



CHRONICLES

Survey of the Old Testament: The Writings

Fall 2006

Introduction

Name

In the original Hebrew Bible, the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles were one book entitled “The Words of the Days.” In the Greek translation of the bible (the Septuagint), the book was titled, “The Things Omitted,” suggesting that Chronicles was a history which included those things omitted in Samuel and Kings. The title Chronicles was first given by Jerome in the Latin vulgate.

Author & Date

Tradition states that Chronicles was written by Ezra. Some scholars doubt Ezra’s authorship, given the number of generations that follow Zerubbabel in chapter 4. However, there is considerable debate on the understanding of this particular genealogy. Nonetheless, given the similar themes and style, most scholars believe that the author/compiler of Ezra-Nehemiah also wrote Chronicles as well.

With the book ending with the decree of Cyrus and the descendents of Zerubbabel carried to at least 2 generations, the earliest date for the book would be the late 6th century BC. If Ezra and Chronicles and Ezra were indeed written by the same person, the book would have been written closer to the events of Nehemiah in the mid fifth century.

This was a time of great uncertainty for the returning exiles. In the exile, the Jewish national identity had nearly died. Now there was political opposition to their right to the land. The continuance of the Jewish nation was at great risk at this time. The people needed a sense of stability and permanence.

Purpose of the Book

The books of Samuel and Kings are more encompassing than Chronicles. They show the strengths and the weaknesses of the major characters in Israel’s history. Ultimately, the purpose of Kings was to demonstrate to the Jews the causes of the exile.

Chronicles, however, presents a much more positive history. Chronicles provides the returning exiles with a recounting of the national history from the time of Adam to the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC, with particular emphasis in the reigns of David and Solomon. However, David’s failures are largely ignored, with the exception of the sin of the census, which is necessary as it ties with the building of the temple. The northern kingdom of Israel is largely ignored except as it relates to the kingdom of Judah. Even the bad kings of Judah are shown in a more favorably, with Chronicles mentioning the repentance of Manasseh.

Primarily, the book provides the post-exilic generations with a sense of connectedness to the David kingdom. It demonstrates the continuity between Solomon’s temple and the new temple built by Zerubbabel. The writer of Chronicles is hoping to establish in his readers a sense of stability which is centered on the temple and the worship of Yahweh. While the temple stood and the people stood in the traditions of David and Solomon, so the exiles could be assured that they would remain in the land as the people of God.

Secondarily, and on a practical level, the book serves as a template for the practice and organization of the temple. The book provides the exiles with a look back at the first temple, the worship of God in the temple, and the organization of the temple workers. In so doing, the author is

outlining the organization and practices of worship in the post-exilic temple, and reminding the people of the importance of temple worship.

Themes of the Book

The construction of the temple serves as the center point of the book of Chronicles. The whole history of Israel is seen through the context of the temple. The temple represented permanence, stability and continuity to the nation.

God's presence in the temple reminded the people that they were the chosen nation, possessing a unique relationship to Yahweh. As David prays in response to the prophecy of Nathan:

Let Your name be established and magnified forever, saying, 'Yahweh of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel; and the house of David your servant is established before You. (1 Chronicles 17:24)

Structure of the Book

1 Chronicles					2 Chronicles																										
The Genealogies		Reign of David			Reign of Solomon			Kingdom of Judah																							
Genealogy of the Davidic Line	1	David Crowned	10	Ark Brought to Jerusalem	13	David's Kingdom Established	17	Preparation for the Temple	21	Solomon's Temple	2	Solomon's Kingdom	8	Reign of Rehoboam	10	Reign of Abijah	13	Reign of Asa	14	Reign of Jehosaphat	17	Reign of Jehoram, Ahaziah & Joash	21	Reign of Amaziah & Uzziah	25	Reign of Hezekiah	29	Reigns of Manasseh & Josiah	33	Fall of Jerusalem	36

Chronicles can be seen as a pyramid; with the peak being 2 Chronicles 2-7. The central point of the book is the completion of the temple during the reign of Solomon. The life of David is seen as a preliminary to this high point. The deeds of the kings after Solomon are evaluated in light of their treatment of the temple and the worship of God.

The Genealogies (1 Chronicles 1-9)

The first chapters of Chronicles are often considered by bible readers as some of the dullest chapters in the entire bible. For nine straight chapters all the modern reader sees is a list of names which often are unpronounceable and which only rarely include people who have any meaning for us. Why would the author of Chronicles devote nearly one-seventh of the entire book to such these endless lists of people?

The genealogies provide the returning exiles with a sense of connectedness to the past. The Jews in Judah in the fifth century must have felt themselves to be rather insignificant in light of the great geopolitics of the day. These struggling settlers were not the movers and shakers of the day. They were the remnant of a nation which had nearly died out in the exile, living far from the centers of political and economic power in the Persian Empire. The Jews in that day needed a sense of identity.

Genealogy of the Davidic Line (1 Chronicles 1-3)

The chronicler provides the Jews settlers with their identity by tracing their heritage back to Adam. Chapter 1 begins with Adam and moves forward without much commentary up to Jacob (a.k.a. Israel). Other nations are mentioned, but the focus of the lineage is headed to Israel.

In chapter 2 the lineage focuses on a single tribe, Judah, and even more specifically within that tribe, the focus comes down to King David.

But more importantly, it is through the tribe of Judah that we find the royal lineage. In chapter 3, the descendents of David are listed, including all the kings of Judah, through Zerubbabel and his descendents right up to the time of the chronicler himself. The settlers are being provided with a

connection to the greatest King and the greatest era in the history of Israel by showing how people today are descendents of the great king David and are part of the royal line.

This line is not, however, just a royal line, but is also the Messianic line. As will be shown in chapter 17, the descendents of David are promised to be part of a royal dynasty which will endure forever. The lineage of David is important not just to connect the returning exiles to the past, but it connects them to the future when the Messiah himself will reign on the throne of David and establish an eternal kingdom. Both Matthew and Luke's gospel understand the importance of the genealogy, for they trace this same royal lineage down to Jesus Christ himself as a means of proving his right to be considered the King of the Jews and as the Messiah who would establish the kingdom forever.

