

1 & 2 Chronicles

The Authorship and Dating

Chronicles represents a second historical record of Israel's history. While Samuel and Kings traced Israel from Judge Eli to the 37th year of their captivity in Babylon, Chronicles begins with the rule of David and ends with the Declaration of Cyrus approximately 70 years after their captivity. Apparent differences between the two historical records have led some to dismiss the truthfulness of Israel's recorded history.

“A number of accounts in Chronicles parallel parts of Samuel and Kings. The fact that these accounts do not match word for word has led some scholars to assume that the chronicler was not concerned about accuracy in citation, or that the authors of all the books drew upon another common source... Writing about the same events, the compiler of 1 Chronicles simply emphasized a different perspective on them than did the authors of Samuel and Kings. The synoptic Gospels function the same way....

The chronicler's different emphases explain many of the differences between the narratives of Chronicles and Samuel. Some of the other apparent contradictions, especially in matters of spelling and numbers, can be explained as inadvertence in copying and text transmissions.”¹

Although Chronicles could have been adapted from as many as ten different sources (1 Chron 9:1; 2 Chron 12:15),² tradition indicates that Ezra (d. 432BC) wrote Chronicles.³ The text itself lends support to a single author having “uniformity of style, flavor, and viewpoint of a single author.”⁴ While one may be quick to assign this work to Ezra, 1 Chron 3:24 provides critical information concerning possible authorship. Anani is mentioned last. Comparisons within the genealogy indicate that Anani was born between 425-400BC. It would follow then that the book was finalized during the lifetime of Anani. For that reason it is hard to say with complete confidence that Ezra wrote the book since he died in 432 B.C. Possibly Ezra wrote part of the book and other unnamed scribes finished the work. However the book was penned, it remains scripture inspired and preserved for our benefit (2 Tim. 3:16).

The Recipients

Chronicles was written during that period surrounding the ministry of Ezra/Nehemiah and Malachi. This generation needed spiritual revival and assurance of the Lord's continued provision for the Sons of Abraham.

¹ *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*, ed. Ronald B. Allen Earl D. Radmacher, H. Wayne House(Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999). 493.

² Paul N. Benware, *The Essential Bible Survey of the Old Testament*(Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003). 139.

³ Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests a History of Old Testament Israel*(Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996). 514.

⁴ Eugene Merrill, "1 Chronicles," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. Roy B. Zuck John F. Walvoord(Wheaton: Victor, 1983). 589.

The Purpose

Given the date and audience of the writing the purpose seems to be two fold. First, the book obviously has a historical purpose. The detail given to records is obvious. There is also a theological purpose behind the book. Given that most of the Old Testament had been settled by the time of this writing, the author did not emphasize such basic theological issues as God's sovereignty and monotheism.⁵ However, he did focus in one particular area. The author chose to mention certain items and disregard others (for example... the author did not even mention David's sin with Bathsheba). The author also spent an extraordinary amount describing the dynasty of David (in relation to David and Solomon) while little information is given concerning other kings before or after. The theological purpose involves the exaltation of David's dynasty as the true covenant line of blessing. Considering the post-exilic dating of the writing as well as the audience, such material would have provided hope and encouragement to the scattered.⁶ They would have been reassured that God had not forgotten his people and continued hope for a righteous rule was sustained.

The Message

The book provides a historical record of David's rule as well as a theological message that the God of Israel would continue to provide for His people. In the first nine chapters the author takes time to list genealogies leading to the David. Apparently the author recognized David as a culminating figure within their national history. The fact that the author of Chronicles spends approximately half of his writing describing the Davidic reign indicates the king's priority within the writer's theology. After describing David's establishment to rule (10-12), the author does little to hide the king's sins (14:1-7; 21:1-30). He does, however, spend the bulk of his writing emphasizing the establishment of Israel's Temple. He notes David's desire to build a temple the Lord (17) and then emphasizes God's commitment to build an eternal rule through David (17:16-27). The anticipation of this rule is further highlighted in chapters 22-29 as David makes preparations for the fulfillment of God's promise. It has been suggested that each book may be summed up by two respective verses.⁷ In First Chronicles 17:12 is that proposed summary. "He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever." Given the historical record of David throughout 1 Chronicles and given the prominent role of the Davidic Covenant beyond his life, this seems a fitting summary for 1 Chronicles. 1 Chronicles simply emphasizes God's promise of Davidic rule and closes with anticipation of that fulfillment.

