given that making the laments a statute is exactly what the text says, the category offered by A/C is also fitting (though their ‘product’ label is under the unhelpful category “quasidatival”). A/C, 4.1.10.

¹⁷⁴ **over Israel** (v. 25): “Over Israel” clearly does not have any spatial reference (the preposition being על). Rather, על is used figuratively, indicating that the statute is in place for all of Israel. BHRG, 39.20.1.

¹⁷⁵ **and behold** (v. 25): “And behold” translates the discourse marker וְהִנֵּה+ the *waw* conjunction. וְהִנֵּה “points to the content of the clause that follows it... [and] has the same function as the focus particles.” BHRG, 44.3. Examples of focus particles as mentioned in this quotation are אֲזֶה and אֲזֶה.

¹⁷⁶ **it has been written in the laments** (v. 25): The preposition על occurs here for the fourth time in this verse. Intriguingly, it is used in three different ways. Here, על is used to denote a spatial relationship. The preposition here indicates that the statute is written alongside of, or “within” the other laments (i.e. “in the Scroll of Laments”). BHRG describes this relationship as: “x is ‘(with)in’ y... a trajector x is ‘on’ the landmark y, but in a sense contained ‘within’ the boundaries of the landmark y.” BHRG, 39.20.1b. This is a common phrase in the Book of Chronicles (cf. 1 Chr 9:1). That something has been written in a scroll is nearly a refrain in both Kings and Chronicles, often being used to summarize a king’s reign (1 Kgs 11:14; 14:19; 15:23, 31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39, 45; 2 Kgs 1:18; 8:23; 10:34; 12:19; 13:8, 12; 14:15, 18, 28; 15:6, 11, 15, 21, 26, 31, 36; 16:19; 20:20; 21:17, 25; 23:28; 24:5; 1 Chr 9:1; 2 Chr 16:11; 20:34; 24:27; 25:26; 27:7; 28:26; 32:32; 35:27; 36:8; This list does not include any of the references to something being written in the “Book of the Law of Moses.”).

Appendix C: Diagram of 2 Chr 35:20–25¹⁷⁷



Key

T: Temporal; L: Location; Sit/R: Situation/Response; Frm/Spch: Frame/Speech; Id/Exp: Idea/Explanation; S: Series; P: Progression; -: Negative; +: Positive; Ac/Res: Action/Result

¹⁷⁷ Created using BibleArc. <https://biblearc.com/>.

Appendix D: The History of the Composition of Chronicles¹⁷⁸

The historical context of the composition of the book of Chronicles is made up of points of both content agreement and contentious disagreement among scholars. Chief among the points of broad agreement among scholars is that Chronicles was written sometime after the exile.

However, this leaves open a wide span of years. The historical context of the composition of Chr can be determined using four categories: (1) Authorship; (2) Sources used in Chr; (3) Date of Chr as determined by i. Linguistic Evidence; ii. Chr's Relationship to Ezr-Neh; iii. Genealogies within Chr; (4) The Original Audience/Readership of Chr.¹⁷⁹

Authorship

Like many books of the Bible (especially the OT), there is no authorial claim in Chr. It is well known that interpretive tradition holds that Ezra was the author of Chr, though this is debated extensively today.¹⁸⁰ I find no arguments for or against unity of authorship between Chr and Ezr-

¹⁷⁸ To the Professor: This is essentially a reproduction of a portion of Part III of our assignment's prep work. It differs only slightly insofar as it has been (hopefully) refined a bit more and formatted somewhat differently. The overall argument and conclusion remains overall the same.

¹⁷⁹ It ought to be noted from the start that establishing a certain author and date of composition is impossible. What is contained herein is what I find to be the most plausible and convincing possibilities. Since there are no authorship claims within the Book of Chronicles itself or the rest of the canon (i.e., Jesus or Paul do not claim that a particular individual wrote Chr) the differences of opinion concerning authorship do not determine orthodoxy or pose severe problems to the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. While there are certainly some viewpoints we want to reject, there are also viewpoints that we ought to be open to considering as possible even if we do not find them to be the most convincing.

