

1 & 2 CHRONICLES

INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – The book makes no claim as to its author. Tradition attributes it to Ezra.
2. DATE WRITTEN – Estimates range from 450-300 BC. It seems clearly to have been written after the time of the exile of Judah.
3. DATES COVERED – It begins with the genealogies of Adam and ends after the return from exile. It covers history from King Saul through the exile.
4. NAME – A Chronicler is one who keeps the records. The Hebrew name meant "the accounts of the days."
5. KEY VERSES – 1 Chronicles 10:13-14, 17:10-14, 2 Chronicles 7:14, 36:19-24

OUTLINE

The Chronicles were originally written as one book that covers much of the same history as Samuel and Kings but from the perspective of the royal line of David and the priests instead of a prophetic perspective as the other books have. The Northern kingdom of Israel is virtually ignored in these books. The purpose of the books seems to be to show the generation after the exile that as Judah was faithful to the Lord, they were blessed. But as they were unfaithful, they had trouble.

1. THE GENEALOGIES FROM ADAM TO DAVID. 1 Chronicles 1-9
2. THE HISTORY OF DAVID'S REIGN. 1 Chronicles 10-29
 - A. Saul's Reign ends. Ch 10
 - B. David's Successes. Ch 13-21
 - C. David's accomplishments in temple worship. Ch 22-29
3. SOLOMON'S REIGN. 2 Chronicles 1-9
 - A. His wealth and wisdom. Ch 1
 - B. The building of the temple. Ch 2-7
 - C. The end of his reign. Ch 8-9
4. THE HISTORY OF JUDAH'S KINGS TO THE EXILE. 2 Chronicles 10-36:14
5. THE EXILE AND THE DECREE TO RETURN. 2 Chronicles 36:15-23

IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

1. The history of the nation centers around her relationship to God and the worship of Him at the temple. See Matthew 6:33.
2. Many of the lessons seen in Samuel and Kings are repeated. That should impress us with their importance. The New Testament has four accounts of the life of Christ.
3. The arrangement of the books lays further stress on the Sovereignty of God as the One Who guides history.
4. David's organization of different Levites for different tasks around the temple in 1 Chronicles 23-26 illustrates how all believers work together in ministering to the Body of Christ. See 1 Corinthians 12-14
5. Solomon's prayer for the dedication of the temple in 2 Chronicles 6:32 previews the NT including Gentiles in the worship of God. See Ephesians 2:11-22.
6. 2 Chronicles 7:14 gives the formula for revival in our day as well as in the days of Solomon.
7. Even the King of Persia was moved to act to fulfill the word of God as in 2 Chronicles 36:22. Earthly rulers remain subject to the rule of our God.

1 CHRONICLES

1-5 – These are the genealogical records from Adam to David and the exile. It is hard to find significance in these names except to note that they indicate the care God places on individuals and generation to generation. It seems that to be significant, it is better to have eternal significance by spiritual children than by biological children. There are some interesting statements at the end of chapter five about a battle where those who won did so because they trusted in the Lord and the battle belongs to the Lord. 5:20 “And when they prevailed over them, the Hagarites and all who were with them were given into their hands, for they cried out to God in the battle, and he granted their urgent plea because they trusted in him.” 5:22 “For many fell, because the war was of God. And they lived in their place until the exile.”

6 – This chapter features the inheritance of the Levites and their genealogy. It recounts the designation of the cities of refuge and the land for the descendants of Levi. Note that the work of the priests included the music. V31 “These are the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the Lord after the ark rested there.”

7 – Listed are the genealogies of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher. These genealogies almost certainly had to do with finding and redistributing the land for the return after the exile. It was important to God that these were kept.

8 – This chapter recounts the genealogies of Benjamin including King Saul. It traces his line from Benjamin and down to his own sons and grandsons.

9 – This chapter tells that it is a list of those who returned to the land of Judah after the exile and it records their genealogies to make certain that those who lived there were qualified. It concludes with Saul and his sons. It is still hard to read these chapters. It helps to look for special comments like the one made about Phinehas in V20. “And Phinehas the son of Eleazar was the chief officer of them in time past; the Lord was with him.” Pray that will be said of us.

