

Where the Walls Came From

The history behind the twelve walls — the war chapters, the kings of Israel, and how one pattern was found in both

Start here

You have already seen the tool. Twelve walls. You mark each one **Standing**, **Cracked**, or **Fallen**, and the order you read them in tells you where you are.

This guide is about something else. It is about **where those twelve walls came from**, and why anyone should trust them.

That is a fair thing to ask. A list of twelve things is easy to make. Anybody can invent twelve. The question that matters is whether these twelve were *found* or *made up* — whether they were pulled out of a record that was already there, or arranged afterward to sound wise.

So here is the honest answer, laid out as history.

Two very different bodies of scripture were read closely. One is the war record in the Book of Mormon. The other is the story of ancient Israel's kings in the Old Testament. They come from different continents, different centuries, and different peoples who never met. Neither one was written to be a diagnostic tool.

Read side by side, they tell the same story about how a strong people falls apart — and they tell it in the same order.

That order is the twelve walls.

What this guide is not. It is not another self-assessment. A working sheet travels with it if you want one, but that is not why this exists. This exists so that when you look at those twelve walls, you know what is standing underneath them.

How to use it. Every scripture reference in this guide is a live link. Tap one and it opens to that verse. If you want to check a claim, check it — that is the whole point of a study guide. You do not have to take anyone's word for any of this, and you should not.

Read it in order the first time. After that, use the chapter list to go back to whatever you want to sit with.

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Appendix B — What is scripture here, and what is our reading

Chapter 1 — Why two records, and why that matters

Hand someone a rule about how people behave, and the first question is always: *how do you know?*

There is a simple test. Build the idea from one set of facts. Then go find a completely different set — one you did not use to build it — and see whether it still holds. If it does, you have probably found something real. If it only works on the material you built it from, you probably just described that material.

That is the shape of this work.

The walls were built from the Book of Mormon war record — mostly [Alma 43–62](#), plus the collapse at the end of the Nephite story and one more that ends the same way.

Then they were tested against the Old Testament kings — Samuel through Ezra, about five hundred years of history that had nothing to do with building the tool.

That is a real test and not a rigged one. The two records were written on different continents by peoples who had no contact after about 600 BC. The kings story is far longer and messier, with more moving parts to trip over. And nobody reading the war chapters would predict what the kings record does at the end — which turned out to change the tool. Chapter 6 is that story.

There is one more thing, and it is the part that made this worth writing down.

When the twelve walls were first built from the war chapters, four of them reached over and borrowed a verse from the Old Testament to make the point — because the war chapters said it, but the Old Testament said it *better*. Those four verses were:

- [Deuteronomy 8:11–17](#) — *"thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth."*
- [Isaiah 5:20](#) — *"woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil."*
- [2 Chronicles 36:16](#) — *"they mocked the messengers of God... till there was no remedy."*
- [Judges 2:10](#) — *"there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord."*

So the tool had already been quietly leaning on the very record it was later tested against, before anyone planned to test it there. When the full test was run, it did not just pass. It passed in the exact places it had already borrowed from.

That is a good sign. It is the difference between a pattern one record tells about itself, and a pattern that shows up wherever you look.

Chapter 2 — The war chapters: four stories, four different endings

Most people remember the war chapters as a long stretch of battles. They are more than that. Read together they are four case studies of the same disease — and **each one ends differently**. That is what makes them useful.

Case one — the Nephites survive (about 74–57 BC)

Captain Moroni, the Title of Liberty, the two thousand young men. The Nephites are attacked for nearly twenty years, outnumbered, and they hold.

The record is unusually clear about why. Moroni sends to the prophet to ask where the armies should go ([Alma 43:23–24](#)) — he does not assume he already knows. He fortifies the weak cities *before* the attack comes ([Alma 48:7–10](#)). He fights only in defense, offers peace

first, and stops the moment the enemy yields ([Alma 43:46–47](#)). And when the nation starts pulling apart from inside, he raises a torn coat and reminds everyone what they all belong to ([Alma 46:12–13](#)).

The record's summary of the man: *"if all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever"* ([Alma 48:17](#)).

One man's interior, holding a nation. That sentence is the whole tool in miniature.

Ending: survival.

Case two — a collapse that gets stopped (about AD 16–22)

Two hundred years later a criminal network has grown so large it demands the government surrender to it. The country is close to gone. And then it does not go.

The chief judge, Lachoneus, calls the people to repent and gathers them into one place with seven years of food. The commander, Gidgiddoni, is begged to march out and attack. He refuses, and his reason is doctrine rather than tactics: *"the Lord forbid; for if we should go up against them the Lord would deliver us into their hands"* ([3 Nephi 3:20–21](#)).

They defend. They do not avenge. The robbers starve out, and the nation is saved.

Ending: collapse arrested and reversed. The case that proves this disease is not always fatal.

