

# Chronicles

## Thematic Comments

- Most of Chronicles is remembered material from Samuel-Kings, but it is commentary on it.
- Chronicles, although it repeats, is actually massively important- because it is the last book in the Hebrew ordering and therefore it essentially provides the reverse commentary of Kings- Kings records why the exile was the right response from God, but Chronicles records how God always loved Israel and the plan for Israel and the world is still on track.
- Furthermore, Chronicles actually serves as a summary of the entire story of the OT. It begins with the word "Adam" and ends by talking about Israel's return from exile.
- This book is written from the vantage point after the second temple is built (Ezra-Nehemiah) and when that temple was built it was a great disappointment (everyone knew-this can't be what the prophets foresaw), and so Chronicles provides a commentary on the events of Israel's history that points forward to a still-future hope that all the prophetic promises will be fulfilled.
- Thus the book looks forward to two future hopes- a messiah, and a real temple (i.e. a place where God's glory actually resides)

## Structure

- Genealogies (Chapters 1-9)
- Focus on David (Chapters 10-29)
- Focus on Kings in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 1-36)

## Exegetical Notes

- **Genealogies (1 Chronicles 1-9)**
  - **Summary Points**
    - Genealogies summarize stories by naming key characters, and that is exactly what the author is doing, summarizing the whole OT story through this name list.
    - These genealogies focus on two specific families- the line of Judah (the messiah) and the line of Aaron (the priests/temple) -- so the hope is clear even in the genealogies- **the messiah will come and build the new temple.**
    - The book focuses on kingship and priesthood- Adam's original role and Israel's mission- to emphasize the ongoing hope and need for one who can be what Adam was always supposed to be righteous priest-king.
  - **Chapter 1**
    - In order to read this and not be bored you have to feel it as a way of telling a story and you have to realize that the length and the repetition is purposeful. You need to feel this against the backdrop of the deep aching of all humanity in the pain of

lostness and sin and death. Perhaps think of the work of art or music or film that most resonates in your heart that ache of the human condition in all its brokenness-- this genealogy has a beat to it- it marches on and you are supposed to imagine all the dusty wanderings and bleak nights and bitter cold and searing heat and how God called this wandering pagan named Abram and walked with him and his family every step of the way, caring for them, rescuing them, and continuing to love them despite their enslavement to their own wicked desires. And so name after name after name emphasizes the length and depth and breadth of God's love and his pursuit of his people along every wandering path they took.

- 1:1 Begins with Adam because we are summarizing the entire story of the OT and looking back asking, "does God really love us?"
- **Chapter 2**
  - 2:1 The genealogy is going to reveal the focus of the following chapters- David and the Temple (priests) as such David's line (kings) and Aaron's line (priests) will be emphasized.
- **Focus on David (1 Chronicles 10-29)**
  - **Summary Points**
    - Almost All negative stories of David are left out
    - Also includes new positive material- especially his preparations for the temple.
    - David is also compared to Moses building the tabernacle.
    - The author isn't hiding David's weaknesses, but show David like an ideal king with the purpose of getting people to wish for a coming king who really will have no weaknesses.
    - 1 Chronicles 17 extremely important because it contains the Davidic covenant but with some differences- the author highlights that neither David nor Solomon nor any of the kings so far have been the one we are looking for, but the Messiah will be like David but so much better.
  - **Chapter 10**
    - 10:1-10 Notice we are jumping right in to the death of Saul- straight into the "peak" of Israel- the closest they came to regaining Eden and fulfilling their role as a light to the nations.
    - 10:13 It appears this is a summary statement that from the first command Saul received to the end of his life he strayed from what Yahweh commanded and thus was not qualified to be the true king of God's people.
  - **Chapter 11**
    - 11:1-8 Notice how this is basically the highlight reel of David's beginning career.
    - 11:9 Highlight reel- David became greater and greater.
    - 11:10-47 God's king brings God's blessing on his people. The military valor of these men is evidence of God's blessing on them.

