

# Chronicles

1Chronicles 1:1-2Chronicles 36:23

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2019-06-02

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## Introduction - Contrasts between Kings and Chronicles

There are two things that sometimes make people skip over Chronicles. And the first reason is obvious - it is that the author starts this book with nine chapters of ultra boring genealogies. In our modern writing classes we are told that we need to catch the attention of the people right up front if we expect people to read a book. So 9 chapters of genealogies seems like an odd way to start. But as we will see, there is a good reason for it. And the reason is not that the author is a boring scribe. Not at all. His story telling abilities are remarkable. He even has a sense of humor, and if we have time, I will point out some of that dry humor later.<sup>1</sup> So the first reason people give up is the genealogies.

The second reason people stop reading is that they assume that Chronicles is telling us exactly the same stories as they had just finished reading in Samuel and Kings. They think, "I can save some time by skipping over this - I've already read all that stuff." But Chronicles really is quite different on a number of levels, and I hope by the end of this sermon you will appreciate why it is important to read it cover to cover. Let me give you the top twelve things that make Chronicles so different from Kings even though it has some of the same stories.

- First, Chronicles begins much earlier than Kings (going all the way back to Adam) and finishes with Cyrus' decree to restore the temple in Israel. So it is a longer span of time. In fact, it is the longest span of time for any history book in the Old Testament.
- Second, where Kings is strictly chronological, Chronicles is sometimes out of order in order to emphasize a topic. It is usually written in order, but it will sometimes introduce earlier stories. So, for example, though Saul died in 1 Chronicles 10, he is discussed again in 12:19. Nobody is confused by that. They know exactly what the author is doing. Likewise, David's battle with the Philistines in chapter 14 is chronologically out of order, but topically very appropriate. He is using the stories from the history to illustrate his points.
- Third, where Kings gives extensive history of both the northern and the southern kingdoms, Chronicles almost completely ignores the north and focuses on the south. It's only when the two fight that he seems to mention the northern kings at

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Chronicles 21:20 reads, "Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. He passed away, to no one's regret, and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings." Ezra gives an editorial comment "to no one's regret" as a touch of comic-relief.

all. And by the way, this makes the narrative much more smooth for reading than the story-line in Kings, which has to jump back and forth between the kingdoms. It is very easy to follow the story line in Chronicles.

- Fourth, Chronicles emphasizes the ark of the covenant and the temple far more than Kings, and along with that, emphasizes redemption much more than Kings. So morals and judgment is emphasized in Kings whereas redemption and temple imagery is emphasized in Chronicles.
- Fifth, Kings emphasizes the sins that led to the exile and applies Deuteronomy to those sins. It is the factual evidence that will be used by Jeremiah in his covenant lawsuit against the nation. In contrast, Chronicles overlooks many of the sins in the lives of its heroes and emphasizes encouragement for the post-exilic people. In many ways it emphasizes grace overcoming sin. They are both perfectly accurate records, but they are emphasizing different aspects of the history.
- Sixth, while the heart of Kings is prophetic judgment, the heart of Chronicles is priestly redemption. The book of Kings shows why Israel deserved the exile that they got, while Chronicles emphasizes hope for the future; hope for return. So it is prophetic judgment in Kings versus priestly redemption in Chronicles.
- Likewise, Kings is more negative and Chronicles tends to be more positive and encouraging.
- Eighth, Kings focuses on the political, while Chronicles focuses on the ecclesiastical.
- Ninth, Kings focuses on man's failings while Chronicles focuses on God's faithfulness in dealing with man's failings.
- Tenth, Kings is numbered with the former prophets in the Hebrew canon, while Chronicles is the very last book of the Hebrew canon.
- Eleventh, Kings emphasizes the human dimension of the history, while Chronicles emphasizes the divine weaving of the history. You see this in even as simple a thing as the description of David's throne. Though both books refer to David's throne, Chronicles alone calls David's throne the throne of Yehowah (2 Chronicles 9:8).
- And twelfth, some people liken Samuel and Kings to the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke and liken Chronicles to John. That's a little more of a fuzzy comparison, but there is something to that in terms of feel.

Stories help these concept to gel in our minds, so I'll give one example story of the differences between these two books. Turn to 2 Chronicles 33, and I will read you the story of Manasseh. But first, let me give you a little bit of background material.

Manasseh was an unbelievably wicked king. He was far worse than Ahab. Chronicles presents him as the worst king of Israel by far. So does Kings. There are a lot of similarities with the account in 2 Kings 21. But there are significant differences that showcase the different purpose for writing Chronicles. The people that God was writing Chronicles for were discouraged and were tempted to think that there was no point in returning to the land since God was done with Israel. This book was written to showcase

God's compassion, His redemption, and His willingness to forgive all sins that are repented of. But it does take repentance and turning from sin. The last chapter deals with the unpardonable sin, but the greatness of the sin is not what makes it unpardonable. If you are willing to confess and turn from your sin, you have not committed the unpardonable sin. And this story illustrates that.

