

Notes on 1 Chronicles

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Introduction

TITLE

The earliest Hebrew title for the Books of Chronicles translates as, "The Things Left Behind." This name describes Chronicles as containing remnants of the monarchy history not recorded in the preceding Old Testament historical books. A later title that appears in most copies of the Hebrew Bible is, "The Accounts of the Days," or "Daily Matters." This title emphasizes the nature of Chronicles as official annals (cf. Esth. 2:23; 1 Kings 14:19). Chronicles contains the official records of Israel's kings, especially those of the Southern Kingdom after the kingdom split. The English title "Chronicles" comes down to us from Jerome's statement that the books contained "the chronicle of the whole of sacred history."¹

As was true of Samuel and Kings, the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Hebrew Old Testament was responsible for dividing the single Book of Chronicles into 1 and 2 Chronicles. Scribes divided these long books to make them easier for copyists and readers to handle. We could translate the Septuagint title as, "Things Omitted." This title implies that Chronicles contains material left out of other inspired histories of Israel. This is true, but it also contains much material that the former historical books included.

"... fully 50 percent, of 1 & 2 Chronicles is the same material found in 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings."²

WRITER AND DATE

Early Jewish tradition recorded in the Babylonian Talmud ascribed the authorship of Chronicles to Ezra and Nehemiah.³ Modern studies of the linguistic differences that exist between the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles have led some scholars to reject this ancient view.⁴ Internal evidence suggests that if the writer was not Ezra and or

¹Quoted in Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 190.

²David M. Howard Jr., *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*, p. 231. See also Eugene H. Merrill, "The Chronicler: What Kind of Historian Was He Anyway?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165:660 (October-December 2008):397-412.

³*Baba Bathra* 15a.

⁴E.g., Sara Japhet, "The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew," *Vetus Testamentum* 18 (1968):330-71; Derek Kidner, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, pp. 136-39.

Nehemiah, he was probably a contemporary of these men. It is very common today to speak of the unknown writer as "the Chronicler."

There is quite a bit of difference of opinion, even among conservative evangelical scholars, regarding the date of composition. Most of them place it within Ezra's lifetime (ca. 450-400 B.C.).⁵ This date would make Chronicles one of the last if not the last historical book of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew canon, 1 and 2 Chronicles conclude the third major section, the Writings, which also suggests that they were written late. The date of composition of Ezra was probably about 446 B.C. The Book of Nehemiah probably came into existence between 420 and 400 B.C. The date of writing of Esther was probably shortly after 473 B.C.

"It is now clear from comparison of Chronicles with the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek translations of the Pentateuch that the text Chronicles used was more like these texts than the MT [Masoretic Text]."⁶

Some scholars hold a date as early as the middle of the fifth century B.C. (450 B.C.), while others date Chronicles as late as 200 B.C.⁷

"The best view is that Chronicles as a whole was in place by 500 B.C., but that additions as late as the early fourth century continued to be added, especially genealogies, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."⁸

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Chronicles covers a broader period of history than any other Old Testament book. In this, it is similar to Matthew, which also covers all of human history from creation to the writer's day. Chronicles begins with Adam and ends with Anani, who lived eight generations after King Jehoiachin (1 Chron. 3:24). If we allow 25 years for each generation, the birth of Anani would have been between 425 and 400 B.C., assuming this genealogy is complete.

"In Near Eastern antiquity, the generation (that is the years between a man's birth and his begetting his first-born son) is ordinarily 25 years or less."⁹

⁵Cf. Bruce K. Waltke, "The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Text of the Old Testament," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, pp. 212-39; Eugene H. Merrill, "1 Chronicles," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, p. 589; Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 413; Gleason L. Archer Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p. 405; and J. Barton Payne, "First Chronicles," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 367. See also John Bright, *A History of Israel*, p. 417.

⁶J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, p. 23.

⁷For further discussion, see Archer, pp. 405-7; R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 1153-57, 1169-71; or any of the major commentaries.

⁸Eugene H. Merrill, "1 Chronicles," in *The Old Testament Explorer*, pp. 294-95.

⁹Frank M. Cross, "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," *Interpretation* 29:2 (1975):192-93.

Since the writer had great interest in David's family, it is unlikely that any of David's descendants after Anani was known to him when he wrote the book. If they had been, the writer probably would have included their names.

Other Old Testament books, especially Genesis, Samuel, and Kings, cover over half the material that Chronicles contains.¹⁰ There are two main reasons for this repetition. First, the writer wanted to give his readers another version of those events. In this respect, Chronicles and the other historical books are similar to the Gospels in the New Testament. Each gives a unique interpretation and emphasis. Each writer selected the historical materials that would present what he wanted to emphasize. Chronicles is more similar to John's Gospel than the other Gospels. Both books are very sermonic, and each has a purpose that is easy to identify (John 20:30-31; 2 Chron. 7:14). Chronicles is also similar to Deuteronomy, the last book of the Pentateuch, which also preaches by recalling history.

Second, the writer of Chronicles explained and expounded the meaning of many events in Israel's history, much like the writers of modern commentaries do. This was especially important since the original readers of Chronicles needed to remember their history and the spiritual issues that had molded and would mold their destiny. These observations would guide them as they sought to reestablish Israel in the Promised Land after the Babylonian Captivity.

"The purpose of these two volumes [1 and 2 Chronicles] is to review the history of Israel from the dawn of the human race to the Babylonian captivity and Cyrus' edict of restoration. This review is composed with a very definite purpose in mind, to give to the Jews of the Second Commonwealth the true spiritual foundations of their theocracy as the covenant people of Jehovah. This historian's purpose is to show that the true glory of the Hebrew nation was found in its covenant relationship to God, as safeguarded by the prescribed forms of worship in the temple and administered by the divinely ordained priesthood under the protection of the divinely authorized dynasty of David. Always the emphasis is upon that which is sound and valid in Israel's past as furnishing a reliable basis for the task of reconstruction which lay ahead. Great stress is placed upon the rich heritage of Israel and its unbroken connection with the patriarchal beginnings (hence the prominence accorded to genealogical lists)."¹¹

". . . 'the Chronicler' is no mere chronicler! He is a theologian, sharing with all the biblical writers the burden of interpreting God's ways to human beings."¹²

The writer saw principles operating in history. He selected unmistakable instances of them and applied them to his own times.

¹⁰See Appendix 1 at the end of these notes for a table of passages unique to Chronicles.

¹¹Archer, p. 404. See also Eugene H. Merrill, "A Theology of Chronicles," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 158, 185.

¹²J. G. McConville, *I & II Chronicles*, pp. 2-3.

"If Kings, composed after the final collapse of the kingdom in 586 B.C., concentrates on how sin leads to defeat (2 Kings 17:15, 18), then Chronicles, coming after the two returns from exile in 537 and 458 B.C., recounts, from the same record, how 'faith is the victory' (2 Chron. 20:20, 22)."¹³

". . . the Chronicler goes even further than the Deuteronomic historian [i.e., the writer of 1 and 2 Kings] in attempting to correlate blessing with faithfulness and judgment with disobedience within each separate generation."¹⁴

Another statement of the purpose of Chronicles is as follows:

". . . to rally the returned remnant to hopeful temple worship . . . by demonstrating their link with the enduring Davidic promises."¹⁵

"The past is explained so that its institutions and religious principles become relevant to the present, and the ways of the present are legitimized anew by being connected to the prime source of authority—the formative period in the people's past."¹⁶

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Three major features of Chronicles appear when we isolate the material the writer included that is not in Samuel or Kings. First, the genealogies reflect the writer's goal of encouraging Israel's racial and religious purity.¹⁷ Second, the emphases on the temple, ark, and worship show his desire that the returned exiles reestablish worship according to the Mosaic Law.¹⁸ Third, the record of David's glories and the victories God gave his successors were his way of encouraging his original readers as they sought to reestablish their nation in the Promised Land.¹⁹

Conservative students of Chronicles differ in their opinion concerning the amount of Messianic expectation the Chronicler held out to his readers. My belief is that he presented much hope of a coming Messiah who would fulfill the promises given to David in the Davidic Covenant. I shall point this out at the appropriate places in the notes that follow.²⁰

¹³J. Barton Payne, "1, 2 Chronicles," in *1 Kings-Job*, v. 4 of *The Expository's Bible Commentary*, p. 303.

¹⁴H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 31.

¹⁵Jeffrey Townsend, "The Purpose of 1 and 2 Chronicles," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145:575 (July-September 1987):283. Cf. John Goldingay, "The Chronicler As a Theologian," *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 5:2 (June 1975):99-126; and Kenneth R. Cooper, "King and Cultus: A Suggested Framework for a Theology of the Chronicles," *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 12:36 (August 2008):63-83.

¹⁶Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, pp. 515-16.

¹⁷See M. D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies*, pp 77-82. He identified nine purposes.

¹⁸See Roddy L. Braun, "The Message of Chronicles: Rally 'Round the Temple," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 42:8 (September 1971):502-14.

¹⁹Payne, "1, 2 Chronicles," pp. 313-14. See Werner E. Lemke, "The Synoptic Problem in the Chronicler's History," *Harvard Theological Review* 58 (1965):349-63.

²⁰For a review of the history of the study of Chronicles, see Sara Japhet, "The Historical Reliability of Chronicles," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33 (October 1985):83-107.

"I regard Chronicles as one of the richest mines of spirituality in all of Scripture."²¹

OUTLINE

- I. Israel's historical roots chs. 1—9
 - A. The lineage of David chs. 1—3
 - B. The house of Israel chs. 4—7
 - 1. The family of Judah 4:1-23
 - 2. The family of Simeon 4:24-43
 - 3. The families of Transjordan ch. 5
 - 4. The family of Levi ch. 6
 - 5. The remaining families of Israel ch. 7
 - C. The lineage of Saul chs. 8—9
- II. The reign of David chs. 10—29
 - A. The death of Saul ch. 10
 - B. David's coronation and capital 11:1-9
 - C. David's mighty men 11:10—12:40
 - D. David and the ark chs. 13—16
 - 1. The removal of the ark from Kiriath-jearim ch. 13
 - 2. Restoring fellowship with Yahweh ch. 14
 - 3. The importance of the priests and Levites 15:1-15
 - 4. The joy produced by God's presence 15:16—16:6
 - 5. David's concern for the universal worship of Yahweh 16:7-43
 - E. God's covenant promises to David chs. 17—29
 - 1. The first account of God's promises to David chs. 17—21
 - 2. The second account of God's promises to David chs. 22—27
 - 3. The third account of God's promises to David chs. 28—29

(Continued in notes on 2 Chronicles)

MESSAGE

The central subject of 1 and 2 Chronicles is the temple of God. Someone evidently wrote these books at the end of the Babylonian exile to encourage the Israelites to reestablish Israel's national life in the Promised Land. In view of this purpose, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was of little interest to the writer. Judah is the kingdom in view, and David is the king in view. The central passion in David's life is in view, namely: the building of the temple. Furthermore, the reason for David's passion for the temple is in view. He saw that the recognition of God is of supreme importance in national life.

²¹Simon J. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. xiv.

This is the message of the book. The recognition of God is of supreme importance in national life—formally as well as actually. The writer demonstrated this fact in the genealogies, and he illustrated it in David's life in the rest of 1 Chronicles.

The genealogies demonstrate the supreme importance of recognizing God in national life.

What was the writer emphasizing by his selective genealogy? This genealogy (chs. 1—9) shows that God has chosen to bless some individuals more than others. This was His plan from Adam to Nehemiah, and it remains His plan. God also chose to bring blessing to those who obeyed Him, regardless of their other personal abilities or disabilities. Obedience is the key to success, from God's perspective. We can see a heart for God in obedience to God's will. There are two reasons God blesses people: His sovereign choice to bless, and our obedience to Him. Character grows out of obedience. Likewise, God chose to bring cursing on those who were disobedient to Him, regardless of their other personal rights and privileges.

