

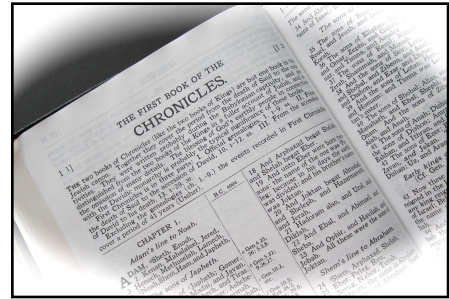
Books of The Bible

A Survey of 1 Chronicles

The Background of Chronicles

When the writer to the Chronicles wrote his books, the nation of Israel was in very dark days. There was little if any joy, and the morale of the people was very low. The four major prophets inform us that four great blessings from God had been lost because of sin.

- a) Isaiah informs us they had lost their God consciousness when he recorded: “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider” (Isa. 1:3).
- b) Jeremiah informs us they had lost their divine satisfaction when he recorded: “Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. . . My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of livings waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:11-13).
- c) Ezekiel informs us they had lost the divine presence when he recorded the departing of the glory (Ezek. 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:23)
- d) Daniel informs us they had lost their inheritance when it was recorded: “Then came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it” (Dan. 1:1). But there was more, they were a broken nation, no longer having a king to rule over them (Dan. 1:2). Solomon’s temple, the place of God’s presence was destroyed (2 Chron. 36:19); the land was utterly desolate (2 Chron. 36:21); and the promises from God of Israel's greatness all seemed like an empty dream. Yet, was there still a hope to be looked for in that apparent empty dream? Thank God there was, for in our darkest hours there is always a light from God. What did they have?
 - i) There were still those that not only remained but returned, and that gave hope for the future, but only if they had learnt the lesson that the covenant had two parts, blessings on those who obeyed, and curses on those who disobeyed (Deut. 27:1-28:29).
 - ii) The prophecies still unfulfilled, thus while 1 Chronicles begins with Adam and ends with a throne under God set in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 29:22-28), it foreshadowed the throne of David’s greater Son when He reigns as King.
 - iii) There was the knowledge that God was still with them and had not forsaken them. Under Cyrus they had been able to return and rebuild the temple (2 Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra. 1:1-4).



Observations

- 1) In contrast to Samuel and Kings which deal with the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, Chronicles deals exclusively with Judah.
- 2) The dealings of God for His people is prominent in Chronicles. Illustrations of such are:
 - a) When Jabez prayed and: “God granted him that which he requested” (1 Chron. 4:10).
 - b) When the tribes of Reuben and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh went to war against the Hagarites they cried unto the Lord: “and he was intreated of them; because they put their trust in Him” (1 Chron. 5:18-20).
 - c) When Dodo fought against the Philistines: “the Lord saved them by a great deliverance” (1 Chron. 11:14). See also 1 Chron. 12:18; 14:2, 11, 15; 18:13.
- 3) The severity of God’s judgment is witnessed, as with Saul when the Lord slew him (1 Chron. 10:13-14), and when David sinned in numbering the people (1 Chron. 21:1-13).
- 4) The Greek translators gave this book the name, “Things Omitted”, therefore, it was seen as an appendix to Samuel and Kings. However, it is much more than that, rather it is the history of Israel from the divine perspective.

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- a) In Samuel the Philistines slew Saul (1 Sam. 31:1-6), but in Chronicles it is God who slew him because of his disobedience (1 Chron. 10:13-14)
- b) In Samuel, one chapter is given to the moving of the ark (2 Sam. 6), but in Chronicles there are three (1 Chron. 13, 15, 16).
- c) In Chronicles, Jacob is always called by his spiritual name, "Israel". On the other hand, "Ish-bosheth" is the name of Saul's son (2 Sam. 2:8), but in Chronicles he is called "Esh-baal" (man of Baal) which would indicate he was born after this father's apostasy (1 Chron. 8:33; 9:39).

Note: It is said that in Samuel, two chapters are used to describe David's sin with Bathsheba, but in Chronicles it is not mentioned at all. This is not accurate, but it is easy to see why the mistake is made. In 2 Sam. 11:3 Solomon is the son of Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, but in 1 Chron. 3:5 both names are changed and it is only because of the sons born to David they can be seen as the same person. In 1 Chron. 3:5 she is called Bathshua, the daughter of Ammiel.