Let's start reading this story at verse 1. 2 Chronicles 33, beginning at verse 1.

2Chr. 33:1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2 But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. 4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem shall My name be forever." 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 7 He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers—only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses." 9 So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. So far, the stories in Kings and Chronicles are basically the same. But at this point Kings adds a great deal of negative material to illustrate why this wickedness helped to result in the exile. So Kings has some material that Chronicles does not. But now Chronicles is going to add some material that is completely missing from Kings. Kings does mention that Manasseh died in Jerusalem, but makes no mention whatsoever of his exile and repentance while he was in Babylon and then his return to Jerusalem. Both accounts are 100% accurate records, but each account is deliberately selective in its history to illustrate the central purpose of each book. Beginning to read again where we left off at verse 11.

11 Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. 12 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his

kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

2Chr. 33:14 After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and it enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15 He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast them out of the city. 16 He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. 17 Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

2Chr. 33:18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. 19 Also his prayer and how God received his entreaty, and all his sin and trespass, and the sites where he built high places and set up wooden images and carved images, before he was humbled, indeed they are written among the sayings of Hozai. 20 So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

You can see that this is a magnificent story of redemption. God sovereignly saves and restores to kingship the absolutely worst king of Israel and his last days are wonderful. He was transformed. It is a remarkable testimony to grace.

And as you read through Chronicles you will see many other examples of this redemptive emphasis. For example, David's worst sin is completely skipped over. Samuel included a detailed description of David's sin with Bathsheba to show that even with forgiveness there are consequences to sin, but because this book focuses on redemption, there is no point in bringing up that forgiven sin.

## **I. The Christ of Chronicles**

And since I started with a couple stories of redemption, I will pick up in your outline at the Christ of Chronicles. Christ is richly displayed in this book.

### **A. *The Davidic covenant (1 Chron. 17)***

He is displayed in the Davidic covenant of 1 Chronicles 17, especially in verses 11-14 where the eternal nature of the Davidic covenant is outlined. There will be an eternal seed of David who will rule eternally on the throne of David. And the later prophets clearly apply that Davidic covenant to Jesus. He is the only way that there could be an eternal seed of David reigning eternally from the throne of David.

***B. Judah preeminent in the genealogy (1 Chron. 4:1-23) because monarchy, temple, and Messiah will all be located in that tribe***

Christ is also hinted at in the genealogy of 1 Chronicles 4 in that monarchy, temple, and Messiah will all be located in the tribe that Jesus Christ will come from, the tribe of Judah. So Judah gets placed first. But that is only a hint and I don't want to give an exposition of it.

***C. The temple. See preparations (1 Chron. 13-29), building (2 Chron. 2-3) and consecration of temple (2 Chron. 5-7)***

Instead, I want to focus on the next two points. Perhaps the most pervasive and obvious image of Jesus is the temple that David planned for and that Solomon built. You can see how central this image is by how many chapters are devoted to the temple. There is way more material on the temple in Chronicles than in all of Samuel and Kings combined. The author devotes an enormous 17 chapters (all of chapters 13-29) to David's preparations for the temple. Then we have all of 2 Chronicles 1-9 being devoted to Solomon's building and consecration of the temple. That is a total of 26 chapters devoted to the temple or 40% of the material of Chronicles. Not counting the genealogies, Chronicles covers 466 years of history, and yet 40% of the history covers the short time to plan and build a temple. It is pretty obvious that the temple was a central theme in this book if you are devoting 40% of the book to an explicit discussion of the temple.

But the more you dig, the more you realize that it's actually more than 40% because the author keeps coming back to the temple in later chapters. For example, in 2 Chronicles 10-36, the reason the kings from the north are not included is because they rejected the temple. In the south, the biggest amount of space is devoted to the kings who sought to restore temple worship - the kings Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah. I haven't taken the time to calculate how much those additional discussions of the temple would add to the figure, but it amounts to way over 50% of the book.

Why all this focus on the temple? Because this is a book with a redemptive message. We saw that the heart and focus of the book of Kings was prophetic through and through. The heart and focus of Chronicles is priestly through and through. It is a redemptive book designed to teach God's people that if they will but put their faith in the coming Messiah (symbolized by Temple and sacrifices), and if they will repent of their sins, and trust Him alone for their salvation, God will be for them and God will be with them. God was establishing the temple to show His presence among them that

would set aside the people to be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles nations, with the goal of reconciling the Gentile nations to Christ. They failed on that mission, unlike their coming Messiah. But when you add the theme of Israel being a priest to the nations, the redemptive aspects of this book increase even more.