¹⁸⁰ Pratt notes that as late as 1995 “it was generally accepted that one man or group of men was responsible for the books of Chronicles, as well as the book of Ezra-Nehemiah.” Richard L. Pratt Jr., “1–2 Chronicles,” in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised*, ed. Miles V. Van Pelt (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 526. This consensus was changed especially with Sara Japhet’s arguments in both her commentary on Chr and her article concerning the book’s authorship. Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993); Sara Japhet, “The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew,” *VT* 63 (2013): 36–76. Individuals like H.G.M. Williamson have also had an impact on this debate. H. G. M. Williamson, *I and 2 Chronicles*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982). Nonetheless, it is significant that Japhet’s four main points are generally cited as being the best arguments against common authorship of Chr and Ezra-Nehemiah. E.g., Eugene H. Merrill, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 25. That said, Japhet’s arguments are far from conclusive. In fact, David Talshir wrote an article systematically rejecting every argument Japhet raised in her “Supposed Common Authorship”. David Talshir, “A Reinvestigation of the Linguistic Relationship Between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah,” *VT* 38.2 (1988): 165–93.

Neh to be definitively convincing.¹⁸¹ The linguistic arguments made by Japhet in her article “Supposed Common Authorship” cited above are questionable, but Talshir’s response to the article in his “A Reinvestigation” do not definitively prove common authorship either. As Talshir himself states, “affinity in language between two literary works is no proof of unity of authorship.”¹⁸² At the very least, Talshir has shown that common authorship is possible—linguistic investigation has not disproven it. If Ezra was not the author of Chr, we simply do not know who was. Nonetheless, we can still affirm single-authorship of Chr. Many scholars agree that if any redaction was done, it was neither thoroughgoing or extensive.¹⁸³ That said, since a

¹⁸¹ Pratt states that there are “two decisive pieces” of evidence in favor of separate authorship. They are: (1) Kingship and the temple are tied together in Chr differently than they are in Ezra-Nehemiah. (2) Chr avoids the issue of intermarriage “that was so controversial in Ezra-Nehemiah.” Pratt, “1–2 Chronicles,” 526. The “decisiveness” of both of these pieces of evidence is easy to reject on the basis of intention and message. (1) That kingship and the temple are tied together differently in the two works can be granted, but a difference of emphasis and viewpoint does not automatically mean a difference in author. Instead, it could simply mean a difference in intention. (2) That the issue of intermarriage that was “so controversial” in Ezra-Nehemiah is avoided in Chr can be explained simply as a difference in purpose. Whereas Ezra-Nehemiah are discussing the rebuilding of the temple and the re-establishment of the people of God in the Promised Land, Chr is primarily putting forth a history of Israel and dramatically spelling out the faithfulness of God from Adam (1 Chr 1:1) to Shallum the Korahite (1 Chr 9:31—the last individual listed in the Genealogy of Returned Exiles). That Chr presents an “idealized” version of Israel’s history is widely accepted (though dubious since an “idealized” account would generally purge the history of all marred spots of shame). Indeed, as noted by various scholars, David and Solomon are especially idealized. Amit states that the Historian “leaves out events which could mar the image of the king he wishes to present, even when they appear in his sources, or else he adapts the old description but inserts different changes in order to make it fit his ideology.” Yaira Amit, “The Book of Chronicles: A Retelling of History?,” in *History and Ideology: Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible*, trans. Yael Lotan, BibSem 60 (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1999), 85, 87; cf. Ralph W. Klein, “Chronicles (Books) I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament,” *EBR*, 229. While Amit is overly critical in her appraisal (even claiming that Chr was written to replace Sam/Kgs), her quotation here helps to illustrate the point. This explains the avoidance of Solomon’s many intermarriages that is so clearly stated in 1 Kgs 11:3. The “idealized” version of Israelite history in no way negates the historicity of the accounts contained therein. Historicity will be addressed later.

¹⁸² Talshir, “A Reinvestigation of the Linguistic Relationship Between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah,” 167. Though I would also say that *dissimilarity* in vocabulary between two works does not make certain a different author between two works of literature.