10 – This is the account of the death of Saul. This one is probably more truthful than the one in Samuel because that one recounted the version of the foreigner who thought David would be thrilled to hear that Saul was dead and so he made up that he killed him, expecting a reward. He was killed. In this account, Saul died at his own hand to avoid capture. Verses 13-14 tell the reason Saul died. “Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.”

11 – This chapter recounts the exploits of David and his mighty men. David was successful and credit is given to the Lord and his relationship with him. It is recounted in V3, “And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the Lord through Samuel.” V9 directs credit to the Lord by saying; “And David became greater and greater, for the Lord of hosts was with him.” Note that among the mighty men loyal to David is “Uriah the Hittite” (V41), the husband of Bathsheba with whom David later committed adultery and whom David had killed to try to cover up his sin. That makes the sin even worse that was against a man who was loyal and fought for David as king.

12 – This chapter tells some very interesting facts about the men who served to fight with David. They are described in V2 as “bowmen and could shoot arrows and sling stones with either the right or the left hand.” V8 “...whose faces were like the faces of lions and who were as swift as gazelles upon the mountains.” Some of the leaders are described as “a match for a hundred” and others were “a match for a thousand” (V14). They swore loyalty to David and represented each of the tribes so that there was unity in Israel among all the tribes for the first time since Joshua and the last time as a nation.

13 – It appears that David was blessed and prospered because he sought the Lord first and wanted to do what God wanted done the way God wanted it done. His strongest desire was to seek God first in a way that was not done during Saul's reign. V3-4 "Then let us bring again the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul. The whole assembly agreed to do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people." When God was not pleased, he let David know as with the death of Uzzah, which led to V12 "David was afraid of God that day." Again, as the ark waited for years to complete its journey to Jerusalem, the Lord blessed the home of the family that hosted it. Blessing equates with the presence of the Lord.

14 – God continued to bless David with the offer of building a home for him and with total victory once and for all over the Philistines. All this was as David sought the advice of the Lord at each step of the battles and carried it out. V17 "And the Lord brought the fear of him upon all the nations." Note the number of times it says, "David inquired of the Lord" and also "and David did as God commanded him." This was the key to David's life.

15 – This time when the Ark of the Covenant was brought up to Jerusalem, they did it according to the way the Lord had commanded and they were successful. Levites carried the Ark. V13 "Because you did not carry it the first time, the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule." Each person had his own place and task to carry out. How like the body of Christ this is that each person has their own ability and therefore place of service. Grant us grace to accept our place and serve faithfully.

16 – Note the musical instruments that are involved in celebration and worship. Musicians were assigned their duties. There was a great celebration of the Levites and all the people. David composed a psalm of thanksgiving for the occasion. Some of the Levites were left before the Ark to minister on a daily basis. Some were to offer the sacrifices and others were the musicians. It is great to see the role of the musicians as such an integral part of the celebration. Note that every part of creation was called upon to join the praise to the Lord. Think of the trees, rocks, even dirt and sky praising the Lord. With all of them praising him, there is even more reason and no excuse for us not to join in praise to God with all we are and all our body parts. Most of the verses from this chapter V8-36 are also found in some of the Psalms. See the footnotes for exact correlations. Key verses are 39-40.

17 – David raised the issue of building a temple for God. What is interesting here is that we seem to gain insight into the way the word of the Lord was spoken through the prophet. Nathan answered David immediately, I believe according to what he thought was the best answer. That night the Lord answered to change the answer to fit his word. There may not have always been direct revelation to a prophet. They would give their best response and only if God desired to change it did he speak. Next the Lord promised to bless David by establishing his house and someone of his descendants would be on his throne forever. David was so blessed and impressed that he spoke a great passage of praise and thanks to God. There are many great verses in this chapter of God's promise to David and of David's response. V11 "When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom." V20 "There is none like you, O Lord, and there is no God beside you, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

What David offers does not seem to warrant this great blessing. Our faithlessness is so rare but important that even a little stands out and is blessed?

18 – V6 "The Lord gave victory to David wherever he went." This is repeated in V13. Again the organization of leaders is mentioned. Note two things. V14 "So David reigned over all Israel, and he administered justice and equity to all his people." Also note that David's sons were his "chief officials." (V17)

19 – A battle was engaged with the Ammonites. It was an unnecessary battle instigated by the son of the king after his father died. Maybe he wanted to show his power over David. He hired another army. It is

easy to wonder if in retrospect he thought he should have hired more but did not or could not afford them. Were there more to hire? Anyway, he was defeated in battle. Joab has a great attitude as they approach this battle that looked overwhelming. V13 "Be strong, and let us use our strength for our people and for the cities of our God, and may the Lord do what seems good to him." That ended the wars with the Ammonites.