The reason God chose to bless some individuals was to accomplish one ultimate goal. This goal was the fulfillment of His plans for His own glorification, including the fulfillment of His promises to humanity. All the details of His choices of individuals contributed to His ultimate goal.

The genealogies teach us this lesson. The way to achieve permanence and success in individual life, and the way to achieve stability and success in national life, is to recognize God in life. Throughout history people and nations have succeeded or failed as they have recognized or feared God. This is a major point the writer was demonstrating in the genealogies. God has been selecting, changing, interrupting, and moving through history inexorably toward His ultimate goal.

The life of David, as narrated here, illustrates the supreme importance of recognizing God in national life (chs. 10—29).

The writer presented David as a strong model king. He selected four pictures from David's life. The first of these was his crowning, which shows God's choice of him. The second was his capture of Jerusalem, which was the victory that led to the temple. The third picture was his mighty men. It shows his influence on personal character and his true power. The fourth was the gathering of multitudes behind his leadership, which shows his influence on the masses. All of these pictures are in a real sense the background for what follows concerning David.

What made David the great king that he was? The writer showed that it was his attitude toward God, which expressed itself in his attitude toward the temple. David's care for the ark (a symbol of God's grace) and his desire to build the temple (a symbol of worship, which responds to God's grace) reveal his deepest passion in life. His master passion was that Israel should never forget the God who had chosen her for special blessing in the world. We can see that his great desire was not simply to build the temple, because when God told him through Nathan not to build it, David accepted this. He was content to gather materials and to make plans, because he saw the temple as a way of helping Israel to remember her God.

The writer of 1 Chronicles wanted to show the importance of what the temple symbolized, namely: Israel's national recognition of God. David's great desire was that Israel should recognize God and express that recognition publicly.

As king, David ruled under the authority of God. As warrior, he executed the will of God. As poet, he constantly extolled the reign of God. He glorified God in every aspect of his life. He also appreciated the importance of recognizing God nationally.

The message of this book is still a timeless one for us today. The recognition of God is still extremely important in life, both nationally and individually. Just as God governs all individuals, He also governs all nations, not just Israel. Amos stressed the fact that God governs all nations, not just Israel. All nations are accountable to Him (cf. Deut. 32). Even today, one of the Jews' favorite names for God is "King of the universe."

It is important that we recognize God because of His selective activity that the genealogies highlight. Throughout all of history, God has been choosing, selecting, lifting up, and putting down. He selects new people in every generation. If they fail, He selects others, and keeps moving ahead. If the person we would normally expect God to use is not ready or is not qualified, God will choose another (cf. Saul and David). If the person with privilege does not respond to his opportunity, God will pass him or her by, find some other perhaps obscure person, and move on. How foolish it is for nations and individuals not to recognize Him in view of God's sovereign progress. Christians have the great opportunity of helping people to see this.

It is also important that we recognize God because of the effect that *recognizing Him* has on life. Take God out of the life of nations and individuals and what happens? There is no moral standard. An English politician once said, "If there is no Bible, where is your textbook of morals? There is the supreme difficulty. We must teach morals, and there is no textbook or standard in the world if we take the Bible away."²²

When we lose our moral standard, we lose individual character. When we lose individual character, we lose the basis for civilized society. These things build on each other. Awareness of the throne of God and the government of God is foundational for any social order.

It is extremely important for every nation to build the temple of God: to recognize and acknowledge God in its life. This creates an opportunity for people to deal with God. Movements that advocate removing recognition of God from national life are pernicious. Atheistic leaders such as Joseph Stalin in Russia, Mao Zedong in China, and Kim Jong Il in N. Korea, are modern examples. The person who points people to God is the true patriot. David wrote, "Zeal for Your house has eaten me up" (Ps. 69:9). What is God's temple today? It is the church (Matt. 16:18). As the universal, true church, we must—individually and collectively—point people to God. This was the "point" of church steeples in the past: to point people to God.²³

²²Cited by G. Campbell Morgan, *Living Messages of the Books of the Bible*, 1:1:220.

²³Adapted from *ibid.*, 1:1:200-21.

Exposition

I. ISRAEL'S HISTORICAL ROOTS CHS. 1—9

"The fact that the author of 1 and 2 Chronicles devoted nine chapters out of sixty-five to genealogies (1 Chr 1—9) makes clear that these were of great importance to him and bear significantly on his purpose in writing his work. This purpose needs to be understood by any commentator who would elucidate the nature of these volumes.

"We may define a genealogy as 'a written or oral expression of the descent of a person or persons from an ancestor or ancestors.'²⁴ They may display breadth ('These were the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah,' 1 Chr 2:1) and depth (the sons of Solomon: 'Rehoboam, Abijah his son, Asa his son,' 1 Chr 3:10). This latter genealogy and others of its type that display depth alone are termed 'linear.' Biblical genealogies, like the extrabiblical ones, are normally quite limited in depth, rarely extending beyond ten or twelve generations but often from four to six. In 1 Chronicles 2—9 we have an exception. Perhaps the writer sometimes joined separate genealogies.

"If a genealogy displays breadth as well as depth, it is termed 'segmented,' or 'mixed.' In Chronicles multiple descendants of an ancestor are frequently named, but not all the lives are pursued to later generations. Genealogies may proceed from parent to child (descending, as in 1 Chr 9:39-44) or from child to parent (ascending, as in 1 Chr 9:14-16).

"The two types of genealogy, linear and segmented, serve different purposes. The linear genealogy seeks to legitimize an individual by relating him to an ancestor whose status is established. The segmented genealogy is designed to express relationships between the various branches of a family."²⁵

"Their function, broadly speaking, is to show that the promises and purposes of God continue."²⁶

The aim of the genealogies "is to paint a portrait of the people of God in its ideal extent as a symbol of both the particularity of his election and the breadth of his grace."²⁷

"The purpose is clear—to link God's creation purposes with David, whose divinely appointed role is recounted at the end of the first long narrative in the book, the one describing Saul's miserable failure (10:14)."²⁸

²⁴R. R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World*, p. 9.

²⁵Thompson, pp. 25-26. Cf. Roddy L. Braun, *1 Chronicles*, pp. 1-5; and Wilson, pp. 9-10.

²⁶McConville, p. 7.

²⁷Williamson, p. 39.

²⁸Merrill, "1 Chronicles," in *The Old . . .*, p. 297.

". . . it should be noted that a further theme of Chr[onicles]., that of the Lord's willingness to start afresh with his errant people, is also tucked away almost unnoticed in the genealogies."²⁹

A. THE LINEAGE OF DAVID CHS. 1—3

The writer evidently chose, under divine inspiration, to open his book with genealogies to help his readers appreciate their heritage and to tie themselves to Adam, Abraham, and David in particular. The fact that he recorded Adam, Seth, Enosh (v. 1), and other antediluvians indicates that he regarded them as historical characters, and not simply legendary figures. Adam was important as the head of the human race. Abraham was important because of the promises God gave him and his descendants in the Abrahamic Covenant. David was important because of his role as Israel's divinely chosen king and because of the promises God gave him in the Davidic Covenant. This section shows Israel's place among the nations. Both the Old and New Testaments open with genealogies, in Genesis, Matthew, and Luke.

One of the major themes of Chronicles is that the Davidic dynasty would be the instrument through which God promised that salvation and blessing would come to Israel, and through Israel to the whole world. The final Davidic king, Jesus Christ, was the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), as well as the Person who would fulfill the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants completely.

"The genealogy of David in the Book of Ruth and in 1 Chronicles 2:3-17 unambiguously establishes the connection between patriarchal promise and historical fulfillment and demonstrates once and for all Judah's theological primacy amongst the tribes despite its geographical handicap."³⁰

The writer probably also went back to Adam for another reason. He tied God's provision of salvation in David and his descendants to the first promise of salvation given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15.

The "Rodanim" (1:7) were the natives of the Greek island of Rhodes. "Caphtor" (1:12) probably refers to the island of Crete. "Heth" founded the nation of Hittites, who lived in what is now central Turkey, and who became a great empire of people in the middle of the second millennium B.C. "Eber" (1:18) became the father of the Eberites, which was another name for the Hebrews. The "earth was divided" (1:19) *linguistically* when God judged humankind at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 10:21; 11:10-26). "Seir" (1:38) was the patriarchal name of the pre-Edomite population of the region later called Edom.

The fact that kings ruled over Edom for many generations before Saul became the first king of Israel (1:43) may explain, in part, why the Israelites wanted a king "like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5).

²⁹McConville, p. 10.

³⁰Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, p. 316.

"Zerah" was the ancestor of several men (2:6) who became prominent in the leadership of temple music under David (cf. 15:16-19; 1 Kings 4:29-31). The mention of "Zerah" (2:6) is also probably due to the fact that notorious Achan (cf. Josh. 7:10-26; here called "Achar," v. 7) descended from him. David's line passed through Zerah's brother "Perez" (v. 5).

That there is at least one gap in this genealogy is clear in that, in 2:10, "Ram" (cf. Num. 1:7; 2:3; 7:12) is said to be the "father" of "Nahshon," but in the Ruth 4:19-20 genealogy, "Amminadab" follows "Ram" and precedes "Nahshon."

"Sisters are rarely mentioned in ancient genealogies. However, this genealogy pays particular attention to the family of David and thus to David's sisters [2:16]."³¹

"Bezalel" (2:20), one of Caleb's descendants (cf. 2:18-20), was the craftsman who headed the construction of the wilderness tabernacle (cf. Exod. 31:2). Another of Caleb's descendants, "Salma" (2:51), became the founder ("father") of Bethlehem Judah: David's hometown. The "Kenites" of 2:55 were evidently descendants of the tribe of Judah. The writer traced the origin of pious "Rechab" (2:55; cf. Jer. 35:1-19) back to these Kenites.

"Tamar" (3:9), one of David's daughters, became a prominent figure in the story of David's family history (cf. 2 Sam. 13:1-39). "Shenazzar" (3:18) is probably the same man as "Sheshbazzar," who led the first group of Jews that returned from Babylonian captivity and laid the foundation for the second temple (cf. Ezra 1:8, 11; 5:15-17).

In 3:19-24, the Chronicler traced David's descendants into the restoration period. David's kingdom ended temporarily with the Babylonian exile (cf. Amos 9:11), but by tracing David's line the writer was giving his original readers hope that God would fulfill His promises. The future did not depend ultimately on the decisions of Cyrus, king of the Persian Empire, but on the faithfulness of Yahweh (cf. Hag. 2:21-22).

In 3:19, the writer said Zerubbabel was the son of Pedaiah. Other references to Zerubbabel call him the son of Shealtiel (cf. Ezra 3:2; Neh. 12:1; Hag. 1:12; Matt. 1:12; Luke 3:27; et al.). This may be a scribal error, or perhaps Shealtiel died early and his brother or other close relative, Pedaiah, reared Zerubbabel.³² The last generation recorded in Chronicles is that of "Anani" (3:24).

The original readers of Chronicles, freshly transplanted into the Promised Land from Babylonian captivity, were having an identity crisis. They needed to remember what they were and what God intended for them to be. They lived in a culture that wanted to use them for its own ends. By piecing together name lists from the previous historical books of the Old Testament, and perhaps other sources, the writer was able to preach the meaning of his people's history. This he continued to do throughout Chronicles.

³¹*The Nelson Study Bible*, p. 664.

³²See *ibid.*, pp. 665-66.