¹⁸³ Chr “appears most naturally to be the product of a single author; nevertheless, there is also the possibility of a further slight redaction or elaboration by a later reviser.” Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 171.

name cannot be definitively obtained for the author, I call him the Historian.¹⁸⁴ The Historian was not just a random Jew that was able to return to the land upon Cyrus' decree. Since Chr gives no explicit mention or indication of authorship, themes can be analyzed in order to draw a plausible conclusion concerning who the Historian was. Kalimi states it well saying, "Because the author is very much in sympathy with the Levites (1 Chr 15:11–24; 23–26; 16:4; and cf. 2 Chr 34:30 with 2 Kgs 23:2), and because he is well-informed about the Temple and Temple rituals and personnel, most likely he was a Levite from Jerusalem."¹⁸⁵ As Pratt also points out, he was likely a leader of the post-exilic returnees since he had "access to Samuel and Kings, to noncanonical prophetic books (e.g., 1 Chr 29:29; 2 Chr 9:29), and to various royal annals of Israel and Judah (e.g., 1 Chr 9:1; 2 Chr 27:7; 36:8)."¹⁸⁶ Summarily, then, three points: (1) The precise identity of the author of Chr is unknown; (2) Nonetheless, there is reasonable justification for considering Chr to be written by one author—excepting small amounts redaction. We can refer to this individual as the Historian; (3) Based on the emphases of the text, it is reasonable to consider the Historian to be a member of the tribe of Levi.¹⁸⁷

On Sources

Similarly, "while some relatively slight redaction of the Chronicler's work may be allowed, a wholesale editing of the Chronicler's text is not warranted. Where it is allowed, it needs to be based on internal literary-critical considerations and not on speculative theories." J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, NAC v. 9 (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 30. This is contrary to some scholars who find various editions within the book. E.g., Frank Moore Cross, "Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," *SBL* 94.1 (1975): 14. Cross finds three editions of the book composed from 520–400 BCE. Nonetheless, his claim is a "speculative theory," to use Thompson's phrase. Cf. also Antony Campbell who states, "generous space needs to be made for later editing." Antony F. Campbell, *Joshua to Chronicles: An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 230.

¹⁸⁴ This, as noted as a footnote in the main body of this paper, is contrary to most of scholarship, which refers to the author as "the Chronicler."

¹⁸⁵ Isaac Kalimi, "1 and 2 Chronicles," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible*, ed. Michael David Coogan (New York: Oxford University, 2011), 121. Pratt states the same thing, but adds in 1 Chr 28:21; 2 Chr 8:14; 30:15–27 as further support. Pratt, "1–2 Chronicles," 527. So also Klein, "Chronicles (Books) I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament," 227; Andrew Stewart, *A Family Tree: The Message of 1 Chronicles* (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 1997), 16.

¹⁸⁶ Pratt, "1–2 Chronicles," 527.

¹⁸⁷ Though, an emphasis on the Levites does not necessitate the individual was a Levite himself. It could be, that the Historian simply understood the role of the Levites in the Israel's history and a properly functioning Israelite society. However, since the priests were charged with keeping the books of the law (Deut 31:9) and Chr draws extensively on the entire Hebrew Bible (observed by various authors; e.g., Steven Shawn Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 5.), it is reasonable to infer a Levitical identity of the author.

None of the above information negates the fact that the Historian used sources in his composition of Chr. This is a well known and accepted fact by all scholars¹⁸⁸ and is even attested in the text itself (e.g., 1 Chr 9:1; 2 Chr 16:11; 20:34; 24:27; 25:26; 27:7; 28:26; 32:32; 35:27; 36:8). One may pose the question, “If the Historian used sources, did he really write the material?” If not, then multiple authors are easily found behind Chr.¹⁸⁹ However, there is a difference between an author who cites sources written by others for one work and one work written by multiple authors. The materials the author of Chr used have been shaped according to the Historian’s desired message—there is nothing wrong with this. That the Historian used sources and Chr is still considered to be written by one author is little different than a modern scholar writing a

¹⁸⁸ Amit describes the Historian’s method as taking various forms. Sometimes the Historian was “faithful to his sources... [other times] he ignored them or added to them... [other times] he altered them... by cutting or expanding, changing the contents or their sequence... [and other times] he introduced passages written by himself.” Amit, 84. From a different perspective (though not entirely contradictory), Throntveit states, “[The] widespread assumption that any differences between Chr and Sam/Kgs were the result of tendentious alteration has been successfully challenged, especially since the critical work of Wilhelm de Wette in the nineteenth century. Text-critical investigation demonstrates the care with which the Chronicler used his sources. The sources were closer to the Lucianic version of the LXX and the parts of Samuel found among the DSS (4QSama) than to the MT of Sam, as previously thought. Understanding this fact accounts for many of the discrepancies and means that Chronicles must not simply be read as a theologically motivated rewriting of the earlier history.” Mark A. Throntveit, “Chronicles,” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 109.