- **Chapter 12**
  - 12:22 and 38 I think this is the key verse to understanding this section- basically it is showing how God in love for his people stirred the hearts of the greatest warriors to recognize David as king and this is what drove forward God's plan during the time David was in persecution.
- **Chapter 13**
  - Interesting that this negative story is recounted but in the context of Chronicles it is probably being used to portray David's zeal for Yahweh- here is a humble king that is both strong and loves the Lord (like a priest).
- **Chapter 14**
  - 14:10 Unlike Saul- he seeks the Lord's counsel.
  - 14:12 David's zeal again highlighted.
  - 14:13 Again he seeks God's counsel. Note, interestingly God has him go up a different way- good example of needing to rely on God every time and not just sometimes. He knows what we don't and we ignore seeking his counsel to our own detriment.
- **Chapter 15**
  - 15:27 the double emphasis of "linen ephod" in this verse is the key to understanding this chapter.. it is highlighting David functioning as a king who leads his people to truly worship- a king who is focused on and who restores relationship between Yahweh and the people.
- **Chapter 16**
  - 16:2 David makes offerings- but not in a wicked way, but a righteous way- he is a priest-king. He also blesses them- which would normally be what Aaron does, but again when done in righteous ways, the king can indeed function like a priest.
  - 16:43 David goes home to bless his household- the concept here is likely that David is being shown as a king whose humility and zeal for Yahweh lead to blessing on others wherever he goes.
  - The point in this retelling of David is to highlight, "yes, he failed, but Yahweh was working through him and Yahweh loved you and there is still hope that someone like him will come and someone better than him..."
- **Chapter 17**
  - We now come to the most important part of David's life- the covenant God makes that one of his descendants will be the heir to the world and receive an everlasting kingdom.
  - This chapter once again continues a theme we could state this way, "Israel, remember how awesome David was? Remember how humble he was and how he blessed everyone by his life? Well, that was all God's work and God hasn't given up on you yet- someone is coming who will be all David was and more."
- **Chapter 18**

- This chapter highlights that when the King from David's line "wields" the Davidic covenant by humble and faithful obedience to Yahweh, he is unstoppable and defeats God's enemies. See especially verse 13 "and Yahweh gave David victory wherever he went."
- **Chapter 19**
  - This chapter highlights the exact same thing as chapter 19- scary bad guys who want to fight against Yahweh stand no chance when the humble chosen one trusts in Yahweh. We know David isn't this ultimate chosen one, but he represents a microcosm of that.
- **Chapter 20**
  - Where is Bathsheba?!?!?! Remember: this is the highlight reel.
  - This chapter broadly continues the same themes as 18 and 19.
- **Chapter 21**
  - Even though chapter 21 recounts a primarily negative story about David, the key to the story is actually to compare David to a number of leaders before him who exhibit the priestly-kingly role of interceding for the people and specifically asking that they be punished in place of the people. So in the highlight reel version **what is highlighted is that a true king will take the punishment in the place of his people.**
- **Chapter 22-27**
  - Although David's sin meant he would not be the one to build the temple, this chapter recounts how David in his zeal ensured that everything was as ready as possible for his son. Again, the king and the temple are emphasized to show that God's love for his people never wavered.
  - Notice how this section mirrors the genealogy. Thus we can see the twin themes emphasized- in the genealogy David (the king) is emphasized and in the ending the temple and priesthood are emphasized. Chronicles is about how God has always loved his people and has continued his relationship with them through the king and the priesthood even till the time of the exile. Further, there is a hope of a greater David and a greater temple to come. (don't forget, when we are talking about temple we are talking about God's presence and relationship).
- **Chapter 28-29**
  - It is extremely important to note the narrative buildup here- Yes the focus has been David, but the focus has been David as initiator of the temple building. David is the one who takes Jerusalem, brings the ark, sets everything up and gets everything ready for the temple. And we have to remember that this makes sense as the temple is the core symbol of the people's relationship to yahweh and the hope of a return to Eden. Thus the king actually functions primarily to secure and protect an ongoing relationship between Yahweh and the people- this is why we can speak of the true king functioning like a priest. Thus the focus of

Chronicles really zeroes in on the temple and asks the question- do we still have a relationship with Yahweh- post exile? Also, we can now understand why there is such a strong link between the messiah and the temple- if the devastation of exile is that the people are driven away from the presence of Yahweh, then the messiah will fully and finally establish that presence between Yahweh and his people in a way that cannot be corrupted even by their own sin-- and this is exactly what we see in Jesus, in whom the glory of God has come to tabernacle among us.

- **Focus on Kings in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 1-36)**

- **Summary Points**

- Overlaps with Kings but the North is totally left out to focus on David's line
- highlights obedient kings and shows how their obedience led to blessing
- adds new stories about evil kings bringing curse and leading to exile.
- The conclusion is especially unique because Cyrus issues a decree- the final line of the book is Cyrus speaking..."and let him go up..." ends on an incomplete sentence...showing that the author is not looking at this return as the final return but looking forward in hope.

- **Chapter 1**

- Note continuation of the temple theme and the royal theme.. Solomon is humble and wants to be a blessing to others.
- Also note how Solomon's sexual sin is conspicuously missing and although the gold and chariots are mentioned, the thing that led him astray to idol worship was his many wives.

- **Chapter 2**

- Godly kings fulfill the hope that the nations will stream to Yahweh because they see the wisdom and glory given to gods people- Solomon embodies this.

- **Chapter 3-4**

- These chapters are basically a crescendo to chapter 5-7
- This whole section describes how Solomon had the temple built and climaxes in the fire coming down on the temple just as it had with the tabernacle at the end of Exodus- the goal is finally going to be accomplished god will dwell with his people.