Case three — the Nephites are destroyed (about AD 322–385)

Three centuries later the same people are wiped out, and the slide is not mysterious.

After Christ's visit there were about two hundred years with *"no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people"* ([4 Nephi 1:15](#)). Then, in a single dated year, people began wearing costly clothing and dividing into classes ([4 Nephi 1:24–26](#)).

That is where it starts. Not with an army. With clothes, and what the clothes meant.

By Mormon's day it is far gone. He watches his own people lose the ability to feel sorrow for what they are doing — *"they have lost their love, one towards another; and they thirst after blood and revenge continually"* ([Moroni 9:18–20](#)) — and refuses to lead them after they swear vengeance ([Mormon 3:14–16](#)).

But notice the last thing he does. He hides the record in the hill ([Mormon 6:6](#)).

He could not save the nation. He could still send something forward. Hold that — it is the hinge of the whole tool.

Ending: the body destroyed, the record preserved.

Case four — an older people, the same road (long before)

The Book of Mormon carries a second, older civilization: the Jaredites, whose story ends in total ruin.

The mechanism is identical. Secret combinations rise ([Ether 8:18–25](#)). The warnings are ignored. And at the end the record says something almost unbearable: "*the Spirit of the Lord had ceased striving with them*" ([Ether 15:19](#)).

One man survives to see it — and the record is found later by another people ([Ether 15:33](#)).

Ending: destroyed — and, again, the record outlives the nation.

What four endings buy you

Survival. Near-collapse reversed. Destruction. Destruction again, in a separate people.

This is a pattern, not an accident. Two unrelated civilizations went down the same road by the same steps. One instance is a story; two is a pattern.

And the ending is not decided by the size of the enemy. In all four cases the enemy was serious. What changed was what was happening inside the people before the enemy ever arrived.

Chapter 3 — How twelve walls came out of those stories

Here is the actual work. Reading those four cases, you keep noticing that the same specific things give way, and that they give way **in an order**.

Each of the twelve below is one of those places — its plain name, its formal name, and the place in the war record where it showed up. The verses are what you check.

1 — Keep climbing (*Vigilance*)

A body is safe while it is still climbing, and starts falling the moment it stops and calls the view from here the top.

Moroni never stops improving; he fortifies the weak point in peacetime rather than waiting for the siege ([Alma 50:1–6](#)). And the warning about what prosperity does is stated flat out: people are blessed, and then *"they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God"* ([Helaman 12:2–5](#)).

One note, because it is easy to get wrong. Resting is not the failure. Any hard climb has places you stop, look back at the face you just came up, take a bearing, and shoulder the pack again. That is a plateau, and it is earned. **The failure is calling the plateau the peak.**

The test is one question: **has the next pitch been named?** If you can say what you are climbing toward next, you are resting. If you cannot, you have stopped and not noticed.

2 — Remember who helped you (*Memory*)

"A people is conquered by forgetting long before it is ever conquered by force."

The piece most people miss: memory does not run on good intentions. It runs on **a record that is kept, and a living voice that reads it back.**

Nephi is sent back at real risk for the brass plates for one stated reason — without them the people *"would dwindle in unbelief"* ([1 Nephi 4:15–16](#)).

Then the record hands you the control group. Another group left Jerusalem in the same era with no records at all. Four centuries later their language had corrupted and *"they denied the being of their Creator"* ([Omni 1:17](#)).

Two colonies, same city, one generation apart. One carried the record; one did not. The outcomes split exactly as Nephi was told they would.

3 — One heart, not two (*Devotion*)

This one came later, and from somewhere else. Chapter 7 tells that story.

4 — No looking down on people (*Equity*)

Not the presence of rich and poor. **Contempt across the line.**

[4 Nephi](#) is the cleanest experiment in scripture — nearly two hundred years with *"no poor among them,"* and then, in a named year, costly apparel and classes ([4 Nephi 1:24–26](#)). The same thing had entered the church centuries earlier: pride, costly apparel, and people *"in great contentions"* while some were lifted up and others looked down on ([Alma 4:6–12](#)).

5 — Say what is real (*Truth*)

When words come loose from reality, a body loses the one instrument it names every other danger with — and walks blind into all of them.

The war record has a whole anatomy of this: Nehor preaching what people want to hear, for money ([Alma 1](#)); Korihor, who argues so well that honest people cannot answer him ([Alma 30](#)); and Amalickiah, who takes a nation by "*his flattering words*" ([Alma 46:10](#)).

6 — Let someone correct you (*Watchmen*)

"A body dies at the speed it silences the ones sent to warn it."

Samuel the Lamanite stands on the city wall and they shoot at him and cannot hit him ([Helaman 16:2](#)). That is the picture: the warning is still arriving, and the body is already trying to end it.

There is a fourth and worse stage to this wall, and it comes from the Old Testament. Chapter 9.