Descendents of Israel (1 Chronicles 4-8)

The next five chapters develop the genealogies of all the tribes of Israel. In 2 Chronicles 10 we learn that the great kingdom established by David divides, with 10 tribes of the north becoming the kingdom of Israel and only 2 tribes remained loyal to the Davidic royal line. Those two tribes are Judah and Benjamin. These two tribes serve as book-ends to this section, with Judah beginning the list of Israel's descendents (chapter 4), and Benjamin ending the list (chapter 8).

In the center of the list of the tribes is the tribe of Levi (chapter 6). The placement of the Levites in the center of this section is not a coincidence. When the Israelites were migrating from Egypt to the Promised Land, their camp was physically arranged so that the Levites were in the center of the camp with all the other tribes surrounding them (Numbers 2). The chronicler is replicating this arrangement in his genealogy by putting Levi in chapter 6. The Levites served as the priests and temple leaders, and their central listing serves as a reminder that all the center of all Israel is around the worship of Yahweh, their God.

The tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi receive much more of the chronicler's attention as they were the largest of the remaining tribes. Most of the other tribes had been hauled away into exile by Assyria in 722 BC. Only a small remnant from the other tribes existed by the time Chronicles was written, having descended either from those who assimilated into Judah after the fall of Israel or those who chose to return after the exile. By the time of this writing, however, there appears to be very little record of some of the tribes. The tribe of Naphtali, for example, only has a single verse, suggesting that there were very few left from this tribe and that the records for this tribe were largely missing. Nonetheless, the chronicler finds it important that all the tribes are mentioned so as to provide a place within Judah for all the descendents of Israel.

Census of Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 9)

The genealogies end in chapter 9 with a list of those living in Jerusalem. There is some similarity between this list and the census in Nehemiah 11. However, it seems that this list is showing those who lived in Jerusalem at the time of the exile (1 Chronicles 9:1). This list first shows that there were people from many tribes living in Jerusalem, and therefore there is a place for all Israel in the newly rebuilt Jerusalem as well. Secondly, this list shows the duties of various tribes and sub-tribes within the city's administration. Priests, gatekeepers, singers and musicians, are listed. This serves the basis of re-establishing the religious and civic duties of the returned exiles.

The Reign of David (1 Chronicles 10-29)

David Crowned (1 Chronicles 10-12)

Genealogy and Death of King Saul (9:35-10:14)

The genealogies end in chapter 9 with the lineage of King Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. Saul was the first king of a united Israel and serves as point of pride for the tribe of Benjamin. However,

the chronicler doesn't spend much time on the reign of Saul, with chapter 10 only discussing his death. This is only a transition chapter, to the main event; namely, the reign of King David.

David Crowned (11:1-3)

Chronicles ignores the strife between David and Saul, which occupies so much of the book of Samuel. It also ignores the 7 years after Saul's death where the nation was divided with Judah following David and the other tribes following after Saul's descendant. Chronicles instead emphasizes the unity of the nation by beginning with David being crowned the king over all Israel in Hebron (11:1-3).

David Conquers Jerusalem (11:4-9)

After his coronation, David sets to conquering Jerusalem, which had been under control of the Jebusites. David establishes his capitol in Jerusalem, rebuilding and expanding the city. It is for this reason that Jerusalem is called the City of David. The central city of those returning from exile remains Jerusalem, the city of David. Here is a connection to the past which can form a basis of civic pride for all Israel at the time of Chronicles.

David's Supporters (11:10-12:40)

David's Mighty Men (11:10-47)

David's key supporters were called his "mighty men." The list of mighty men begins with "the three mighty men" and shares some of their exploits on behalf of David (11:11-19). Then are listed two of David's top generals, Abshai and Benaiah, who were second only to Joab, David's top general (11:20-25) along with their exploits. Then the "thirty" are listed (11:26-47). This "thirty" were the elite within David's army.

David's Army at Ziklag (12:1-22)

During the latter part of King Saul's reign, David was exiled in Ziklag. However, many men came out in support of David and joined his army there. This was in addition to the thirty listed in the previous chapter. These supporters were well equipped and particularly skilled as archers and slingers (12:2). The chronicler seems to emphasize that David's supporters in Ziklag were not just from the tribe of Judah. In fact, there were men from Saul's own tribe, Benjamin (12:2b, 16). David is being presented, even during a time of division in the kingdom, as a unifying symbol to Israel. He was not just ruler of Judah, but all Israel.

The unity of all the tribes of Israel seems to continue to be a focus of Chronicles. The writer sees a need even in his time to show the unity of the nation. These returning settlers are not just from the tribe of Judah, but represent all the tribes. Just as in the time of David all the sons of Israel should come together in unity.

David's Army at Hebron (12:23-40)

When all the tribes of Israel come to crown David as king, the tribes present themselves with an army to be led by David. The census of this army is listed in that last part of chapter 12. This again emphasizes the unity of the whole nation behind David (12:38). The entire nation was ready to follow their leader, demonstrating that David and his family were indeed the legitimate royal line of the whole nation, not just Judah.

Ark Brought to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 13-16)

Attempt to Bring the Ark to Jerusalem (13:1-14)

The Purpose in Moving the Ark

With David established as the king over a unified Israel, and with Jerusalem established as the political capital of the kingdom, now David works to solidify the unity of the nation around the worship of Yahweh, the God of Israel. To do so, David has to expand Jerusalem from being merely the political capital to the religious capital of the nation.

Ever since the time of the Exodus, the central focus of the worship of the God of Israel had been around the tabernacle. Within the tabernacle, the center focus of worship was around the Ark of the Covenant. The ark was constructed by Moses, and within it contained the original copies of the Mosaic covenant where God promised to make Israel His chosen nation. The ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, the most inner part of the tabernacle. It was here that God chose to exhibit his glory in a special way so as to demonstrate his presence with the nation of Israel.

The tabernacle was tent of worship was constructed to be mobile so that it could move with the nation as it migrated from Egypt to the Promised Land. However, Israel had been in the land for over 400 years. Yet the ark remained in a mobile tent this entire time. By moving the ark to Jerusalem, David was proclaiming that the nation is no longer a nation on the run, but a firmly established, stable and unified nation tied to this land.