And the symbology of the temple and the furniture of the temple is identical to what we looked at in the Tabernacle under Moses. So I won't dig into that much this morning. Every piece of furniture pointed to a different facet of Christ's work, and was made of wood (representing Christ's humanity) and was covered with gold (representing His deity). And the temple as a whole was plated with enormous amounts of gold. It was a golden palace for the King of the Universe. It was a spectacular wonder of the world that pointed to the presence of God dwelling with His people because of the merits of Jesus Christ, whose atonement was symbolized by temple's sacrifices. Enough said on that point.

#### ***D. The booth of David (1 Chron. 15-16)***

But the booth of David is also an astounding picture of Christ dwelling with His people in New Covenant times. This booth is discussed in 1 Chronicles 15-16 and is referenced in other places. But Acts 15 uses the booth of David as a type of Jesus uniting in His body both Jew and Gentile.

Scholars point to a number of unusual things about the booth of David. And I'm surprised that I am recommending another Peter Leithart book, but his ground-breaking study on the Booth of David has some absolutely fabulous material.<sup>2</sup> But let me start by listing some of the key differences between tabernacle and booth (because sometimes people confuse the two), and I think you will quickly see why this was an amazing symbol.

- First of all, the booth of David was inside Jerusalem in 1 Chronicles 15-16 and that booth is clearly distinguished from the tabernacle of Moses seven miles northwest of Jerusalem in Gibeon. And there is a brief mention of the tabernacle of Moses at Gibeon in 1 Chronicles 16:39-43. But the two are in quite different locations.
- Second, the booth of David was not a substitute for the tabernacle of Moses. Both were needed and both were used. And both had different functions.
- Third, there are different Hebrew terms for both. Even though some versions translate it as the tabernacle of David, because there are two totally different Hebrew terms used, most modern translations prefer to translate it as the Booth of David.

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<sup>2</sup> Peter J. Leithart, *From Silence to Song: The Davidic Liturgical Revolution*, (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003).

- Fourth, the architecture was quite different, with the tabernacle of Moses having an outer court, a holy place, and a Holy of Holies and the booth of David having only one room. So three rooms versus one room.
- Fifth, when the ark of the covenant used to be in the tabernacle of Moses, it was not visible to the people. No one but the High Priest could approach that ark, which was housed in the Holy of Holies, and he could only approach it once a year on the Day of Atonement. And he had to wear a rope around his leg just in case he got killed. But when the ark was moved to the booth of David by God's authorization, it was visible to all who worshiped before God there. They were face to face with the ark. This is astounding. David frequently went in to commune with God before the ark. When it was in the Mosaic tabernacle, he would never have been able to do that. Not even the high priest could do that.
- Sixth, sacrifices were offered at the tabernacle of Moses in Gibeon, whereas fellowship with God is emphasized in the booth of David. But since the priests didn't function at the Booth of David, there were not any sacrifices at the Booth of David. The only exception was when the ark was first being moved there by the priests. And even that was symbolically appropriate of the New Covenant. They offered sacrifices once, but after that, they have fellowship without sacrifices. David approached the ark to commune with God without sacrifice. To get right with God, He had to sacrifice at Gibeon, but to commune with God, he simply walked into the Booth of David and worshiped. So the sacrifices at the beginning of chapter 15 symbolize the finished work of Jesus, which was done once and became the means for ushering all into communion without sacrifice.
- Seventh, this meant that the booth of David functioned similarly to a synagogue, with three exceptions, and I will give those very important exceptions in a bit. The tabernacle of Moses was not a synagogue, but the booth of David was. But it was an unusual synagogue. It was a synagogue with God's throne right in its midst. So again, there are many parallels to our New Covenant worship.
- Eighth, (and this is one of the most astounding differences between the tabernacle of Moses and the booth of David), the booth of David had ministers who were both Jewish and Gentile. The Jewish priests continued to minister at the Tabernacle of Moses in Gibeon while the synagogue Levites ministered side-by-side with the majority Gentile officers of Obed-Edom and his brethren. Some people who can't understand how Gentiles could minister before the ark have said that the Gentiles must have been adopted into the family of Levi.<sup>3</sup> But the point is, they were Gentiles. All acknowledge that this is a strange and astounding new thing that God had authorized for this brief time of history. And it was authorized to foreshadow the astounding things that the final David, Jesus, would accomplish in the New Covenant.