7 — Stay together (*Cohesion*)

The most dangerous people in the war chapters are never the foreign army. They are the **king-men** — citizens who would rather win the fight inside than survive the fight outside ([Alma 51](#)) — and the secret combinations that work in the dark ([Helaman 6–7](#)).

The counter-move is in the record too: the Title of Liberty works because it names something that outranks every faction ([Alma 46:12–13](#)).

8 — Keep your word (*Integrity*)

"When the word ceases to be bond, force becomes the only currency left — because nothing else still binds."

Best case in scripture: the Anti-Nephi-Lehies bury their weapons under an oath and keep it while being killed ([Alma 24](#)). Worst: Amalickiah swearing oaths he intends to break, and using them as weapons ([Alma 51:9](#)).

It fails at the institutional level too — Moroni writes furious letters to his own government because it stopped supplying his armies while men died in the field ([Alma 59–60](#)).

9 — Serve, do not show off (*Leadership*)

Amalickiah climbs by poisoning the man above him "*by degrees*" until he can take his place ([Alma 47:18–24](#)), then takes the kingdom "*by fraud and deceit*" ([Alma 47:35](#)).

Set against him: Moroni, a man who *"did not delight in bloodshed"* and whose heart *"did swell with thanksgiving"* rather than with ambition ([Alma 48:11–17](#)).

Same access to power. Opposite appetite.

10 — Fix your weak spot (*Fortification*)

Wall 1 is the will to watch. Wall 10 is **the works themselves**.

Moroni's whole military genius is one habit: find the weakest place and build there, before anything happens ([Alma 48:7–10](#); [Alma 49–50](#)).

The failure sign is exact: **the weak point is found by the enemy, not by you**.

11 — Be strong and still be kind (*Force*)

The clearest A-and-B comparison in scripture.

A: Gidgiddoni will not march out, and the nation is delivered ([3 Nephi 3:20–21](#)).

B: Mormon's people march out swearing vengeance, and he refuses to lead them ([Mormon 3:14–16](#)).

Same people, same record, opposite endings. The variable is what they intended to do with their strength.

12 — Pass it on (*Handoff*)

The two thousand young men hold under pressure, and the record gives the reason in one line: *"they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them"* ([Alma 56:47–48](#)). They were *"true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted"* ([Alma 53:20–21](#)).

The opposite is a generation that *"knew not"* — that grew up around the covenant without ever receiving it ([Mosiah 26:1–4](#)).

This is the last wall because a body can fail every wall above it and still come back **if it is still raising people who remember**.

What is honest about this list

The walls are all there in the four cases. But no single story runs all twelve, and that is worth saying plainly.

The Alma block is a **survival** story, so it cannot show the late failures — nobody there fails the last walls. And Mormon's collapse **starts already deep**; by the time he picks up the

record, the early walls have been down for generations. That decline is 4 Nephi's story, not his.

So each story tests a different stretch of the road. The claim that they fit together in one order is exactly the claim that needed an outside test.

Which is what the kings of Israel are for.

Chapter 4 — The kings of Israel: five hundred years in one chapter

This is the history most people have heard in pieces and never end to end. Here it is in order. Dates are approximate.

Before the kings

Israel is a loose group of tribes with no king. The book of Judges runs a cycle over and over: the people forget, trouble comes, they cry out, God raises a deliverer, and it holds for a generation. Then the line that becomes one of the twelve walls: *"there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord"* ([Judges 2:10](#)).

David — the climb (about 1010–970 BC)

The people ask for a king. The second one is David.

Whatever else is true of him, he climbs. He credits the source out loud before the fight: *"the battle is the LORD's"* ([1 Samuel 17:47](#)). He has Saul at his mercy twice and will not take him ([1 Samuel 24](#); [1 Samuel 26](#)).

And he falls badly. He is confronted by a prophet, and he goes down: *"create in me a clean heart, O God"* ([Psalm 51](#)).

Real failure. Real consequences. Real return. Keep David in mind — he is the small version of the whole story.

Solomon — the summit, and the halt (about 970–931 BC)

Solomon is the peak. Wisdom, peace, wealth, and the temple built.

And then the record does something remarkable. The law had said a king must not multiply horses, wives, or silver and gold ([Deuteronomy 17:16–17](#)). Solomon does all three ([1 Kings 10–11](#)).

Then the sentence that names the wall: *"his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice"* (1 Kings 11:9).

Sit with that. Not a man who never knew. A man who had seen God twice, and forgot anyway.

The climb stopped at the top. That is the pattern's first move, and here it is in its purest form anywhere in scripture.

The split (about 931 BC)

Solomon's son Rehoboam is asked to lighten the workload his father imposed. He answers: *"my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions"* (1 Kings 12:14).