"The framework of history is . . . seen to comprise three pairs of events. God creates all things; in due course Adam procreates the rest of mankind. God calls Abraham; in due course Israel sires the twelve patriarchs. God calls Moses; in due course David sets up the kingdom. In each of these three pairs, it is with the second member that the Chronicler is concerned."³³

B. THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL CHS. 4—7

The writer's next concern was to trace the line of people to whom and through whom God promised to bring blessing and salvation. That nation was Israel, the descendants of Jacob. The writer viewed Israel as consisting of 12 tribes, not just the tribes represented by the returnees from Babylonian exile. The nation as a whole would have a future.³⁴

1. The family of Judah 4:1-23

"The Hebrew noun *ben* is probably related to *banah* which means 'to build,' as in 'to build' a family (Ruth 4:11). The ancient Hebrews considered sons the 'builders' of the next generation. *Ben* can either refer to a literal son as in 1 Kin. 2:1, or to one's descendants as in 7:14. The word may also pertain to an attribute of an individual, as in Ben-Oni, meaning 'Son of My Sorrow,' and Benjamin, meaning 'Son of the Right Hand' (Gen. 35:18). In the plural, the Hebrew word for *sons* can be translated *children* regardless of gender, as in the phrase 'children of Israel' (see Ex. 12:37). Perhaps the most significant use of the Hebrew word is for Israel's relationship to the Lord. God Himself declared: 'Israel is My son, My firstborn' (Ex. 4:22)."³⁵

Jacob prophesied that his fourth son, Judah, would become the leader of the Israelites. Through him God would provide the greatest promised blessing to come (Gen. 49:8-12). The Davidic dynasty was one branch of Jacob's descendants, so the writer had special interest in Judah.

"Many unrelated fragments have been brought together here in the interests of completeness."³⁶

Jabez's prayer (v. 10) shows that prayer and a prayer-answering God can overcome the threat of evil.³⁷ This writer believed in the efficacy of prayer, and he emphasized prayer much in his narrative.

³³Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Chronicles*, p. 28.

³⁴See Howard, pp. 253-56, for a discussion of the Chronicler's concern to demonstrate the unity of all the Israelites throughout 1 and 2 Chronicles.

³⁵*The Nelson . . .*, p. 666.

³⁶Williamson, p. 58.

³⁷For an excellent exposition of this verse, see D. Edmond Hiebert, *Working With God: Scriptural Studies in Intercession*, pp. 68-76. See also David L. Cooper, "The Prayer of Jabez," *Biblical Research Monthly* 9:1 (January 1944):3-4. On verse 12, see C. H. Knights, "The Text of 1 Chronicles IV 12: A Reappraisal," *Vetus Testamentum* 37:3 (July 1987):375-77.

"As a Judahite and ancestor of David, it seems quite likely that Jabez was a type of David and that his fervent appeal was made in anticipation of God's selection and blessing of the yet unborn house of David."³⁸

2. The family of Simeon 4:24-43

The writer may have listed Simeon's descendants next because the Simeonites shared the tribal territory God gave to Judah. The Judahites absorbed many of them through intermarriage shortly after settlement in the land.

3. The families of Transjordan ch. 5

Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan River. Reuben would have normally been the son of Jacob through whom the greatest blessing would come since he was the first-born. However, because of his sin (v. 1), God passed him over. God blessed Joseph with the double portion of the birthright. He did this by elevating Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to equality among Jacob's other sons, Joseph's brothers. God's blessing of Judah with leadership over the Israelites was contrary to natural order. It was pure grace for those tribes.

God was not only faithful to bless as He had promised, but He also judged sin as He had said He would (vv. 25-26). This is the reason the Transjordanian tribes went into captivity.

4. The family of Levi ch. 6

This list clearly defines the priests and Levites' line of descent. Its purpose seems to be to legitimate and clarify their role and service in the temple.³⁹ Only the descendants of Aaron, the priests, could serve in the temple by offering sacrifices on the incense altar (v. 49; cf. Num. 3:5-38). Nehemiah correctly barred priests who could not demonstrate that they were descendants of Aaron from serving in the rebuilt (second) temple (Neh. 7:63-65).

The priests could only function when Israel dwelt in the Promised Land and as long as the tabernacle or temple God had blessed with His presence stood. With the return from exile the ritual of covenant worship was again possible. Consequently the priesthood was very important to the restoration community (the company of Israelites restored to the land from Babylonian exile).

God had given the special privilege of being priests to Aaron and his sons as a gracious blessing. Normally the first-born son acted as priest of the family in the ancient Near East. This was one of the privileges of the birthright. Reuben had forfeited this, too, by his sin.

Verses 1-15 trace Aaron's descendants, the high priests, to the Babylonian exile.

³⁸Merrill, "A Theology . . .," p. 185.

³⁹Merrill, "1 Chronicles," in *The Old . . .*, p. 301.

"Some writers have wanted to portray the high priest in postexilic times in an exalted position. But it is striking how little attention the Chronicler gives to the role of high priest. . . .

". . . in a number of passages he put considerable emphasis on faith in God as the way to blessing but rarely on ritual perfection."⁴⁰

Beginning with "Aaron" (6:3), the writer listed 23 successive high priests in Israel's history, the last being "Jehozadak" (6:15), who went into Babylonian captivity. There may have been others who are not named.⁴¹

Verses 16-53 give a more general list of the descendants of Levi whom God allowed to assist the priests in certain aspects of Israel's worship. They received this privilege as a result of God's grace as well (Num. 3:12-13, 45; 8:14). God's physical provision for the Levites concludes the chapter (vv. 54-81).

"Samuel" (vv. 28, 33) was an Ephraimite by residence (cf. 1 Sam. 1:1) but a Levite by tribe (vv. 33-38). Being a Levite, he could receive training from Eli in the tabernacle (1 Sam. 2:11) and officiate at services that included sacrifices (1 Sam. 9:13; 10:8).

"The priests and Levites occupied not only houses within the city walls, but they owned and worked fields immediately adjacent to the cities as well [cf. v. 55]. These common-lands extended out from the perimeters of the city walls for a thousand cubits (about 1,500 ft.) in every direction (Num. 35:4, 5) and could be used for farming and grazing (Num. 35:3). This does not mean that the priests and Levites supported themselves by farming, for the Law is clear that they were to live on the tithes and offerings of the other tribes (Num. 18:21-32). The produce they received from the common-lands was a bonus."⁴²

The writer placed Levi's genealogy at the heart of the chiasmic structure that he used to set forth these genealogies. In this way he drew attention to Levi's central importance in Israel.⁴³

- A** The lineage of David (chs. 1—3)
- B** Judah and Simeon in the South (4:1-43)
- C** The Transjordanian tribes to the north (ch. 5)
- D** Levi (ch. 6)
- C'** The other northern tribes (ch. 7)
- B'** Benjamin in the South (ch. 8)
- A'** The lineage of Saul (ch. 9)

⁴⁰Thompson, p. 36. See Braun, *1 Chronicles*, p. 84, for a chart of Israel's high priests as they appear in Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1 Chronicles.

⁴¹*The Nelson . . .*, p. 669.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 671.

⁴³See Leslie C. Allen, "Kerygmatic Units in 1 & 2 Chronicles," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 41 (June 1988):22. This article contains many helpful insights into the structure of Chronicles.

"The emphasis on Judah and Levi in the genealogies marks the center of the Chronicler's hope and faith. Two things marked the true Israel: the king and the priest."⁴⁴

As we compare parallel genealogies in various parts of Scripture, we observe that some lists contain omissions and additions. This shows that genealogical lists are not always complete.

5. The remaining families of Israel ch. 7

The tribes the writer listed were Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher. Why did he omit Dan and Zebulun? The inclusion of these tribes would have resulted in a total of 14 tribes since he had counted Levi and had dealt with both halves of Manasseh separately. Evidently to keep the whole number of tribes at 12 he omitted these.⁴⁵ Another possibility is that perhaps the tribes of Dan and Zebulun had little influence or relevance among the Jews who made up the returned exiles.⁴⁶ That there were 12 tribes seems to have been more important to the writer than how he counted them as 12. The writers of both the Old and New Testaments used many different combinations each totaling 12 in the many lists of the 12 tribes that appear in Scripture. By listing 12 tribes the Chronicler emphasized that the whole nation was intact. The term "all Israel" occurs over 40 times in Chronicles, and there are also many occurrences of the phrases "all the house of Israel" and "all the tribes of Israel."

"At a time when the northern tribes had long been in exile, the Chronicler provides a genealogical listing for all the tribes (except Zebulun and Dan); in giving such a list, the Chronicler is (1) expressing his awareness of continuity with the larger number, (2) showing his concern to include the northern tribes rather than to exclude them, (3) suggesting that he regarded the schism as neither permanent nor desirable, and (4) possibly giving some expression to an eschatological hope for a revival of the nation in its largest extent."⁴⁷

"Individuals without lineage in the course of time took their names from the cities in which they were located, and their names were enrolled genealogically among the ancestors of Israel."⁴⁸

These are not complete lists of the descendants in each tribe. For example, the writer only recorded the descendants of one of Issachar's sons, "Tola," in his list of that tribe (7:1-5). The unusually brief genealogy of the tribe of Naphtali (7:13) may reflect its greatly reduced size and influence following the Assyrians' invasion of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by Tiglath-Pileser III (cf. 2 Kings 15:29).⁴⁹

⁴⁴Thompson, p. 56.

⁴⁵John Sailhamer, *First and Second Chronicles*, p. 26.

⁴⁶Payne, "1, 2 Chronicles," p. 357.

⁴⁷Longman and Dillard, p. 196.

⁴⁸Braun, *1 Chronicles*, p. 109.

⁴⁹*The Nelson . . .*, p. 673.

In these chapters (4—7), the writer stressed the following central features of God's covenant relationship with Israel. The leadership of Judah that even swallowed up another tribe came to a head in David and his descendants. The Transjordanian tribes experienced the results of unfaithfulness to God. The tribe of Levi enjoyed the privilege of priesthood in Israel. The writer also drew attention to the 12-tribe structure of the one Israelite nation.

C. THE LINEAGE OF SAUL CHS. 8—9

This list obviously parallels to some extent David's genealogy (chs. 1—3). Saul came from the tribe of Benjamin, not from the tribe of Judah that God had promised leadership of the nation. One reason the writer had an interest in the tribe of Benjamin (ch. 8) was that it was the only tribe other than Judah to remain loyal to the Davidic line. The tribe of Benjamin "ranked second only to Judah in postexilic society."⁵⁰ Furthermore, Jerusalem stood in the Benjamin tribe's territory.

"From the lengthy genealogy provided, we may see that centuries later there remained families of Israelites who pointed with pride to their descendancy from Israel's first kings."⁵¹

In both chapters 8 and 9, the writer drew a distinction between those people who lived in Jerusalem (8:28; 9:34) and those who lived in Gibeon (8:29; 9:35). The temple servants (Heb. *nethinim*, lit. given ones, 8:2) were probably originally strangers and captives, including the Gibeonites of Joshua's day (cf. Josh. 9:21, 23, 27).

"Though the Nethinim, like the Levites and priests, were freed from all taxation (Ezra 7:24), and perhaps also from military service,⁵² the Rabbinitists held them in the lowest repute—beneath a bastard, though above a proselyte—forbade their intermarrying with Israelites, and declared them incapable of proper membership in the congregation."⁵³

There were Benjamites who lived in Jerusalem and others who lived in Gibeon. Both these towns were important religious centers. Gibeon was where the central sanctuary stood during most of Saul's reign and from then on until Solomon built the temple. Nonetheless it was not God's chosen place of worship. The ark was never in the sanctuary at Gibeon. Rather, the Gibeon site was the people's choice, even as Saul was. God's choice was Jerusalem (2 Chron. 6:6). God did not choose Saul or Gibeon, but He had chosen David and Jerusalem. David and Jerusalem are the two major pieces in God's plan of salvation and blessing in Chronicles.

Chapter 9 brings the genealogical roots of Israel down to real life in postexilic Jerusalem. The emphasis in this chapter is again on the temple: the priests (vv. 10-13), the Levites (vv. 14-19), and the temple servants (vv. 17-34).

⁵⁰Payne, "1, 2 Chronicles," p. 360.

⁵¹Braun, *1 Chronicles*, p. 128.

⁵²Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 4:4:3.

⁵³Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple*, pp. 88-89.

"The Chronicler established Israel's place in the world through the lengthy genealogies of chaps. 1—9 so that his audience might understand anew their role among the nations."⁵⁴

These nine chapters of genealogy prepare for the narrative section of the book that follows and the very next section, the record of Saul's death (10:1-14). God permitted leadership by Saul and worship at Gibeon, but His plan called for leadership by David and worship at Jerusalem. Thus the Chronicler reminded his readers that their forefathers' premature insistence that God give them a king like all the other nations was a serious mistake. They should learn from their history and not seize the initiative from God again, but simply follow Him faithfully.

"With his first nine chapters the Chronicler has introduced his ambitious re-presentation of Israel's history as a sermon. Drawing on ancient material, much of which is familiar to us from the earlier books of the Bible, he has already indicated his major concerns. He will be focusing on the kingship and the priesthood—that is, as it will turn out, on the throne of David and the temple of Solomon—and he will be selecting and simplifying, as he preaches on the story of these things, so as to bring out unchanging principles and ultimate truths."⁵⁵

II. THE REIGN OF DAVID CHS. 10—29

In all of Chronicles the writer assumed his readers' acquaintance with the other Old Testament historical books. This is especially true regarding what Samuel and Kings contain. These books, or at least the information in them, appears to have been well known by the returning exiles.

"The reigns of Saul, David and Solomon over a united Israel are central to the concerns of the Chronicler, about half his narrative material being devoted to these three kings alone. Nearly all the many themes of his work are developed here, and it is in their light that the subsequent history of the people is assessed."⁵⁶

"While it is customary to relate 1 Chr 10—29 exclusively to David, and to define the writer's intentions almost exclusively with respect to him, our study indicates that the work of David and Solomon is to be considered a unity reaching its goal in the dedication of the temple."⁵⁷

A. THE DEATH OF SAUL CH. 10

"Having established the remnant's genealogical link with the Davidic and priestly lines, he [the writer] focused on the groundwork of the Davidic

⁵⁴Thompson, p. 48.

⁵⁵Wilcock, p. 51.

⁵⁶Williamson, p. 92.

⁵⁷Braun, *1 Chronicles*, p. 145.

promises. His design was to show how the kingly and priestly concerns came together in David. David is then seen as a model for the postexilic community as they look forward to One like David."⁵⁸

Chapter 10 is an almost verbatim repetition of Saul's defeat as the writer of Samuel recorded it in 1 Samuel 31.

The Chronicler's presentation of Saul supplied a backdrop and a contrast for his portrayal of David. Saul was the king the people had demanded prematurely. He was the king after the people's heart. His name means "he who was requested." Saul failed to submit to Yahweh's authority and to obey His Word as God had revealed it in the Mosaic Law and through the prophet Samuel (vv. 13-14). He failed to respond appropriately to God's elective grace in placing him on the throne. Saul had no heart for God. Consequently God brought discipline on Saul and on Israel under him. Because Saul failed to listen to God, God eventually stopped listening to him (cf. Jer. 7:13-16). Finally God killed him (v. 14). The reason the writer recorded the death of Saul at such length seems to have been to show that David had no hand in it.⁵⁹ Disloyalty to God always results in catastrophe, especially for His servants (cf. Luke 12:48).

By recounting Saul's death, the writer intended to bring many of the lessons connected with the people's demand for a king, and Saul's history, back to the minds of his restoration readers. Hopefully it will do the same for us.

"For the Chronicler, the disobedient Saul (v. 13) was if anything a foil meant to show the faithfulness of David."⁶⁰

In contrast to Saul, David was God's choice for Israel. His reign resulted in blessing, not blasting.

"One of the striking features of the Chronicler's theology is his attempt to correlate blessing with faithfulness and judgment with disobedience. He returned to the theme again and again . . ."⁶¹

A comparison of this chapter with 1 Samuel 31:6-10 shows how the Chronicler heightened the disastrous nature of Saul's death in subtle ways.⁶² In this and the following chapters four themes interweave.⁶³

⁵⁸Townsend, p. 286.

⁵⁹See Saul Zalewski, "The Purpose of the Story of the Death of Saul in 1 Chronicles X," *Vetus Testamentum* 39:4 (October 1989):465.

⁶⁰Thompson, p. 109. Cf. Wilcock, p. 54.

⁶¹Thompson, p. 37.

⁶²Cf. Williamson, pp. 93-94; and McConville, pp. 15-18.

⁶³Wilcock, p. 87.

THEMES	CHAPTERS											
Nation	10	11	12									
Ark				13		15	16					
Testimony					14				18	19	20	
Temple								17				21 22

B. DAVID'S CORONATION AND CAPITAL 11:1-9

David is really the hero of both 1 and 2 Chronicles. The heart of Chronicles is the rise of David and the establishment of the Davidic kingdom, which begins with chapter 11.

"They [1 and 2 Chronicles] look *forward* with anticipation to the coming King who will bring in God's final salvation and blessing."⁶⁴

"The principle point we wish to emphasize is that the Chronicler, the composer of the original work, structured his history around the figure of David and his dynasty, focusing attention on the religious activity of the monarch and his successors."⁶⁵

"David's heroic personality exemplifies the success that God bestows on those who trust in him, whether in the Chronicler's time or any other."⁶⁶

In 1 Chronicles the writer documented David's greatness as God's faithful vice-regent. In 2 Chronicles he evaluated all David's successors in terms of his successes. In the chapters that unfold, the writer wove his hope for Israel's future together with God's love, as demonstrated in His past faithfulness, to encourage faith and obedience in his readers.

David's eventual coronation was inevitable because God had chosen him as king long before Saul died. The Chronicler began his history of David with his coronation over all 12 tribes. This fact probably reflects the writer's concern for the unity of God's chosen people. The people recognized David as the suitable king because he had led Israel. Furthermore, God had anointed him to shepherd the people (his function) and to be prince over them (his office under Yahweh, vv. 1-2). David's elevation happened as God had announced through Samuel (v. 3). God was leading the nation. These verses provide solid evidence that David, not Saul, was God's preference as king of Israel.

David's capture of Jerusalem was foundational to all the political and religious events that followed. The earliest reference to Jerusalem (Salem) that archaeologists have found so far occurs in the Ebla tablets that date from about 2400 B.C.⁶⁷ Joab's deed shows he was a mighty warrior. By fortifying Jerusalem, David established a secure base of operations at

⁶⁴Sailhamer, p. 32.

⁶⁵David N. Freedman, "The Chronicler's Purpose," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23 (1961):440.

⁶⁶Payne, "1, 2 Chronicles," p. 368.

⁶⁷See Eugene H. Merrill, "Ebla and Biblical Historical Inerrancy," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140:550 (October-December 1983): 302-21; and Giovanni Pettinato, "The Royal Archives of Tell Mardikh-Ebla," *Biblical Archaeologist* 39 (May 1976):44-52.

a politically neutral site between Israel and Judah. This led to his succeeding, though the real reason for his greatness was that the Lord of Armies was with him. God was with David because David was with God, as well as because God had chosen David as His vice-regent. Payne believed that David established a "constitutional" monarchy, which was unique in the ancient Near East.⁶⁸

C. DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN 11:10—12:40

This list of great warriors reflects the greatness of David. People know something about a man or woman by the company he or she keeps. The writer identified three groups: the chiefs among David's mighty men (11:10-25), the mighty men in David's army (11:26-47), and the mighty men who joined David at Ziklag (ch. 12).

There are several discrepancies between the numbers in Chronicles and those in parallel passages in Samuel, Kings, and elsewhere. A case in point is 11:11 where 2 Samuel 23:8 has 800. The number in Samuel is apparently the correct one in this case, and the difference was evidently due to a scribal error in copying.⁶⁹

David was a leader who had won the confidence and support of the strongest men in Israel as well as Judah. The episode in 11:15-19 shows why men such as these pledged their loyalty to David. He showed unusual sensitivity to the dangers his men faced.

Chapter 12 has no parallel in Samuel. Its unique emphases are these. Men from Israel as well as Judah followed David, and there was a very large number of them (v. 22). David also had many other supporters (vv. 39-40). Even Saul's relatives followed him (vv. 2, 16, 29).⁷⁰ God sanctioned the plan of these men to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him (v. 23).

Popular enthusiasm for David was overwhelming (v. 38; cf. v. 18). The writer named all the tribes, proving broad-based support (vv. 24-37). This emphasis is much stronger in Chronicles than it is in Samuel.

Chapters 11 and 12 give evidence of what God told David later in 17:8, namely, "I have been with you wherever you have gone." They also provide hope that God would do for David what He promised in 17:10, namely, "I will subdue all your enemies."

D. DAVID AND THE ARK CHS. 13—16

"In the Chronicler's eyes David's reign consisted of two great religious phases, his movement of the ark to Jerusalem (chs. 13—16) and his preparations for the building of the temple (chs. 17—19 or at least 17—22,

⁶⁸Payne, "First Chronicles," p. 377.

⁶⁹For an explanation of each such difference and other problems involving numbers in Chronicles, see the note in *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, pp. 472-73; and J. Barton Payne, "The Validity of the Numbers in Chronicles," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136:542 and 543 (April-June and July-September 1979):109-28, 206-20. See also Appendix 2: "Numbers in Chronicles That Disagree With Their Old Testament Parallels" from Payne, "1, 2 Chronicles," at the end of these notes.

⁷⁰See Benjamin Mazar, "The Military Elite of King David," *Vetus Testamentum* 13 (1963):310-20.

28, 29). The intent of the parallelism seems to be to mark the ends of these two phases with praise and prayer that both glorified Yahweh and spelled out his relationship to his people in theological terms appropriate to the Chronicler and his constituency."⁷¹

"Prayer plays an important role in 1 & 2 Chronicles. We find five major prayers (whose contents are given) included in the books. These prayers are all by good kings—David (2), Solomon, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah—and their inclusion performs at least two functions: first, they reinforce the positive picture that the Chronicler wants to paint of these kings; second, their contents provide us with rich insights into God Himself, His desires for His people, and ways of properly relating to God."⁷²

The ark of the covenant plays a central role in chapters 13—16 (cf. 2 Sam. 6). It was not only a symbol of God's grace and presence but the actual place where God had chosen to reside among His people (Exod. 25:22). The Chronicler showed great interest in the location of the ark because that was where God was and where He manifested His grace. David's desire to bring the ark into Jerusalem shows his concern that God would dwell among His people (cf. Exod. 19:3-6; 25:8). It also reveals his desire that the people would again have ritual access to God. They had not had this during Saul's reign when the Philistines held the ark captive or when the Israelites kept it in a private residence (13:3). God blessed David and his kingdom in many ways for bringing the ark into Jerusalem. David's desire to honor Yahweh as Israel's Head served as a model for the postexilic community. The Chronicler probably related the ark's movement to Jerusalem in stages to heighten anticipation in the reader.

1. The removal of the ark from Kiriath-jearim ch. 13

The lesson the writer intended this incident to teach the readers is that Yahweh is holy and His people should not take His presence among them lightly (cf. Lev. 10:1-11; Num. 16). God's presence is real, and His people must deal with it in harmony with His character (cf. Exod. 25—31). It would have been tempting to regard the rituals and physical objects used in worship as common. The writer warned his readers not to make this fatal mistake.

"In a real sense Yahweh was wherever His Ark was. It crystallized His immanence, bearing witness to both His nearness and His sovereignty."⁷³

Even though there was much joy and worship as the people transported the ark, they did not obey God's orders for its proper treatment (vv. 7, 9; cf. Num. 4:15). Worship can never replace obedience to God's revealed will (cf. 1 Sam. 15:22-23). Where God's presence abode there was power, as always (v. 14).

⁷¹Allen, p. 22.

⁷²Howard, p. 266. This author proceeded to discuss most of the references to prayer in 1 and 2 Chronicles as an important aspect of these books' biblical theology.

⁷³Merrill, "A Theology . . .," p. 174.

2. Restoring fellowship with Yahweh ch. 14

God blessed David and his kingdom because David had honored God by seeking to bring the ark into Jerusalem. The Chronicler recorded three instances of divine blessing in this chapter. First, God gave David favor in the eyes of his neighbor allies. This resulted in his kingdom experiencing great honor in the ancient Near East (vv. 1-2). Second, God increased David's personal fertility by giving him many children (vv. 3-7).

A problem that bothers some students of David's life is this. In view of the high moral standards that God requires for qualification as an elder in the church, why did God bless David as He did since he had many wives (v. 3)? First, an appreciation of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the Old Testament is crucial to understanding this apparent inconsistency. References to the Holy Spirit's ministry to select Old Testament saints connect with His enabling them to gain military victories to deliver His people from their enemies (e.g., Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6, 19; 1 Sam. 11:6; et al.). The Spirit's indwelling ministry to every Christian after the day of Pentecost focuses on the transformation of the believer's character into Christ's image (e.g., Gal. 5:16-24; et al.). Second, an appreciation of God's different purposes in Israel and the church is helpful. In Old Testament Israel, God was manifesting His glory primarily through the uniqueness of Israel and through its national institutions. In the New Testament church, God is glorifying Himself primarily through the lives of the individual and corporate temples that He indwells. These are Spirit-controlled people and churches. God was more merciful with David's polygamy in view of His purposes then. In view of His purposes now, He requires a higher degree of personal holiness. Third, the progress of revelation helps us understand this issue. Old Testament saints had revelation concerning the sin of polygamy (Gen. 2:24; Deut. 17:16-17). However, they did not have the added privilege and responsibility of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles on this subject (Matt 5; 19; 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5; Col. 3; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; Heb. 13; 1 Pet. 3). Greater privilege always results in greater responsibility. David's understanding of God's will was not as comprehensive as ours is, and consequently God did not hold him as culpable as He holds us in this particular matter.

The third instance of God's blessing in this chapter is that God gave David victory over his enemies, the Philistines (vv. 8-17). Since Saul's death the Philistines had dominated Canaan. Finally David brought them under his control. The result was that other nations feared David (v. 17).

In the renaming of Baal-perazim (v. 14), as well as Perez-uzza (13:11), David and the Chronicler emphasized God breaking into the life of His people. In the first instance it was for judgment, but in the second it was for blessing. This record would have encouraged the restoration community to remember that God could do the same for them.

3. The importance of the priests and Levites 15:1-15

David had learned that he had to handle the ark as God had prescribed. He had to relate to God on His terms. His preparation of a tent for the ark in Jerusalem was in harmony with God's instructions (Exod. 26). David scrupulously observed the Mosaic Law as he

brought the ark into Jerusalem (vv. 13, 15). His obedience was worship, but David also provided for other expressions of worship: namely, music and praise.

"One cannot . . . understand the theology of Chronicles without understanding the centrality of worship and its formal apparatus to the life of the theocratic people."⁷⁴

4. The joy produced by God's presence 15:16—16:6

David provided for a full orchestra and choir to sing God's praises at his new worship center. He originated musical guilds and services.⁷⁵ God's presence in Israel's capital symbolized His leadership over the nation, and it brought great joy to all the godly. This incident (15:16) marked the beginning of the Levitical singers' ministry in Israel (16:7).

Michal possessed a different spirit, however (15:29). Her concept of kingship in Israel was her father's, namely, that the human king was the ultimate authority in Israel as in other ancient Near Eastern countries. It was her attitude, rather than David's actions, that was despicable.

According to the Mosaic Law, individual Israelites were to bring their sacrificial animals to the sanctuary and slay them themselves (Lev. 1:3-5; 3:2; 1 Chron. 16:1-2). Only the priests were to place the blood and other parts of the animals on the altar (Lev. 1:5; 3:2, 5). How could David, clothed in a priestly garment (15:27), offer sacrifices to God since he was not an Aaronic priest? Evidently he did so as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, fulfilling the provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant, rather than as an Aaronic priest serving under the Mosaic Covenant.⁷⁶ David realized he was the king promised to the patriarchs (Gen. 17:6; 49:10; et al.) for whom Israel had been looking (cf. 1 Sam. 2:10).⁷⁷

"David functioned as the type for the Messiah as a king who is also a priest."⁷⁸

David personalized God's blessing on Israel by giving each participant bread, meat, and fruit, which were emblems of fruitfulness (16:3).

5. David's concern for the universal worship of Yahweh 16:7-43

This hymn (vv. 8-36) was probably one of many that the people sang on this occasion. It expressed the hopes and thoughts of the Israelites assembled that the returned exiles needed to emulate. This thanksgiving song is a medley of several psalms (96:1-13; 105:1-15; 106:1, 47-48). It stresses that the intended result of Israel's worship was the salvation

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 164.

⁷⁵See W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, pp. 125-26.

⁷⁶See Thomas L. Constable, "A Theology of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 96.

⁷⁷See Eugene H. Merrill, "The Book of Ruth: Narration and Shared Themes," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 142:566 (April-June 1985):136; and Aubrey Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, pp. 27-46.

⁷⁸Thompson, p. 138.

of the nations so that they, too, might come and worship Yahweh (cf. Exod. 19:5-6; Isa. 42:6; Zech. 2:10-11).

The hymn began with a call to worship that embraced the nations (vv. 8-13; cf. Isa. 12:4). Then the people extolled God's greatness and glory (vv. 14-22). They stressed God's unmerited favor toward Israel's patriarchs in this section. Another call to worship (vv. 23-24) led to another section of praise that emphasizes Yahweh's superiority over the nations' gods (vv. 25-26) and His creative power (vv. 27-30). The final part of the hymn called on all people to turn to Yahweh in trust and obedience in view of His coming to judge and save (vv. 31-36). Throughout this hymn the emphasis rests on God's deeds, God's words, God's greatness, and God's worth.

David let the sanctuary remain at Gibeon and provided for worship and sacrifice to continue there (vv. 39-40). He appointed Zadok as the priest in charge of that tabernacle. Throughout Israel's history, the ark was a symbol of God's grace and the altar was a symbol of human response to that grace. Normally they were together, but in Saul's day they were separate.⁷⁹ The ark was in Philistia, Bethshemesh, or Kiriath-jearim, and the tabernacle was at Shiloh or Gibeon.

Chapters 13—16 help the reader focus on the presence of God as what is essential, rather than on ritual that, though important, is only a means to an end. Worship is appropriate in view of who God is, but for worship to be acceptable, God's people must worship Him as He has prescribed. Furthermore, worship must be God-centered rather than man-centered.

E. GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES TO DAVID CHS. 17—29

The dominating theme in 1 Chronicles is the Davidic Covenant, the receiving of which was the most important event in David's life. God promised to give him an eternal kingdom, and He formalized that promise by making a covenant with him. The writer repeated three times that David's descendants would be God's instruments for bringing salvation to the nations.

The Chronicler referred to the Davidic Covenant seven times in his book (1 Chron. 17:11-14; 22:8-13; 28:6-7; 2 Chron. 6:8-9, 16; 7:17-18; 13:5; 21:7). Many students of Chronicles have regarded the Davidic Covenant as the heart of these books because it established David's kingly line with promises that relate to the temple and the priesthood. The temple and the priesthood are two major themes of these books. God brought them under Davidic rule forever, as the Chronicler revealed. Another unifying theme is the steps taken toward the building of the temple.

"These include identification of the builder (ch. 17), the necessary political conditions (18—20), site (21), materials and plans (22, 28—29), and the personnel (the primary layer in 23—27)."⁸⁰

⁷⁹See Wilcock, p. 73.

⁸⁰Williamson, p. 132.

1. The first account of God's promises to David chs. 17—21

In some particulars, the promises God gave David related to him personally. However, other promises pertained to his descendants and, in particular, to one descendant who would do for Israel much more than David could do. In chapters 17—21 the emphasis is on the promises that related to David personally. The writer evidently wanted to establish God's faithfulness in fulfilling these to encourage his readers to trust God to fulfill the yet unfulfilled promises concerning David's great Son.

In 17:8, God promised David victory over his enemies. The writer recorded that victory in chapters 18—20. In 17:9-12, God promised David that He would establish a place for Israel and a place for Himself within Israel (v. 12; cf. Deut. 12:1-11). The Chronicler documented the selection of that place in chapter 21. These verses contain promises central to the Chronicler's emphasis and purpose.

The promises of the Davidic Covenant 17:1-15

The main reason God did not allow David to proceed with his plans to build Him a house (temple) was that God, not David, was sovereign. A secondary reason was that David was a man of war (22:8; 28:3). God reserved the right to choose who should build such a place, as well as when and where he should build it. It was inappropriate for David to decide these things, though his desire to honor God in this way was certainly commendable. David's plans were premature and presumptuous (cf. Israel's desire to have a king like all the other nations), though pardonable because he sought to glorify Yahweh.

"In Near Eastern thought there was a widely recognized relationship between the earthly kingship and the temple of the protecting deity of the city-state. The state was seen as a reflection of the cosmic reality of the divine government, which stood behind the state. The state, with its various hierarchies, culminated in the earthly kingship at its apex. This was thought to be parallel to a cosmic state of affairs with its own gradations in which the major deity headed a pantheon of lesser deities. The ultimate kingship of the protecting deity was thought to be expressed through, and paralleled by, the empirical kingship exercised by the ruler of the city-state on earth. This concept was given concrete expression in the relationship that existed between the temple of the city-state and the palace of the king of the city-state. The temple was the earthly residence of the deity, and the palace was the residence of the earthly representative of the deity, that is, the king."⁸¹

"Often we may have to accept that the work which we would dearly like to perform in terms of Christian service is not that for which we are best equipped, and not that to which God has in fact called us. It may be, like David's, a preparatory work, leading to something more obviously grand.

⁸¹Thompson, p. 144.

Recognition and acceptance of our true measure is the first and necessary step towards seeing the significance of what, in God's purposes, we really can achieve and have achieved."⁸²

God's plan was that David's son would build Him a house, and He revealed this to David (vv. 11-15). However, these words look beyond Solomon to One who would not fail to fulfill all God's purposes as David's descendant.

"This verse [13] along with Psalms 2:7, 12, is one of the major OT revelations on the deity of the Messiah. It foretells Jesus' being uniquely God's son (Heb. 1:5; cf. Acts 13:33; Heb. 5:5), for it is not really applicable to Solomon (cf. comment on 22:10) or to any other of David's more immediate successors . . ."⁸³

Verse 14 clarifies that Yahweh was the real King of Israel, even though He exercised His rule on earth through human mediators.

In 2 Samuel 7, the warnings of discipline if David's descendants failed God focused attention on Solomon and the kings that followed him through Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. In 1 Chronicles 17 those warnings are absent. This fact probably indicates that the Chronicler was looking beyond the kings of Judah who had failed and died to the King who was yet to come. This king would carry out God's will perfectly (cf. Isa. 9:6; John 4:34). This would have given the restoration community renewed hope.⁸⁴

"Though there can be little argument that the covenant with David was unconditional both in its granting and in its perpetuity, the benefits of that covenant to David and to the nation depended on their obedience to the terms of the Mosaic Covenant within which the monarchy functioned. In this respect and only in this respect was the Davidic Covenant conditional."⁸⁵

David's response to God's promises 17:16-27

David manifested attitudes of humility (v. 16) and trust (v. 27) in his prayer.⁸⁶ Most of what he prayed was thanksgiving for what God had promised (vv. 20-27). David's idea that the Israelites were Yahweh's "own people" (v. 22) reflects Exodus 19:5 and Deuteronomy 7:6 and 14:2.

"The erection of the temple was an assertion of the divine control over the political and religious life of the state (v. 22)."⁸⁷

⁸²McConville, pp. 55-56.

⁸³Payne, "1, 2 Chronicles," p. 396. Cf. v. 14.

⁸⁴For an examination of the Chronicler's renditions of prophetic utterances, see Simon J. De Vries, "The Forms of Prophetic Address in Chronicles," *Hebrew Annual Review* 10 (1986):15-35.

⁸⁵Merrill, "A Theology . . .," p. 171.

⁸⁶See Andrew E. Steinmann, "What Did David Understand about the Promises in the Davidic Covenant?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 171:681 (January-March 2014):19-29.

⁸⁷Thompson, p. 145.

David's response was a model for the returned exiles, and it is for us.

David's victories over his enemies chs. 18—20

These chapters record the fulfillment of God's promised victory over David's enemies as part of the Davidic Covenant (17:8). David was successful because God was with him and helped him (18:6, 13; cf. 19:19).⁸⁸ Human kings only defeat themselves when they oppose the Lord and His anointed (cf. Ps. 2:1-2). The evidence that God gave David victory bolsters confidence that He will do the same to David's great Son, Messiah.

The Chronicler recorded David's victories over the Philistines (18:1), the Moabites (18:2), the Arameans (18:3-11), the Edomites (18:12-13), and the Ammonites (19:1—20:3).

The "Mesopotamia" in this verse (19:6) was probably not the large land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which was inhabited by the Assyrians and Babylonians, but the district on the upper western Euphrates known as "Aram Naharaim" ("Aram-maacah"), where the Arameans, or ancient Syrians, lived. "Maacah" (19:7) was a small kingdom located between Damascus and the Sea of Galilee.⁸⁹

"Kings" normally waged war "in the spring" of the year (20:1) for two reasons: the spring rains had ended and drier weather had begun, and the spring barley harvest was over, so the farmers could get away from their lands and go to war.⁹⁰

The writer also noted David's defeat of the giants who came from the home of his first great adversary, Goliath (20:4-8). David's wars were both aggressive and defensive (cf. ch. 19).⁹¹

The writer portrayed David as having acted decisively to rid his kingdom of internal and external threats. He set up garrisons in Israel's neighbor states by which he extended his influence beyond his own borders (18:6, 13). God's blessing of Israel paralleled His blessing of David. Both nation and king had begun in humility with lowly origins but had expanded because of God's grace and David's appropriate trust and obedience to that grace (cf. 17:7).

These chapters also help clarify why David did not build the temple himself. He was a man of war who had shed much blood, and his reign was not a period of "rest," which was necessary for the establishment of a central sanctuary. Also these chapters show the economic prosperity that would have been needed for temple building, which characterized Solomon's reign more than David's.⁹²

⁸⁸For a good explanation of the difference between 18:17 and 2 Samuel 8:18, see G. J. Wenham, "Were David's Sons Priests?" *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 87:1 (1975):79-82.

⁸⁹*The Nelson . . .*, p. 693.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 694.

⁹¹See Zane C. Hodges, "Conflicts in the Biblical Account of the Ammonite-Syrian War," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 119:475 (July-September 1962):238-43.

⁹²Williamson, pp. 137-38.

God's provision of a place for Israel ch. 21

Chapter 21 records the fulfillment of God's second personal promise to David, namely, that He would appoint a place where Israel could dwell securely (in rest, 17:9). This was a promise of peace for Israel, but as the verses following 17:9 make clear, God had more than this in mind. He intended to dwell among His people in the house Solomon would build (17:11-12). God's presence was the real source of Israel's security. By giving Israel a place, God would provide for Himself a place where He would dwell, specifically the temple. Chapter 21 records God's choice of the place where He would dwell, the site of the temple. There David's successor would build a house for Yahweh (17:12).

"It may also be said that having empowered Israel to defeat their human foes, God provided a place of atonement and divine manifestation whereby they could defeat (or hold at bay) their nonhuman enemy, Satan."⁹³

The writer gave much attention to detail and background events because of the importance of the temple site. All these events point to God's ultimate purpose for the temple: that it would draw the Israelites and the Gentiles to Himself.

"Here, by divine command, is to be the site of the temple. It is a gift not from Ornan but from God. The grace of God, in giving this to His people as the place where ark and altar are to be brought together, is a thing to be wondered at."⁹⁴

Apparently David's lack of faith in God's ability to save His people led him to number the people (vv. 1-7). God did not approve of this attitude, and even though David confessed his sin and God removed his guilt, the consequences of his sin followed (vv. 8-12). David's words to Gad again model a proper response to God (v. 13). By referring to Gad as a "seer," the writer implied that Gad served David primarily by getting divine revelation for him (cf. 1 Sam. 22:5; 2 Sam. 24:11-19). In contrast, the "prophet" Nathan's primary role appears to have been announcing messages from the Lord to the king (cf. 2 Sam. 7:2-17; 1 Chron. 17:1-15).⁹⁵ God's compassion is also evident in His relenting and reducing His originally intended judgment (v. 15; cf. Exod. 32:14; et al.). David volunteered to bear God's judgment in place of the innocent Israelites (vv. 16-17). However, God instructed him to build an altar at the place of God's judgment and to offer the sacrifice that the Mosaic Law required. That was the site God chose for His house (21:18—22:1). That place forever after, as long as Israel occupied the land, would be where the priests would atone for the Israelites' sins by sacrifice. God demonstrated His approval of David's offerings by sending fire from heaven (v. 26; cf. Lev. 9:24; 1 Kings 18:38). The primary reason for including this incident involving David's sin was that it explains the site chosen for the temple.⁹⁶ This is the only place in the Bible where God offered someone a choice of punishment.

⁹³Thompson, p. 160.

⁹⁴Wilcock, p. 95.

⁹⁵See Leon J. Wood, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 169-257, for discussion of each of the prophets mentioned during Israel's monarchy.

⁹⁶Thompson, p. 160.

The Hebrew word transliterated "Satan" (*satan*; 21:1) means adversary. Adversary would be a better translation here. This is the first time in Scripture the word appears without the definite article as a proper noun. It seems that the adversary God permitted to worry David into numbering the people was a foreign enemy (v. 12; cf. 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:23; 24:1-25; 1 Kings 5:4; 11:14, 23, 25).⁹⁷ Of course Satan played a role in this temptation, but it was evidently fear of one of his neighbors that disturbed David's mind.⁹⁸

"The major reason for taking a census in Israel was to lay the basis for levying taxes (Exod 30:12; Num 3:40-51) or registering men for military service (Num 26:1-4)."⁹⁹

"The version of the incident in the Book of 2 Samuel [24:1] gives an underlying theological perspective, while the Chronicler simply describes what happened from a human perspective."¹⁰⁰

David's response to Gad's instructions indicated his true repentance. He left the decision about punishment entirely in God's hands and did not seek to control it.

"Perhaps the one thing that impresses more than David's sins in his life are his repentances (cf. 2 Sam. 12:13ff., and, associated in its heading with the same incident, Ps. 51). We do well to let his willingness to come fully to terms with his deficiencies inform our own responses to our moral failures before God."¹⁰¹

Chapters 17—21 give the writer's first account of what God promised David in the Davidic Covenant. The things that God promised, He provided in David's lifetime and shortly after that. They included victory in battle, expanded influence, and a glorious reputation. The record of this promise is in 17:8, and the fulfillment is in chapters 18—20. The second promise was a secure, peaceful place for Israel that made necessary a place for Yahweh to dwell among His people in fellowship. The record of this promise is in 17:9-12, and chapter 21 guarantees its fulfillment. These promises and their fulfillments would have given the original readers of Chronicles great confidence. They would have encouraged them that Yahweh would yet fulfill those promises in the Davidic Covenant that had not yet materialized but were still future for them. The record should have the same effect on us today.

⁹⁷See Sarah Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, pp. 374-75; Robert B. Chisholm Jr., "Does God Deceive?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155:617 (January-March 1998):22-23; and Sydney H. T. Page, "Satan: God's Servant," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50:3 (September 2007):449-65.

⁹⁸See John H. Sailhamer, "1 Chronicles 21:1—A Study in Inter-biblical Interpretation," *Trinity Journal* 10NS:1 (Spring 1989):42-43.

⁹⁹Thompson, p. 160. Cf. 21:4-7.

¹⁰⁰The NET Bible note on 21:1.

¹⁰¹McConville, p. 71.

2. The second account of God's promises to David chs. 22—27

In this group of chapters we have David's preparations for the fulfillment of those aspects of the covenant that extended beyond his reign. We can see David's belief that God would fulfill the rest of His promises in the ways he prepared for their fulfillment. He prepared in two ways: by gathering materials for the construction of the temple (ch. 22), and by appointing the officials who would guide Israel after his death (chs. 23—27).

David concerned himself with what God had promised. In this he was a godly example to the restoration Jews, and he is to us. He wanted to see God's kingdom come, namely, the kingdom that God had promised (cf. Matt. 6:10). The focus of the promise was the house for God that Solomon would build. David did all he could to pave the way for its coming into reality (cf. Ps. 69:9; John 2:17). The postexilic remnant demonstrated little zeal to rebuild the temple or to reestablish God's kingdom on earth (Hag. 1:2). The Book of Chronicles was one instrument God used to stir them up to action (cf. Hag. 2:20-23; and Zech.).

"It seems incredible, but the king said he had amassed 3,750 tons of gold and 37,500 tons of silver, and that there was so much bronze and iron that it couldn't be weighed. At least Solomon wouldn't have to take up any collections!"¹⁰²

Preparations for temple construction ch. 22

This chapter is unique to Chronicles. It records David's plans to assemble building materials and workers for the construction of the temple. He instructed Solomon carefully in what God had promised so his son would carry out the work as God wanted it done (vv. 5-13). This is the first of three speeches by David that the Chronicler recorded: 22:2-19; 28:1-21; and 29:1-9.

The writer provided another reason God did not permit David to build the temple himself. God wanted a man characterized by peace to build His house (v. 8). David not only shed blood in obedience to God (14:10; 19:13), but he had also been guilty of excessive violence (cf. 2 Sam. 8:2; 11:4, 15). Solomon not only ruled in peaceful times, after David had subdued Israel's enemies, but his name even relates to the Hebrew word for peace (*shalom*). "Shalom" does not just mean the absence of war, however. It includes the fullness of Yahweh's blessing that Israel enjoyed because of David's reign.

If God's revelation to David (v. 8) took place at the same time as the one mentioned in 2 Samuel 7:2, Solomon's birth appears to have followed the giving of the Davidic Covenant (cf. v. 9). However, it seems probable that God gave the revelation in verse 8 to David before Solomon was born (v. 9). He evidently repeated it after Solomon's birth when He gave David the covenant (2 Sam. 7:2). Such a repetition is very probable in view of David's great desire to build a house for the Lord. This was the passion of his life at the time he became king and from then on.

¹⁰²Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary/History*, p. 388.

David also mentioned a qualification on God's promise: obedience to God's will (v. 13). Solomon would only prosper as he submitted obediently to God's authority. Solomon and all who followed him failed God. Consequently, the original readers of Chronicles anticipated a Son of David who would yet come and complete what Solomon and the other kings of Judah could not. These promises were still unfulfilled in the returned exiles' day, as they are in ours.

"David is here to Solomon much like Moses was to Joshua. David could do all the preparations for the temple but could not build it, just as Moses could not lead Israel into Canaan."¹⁰³

Preparations for temple service chs. 23—26

Verses 1 and 2 of chapter 23 provide an outline for what follows in chapters 23—27 but in reverse order. After David appointed Solomon as his coregent in 973 B.C., he began the preparations the writer described here.

David adapted the service of the Levites, who assisted the priests, to the new temple ritual. This form of worship was a combination of tabernacle and divinely approved revised worship (23:3-32; Num. 3). The Chronicler gave the names of the family heads in Levi's tribe first (vv. 3-24). Then he explained the duties that David prescribed for them (vv. 25-32). In all this, David was careful to abide within the guidelines of the Mosaic Law and other instructions he had received from the Lord (cf. 28:19). Previously the Levites had served mainly by carrying the tabernacle and its furnishings from place to place (Num. 2—4) and by instructing the people in the Law (Lev. 11—27). Now their duty was also to maintain the temple and its worship, with the exception of matters reserved for the priests (vv. 28-32).

"To entitle this section the 'organization of the Levites' is to make it sound like bureaucratic regimentation. It is rather to be seen as a scaffolding for that house, a structure to enable God's people to function as they ought."¹⁰⁴

The high priest supervised the priests in their temple service (23:28; 24:1-19). Priests were descendants of Aaron and constituted only one branch of the Levitical family (Num. 18:7). The priests continued to offer sacrifices and offerings on the brazen and incense (golden) altars (Num. 18:1-7). David organized the priests into 24 groups, each of which served for one week at a time (2 Chron. 23:18). Zadok and Ahimelech served as high priests. Ahimelech, a descendant of Eli, served at the Jerusalem tent David had erected for the ark, until Zadok replaced him. Zadok originally oversaw the sanctuary at Gibeon until David brought him into Jerusalem to take Ahimelech's place. Abiathar, Ahimelech's son, rebelled against Solomon, and from then on Zadok served as high priest alone.

The writer also recorded the order of Levitical service (24:20-31). The casting of lots determined this order. Every detail of temple service was important to David. This shows his heart for God and how he lived in the present with the future God had promised

¹⁰³Thompson, p. 165.

¹⁰⁴Wilcock, p. 100. Cf. 1 Pet. 2:5.

clearly in view. David lowered the age required for Levitical service from 30 to 20. He may have done this because there was a need for many more Levites under the new system of worship (vv. 24, 27; cf. v. 3).¹⁰⁵

David also organized some of the Levitical families as temple musicians. Asaph was a Gershonite (6:39-43), Heman a Kohathite (6:33), and Jeduthun (Ethan) a Merarite (6:44-47). They were responsible for singing praises to God and leading the people in doing the same. This is what "prophesying" included (25:1).¹⁰⁶ The re-establishment of temple worship was important in postexilic Israel, and music played a large part in it. Consequently, David's organization would have been of great interest then.

The organization of a temple choir is surprising since the Chronicler elsewhere presented Israel's worship as done in compliance with the Mosaic Law, which made no provision for a choir. However, the prophets Nathan and Gad had authorized this choir (2 Chron. 29:25). Furthermore, this choir was in harmony with other legislation in the Law directing praise of the Lord (cf. Num. 10:10; Deut. 10:8; 18:5). Also, the general scriptural admonition to rejoice in God's presence encouraged creative expressions of worship in harmony with God's Word.¹⁰⁷

"David was Israel's Mozart, a consummate genius. He provides the libretto of his psalms to accompany the ritual in connection with musical scores; elaborates the liturgy's staging in the magnificent temple that he envisioned and his son built; and gave the liturgy a choreography that includes dances and processions. With David, the Mosaic liturgy comes to life, reaching its aesthetic zenith."¹⁰⁸

David also organized the officers of the Levites as gatekeepers (26:1-19), treasury guards (26:20-28), and leaders in external affairs (26:29-32). The gatekeepers were the temple guards (cf. 26:7-8).¹⁰⁹ David even specified the number of guards at each temple gate (26:17-18). The "Parbar" (v. 18) may refer to a court or colonnade, or to a suburb.¹¹⁰ There were 24 guard stations manned 24 hours a day. In view of the wealth in and on the temple, security needed to be tight (cf. 26:27-28).

"In the capitals of the Asiatic kingdoms of antiquity, enormous quantities of precious metals were accumulated."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵Merrill, "1 Chronicles," in *The Bible . . .*, p. 612.

¹⁰⁶See Wood, pp. 53-56.

¹⁰⁷J. W. Kleinig, "The Divine Institution of the Lord's Song in Chronicles," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 55 (1992):75-83.

¹⁰⁸Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, p. 474.

¹⁰⁹J. W. Wright, "Guarding the Gates: 1 Chronicles 26:1-18 and the Roles of Gatekeepers in Chronicles," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 48 (1990):69-81.

¹¹⁰Edersheim, p. 42.

¹¹¹C. F. Keil, *The Books of the Chronicles*, p. 247.

Preparations for governmental order ch. 27

David also organized his army (vv. 1-15), Israel's tribal leaders (vv. 16-24), his administrators (vv. 25-31), and his counselors and advisers (vv. 32-34).

"Apparently a professional standing army is being described here [vv. 1-15], one broken up into twelve corps that served a month at a time on a rotating basis."¹¹²

David did all this to ensure future stability so what God had promised could happen without unnecessary opposition or confusion. Again the writer mentioned 12 tribes, but in this list these included Levi and the two halves of Manasseh. He omitted Gad and Asher in this tally (vv. 16-24; cf. ch. 7).

"The mention of the tribes and their leaders brought to mind David's ill-fated census (21:1-17; 2 Sam. 24). This extra piece of information helps us understand why the numbers differ in the two accounts (24:9; 21:5), because Joab didn't finish the census and not all the numbers were recorded."¹¹³

Chapters 22—27 record David's preparation for the fulfillment of those Davidic Covenant promises that would come after he passed off the scene. His preoccupation with God's promises and his preparations for their fulfillment served as a good example for Chronicles' original readers. David's zeal for the house of the Lord reflected his zeal for the reputation of the Lord. He truly put God's glory before his own personal ambitions.

3. The third account of God's promises to David chs. 28—29

A primary concern of the Chronicler, the evidence of which is his selection of material and emphases, was the promise of a King who would eventually come and rule over God's people. God had fulfilled some of the Davidic Covenant promises in David's lifetime. He fulfilled others in Solomon's reign. Still others remained unfulfilled. For a third time the writer recorded the promises God gave to David. In the first case, God spoke to David (17:1-27). In the second, David spoke to Solomon (22:1-19). In the third, David spoke to Solomon and Israel's other leaders (28:1).

David may have thought Solomon would fulfill the rest of the promises in the covenant (28:5-7). He must have realized that to do so Solomon would have to obey God faithfully (28:7). Solomon, however, was not completely obedient. Consequently, if God is faithful to His promises, a faithful Son of David had to arise. The Chronicler looked forward to this future hope.

¹¹²*The Nelson . . .*, p. 703.

¹¹³Wiersbe, p. 391.

In describing David's plans for building the temple, the Chronicler seems to have wanted to present David as a second Moses. He also seems to have wanted to present Solomon as a second Joshua to some extent.¹¹⁴

The public announcement of Solomon's succession 28:1-10

The earlier Old Testament historical books did not record this announcement. David directed his charge to remain faithful to Yahweh (vv. 7-9) to all the assembled leaders, not just Solomon, as is clear from the plural imperatives in the Hebrew text. David stressed obedience from the heart (v. 9), not just external conformity to the ritual he had established. Like Solomon, the people also failed here (Isa. 29:13).

"In a number of passages unique to Chronicles (i.e., not found in the parallel text of Samuel-Kings) the author specifically articulates the theme of an immediate divine response to precipitating events (1 Chron. 28:8-9; 2 Chron. 12:5; 15:2; 20:20)."¹¹⁵

The temple plan 28:11-19

God had revealed detailed plans for the temple to David (v. 19). Evidently God had instructed David as He had Moses (Exod. 25—31). The writer did not include all the details of the plan David received from the Lord any more than the writer of Kings did. Nevertheless God revealed the instructions for the temple as specifically as He had revealed the instructions for the tabernacle. The postexilic Jews must have had more detailed plans than are available to us today.

". . . the Temple of Old Testament Israel was not essentially a 'religious' center where religious activities such as sacrifice and worship were carried out; it was the house of Yahweh, the palace of the Great King who could and must be visited there by His devoted subjects. Losing sight of this downplays the centrality of covenant as a fundamental theological principle. When one understands that Yahweh had redeemed and made covenant with His elect people Israel as a great king makes covenant with a vassal, the role of the Temple as the focal point of Israel's faith becomes immediately apparent. It is the palace of the Sovereign, the place to which they make periodic pilgrimage to proffer their allegiance and to offer up their gifts of homage. Seen as such, the care with which even its most minute details are revealed and executed is most intelligible, for as the visible expression of the invisible God, the Temple with all its forms and functions becomes a sublime revelatory vehicle of the character and purposes of the Almighty."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴See H. G. M. Williamson, "The Accession of Solomon in the Book of Chronicles," *Vetus Testamentum* 26 (1976):351-61; and Raymond B. Dillard, "The Chronicler's Solomon," *Westminster Theological Journal* 43 (1981):289-300.

¹¹⁵Longman and Dillard, p. 199.

¹¹⁶Merrill, "A Theology . . .," p. 176.

"A problem in many churches today is the failure to recognize that corporate worship is an experience to be governed to a certain degree by order and propriety. David did not concoct the design of the temple by his own imagination, nor could Solomon build it as he pleased. The very architecture of the place was intended to teach Israel important lessons about the glory, grandeur, and awesomeness of their God. Christian worship that does less should be called into serious question."¹¹⁷

The commissioning of construction 28:20—29:9

Haggai echoed David's words of encouragement to begin building—which David addressed to Solomon and Israel's leaders—hundreds of years later to Israel's leaders in his day (Hag. 2:4-5). David sought to instill his own zeal for God's glory in his hearers (29:1). The people donated a freewill offering of more gold, silver, bronze, and other materials to make Yahweh's house reflect the glory of His greatness (cf. Hag. 2:6-9).¹¹⁸

"According to 22:14, the spoils of battle devoted to the Lord amounted to 3,750 tons of gold and 37,500 tons of silver. David added from his own wealth 110 tons of gold and 260 tons of silver (v. 4). This means that David was responsible for providing 3,860 tons of gold and 37,760 tons of silver. But the king then urged his leaders to give generously to the 'building fund' (vv. 6-9), and they contributed 190 tons of gold, plus another 185 pounds, 375 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze, and 3,750 tons of iron, as well as precious stones."¹¹⁹

The Israelites of Moses' day had been similarly generous in providing building materials for the tabernacle (Exod. 25:1-7; 35:4-9, 20-29).

"Often the extent to which we are prepared to put at risk our material well-being is a measure of the seriousness with which we take our discipleship. . . .

"People are closest to God-likeness in self-giving, and the nearer they approach God-likeness the more genuinely and rightly they become capable of rejoicing."¹²⁰

David's blessing 29:10-22a

"The climax of David's reign, as portrayed by the Chronicler, has now been reached. All the preparations for building the temple have been completed, and Solomon, chosen by God as the one who shall bring the

¹¹⁷Idem, "1 Chronicles," in *The Old . . .*, p. 313.

¹¹⁸For an answer to the argument that the references to "darics" of gold in 29:7 necessitates a late date of writing, see Harrison, p. 1157.

¹¹⁹Wiersbe, p. 393.

¹²⁰McConville, p. 103.

plans to fruition, is about to be proclaimed as king over all Israel. And at this point the Chronicler reveals his true heart: the proper response to such a situation is a prayer which breathes joyful faith and simple humility."¹²¹

These were some of David's last official words to his nation and his son Solomon. Ancient Near Easterners regarded such statements as extremely important, as indeed they were. In this address David reviewed the major lessons he had learned in life.

First, he said that everything belonged to Israel's great God (vv. 11-13).

"The truth that 'everything' we have 'comes from' God is the foundation for the doctrine of stewardship. Its basis is this: since our property is his (Ps. 24:1), and since we hold it only temporarily and in trust (1 Chron. 29:15-16), it should therefore be used for him (Luke 17:10 . . .)."¹²²

God's universal kingdom includes all that exists in space and time (v. 12). God had made it possible for His people to build an unusually magnificent temple. He had also caused Israel to grow from a small family of insignificant shepherds to become a mighty nation (vv. 14-16).

Second, David saw a parallel between Israel's growth and Yahweh's elevation of him (v. 17). God had graciously blessed both David and Israel. Their prosperity was not a result of their own merits. David also spoke of the importance of a heart devoted to God (vv. 17-19; cf. 1 Sam. 16:7). The people's lavish donation revealed hearts God had touched. David prayed that that heart attitude might remain in God's people forever.

