

Old Testament Survey

1 & 2 Chronicles

Chronicles

- The title in Hebrew means “events of the days.”
- Originally written as one book but was split into two in the Septuagint.
- The last book in the Hebrew Bible.
- The author is unknown, possibly Ezra.
- Written at the end of the fifth century B.C. after the return of the exiles.

Chronicles

- The content in Chronicles overlaps with 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings.
- There are four main sections to the book: genealogies, David's reign, Solomon's reign, and the kings of Judah.
- God is shown not as having failed to save His people but as the One who fulfilled His warnings to Israel.

Chronicles – Overview

- **Genealogies (1 Chronicles 1:1-9:44)**
 - Genealogies serve a practical purpose: determining familial status, privileges, obligations, inheritance, and hereditary rights
 - The genealogy in Chronicles spans all of human history from creation to author's day and shows the roots of the postexilic community
 - From Adam there is a focus on Seth's line, the genealogy is not meant to be comprehensive
 - Special attention is also given to Judah (the line of the kings) and Levi (the line of the priests and temple servants)

Chronicles – Overview

- Chronicles vs. Samuel & Kings

- Idealization of the reigns of David and Solomon in Chronicles
- There are generally four types of added details found in the Chronicles accounts:
 - **An act of disobedience from a “good” king, with negative consequences** (E.g. Amaziah)
 - **An act of obedience/repentance from a “bad” king, with positive consequences** (E.g. Rehoboam, Abijah, Manasseh)
 - **An account explaining a previous act of judgment** (E.g. Joash, Uzziah)
 - **A moral perspective on previously neutral account** (E.g. Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah)

Chronicles – Overview

- Is this revisionist history?
 - Chronicles is to be considered a supplement to Samuel and Kings
 - It was not the author's intent that Chronicles be treated as a standalone book, but that it should be read with the other available writings
 - Though Chronicles has a different focus, it highlights an equally valid message from the same events (like the gospels)

Chronicles – Overview

- **The United Monarchy**
 - The entire nation of Israel was united under David and Solomon
 - Chronicles puts a lot of focus on the reigns of David and Solomon, especially as they relate to the temple of God
 - There is anticipation of a future ruler from David's line who will once again rule over all Israel

Chronicles – Overview

- **The United Monarchy (1 Chr. 10:1-2 Chr. 9:31)**
 - **The Reign of David (1 Chronicles 10:1-29:30)**
 - The narrative portion of Chronicles begins with the end of Saul's reign
 - David succeeded Saul with the unanimous support of Israel, becoming a rallying figure for the whole nation
 - David's first recorded act as king was to conquer Jerusalem and move the ark of the Lord there
 - David desired to build a temple for God
 - God's covenant with David (1 Chr. 17:11-14)

Chronicles – Overview

- The United Monarchy (1 Chr. 10:1-2 Chr. 9:31)
 - The Reign of David (1 Chronicles 10:1-29:30)
 - God enabled David to triumph over all his enemies.
 - David's census is his only account of personal disobedience included in Chronicles
 - The ensuing punishment on Israel provided David with the occasion to purchase the plot of land on which the temple would be built
 - Chronicles provides a lot of detail on David's preparation for the construction of the temple
 - When Solomon succeeded David all Israel acknowledged him as king

Chronicles – Overview

- **The United Monarchy (1 Chr. 10:1-2 Chr. 9:31)**
 - **The Reign of Solomon (2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31)**
 - Like with David, Chronicles presents an idealized account of Solomon's reign, listing him as an example of faithfulness to God (2 Chr. 11:17)
 - When Solomon became king he inquired of the Lord and asked God for wisdom
 - The temple of the Lord was completed during Solomon's reign, after which he summoned all Israel, installed the ark, and made a great sacrifice to God
 - God confirmed His covenant with Solomon (2 Chr. 7:17-22)

Chronicles – Overview

- **The United Monarchy (1 Chr. 10:1-2 Chr. 9:31)**
 - **The Reign of Solomon (2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31)**
 - Solomon ruled over all Israel, achieving military victory and engaging in many building projects
 - His splendour was unrivaled
 - He attained great wealth, great wisdom, and worldwide renown
 - Israel was exceedingly prosperous during Solomon's reign

Chronicles – Overview

- **The Schism and the History of the Kings of Judah**
 - After Solomon, Chronicles contains the accounts of the 19 kings of Judah (Rehoboam to Zedekiah) after the split of the northern and southern kingdoms
 - The emphasis in these accounts is on God's immediate response of blessing or judgment for each generation
 - Obedience and faithfulness result in success and prosperity but disobedience and infidelity lead to defeat, public disaffection, and illness