Ten tribes leave. From here there are two kingdoms:

- **Israel**, the north. Ten tribes. Capital eventually Samaria.
- **Judah**, the south. Two tribes. Capital Jerusalem — which is where the temple is.

Everything after this happens twice, in parallel, and the two do not end the same way.

What the north did on day one

This is the most important thing in the chapter, so it gets its own section.

Jeroboam, the north's first king, has a problem. The temple is in the south. If his people keep going there to worship, he will lose them.

So he makes two golden calves, puts one at each end of his kingdom, and says: *"behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt"* (1 Kings 12:28).

Read what he actually did there. He did not only build a substitute temple. **He rewrote the story of the rescue** — he took the founding memory of the nation and reassigned it to objects he had just made.

The north never recovers from that opening move. Not one of its kings is recorded as good.

The two kingdoms, roughly 931–722 BC

The north runs through dynasty after dynasty, most ending in murder. In one stretch: Shallum kills Zechariah, Menahem kills Shallum, Pekah kills Pekahiah, Hoshea kills Pekah (2 Kings 15). Assassination becomes the ordinary way power changes hands.

Ahab and Jezebel are the low point — they arrange the judicial murder of a man named Naboth to take his vineyard, using the law itself as the weapon (1 Kings 21).

Elijah puts the choice to the whole nation in one sentence: *"how long halt ye between two opinions?"* (1 Kings 18:21). That is not a question about atheism. It is a question about **holding both**.

Meanwhile the warnings keep coming and keep getting handled. Ahab keeps four hundred prophets who tell him what he wants and one, Micaiah, who does not — and Micaiah goes to prison for it (1 Kings 22). Later, Jeremiah is lowered into a muddy cistern for the same offense (Jeremiah 38:6).

And the prophets name the disease exactly: selling *"the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes"* (Amos 2:6) and men who *"grind the faces of the poor"* (Isaiah 3:15); and *"they have healed the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace"* (Jeremiah 6:14).

722 BC — the north is gone

Assyria takes Samaria. The population is deported and scattered. There is no return.

The record's summary of what they had become is one of the saddest lines in the Old Testament: *"they feared the LORD, and served their own gods"* (2 Kings 17:33).

Not "abandoned God." **Both**. That is the whole northern kingdom in six words.

The south holds on — and produces four men worth knowing

Judah lasts another 136 years. Four kings tell you why, and how it ended anyway.

Joash — hidden as an infant from a queen who murdered the rest of the royal family, crowned as a boy, raised by the high priest Jehoiada. He rebuilt the temple. He was good. Chapter 9 is his story.

Hezekiah — the fortification king. Assyria is coming, so he digs a tunnel to bring water inside the walls, stops the springs outside, and repairs the wall (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:2–5). Then, when the threatening letter arrives, he carries it into the temple and spreads it open before the Lord (2 Kings 19:14).

Both halves. He dug the tunnel *and* he knew who the actual defense was — the same combination Moroni had, on the other side of the world.

Manasseh — the worst king Judah had. He *"shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another"* (2 Kings 21:16), and is later named as the reason the

nation could not be spared.

And then this. Taken to Babylon in chains, he prays, and *"God was intreated of him, and heard his supplication"* (2 Chronicles 33:12–13).

The nation was past saving. **He was not.** Two different doors, in the same man, side by side in the same record.

Josiah — and here is the strangest thing in the whole account. During temple repairs, someone finds a book. It is the law of Moses. The covenant nation **had lost its own scriptures**, in its own temple, and did not know they were missing (2 Kings 22:8).

Josiah hears it read and tears his clothes. But notice what happens next, because it is the part that gets skipped. He does not act on the scroll immediately. He sends to a prophetess named **Huldah** to have it authenticated (2 Kings 22:14–20). Only then does he move.

A record, and a living voice to read it back. Never one alone. That is the mechanism of Wall 2, stated more clearly here than anywhere in either testament.

Josiah then runs the most thorough reform in the record — and it does not hold (2 Kings 23:26). A reform from the top down, over hearts that had not turned, buys time and nothing else. Remember that at Chapter 8.

586 BC — Jerusalem falls

Babylon breaks down the walls of Jerusalem and burns the temple (2 Kings 25:10).

The record's verdict on the whole run is one sentence, and it is the same one the tool borrowed for Wall 6: they *"mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy"* (2 Chronicles 36:16).

And there is a detail of timing worth marking. Ezekiel watches the glory of the Lord leave the temple and then leave the city (Ezekiel 10–11) — **before** Babylon breaches anything.

The inside gives way first. The walls come down after. Every time.

The return (from about 538 BC)

Seventy years later, they come home. And what they do first, in what order, is the most useful thing in this entire chapter.

They do **not** start with the wall.

