

1-2 Chronicles

Divine History

Writing of the Book

- The Chronicles are an anonymous composition.
- It seems likely the writer was a priest or Levite.
- The exact relationship between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah remains an open question, though it makes a lot of sense to see them as two volumes from one compiler/editor.

Writing *continued*

- The Chronicles are, with Ezra-Nehemiah, probably the latest books of the Old Testament in respect to the date of the composition, which was likely near 400 B.C.
- The genealogies of 1 Chronicles trace the heritage of covenant faith from Adam to David, with particular attention given to the patriarchs and the twelve sons of Jacob.

Writing *continued*

- The actual history addressed in Chronicles spans the Hebrew united monarchy from the close of Saul's reign to the Babylonian captivity of Judah (ca. 1020-586 B.C.).
- The books conclude with the edict of Cyrus permitting the Jews to return to Palestine (ca. 538 B.C.).
- The backdrop for the writing of Chronicles was the post-exilic period of Hebrew history.

Background

- The Chronicler offers a “theology of hope” in the midst of despair related the apparent failure of prophecies by Haggai and Zechariah to come true, coupled with disappointment over the short-lived reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah.
- Chronicles reassures Israel that God’s promises were not canceled, that the kingdom would one day come.

Outline

I. Genealogical Prologue

- A. Patriarchs (1 Chron 1)
- B. Israel's Sons (2-3)
- C. Families of Judah (4:1-23)
- D. Simeon (4:24-43)
- E. Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (5)
- F. Levi (6)
- G. Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Ephraim, Asher (7)
- H. Saul (8)
- I. Returning Exiles (9)

II. United Monarchy

A. David's Reign (1 Chron 10-29)

1. Saul's death (10)
2. David's ascension (11-12)
3. Return of the ark of the covenant (13-17)
4. David's conquests (18-20)
5. Organization of David's kingdom (21-27)
6. David's preparation for the temple (28:1-29:9)
7. David's farewell and death (29:10-30)

II. United Monarchy

B. Solomon's Reign (2 Chron 1-9)

1. Solomon's kingship (1)
2. Construction of the temple (2:1-5:1)
3. Dedication of the temple (5:2-7:22)
4. Solomon's activities (8-9)

III. History of Judah

- A. Rehoboam (10-12)
- B. Abijah (13:1-14:1)
- C. Asa (14:2-16:14)
- D. Jehoshaphat (17:1-21:1)
- E. Jerhoram (21)
- F. Ahaziah (22:1-9)
- G. Athaliah and Joash (22:10-24:27)
- H. Amaziah (25)
- I. Uzziah (26)
- J. Jotham (27)
- K. Ahaz (28)

III. History of Judah

- L. Hezekiah (29-32)
- M. Manasseh (33:1-20)
- N. Amon (33:21-25)
- O. Josiah (34:1-36:1)
- P. Jehoahaz (36:2-4)
- Q. Jehoiakim (36:5-8)
- R. Jehoiachin (36:9-10)
- S. Zedekiah (36:11-16)

IV. The Exile (36:17-23)

Purpose and Message

- The chronicler's message centers on the Israelite united monarchy and the crucial roles played by David and Solomon in establishing and maintaining the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem.
- The chronicler highlighted David's kingship to communicate the centrality of the temple, while Solomon's success was directly tied to the proper worship of Yahweh.

Purpose/Message *continued*

- The new exodus and restoration of the Hebrew community predicted by the prophets could only be realized as postexilic Jerusalem imitated the model of past faithfulness and obedience in worship and service to the Lord.
- For postexilic Jerusalem, the message concerned Yahweh's election of Israel and the providential activity of Yahweh in Israel's history.
- The historical review of Judah underscored the message of divine retribution associated with the blessings and curses conditioning Yahweh's covenant with Israel.

Purpose/Message *continued*

- The chronicler's fixation with the Davidic and Solomonic kingdoms was more than a plea for a return to the good old days. Those kingships served as models of an "ideal" Israel under theocratic rule for the present community.
- The centrality of the temple, the proper worship of Yahweh, and the role of the priests and Levites in the temple service demonstrated the supremacy of Yahweh in the face of encroaching paganism.

Purpose/Message *continued*

- Finally, the chronicler's history offered hope to postexilic Jerusalem by assuring the present community that God would continue providentially to intervene in Hebrew history to accomplish the prophetic vision of Zion as the political and religious center of the nations (cf. Zech 14:12-21).

Major Themes

Worship in the Old Testament

- The worship of Yahweh was an integral part of the chronicler's theocratic ideal for postexilic Jerusalem.
- The records of Hebrew worship in Chronicles are representative of the wide range of Israelite religious experiences and are useful as a summary statement of Old Testament worship in general.

Major Themes

Worship in the Old Testament

- Although the chronicler emphasized the former, he clearly understood the importance of both corporate and individual worship (1 Chron 15:29; 2 Chron 31:20-21).
- The chronicler also offered examples of ordered and priestly led worship in keeping with the liturgical calendar (2 Chron 35:1-19) and the spontaneous response to Yahweh's steadfast lovingkindness (1 Chron 16:28-34; cf. 2 Chron 30:13-22).
- The private aspect of worship is more implicit in Chronicles (e.g., 1 Chron 16:23-27), but gatherings for public worship abound in the two books (1 Chron 16:36; 29:9; 2 Chron 5:2-14; 6:3-11).

