



# KINGS OF ISRAEL III: 1 & 2 CHRONICLES

## WEEK 1

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# OUTLINE

## COURSE LOGISTICS

## INTRODUCTION, CRITICAL MATTERS

The Author and Date

Theology and Themes

Historical Evidence

Literary Features



## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The book(s) of Chronicles is often ignored or skipped for two reasons. First, it contains an impervious nine chapters of genealogies. Second, the remainder feels like a repeat of much that came before it. This is unfortunate, because if the book of I & II Kings is about sin and judgment, Chronicles is about salvation. Chronicles near comprehensive historical reach—ranging from the beginning of human history to the return from exile—is no mere repeat but was organized with a very specific message in mind. On top of recapitulating some of the disturbing moral, political and spiritual degradation of God's chosen people from the first two courses, we will explore the unique aspects of the book(s) of Chronicles to understand how all the parts fit together—genealogies included!





## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- ▶ **Attendance** You must attend 4 of 5 classes to receive credit.
- ▶ **Readings** You must turn in 3 of 4 of the reading assignments.



## COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Week	Topic	Read
2/19	1	Introduction	–
2/26	2	Genealogies, David's Ascent	I Chron 1-21
3/4	3	The Temple, United Israel	I Chron 22–II Chron 9
3/11	4	Solomon to Hezekiah	II Chron 10-28
3/18	5	Hezekiah to Exile (and back!)	II Chron 29-36



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## WHO WROTE I & II CHRONICLES?

Some preliminaries:

- ▶ As with the other books in this series, I, II Chronicles are a single text, divided for practical purposes. So, we'll use, *Chronicles*.
- ▶ While it is fashionable to fuss over sources in Old Testament scholarship, Chronicles is one text where numerous sources are drawn into explicit citation.
  1. The genealogical records during the reigns of Jotham king of Judah and Jeroboam king of Israel (1 Chr 5:17)
  2. The genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah (1 Chr 9:1)
  3. The book of the annals of King David (1 Chr 27:24)
  4. The records of Samuel the seer (1 Chr 29:29)
  5. The records of Nathan the prophet (1 Chr 29:29; 2 Chr 9:29)
  6. The records of Gad the seer (1 Chr 29:29)



## WHO WROTE I & II CHRONICLES?

7. The prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite (2 Chr 9:29)
8. The visions of Iddo the seer (2 Chr 9:29)
9. The records of Shemaiah the prophet, Iddo the seer that deal with genealogies (2 Chr 12:15)
10. The annotations of the prophet Iddo (2 Chr 13:22)
11. The book of the kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chr 16:11; 25:26)
12. The annals of Jehu son of Hanani (2 Chr 20:34)
13. The book of the kings of Israel (2 Chr 20:34)
14. The annotations on the book of the kings (2 Chr 24:27)
15. The book of the kings of Israel and Judah (2 Chr 27:7; 35:27; 36:8)
16. The words of David and of Asaph the seer (2 Chr 29:30)
17. The annals of the kings of Israel (2 Chr 33:18)
18. The records of the seers (2 Chr 33:19)
19. The instructions written by David king of Israel and by his son Solomon (2 Chr 35:4)



## WHO WROTE I & II CHRONICLES?

Allowing that the author of Chronicles drew on the above sources, there is decent but inconclusive evidence that Ezra wrote this book.

1. The Babylonian Talmud asserts that Ezra wrote the majority of the book and that Nehemiah completed it.
2. The first three verses of Ezra is exactly the same as the end of II Chronicles (word-for-word).
3. There are syntactic and stylistic similarities; for example, both books contain numerous lists.
4. Ezra would have been well-situated to write it as a priest, prophet and leader in the immediate aftermath of the exile.