The Tragedy in Moving the Ark

While this was a noble effort on David's part, the king is reminded that he is not above the law as king. God's commandments must be obeyed, even by the king. Yahweh is the true king of Israel, and David is merely his vice regent.

The ark is moved by Levites. However, the ark is not carried by the Levites as required by the Mosaic Law. Instead it is placed on an ox cart and hauled to the city. The cart hits a pot-hole and the ark begins to fall off the cart. Instinctively, Uzza, reaches out to stabilize the ark and is struck dead. No one is to touch the Ark of the Covenant, and Uzza is caught in violation, even though he had the best of intentions.

The fault, however, lies not so much with Uzza, but with David and the Levites for ignoring the commandment on how to carry the ark. David is angry at the situation, and the ark is not brought to Jerusalem at this time. Instead it sits in the house of Obed-edom for three months, during which time Obed-edom is richly blessed.

David's Kingdom Expands (14:1-17)

Expansion of David's Household (14:1-7)

David's disobedience in the method of moving the ark prevents him from further establishing his kingdom. But David soon learns that when he obeys God, his kingdom expands.

David builds a palace for himself. He takes many wives and has many children. While our modern sensibilities struggle with David's harem, two things should be noted about his wives. First, in that culture, the size of the king's family was a sign of success for a king. Secondly, his point of the passage is not to render a moral verdict on polygamy. It is to demonstrate the expansion of David's influence, prosperity and success.

What is particularly important is that David recognizes that this expansion of his kingdom is a result of the favor of God. The Lord had prospered David, not for his sake, but for the sake of God's people, Israel (14:2). In other words, it was not all about him, but it was about God and his people.

Expansion of David's Territory (14:8-17)

This point is further reiterated in a recounting of David's defeat of the Philistines. In the details of the battle we learn that David found success because he inquired of the Lord before the battle. In 14:10 he asks the Lord if he should go against the Philistines, and God answers affirmatively. David is wildly successful. In 14:14 David asks again, but this time God gives him a different strategy. David follows God's command and is again highly successful.

David became very famous and highly feared by the nations. But the point of the passage is clear. David's fame was a result of his obedience to God and the influence of the Lord, not David.

Ark Brought to Jerusalem (15:1-16:6)*Ark Returned (15:1-15)*

Having learned his proper place before the Lord, David now is ready to bring the ark back into Jerusalem. This time, however, he requires the Levites to bring the ark in carried on poles, as required by the Law (15:2).

Appointment of the Levites (15:16-24)

David also prepares detailed assignments for the Levites. There will be musicians and doorkeepers and gatekeepers watching over the procession of the ark. Particular attention is paid to the singers and musicians. David appoints Heman, Asaph and Ethan to be the chief musicians as they prepare a great worship concert to be performed after the ark is returned. This is the first of many appointments David gives to the Levites, this appointment being specifically for the moving of the ark. Subsequent appointment will be made more permanent. These appointment will be important for the original audience of Chronicles, as the Levites are organized in the time of Ezra "according to the commandment of David" (Nehemiah 12:45).

Ark brought to the tent (15:25-16:6)

As the ark is brought to the tent in Jerusalem, the Levites sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams to the Lord. This begins a time of worship, led by the Levites, but entered into with passionate abandon by King David. There were shouts and loud cymbals, horns, harps and lyres. David himself was wearing a linen ephod and was singing along with the Levites and dancing in praise. This embarrassed David's wife, Michal such that she despised David's *undignified* praise to God.

After the ark enters the temple, David gives more offerings to the Lord and then gives everyone in Israel a present of a loaf of bread, meat and a raisin cake. The praise continues as Asaph and the other musicians keep playing the trumpets and cymbals.

The Psalm of Praise (16:7-36)

On this occasion, the song sung was a medley of Psalms 105, 96 and 106.

Thanks to the Lord for Remembering the Covenant (16:8-22)

The first part of the medley comes from Psalm 105. It begins with a command for the worshipper to proclaim the wondrous deeds of God (16:8-10), followed by a call to seek after his face (16:11-12).

This is followed by a call to remember the covenant that God had made with Israel (16:13-18). This covenant was an everlasting covenant, lasting "to a thousand generations" (16:15). This means that the covenant extends even to the post-exilic period. The chronicler is reminding his reader of the permanence of the covenant and that they are part of that same covenant.

Note that the covenant is tied closely to the promise of the land (16:18). The people of God did not always dwell in the land. The patriarchs were sojourners in the midst of the land (16:19-20).

Comparison of I Chronicles 16 & Psalms

I Ch 16:8-22	Psalm 105:1-15
I Ch 16:23-33	Psalm 96:1-13
I Ch 16:34-36	Psalm 106:1,47-49

Israel would be enslaved in Egypt for 400 years and wander in the desert for 40 more before entering the land. The exiles would be in Babylon for 70 years. Yet, even with this absence, God would protect His people while they dwelt amongst the other nations (16:20-22).

Praise for the Sovereignty of God (16:23-33)

In the second part of the medley comes from Psalm 96. It affirms that God is sovereign over all the nations and other gods. God is able to protect Israel even in the midst of its exile from the promised land because Yahweh is not merely the God of Israel, but is above all gods (16:25), and He alone is the maker of the heavens (16:26). Yahweh is not like other gods. He is not merely an idol. He is full of real strength and power and glory. He is sovereign and all creation praises His name (16:30-33).

Praise for God's Lovingkindness (16:34-36)

The medley concludes with Psalm 106. God is not only powerful and sovereign, but He is loving as well:

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34)

This simple refrain is a favorite of the temple musicians. It speaks of God's enduring love which motivates Him to restore Israel from its wandering and exile, delivering them from the nations and establishing them in the land according to the covenant.

When the ark I brought to Jerusalem, when Solomon temple is complete, and centuries later, when Zerubbabel lays the foundation five centuries hence, this song is sung. Why is this refrain so closely tied with milestones in the life of the temple?

