

Background

- The Hebrew name of the book translates to “events of the days” (dibre hayyamim). Jerome, one of the early church fathers, called it “the chronicle of the whole of sacred history” when he translated the Bible into Latin (Vulgate) which Luther, among others, followed in his German translation of the Bible.
- It was also called “the things omitted” by the translators of the pre-Christian Greek Old Testament (Septuagint or LXX) and regarded as a supplement to Samuel and Kings.
- Like Samuel and Kings, Chronicles was originally written as one book. It was split into two in the Septuagint. It is also last book in the final section (the Khetuvim or Writings) of the Hebrew Bible.
- The identity of the Chronicler who assembled the historical accounts is unknown but some have suggested it to be Ezra. The book was put together during the postexilic period, after the people returned to Jerusalem, during the latter half of the fifth century B.C. (1 Chr. 9:1-2; 2 Chr. 36:22-23).
- The book was written for the restored Israelite community, the people who had been released after the 70 year exile in Babylon.

Outline

- Chronicles contains historical records. Its content overlaps to a large degree with that of 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. It draws upon many written sources: the Pentateuch, Judges, Ruth, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Zechariah, as well as other written records: the annals of the kings of Judah and the writings of prophets such as Samuel, Nathan, Gad.
- Chronicles can be divided into four main sections: genealogies, David’s reign, Solomon’s reign, and the kings of Judah.
- There may have been questions and doubts in the minds of the Israelites regarding where they stood with God after the exile. God didn’t stop the exile from happening, the temple was destroyed, Jerusalem was sacked, and the people had been carried off.
- In Chronicles, God is not shown as having failed to save His people from exile but as the One who fulfilled His warnings to Israel. The exile confirms the power of Yahweh rather than being a sign of His defeat.
- A connection is made between the restored community and the Israelites of the past, who had experienced God’s favour and who were recipients of His promises, as a reminder that God still had a future for them.

Genealogies: the Roots of the Postexilic Community (1 Chronicles 1:1-9:44)

- Practical purposes of genealogies: determining familial status, privileges, and obligations (rights of the firstborn); settling matters of land distribution and inheritance; determining national obligation (Levites were exempt from military service); hereditary rights (who could serve and how – 1 Chr. 6:48-49).
- The genealogy in Chronicles spans all of human history from creation to the author’s day. Through this, the author establishes continuity with the past and with it continuity of God’s covenants, promises, and His election of Israel as His people.
- The genealogy begins with Adam and continues through the line of the Seth (the line of promise). Neither Cain nor Abel are mentioned. The genealogy is not meant to be comprehensive, by the second generation there is already a focus on one line and the significance of those who would come from it.
- Israel’s descendants continue through Judah rather than Reuben, the oldest son, and the line of David is traced through the exile to the restoration of God’s people, resulting in an unbroken line of ancestry to Zerubbabel (1 Chr. 3:19, see also Ezra 2:2), David’s descendant who governed Jerusalem after the return of the exiles. The continuity of the Davidic line is maintained through the period of the exile despite the loss of the monarchy.
- The genealogy goes from Abraham ⇒ Israel ⇒ Judah ⇒ Jesse. Judah received special attention (1 Chr. 2:3-4:23) because the kings of Israel descended from that tribe. Greater focus was also given to the Levites (1 Chr. 6:1-81) because from them came the priests as well as those who served in the temple and before the ark of the Lord.

- Later in the records there is also a section dedicated to the assignment of the gatekeepers, those in charge of the articles used in the temple service, those in charge of the furnishings of the sanctuary, and the musicians.
- The dual emphasis on the line of the kings (Judah) and on the priesthood and temple servants (Levi) indicates what the author considered were the important focal points for his audience.