2 Chronicles starts with a sense of hope. The book opens recording Solomon's spiritual emphasis and prosperous rule (1). It continues this hope through the successful establishment of the temple (2-9). However, once the book gets beyond Solomon's forty year rule, it quickly moves through nearly four hundred years of failing kingships and captivity (10-36). This literary movement from a kingdom of promise and worldwide stature under Solomon to a kingdom of slavery in foreign lands highlights Israel's need for national repentance according to covenantal promises. However, the book doesn't close in despair. The book closes with a verse of hope. The last verse of 2 Chronicles states:

⁵ Bill T. & Bryan T. Beyer Arnold, *Encountering the Old Testament*(Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008). 259.

⁶ Charles Dyer & Eugene Merrill, *Nelson's Old Testament Survey*, ed. Charles R. Swindoll & Roy B. Zuck(Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001). 295.

⁷ David Allan Hubbard William Sanford LaSor, Frederic Wm. Bush, *Old Testament Survey the Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, Second ed.(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996). 547.

“Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, Jehovah his God be with him, and let him go up.” 2 Chron 36:22 ASV

The Chronicles trace the regal history of Israel emphasizing the Davidic covenant. This emphasis provided hope for an exiled nation.

Theme

The Davidic Throne

1 Chronicles Outline

I. The Genealogies Leading to David's Rule 1:1-9:44

II. David's Rule 10-29:30.

- A. David Established as King 10:1-12:40
 - 1. Saul's Death 10:1-14
 - 2. David Takes Kingship and Jerusalem 11:1-9
 - 3. David's Mighty Men 11:10-47
 - 4. Warriors Who Joined David at Ziklag 12:1-22
 - 5. Warriors Who Joined David with Joy at Hebron 12:23-40
- B. David's Work as King 13:1-21:30
 - 1. David Moves the Ark to Obededom 13:1-49
 - 2. David Takes Multiplied Wives 14:1-7
 - 3. David Smites the Philistines 14:8-17
 - 4. David Brings Ark into Jerusalem 15:1-16:43
 - a. The Ark is Move to Jerusalem 15:1-16:6
 - b. David Sings Covenant Praise to the Lord 16:7-36
 - c. Ark Left in Hands of Asaph 16:37-43
 - 5. David's Desire to Build a Temple 17:1-27
 - a. David Rejected as Temple Builder 17:1-10a
 - b. God Promises to Build David a House 17:10b-15
 - c. David's Response to God's Promise 17:16-27
 - 6. David's Success in Battle 18:1-20:8
 - a. David's Reign over all Israel 18:1-17
 - b. David Conquers Ammonite and Syrian Coalition 19:1-19
 - c. David's Multiplied Victories 20:1-8
 - 7. David's Sin Against God 21:1-30
 - a. David Sins of Numbering Israel 21:1-30
 - b. God Sends Plague 21:7-17
 - c. David Buys Threshing Floor to Sacrifice 21:18-30
- C. David's Preparations for Solomon's Building of Temple 22:1-29:30
 - 1. David Gathers Material and Workmen for Temple 22:1-19
 - 2. David Gathers Israel's Heads before Solomon 23:1-32
 - a. David Sets Apart Priest unto the Lord 24:1-31
 - b. David Sets Apart Singers to the Lord 25:1-31
 - c. David Sets Apart the Porters 26:1-28
 - d. David Sets Apart Officers and Judges 26:29-27:34
 - e. David Instructs the Leaders of Israel 28:1-29:5
 - 3. Israel's Princes Commit to Build Temple 29:6-9
 - 4. David Prayer of Dedication 29:10-22
 - 5. David turns Kingdom to Solomon and Dies 29:23-30

Outline of 2 Chronicles

I. Solomon's Rule 1:1-9:30

- A. Solomon's Preparations 1:1-17
 - 1. Solomon's Prayer and God's Promise 1:1-12
 - 2. Solomon Begins with Prosperous Rule 1:13-17
- B. Solomon Build's Temple 2:1-7:22
 - 1. Solomon Contracts Labor with Tyre 2:1-18
 - 2. Solomon Begins Construction 3:1-4:22
 - a. Construction of the Temple 3:1-17
 - b. Construction of the Holy of Holies 3:10-17
 - c. Construction of Altar and Laver 4:1-5
 - d. Construction of Golden Candlesticks and Utensils 4:7-22
 - 3. Solomon's Dedication of Temple 5:1-7:22
 - a. Solomon Moves Ark into Temple 5:1-14
 - b. The Glory of God Filled the House 5:11-14
 - c. Solomon's Speak of Dedication 6:1-11
 - d. Solomon's Prayer for God's Covenant Faithfulness 6:12-42
 - e. Fire Consumes the Offering 7:1-11
 - f. God's Promise of Covenant Faithfulness 7:12-22
- C. Solomon's Building Efforts 8:1-18
- D. Solomon's Worldwide Fame, Wisdom and Wealth 9:1-30