"Three important attitudes were expected in Israel—not merely obedience but obedience with a perfect heart (1 Chr 28:9; 29:9, 17); not merely contributions to the temple for its repair and upkeep and the support of its personnel but willing contributions (1 Chr 29:1-9, 14, 17); and not merely temple rituals but ritual participation with joy (1 Chr 29:9, 17, 22)."¹²³

These emphases are even more prominent in 2 Chronicles than they are in 1 Chronicles.

Solomon's coronation 29:22b-25

Two years after David's blessing (29:10-22a), Solomon mounted the throne as sole king of Israel (v. 22b; cf. 1 Kings 1:32-40).¹²⁴ He had been David's co-regent for the two previous years (cf. 23:1). The events surrounding Adonijah's rebellion (1 Kings 1) were of no significance to the Chronicler since they had no bearing on his purpose. His interest lay in Solomon as a focus of the Davidic Covenant promises and the builder of the temple.

¹²¹Williamson, *1 and 2 . . .*, p. 185.

¹²²Payne, "1, 2 Chronicles," p. 438. See also idem, *The Theology of the Older Testament*, pp. 434-35.

¹²³Thompson, p. 39. On the significance of "heart" in Chronicles, see Howard, pp. 264-66.

¹²⁴Merrill, *Kingdom of . . .*, p. 248, n. 37.

David's death 29:26-30

The writer highlighted David's greatness again and cited documentation for the sources he had used in researching David's life and reign. The Chronicler identified 32 sources that he used in writing 1 and 2 Chronicles. Most of these were official annals, genealogical records, or prophetic records.¹²⁵ Compare the summary of Moses' life in Deuteronomy 34:7.

"A Russian proverb says, 'Even the greatest king must at last be put to bed with a shovel.' True, but some bring glory to God even from the grave! From that day on, the Jewish kings were all measured against David (1 Kings 3:3; 15:5; 2 Kings 18:3; 22:2; 14:3; 15:3, 34; 16:2; 18:3; 20:3)."¹²⁶

As the reign of David closed, God had already fulfilled many of His promises in the Davidic Covenant. Yet many remained unfulfilled. On the basis of God's faithfulness thus far the Chronicler had built a solid base of confidence that He would also fulfill those that remained. This fulfillment motif is one he carried through his history of David and Solomon's successors that follows in 2 Chronicles.

"The Chronicler presents not one but two great kings as the ideal for Israel. The one was David, the warrior-king, who subdued the enemies of the people of God and established a secure domain. He was now passing, and the other, Solomon, was taking his place. Solomon was a man of peace who would build up the prosperity of the nation. These two things together—victory over enemies and a reign of peace—are both essential. For Christian readers these two ideals are fulfilled in the one man, Jesus Christ. He conquers all his foes but at the same time establishes a reign of peace for his own people. In this the tandem of David and Solomon are a type of Christ."¹²⁷

¹²⁵See Howard, pp. 238-42.

¹²⁶Wiersbe, p. 394.

¹²⁷Thompson, pp. 198-99. Cf. Wilcock, pp. 140-42.

Conclusion

What Deuteronomy is to the Pentateuch, and John is to the Gospels, Chronicles is to the Historical Books of the Old Testament: a selective history to teach spiritual lessons.

Here are some contrasts of Samuel and Kings with Chronicles.

- In style, Samuel and Kings are more biographical, while Chronicles is more statistical.
- In approach, Samuel and Kings are more personal, whereas Chronicles is more official.
- In viewpoint, Samuel and Kings are prophetic, while Chronicles is priestly.
- In emphasis, Samuel and Kings stress the throne, but Chronicles focuses on the Temple and the ark.
- In purpose, Samuel and Kings provide indictment for sin, and Chronicles try to incite to godliness.
- The history in Samuel and Kings deals mainly with the civil and political life, whereas the history in Chronicles emphasizes the sacred and ecclesiastical aspects.
- Samuel and Kings give the history of both Israel and Judah, with more space given to Israel, but Chronicles gives only the history of Judah.

Appendix 1

PASSAGES UNIQUE TO CHRONICLES (IN PROBABLE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)¹²⁸		
Genealogies	The genealogical tables	1 Chron. 1—9
David	The list of the men who came to David at Ziklag	1 Chron. 12:1-7
	The list of the men who joined David on his way to Ziklag	1 Chron. 12:19-22
	Data concerning the number of warriors who made David king	1 Chron. 12:23-40
	The Gadites who "separated themselves unto David"	1 Chron. 12:8-15
	David's hymn of praise when he moved the ark	1 Chron. 16:4-36
	David's final preparations for the building of the temple	1 Chron. 22:1-19
	The national convention	1 Chron. 23:1—29:22
Solomon	The making of the altar of brass	2 Chron. 4:1
	The close of Solomon's dedicatory prayer	2 Chron. 6:40-42
Rehoboam	The adherence of the Levites in all Israel to Rehoboam	2 Chron. 11:13-14
	The immigration of other pious Israelites to Judah	2 Chron. 11:16-17
	Rehoboam's fortifications	2 Chron. 11:5-12
	Rehoboam's family	2 Chron. 11:18-23
Abijah	Abijah's family	2 Chron. 13:21
Asa	The ten years of peace under Asa	2 Chron. 14:1
	Asa's defense policy	2 Chron. 14:6-8
	Asa's victory over Zerah the Ethiopian	2 Chron. 14:9-15
	The warning of the prophet Azariah	2 Chron. 15:1-7
	The four years of peace under Asa	2 Chron. 15:19
	The renewal of the covenant	2 Chron. 15:9-15
	The warning of the prophet Hanani	2 Chron. 16:7-9
	Asa's transgression	2 Chron. 16:10
Jehoshaphat	Jehoshaphat's strengthening of his kingdom	2 Chron. 17:1-7
	The mission of the princes, Levites and priests	2 Chron. 17:7-9
	Jehoshaphat's increasing power	2 Chron. 17:10—8:1
	The prophet Jehu's judgment on Jehoshaphat	2 Chron. 19:1-3
	Jehoshaphat's further reforms in worship and law	2 Chron. 19:4-11
	The deliverance from Moab and Ammon on Mt. Seir	2 Chron. 20:1-30
Jehoram	The posthumous message of Elijah to Jehoram	2 Chron. 21:12-15
	The invasion of the Philistines and Arabians	2 Chron. 21:16-17
	Jehoram's illness	2 Chron. 21:18

¹²⁸Compiled from W. D. Crockett, *A Harmony of the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles*.

PASSAGES UNIQUE TO CHRONICLES (CONT.)		
Joash	Joash's matrimonial affairs	2 Chron. 24:3
	The temple worship	2 Chron. 24:14
	The death of Jehoiada	2 Chron. 24:15-16
	The sins of Joash	2 Chron. 24:17-19
	The stoning of Zechariah	2 Chron. 24:20-22
	The reverses of Judah due to Hazael's operations	2 Chron. 24:23-24
Amaziah	Amaziah's planned expedition against Edom	2 Chron. 25:5
	Amaziah's hiring of 100,000 mercenaries out of Israel and dismissing them	2 Chron. 25:6-10
	The pillage of the cities of Judah by the dismissed mercenaries	2 Chron. 25:13
	Amaziah's further wickedness	2 Chron. 25:14-16
Uzziah	Uzziah's success in war	2 Chron. 26:6-8
	Uzziah's building and farming	2 Chron. 26:9-10, 15
	Uzziah's army	2 Chron. 26:11-14
	Uzziah's fame	2 Chron. 26:8, 15
Jotham	Jotham's subjugation of the Ammonites	2 Chron. 27:5-6
Ahaz	Obed the prophet's obtaining the release of the Jewish captives during Ahaz's war with Rezin and Pekah	2 Chron. 28:9-15
	The Edomite and Philistine invasions under Ahaz	2 Chron. 28:17-19
Hezekiah	The cleansing of the temple by Hezekiah	2 Chron. 29:3-19
	The consecration of the temple	2 Chron. 29:20-36
	Preparations for the Passover	2 Chron. 30:1-12
	The keeping of the Passover	2 Chron. 30:13-22
	The keeping of "other seven days"	2 Chron. 30:23-27
	Hezekiah's further religious reforms	2 Chron. 31:1-21
	Hezekiah's wealth and building	2 Chron. 32:27-30
	Sennacherib's second entry into Judah for invasion	2 Chron. 32:1
	Hezekiah's precautions in view of Sennacherib's second entry into Judah for invasion	2 Chron. 32:2-8
	Hezekiah's renewed prosperity	2 Chron. 32:23
Manasseh	Manasseh's captivity	2 Chron. 33:11
	Manasseh's repentance and restoration	2 Chron. 33:12-13
	The acts of Manasseh after his restoration	2 Chron. 33:14-16
	The spiritual condition of the people	2 Chron. 33:17
Josiah	Josiah's early reformations	2 Chron. 34:3-7
Captivity	The length of the captivity	2 Chron. 36:20-21
	Cyrus' proclamation permitting return from the captivity	2 Chron. 36:22-23

Appendix 2

NUMBERS IN CHRONICLES THAT DISAGREE WITH THEIR OLD TESTAMENT PARALLELS ¹²⁹						
	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Same</i>	<i>Lower</i>		<i>Parallel Passage</i>	<i>Evaluation of Chronicles</i>
A			1 Chron. 11:11	300 slain by Jashobeam, not 800	2 Sam. 23:8	Scribal error
B	1 Chron. 18:4			Hadadezer's 1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen, not 1,000 [chariots] and 700 horsemen	2 Sam. 8:4	Correct
C	1 Chron. 19:18a			7,000 Syrian charioteers slain, not 700	2 Sam. 10:18a	Correct
D			1 Chron. 19:18b ¹³⁰	and 40,000 foot soldiers, not horsemen	2 Sam. 10:18b	Correct
E	1 Chron. 21:5a			Israel's 1,100,000 troops, not 800,000	2 Sam. 24:9a	Different objects
F			1 Chron. 21:5b	Judah's 470,000 troops, not 500,000	2 Sam. 24:9b	More precise
G			1 Chron. 21:12	Three years of famine, not seven	2 Sam. 24:13	Correct
H	1 Chron. 21:25			Ornan paid 600 gold shekels, not 50 silver	2 Sam. 24:24	Different objects of purchase
I	2 Chron. 2:2			3,600 to supervise the temple construction, not 3,300	1 Kings 5:16	Different method of reckoning
J	2 Chron. 2:10			22,000 baths of oil to Hiram's woodmen, not 20 kors (=200 baths)	1 Kings 5:11	Different objects
K	2 Chron. 2:18			3,600 to supervise the temple construction, not 3,300	1 Kings 5:16	Different method of reckoning
L	2 Chron. 3:15			Temple pillars 35 cubits, not 18	1 Kings 7:15	Scribal error
M	2 Chron. 4:5			Sea holding 3,000 baths, not 2,000	1 Kings 7:26	Scribal error
N			2 Chron. 8:10	250 chief officers for building the temple, not 550	1 Kings 9:23	Different method of reckoning
O	2 Chron. 8:18			450 gold talents from Ophir, not 420	1 Kings 9:28	Correct or scribal error
P		2 Chron. 9:16		300 gold bekas per shield, not 3 minas	1 Kings 10:17	Different method of reckoning

¹²⁹Content from Payne, "1, 2 Chronicles," p. 561.

¹³⁰The number is the same in 1 Chronicles and in 2 Samuel, but Payne listed the number in 1 Chronicles as lower, for some reason. The difference is not in the number but in the type of soldier described.

NUMBERS IN CHRONICLES THAT DISAGREE WITH THEIR OLD TESTAMENT PARALLELS (CONT.)						
Q			2 Chron. 9:25	4,000 stalls for horses, not 40,000	1 Kings 4:26	Correct
R	2 Chron. 22:2			Ahaziah king at 42 years, not 22	2 Kings 8:26	Scribal error
S			2 Chron. 36:9	Jehoiachin king at 8, not 18	2 Kings 24:8	Scribal error

There is a total of 19 disagreements out of 213 paralleled numbers. Note that K repeats I above.

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