Chronicles vs. Samuel & Kings

- Comparing the Chronicles accounts of the kings of Judah with their parallels in Samuel and Kings often reveals differences (sometimes significant ones) in the content as well as the perspective of the writers.
- One notable difference involves the idealization of the reigns of David and Solomon.
 - David and Solomon are portrayed as glorious, faithful, all-conquering figures who were recipients of divine blessing and unanimous national support.
 - Almost every account that would tarnish their reputations is omitted from Chronicles. Compare 2 Samuel 11:1-4 with 1 Chronicles 20:1-3, the focus in the book of Samuel is on David's sin with Bathsheba while Chronicles leaves that part out completely and focuses on His victory.
- In the accounts where the Chronicler has added additional material, the content can be generally classified into one or more of the following categories:
 - 1) An act of disobedience from a generally good king along with its negative consequences (E.g., Amaziah).
 - 2) An act obedience/repentance from a generally bad king along with its positive consequences (E.g., Rehoboam, Abijah, Manasseh).
 - 3) An additional account that explains a previously recorded act of judgment (E.g., Joash, Uzziah).
 - 4) A moral perspective on a previously neutral account (E.g., Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah).

Is this an example of revisionist history (i.e., the author is reinterpreting facts to support his own views)?

- Just as the genealogy in Chronicles isn't meant to be a comprehensive account of the peoples of the world, the narratives in Chronicles don't presume to present the whole story. The translators of the Septuagint regarded Chronicles as a supplement to Samuel and Kings and grouped those books together.
- It appears that Chronicles was intended to be read in conjunction with the other Old Testament books. Some accounts in Chronicles appear disjointed unless the audience possesses additional supplementary details (E.g., in 1 Chr. 20:1-3 how did David suddenly appear in Rabbah? See 2 Samuel 12:26-31).
- Though the same historical events are being reported, there's a difference in the focus (like in the gospels). This is used to present a different but equally valid message to address concerns that were pertinent to the author's audience.

The United Monarchy (1 Chronicles 10:1-2 Chronicles 9:31)

- After the death of Saul there was a united monarchy under David and Solomon; the Chronicler puts a lot of focus on the reigns of these two kings. There were other kings who ruled as long, if not longer, than David and Solomon but most of the details of their reigns aren't recorded in Scripture (Asa: 41 years in 3 chapters; Joash: 40 years in 2 chapters; Uzziah: 52 years in 1 chapter; Manasseh: 55 years in <1 chapter). This isn't due to a failure in the royal record-keeping, other sources like the annals of the kings of Judah and the writings of prophets and seers were available and were drawn upon by the Chronicler.
- The author is directing his audience's attention toward the temple of God and at looking in anticipation for a future descendant of David who would rule over all Israel in faithfulness and obedience to the Lord.

The Reign of David (1 Chronicles 10:1-29:30)

[See the lesson notes for 1 & 2 Samuel for more information on the reign of King David]

- The narrative portion of 1 Chronicles begins at the end of Saul's reign with his death and the death of his sons. Even though Saul took his own life (1 Chr. 10:4), Chronicles records that God put him to death (1 Chr.

10:14). The concluding statement in 1 Chr. 10:13-14 is absent in the 1 Samuel 31 account. This perspective from the Chronicler links Saul's death with his unfaithfulness and disobedience.

-After the death of Saul, Chronicles records that all Israel went to David to make him king, even attributing to David the victories achieved under Saul's reign (1 Chr. 11:1-3). David is shown as having the steadfast support of all the people (1 Chr. 12:38).

-Chapter 11 lists David's mighty men and chapter 12 records that many brave warriors defected to join David. David had fighting men from every tribe and became a rallying figure that united Israel. Even those who were loyal to Saul went to David to turn the kingdom over to him (1 Chr. 12:23, 29).

-After David became king, his first recorded acts were to conquer Jerusalem (1 Chr. 11:4-9) and to move the ark of the Lord there (1 Chr. 13:1-6). He also reinstated service before the ark, appointing the Levites (1 Chr. 16:4) as well as the priests, gatekeepers, and musicians (1 Chr. 16:37-42) to minister there.

-In David's first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem, Uzzah was struck down by God (1 Chr. 13:9-10). Although this is a negative account, it highlights the importance of following God's ways as well as the consequences of disobedience. David corrected his mistake in his second attempt (1 Chr. 15:2, 11-15).

-In chapter 17 David expresses his desire to build a temple for God but God sends word to him that He would instead be the one to build a house for him (1 Chr. 17:10b). God makes a covenant with David to establish his kingdom and make his throne endure forever (1 Chr. 17:11-14).

-Chapters 18-20 recount David's victories. God gave David victory wherever he went (1 Chr. 18:6b, 13b). David is shown as a victorious, conquering king triumphing over all of his enemies.