¹⁸⁹ E.g. Williamson argues that there is a document behind Chr used by the Historian that is different than the extant MT version of Kgs. He argues this primarily on the basis of style. H. G. M Williamson, “The Death of Josiah and the Continuing Development of the Deuteronic History,” *VT* 32.2 (1982): 424–48. In beautiful scholastic dramatic form, Begg responds to Williamson’s article arguing the opposite. For Begg, there is no reason to posit an “in between stage” document that Chr used rather than Sam/Kgs. Christopher T. Begg, “The Death of Josiah in Chronicles: Another View,” *VT* 37.1 (1987): 1–8. Continuing the drama, Williamson responded strengthening his initial argument: H. G. M. Williamson, “Reliving the Death of Josiah: A Reply to C. T. Begg,” *VT* 37.1 (1987): 9–15. While I do not find Williamson’s posited in between document argument particularly convincing, it is interesting that some of Chr is similar to the Lucianic redaction of the Greek Old Testament. Thompson uses this fact to argue that the Historian did not simply make up document, but faithfully used the sources to which he had access. Thompson, 23; cf. Throntveit, 109. Similarly, Zipora Talshir rejects a “better” or “in-between” version of Kgs as the *vorlage* of the Historian’s work in Chr. “There is nothing to suggest that a different and better version of Kings was at the Chronicler’s disposal.” Zipora Talshir, “The Three Deaths of Josiah and the Strata of Biblical Historiography (2 Kings XXIII 29-30; 2 Chronicles XXV 20-5; 1 Esdras I 23-31),” *VT* 46.2 (1996): 213–36.

work on any given topic and citing two dozen or more other authors in the same field. Just because the citations and quotations are from other authors does not mean that the author of the new work did not write the material.¹⁹⁰ We can accept that the Historian used sources in composing Chr without accepting that there are multiple layers of redaction by different authors with more or less opposing and unifying messages.

Date of Composition

Just as there is no unanimity concerning authorship, there is no unanimity concerning the date of composition.¹⁹¹ As Albright aptly states concerning the relation between Chr and Ezr-Neh, “The complexity of the textual problems involved has been increasingly recognized, while the equally intricate chronological and historical questions have received every conceivable solution... except the right one, to judge from the unsatisfactory results hitherto obtained.”¹⁹² That Chr is later than most other books of the OT is evident from his extensive use of the other OT Scriptures as stated briefly above. Throntveit comments, “No other OT book utilizes more biblical material than Chronicles, which draws extensively upon all three sections [i.e. the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings—the traditional Hebrew division of the canon] of the Hebrew canon.”¹⁹³ The question of the date of Chr concerns linguistics, the book’s relationship to Ezr-Neh, and the genealogies contained within Chr itself.

1. Linguistic Evidence—Various scholars note the postexilic character of the Hebrew contained within Chr.¹⁹⁴ Dating the language of the Hebrew Bible, though is remarkably difficult and many of the methods are based on massive assumptions.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ Indeed, the author of the new work likely shaped the quotations and citations to some extent as well—including and excluding as much context as he saw fit and helpful.

¹⁹¹ The only unanimity that can be found within scholarship is that the work is decidedly post-exile. Chr mandates this, though, without any scholarly argumentation by recording Cyrus’ decree that the Jews may return to their homeland (2 Chr 36:22). This is the *terminus a quo* of the book.

¹⁹² W. F. Albright, “The Date and Personality of the Chronicler,” *JBL* 40.3/4 (1921): 104.

¹⁹³ Mark A. Throntveit, 111.