## WHO WROTE I & II CHRONICLES?

### Arguments against Ezra writing Chronicles:

1. In the Hebrew Scriptures (MT), Chronicles is given after Ezra-Nehemiah rather than before, as would be natural given the linkage between the end of Chronicles and the beginning of Ezra. [It's in the natural order in LXX.]
2. The focus on Ezra-Nehemiah on intermarriage is much stronger than it is in Chronicles; the monarchy is much stronger in Chronicles than Ezra-Nehemiah. [This seems appropriate to their respective goals.]

It is my personal judgment that these are not really persuasive counterpoints. There are a few other arguments out there but they are equally unremarkable.



## WHO WROTE I & II CHRONICLES?

Gleason Archer remarks:

As the chief architect of the spiritual and moral revival of the Second Commonwealth, he [Ezra] would have had every incentive to produce a historical survey of this sort. As a Levite from the priestly line, his viewpoint would have been in perfect agreement with that of the author of this work, and he would be very apt to lay the stress just where the Chronicler has... In 2 Macc. 2:13-15, [there is] a tradition that Governor Nehemiah owned a considerable library... If Nehemiah did possess such a sizable collection of reference works, it might very well be that his close collaborator, Ezra, would have had ready access to these reference works and used them in the compilation of Chronicles. (Archer, 450)



## WHEN WAS I & II CHRONICLES WRITTEN?

Given the above evidence, we may fix the book of Chronicles solidly in the fifth century after the exile. Even Alter, a secular author, judges that the ostensible function of the text points to the immediate post-exilic environment:

*In all likelihood, it was composed sometime in the late in the late decades of the fifth century B.C.E., after the Return to Zion and after the mission of Ezra and Nehemiah in the middle of that century to renew the Temple cult and establish the canonical authority of the Torah. (Alter, 865)*

His point is that themes and interests of the text fit most naturally with our historical knowledge of the political and religious environment following the exile. Rebuilding Jerusalem and its temple is the most natural soil out of which such a text would blossom.



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# THEOLOGY

1. **YHWH is the God of history.** As with all historical books, God's sovereignty is visible throughout. Chronicles as a whole has an additional and deliberate flavor of God's operation in all of human history, not just in the immediate pericope. This is witnessed in the extended genealogies, in the scale of time, and in the frequently used phrase, 'YHWH God of their fathers.'
2. **Salvation comes from God alone.** The other books concerning Israel's monarchy highlight the depravity of man and the judgment of God. In Chronicles, these notions are present with the additional emphasis on God providing salvation from this judgment. This is demonstrated by Israel's returning from exile and the large block of chapters devoted to the temple—God's uniquely designated place for atonement for sin.



## THEMES

1. *Seed*—The extensive genealogies immediately invite a comparison to Genesis, especially since the author of Chronicle—most likely a priest—would have been intimately familiar with the Law. This leads our eyes to Gen 3:15—the seed of the woman v. the seed of the Serpent.
2. *Davidic King*—On top of the explicit promises issued by God to David's family (1 Chron 17), the chapters devoted exclusively to David and Solomon span almost half of the entire book and two thirds of those focus exclusively on David himself.
3. *Temple*—17 of 21 chapters regarding David involve preparations for the temple; 7 of 9 regarding Solomon concern the building and consecrating of the temple. An emphasis on cultic activity also appears in those portions devoted to Hezekiah's rule.
4. *Election*—The concepts of God's 'chosen' appears throughout the book, especially in reference to the roles of the Levites and the royal line.



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## INTRODUCTION

If Samuel(s) have very little evidence and Kings has much, Chronicles falls somewhere in between.

1. I, II Samuel—This text only spans a couple generations. Jerusalem has been conquered many times and has evolved into a modern city. Therefore, much of the relevant archaeological data, if it exists at all, is still buried. Also, during this time, regional powers in Palestine had ebbed, meaning that extra-biblical sources are limited.
2. I, II Kings—This text spans five centuries, considerably opening up the range of data. Large portions of the book focus on royal houses and war, topics liable to produce articles for posterity. Also, references to biblical figures in extrabiblical literature are natural given that Israel and Judah were steadily conquered by neighboring powers.
3. I, II Chronicles—Here the span of time is longest, but the text focuses almost entirely on Jerusalem and the southern kingdom of Judah.