The ark and the temple represent God's permanent presence in the land. Up to this time, Israel worshipped the Lord at a mobile tabernacle. Later, in exile, the people would worship God in foreign lands, but without the presence of God nearby. But with the temple, Israel's worship was tied to the land promised by the covenant. With the ark being relocated in Jerusalem, it was being moved from the transitory tabernacle. With the completion of Solomon's temple, now the ark would be kept in a permanent house of the Lord. Finally, after the exile, the temple reinstates the sense of permanence to the worship of God, the permanence of the people in the land, and permanence of the covenant.

His love endures forever. He is above all gods. He is maker of heaven and earth. He protects those with whom He has given His covenant. All the people respond, "Amen," praising the Lord (16:36).

Continuation of the Worship (16:17-43)

It was on this occasion that David first assigned Asaph and his family to be the temple musicians. But the worship of the Lord didn't end with the ark coming to Jerusalem. Asaph and his family would continue to offer praise because "his love endures forever" (16:41).

This would be the beginning of a long standing relationship between David and Asaph. David would write many Psalms "for the choir director," namely Asaph. Asaph himself along with his sons would be the second most prolific Psalmist.

Under David and Asaph, music would become one of the chief distinctions of the worship of the Lord. This heritage of worship music would be recaptured in the post-exilic period by Ezra as he appointed sons of Asaph to their ancient posts. The legacy of David and Asaph continue today in the many songs we sing now that are directly or indirectly based on the words of the Psalms.

David's Kingdom Established (1 Chronicles 17-20)

The Davidic Covenant (Chapter 17)

Nathan's Dream (17:1-15)

Now that the ark had been moved to Jerusalem, the next logical step was to build a permanent home for the ark. So long as the ark remained in a tent, it seemed as though the presence of God amongst the Israelites was temporary. Clearly, if the covenant was everlasting, then the presence of God in the land should have a more lasting structure than at tent. So David begins efforts to build a temple to the Lord.

David announces his intention to the prophet Nathan (17:1), who at first agrees that this is a good idea. However, that night, Nathan has a dream where God tells him that David is not to build the temple (17:3). However, just because God desires for his ark to remain in a tent doesn't mean his promise to Israel is temporary. Indeed, God affirms to David (through Nathan) that he has appointed this land for Israel (17:9), that they will not be moved, and that the wicked will not push them around anymore (17:9). Even if God's house is not permanent, His promise to establish Israel is.

God's promise then becomes more personal. While David is not allowed to build a house for God, God will build a house for David (17:10b). God promises David that He will establish David's son as king and that his son will build the temple (17:11-12). Furthermore, when God takes up residence in the new temple, it will be a sign that God's kingdom will last forever with the descendants of David ruling forever (17:14).

Messianic Aspect of the Davidic Covenant

This is a Messianic prophesy, demonstrating that the Messiah would come and rule as king over Israel forever. God himself would descend and come as a descendent of David and establish and rule over His kingdom forever.

The temple becomes an important symbol of the rule of the Messiah. The temple represents the dwelling of God amongst His people. However after the coming of Jesus, the Messiah the Jewish temple is destroyed in AD 70, as is predicted by the prophet Daniel (Daniel 9:26). That does not mean that God no longer dwells among His people. Indeed, with the coming of the Holy Spirit which indwells all believers, God continues to live with and in the church of God. For this reason both the church and our bodies are called by the apostle Paul as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19)¹.

David's Response (17:16-27)

David responds to the promise of God with humility:

Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that You have brought me this far?(1 Chronicles 17:16)

David is overwhelmed by God's lovingkindness towards him. He is amazed that God has brought him this far, let alone promise to establish him as a dynasty forever.

David then praises God, proclaiming there is none like God (17:20). Furthermore, there is no other nation like Israel (17:21), for God has redeemed His people from Egypt and now He will establish Israel forever (17:22). David proclaims that Yahweh, the Lord of hosts, is the God of Israel and that his throne and Israel will be established forever and ever (17:24).

¹ Amongst Christians there exists a debate as to whether the enduring nature of God's covenant with Israel is fulfilled by the church or whether there will still be a time when God will re-establish Israel at some yet future time. For a more detailed discussion of this controversy, see the Grace Institute notes on Ecclesiology, from the Systematic Theology class (available on-line at <http://www.gcfweb.org/institute/theology/ecclesiology-2.php>)

Even though God had temporarily removed the kingdom from Israel, now the chronicler is reminding the returning exiles that they are part of this on-going covenant. David's kingdom is eternal and as long as the people worship Yahweh, the God of Israel, they will be able to partake in this covenant. The returning exiles belong to God and will be established by God even in the midst of their current difficulties. For the promise of God is eternal!

David's Military Victories (1 Chronicles 18-20)

God will not allow David to build the temple because he is a man of war, and he has blood on his hands (1 Chronicles 22:8). The chronicler must establish this, however. So chapters 18-20 recount David's conquering of the neighboring nations. His military victories extended his kingdom as far as the Euphrates River to the north.

The chronicler spends an entire chapter retelling David's war with the nation of Ammon. This war came as a result of an insult to David's emissaries. David soundly defeats the Ammonites and their allies. The chronicler highlights this war, for the Ammonites continued to harass Israel in the time of Nehemiah. In fact, Nehemiah's chief nemesis, Tobiah, is an Ammonite (Nehemiah 2:10).

Finally, the chronicler completes his recounting of David's victories with a summary of the great battles against Israel's chief oppressor, the Philistines (chapter 20). This includes some wonderful stories including the defeat of Goliath's brother and a giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot.

Preparation for the Building of the Temple (1 Chronicles 21-29)

Sin of the Census (1 Chronicles 21)

Chronicles skips over nearly all of David's weaknesses. In Samuel, David's faults are laid bare, including his adultery with Bathsheba and the rebellion of his son Absalom. However, one sin is recorded by the chronicler: taking a census. This sin has to be brought up because it is through David's repentance of this sin that he finds the location on which the temple will be built.

