

## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF

# 1 and 2 Chronicles

Among the Bible's least-read books are its 11th and 12th: the volumes of Chronicles between the Kings and Ezra.

First Chronicles' long lists of difficult names discourage reading. The first two chapters have more than 240 names each, with little relief until the book's mid-section. In 2 Chronicles the ancient records are less tedious, being supplemented with moral and spiritual insights throughout. This book deserves more reading!

Written by Ezra after the exile to Babylon, these two volumes demonstrate that the returning Jews are direct heirs to God's plan — from Creation through Israel and King David. Chronicles is to Old Testament history what Deuteronomy is to the Pentateuch: a second telling of the story (or the law) in abbreviated form.

## 1 Chronicles: lineages and lists

- genealogies: sons of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Israel, with their extended families (1—9)
- David's mighty men (11, 12)
- gatekeepers, musicians, treasurers, etc. of the temple (15, 23—26)
- orders of Levites for temple service (24)
- divisions for military service (27)

## Mostly about King David

First Chronicles' historical content parallels 2 Samuel and focuses on David:

- After Saul's death, David is elevated to the throne (10).
- Jerusalem becomes David's city, home of tabernacle and ark (11, 13, 15, 16).
- David expands his kingdom by war (11—14, 18—20).
- David's house and posterity are established by God's promise (17).
- David sins by numbering Israel (21).
- David prepares materials for the temple (22, 28, 29).
- At his death, David's kingdom is passed to his son Solomon (23, 29).

## Nuggets from the first book

- Jabez asks for blessings of enlargement, presence, and righteousness so he would do no harm (4:9, 10).
- Sons of Issachar understand the times and know what Israel should do (12:32).
- David offers a psalm of celebration (16:7-36; see Psa. 105) and a paean of praise (29:10-19).
- Asaph, choir leader and psalmist, founds a music school. Sons of Asaph are his students, performing instrumental and vocal music for temple worship (6:39; 16:5-7; 25:1-9; also 2 Chron. 5:12; 20:14; 29:13, 30; 35:15).
- "For His mercy endures forever" (16:34, 41; also, 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:3; 20:21).

## 2 Chronicles: good and bad kings

The second volume begins with Solomon's reign and building the temple (1—9). It traces Judah's history from the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam (10, 11) to the Babylonian

captivity (36). Parallel with the books of Kings, Chronicles reports only the royal succession in David's house, not the northern kingdom.

After Solomon, half the book's remainder focuses on four outstanding kings: Asa (14—16), Jehoshaphat (17—20), Hezekiah (29—32), Josiah (34, 35). Other kings of Judah: Abijah, Jehoram, Ahaziah, [Queen] Athaliah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah.

## Treasures from the second book

- God's recipe for revival: "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 . . .*" (7:14).
- Judah prevails over Israel "because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers" (13:18; 16:7).
- A prophet speaks: "The LORD is with you while you are with Him . . . but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you" (15:1-8; 24:20, 24; 26:5, 15, 16; 27:6; 31:21).
- God sees: "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" (16:9).
- Stand by faith: "Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established" (20:20).
- Hezekiah prays: "May the good LORD provide atonement for everyone who prepares his heart to seek God . . . though he is not cleansed according to the . . . sanctuary" (30:18, 19).

## 1 and 2 Chronicles in a sentence:

With the use of a thousand names, the history of the Jewish people is traced from Adam until their captivity in Babylon, giving special emphasis to David, Solomon, and the Jerusalem temple — its construction and service.