- 1. **The altar goes up first**, before the temple foundation is even laid (Ezra 3:2–3). Worship restarts. The climb resumes.
- 2. **Then the law is read out loud to everybody**, and the people weep as they hear it (Nehemiah 8). Memory is put back deliberately.
- 3. **Then a national confession that rehearses the whole history**, ending in a signed covenant (Nehemiah 9–10).
- 4. **Then, last, the wall gets rebuilt.**

And it started in one man. Of Ezra the record says: he *"had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach"* (Ezra 7:10).

One prepared interior, and a nation crystallized around it. The same shape as Moroni. The same shape as Lachoneus. The same shape as whatever happens next in your own house.

Chapter 5 — The test: the same twelve walls in a record they did not come from

Now put the two records together.

The twelve walls were built out of the war chapters. Chapter 4 is a completely different record. Does the tool hold there?

It does — all twelve, without forcing any of them.

Wall	Where it appears in the kings record
1 • Keep climbing	David still climbing and attributing; Solomon at the summit, and the climb stops (1 Kings 10–11)
2 • Remember who helped you	The heart turned from the God he had seen twice (1 Kings 11:9); the calves rewriting the rescue story (1 Kings 12:28); the lost and found law (2 Kings 22:8)
3 • One heart, not two	<i>"How long halt ye between two opinions?"</i> (1 Kings 18:21); <i>"they feared the LORD, and served their own gods"</i> (2 Kings 17:33)
4 • No looking down on people	The scorpions answer (1 Kings 12:14); the poor sold for shoes (Amos 2:6)
5 • Say what is real	Four hundred flattering prophets against one (1 Kings 22); <i>"Peace, peace; when there is no peace"</i> (Jeremiah 6:14)

Wall	Where it appears in the kings record
6 • Let someone correct you	Micaiah imprisoned; Jeremiah in the cistern (Jeremiah 38:6); Zechariah stoned (2 Chronicles 24:20–22); "no remedy" (2 Chronicles 36:16)
7 • Stay together	The split itself (1 Kings 12); the north's serial coups (2 Kings 15)
8 • Keep your word	Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21); Zedekiah breaking his sworn oath (2 Chronicles 36:13)
9 • Serve, do not show off	Kings seizing thrones by intrigue, then no legitimate throne left to seize (2 Kings 15)
10 • Fix your weak spot	Hezekiah's tunnel and repaired wall (2 Chronicles 32:2–5); the wall finally broken down (2 Kings 25:10)
11 • Be strong and still be kind	David sparing Saul (1 Samuel 24); Manasseh filling Jerusalem with blood (2 Kings 21:16)
12 • Pass it on	"Which knew not the LORD" (Judges 2:10); the law lost, then carried into exile and read back out (Nehemiah 8)

And the order held too. Solomon halts first. The forgetting follows. Then class contempt, then flattery, then the silencing of the prophets. Then the split and the broken faith and the scramble for power. Then, late, the breached wall and Manasseh's blood. Then the generation carried off.

Nothing had to be moved out of sequence to make it read.

That is what an out-of-sample test is supposed to do. It moves the twelve walls from a *pattern one record tells about itself* toward a *description of how bodies actually fall*.

The three individual lives that are the nation in miniature

The kings record also does something the war chapters do not. It gives you three men whose personal arcs are the exact shape of three national outcomes.

- **David** — falls hard, is confronted, comes back, is scarred and restored. **That is Judah:** real failure, real loss, a remnant preserved, a return.
- **Solomon** — reaches the summit, stops climbing, forgets, and there is no recorded return. **That is the north:** the end reached at the height of strength.
- **Manasseh** — the worst, and yet given a real repentance late ([2 Chronicles 33:12–13](#)). **That is the remnant:** one heart crossing back even after the nation could not.

Same record, same century, both magnifications. What is true of a man is true of a nation, and the reverse.

Chapter 6 — Two kingdoms, two endings, and the three anchors

Here is the finding the kings record gave that the war chapters could not have.

Two kingdoms. Same covenant. Same century, roughly. Both fall. **One is gone forever. One comes home.**

Why?

Not because Judah was better — Judah had Manasseh. Not because Judah was stronger or luckier. One difference, and it was set in place on the day the north was founded.

Judah kept three things. The north cut all three at the start.

The three anchors

An anchor is not a wall. A wall is something you hold. An anchor is **a way back** — something that keeps the door open after the walls are down. There are three.

1 · The temple — a place to return to. Judah's was burned in 586. Burned, not renounced — and rebuilt seventy years later. The north never had it, because Jeroboam put up two calves instead ([1 Kings 12:28](#)).

2 · The covenant — the right to return. The promise made to Abraham, carried down the line of David. Judah still had it in exile. The north cut itself off from that line the day it left.

3 · The word — the map home. The written record, plus a living voice still reading it. **This is the portable one.** In Babylon there was no temple and no king, and the covenant survived anyway, because the record went into exile with the people and came back out being read aloud ([Nehemiah 8](#)).

The difference between losing something and cutting it

This distinction is the whole chapter.

Judah's temple was taken by force. Babylon burned it. Judah never said it did not want it. So it was damaged and recoverable — and it was recovered.

The north's temple was replaced by its own hand. No enemy did that. Jeroboam did it, in year one, as policy.

Same covenant. One lost something; one cut something. **That is the variable, and it is the only one that explains the two endings.**

What that changes about a bad reading

Before the kings record was read, the tool had one bad ending: collapse. Read the kings record and there turn out to be **three** places a collapse can go.

	What it is	The case
Survival	The line held. Damage taken. The body is intact.	Moroni's Nephites; the Gadianton siege broken
A furnace	Real collapse. Real loss. And the body comes out of it cleaner than it went in.	Judah, 586 BC
The end	Collapse that finishes the body.	The north, 722 BC

Scripture has a name for the middle one: *"I have refined thee... I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction"* (Isaiah 48:10). It is described as what a father does with a son he intends to keep (Deuteronomy 8:5; Proverbs 3:11–12).

And it worked. Judah went into Babylon with a four-hundred-year idolatry problem. It came out without one, and never went back. Seventy years of exile did what four centuries of prophets and reforms could not.

The fire was not the punishment. The fire was the mercy.

What this means for reading your own life

Two things, and they are both load-bearing.

One. A bad reading is not a verdict. The tool tells you where you are standing and which way you are pointed. It does not tell you how the story ends, and it has no authority to. A reading deep in the late walls says *the fire is here*. It does not say the fire is a funeral.

Two — and this is the one that actually matters to a person rather than a nation. The ending that finishes a body is a *collective* threshold. It applies to nations and peoples. **It does not apply to a living person.**

Scripture is not vague about this. Manasseh — the man named as the reason his nation could not be saved — prayed in chains and was heard (2 Chronicles 33:12–13). Coriantumr outlived his entire civilization and still had a road (Ether 13:20–22).

So at the scale of one person, there are only two readings available: **survival**, or **a furnace**. The third is not on the table while you are breathing.

That is not encouragement. That is what the record actually says.

Chapter 7 — The wall the war chapters could not give us

Wall 3 was not in the original list, and that is the best evidence in this guide that the walls were found rather than invented.

When the twelve were first pulled out of the war chapters, there were **eleven**. Wall 3 — *One heart, not two* — was added later, after the Old Testament work, and then checked backward against all the earlier material.

Here is why it was missing.

In the Old Testament the divided heart is obvious. It is literal. Baal, groves, high places, two golden calves. You can point at it.

In the Book of Mormon there are no calves. The same failure shows up as the love of riches, as preaching for money, as a raised platform where people say a prepared prayer about being chosen and then go back to their week. Same disease, different clothes — much harder to see, and easy to file under something else.

Once the Old Testament made it unmissable, it was checked against every record. It was in all of them.

Why this is the wall to watch. It is not the loud one. It is the quiet one, and the reason is the mechanism:

A covenant is rarely broken by denying it. It is dissolved by addition.

Nothing gets thrown out. The altar stays. The forms stay. The words stay. Something else just quietly sits down beside it and takes a share.

Which is what makes *"they feared the LORD, and served their own gods"* (2 Kings 17:33) the most useful line about the northern kingdom. They did not stop. They added.

Elijah's question is not *do you believe*. It is *"how long halt ye between two opinions?"* (1 Kings 18:21) — how long are you going to keep both. Christ says it without the poetry: *"Ye cannot serve God and mammon"* (Matthew 6:24).

One necessary distinction, or this wall gets misused. Not every accommodation is a divided heart. Daniel ate different food, served in a pagan government, and kept praying at the window ([Daniel 1:8](#); [Daniel 6:10](#)). He accommodated language, dress, and job. He did not accommodate allegiance.

Form, language, and method can bend. Substance, allegiance, and worship cannot. That is a real line, not a mood.

Chapter 8 — Why the order is the reading

The twelve walls are not a checklist where you count how many you have.

They are a **sequence** — the order a body tends to lose its footing. That means two numbers matter more than any total:

The deepest wall that has fallen tells you where you are.

The lowest wall still standing tells you what is holding.

Reading them in order gives you six stages:

	Walls	What it looks like
Stage 1	1	The climb stopped. The watch loosened.
Stage 2	2–3	Forgetting, then a divided heart. The last stage where everything still looks fine from outside.
Stage 3	4–6	Looking down on people; words coming loose; correction shut out. The body loses the ability to see its own decline.
Stage 4	7–9	The "us" fractures; promises stop binding; the flatterer climbs.
Stage 5	10–11	Defenses breached; strength turns mean.
Stage 6	12	Nothing gets handed on.

Now here is the rule that makes the whole thing useful, and it is the opposite of what people do.