God had given David's kingdom peace and prosperity. So much so, that by the end of David's life he starts becoming proud over all his accomplishments. To quantify these accomplishments, David takes a census of Israel. The results of the census are that there are over 1 million men who could draw the sword in Israel, with 470,000 in Judah alone (21:5).

This show of arrogance, however, was a sin against the Lord. By checking to see the size of an army he could muster, he was showing that his confidence was in himself and in the might of Israel rather than in God. As a result, God punishes David by sending a plague in which 70,000 people are killed (21:14). David repents before the Lord and asks that his people be spared, for it was his sin, not the people's (21:17).

God responds to David through the prophet Gad. David is to erect an altar on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. David goes to purchase the land from Ornan, but Ornan offers to donate it to the king (20:23). The king insists, however, on purchasing it. David is recognizing that the king is not above the law, for he could have demanded the land himself. Instead he insists on purchasing it, for then the altar becomes an act of his sacrifice (21:24). There David builds an altar and prays to the Lord. The Lord is pleased by this sign of humility and he stops the plague affecting Israel.

Normally David would have to go to the tabernacle to make a sacrifice unto God. The tabernacle, at this time, was in Gibeon. But David was afraid to go to Gibeon for fear that the angel of the Lord would kill him (21:30). But the fact that God would accept his sacrifice on the threshing floor of Ornan revealed to David that this place was as sacred as the tabernacle in Gibeon. As a result, David declares that this will be the place where the temple is to be built (22:1)

David Prepares the Temple (1 Chronicles 22)

David is not allowed to build the temple because of the wars he has waged (22:8). His son Solomon will be left with the task of actually building the temple (22:9). But that doesn't mean

David can't get everything ready for the temple to be built. Indeed, Solomon was young and inexperienced, so David wants to make sure everything is ready for Solomon so the building can take place as soon as David dies (22:5)

David orders for all the building material to be delivered, including the stones, iron nails, and timbers. He provides the money for the construction. He organizes the work parties. Finally he charges the leaders of Israel to assist Solomon. After all, because God has established Israel in the land, the least they can do is show their thanksgiving to God by providing a place for the ark of the Lord (22:18-19)

David Organizes the Levites (1 Chronicles 23-26)

After preparing for the construction of the temple, David then organizes the Levites to be the stewards of this temple. First, he counts the Levites so he knows who he has (23:3-5). Then he divides them according to their ancestry: the descendents of Gershon, Kohath and Merari (23:6).

The Levites has to be reorganized because up to now, much of their duties had been defined by the mobile nature of the tabernacle. In the book of Leviticus, Moses outlined for the Levites who was responsible for what in the disassembly and reassembly of the tent of meeting. Certain Levites would be responsible for carrying various parts of the tabernacle. However, the Levites would no longer need to carry the tabernacle and its related utensils (23:26). For the Lord God had given rest to the people, and God would now dwell in Jerusalem forever (23:25).

The sons of Aaron were the priests of God, responsible for offering the sacrifices. David divided them into groups of twenty-four (24:7-18) and each group would be responsible for specific shifts at the temple. The sons of Asaph and Heman would be responsible for the temple musicians. They arranged for a choir of 288 people, consisting of 24 divisions of 12 people each (25:7-31). Other Levites would be responsible to be the gatekeepers, and these were placed into division to guard the various gates of Jerusalem (26:1-19). Finally some of the Levites were charged with keeping the treasures inside the temple safe (26:20-28).

These same responsibilities remain with the Levites in the days of the Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra appointed the Levites in his day to be priests and gatekeepers and singers as well "in accordance with the command of David" (Nehemiah 12:45). Chronicles serves as the template for the organization of the Levitical administration in the post exilic period.

David's Final Charge to Solomon (1 Chronicles 27-29)

As David nears his death, he assembles all his officials, princes, commanders and overseers in Jerusalem (28:1). In the previous chapter, the names and duties of these official has been detailed. Now he gives them one final charge: build the temple.

The charge to Solomon and His officials (1 Chronicles 28)

David recounts the events that have led them to this moment. He had intended to build the temple so that God would have a permanent home (28:2). But God prohibited him from doing so (28:3). Nonetheless God, in his graciousness had established David's house as the royal line for Israel, and specifically he has chosen Solomon to replace him (28:4-5). Now he was calling on all his leadership to courageously take up the challenge and help Solomon build the temple. David charges Solomon to be strong and courageous and follow through (28:20).

The call to contribute (29:1-22a)

David finishes the speech to the assembly with a capital pledge campaign. He begins by showing what his pledge is—namely gold, silver, iron, and precious stones. In all David is giving 3,000 talents of gold and 7,000 talents of silver. He then asks, "who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the Lord." In other words, who else is going to contribute (29:5)? The leadership steps up and give generously to the temple project (29:6-9).

This heartens David and he blesses the Lord. He declares that God rules over all and controls everything (29:10-13). Therefore the generosity of the people really amounts to nothing. The things they gave already belonged to God. He gave them these things, and they were merely returning to God what was already His (29:13). Previously Israel had been wanderers in the earth with no hope (29:15). Now, they had been established in peace and prosperity, and from this prosperity the people had decided to build the temple, giving back that which was from the Lord (29:16).

Following this assembly, they offered sacrifices to God and had a celebration (29:21).

Epilogue (29:22b-30)

In the epilogue, to the party, Solomon is made king with all the officials pledging their support (29:22b-25). David dies at a “ripe old age,” having reigned for 40 years over Israel (29:26-30).

The Reign of Solomon (2 Chronicles 1-9)

Solomon Obtains Wisdom (2 Chronicles 1)

2 Chronicles begins with Solomon’s rule securely established (1:1). From the book of Kings we know that there was some significant court politics behind this, but in keeping with the positive tone of Chronicles, this is omitted.

His kingdom established, Solomon goes to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to the Lord. While the Ark of the Covenant had been moved to Jerusalem, the tabernacle of Moses remained in Gibeon and remained the appropriate place to offer sacrifices. Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings (1:6).