- **Chapter 5**

- This begins the first of a three chapter climactic section.
- In this chapter the ark is moved into the temple and it is noteworthy that it says their sacrifices were uncountable - keep in mind these would have been all of their own and so the author wants to emphasize that the people really did love Yahweh (at least a portion of them) -the priests could not stand to minister- this echoes Exodus 40.

- **Chapter 6**

- Solomons prayer basically gives the history of Israel and remember the author is crafting the words to give hope-- if they go into captivity hear their prayer and bring them back!
- **Chapter 7**
  - v1-3 are highly climactic
  - the underlying hope is that even though they are in exile (at time of writing) maybe a figure like David and Solomon will come who can restore this relationship and fix the sin that has corrupted all things
  - 7:14 this is not about America!
  - 7:17-22 it is important to remember that God's offers are genuine even though he is totally sovereign.
- **Chapter 8**
  - Note that there is no mention of the details of Solomon's house. Kings brings out how it took more time than the temple and was presumably extremely important to Solomon- but it is left out here because the highlight reel is emphasizing that god has always loved his people and gave them kings who brought genuine blessing on the people by their obedience Also note in the middle of the chapter how Solomon's accomplishments are framed around his religious zeal - emphasizing that he was indeed a godly man and that God loved his people by giving them godly kings and leaders.
- **Chapter 9**
  - Despite much of what is recounted here being a part of Solomon's downfall it is painted in the light of being blessings on the people and evidence of gods blessing on the world through Israel in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham.
  - This is also confirmation that god will indeed pour out the blessings he promised in Deuteronomy for obedience.
- **Chapter 10**
  - The remainder of this book is not going to hide the downfall of Israel but it is going to focus on the southern kingdom-- because that's where the temple is and that's the symbol of the relationship between Yahweh and his people- remember 1 Chronicles led up to the temple, this book climaxed in 6-8 with the temple dedication and now we are going to see the downfall of the kingdom that leads eventually to the rupture between heaven and earth and the destruction of the temple and exile of the people.
  - 10:19 there will never again be a David if king who can unite all Israel until the messiah
- **Chapter 11**
  - 11:13-17 the southern kingdom is the theological center for those who love the lord
- **Chapter 12**

- The beginning of the end (see verse 1)
- 12:9 the exile began long before it became official
- **Chapter 13**
  - Abijah continues the theme that even though the kingdom is split and the North is filled with idolatry God is preserving David's line and preserving faithful kings who will rule well and trust Yahweh.
- **Chapter 14**
  - Notice how when good kings rule phrases appear that echo the blessings in Deuteronomy like in verse 5 "and the land had rest under him." Obedient kings bring God's blessing on the people via their obedience. This sets a pattern that culminates in the one king who is utterly obedient who can secure all the blessings of God and then give those blessings to those who follow him.
  - Asa again continues the theme that those who trust in Yahweh alone will be rescued by him no matter what the material odds against them.
- **Chapter 15**
  - This continues Asa reign and shows how he listened to God's word through the prophet and was "wholly devoted" to Yahweh. Again, the thematic thread here is that Yahweh didn't forget or forsake his people but carried them along through all the years.
- **Chapter 16**
  - This chapter is an excellent warning and a highly applicable passage.
  - As things went well for Asa and he became established we see that instead of first turning to Yahweh, he presumes to know the right thing to do and so sends tribute to the king of Syria, leading to his downfall. Further when he becomes sick he first turns to the physicians and not the Lord. What is highly instructive is the word used in verse 9 translated "blameless." While this is the standard translation of the word, the literal sense is "whole." So while "blameless" is suitable in most contexts, here it helps to know that the underlying sense is "whole" and thus we can see that the emphasis is that God is looking for a person who is "wholeheartedly" his, and Asa serves as a negative example- someone whose heart is not wholly God's.
  - Some applications that could be drawn from this chapter...
    - We often think of sin as active disobedience but here it is simply "forgetting" to turn first to Yahweh for wisdom and help
    - Yahweh wants "whole hearted" followers, not divided followers. The idea of the first commandment is not that Yahweh is the only God, but that Yahweh alone is the ruling governing pursuit and Lord of your life.
    - There is a great danger in blessing- it can lead to a subtle pride that doesn't commit gross sin, but quietly trusts more in yourself than in the Lord without you even realizing it.

