

2 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. The Reign of Solomon (1-9)

- A. Solomon Requests Wisdom (1)
- B. Solomon Recruits builders for the Temple (2)
- C. Solomon's Realization of the Temple (3-4)
- D. Solomon Receives the Ark in the Temple (5)
- E. Solomon Reviews the Temple's Construction (6:1-11)
- F. Solomon Requests God's Blessing on the Temple (6:12—7:11)
- G. God Responds: "Will it be blessed or cursed?" (7:12-22)
- H. Review of Solomon's Reign (8)
- I. Further Review of Solomon's Reign (9:13-31)

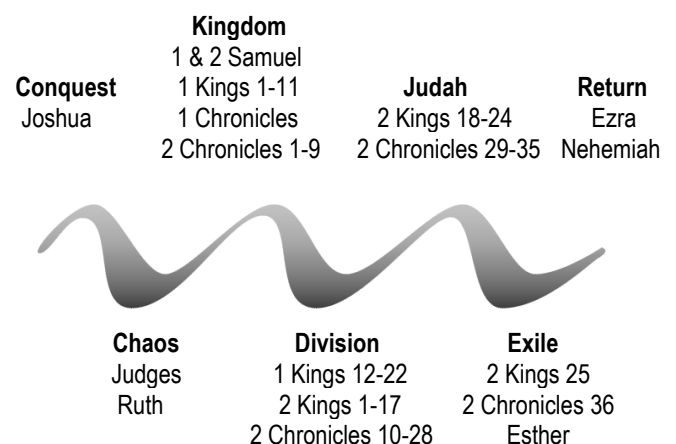
II. The Kings of Judah (10-36)

- A. Rehoboam (10-12)
- B. Abijah (13)
- C. Asa (14-16))
- D. Jehoshaphat (17-20))
- E. Jehoram (21))
- F. Ahaziah (22:1-9))
- G. Athaliah and Joash (22:10-24:27))
- H. Amaziah (25)
- I. Uzziah (26)
- J. Jotham (27))
- K. Ahaz (28)
- L. Hezekiah (29-32)
- M. Manasseh (33:1-20)
- N. Amon (33:21-25)
- O. Josiah (34-35)
- P. Jehoahaz (36:1-4)
- Q. Jehoiakim (36:5-8)
- R. Jehoiachin (36:9-10)
- S. Zedekiah (36:11-14)
- T. Fall of Jerusalem; Decree of Cyrus (36:15-23)

Key Verse

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land"
(2 Chronicles 7:14 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.