The disease runs downward from the highest fallen wall. The repair runs upward from the lowest.

You do not rebuild the ramparts for a people who have stopped climbing and forgotten the Source.

Josiah is the proof. He ran the most thorough top-down reform in the record — smashed the idols, cleaned the temple, kept the Passover — and it did not hold (2 Kings 23:26). The structures changed. The hearts had not.

Ezra is the counter-proof. Same nation, worse situation, and it held — because it started with the altar and the reading and one prepared interior, and the wall came last (Ezra 3:2–3; Ezra 7:10; Nehemiah 8).

So wherever your reading lands, Walls 1 and 2 get re-lit first. Every time. Resume the climb, and remember who helped you. Everything else is powered off those two.

And the fuel for both is the same thing that carried Judah through Babylon: the word, taken daily. *"Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do"* (2 Nephi 32:3). The rod in Lehi's dream is not a metaphor for scripture — the record says flatly that it **is** the word of God (1 Nephi 11:25), and holding it is what gets a person through the mist (1 Nephi 15:24).

Chapter 9 — Joash, scored

You have met Joash. Here he is again with the tool actually applied, so you can see a reading done end to end on someone other than yourself.

The reign

Athaliah murders the royal family to take the throne. One infant is hidden — Joash. The high priest **Jehoiada** raises him in the temple and crowns him at seven (2 Kings 11).

And Joash is good. Genuinely. He renews the covenant, and he organizes the repair of the temple and sees it through (2 Kings 12:4–16).

Then the sentence that carries the whole diagnosis:

*"And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD **all the days of Jehoiada the priest.**"* (2 Kings 12:2)

Jehoiada dies. Within one chapter the princes come flattering, and Joash goes with them (2 Chronicles 24:17–18).

Then it gets worse, and this is the part that changed the tool. Jehoiada's own son **Zechariah** stands up in his father's place to warn the king — and Joash has him stoned to death **in the courtyard of the temple Joash himself had rebuilt** (2 Chronicles 24:20–22).

He dies badly: defeated by a small Syrian force, murdered by his own servants, denied burial with the kings (2 Chronicles 24:23–25).

What Joash added to the tool

Wall 6 got a fourth stage. It used to read: correction resented → messenger questioned → watchman removed. Joash runs one further —

the replacement watchman destroyed.

That stage is different in kind. At stage three a man no longer *has* someone who tells him the truth. At stage four he no longer *wants* one. Not merely unguarded — hostile to being guarded. In Joash the distance between the two is a single chapter.

The counsel it produces: *choose your watchman while you still want one.*

Wall 12 got its subtlest failure. From outside, Jehoiada's handoff looked like a complete success. Forty righteous years, a rebuilt temple, a renewed covenant.

Nothing had transferred. What was handed on was **scaffolding, not conviction** — and scaffolding holds exactly as long as the man holding it is alive. So the wall takes its sharpest test from Joash:

A handoff is not finished when the next person behaves rightly. It is finished when the behavior is self-sourced. The test is never what they do while you are standing there. It is what remains the day you are not.

Note how the two connect. Joash's Wall 12 failure discharges straight into his Wall 6 failure. **Borrowed faith does not merely lapse. It turns hostile.**

The reading

Scoring Joash at the end of his reign:

Wall	State	Why
1 · Keep climbing	Fallen	Forty years of coasting on someone else's altitude; no next pitch ever named
2 · Remember who helped you	Fallen	He forgot the man and the God who put him on the throne

Wall	State	Why
3 · One heart, not two	Fallen	Went with the princes to the groves and idols
4 · No looking down	Cracked	The flattering princes are a class capture
5 · Say what is real	Fallen	Ruled by flattery from the moment Jehoiada died
6 · Let someone correct you	Fallen	Fourth stage — he killed the replacement watchman
7 · Stay together	Cracked	The court divides; he ends murdered by his own servants
8 · Keep your word	Fallen	The renewed covenant abandoned; his benefactor's son killed
9 · Serve, do not show off	Fallen	Power without an interior to govern it
10 · Fix your weak spot	Fallen	A small Syrian force defeats a great host
11 · Be strong and still be kind	Fallen	Murder in the temple court
12 · Pass it on	Fallen	Nothing self-sourced was ever there to pass on

Deepest fallen wall: 12. Stage 6.

Lowest wall still standing: none. Walls 4 and 7 are cracked, not standing.

Where the repair would have started: Wall 1. Always Walls 1 and 2 first.

And the anchors. Here is where the reading gets interesting, and where it stops being only a judgment.

- **The temple** — *standing*. He had personally rebuilt it.
- **The covenant** — *standing*. He was the Davidic heir. The promise was his.
- **The word** — *cut*. And this is the whole tragedy of Joash in one line: **his access to the word was a man, not the word**. When the man died, the access died.

Two anchors standing. So the reading is not "finished." At the scale of one man the reading is: **a furnace, with nobody tending it**.

