

# 1 Chronicles

**Authorship:** Unknown, though tradition ascribes authorship to Ezra. The book is written from a priestly point of view; Ezra was a priest as well as an important leader, and it was completed during Ezra’s time. Most conservative scholars believe an unknown chronicler may have been the final editor of 1 and 2 Chronicles as well as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. 1 and 2 Chronicles were originally one document. The author or authors made use of court records such as The Book of the Kings of Israel (1 Chronicles 9:1; see 2 Chronicles 20:34), “King David’s official records (1 Chronicles 27:24), and The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel (or now “Israel and Judah”; cited several times in 2 Chronicles).

**Date and Location:** Aside from the opening genealogy (1-9), the events of 1 and 2 Chronicles – from the death of Saul to the decree of Cyrus – took place 1010-538 B.C. However, the genealogy of Zerubbabel (1 Chronicles 3:17-21) takes us beyond 538 B.C. The completed books were probably compiled in the postexilic period, about 450-430 B.C., probably in Jerusalem, where the court records were kept.

**Overview:** The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles cover essentially the same historical eras as do the books of Samuel and Kings, but with different emphases. Samuel and Kings put more emphasis on military and political history, while Chronicles captures more of the priestly emphasis. Thus, the temple and the kings who reformed Judah’s worship have larger roles.

**Recipients:** 1 and 2 Chronicles was written for the second and third groups of Jews returning from exile in 457 and 445 B.C., during the time of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi. These Jews needed to be encouraged in the task of rebuilding their nation. Since they were primarily from the tribe of Judah, 1 Chronicles focuses on David and 2 Chronicles focuses on his descendants, the kings of Judah.

**Purpose:** (1) To provide a religious history of Israel from the time of Saul to the return from Babylon; (2) To demonstrate to the postexilic Jews, who were unstable in their faith, that God was still active and would keep his promises; (3) To show to a people who had lost their Davidic kings and were now ruled by Persia that God would always be faithful to the Davidic throne (17:13-14, 24, 27) and that in the meantime the heart of the Persian kings was in God’s hands (2 Chronicles 36:22-23); (4) To show, furthermore, that while Israel waited for the Davidic kingship to be renewed, they had the legacy of David – the Temple – as the sign of God’s continued blessing.

**Outline:**

**I. Genealogy: Creation to the End of the Exile (1-9)**

- A. Patriarchs (1)
- B. Tribes of Israel (2-7)
- C. Tribe of Benjamin (Saul’s tribe) (8)
- D. Returning Exiles (9:1-34)
- E. Saul’s Genealogy Repeated (9:35-44)

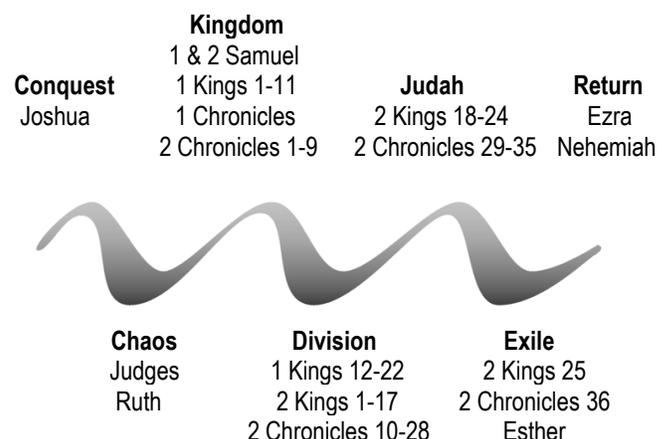
**II. History of David (10-29)**

- A. Condemnation; Death of Saul (10)
- B. David and his Mighty Men (11-12)
- C. Ark brought to Jerusalem (13-16)
- D. God’s Covenant with David (17)
- E. David’s Conquests (18-20)
- F. David’s Census (21)
- G. Preparations for the Temple (22)
- H. Organization and Duties of Priest and Levites (23-26)
- I. Organization of Army and Government (27)
- J. More Preparations for the Temple (28:1-29:20)
- K. Solomon becomes King (29:21-25)
- L. Death of David (29:26-30)

**Key Verse**

“Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, ‘Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!’ And God granted what he asked”  
(1 Chronicles 4:10 ESV).

**Peaks and Valleys of Historical Books**



**Sources:**

*Journeying with God: A Survey of the Old Testament*, Purposeful Design Publications.  
Wilmington, Harold L. *Wilmington’s Bible Handbook*, Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale, 1997.