-In chapter 21 David orders Joab to take a census of the fighting men despite Joab's objections. Joab recognized that the census would bring guilt on Israel (1 Chr. 21:3), which isn't mentioned in Samuel, and he only took a partial census because the order was repulsive to him (1 Chr. 21:6).

-After the census was taken, 2 Samuel 24 only mentions that David was conscience-stricken whereas Chronicles explicitly states that this act was evil in the sight of God, highlighting its wickedness and connecting it with the subsequent punishment of Israel (1 Chr. 21:7, 27:24).

-The reason for the inclusion of this account in Chronicles is because the plague that was brought on Israel on account of the census provided the occasion for David to purchase the plot of land on which the temple would eventually be built (1 Chr. 22:1). When the angel of the Lord reached the threshing floor of Araunah, God had compassion on Israel and stopped the plague. God then told David to build an altar on that piece of land, which David purchased.

-Chapters 22-27 focus on David's preparations for the work on the temple of God. David set aside an enormous amount of the materials for its construction: stone, iron, gold, silver, and immeasurable amounts of bronze and wood (1 Chr. 22:3-4, 14). He also charged Solomon with building the temple.

-David assigned the workers who were to serve in the temple (1 Chr. 23:1-6). He divided the Levites according to their clans and gave them their responsibilities. The priests were designated (chapter 24) as well as the singers (chapter 25), the gatekeepers, treasurers, and other officials (chapter 26), and finally the army divisions, tribal leaders, and royal officials (chapter 27).

-In chapter 28 David announced Solomon's succession and charged both Israel and Solomon to follow God's commands (1 Chr. 28:8-9). He then passed the plans for the temple, the articles for service, and the instructions for the priests and Levites to Solomon.

-He also made a personal offering to the work of the temple (1 Chr. 29:2-5), which the rest of Israel followed (1 Chr. 29:6-9). The amount that was given shows the abundance and prosperity that was achieved under David's reign.

-When it was time for Solomon to become king, all Israel acknowledged Solomon as David's successor and obeyed him resulting in a flawless transition of leadership.

The Reign of Solomon (2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31)

[See the lesson notes for 1 & 2 Kings for more information on the reign of King Solomon]

- Like with David, the record of Solomon's reign in Chronicles omits the unsavoury events of his life like his vengeance on his father's enemies (1 Kings 2:1-46) and his sins involving his many wives (1 Kings 11:1-13; Nehemiah 13:26). The blame for the schism of the kingdom is also shifted in Chronicles to Jeroboam (compare 2 Chr. 13:6-7 with 1 Kings 11:9-13, 29-39) and Solomon's ways are listed alongside David's as models of faithfulness to God (2 Chr. 11:17).
- One of Solomon's first acts after he became king was to go to the Tent of Meeting with the whole assembly of Israel to inquire of the Lord and to offer burnt offerings to Him (2 Chr. 1:5-6). When God appeared to Solomon to grant him whatever he wanted, Solomon asked for wisdom.
- The account that immediately follows shows Solomon beginning construction on the temple and obtaining wood and a craftsman for it from the king of Tyre.
- Chapters 3-4 record the details of the construction of the temple on the site purchased by David as well as the making of the temple furnishings (the bronze altar, the Sea, the tables, the lampstands, and the bowls).
- When the temple was finished, Solomon summoned all of Israel and had the ark installed in the temple so that they could make a momentous offering of sheep and cattle there (2 Chr. 5:6). This shows the abundance enjoyed by Israel under Solomon. When the ark was put in its place, the temple was filled with the glory of God (2 Chr. 5:13-14).
- God later appeared again to Solomon to confirm the covenant that He had made with David and to reaffirm that there would be blessings for obedience but punishment for disobedience (2 Chr. 7:17-22).
- Chapter 8 records Solomon's other endeavours: he achieved military victory, built up numerous cities, and installed the priests, Levites, and other temple workers according to what David had ordered.
- Solomon in his splendour is described as unrivaled in his greatness. His rule extended throughout all of Israel. He was exceedingly wealthy and possessed world renowned wisdom. His possessions included more than gold, silver, and precious stones but also imported wood (2 Chr. 9:10), rare spices (2 Chr. 9:9, 24), clothing (2 Chr. 9:24), and exotic animals (2 Chr. 9:21); the best of the world was brought to him. Israel was so prosperous under Solomon that silver was regarded as of little value (2 Chr. 9:20, 27).