- **Chapter 17**
  - Despite Asa's fall God continues faithfully bringing up kings in David's line who follow Yahweh. However...
- **Chapter 18**
  - This begins a wonderful series of moments between Ahab vs. Yahweh.
  - Jehoshaphat is absolutely acting faithlessly by partnering with Ahab here.
  - Notice first the amazing sarcasm of Micaiah
  - This is fleshed out more in 1 Kings 18-22 but all we really need to add is that God had promised that Ahab's blood would be licked up by the dogs in the city.
  - v28-34 the language of "drew the bow at random" and the location at which the arrow penetrates the king all points to God's sovereignty and control. Ahab thinks he's something special but God shows who really rules human history. God's plan will be thwarted by nothing and no one.
- **Chapter 19**
  - Jehoshaphat will experience wrath because he partnered with Ahab who promoted massive amounts of idolatry in Israel, however God continues to stir his heart to bring the people back to the Law and to pursue Yahweh.
- **Chapter 20**
  - In Jehoshaphat's prayer he basically repents and begs for Yahweh's help and the Lord rescues him and Judah. Notice especially that they sing essentially the same words that are sung at the dedication of the temple. Note the theme- righteous king leads to godly people leads to worship and blessing.
  - Note another king whose downfall comes after a great number of victories and blessings.
- **Chapter 21**
  - This chapter is a low and scary point that looks as though the line of David might get swallowed up and merged with the evil line of Israel and Ahab.
  - 21:7 this however is the anchoring hope- God remembers his promise to David and therefore will not allow David's dynasty to be wiped out.
- **Chapter 22**
  - The dynasty hangs on by a thread...again!
  - 22:10-12 the thread gets even thinner...but a nurse rescues the line.
- **Chapter 23**
  - Things are so bleak that once they publicly anoint the true Davidic king Joash- he has to be completely surrounded by guards to not be killed.
  - 16-21 Even when there is no king- Yahweh ensures that his word rules his people.
- **Chapter 24**
  - God cares about his relationship with his people and always has- he has always preserved the thread of the line of David and he has always raised up leaders



who care about Yahweh and the people and who restore the temple- the place of relationship.

- v17-18 what a great example of how you can have spiritual leaders in your life who help and guide you, but you have no real godliness yourself and if they were only removed you would wander off from the Lord- this is a great warning for us.
- **Chapter 25**
  - Victory again leads to idolatry and then defeat.
- **Chapter 26**
  - v15 a wonderful line to capture the theme running through so many of these kings- "he was helped, till he was strong."
  - This section continues the slow spiral out of control not just in Israel but also in Judah- however Yahweh remains faithful to his promises to rescue and restore, but it's hanging by a thread.
- **Chapter 27**
  - Jotham continues the hope- God will sustain them until a righteous king arrives.
- **Chapter 28**
  - v21 it has gotten so bad that the king is taking from the temple to pay tribute to Assyria.
  - v22 and sadly "in the time of distress he became more faithless to the Lord" - trials don't always make you stronger, sometimes they only reveal the wickedness inside.
  - We often hear phrases like v23 and think of idolatry as this far off thing- but this scene really pictures what idolatry is all about, it is a way to get what you want- and we do this all the time. We want joy, peace, material victory or wealth and we go to all these places searching for ways to get what we want and when we do that instead of turning to the Lord we are committing idolatry and it could be well said of some people- "they turned to the gods of (whatever you're longing for) "but they were the ruin of him/her."
- **Chapter 29-31**
  - Once again, when it looks the bleakest God will not allow his people and his relationship with them to be utterly destroyed and so he raises up individuals who will restore things.
  - Notice how Hezekiah immediately focuses on the temple because he understands the centrality of worship to the wellbeing of the nation.
- **Chapter 32**
  - This chapter contains a great picture of a righteous blend between trust in Yahweh coupled with action. Isaiah and Hezekiah pray together earnestly to the Lord to rescue them and at the same time they build fortifications and arm the people and set up combat commanders. Trust doesn't look like laziness or even

inactivity, but all the activity in the world without a primary and intense dependence on Yahweh is meaningless.

- **Chapter 33**

- Another down turn on the roller coaster- in fact a very huge down turn, but as we have learned to expect God will not allow things to spiral utterly out of control.

- **Chapter 34**

- Once again God raises up a faithful and godly king to bring the people back to him. However, there is an important note in Kings (not mentioned here because of the focus on the highlights) that even faithful Josiah was unable to turn away Yahweh's wrath and thus we still look for a king to come who can indeed turn away the wrath of Yahweh.

- **Chapter 35**

- Once again, blessing and victory lead to pride which leads to defeat and death.

- **Chapter 36**

- When we see an evil king reigning in Judah and then the people carried off into exile (the greatest curse possible under the Mosaic law) we have been primed to expect the pattern that God will now bring a king who brings the people back and fixes everything- but that is not what we get.. in every way this book (the last of the Hebrew bible!) ends on a massive cliffhanger. there is no resolution of the exile, Jerusalem is captured and burned, the temple destroyed, and the final paragraph of the book gives some hope, but basically ends on an incomplete sentence in Hebrew. This open endedness leaves the reader with the distinct impression that God is still at work, the story is still continuing, and there is more to come, but the solution to all these problems is by no means clear.

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