While offering sacrifices, God spoke to Solomon, telling him that He would give Solomon whatever he asks. Solomon responds first with thanksgiving for making him king. He then asks for wisdom and knowledge so that he can rule over the people well (1:10). God grants Solomon his request because it was an unselfish request motivated by his concern for the people. Because of the unselfishness of the request, God gives, in addition to wisdom, riches and honor to Solomon (1:12).

According to 1 Kings 4:29-34, because of the gift of God, Solomon becomes more wise than all the wise men of the east and Egypt, and he becomes famous for his wisdom. He spoke more than 3,000 proverbs (375 of which are recorded for us in the book of Proverbs), and he wrote more than a thousand songs. He also was a great biologist, understanding things regarding trees and animals. Solomon’s wisdom is so great that people from all over the world would hear and come visit Solomon to hear of his wisdom.

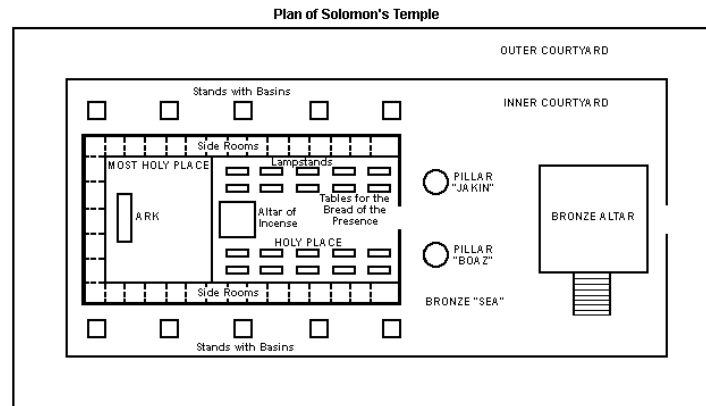
2 Chronicles 1 lays the background of the wisdom Solomon will share in the *wisdom literature* found in the bible. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon (as well as one Psalm) are all books written by Solomon demonstrating his great wisdom. Each exhibit a wide range of knowledge, yet are focused on a simple message.

Solomon’s Temple (2 Chronicles 2-7)

The Construction of the Temple (2 Chronicles 2-4)

Two years into his reign, Solomon begins to build the temple to Yahweh. He begins by requesting from cedar timber and skilled workmen from Hiram, the king of Tyre (2:3-10). Hiram’s answer to Solomon begins with a blessing to Yahweh. Hiram recognizes Yahweh as the God who has made the heavens and the earth, and who provided Solomon with his wisdom (2:11-12). Solomon’s wisdom is already serving as a testimony to the greatness of Yahweh. Hiram agrees, sending Hiram-abi, who is half Israelite and half-Phoenician, and extremely skilled at working in precious metals, building materials and engravings. The chapter ends and begins by explaining that Solomon had 153,600 forced laborers build the temple, but that these were foreigners and not citizens of Israel (2:17-18). The Chronicler makes it an important point that Solomon never used the sons of Israel as his forced laborers; only defeated foreigners (2 Chronicles 8:7-9).

Chapter 3 outlines the dimension of the temple. The foundation of the temple is only 30 x 90 feet, making the temple itself only 2700 square feet. While this is small, especially by modern standards, the interior decorations are extravagant. All the beams, walls, doors and thresholds were overlaid in gold. Inside the holy of holies, where the Ark would rest, Solomon built two statues of cherubim with their wings extending the width of the temple and providing a canopy over the ark. Then a veil of purple with embroidered cherubim was built and placed between the holy place and the holy of holies. In front of the temple were two pillars 52 feet tall.



Source: Bible Knowledge Commentary

Chapter 4 describes the furnishings and utensils for the temple. He also created a great water feature in the courtyard, a “bronze sea” and a large bronze altar. He also crated the items needed to build a fire and sacrifice animals on the altar. All of these items were made of the purest gold.

Dedication of the Temple (2 Chronicles 5-7)

Praise to Yahweh and His Glory Fills the Temple (Chapter 5)

In chapter 5, the temple is complete and the ark of the covenant is brought into the temple. The priests bring the ark out of the tent and place it in the holy of holies under the wings of the cherubim. Then all the Levitical singers, including Asaph and Heman, lift a song of praise to glorify Yahweh. This included 120 trumpeters, loud cymbals and a large chorus, all giving praise to Yahweh, for “He is good, His love endures forever.” This familiar refrain took place when the ark was first brought to Jerusalem and would be repeated when Zerubbabel laid the foundation for the second temple in Ezra 3.

In the midst of the celebration, a cloud comes and fills the temple. Just as in Exodus 40, when Moses built the tabernacle, the cloud representing the presence and guidance of the Lord descended on the tabernacle, so now God’s glory was entering the temple, and it was so great that the priests could not enter the temple.

Solomon’s Dedicatory Address and Prayer(Chapter 6)

In chapter 6, Solomon sees the descent of God’s glory on the temple, and He explains to the people what this means. God has fulfilled His promise to David, and Solomon has fulfilled his vow to David to complete the temple.

Solomon then offers a deeply theological prayer to the Lord. He kneels before the people and prays aloud. First, Solomon affirms that this temple does not hold God. Indeed, the heavens themselves can not contain God (6:18). But Solomon does ask that God would use the temple as a symbol of his presence, so that when Israel prays facing the temple, He would answer their prayers.

Solomon, then, prophetically speaks of a time when Israel will rebel against God (6:36-39). When God punishes them, and the people repent, offering their prayers while facing the temple, Solomon asks that God would accept this as a symbol of the repentance of the people and restore them. Because Chronicles is written to the remnant who have returned after the exile, this would have been an important part of Solomon's prayer. This remnant had indeed repented and had returned to the Lord. They had prayed facing the temple. Solomon's request that God would hear His people when exhibiting this repentance would be an assurance to the reader of Chronicles that God indeed had heard their prayers and that He would forgive and restore them.

When Solomon finished His prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices on the altar, and all the Israelites there shouted out that God is good, "his love endures forever!"

After this, the Lord appeared to Solomon and reminded him of the covenant he had with David and his descendents. So long as the people humbled themselves in prayer and repented, then indeed, God would hear them, forgive them and heal their land (7:14). God is saying He has honored Solomon's request that the temple become the focal point of Israel's worship and prayers. Indeed, if the people repent and pray towards the temple, God will hear them, and re-establish them. This promise of God would be of great comfort to the exiles.