The Schism and the History of the Kings of Judah (2 Chronicles 10:1-36:23)

[See the lesson notes for 1 & 2 Kings for more information on the reigns of the kings of Judah]

- After Solomon, the rest of Chronicles contains a record of the kings of Judah after the split of the northern and southern kingdoms. Chapters 10-36 span the reigns of 19 kings, from Rehoboam to Zedekiah.
- In the accounts of the kings of Judah there is an emphasis on God's immediate response of blessing or judgment to each generation according to how they regard His commands. Obedience and faithfulness are rewarded with success and prosperity, while disobedience and infidelity result in defeat, disaffection of the kingdom, and personal illness.

Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16, see also 1 Kings 12:1-24; 14:21-31)

- The book of Kings records that Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord during Rehoboam's reign, stirring up His anger (1 Kings 14:22-24). However, Chronicles reports that Rehoboam walked in the ways of David and Solomon for three of the early years of his reign (before he became established).
- In Chronicles, Rehoboam received the support of the priests and Levites throughout Israel after the split of the northern and southern kingdoms (2 Chr. 11:13). Even the Levites from Jeroboam's territory, along with people from every tribe who sought the Lord, went to Judah to support Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11:16-17).
- Because of Rehoboam's unfaithfulness later in life he was given over in defeat in Shishak (2 Chr. 12:5), but when Rehoboam and the leaders of Israel humbled themselves God declared that He would spare them from destruction (2 Chr. 12:6-7, 12).

Abijah (2 Chronicles 13:1-14:1, see also 1 Kings 15:1-8)

- The book of Kings records that Abijah committed all of the sins of his father (1 Kings 15:3).
- In Chronicles, Abijah denounced Jeroboam's false religion and held on to the worship of the God of Israel (2 Chr. 13:4-12). When his army was surrounded by Jeroboam's, he cried out to God who routed the opposing army, which was twice the size of his own (2 Chr. 13:14-15).

Asa (2 Chronicles 14:2-16:14, see also 1 Kings 15:9-24)

- The book of Kings records that Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (1 Kings 15:11).
- Asa built up the fortified cities of Judah and ushered in a period of peace (2 Chr. 14:5-6).
- He instituted a national reform wherein he removed the idols throughout Judah and Benjamin and from the towns of Ephraim and repaired the altar of the Lord, restoring worship to Judah. He also entered into a covenant with the people to seek the Lord and so God gave the kingdom a time of rest (2 Chr. 15:15, 19).
- When Asa later allied himself with the king of Aram and purchased his cooperation with the silver and gold from the royal treasury and the temple, God sent Hanani to him with a message of judgment (2 Chr. 16:7-9). Asa's response was to imprison Hanani and to oppress his people. The same account in the book of Kings doesn't condemn Asa's alliance with Aram (1 Kings 15:16-22).

Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17:1-21:3, see also 1 Kings 22:41-50)

- The book of Kings records that Jehoshaphat did what right in the eyes of the Lord in everything and did not stray from the ways of his father (1 Kings 22:43).
- Chronicles mentions that he only walked in the ways of David during his early years (17:3).
- Where the book of Kings only states that Jehoshaphat was at peace with Ahab, the king of Israel (1 Kings 22:44), Chronicles reveals that they had a political alliance through marriage (2 Chr. 18:1).
- God protected Jehoshaphat from Aram's chariots when he cried out to Him in battle (2 Chr. 18:31-32) while Ahab was fatally wounded. However, when Jehoshaphat returned from battle God pronounced wrath on him for his association with Ahab (2 Chr. 19:1-3).
- Jehoshaphat once again sought the Lord when the Moabites and Ammonites went to war against him (2 Chr. 20:1-3). When he and all Judah fasted and sought the Lord, God caused the opposing armies to turn and destroy one another (2 Chr. 20:22-24).
- Later in his reign Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Ahaziah, the wicked king of Israel, to build trading ships. Where the book of Kings only reports the destruction of the ships (1 Kings 22:48), the account in Chronicles makes it clear that Jehoshaphat's alliance was wicked in the sight of the Lord, which is what led to the loss of his fleet (2 Chr. 20:35-37).

Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21:4-20, see also 2 Kings 8:16-24)

- The book of Kings records that Jehoram did evil in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 8:18). When he became established as ruler he executed his brothers as well as some of the princes of Israel (2 Chr. 21:4).
- God's faithfulness to His covenant with David was what saved David's line from total destruction (2 Chr. 21:7).
- God sent a message to Jehoram through Elijah the prophet pronouncing judgment on him and his household (2 Chr. 21:12-15).
- God stirred the Philistines and Arabs against Jehoram who attacked Judah and carried off the royal treasures as well as his wives and all but his youngest son (2 Chr. 21:17). He also afflicted Jehoram with a disease of the bowels that eventually killed him (2 Chr. 21:18-19). The book of Kings doesn't contain the account of Judah's defeat or give any details about the end of Jehoram's reign.
- When Jehoram died Chronicles mentions that it was to no one's regret and that he was neither honoured nor buried in the tombs of the kings (2 Chr. 21:19b-20).

Ahaziah (2 Chronicles 22:1-9, see also 2 Kings 8:25-29; 9:11-29)

- The book of Kings records that Ahaziah did evil in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 8:27).

- He went to war alongside Joram, Ahab's wicked son, against the king of Aram (2 Chr. 22:5).
- He and his family were later executed by Jehu, who had been sent to execute judgment on the house of Ahab, because of his association with Joram (2 Chr. 22:7).

Joash (2 Chronicles 22:10-24:27, see also 2 Kings 11:1-12:21)

- The book of Kings records that Joash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord during the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest (2 Kings 12:2).
- God protected Joash from his grandmother Athaliah when she tried to wipe out the royal family after Ahaziah's death. Jehoram's daughter took Joash and hid him from Athaliah (2 Chr. 22:10-12).
- When Joash was made king, his first recorded act was to repair the temple (2 Chr. 24:4). All the officials and the people gladly brought their contributions for the work on the temple at the Joash's command (2 Chr. 24:10). Once the temple was restored, burnt offerings were made there continually during the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest.
- After Jehoiada died, Joash abandoned the temple of the Lord and began to worship idols (2 Chr. 24:17-18). He refused to listen to the prophets that God sent to turn him back, arousing God's anger. God then sent Zechariah, Jehoiada's son, to proclaim judgment on him but Joash had him stoned.
- Some time later when the Arameans marched against Joash. They invaded Judah and Jerusalem, killing the leaders and plundering the people. Even though the army of Aram was greatly outnumbered, Chronicles states that God delivered Judah into their hands because they had forsaken Him (2 Chr. 24:24).
- After the Arameans withdrew, Joash's own officials conspired against him and killed him (2 Chr. 24:25). The account of Zechariah is not found in the book of Kings but is included in Chronicles as the explanation for Joash's assassination.

Amaziah (2 Chronicles 25:1-28, see also 2 Kings 14:1-22)

- The book of Kings records that Amaziah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 14:3).
- When he executed the officials who had murdered his father he spared their sons according to the Law (2 Chr. 25:4, see also Deuteronomy 24:16), emphasizing personal accountability for sins.
- As part of the army he was assembling against the Edomites he hired 100,000 men from the northern kingdom but dismissed them when he was warned that God would overthrow his army if he took them with him into battle. Amaziah defeated the Edomites but the disgruntled soldiers who had been sent away raided several Judean towns, killing thousands of people there (2 Chr. 25:13).
- After the defeat of the Edomites, Amaziah brought back the gods of Seir and worshipped them, which caused the anger of God to burn against him (2 Chr. 25:14). God then sent a prophet to Amaziah with a message of destruction.
- In his pride, Amaziah issued a foolish challenge to Jehoash, the king of Israel, and was defeated resulting in great loss for Judah (2 Chr. 25:22-24).
- Because Amaziah turned away from the Lord the people of Jerusalem conspired against him and hunted him down and killed him (2 Chr. 25:27).

Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:1-23, see also 2 Kings 15:1-7 [Azariah])

- The book of Kings records that Uzziah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 15:3).
- Chronicles qualifies that by noting that he only sought God during the days of Zechariah and was given success as long as he did so (2 Chr. 26:5). God gave him both military victories as well as success in his many building projects.
- After Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord and entered the temple to burn incense on the altar, a service that was reserved for the sons of Aaron. When Azariah along with eighty other priests confronted him, he refused to accept correction and raged against them until God struck him with leprosy. Because of this, he had to live the rest of his life excluded from the temple of the Lord with his son governing the people in his place (2 Chr. 26:21, see also Numbers 5:2-3).

Jotham (2 Chronicles 27:1-9, see also 2 Kings 15:32-38)

- The book of Kings records that Jotham did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 15:34).
- He rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple and repaired the wall at the gate of Ophel (2 Chr 27:3).
- He also conquered the Ammonites and became powerful because he walked steadfastly before the Lord (2 Chr. 27:5-6).

Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:1-27, see also 2 Kings 16:1-20)

- The book of Kings records that Ahaz did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 16:2).
- He practiced the religions of the nations that God had driven out of the land (2 Chr. 28:2-4), which resulted in God handing him over to both the king of Aram as well as the king of Israel (2 Chr. 28:5-8).
- When Ahaz tried to solicit help from the king of Assyria using treasure from the temple, the palace, and the princes, the Assyrian king ended up causing even more trouble for him (2 Chr. 28:20-21).
- In his distress Ahaz became even more unfaithful, sacrificing to the gods of Damascus, taking away the furnishings of the temple and shutting its doors, and setting up altars and high places throughout Jerusalem and Judea (2 Chr. 28:24-25).

Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29:1-32:33, see also 2 Kings 18:1-20:21)

- The book of Kings records that Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 18:3).
- In the first month of his first year he reopened the doors of the temple that had been shut by Ahaz and repaired them. He also had the temple cleared out of everything in it that was unclean and had it consecrated (2 Chr. 29:3-5, 15-19).
- Hezekiah ordered a burnt offering and a sin offering to be made for all Israel (2 Chr. 29:24) and led the people in bringing personal offerings to God, re-establishing service in the temple (2 Chr. 29:31).
- He also reinstated the celebration of the Passover for the entire nation of Israel at which time the people removed the pagan altars from Jerusalem (2 Chr. 30:14). The result of the Passover celebration was a renewal of fervor for God; the Israelites who were there went out and smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles that were in the towns of Judah. They also destroyed the high places and altars throughout Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh (2 Chr. 31:1).
- At Hezekiah's command, the Israelites in Jerusalem gave generously from the firstfruits of their fields and vineyards, which was given to support those who served in the temple.
- Chronicles states that Hezekiah prospered in all his service to the temple and in his obedience to God's commands because he sought God and worked wholeheartedly (2 Chr. 31:21).
- When Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded Judah, Hezekiah encouraged his people to take confidence in God (2 Chr. 32:7-8). He and Isaiah the prophet cried out to God to which God responded by sending an angel to annihilate the army of Assyria (2 Chr. 32:21-22).
- Later in his life Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He once again turned to God in prayer and God answered him with miraculous healing (2 Chr. 32:24, see also 2 Kings 20:4-6).
- Chronicles records that Hezekiah became proud later in his reign and stirred up God's wrath, but when he repented God deferred the execution of His judgment (2 Chr. 32:25-26). These details supplement the account in Kings where Hezekiah showed off his wealth to the envoys from Babylon (2 Kings 20:12-21).

Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:1-20, see also 2 Kings 21:1-18)

- The book of Kings records that Manasseh did evil in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 21:2).
- Manasseh rebuilt the pagan high places that Hezekiah had demolished and reinstated the religious practices of the other nations, leading Judah and Jerusalem to commit even more evil than the nations God had previously destroyed (2 Chr. 33:2-9). He ignored the word of God that was spoken to him (2 Chr. 33:10).
- Because of this, God brought the army of Assyria against Manasseh who captured him and took him to Babylon. In his distress he humbled himself and sought the Lord who heard his plea and brought him back to Jerusalem (2 Chr. 33:12-13).