This means that the Booth of David showcases what New Covenant worship

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Gordon calls this a "Levitical preferment" to a Gentile. But Obed-Edom was not the first Gentile to provide leadership and access with regard to the Ark of the Covenant. In 1 Samuel 7 the Philistines send the ark out of captivity to Kirjath Jearim, a Gibeonite city. The Gibeonites are not yet considered Israelites. 2 Samuel 21:2 says, "the Gibeonites were not of the sons of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites." So the ark is in Gentile hands, and these Gentiles take very good care of the ark. They take much better care of it than the Levites of Beth Shemesh did. Both these passages prefigure the New Covenant church composed of Jew and Gentile.



should look like far more than the temple did. The Booth of David contained the temple worship stripped of all its ceremonial law just as the synagogues and the New Covenant church contains the temple worship stripped of the ceremonial law. There were no priests, no sacrifices, no incense, no priestly garments, no temple furniture, no holy pots and pans, and no altars. It was people face-to-face with God. So the Booth of David was equivalent to an Old Testament synagogue,<sup>4</sup> but with three additional things that are distinctively new covenant: 1) the presence of Gentile ministers, 2) the presence of the ark of the covenant, 3) and far more musical instruments than the synagogues in Israel had. The synagogues did have musical instruments, but this became the largest synagogue in the land, and as such had far more musicians and musical instruments than the other synagogues.

And David would not have been able to get away with any of that if God had not explicitly authorized Him to do so. 2 Chronicles 29:25-27 says that all of this was by the commandment of the Lord through the prophets and references that command of the Lord for even the musical instruments.

Likewise, both Amos 9 and Acts 15 use the booth of David as a type of New Covenant worship, where Jew and Gentile together are able to worship God. Never do the prophets or the New Testament Scriptures liken the church to “mount Moriah,” where the temple was. Rather they liken the church to mount Zion where the Booth of David was. Over the past thirty-five years of preaching, I have occasionally confused the two mounts, but they are different.

The psalm in 1 Chronicles 16 is particularly powerful in describing Jew and Gentile worshipping side-by-side in New Testament times. In commenting on the Jew-Gentile issue in Acts 15, James says that the New Testament church is a rebuilding of the Booth of David. That’s the essence of the New Testament church. It’s not temple. It’s not merely synagogue. It is the rebuilding of the Booth of David. James says,

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4 That synagogues were a Mosaic institution can be seen from Acts 15:21 where it says that “Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in... the synagogues.” The Jews said that the officers and courts of the synagogue system were established in Exodus 18. Leviticus 23:3 required people to gather for worship every Sabbath “in sacred assembly.” This was geographically impossible to fulfill via the temple; rather, the sacred assemblies were led by Levites in synagogues in every town and hamlet throughout the land. The Levites were scattered throughout the land in order to provide teachers or scribes (2 Chron. 17:9; Deut. 18:6-8; Neh. 10:37-39; etc.). Levites were trained in the law as teachers. Thus Psalm 74:8 speaks of these “meeting places” throughout the land. Though Levites also taught at the temple, and assisted in other ways (Deut. 18:6-8), most Levites taught in the cities (Deut. 18:6) in proto-synagogues (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 17:18; 31:9-13; 33:10; 2 Chron. 17:7-9; 30:22; 35:3; Neh. 8:17-13; Mal. 2:6-7). The Levites of the Old Testament were equivalent to the teaching and ruling elders of the New Testament with the Teaching Elders carrying the title of “scribe” (2 Sam. 8:17; 20:25; 1 Kings 4:3; 2 Kings 12:10; 18:37; 19:2; 1 Chron. 24:6; 27:32; Ezra 7:6,11; Neh. 12:10; Jer. 36:12; Matt. 7:29; 13:52; 17:10; 23:2,3; etc.)

And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: “After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,” Says the LORD who does all these things.

So the booth of David is an amazing type of New Covenant worship being caught up to the heavenly ark of the covenant by means of our union with Jesus. Just as David boldly approached the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant, which was God’s throne of grace, we too may approach the throne of grace boldly. I love this image.

### ***E. David***

I’ll have to be very quick on the other types of Jesus. David himself was a type of Christ, and we have looked at that in enough detail that I won’t focus upon him, other than to say that he was a man of war who foreshadowed the messy times that we live in.

### ***F. Solomon***

In contrast, Solomon was a man of peace, and as such was a type of Christ ruling all nations in our future in an era of peace and prosperity.

### ***G. Numerous other types such as book of the law, ark, passover, burnt offering, and the offices of prophet, priest, and king***

I won’t even cover how the book of the law, the ark, the passover, the burnt offering, and the offices of prophet, priest and king also point to Jesus. I’ve commented on those enough in the past. But I think you can see that this is a book of redemption that beautifully foreshadows the redemption we have in Jesus.

## **II. The author is Ezra**

But who was the author? I think that it is a slam dunk that it was Ezra. I was going to give you my reasons for believing that, but I will have to leave that for the website.<sup>5</sup>

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- 5 First, it is consistent with ancient Jewish and Christian tradition. The church has always held to that opinion. So this is not an odd view of a minority.
- Second, the style of writing and the language itself is very similar to the book of Ezra. There are a number of internal evidences that Ezra and Chronicles had to have a common author. Just linguistically I think that is true, though there has obviously been some debate.
  - Third, the last verses of 2 Chronicles are the same as the first verses of Ezra. Whoever wrote the one wrote the other. The prophet is linking those two books. He is indicating, “OK, now go back to what I said in the book of Ezra.”
  - Fourth, both Ezra and Chronicles have a priestly point of view. There is a common emphasis.

### **III. Date and audience - written for post-exilic community**

Well, if Ezra was the author (which I am 100% convinced that he was), then the emphasis of the book that we have been looking at makes total sense. It certainly makes sense of his original audience. His goal was to reestablish the temple, encourage more Jews to immigrate from Babylon to Israel, prove that God's purposes for returning to the land were still valid, charging the already-returned-Jews to be more faithful to the covenant, seeking to give hope that God would be their God, and giving hope of a coming Messiah. Since the rulers of Israel were not Davidic kings, they might have thought that God was unfaithful to His covenant. But this book points to Jesus fulfilling that promise.

### **IV. Key chapter - 2 Chronicles 7**

There is debate on what is the key chapter. Some think it is 1 Chronicles 17, which points to the Davidic covenant. And that certainly is an important one. But since the temple chapters are central to the redemptive message, I believe 2 Chronicles 7, where God responds with fire from heaven and accepts the temple as His throne has to be the key chapter. Let me read Chapter 7, verses 1-3.

1 When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. 3 When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever."

### **V. Key verse - 2 Chronicles 7:14 (or verses 1-3)**

And those may indeed be the key verses for the whole book as well, though verse 14 of the same chapter fits the central message of redemption too. 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, "If My people who are called by My name will 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." It is a redemptive verse, in a redemptive chapter, in a redemptive history, preaching to a people who needed to hear the message of the total sufficiency of God's redemption for His returning people.

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- And then last, Ezra fits the post-exilic period and would have been qualified to write every chapter of it.

## **VI. Key word - temple (sumarrizing other key words like “house of the Lord,” priest, ark, covenant, altar, sacrifice)**

The key word is debatable. But almost every theory ties their key word in some way to the temple and redemption. For example, some think that the term “priest” is the key word. And it is true that the word “priest” occurs 93 times. But the priests were completely tied to the temple weren’t they? Others say that it is “ark of the covenant,” since that term occurs 44 times. But the terms “temple” and “house of the Lord” occur 126 times, and since the temple is described in more than 50% of the book, and since all of the other terms are related to the temple, I believe that “temple” is the key word for understanding this book.

## **VII. Overview of Chronicles**

### ***A. Genealogies from Adam to Exile (1 Chron. 1-9)***

In light of what we have studied so far, let me give an overview of the book. The first section of the book is chapters 1-9, and it is composed of nothing but genealogies. And where do the genealogies start? The very first word is “Adam.” I think that is significant. It gives a universal (even a Gentile) scope to this book. It should be of interest to all mankind.

Now, I will admit that it is easy to skip over those genealogies because if they are unhinged from the history of Genesis to the end of the Old Testament, those names don’t mean a lot. But to the Hebrew reader who knew his history, every name as it was being read would be freighted with a lot of instant history. It would give them a trip down memory lane - in this case, the memories of the entire Old Testament.

It is obvious why the line of David is traced in this book because He is the one to whom the Messianic promise is made. That same genealogy, going all the way back to Adam is given in Luke’s genealogy of Jesus. It’s not by accident.

The genealogy of the priests also makes sense, because priestly redemption is going to be a focus for the book, and because Ezra is concerned about the establishing of the second temple. The book of Ezra is very preoccupied about the priests being qualified. So all of those genealogies make sense in the context of Ezra.

But what many people miss is the inclusion of Gentiles in these chapters of

genealogies. That is not by accident. Obviously, Adam and Noah will represent both Jews and Gentiles, so it would be hard to avoid them in any Jewish genealogy that was at all complete. But chapter 1:5-7 lists the genealogy of Japheth. Why? Verses 8-16 lists the genealogies of Ham, and the genealogy of Shem includes far more than Israel's ancestors. These genealogies include all the nations listed in Genesis.

This inclusion of the Gentiles is very deliberate, since this book will shockingly show hundreds of Gentile converts, including David's body guard of Cherethites and Pelethites as well as other Gentiles who have joined his ranks. He on many levels is such an amazing figure of Jesus, who would save the world. We have already looked at the most puzzling place where Gentiles were included - in the Booth of David before the ark of the Covenant. All of this is setting the context for why the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus, will be a universal king saving a people from every nation, tribe, and language. Even in these genealogies you can already see the heartbeat that God has for missions.

So rather than compromising with the Gentiles, Ezra wanted his people evangelizing the Gentiles and bringing them into the covenant. Where the New Testament had centrifugal missions with missionaries being cast out to the far reaches of the globe, Chronicles had centripetal missions where Israel was to be a magnet drawing the Gentiles into Israel and making the Gentiles jealous of the Gospel and being attracted to Israel.

In fact, even the way the genealogies are constructed highlights this redemptive feature. All nine chapters are arranged in a perfect chiasm. The A sections start with the genealogies of the ancient non-tribal past and are paralleled with present non-tribal situation. The royal tribe of Judah's genealogy leads us to David in 2:1-4:23 and it is paralleled with the royal tribe of Benjamin's genealogy leading up to king Saul in chapter 8. Incidental tribes are listed in 4-5 and again in chapter 7, but are interrupted with the heart of the genealogies being (surprise, surprise!) the Tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe in chapter 6.<sup>6</sup> So the heart of even these genealogies is redemptive! This makes the Hebrew reader instantly aware that the priesthood and temple will be the central theme for this book.

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6 Doug Wilson labels the chiasmic structure as: A Ancient non-tribal past (1:1-54) B The royal tribe of Judah (2:1-4:23) C Incidental tribes (4:24-5:26) D Tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe (6:1-81) C' Incidental tribes (7:1-40) B' The royal tribe of Benjamin (8:1-40) A' Present non-tribal situation (9:1-34)

Dr. Thomas Constable gives different wording, but it amounts to the same thing: A The lineage of David (chapters 1-3) B Judah and Simeon in the South (4:1-43) C The transjordan tribes to the north (ch 5) D Levi (ch 6) C' The other northern tribes (ch 7) B' Benjamin in the South (ch. 8) A' The lineage of Saul (chapter 9)

- A Ancient non-tribal past (1:1-54)
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  - B' The royal tribe of Benjamin (8:1-40)
  - A' Present non-tribal situation (9:1-34)
- As worded by Douglas Wilson

***B. David (1 Chron. 10-29)***

Let's move to the next major section of the book. In chapters 10-29 we have a lot of the familiar stories about David from Samuel. What is deliberately left out are any stories that portray David as weak or his character as flawed. So his persecution by Saul is left out as is his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of his friend, Uriah the Hittite. Uriah is mentioned as one of David's heroes, but his death is not mentioned. It's not necessarily a sanitized history of David since his numbering of Israel is mentioned, but a selective history of David that is true and narrated for a different purpose than what Samuel had.

Likewise, Chronicles gives us some new material about David that we would not otherwise have gotten in Samuel. Just as one example, David is portrayed as a kind of Moses in chapter 28, where God reveals the detailed plans for the temple and its worship just as God had revealed to Moses the detailed plans for the tabernacle and its worship. And we have a boatload of material in chapters 22-28 about these plans for the temple, the musicians, the priests, etc.

So David is deliberately painted as an image that will later be appealed to by prophets as the type of Jesus, the King of kings.

***C. Solomon (2 Chron. 1-9)***

So that brings us into 2 Chronicles. 2 Chronicles picks up where the book of Kings starts. Just like our comparison of 1 Chronicles to Samuel, 2

Chronicles has some stories that are the same as in Kings, but we also have a bunch of material that was deleted and some that was added that you won't find earlier. And it is again for the same purpose.

Since Solomon will serve as a type of Jesus, the author tends to focus (where possible) on those aspects of Solomon's character that most clearly portray him as an image of Jesus. So we see no mention of his multiple wives and concubines, indicating to me that polygamy does not constitute a legitimate image Christ and the church. In fact, the only mention of any wife in this book makes it clear that Solomon shouldn't have married her. We know from Kings that he must have had a wife earlier, but apparently she died because this indicates that he only had one wife. But he shouldn't have had her. 2 Chronicles 8:11 mentions that Solomon removed the daughter of Pharaoh out of Jerusalem, and the text explains why. Solomon realized by divine inspiration that this was not appropriate, and he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places to which the ark of the LORD has come are holy." He is dwelling in the holy place, but she can't. What's his point? She is not holy; she spoils the imagery of Jerusalem. Solomon is saying that she was utterly inappropriate to the symbolism of Jerusalem and ark. But otherwise, there is no mention of his multiple wives, of God's anger against him, of Solomon's adversaries, or of lack of peace toward the end of his kingdom.

#### ***D. Kings of the South (2 Chron. 10-36)***

The next section is chapters 10-36. The history of the northern kings is for the most part ignored. Of the southern kings you have material removed, but also new material added in that shows God's blessings on kings who followed Him with a faithful heart. These character studies motivate us to yearn to be faithful to God like those hero kings were.

You also have new stories of how God punished kings that were unfaithful, and this unfaithfulness is not overlooked because those stories are needed to explain the exile. So he doesn't exclude all sin. But those stories are recorded in a way so as to motivate later generations to avoid their sins and to remain faithful to God. In fact, as I have already mentioned, you have strong redemptive features running all through it, as the story of Manasseh so wonderfully illustrates. You can see Ezra's hand in these stories pastorally pointing the post-exilic people to redemption.