The Author

I am aware the normal thought is that this was a priest writing from his perspective, and indeed such may be the case. However, I see this as a book from God, a book of encouragement for His people, summarized in the words of Paul: "Forgetting those things which are behind . . . I press toward the mark" (Phil. 3:13, 14). As mentioned, the morale of the people was very low. How could they be caused to see beyond the present darkness, what was there left to give an anchor of hope? I suspect we all have known times in life when, due to our own sin, the disciplining hand of God has been on us. Life looked so dark, and a decision had to be made, "Do we fight this disciple and make the best of things, pretending that all is well"; or do we "acknowledge our fallen state" and look to God for a little encouragement? It was to people of this latter character the chronicler wrote. Whither he was a priest or not is of no consequence, he was a man with a message from God, to "lift up the feeble knees". How was this to be done? They were to look back to God's promises, and relying on them, work toward the future.

Key Verse 1 Chron. 29:12-12

- 1) There can be little doubt that God is a God of order, and yet 1 Chronicles seems, on the surface, so utterly chaotic. It is easy to see the first nine chapters are a series of genealogies, but they are not written in chronological order nor apparent logic. For instance, right in the middle of the genealogies there is a sudden turn to deal with the kings who ruled in Edom (ch. 1:43-54). He writes about the sons of Israel (ch. 2:1-2) and then speaks of "Carmi" whose name nowhere appears in the genealogy (ch. 2:7). There is a collective gathering of data on certain themes but one is left wondering, what is the main thrust of the point? To me, it is found in the words of David: "Blessed be Thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all" (1 Chron. 29:10-12). The whole book is the manifestation of the greatness of God. This is the focus.
- 2) To focus on this glorification of God it's interesting to see that which God leaves out. Surely the Exodus was a manifestation of His glory in judgment (Ex. 12:12), yet in Chronicles the being brought out of Egypt is not mentioned (compare 2 Sam. 7:6 and 1 Chron. 17:5). Again, in 1 Kgs. 6:1 there is reference to the coming out of Egypt but that is not mentioned in Chronicles. Another observation is there is no mention of the wickedness of Cain, but there is to Nimrod (1 Chron. 1:10), neither is there any mention of the flood, but there is to the dividing of the earth at Babel (1 Chron. 1:19). The evil act of Er is mentioned (ch. 2:3) and the fact that he and Saul were both slain by the Lord (ch. 2:3), and Satan being behind the counting of the people by David. Why would the fact that Selad and Jether died without children (ch. 2:30, 32) be important, or that Sheshan had no sons and only daughters (ch. 2:34). Add to this that Sheshan gave his daughter to his servant Jarha to be his wife (ch. 2:34-35).

When Was It Written?

1 Chronicles was written after the death of David (1 Chron. 29:28); after the reign of Solomon (1 Chron. 29:22-25; 28); after Israel went into captivity (ch. 6:15); and after 20 generations from Solomon (1 Chron. 1:3-19).

Contrasts and Similarities Between Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles

To a casual reader the double books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles are very alike, and in many ways they are for:

- a) They cover the same time periods.
 - i) 1st Chronicles covers the same time period as 2nd Samuel and the reign of David, whereas 2nd covers the time period of 1st and 2nd Kings and the kings of Judah from Solomon to the Babylonish captivity.
- b) There is a different emphasis on how things are viewed.
 - i) The books of Samuel and Kings deal more with failures, sins, and man's independence of God. Chronicles deals with humbling (2 Chron. 12:6, 7, 12; 30:11; 32:26; 33:12, 19, 23; 36:12). Only Ahab and Josiah are spoken of as humbling in Kings (1 Kgs. 21:29; 2 Kgs. 22:19); Dependence on God (2 Chron. 13:18).
 - ii) Samuel and Kings deal with the past, whereas Chronicles looks to the future with hope.
 - iii) Samuel and Kings focus on the political perspective, whereas Chronicles focuses on the temple and the worship of God.

The following are only some of the distinctions and references. They are not to be viewed as complete, for as the books are carefully read, many other distinctions will be seen.

Some of The Matters Found in Samuel and Kings, But Not in Chronicles

- 1) The reign of Saul (1 Sam. 10:1-31:6)
- 2) David's sin with Bathsheba and his slaying of Uriah (2 Sam. 11:2-27)
- 3) The revolt of Absalom against his father (2 Sam. 15:1-18:15)
- 4) Absalom's arranging for the death of Amnon (2 Sam. 13:23-29)
- 5) Saul's hatred for David and endeavors to slay him (1 Sam. 18:9-11; 20:31; 21:10; 22:21)
- 6) Conflict with Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 2:8-17; 3:1)
- 7) The putting of Saul's seven descendants to death (2 Sam. 21:1-16)
- 8) The song of David (2 Sam. 22:1-51)
- 9) The last words of David (2 Sam. 23:2-7)
- 10) Amnon and Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1-14)
- 11) Solomon's apostasy (1 Kgs. 11:5-8; 2 Kgs. 23:13)