II. Judah's King's in Divided Kingdom 10:1-36:3

- A. Israel Rejects the House of David 10:1-19
- B. Rehoboam Turns from War 11:1-12
 - 1. Priests and Levites Return to Jerusalem 11:13-17
 - 2. Rehoboam takes many wives 11:18-23
 - 3. Rehoboam's Loss of Treasure 12:1-12
 - 4. Rehoboam's Continued Rule and Death 12:13-16
- C. Abijah Rules Judah 13:1-22
 - 1. Abijah wars with Jeroboam 13:1-12
 - 2. Abijah questions Israel's Rebellion to Yahweh 13:1-12
 - 3. Jeroboam's Failed Ambush of Abijah 13:13-20
 - 4. Abijah Marries Multiple wives and Dies 13:21-22
- D. Asa Rules Israel 14:1-16:14
 - 1. Asa's Godly and Prosperous Rule 14:1-8
 - 2. Asa Defeat the Ethiopians 14:9-
 - 3. Asa's Godly Response to Oded the Prophet 15:1-9
 - 4. Judah's Godly Existence under Asa 15:10-19
 - 5. Asa's Faithless Union with Syria 16:1-7
 - 6. Asa's Wicked Response to Hanani the Prophet 16:7-14
 - 7. Asa's Death 16:13-14
- E. Jehoshaphat Establishes Godly Rule 17:1-9
 - 1. Enemies of Judah Fear 17:10-19
 - 2. Jehoshaphat leagues with Ahab 18:1-3
 - 3. Jehoshaphat request of God's Word 18:4-27

4. Jehoshaphat Demands Different Prophet 18:6-27
5. Jehoshaphat Aligns with Ahab 18:28-34
6. Jehoshaphat Warned concerning his Alliance 19:1-4
7. Jehoshaphat Charges Leaders to Follow the Lord 19:5-11
8. Jehoshaphat Faces War with Moab and Ammon 20:1-13
9. Jahaziel Prophecies Victory 20:14-19
10. Jehoshaphat Worships and God Delivers 20:20-30
11. Jehoshaphat's Godly Reign 20:31-34
12. Jehoshaphat Ungodly Union with Ahaziah 20:35-37
- F. Jehoram Reigns after Jehoshaphat 21:1-3
 1. God Sustains Judah Despite Jehoram 21:4-11
 2. Elijah's Rebuke and Prophetic Judgment on Jehoram 21:12-20
- G. Ahaziah's Short Reign as King of Judah 22:1-9
- H. Queen Athaliah's Wicked Rule 22:10-12
- I. Joash's Reign as Judah's King 23:1-24:27
 1. Jehoiada Establishes Joash as King 23:1-21
 2. Joash Restores the Temple 24:1-24
 3. Joash Commands the Slaying of a Prophet 24:17-22
 4. Joash Avenged of Prophet's Death 24:23-27
- J. The Reign of Amaziah 25:1-28
 1. Amaziah Sends Ephraim's Soldiers Home 25:1-13
 2. Amaziah Worships the gods of Seir 25:14-16
 3. Amaziah Falls to Joash the King of Israel 25:17-28
- K. Uzziah Reigns over Judah 26:1-23
 1. Uzziah's Godly Rule over Judah 26:1-15
 2. Uzziah's Prideful Service in the Temple 26:16-23
- L. Jotham's Righteous Rule in Judah 27:1-9
- M. Ahaz's Ungodly Rule in Judah 28:1-28
 1. Ahaz sinful actions as King 28:1-5
 2. Pekah Defeats Judah's Army and Returns Captives 28:6-15
 3. Ahaz's Continued Sin in Judah 28:16-28
- N. Hezekiah's Reign in Judah 29:1-32:34
 1. Hezekiah's Brings National Repentance 29:1-31:21
 - a. Hezekiah's Recognizes Judah's Sin 29:1-11
 - b. Priests Make Atonements for Sins 29:20-36
 - c. Judah and Israel Celebrate Great Passover 30:1-27
 - d. Israel Destroys Idols in Judah 31:1
 - e. Hezekiah Sets Prosperous Priestly Orders 31:2-10
 - f. Judah Brings Enormous Offerings 31:11-21
 2. Lord Delivers Hezekiah from Sennacherib 32:1-23
 3. Hezekiah's Prideful End 32:24-33
- O. Manasseh's Ungodly Rule 33:1-20
 1. Manasseh's Sinful Acts 33:1-10
 2. Manasseh Repents after God's Judgment 33:11-20
- P. Amon's Ungodly Rule in Judah 33:21-25
- Q. Josiah's Righteous Reign in Judah 34:1-35:27