#### ***E. Epilogue - proclamation of Cyrus (36:22-23)***

The last two verses form an epilogue that shows that God is not finished

with His people. He has a plan and a hope for them. And he explicitly says that this return from the exile after 70 years had been predicted by Jeremiah the prophet. So the book ends with the assurance that the exile was not an accident of history, but had been decreed by God down to the year. And the return from exile was not an accident of history. God was sovereignly in charge of even the heart of Cyrus. But once again we have mention of the temple - it's the temple that will be rebuilt. So, reading the last two verses: 2Chr. 36:22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 23 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up! So that is the book in a nutshell.

## **VIII. Additional lessons from Chronicles**

But I want to end by giving eight practical lessons from 2 Chronicles. We cannot leave this book without applying it.

### ***A. Preparing the heart to seek God (2 Chron. 12:14; 15:12-15)***

2 Chronicles 12:14 ends the story of wicked king Rehoboam by saying, "And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD." Jesus said that every sin arise from the heart, so the heart must be worked on for there to be holiness. If we don't prepare our hearts, we could end up like Rehoboam.

What does it mean to prepare your heart? Well, first, it means that you don't just drift through life. You make preparations. You plan every day with God as your focus. Second, it involves evaluation of every day, with confession and repentance where needed, and asking God to help you to honor Him in your plans. Third, it involves systematically crucifying any desires that will hinder our walk with God. You start with the heart, and if you don't have strategies to prepare your heart to seek God, you will drift. And drifting isn't safe. Drifting always sends you downstream to disaster. God requires heart preparation and daily seeking of His face.

### ***B. Rely on the Lord, not your abilities (2 Chron. 13:18)***

The second lesson is from the life of good king, Abijah. 2 Chronicles 13:18 summarizes the lesson that we can get from the miraculous win that Abijah had against Jereboam; and it was miraculous. It says, "Then the children of



Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers.”

When you read the story you realize that they couldn't take credit for that win because they were surrounded and faced with overwhelming odds. And it would have been easy to give in to fear and a sense of hopelessness. But fear kills faith, and rather than fleeing (which would have been the normal impulse) they cried out to God, trusted Him to deliver, and dove into the battle with a confidence that if God is for us, who can be against us? And God loves to deliver those who rely upon Him and not upon their own resources. It's too easy to trust our own resources rather than God.

### ***C. Guard your heart and keep it loyal (2 Chron. 16:1-14)***

The third lesson comes from the life of Asa in chapter 16. Asa started off wonderfully well and God gave him an astounding victory over the Ethiopians. Chapter 14 had told us that Zerah the Ethiopian had an army of one million soldiers plus another 300 chariots. Asa cried out to the Lord telling Him that for God, numbers were not a big thing. And God honored his faith with an astounding victory. So he had a good start. He was a man of faith.

But over time Asa became spiritually lazy, failed to guard his heart, and was no longer driven by a radical loyalty to God. I have seen this drift happen in so many people's lives. Sometimes it ends in divorce, or excommunication. But somebody always gets hurt. Look at 2 Chronicles 16:7-10. It's surprising to see good king Asa get this bad.

2Chr. 16:7 And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: “Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. 8 Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. 9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.” 10 Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time. Previously he was a servant of the people because He loved God. But when that love grew cold and his pride began to grow, he ended up wounding others rather than serving them. I have seen the same thing happen with so many gifted men and women of God. They have been used powerfully by God in the past, but pride gains a foothold and they start attacking their friends and alienating any who try to correct them. This story is a solemn warning of what can happen to any of us. How do you avoid it? Be open to

correction now, guard your heart against pride, and recommit yourself every day to be sold out to Jesus. If you are not open to correction, you could easily become an Asa.

***D. Don't underestimate the influence of friends for good or for evil (2 Chron. 24)***

The fourth lesson comes from the life of king Joash who slipped away from God because he hung out with the wrong crowd in chapter 24. Under the influence of Jehoiadah the high priest, Joash did some amazingly good things. But in verses 17 and following he got in with the wrong crowd and ended up being horrible.

With Solomon it was unbelieving wives who led him into sin. With Joash it was friends who influenced him into sin. Don't underestimate the influence that friends can have upon you for either good or for evil. Choose your friends and advisors wisely. Even friends within the church can influence you for good or evil. Always evaluate your friendship by the Word of God.