-After his return, Manasseh got rid of the foreign gods and the altars he had built and restored the altar of the Lord. He then made offerings to God on it and tried to turn the people back to serving the Lord.

Amon (2 Chronicles 33:21-25, see also 2 Kings 21:19-26)

-The book of Kings records that Amon did evil in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 21:20).

-He worshipped and sacrificed to the idols his father Manasseh had made and didn't humble himself before the Lord (2 Chr. 33:22-23).

-His own officials conspired against him and assassinated him (2 Chr. 33:24).

Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:1-36:1, see also 2 Kings 22:1-23:30)

-The book of Kings records that Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 22:2).

-His first recorded acts were to seek the Lord and to purge Judah and Jerusalem of its high places, Asherah poles, and idols (2 Chr. 34:3-7). He then undertook to purify and repair the temple (2 Chr. 34:8).

-Upon hearing the words of the Book of the Law that had been found in the temple, Josiah mourned and sought the Lord (2 Chr. 34:19-21).

-Judah was under God's wrath because they had provoked Him to anger by their idolatry but the kingdom was spared during Josiah's reign because he was responsive and humbled himself before God (2 Chr. 34:24-28).

-Josiah led the people to renew the covenant to follow God wholeheartedly according to the Book of the Covenant. He also removed the idols from the land and led the people to follow the Lord all his life (2 Chr. 34:29-33).

-Josiah celebrated the Passover and, along with his officials, personally provided offerings for the people and the priests from their own possessions (2 Chr. 35:7-9).

-At the end of his reign Josiah marched out to fight against Neco, the king of Egypt, who was warring against the Babylonians. He refused to turn back even though he had no reason to enter the conflict and was killed in battle (2 Chr. 35:20-24).

Jehoahaz (2 Chronicles 36:2-4, see also 2 Kings 23:31-35)

-The book of Kings records that Jehoahaz did evil in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 23:32).

-He reigned for only three months and was carried off to Egypt by Neco, who made his brother Jehoiakim king in his place (2 Chr. 36:4).

Jehoiakim (2 Chronicles 36:5-8, see also 2 Kings 23:36-24:7)

-The book of Kings records that Jehoiakim did evil in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 23:37).

-He was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who also seized articles from the temple of the Lord and took them for his temple in Babylon (2 Chr. 36:6-7).

Jehoiachin (2 Chronicles 36:9-10, see also 2 Kings 24:8-17)

-The book of Kings records that Jehoiachin did evil in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 24:9).

-He reigned for only three months and was sent to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar along with the remaining treasures from the temple. Nebuchadnezzar then made his uncle Zedekiah king in his place (2 Chr. 36:10).

Zedekiah (2 Chronicles 36:11-14, see also 2 Kings 24:18-25:7)

-The book of Kings records that Zedekiah did evil in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 24:19).

-He refused to listen to the word of God through Jeremiah (2 Chr. 36:12).

-He wouldn't turn to the Lord and broke an oath that he had sworn by rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar.

-During his reign all the leaders of the priests and the people became increasingly unfaithful and defiled the temple of the Lord (2 Chr. 36:14).

Exile and Restoration (2 Chronicles 36:15-23, see also 2 Kings 24:20-25:26)

- The final account in Chronicles is that of the fall of Jerusalem, which links all of the previous history to the returned exiles.
- It begins with a revelation of God's heart for His people, the pity He had on them, and His repeated attempts to turn His people back to Him (2 Chr. 36:15). However, the people despised His words and rejected His messengers, arousing His anger until He finally sent the king of Babylon to punish them and carry them away.
- The final image of the temple during the time of exile was that of its destruction (2 Chr. 36:19), which was symbolic of God's relationship with His people.
- Unlike the book of Kings, which focuses to a far greater extent on the death, destruction, and loss that Jerusalem experienced at the hands of the Babylonians, Chronicles ends with God working once again to bless and lead Israel back to right worship through their release from captivity with the direction to rebuild the temple of the Lord.
- The decree of Cyrus to release the Israelites for the purpose of building a temple to God symbolizes a new beginning with God. Chronicles attributes this to the Lord moving the heart of the king (2 Chr. 36:22-23).