20 – More battles are recalled with David and Joab and the army of Israel winning all of them. It is especially interesting to note that they subdued the Philistines for the final time. Never again are they a threat to Israel. They did include some giant type leaders. They were defeated to show that the battle really belongs to the Lord. V7 "And when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, struck him down." Does it not seem that the more impressive the giants sound, the more glory goes to God for the victory that he gave? Let that be an encouragement to us that the larger or more frightening our situation or impossible it appears, God's answer gives him more glory.

21 – David sinned by counting the fighting men. God punished him for it but offered three options for the punishment. V13 "Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man." David offered a sacrifice on the place where the plague was stopped. The negotiation is great drama. V24 "No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

22 – It may be that V1 is intended as the answer to the question of chapter 21. It tells how the location of the temple and altar were chosen. "Then David said, 'Here shall be the house of the Lord God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel.'" The chapter continues to tell about the early preparation of material for the building of the temple and of David's commission to his son Solomon to build it. The key is stated as obedience to the commands of the Lord to him. V13 "Then you will prosper if you are careful to observe the statutes and the rules that the Lord commanded Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Fear not; do not be dismayed." V19 "Now set your mind and heart to seek the Lord your God. Arise and build the sanctuary of the Lord God, so that the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy vessels of God may be brought into a house built for the name of the Lord."

23 – This chapter tells the divisions of priests and Levites and their ancestry from Aaron and Moses. There were 4000 whose job was to "offer praises to the Lord with the instruments I have made for praise." V28 "For their duty was to assist the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord, having the care of the courts and the chambers, the cleansing of all that is holy, and any work for the service of the house of God."

24 – The descendants of the Levites are listed and they are assigned their tasks according to their family. What a great representation this is of the body of Christ in the NT as each one has his place to serve and it takes all serving together as one to accomplish the service for the Lord!

25 – Some were set apart for the ministry of prophesying "with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals." Their names are listed in this chapter. They cast lots to find their place of service even though some "were trained in singing to the Lord." There is an interesting statement in V5. "All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer, according to the promise of God to exalt him, for God had given Heman fourteen sons and three daughters."

26 – This is a list of the gatekeepers for Jerusalem in the time of David. If as it appears, Chronicles was written after the exile, it provides a model for how Jerusalem was to be set up for when they returned to the Promised Land. There are comments made about the descendants of Obed-Edom that make him stand out within this chapter. V5 "And Obed-Edom had sons...for God blessed him." V8 "All these were of the sons of Obed-Edom with their sons and brothers, able men qualified for the service."

27 – This chapter consists of lists of the leaders of the army and of other areas of the king's work. Some of these included oversight of the flocks, vineyards, olive oil, camels and donkeys. It also lists other official positions such as counselor and "king's friend." Note two things in this chapter. One is that the army leader is the last one listed. Second is the organization, that there are so many categories and that there is someone who is not talked about anywhere else that is in charge of it. This is a lesson for the church, that we find more areas of ministry and put different people in charge of those areas. Or should our approach be to find people and place each one in charge of a ministry specially created for them? That is how the body of Christ is to work. He has equipped every one of us for ministry in and on behalf of the body.

28 – David gathered all his leaders and announced that while he desired to build a temple for a "footstool" for God, God would not permit him to do it but chose his son Solomon to carry it out. The Lord gave David all the detailed plans for every part of the building and David instructed Solomon to carry these out in complete detail. V9 "And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever." This is similar to the details for the tabernacle God gave Moses. V19 "All this he made clear to me in writing from the hand of the Lord, all the work to be done according to the plan."

29 – There is a great celebration and praise service as David announces his preparations and offering for the temple. V9 "Then the people rejoiced greatly because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly." There is a great recognition that all the great gifts that were given were only giving to God what he had given to them. The generous giving combined with the greatness of the building to be built for the glory of God produced a great worship experience for all the people and another opportunity to submit to God as Sovereign and their king as his representative ruler. V14 "But who am I, and what is my people that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you." And there is a great prayer of praise in verses 10-14.