Major Themes

Worship in the Old Testament

- More important, the chronicler recognized that the true worship of Yahweh was motivated both by the fear of the Lord (2 Chron 6:31, 33), and love for God with a whole heart (1 Chron 28:9; 2 Chron 19:9).
- Acknowledging the worth of God and giving him the reverence and adoration due his name included the following gestures, acts, and movements: drink offerings and libations, the presentation of sacrifices and burnt offerings, bowing down, burning incense, giving thank offerings and votive gifts, prayer in various postures, fasting, ritual washing and cleansing, dancing, tearing of the clothes in repentance, feasting, and observing the great religious festivals (cf. 2 Chron 29:12-19, 31-36; 32:13-27; 34:12; 34:22-28).

Major Themes

Worship in the Old Testament

- Of special importance to the chronicler was the significance of worship as word.
- There was the word of oath taking, of praise and thanksgiving, of prayer, joyful song, confession, and liturgical responses by the Hebrew congregation (cf. 1 Chron 15:29; 16:4, 9, 23, 36, 40; 17:16-27; 2 Chron 15:15).
- Preeminent in the chronicler's theocratic ideal was worship as a place, namely, the temple of Yahweh (cf. 2 Chron 5:2-7:10). Yet he also acknowledged that true worship of the Lord God of Israel is not limited by the bounds of time or the confines of a "sacred place" (2 Chron 6:12-23).

Major Themes

Worship in the Old Testament

- The chronicler devotes large sections of his record to the role of the priests and Levites in the religious life of the nation.
- The priests and Levites were the Old Testament equivalent of professional clergy, since they were supported by the offerings and votive gifts of the people.
- The priests were descendants of Aaron, Israel's first high priest, and they were responsible for guiding and representing the Hebrews in the sacrificial and festival worship.

Major Themes

Worship in the Old Testament

- In the Chronicles the Levites were assigned, by royal decree, to service guilds such as singer, musician, gatekeeper, and teacher of the law and judge (cf. 1 Chron 24-26; 2 Chron 17:7-9; 19:11).
- The chronicler assumed that the priests and Levites would bring in the new order and reestablish theocracy in Israel. However, Malachi and others censured the priests and the Levites for their failure to keep their sacred trust before God (e.g., Mal 1:6-2:9).
- According to the New Testament, this only served to heighten the priesthood of Jesus, the surety of a better covenant (Heb 7:20-22).

Major Themes

The Importance of the Repentant

- **Heart** The emphasis on “repentance” in Chronicles reveals that the compiler knew the mercy of Yahweh and his gracious capacity for turning from wrath in the face of genuine repentance by his people (e.g., 2 Chron 12:6-12; cf. Exod 32:11-14).
- Illustrations of past repentance are recited as concrete examples assuring God’s continued response of merciful forgiveness to those who return to him (2 Chron 15:4; 32:26).

Major Themes

The Importance of the Repentant

- **Heart**
Other phrases giving evidence of the chronicler's awareness of the need to balance the "internal" and "external" factors of true religion include his attention to "rejoicing and serving God with a pure heart" (e.g., 1 Chron 28:9; 29:9, 19; 2 Chron 16:9), "generous giving and faithfulness" (e.g., 1 Chron 29:1-9, 14, 17; 2 Chron 19:9), and "thankful and joyful celebration and worship" (e.g., 1 Chron 16:4, 7; 23:30; 29:13).

Major Themes

Typology

- Typology is a method of exegesis that establishes historical correspondence between Old Testament persons, events, or objects and ideas by way of foreshadowing or prototype.
- Usually the Old Testament correspondent is identified as the “type”; the New Testament correspondent expressing the truth in a greater way is the “antitype.”
- For example, the writer of Hebrews understands the priesthood of Melchizedek in the Old Testament (Gen 14:17-24; Ps 110:4) as the prototype of the superior priesthood of Jesus Christ (Heb 7:1-22). In the same manner, the tabernacle (and later the temple) were symbols or types of the new covenant, foreshowing Christ’s eternal sacrifice (Heb 9:6-14).

Major Themes Typology

- In describing the preparations for and construction of the temple of Yahweh, the chronicler portrayed David as a “second” Moses and Solomon as a “second” Joshua.
- Specifically, David was prohibited from completing the temple even as Moses was denied the privilege of leading the Hebrews into the land of covenant promise (cf. Num 20:2-11; 1 Chron 22:8).

Major Themes Typology

- Likewise, Solomon exemplified Joshua in that both were chosen as successors privately and given public acclaim, both received popular support without political or military resistance, both were exalted by God, and both led the Hebrew people into an era of “rest” and “blessing.”
- Finally, both Joshua and Solomon were given the same charge in assuming their leadership roles, a charge “to be strong and courageous” (Deut 31:6; cf. 1 Chron 22:13) because “the Lord goes before you” (Deut 31:6, 8, 23; Josh 1:5, 9; cf. 1 Chron 22:11, 16), and “he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deut 31:6, 8; Josh 1:5, 9; cf. 1 Chron 28:20).