¹⁹⁴ Thompson, 29. In her article “The Three Deaths of Josiah,” Zipora Talshir argues that the language contained in 2 Chr 35:20–25 is decidedly Late Hebrew. Zipora Talshir, “The Three Deaths of Josiah and the Strata of Biblical Historiography (2 Kings XXIII 29-30; 2 Chronicles XXXV 20-5; 1 Esdras I 23-31),” *VT* 46.2 (1996): 230. Likewise, as discussed above concerning authorship, Japhet makes a lengthy linguistic argument concerning the non-Ezra origin of Chr in “Supposed Common Authorship.” This leads Japhet to conclude a date no later than the late Persian period, but more likely the early Hellenistic age. Japhet, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 28. Nonetheless, each of her points is contested by Talshir’s “Reinvestigation of the Linguistic Relationship.”

¹⁹⁵ E.g. JEDP theory, levels of authorship (i.e. the supposed three or more authors of Isaiah as opposed to unity of authorship), and international relations to Persia or Greece.

One component used to date texts is the number of loan words from other languages.¹⁹⁶ Kalimi argues for a late date due to “substantial Aramaisms and Persian loanwords” as well as Persian anachronisms. However, Kalimi does not offer any certainty other than that Chr was written during the Persian period.¹⁹⁷ Albright addresses the possibility of Chr being written in the Hellenistic age. He notes that the genealogy of Jeconiah (1 Chr 3:17–24) and the supposed Greek loanwords are typically put forth in support of a date in the first century of the Greek period. However, he addresses each of these and concludes, “we do not find a single probable Greek loanword in the Chronicler’s work, and only one even possible one.”¹⁹⁸ It seems best to assume a pre-Greek age composition. As stated above, the absolute *terminus a quo* is the first year of Cyrus’ reign (2 Chr 36:22), which was in 538 BCE. It has also been noted that 1 Chr 29:7 refers to a *daric*, which was a Persian coin not minted before 515. This leads Paul Hooker to conclude that Chr could not have been written before the end of the sixth century.¹⁹⁹ However, the Hebrew in this verse (גָּלָגָל) could also refer to the Greek δραχμη coin, destroying the 515 conclusion. 538 remains the earliest possible date. This leads well into the genealogies, which will be addressed after another brief excursion into the issue of the relationship between Ezr-Neh and Chr.

2. Relationship to Ezr-Neh—The question concerning Chr’s relationship to Ezr-Neh is a difficult one and has been addressed some above in the authorship section. As it was concluded then, it is impossible to state with certainty that Ezr-Neh and Chr were written by the same author. None of the points raised against common authorship are entirely convincing, yet each argument raised in favor of common authorship can simply be written off as being part of the same school of thought. While we do not want to simply “write off” the possibility of common authorship, we also do not want to hold dogmatically to something that (1) the Scripture does not explicitly state and (2) the Scripture does not require by good and necessary consequence (WCF 1.6). The relationship that Chr has to Ezr-Neh, then, is not one that helps to establish a more precise date, but is one that helps to corroborate what is already known: Chr was written in the postexilic period.²⁰⁰ Likewise, whatever the relationship, a similar theology is present.

¹⁹⁶ Though this too is not an exact science.

¹⁹⁷ Kalimi, 122, 125. Kalimi explicitly states that Chr was written before the invasion of Alexander the Great.

¹⁹⁸ Albright, 107, 115. Kalimi also agrees with the assessment that there are no Greek loanwords in the text of Chr. Kalimi, 125.

¹⁹⁹ Hooker’s composition range is the entire Persian period from 515–330 BCE, but notes that if Ezr-Neh and Chr were written by the same author then a date following 450 would be necessitated. Nonetheless, he acknowledges the impossibility of certainty on this point and states, “the two works are the products of the same general school of theological thought, if not from the same hand.” This is a reasonable assessment. Paul K. Hooker, *First and Second Chronicles*, 1st ed., Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 4, 5.

²⁰⁰ This provides a range much like Hooker’s nearly 200 year range cited above. While that is not very precise, the nature of the book and the message that it is giving does not necessitate much more precision than this. I find Hooker’s comment that Chr and Ezr-Neh are from a common school of thought to be both convincing and fair to those who reject common authorship (Hooker,