That is not a verdict. It is a description of who was missing.

What Joash is actually for

Joash is not in this guide as a warning about being a bad man. He was, by every visible measure, a good one for forty years.

He is here because he is the cleanest picture in scripture of a specific thing: **a life whose walls were all being held up from outside, by someone else, and the day the scaffolding came down there was nothing underneath.**

That question — *which of my walls are self-sourced, and which are being held up by something outside me?* — is the one the whole instrument exists to ask.

Your own reading

You do not have to do this. The guide has done its job if you now know where the twelve walls came from.

But if you want it, it travels as its own sheet — **The Twelve Walls: Your Own Reading** — so you can print it, mark it, and keep it beside you without carrying this whole guide around. It has the twelve walls with their Standing / Cracked / Fallen signs, the four questions that turn twelve marks into one reading, and the three anchors.

One thing to carry into it from Chapter 8, because it is the part people get backward: whatever your reading lands on, **Walls 1 and 2 get re-lit first.** Every time. Resume the climb, and remember who helped you. Everything else is powered off those two.

Appendix A — Six collapses whose endings we already know

A tool that predicts anything is only worth having if you can check it against cases where the answer is already in the record.

So it was run against six collapses whose endings scripture tells us, using two inputs only: **did anything get handed forward (Wall 12), and how many anchors were still standing when the walls came down?**

The body	Wall 12	Anchors standing	What the record says happened
Moroni's Nephites (Alma 43–62)	Standing	3	Survived. The line held.
The Gadianton siege (3 Nephi 2–4)	Standing	3	Collapse stopped and reversed.
Judah, 586 BC	Fallen	2 — temple burned, covenant and word kept	Exile, then a real return. Seventy years, and the idolatry burned out of them. A furnace.
The north, 722 BC	Fallen	0 — all three cut at its founding	Swept and scattered. No corporate return.
The Nephites (Mormon 1–6)	Fallen	0 for the nation	Destroyed — <i>and the record survived for somebody else.</i>
The Jaredites (Ether 13–15)	Fallen	0 for the nation	Destroyed — <i>and again the record was found</i> (Ether 15:33).

Six for six, with no case needing to be bent to fit.

And the last two rows forced something into the tool that nobody planned.

They could not be scored honestly as one number, because two different things are true of them at once. The **nation** ended. The **record** did not. Mormon hid the plates in the hill ([Mormon 6:6](#)) and Moroni sealed them up, and a thousand years later they reached somebody else.

So the reading has to be given twice: for the body, and for whatever the body sends forward.

Which names exactly what Mormon and Moroni spent their last years doing. They could not change the nation's ending. They could still change what survived it — and they did.

That is not a footnote. For anyone who has watched something in his own life go past saving, it is probably the most useful sentence in this guide: **the reading on a body and the reading on what that body hands forward are two different readings, and the second one is still yours to move.**

Appendix B — What is scripture here, and what is our reading

If you cannot tell the difference between what the record says and what somebody concluded from it, you cannot check anything — and a guide you cannot check is worth nothing. So, plainly:

Scripture. Every verse cited here, every quotation, every event, and every stated outcome. Those are in the record. Tap the links. That covers all the history in Chapter 4 and every episode in Chapters 2, 5, 7 and 9.

Our reading. Conclusions drawn from the record — held with real confidence, and still conclusions:

- That these twelve places are *the* twelve, and that no thirteenth is needed.
- That they tend to fail **in this order**.
- The assignment of any particular episode to a particular wall.
- The plain names, meaning lines, and check questions in the score sheet.
- Naming three anchors and ranking them the way Chapter 6 does.
- The three endings, and the reading that Wall 12 plus the anchor count separates a furnace from an end.
- The reading of Joash as a picture of borrowed conviction.

Where the line is drawn on purpose. The tool describes **position**, not verdict. It can say where a body stands and which way it is pointed. It cannot pronounce an ending and is not allowed to try — least of all on a person, where that ending is not on the table while he is alive.

One thing deliberately left out. The record does describe a point past which a *people* can no longer be moved. That is real and it is in the text. It is not in this guide, because at the scale of one man it does not apply, and printing it beside a personal score sheet would be printing something untrue about the reader.

The last thing

Two records. Different continents. Different centuries. Peoples who never met.

Both say the same thing: **a strong people is never taken from outside first**. The gate opens from the inside, one interior yes at a time, long before any enemy shows up. And both say the other half too — that the way back is offered again, and again, and again, and that it usually starts in exactly one person who decides to prepare his heart.

Ezra. Moroni. Lachoneus. Manasseh in chains.

The nation gets rebuilt after the altar goes up. Not before.

"There was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people." (4 Nephi 1:15)

That is what it looked like when the walls all stood. It has happened. It can happen again — including in one house, which is where it always starts.