***E. Don't let finances keep you from doing the right thing (2 Chron. 25:5-13)***

The fifth lesson is from the life of Amaziah in 2 Chronicles 25:5-13. Verse 2 summarizes his life with the words, "And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a loyal heart." And you can see his divided loyalties throughout his life. I'll just give you one story. Because of a prophet, God helped Amaziah to make a good decision in chapter 25:5-13. He had foolishly hired mercenaries who weren't believers, and a prophet came to him warning him that that was not right and that God would ensure that he would lose if he used those mercenaries. And in verse 9 Amaziah wants to obey God, but is torn; he is conflicted. He is worried about the hundred talents of silver which he had already given to the mercenaries. 100 talents of silver was three and a quarter tons of silver. That's a lot of money lost if he fires these mercenaries. And God's response was, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this." So he recognized his foolish decision, took the massive economic loss, and fired the mercenaries. The mercenaries were angry and went on a looting rampage, so initially it looked like his decision was not good. But that actually illustrated the poor character of those mercenaries. If you can't trust them when you fire them, you can't trust them when you hire them. In any case, God did pay Amaziah back in verses 11-13.

Here is the point of this lesson - Never let finances determine your

obedience. And believe it or not, it is the potential loss of finances that make people engage in a whole host of compromises. It is finances that often dictate sabbath breaking. Let the finances go. It is often the potential loss of tithers that make some pastors soft on their preaching. They need to be faithful and trust God for finances, or cut their budget, but never should we let finances determine our obedience. It is worry about finances that make many Christians fail to tithe. It is often lack of finances that make people disobey the commands for hospitality (“We can’t afford to do hospitality”), giving a Christian education (“But wouldn’t God want us to save the money and send our children to be missionaries in the world?”), and it is potential loss of finances that make Christians compromise in so many areas. It is greed that makes many Christians make foolish financial decisions with their purchases or their investments.

If you have already engaged in poor stewardship, do like Amaziah: confess it to God and repent, taking whatever losses you need to, and start off on a fresh footing with God. He has promised to supply all your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. As the prophet said, “The LORD is able to give you much more than this.”

#### ***F. Kill pride before it kills you (2 Chron. 26:16-21)***

The next lesson is from the life of the fairly good king Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26:16-21. He did some amazing things in the earlier verses, but pride got the better of him. And his pride came at the height of his success. That’s where it often comes, doesn’t it? Let’s read verses 16-21 so as to learn to hate pride in ourselves and to instantly put it to death when it rears its ugly head in our chest.

2Chr. 26:16 But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. 18 And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God.”

2Chr. 26:19 Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. 20 And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he was leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him.

2Chr. 26:21 King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land.

I regularly go through different exercises designed to help me to recognize my pride and to crucify my pride. Pride is our mortal enemy and we must war against it so that God does not war against us. James says that God opposes the proud. That's scary.

### ***G. Don't give up on rebels (2 Chron. 33:10-20)***

The next lesson is from the life of Manasseh in 2 Chronicles 33:10-20, but since I already read the whole story to you, I will be brief. God took the absolutely worst king of Israel to showcase the power of His grace to transform people. He first of all humbled the king as the Assyrians stripped him of his clothing, put a large fish hook through his mouth, and dragged him away by that fish hook. How humiliating. And he then spent some time in prison. But in prison God soundly converted him, and he ended up actually being restored to his throne.

The point of this story is that no person is too tough for God's grace. Don't give up praying for your relatives or hardened friends. Only God knows when a person has gone too far to be saved. And just because a person is in the gutter does not mean he cannot be saved. Scripture says that God can save to the uttermost, and one guy who ministers to drunks paraphrased it to say that God can save to guttermost. Indeed, God often takes people to the gutter in order to save them. Pain can have a redemptive purpose. So if you are going through pain, consider whether God is seeking to draw you closer to the cross of Christ.

### ***H. There does come a time when there is no remedy (2 Chron. 36:16)***

But the last lesson is to warn us not to put off the day of repentance because it is possible to cross a line of no return that makes it impossible for us to repent or be restored. Once we cross that line, there is no remedy and no salvation. Again, we don't know where God has put that line. It's not for us to know. It is for us to stay as far away from that line as possible. 2

Chronicles 36:15-16 says about Judah,

2Chr. 36:15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. 16 But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy.

That's the phrase I want to comment on - "till there was no remedy." There is a point where God says "Enough is enough," and He abandons you. There is a point when God says that to a nation, to a church, and to an individual,

“I will no longer offer you a remedy. I’m done with you.” 1 John even applies that truth to individuals in the church saying that there is a line that a brother can cross where God will devote him to death (and I take that as physical death, not eternal death). And when that happens, 1 John 5:16-17 says that there is no point in even praying for that person’s healing. Don’t bother. God will not hear that prayer. God at that point says, “Enough is enough.”

Now, it is a bit of a bummer that I needed to end on a sad note, but I think doing so is staying true to the text. It is still a redemptive message that makes us fear getting close to the line and drives us (if we are elect) back to the cross of Christ.

But Chronicles as a whole emphasizes the amazing compassion and redemption that flows from God’s throne. It is primarily a book about redemption. But the last chapter says that when you spurn His grace long enough, it can be too late.

Nevertheless, the last two verses remind us that God’s covenant with His elect endures to eternity. So let’s pray and thank God for His mercies which are new every morning.