Chronicles – Overview

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

King	Account in Chronicles	Account in Kings
Rehoboam	2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16	1 Kings 12:1-24; 14:21-31
Abijah	2 Chronicles 13:1-14:1	1 Kings 15:1-8
Asa	2 Chronicles 14:2-16:14	1 Kings 15:9-24
Jehoshaphat	2 Chronicles 17:1-21:3	1 Kings 22:41-50
Jehoram	2 Chronicles 21:4-20	2 Kings 8:16-24
Ahaziah	2 Chronicles 22:1-9	2 Kings 8:25-29; 9:11-29
Joash	2 Chronicles 22:10-24:27	2 Kings 11:1-12:21
Amaziah	2 Chronicles 25:1-28	2 Kings 14:1-22
Uzziah (Azariah)	2 Chronicles 26:1-23	2 Kings 15:1-7
Jotham	2 Chronicles 27:1-9	2 Kings 15:32-38

Chronicles – Overview

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

King	Account in Chronicles	Account in Kings
Ahaz	2 Chronicles 28:1-27	2 Kings 16:1-20
Hezekiah	2 Chronicles 29:1-32:33	2 Kings 18:1-20:21
Manasseh	2 Chronicles 33:1-20	2 Kings 21:1-18
Amon	2 Chronicles 33:21-25	2 Kings 21:19-26
Josiah	2 Chronicles 34:1-36:1	2 Kings 22:1-23:30
Jehoahaz	2 Chronicles 36:2-4	2 Kings 23:31-35
Jehoiakim	2 Chronicles 36:5-8	2 Kings 23:36-24:7
Jehoiachin	2 Chronicles 36:9-10	2 Kings 24:8-17
Zedekiah	2 Chronicles 36:11-14	2 Kings 24:18-25:7

Chronicles – Overview

- **The Schism and the Kings of Judah (2 Chr. 10:1-36:23)**
 - **Exile and Restoration (2 Chronicles 36:15-23)**
 - Links all of the previous history to the returned exiles
 - God's heart for His people is revealed, His pity and His patience (2 Chr. 36:15)
 - Israel despised His words and rejected His messengers, resulting in punishment and exile
 - The last image of the temple during the exile was its destruction (2 Chr. 36:19) – symbolic of God's relationship with His people
 - Chronicles ends with Cyrus releasing the Israelites to rebuild the temple (2 Chr. 36:23) – symbolizing of a new beginning with God

Chronicles – Themes

- **Importance of Obedience to God**
 - The author warns against complacency and presumption on God's forbearance and His delaying of judgment
 - Emphasis is placed on the sure and immediate curses of God against those who reject Him as well as the blessings for those who live uprightly
 - Even a good king would be judged for abandoning God and a wicked king who turned from his wickedness and sought after God would experience blessing
 - Importance of taking personal responsibility to deal with sin seriously and appropriately

Chronicles – Themes

- **Importance of Right Worship**
 - This was forgotten by the previous generation, which is what led to their exile
 - Worship is central to the accounts in Chronicles, either right worship which led to blessing or corrupted worship which led to judgment
 - The greatest threats to the kingdom came from the religious practices of the king his people rather than foreign armies
 - Good kings led the nation to worship God and removed objects of idolatry, bad kings abandoned God and turned to pagan religions
 - Emphasis on the building of the temple and on the priests and Levites allude to the worship of God

Chronicles – Themes

- **Christ the Promised Davidic King**

- “Chronicles presents a vision of what the Messiah will be like by highlighting the positive aspects of David and Solomon.”
- The focus of the genealogies is on the line of Seth and the descendants of Judah through David in fulfillment of Genesis 3:14-15
- Davidic succession and the continuation of David’s seed through the exile is an important theme maintained in Chronicles
- God’s covenant with David is the basis for the hope of the coming king who would sit on David’s throne (1 Chr. 17:11-14)
- There will once again be an “all Israel” (no longer based on family of birth) under Christ who rescues us from spiritual exile

Conclusion

- Chronicles is a call to hope in the Lord, looking back in order to look ahead
- It is God's final word to His restored people before the 400 years of silence preceding Christ
- The guiding principles in Chronicles still apply today:
 - Look forward to the return of Christ
 - Follow God faithfully in uprightness and obedience
 - Worship God with complete 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/>