3. Genealogies—The genealogies at the beginning of Chr are an interesting subject of study. While many readers likely just skip to 1 Chr 10, the genealogies actually provide a lot of helpful information both for redemptive history and for dating the book as a whole. The difficulty with using the genealogies to date Chr, though, is that no one is certain how long to consider the generations contained therein or the amount of overlap between them. Scholars have put forth anything from a twenty year generation to a thirty year generation.²⁰¹ The genealogies could cause a problem for an earlier date if the scholar interpreting the text assumes a lengthier generation. But, if minor editing occurred in the text of Chr at any point then it is possible that the later generations were subsequently added.²⁰²
4. Concluding remarks—The date of the composition of Chr is difficult to determine. After discussing the linguistic evidence, the relationship to Ezr-Neh, and the genealogies of the book, we are really no closer to the specific date of composition than we were at the beginning. The Scripture itself testifies to the work being written after the exile (2 Chr 36:22) and nothing in the text or in history gives us much more explicit information than this. It seems best, then, alongside of many other scholars, not to attempt to pinpoint a specific date, but to offer a range of possibilities. Broadly speaking, any date within the Persian period is acceptable. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to conclude an earlier date in the Persian period due to the possibility that יְמִינָה refers to a δραχμή and the lack of information on the post-exilic period.²⁰³ Late sixth century BCE is a reasonable date to establish.

5). Indeed, if the Jews learned anything during their time in the exile then they would necessarily come out from exile with similar thoughts concerning their God.

²⁰¹ Curtis proposes a thirty year generation, which leads to a date not earlier than 350. Edward Lewis Curtis and Albert Alonzo Madsen, *The Books of Chronicles*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1976), 5. Albright, on the other hand, argues that the genealogy is “not nearly so difficult a problem as frequently assumed” and concludes that the genealogies indicate a pre-350 date (around 380). Albright, 113.

²⁰² While this is not stated by Braun, it is inferred on the basis of one of his comments. He states, “Major additions and revisions to his work occur principally in the genealogies of 1 Chr 1–9 and 1 Chr 23–27, and lesser ones chiefly in connection with expansion of lists and genealogical data.” Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles*, ed. David Allen Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, WBC (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), xix. If additions and revisions have primarily taken shape in the genealogies, then it seems plausible, if the book was written earlier in the fifth century BCE, that the genealogies could have been added to. Admittedly, this is speculative. If Albright is correct, though, the genealogies do not point to a date any later than 350 BCE in the first place.

²⁰³ Pratt concludes a date between 515–390. Pratt, “1–2 Chronicles,” 528. Cf., 539–332 BCE: Kalimi, 125; “roughly” the Persian period (538–330); “situating in a time in which the ancient Yahwistic religious core of the community of Israel was reconstituted in the form that became the foundation for modern Judaism and Christianity”: R. K. Duke, “Chronicles, Books Of,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 164; “end of the Persian or, more probably, the beginning of the Hellenistic period”: Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 28. Talshir’s argument against Japhet indicates a date similar to Pratt above. Talshir, “A Reinvestigation of the Linguistic Relationship Between

Readers

The original audience of Chr was the Jewish community living in reconstituted Israel following Cyrus' decree of liberation in 538 BCE. Throntveit helpfully summarizes the audience stating, “Chronicles... addresses the postexilic community that, following the Persian defeat of the Babylonians under Cyrus in 539 BCE, had returned from Babylon to live under Persian rule and worship in the rebuilt Jerusalem temple.” He goes on to state that this people was asking questions like “‘Who are we?’ ‘Are we still the people of God?’ and ‘What do God’s promises to David and Solomon mean for us today?’”²⁰⁴ These Jews were tasked with rebuilding the temple (2 Ch 36:23) and the city walls (Neh 3). They faced hostility from rulers following Cyrus (Ezr 4) and hostility from the Samaritans (Neh 4). They were recipients of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. They expected the fulfillment of the prophecies that had already been declared from the mouths of prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. They were those whom the Lord had saved from exile. They were No Mercy who received mercy and Not my people who became His people. They were the faithful remnant who Yahweh had promised to deliver yet again (Jer 23:3)—the remnant He had delivered again.

Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah.” Albright’s conclusions lead him to conclude a date between 400–350, written by Ezra. Knowing he stands against a majority of scholarship he states, “This may seem absurd, since critical scholarship has for generations rejected the tradition that Ezra was the Chronicler. This skepticism has served its purpose in freeing the minds of scholars from predispositions as to the nature of the work, but now the cycle is completed, and we may return to a traditional theory without being regarded as slaves of tradition.” Albright, 120.

²⁰⁴ Throntveit, 110.

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