

Analysis of Chronicles (1 & 2)

General

The original title in the Hebrew Bible read, “The annals (i.e., events or happenings) of the days.” 1 and 2 Chronicles were comprised of one book until later divided into separate books in the Greek OT translation, the Septuagint (LXX), 200 B.C. The translation of the LXX title means “the things left over.” This unfortunate moniker may be the reason that many see the book as a simple retelling of Kings. The book of Chronicles normally stands at the end of the Hebrew Bible because of the influence of the Septuagint.

Authorship and Date

Neither 1 nor 2 Chronicles contains direct statements regarding the human author, though Jewish tradition strongly favors Ezra the priest (cf. Ezra 7:1–6) as “the chronicler.” These records were most likely recorded ca. 450–430 B.C. The genealogical record in 1 Chronicles 1–9 supports a date after 450 B.C. for the writing. The NT does not directly quote either 1 or 2 Chronicles.

Key Issues

Key issues in Chronicles are: 1) to investigate the relationship between Ezra/Nehemiah and Chronicles; Kings and Chronicles, 2) to investigate the complementary presentation of David and Solomon, 3) to harmonize the use of numbers in Chronicles, 4) to harmonize a Christian’s use of 2 Chronicles 7:14, 5) to recognize the retribution theology of the Chronicler, 6) to recognize the use of sources in the Chronicler’s composition and the value he placed on the written law, 7) to understand the Chronicler’s use of “all Israel,” 8) to appreciate God’s faithfulness to keep his promise to keep Israel as his special covenant people.

Subject/Purpose Statement

The Chronicler recounted Israel election, the glorious rule of David and Solomon and a retribution history of the rest of the kings of Israel. The author traced Israel’s history in order to demonstrate to the post-exilic community that they still were the people of God with the Davidic promise still enforced. This demonstration was meant to motivate the people of God to continued faithfulness to the covenant to be able to enjoy the blessings of God and thus escape his sure judgment.

Outline of Chronicles

- I. God’s election of Israel seen through the genealogies (1:1-10:44).
 - A. Genealogy from Adam to Saul (1:1–9:44)
 - B. Genealogy and service of the temple (9:1-44).

- II. The glorious rule of David and Solomon's united monarchy point to a restoration of such a rule in the future (1 Chronicles 10:1- 2 Chronicles 9:31).
 - A. David's reign (10:1–29:30)
 - B. David's establishment of "pre-temple" worship (15:1-20:8).
 - C. David established people for the worship at the temple (22:1-27:34).
 - D. David passed the torch of temple building and worship to Solomon the new king (1 Chronicles 28:1 - 2 Chronicles 2:18).
 - E. Solomon's reign (1:1–9:31)
 - F. Solomon built the temple and God dwelt in it (3:1-8:18).
 - G. Solomon enjoyed God's blessings (9:1-31).
- III. The post-schism kingdom demonstrates the retribution theology as a motivation to the present generation to remain faithful (2 Chronicles 10:36:23).
 - A. Kings of Judah (10:1–36:23)
 - B. A foreign king who begins to restore the temple (36:22-23).

Theological Application

On the basis of past history he [the Chronicler] sought repeatedly to draw the lesson that Israel prospered when obedient but courted God's wrath and the destruction of the nation through disobedience.... However, after the judgment, God once again restored his people who continue to stand under the same divine imperatives. ...both the judgment which the writer cites upon disobedience in the past... as well as the promises proffered for a faithful response remain authoritative for every generation.

God has not forgotten his people, Israel in the land of exile. On the contrary God desires to restore his people to himself and fulfill his promise to David.

Chronicles demonstrates how God is good to those in relationship with Him but against those who oppose Him—this presents a healthy understanding of what relationship with Him entails. Chronicles shows us that when we humble ourselves, seek God, and repent of our sins, He is faithful to listen, forgive, and heal (7:14). Today, the one who rules from David's throne (Luke 1:32; Rom 1:3–4)—Jesus—offers us these things (Luke 4:18–21; 1 John 1:9).