

Promises for the Throne: The Kings of Judah in Light of Proverbs 3:1–8

Series: A Little Bit of This...A Little Bit of That

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1. Understanding the Background

- **Historical Context**
 - The kingdom of Judah emerged when Israel split into two nations under King Rehoboam (1 Kings 12).
 - The southern kingdom's royal line stretched from David to Zedekiah.
 - **Key Scripture: Proverbs 3:1–8 (KJV)**
 - God promises "length of days, and long life, and peace" (3:2) to the royal line who follows His ways. NOTE: This is built on the assumption I've laid out in my study "Proverbs: Wisdom Unveiled," a series which seeks to make sense of the book of Proverbs by viewing it as a guide to the Law for Judah's Kings, not an "any-size fits all" approach.
 - The passage emphasizes trusting God and keeping His commandments, while warning the king who turns away.
 - **What You'll Learn**
 - How each king's reign shows the results of either following or rejecting God's commands.
 - The two types of kings you'll study:
 - *Faithful Kings*: Those who either stayed true to God or returned to Him after straying.
 - *Unfaithful Kings*: Those who consistently disobeyed God.
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2. Surveying the Faithful Kings

- **Overview of the Seven Faithful**
 1. **Asa** (41 years)
 - Removed idols, trusted God against enemies.
 - Mistake near the end (relied on alliances), yet overall "his heart was perfect with the LORD all his days" (1 Kings 15:14).
 2. **Jehoshaphat** (25 years)
 - Sent teachers of the Law to instruct Judah (2 Chr 17:7–9).
 - Unwise alliances but repeatedly turned back to God's ways.

3. **Uzziah (Azariah)** (52 years)
 - Prospered greatly by seeking the LORD, eventually became proud and intruded into priestly duties.
 - Struck with leprosy but had decades of overall obedience.
 4. **Jotham** (16 years)
 - “He did that which was right in the sight of the LORD” (2 Kings 15:34).
 - Generally stable reign, though idolatry remained among the people.
 5. **Hezekiah** (29 years)
 - Restored temple worship, trusted God against the Assyrians.
 - Granted 15 extra years of life.
 6. **Manasseh** (55 years)
 - Began extremely wicked. After captivity in Assyria, he repented and tore down idols.
 - Ended his reign seeking the LORD.
 7. **Josiah** (31 years)
 - Rediscovered the Book of the Law, cleansed Judah of idols, held a great Passover.
 - Died in battle, yet Scripture portrays him as a model reformer.
 - **Connections to Proverbs 3**
 - Longer reigns (average over 30 years, from 16 to 55).
 - Times of peace, miraculous rescues (e.g., Hezekiah vs. Sennacherib).
 - Illustrate “in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”
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3. Surveying the Unfaithful Kings

- **Overview of the Twelve Unfaithful**
 1. **Rehoboam** (17 years)
 - Idolatry and arrogance. Brief humbling did not change his overall trajectory.
 2. **Abijah (Abijam)** (3 years)
 - Fought Jeroboam with a nod to the LORD, but “his heart was not perfect” (1 Kings 15:3).
 3. **Jehoram** (8 years)
 - Killed his own brothers, led Judah into idolatry. Died painfully, unlamented.
 4. **Ahaziah** (1 year)
 - Followed Ahab’s ways, killed by Jehu.
 5. **Joash (Jehoash)** (40 years)
 - Faithful under priestly mentor Jehoiada, turned wicked afterward. No repentance.
 6. **Amaziah** (29 years)
 - Began well, ended worshipping idols of Seir.
 7. **Ahaz** (16 years)
 - Child sacrifice, pagan altars, constant defeat.

8. **Amon** (2 years)
 - Continued early Manasseh's idolatry, assassinated.
 9. **Jehoahaz** (3 months)
 - Did evil, deposed to Egypt.
 10. **Jehoiakim** (11 years)
 - Burned Jeremiah's scroll, died in disgrace.
 11. **Jehoiachin** (3 months)
 - Did evil, surrendered to Babylon.
 12. **Zedekiah** (11 years)
 - Rejected Jeremiah's counsel, led Judah to destruction, blinded by Babylon.
- **Connections to Proverbs 3**
 - Average short reign (~11 years, from 3 months to 40 years).
 - Political turmoil, invasions, defeats, assassinations.
 - Demonstrate "forget not my law" in the negative: they did forget, and faced dire consequences.
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4. Comparisons and Observations

- **Reign Length Totals**
 - Faithful: ~35.57 years average.
 - Unfaithful: ~11.54 years average.
 - **Key Pattern**
 - Even with slip-ups, those who turned back to God found stability and longevity.
 - Habitual rejection yielded chaos, defeat, and short reigns.
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5. Reflections Tied to Proverbs 3:1–8

- **Promises in Proverbs can be taken as "always true" if you always take them for their intended audience.**
 - "Length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."
 - "Trust in the LORD ... lean not unto thine own understanding."
- **Illustrating the Principle**
 - Faithful kings exemplify "in all thy ways acknowledge him."
 - Unfaithful kings repeatedly "forgot" the Law and reaped bitter consequences.
- **Takeaway**
 - The narrative of Judah's monarchs is more than historical record; it is a lived example of Proverbs 3's promises and warnings.
 - Even egregious sin (Manasseh) does not prohibit restoration if true repentance occurs.
 - Consistent reliance on God fosters enduring blessings.