1. Josiah Listens to God's Word 34:1-35:19
 - a. Josiah Destroys Idols 34:1-7
 - b. Josiah Restores the Temple 34:8-13
 - c. Josiah's Repentance After Finding the Law 34:14-28
 - d. Josiah Promotes National Repentance 34:29-34
 - e. Josiah Holds Great Passover 35:1-19
2. Josiah Ignore God's Word and Dies Battling Neco 35:20-27

III. Judah's Bondage 36:4-23

- A. Jehoahaz's Reign Destroyed by Egypt 36:1-3
- B. Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar 36:4-16
 1. Jehoiakim's Reign Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 36:4-8
 2. Jehoiachin Removed by Nebuchadnezzar 36:9-10
 3. Zedekiah's Unrighteous Rule 36:11-21
 - a. Zedekiah Hardens Heart Against God 36:11-16
- C. Jerusalem Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 36:17-21

IV. God Returns Israel through Cyrus King of Persia 36:22-23

Questions for 1 Chronicles

1. Who wrote 1 Chronicles?
2. When was 1 Chronicles written?
3. What is the main thrust of 1 Chronicles?
4. Why does the Genealogies play a major part in 1 Chronicles?
5. Why did God strike Uzza when he place his hand on the cart?
6. What was David's Primary Sin according to 1 Chronicles?
7. What is the significance that Nathan at first "yelled" yes to David's proposal and then the following day said no?
8. What promise did God make to David when David purposed to build the Lord a house?
9. According to David, why was he not allowed to build the Lord's Temple?
10. Is there any literary significance that nearly half of the combined 1 and 2 Chronicles deal with the rule of David? If so, what is that significance?

Questions Concerning 2 Chronicles

1. Who were the intended recipients of 2 Chronicles?
2. Why do chapters 7-8 focus so heavily on the Davidic Covenant?
3. In chapter 9 Solomon's workers are pictured as happy. The passages also acknowledge that it is the foreign labor who is in "service." Why then does the Israelites in chapter 10 describe the work as overbearing?
4. In 11:4 Rehoboam is warned not to war with Jeroboam because "it was of the Lord." However, 13:7 states that the reason Rehoboam did not war with Jeroboam was because he could not withstand them. How do we reconcile these two seeming differences?
5. How do you explain the fact that 22:1 indicates that Ahaziah was 42 years of age when he began to reign when his father died at the age of 40 (21:20)?
6. How does the event described in 36:22-23 (which occurs about 60 years after the previous verses) work to demonstrate the author's purpose in writing?
7. What is the Kings overall pattern of behavior?
8. Why is little attention given to Israel in 2 Chronicles?
9. What role does the story recording Israel's destruction of Judah's Idols during Hezekiah's reign have to do with the purpose of 2 Chronicles?
10. Why is Manasseh seen in a better light in 2 Chronicles than in 2 Kings? In 2 Kings he becomes the main reason Judah is carried into exile. However in 2 Chronicles that is not only mentioned but the fact that he repented is made a highlight.

Bibliography

- Arnold, Bill T. & Bryan T. Beyer. *Encountering the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Benware, Paul N. *The Essential Bible Survey of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003.
- Merrill, Charles Dyer & Eugene. *Nelson's Old Testament Survey*, Edited by Charles R. Swindoll & Roy B. Zuck. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001.
- Merrill, Eugene. "1 Chronicles." In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, edited by Roy B. Zuck John F. Walvoord. Wheaton: Victor, 1983.
- Merrill, Eugene H. *Kingdom of Priests a History of Old Testament Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Edited by Ronald B. Allen Earl D. Radmacher, H. Wayne House. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999.
- William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic Wm. Bush. *Old Testament Survey the Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*. Second ed. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996.