## ARTIFACTS

Here is a sampling of some archaeological discoveries relevant to this period:

1. Tell-Dan stele—Aramean king describes his conquests, and a fragment mentions a vanquished king of the “House of David.”
2. Mesha stele—Also (most likely) refers to the house of David, partly due to its parallel with the house of Omri (Ahab’s father).
3. Bubastite Portal at Karnak Temple—According to I Chron 12, “Shishak” invades the land of Canaan during Rehoboam’s reign. This figure is linked to the Libyan Pharaoh, Shoshenq I. This gateway (portal) has a list of defeated cities, including Gibeon, Gath and Aijalon.
4. Shoshenq I Fragment—At Tel-Megiddo (i.e. in Israel), a fragment of a stele bears Shoshenq I’s cartouche (royal mark).



## ARTIFACTS

Relevant archaeology cont'd:

5. Royal Seals and Bullae—Seals and seal-impressions (bullae) are abundant from this period, attesting to Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh and Jeconiah's son, Pedaiah (I Chron 3:16-18).
6. Sennacherib's Annals—These are Assyrian records inscribed in cuneiform on three separate clay prisms. They mention Hezekiah and the siege of Lachish.
7. Lachish Reliefs—Discovered in Nineveh, shows Sennacherib's capture of the Judean city, Lachish (cf. II Chron 32). This capture is also supported by discoveries of siege-works at the site of Lachish.



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# BOOK OUTLINE

<b>I</b>	<b>Genealogies from Adam to post-exilic era</b>		
	–	I Ch 1-9	
<b>II</b>	<b>United Monarchy of David and Solomon</b>		
	A	I Ch 10-12	David Becomes King Over Israel
	B	I Ch 13-16	David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem
	C	I Ch 17-21	God's Promise to David, Final Occupation
	D	I Ch 22-29	David Prepares for Temple
	E	II Ch 1-9	Solomon Builds Temple
<b>III</b>	<b>Judah Under Divided Monarchy</b>		
	A	II Ch 10-12	Pattern of Repentance and Resistance
	B	II Ch 13-16	Benefits of Trust in God
	C	II Ch 17-23	Unholy Alliance Results in Compromise and Disaster
	D	II Ch 24-26	Three Kings Start Well, Finish Badly
	E	II Ch 27-32	Three Contrasting Kings
	F	II Ch 33-35	Three Kings and Humble Repentance
	G	II Ch 36	Four Kings, Exile and Restoration



## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER BOOKS

What do you make of the following commentary?

The tales of the Patriarchs and the story of the troubled founding of the Israelite monarchy in their early formulation are full of human contradictions, moral ambiguities, psychological probings, and sometimes the intimation of dark and destructive impulses... The Chronicler is impelled to rewrite these stories in order to make them yield a picture of divinely ordained political and cultic practice. He speaks of good and bad kings, as something he knows well from reading the Book of Kings, but these are now neatly divided between those who do right in the eyes of the LORD and those who do evil in the eyes of the LORD. The national history is painted in black and white, and the haunting shadows, the chiaroscuro, the sudden illuminations of classical Hebrew narrative, vanish in this work. (Alter, 867)

If anything, the kings are “painted” with much more gray! For example, Manasseh repents and Asa is shown to be more troubled.





## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER BOOKS

Given that the author has a researcher's sense for citation and sources, we may assume that the author of Chronicles is familiar with all the previous canonical books concerning his subject matter.

Why might we assume that his audience is also familiar with the canonical texts?

- ▶ If nothing else, Genesis, Samuel and Kings were all written first.
- ▶ The author's endless citation would be meaningless if the audience did not have some inkling of their authority or whereabouts.
- ▶ Ezra and Nehemiah both record reading the law to the people.
- ▶ The counter-claim that Chronicles is white washed is undermined





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