Some of The Matters Found in Chronicles But Not in Samuel or Kings

- 1) David's material preparation for the temple (1 Chron. 22:1-4; 29:1-9)
- 2) David's numbering and distribution of the Levites and priests (1 Chron. 23:1-24:31)
- 3) David's arranging of the singers and porters (1 Chron. 25:1-26:25)
- 4) The death of Saul was a judgment from God who slew him because of sins committed (1 Chron. 10:1-6; 13-14)
- 5) The war between Abijah and Jeroboam (2 Chron. 13:2-19)
- 6) Genealogical histories (1 Chron. 1:1-9:44)

- 7) The Passover of Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30:1-25)
- 8) The keeping of the feast of unleavened bread (2 Chron. 30:21)

Some of The Matters Found in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, But With a Different Emphasis

- 1) In Kings Manasseh was sinful (2 Kgs. 21:11), but in Chronicles he is deported, and in humility prays to God, and God “brought him again” until he confessed (2 Chron. 33:13).
- 2) Asa had a foot disease (1 Kgs. 15:23), but in Chronicles we are informed that he did not seek the Lord (2 Chron. 16:12).
- 3) The Passover of Josiah (2 Kgs. 23:21-23; 2 Chron. 35:1-19).
- 4) The judgment of God on Israel for David’s sin and the purchasing of the ground for the altar (1 Sam. 24:1-25; 1 Chron. 21:1-28).
- 5) Glory of the Lord filling the house (1 Kgs. 8:11; 2 Chron. 7:2).
- 6) The death of Saul (1 Sam. 31:2-6; 1 Chron. 10:1-6).
- 7) David’s thoughts of building a house for the Lord (1 Kgs. 8:17-19; 2 Chron. 6:8-9).
- 8) In Kings the law is seen to come from the hand of Moses (2 Kgs. 21:8) but in Chronicles it is the law of God (1 Chron. 16:17; 22:12).

What Are Some of The Lessons Chronicles Presents?

- 1) The sovereignty of God was seen in His election of Jacob and not Esau, David and not his six older brothers, and Solomon who was not the firstborn son.
- 2) The ongoing purposes of God despite all opposition, and how He overrules and is never taken by surprise by any “turn of events”.
- 3) God is faithful to His promises, there is a future for Israel despite the checkered past of Israel.
- 4) To help the people focus on the way to recovery, repentance.
- 5) The centrality of the temple since all else was gone, thus the emphasis on rebuilding the temple and all David’s preparation for it in materials and ordering of the priests, and most importantly the returning of the ark.
- 6) God’s work must be done in God’s way as seen in the bringing up of the ark.
- 7) When facing the opposers of God’s people Moses sought to develop God’s purposes by the flesh (Ex. 2:11-12). In contrast, David when facing opposers to God’s purposes, sought the Lord twice, and twice gained the victory (ch. 14:10, 14).

The Structure

The book falls automatically into five sections:

- a) The genealogies (chs. 1:1-9:1)
- b) The inhabiting of the land (ch. 9:2-9:44)
- c) Saul (ch. 10:1-14)
- d) David (chs. 11-20) and his activities
 - i) David anointed king (ch. 11:1-3)
 - ii) The taking of Jebus (Jerusalem) (ch. 11:4-9)
 - iii) David’s mighty men (chs. 11:10-12:40)
 - iv) David brings up the ark (ch. 13:14)
 - v) David’s prosperity (ch. 14:1-7)
 - vi) David’s conquest (ch. 14:8-17)
 - vii) The building a place for the ark and bringing it up from Obed-edom (ch. 15:1-16:6)
 - viii) David’s praise (ch. 16:7-36) and the great feast (ch. 16:37-43)
 - ix) David’s desire to build the altar (ch. 17:1-27)

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- x) David's victories (ch. 18:1-20:8)
 - xi) David's sin in numbering the people (ch. 21:1-17)
- e) The Temple
- i) The acquisition of the temple site (ch. 21:18-30)
 - ii) The materials for the temple (ch. 22:1-4)
 - iii) David's charge to Solomon (ch. 22:5-19)
 - iv) The organization of the temple worship (ch. 23:1-26:25)
 - v) The organization of the state officials (ch. 26:26-27:34)
 - vi) Closing scenes of David's life (ch. 28:1-29:30)

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia