



1 & 2 Chronicles

2 Chronicles 17-36

The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

Blessings and Judgment

The overarching concern of the Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles is restoration. The Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah had fallen to exile because of rebellion. With the sacking of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the temple was destroyed and the Davidic monarchy was taken into captivity in Babylon.

The Babylonian Empire fell to the Persian Empire in 538 BC. Under the Persian king Cyrus, many of the captive peoples were allowed to return to their homelands and rebuild their cities. Many of the people of Judah and Israel were allowed to return home.

The writer of Chronicles (who some believe to be the scribe Ezra) was careful to document not only the causes of exile, but also hold out tremendous hope for Israel with the reestablishment of the Davidic covenant. The Davidic monarchy and the temple are the institutional representations of Yahweh's kingdom in Israel. For this reason, the focus in the book is primarily on the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Events and Dates covered in 1 & 2 Chronicles:

Events	Dates	Passages
Establishment of the Davidic Monarchy	c. 1010 - 931 BC	1 Chronicles 10 - 2 Chronicles 9
History of Judah from the division of the Kingdom until its fall	931-586	2 Chronicles 10 - 36:21
Exile in Babylonian Captivity	586 - 538	2 Chronicles 36:17-21
Cyrus decree	538	2 Chronicles 36:22-23

The focus in 1 & 2 Chronicles is on reestablishing the genealogical and institutional ties of a restored people in the land. The original blessings and blueprint from God in the land of promise can be traced back to Noah, Abraham, Israel (Jacob), Moses and David. If the people of God will learn the lessons of the past they will build a better future. Reestablishing the temple worship and the Davidic monarchy is priority one for a restored people of God.



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Structure

The Structure of 1 & 2 Chronicles can be divided into four main parts:

Section	Passages
Genealogy of the Tribes of Israel	1 Chronicles 1-9
United Kingdom: David and Solomon	1 Chronicles 10 - 2 Chronicles 9
The Divided Kingdom: Focus on Judah	2 Chronicles 10-28
The Reunited Kingdom	2 Chronicles 29-36

The Divided Kingdom reveals the Blessings and Judgments of God for the southern Kingdom, Judah. (10-28) The history of the reunited kingdom provides a vision of hope for the future of all Israel. (29-36)

The Divided Kingdom: Focus on Judah (10-28)

Whereas 1 Kings, tells the story of both the Northern and Southern kingdoms. 2 Chronicles focuses almost exclusively on the Kings of Judah and expands on the stories of their reign positively and negatively. For the post-exilic community, these stories served to illustrate the reasons for the exile, as well as demonstrate a blue print for a thriving Davidic kingdom.

Jehoshaphat, All is Well--Except (17-20)

Jehoshaphat is seen as a faithful king of Israel for the most part. He does have a couple of negative lapses. Overall the story of his 35 year reign is positive. He strengthens the kingdom both spiritually and militarily (17:1-9). He walked in the ways of David, he did not "seek the Baals". (17:3) He sent teachers of the Law of Moses out into the land to instruct the people.

As a ruler, Jehoshaphat strengthened the courts system by appointing Levite judges in order to bring order and peace across the land. He was very concerned that the people remained upright and faithful to the Lord. (19:1-11)



*"But Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Because of this, wrath has gone out against you from the LORD."
--2 Chronicles 19:2*

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He is a king who listens to the words of the prophets. In contrast to Ahab of the Northern Kingdom, even when the prophets do not tell Jehoshaphat what he wants to hear, he is responsive, he commends the people to "believe his [the Lord's] prophets" (20:20).

The Chronicler gives two examples where Jehoshaphat is criticized by the prophets for making unholy alliances. (19:1-3;20:37) This alliance with the Northern corrupt king Ahab will bear negative fruit for generations.

Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah: Reign of Terror (21-22)

The unholy alliance with the Northern King Ahab, begins to bear evil fruit in the House of David. The marriage of Jehoram and Ahab's daughter (18:1) leads to do great harm to the Davidic line as "he killed all of his brothers with the sword".(21:4) Yet in spite of his unfaithfulness, YHWH remained faithful to the covenant promise to David:

Yet the LORD was not willing to destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever. --2 Chronicles 21:7

The reigns of Jehoram and his son Ahaziah and Ahaziah's mother Athaliah were marked by idolatry, treachery and murder. The Davidic line was decimated during these reigns. Was it not for God's faithfulness to his promise and the actions of Ahaziah's daughter Jehoshabeath (22:10-12), this period would have marked the end of the Messianic line. Joash, a young Davidite king is preserved in hiding during this reign of terror.

Joash, the Messianic Line is Preserved (23-24)

The Chronicler reveals the critical role that the Levitical priesthood is to play in preserving the Messianic line of David. The faithful and wise high priest Jehoiada is the model priest and Levitical leader.

And Jehoiada said to them, "Behold, the king's son! Let him reign, as the LORD spoke



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concerning the sons of David.... The Levites shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand. And whoever enters the house shall be put to death. Be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out."
--2 Chron. 23:3, 7

The Chronicler uses this narrative to highlight the importance of a faithful and wise High priest to preserve the monarchy. With the death of Jehoida, King Joash and the people return to idolatry.

Jehoida's son Zechariah serves as a prophet who warns the king and people in their rebellion. He is stoned to death by the King's men.

The last words of the prophet Zechariah would prove true: "May the Lord see and avenge!" (24:22) The LORD would raise up the Syrians army before the end of the year to serve as instruments of wrath. (24:23-27)

The Reigns of Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz (25-28)

The next four kings of Judah are mixed in their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to YHWH. we see in the narrative the importance of the checks and balances which the prophets and priests provide to the Kings. The danger highlighted in the stories of Amaziah and Uzziah is the issue of idolatry (25:14-16) and pride (26:16-22). The unreponsiveness to the prophets and priests of the Lord leads to consequences. Jotham is not given much space but is generally seen as a positive King who expands and builds.

Ahaz is an evil king. During his reign we find a complete abandonment of YHWH and the temple for false gods and abominable practices and evil alliances. (28:1-27)



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Hezekiah, a Model for Restoration (29-32)

The reign of Hezekiah is exalted by the Chronicler. He tells more of his story than any other king since David and Solomon. Hezekiah is a restorer and reformer of right worship of YHWH. Where his father Ahaz closed and barred the doors to the House of the Lord, Hezekiah "opened the doors of the House of the Lord and repaired them." (29:3) He cleansed and consecrated the Temple and people. (29) He reinstated right celebrations and festivals. (30) He reorganized the priesthood. (31)

For this reason, Israel is preserved from crisis when the Assyrian King, Sennacherib invades. (32)

Manasseh and Amon, An Evil Contrast (33)

The reigns of Manasseh and Amon are given a chapter of narrative. The Chronicler chooses to highlight a moment of Manasseh's repentance and responsiveness to the Lord's discipline (33:11-13).

The message is simple: repentance leads to restoration. (see 2 Chron. 7:42) While Manasseh repents, Amon did not repent and is struck down.

Josiah the Reformer (34-35)

Josiah, like Hezekiah is a reformer. Following the discovery of the Law of Moses in the Temple, he promotes reform and renewal for Judea. He eliminates idolatry and restores the temple. (34:3-13,33)

Unfortunately, his reforms would not be enough as exile is looming in Judah's future. (34:23-28) The King of Egypt would be raised up to bring judgment against Judah.

Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, The Kingdom in Exile (36)

The Chronicler chooses to briefly summarize the last four kings of Judah. The key point is they were deported along with many of the holy things of the Temple. Zedekiah being the worst in his rejections of the word of the prophet Jeremiah. (36:11-14) His evil leads to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (36:17-19)

Hope of Restoration (36:22-23)

The Chronicler ends with a word of Hope as the Persian Empire's king Cyrus offers return for the people to Jerusalem. (36:22-23)

If my people who are called by my name 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.

--2 Chronicles 7:42