Solomon's Kingdom (2 Chronicles 8-9)

In addition to the temple, Solomon built his own palace. He also built several storage cities and fortified cities throughout his kingdom. Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter and built her a house. However, note that the Chronicler states the reason for building her a house is so she does not enter into a place where the ark has entered.

Solomon's wisdom and wealth had made him a very famous person in his time. People from all over the world would come to see the greatness of this kingdom. The most famous of these was the Queen of Sheba. Sheba is located in present day Ethiopia. Her queen came with an amazing entourage, including camels and spices and gold. She quizzes Solomon to see if his wisdom is real. Solomon, of course, passes. The queen, having seen Solomon's wisdom and wealth blesses Yahweh "your God" and gives Solomon great gifts.

Solomon had become tremendously wealthy as a result of the blessing of God (9:22). What is missing from these chronicles is the sin of Solomon. From 1 Kings, we know that Solomon's heart wandered from God as he grew older, offering sacrifices to the gods of his many foreign wives. However, this is not the point of Chronicles. Instead the wisdom of Solomon and the establishment of the temple as the focal point of Israel's worship are the crucial points of Solomon's reign.

The Kingdom of Judah (2 Chronicles 10-36)

Beginning in Chapter 10, a shift occurs in the narrative. The Chronicler shows God's grace to a stubborn people. The Southern Kingdom swings back and forth from Idol worship to true worship of Yahweh. The intention is to show what true worship of God looks like. The demonstration of proper temple worship is important for the returning remnant. The author uses each king of Judah to trace the spiritual history of the nation.

Reign of Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 10-12)

Spiritual State: Evil

Age: 41

Reign as King: 17 years

Solomon has died and his son Rehoboam ascends to the throne. When the news of Solomon's death reaches Egypt, Jeroboam returns to Israel. He meets with Rehoboam and seeks better living conditions. Rehoboam rejects the advice of his father's associates. Instead, Rehoboam increases taxes and makes working conditions harsh.

Rehoboam splits the Davidic Kingdom in two. Ten tribes are in the north and two tribes remain in the South. Rehoboam gathers a large army to reunify the kingdom. Speaking through the prophet Shemaiah, God tells the people to return to their homes. Ironically, the people obey.

The priests and the Levites leave the Northern Kingdom and return to Jerusalem. This material is not included in the book of Kings.

Rehoboam continues to increase in power. He places his sons in key political positions throughout Judah. Rehoboam facilitates idol worship and abandons the Law of the Lord. God disciplines Rehoboam by sending Shishak, the king of Egypt. The people respond with humility and God removes his chastening hand. Rehoboam ruled in Jerusalem 41 years. The monarchy continues with his son Abijah

Reign of Abijah (2 Chronicles 13)

Spiritual State:

Age:

Reign as King: 3 years

The Chronicles records a scathing message about the rebellion of the northern tribes when Abijah, of Judah, fought Jeroboam. The northern kingdom is rebuked for replacing the Davidic throne, making new priests, and worshipping golden calves. God delivers Jeroboam's army into the hands of Judah during the battle. Jeroboam never recovered control of the northern kingdom after this battle.

Reign of Asa (2 Chronicles 14-16)

Spiritual State: Good

Age:

Reign as King: 41 years

Asa becomes King of Judah when his father Abijah dies. The Chronicler gives more information about Asa than the book of Kings. That is because Asa's experiences illustrated the main points the author was driving home to his readers. Asa is considered a righteous man. He removed the idol worshipping alters in the hill country. He enjoyed peace and prosperity during his reign.

Zerah the Cushite attacked Judah. Cush was located in modern day Ethiopia. God granted victory to Asa. The Cushites were routed and fled.

Asa continues to spiritual reform Judah. He gains confidence and courage when the prophet Azariah speaks to him.

The Chronicler records Asa's lack of faith in Yahweh. The northern kingdom of Israel surrounded Judah and blocked all commerce. Instead of trusting Yahweh to provide a solution, as God did with the Cushites, Asa buys the allegiance of the King of Aram.

Asa seeks an alliance with a pagan King. This action was denounced by God's prophet. Asa does not respond with humility. He throws the prophet into prison and oppressed others. God disciplines Asa with a physical ailment but he refuses to repent. Asa started by following God but his final days were filled with spiritual failure.

Reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17-20)

Spiritual State: Walked with God

Age: 35

Reigned as King: 25 years

Jehoshaphat is a bright spot in the story. Early in his reign he walked with the Lord. His enthusiasm brought spiritual reforms throughout the kingdom. Several chapters are dedicated to his reforms. He commissioned priests to teach the Law throughout Judah. Ultimately, Jehoshaphat became a prideful person. His early years provided spiritual awareness for the people but he departed from the faith of his youth as he grew older.

Chapter 20 records his prayer of dedication which is similar to Solomon's at the temple dedication. Jehoshaphat based his prayer for deliverance on God's promises.

Jehoshaphat made alliances with other kingdoms in order to gain political stability in the geographic region. His alliances included Ahab of Samaria. King Jehoshaphat fell short of the complete obedience that is required of God's servants.

Reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah & Joash (2 Chronicles 21-24)

King Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21)

Spiritual State: Evil

Age: 32

Reigned as King: 8 years

Jehoram was evil in the sight of the Lord. His first act was to murder his brothers to gain full control over the throne. The author presented a classic example of the consequences of disobedience. This is the first king in which the chronicler is totally negative.

As Jehoram makes battle plans he receives a message from Elijah the prophet. This is the only place in Chronicles where Elijah is mentioned.

King Ahaziah (2 Chronicles 22)

Spiritual State: Evil

Age: 26

Reigned as King: 1 year

Ahaziah did evil in the eyes of the Lord by worshipping the Baals and forming an alliance with the king of Israel. He died at the hands of Jehu.

Queen Athaliah (2 Chronicles 22:10-23:15)

Spiritual State: Evil

Age

Reigned as Queen: 6 years

After the death of Ahaziah, his mother slaughtered all the descendants to the throne. She consolidated her power and took control of the kingdom. The Chronicler did not have much interest in Athaliah because she was not of the Davidic line. She was the daughter of Ahab.

The returning exiles were in a similar situation. No descendant of David is on the throne in their day. By rebuilding the temple they hoped that God would fulfill his promises.

One descendant on the throne, Joash, was hidden. When the boy reached the age of 7, he was crowned king of the leaders of Judah. Queen Athaliah was put to death.

King Joash (2 Chronicles 23)

Spiritual State: Good

Age: 7

Reigned as King: 40 years

Through the influence of Jehoiada the priest, Joash remained faithful to God. He brought spiritual reform and repaired the temple. After the death of his mentor Jehoiada, Joash was influenced by government officials to abandon his reforms. Joash compromised and allowed idol worship. Zechariah (Jehoiada's son) confronted King Joash's sin. The king had him stoned to death.

Reigns of Amaziah & Uzziah (2 Chronicles 25-28)

King Amaziah (2 Chronicles 25)

Spiritual State: Good

Age 25

Reigned as King: 29 years

The author selected three events from Amaziah's reign to teach important spiritual lessons.

- A. Amaziah followed the Mosaic Law faithfully in dealing with the people who had killed his father.
- B. The king partially obeyed God in his war with the Edomites (v. 5-16).
- C. The king disobeyed God by attacking Israel late in his reign.

God grants Amaziah victory in battle at Seir. This victory led to Amaziah downfall as he became prideful. God brought the king of Israel into battle against Amaziah. Jerusalem was plundered and precious articles were taken from the temple.

King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26)

Spiritual State: Good

Age: 16

Reign as King: 52 years

Uzziah was an outstanding leader and spiritual reformer of Judah. His name means Yahweh is strong. He built the fortifications and strengthened Jerusalem. He had success against the Philistines and attempted to eradicate idol worship. However, Uzziah lost his humility and became prideful. The king took personal credit for his success. He entered the temple to burn incense. God had given explicit instructions that only the priests could perform this temple ritual. The priests stopped Uzziah but not before he was instantly struck with leprosy.

King Jotham (2 Chronicles 27)

Spiritual State: Good

Age: 25

Reign as King: 16 years

Jotham continued the reforms of his father Uzziah. He made improvements to the temple and did extensive work on the walls of Jerusalem. The only negative detail that the Chronicler includes is a reference to idol worship. Apparently, Jotham tolerated idol worship and did not actively stop the practice.

King Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28)

Spiritual State: Evil

Age: 25

Reign as King: 16 years

Prophet:

As with other kings, the author selected three events to teach spiritual lessons.

- A. Ahaz worshipped idols
- B. He sought help from Assyria instead of trusting God.
- C. He made sacrifices to foreign gods.

Ahaz is one of the evil kings of Judah. God punishes his sin by bringing the Arameans. The Arameans delivered over 200,000 prisoners into the hands of the King of Israel. A faithful prophet of

God delivered a message that all prisoners should be released and treated well. The Israelites released them with food and clothing.

King Ahaz asked for help from the King of Assyria to fight against the Edomites. Ahaz plundered the temple treasure to pay the King of Assyria. God's anger burned against Ahaz.

Reign of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29-32)

Spiritual State: Good

Age: 25

Reign as King:

The Chronicler gives more space to Hezekiah than any other king. He stands in contrast to the evil King Ahaz. Yet this good king was not totally faithful to God. Five major events are recorded about this King:

- A. Cleansing of the Temple
- B. Passover
- C. Establishing proper worship
- D. Invasion of Sennacherib
- E. Humility of Hezekiah

Hezekiah reinstates the Passover and improves temple worship. Proper worship is a central theme to the author of the book. The ground work is being laid for Ezra to promote appropriate worship.

When Sennacherib of Assyria invades Jerusalem, Hezekiah trusts the Lord for deliverance. In a remarkable story, the angel destroys the army of Sennacherib.

As with other kings, Hezekiah becomes proud. He started strong and ended weak.

Reigns of Manasseh & Josiah (2 Chronicles 33-35)

King Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33)

Spiritual State: Evil

Age: 12

Reign as King: 55 years

Manasseh was an evil king who reigned for 55 years. He worshipped the gods of other nations and placed idols in the temple. God spoke to Manasseh and the people through prophets but they paid no attention.

Manasseh was taken prisoner by Assyria. While in chains, Manasseh humbled himself and prayed to the Lord for deliverance. God heard his prayer and brought him back to Jerusalem. He made some modest improvements in the spiritual condition of Judah but he still compromised.

King Amon (2 Chronicles 33)

Spiritual State: Evil

Age: 22

Reign as~ King: 2 years

Amon was an evil king like his father. He died prematurely at the hands of his officials.

King Josiah (2 Chronicles 34-35)

Spiritual State: Good

Age: 8

Reign as King: 31 years

Josiah is a bright spot in the history of Israel. He passionately brought reform to the people and walked with the Lord. He removed the idols and cut down the alters of the baals. The temple was in disrepair and Josiah directed the priests to make the necessary repairs.

While the temple was under repair, the book of the Law was discovered. For many years, the Torah was neglected and unknown throughout Judah. When the Law is discovered, Josiah humbles himself. God declares that disaster is coming upon the people for their disobedience. The coming punishment will be after Josiah's reign as king. Josiah is killed in battle against the king of Egypt.

Fall of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36)

	Jehoahaz	Jehoikim	Jehiachin	Zedekiah
Spiritual State:	Evil	Evil	Evil	Evil
Age:	23	25	8	21
Reign as King:	3 months	11 years	3 months	11 years

The last chapter of the book is a quick summary of the last four kings of Judah. The author's purpose is to show God's direct involvement in their history. The exile was caused by following idols instead of the living God of heaven. Proper temple worship is a theme in the book.

The book ends with the decree of Cyrus which serves as a bridge to the book of Ezra. The entire mood of the book is set by the ending. Rather than ending with the failure of man, the Chronicler concluded by focusing our attention on the faithfulness of God.

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