Themes

Importance of Obedience to God

- As a warning against complacency and presumption on God's forbearance and His delaying of judgment, the author of Chronicles highlights the immediate curses of God on those who reject Him. Conversely, the blessings of living uprightly and responding to sin with repentance are also emphasized.
- Even a "good" king would face judgment through defeat, illness, or tragedy if he abandoned God and a king whose rule was a blight on the nation would experience blessing and answered prayer if he turned from his wicked ways and sought after God.
- Chronicles doesn't promote retribution theology, the view that good deeds are always rewarded and bad deeds are always punished. However, the numerous accounts of generations experiencing blessing or judgment for their own actions reinforce the importance of living in accordance with God's ways and emphasize the need for personal responsibility in dealing with sin seriously and appropriately.

Importance of Right Worship

- Right worship was something that many from the preceding generation forgot about, which is what led to their exile. The author emphasized this in his writing to ensure that his generation would understand its importance. The issue of worship is central in the book of Chronicles, whether it was right worship which led to blessing, or corrupted worship which brought God's judgment.
- In the accounts of the kings of Judah, the greatest threats to the kingdom didn't come from the armies of foreign nations, it was found in the religious practices of the king and his people. Good kings were characterized by their leading the nation to worship God and by the removal of pagan altars and other foreign objects of worship from the land while bad kings were characterized by their abandonment of God for the practices of the nations that God had driven out before Israel.
- The emphasis in Chronicles on the building of the temple and on the priests and Levites points to the purpose of the temple building and the duties of the temple workers, the worship of God.
- The reigns of David and Solomon are presented primarily in terms of their involvement in the building of the temple. There is even a section dedicated to David's preparation for the temple's construction (1 Chr. 22-26).
- Many of the accounts in Chronicles involve either the temple (building it, assigning workers to serve in it, placing treasure in it, conducting worship in it, repairing it, looting it, shutting or opening its doors) or pagan objects of worship (destroying or setting up pagan altars, cutting down or installing Asherah poles, making sacrifices to idols).
- The attitude of the people toward the temple and the physical state of the temple building itself was often an indicator of the spiritual health of the nation.

Christ the Promised Davidic King

- In his accounts of Israel's history, the author of Chronicles presents a vision of a future Messianic king by highlighting the positive attributes of David and Solomon.
- The focus of the genealogies is on the line of promise through Seth (1 Chr. 1:1-4) and then on the descendants of Judah as opposed to Reuben. From Seth would come the seed of the woman who would bring final defeat to the serpent (Genesis 3:14-15) and this would be accomplished by a ruler in the line of David, all of whom came from Judah.
- One important characteristic of the Messiah that is hinted at in Chronicles is His place in David's dynasty; Davidic succession and the continuation of David's seed is shown even through the exile (1 Chr. 3:17-24).
- God's covenant with David is the basis on which the author looks forward to the coming king who will sit on David's throne (1 Chr. 17:11-14). In faithfulness to His covenant, God preserved David's offspring in spite of wicked kings such as Jehoram (2 Chr. 21:7) and acts of treachery as with Athaliah (2 Chr. 22:10-12).
- All Israel was ruled by David and Solomon and, despite the fragmentation of the kingdom and the exile, there will once again be an "all Israel" (no longer based on family of birth) under the coming king, Christ who rescues us from spiritual exile, the son of David and the true temple that Israel was to anticipate.

Conclusion

- The book of Chronicles is a call to hope in the Lord, looking back in order to look ahead. It presents a retrospective following the development of God's plan of redemption throughout Old Testament history.
- Order matters; there is benefit in considering Chronicles in its original place as the final word of God to the restored people of Israel before the 400 year period of silence preceding the coming of Christ. The themes within the book are what the people were to dwell on and use to guide their lives.
- The guiding principles that were given to the people of Judah apply to us today as well. Just as Israel had the coming descendant of David to look forward to, we look forward in hope to the returning son of David who will rule in perfect righteousness and justice. As we wait, we are to continue following God in what He has revealed to us and to live upright and obedient lives. We must also maintain the focus of our worship on God and not be drawn away by the desires and philosophies of the world that compete for our devotion.

References

Longman, Tremper III, and Raymond B. Dillard. An Introduction to the Old Testament, second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

NIV Study Bible

<http://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/we-equip/adults/core-seminars/old-testament/>