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# BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

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**Approximate date:** late 400s B.C.E. (Right, conservative-moderate, some Left); 300s B.C.E. (some Left); 200s B.C.E (some Left)

**Time period:** additional material not covered in Samuel-Kings, detailing the rise and fall of Israel's monarchy

**Author:** Ezra (Right); an anonymous Chronicler (conservative-moderate, some Left); unidentified redactors (some Left)

**Location of author:** Land of Israel, possibly Jerusalem (Right, conservative-moderate, Left)

**Target audience and their location:** Jewish exiles having returned from Babylonian captivity (Right, conservative-moderate, Left)

## People:

a listing of ancestors from Adam to Abraham (1 Chronicles 1:1-27), a listing of the descendants of Abraham's immediate family (1 Chronicles 1:28-54), a listing of the descendants of Israel's (Jacob's) sons and the formation and establishment of the Twelve Tribes (1 Chronicles 2:1-7:40), the genealogical ancestors of King Saul (1 Chronicles 8:1-40; 9:35-44), a census of those taken from Jerusalem into Babylonian exile (1 Chronicles 9:1-34), Saul, Philistines, Dagon (deity), David, Jebusites, Joab (son of Zeruiah), David's mighty men (1 Chronicles 11:10-47), warriors who joined David (1 Chronicles 12:1-22), armed men who joined David (1 Chronicles 12:23-40), Abinadab, Uzzah, Ahio, Obed-Edom, Hiram, David's children (1 Chronicles 14:4-7), Zadok, Abiathar, leaders of Levitical families (1 Chronicles 15:11), musicians and singers (1 Chronicles 15:17-22), doorkeepers (1 Chronicles 15:23, 24b), trumpet blowers (1 Chronicles 15:24), Kenaniah, Michal, Levites appointed by David to minister before the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chronicles 16:5-6), Nathan, Moabites, Hadadezer, Arameans, Tou, Hadoram, Ammonites, Amalek(ites), Abishai (son of Zeruiah), Jehoshaphat (son of Ahilud), Shavsha, Benaiah (son of Jehoiada), Nahash, Hanun (son of Nahash), Shophach, Sibbecai the Hushathite, Sippai, Elhanan (son of Jair), Lahmi (brother of Goliath the Gittite), Jonathan (son of Shimea), Satan, Gad, Sidonians, Tyrians, Solomon, divisions of the Levites that will serve in the new Temple (1 Chronicles 23:7-23), subdivisions of the priests that will serve in the new Temple (1 Chronicles 24:1-19), the other Levites (1 Chronicles 24:20-31), the singers and musicians who will praise God in the new Temple (1 Chronicles 25:1-31), the gatekeepers who will watch over the new Temple (1 Chronicles 26:1-19), the treasurers who will watch over the funds for and of the new Temple (1 Chronicles 26:20-32), army divisions dedicated to the service of King David (1 Chronicles 27:1-24), King David's overseers (1 Chronicles 27:25-33), Bezalel (son of Uri, son of Hur), Hittites, Hiram-Abi, Jakin and Boaz (Temple pillars), Pharaoh's

daughter, queen of Sheba, Rehoboam, Jeroboam (son of Nebat), Adoniram, Shemaiah, Mahalath, Jerimoth, Abihail, Eliab, Rehoboam's children with Mahalath (Jeush, Shemariah, Zaham), Maacah (daughter of Absalom), Rehoboam's children with Maacah (Abijah, Attai, Ziza, Shelomith), Uriel (of Gibeah), Zerah the Cushite, Cushites, Azariah (son of Oded), Baasha, Ben-Hadad, Lybians, Jehoshaphat, Baals (deities), Jehoshaphat's officials and Levitical teachers (2 Chronicles 17:7-8), fighting men under Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17:14-17), Ahab, Micaiah (son of Imlah), Zedekiah (son of Kenaanah), Jehu (son of Hanani), Amariah, Zebadiah (son of Ishmael), Meunites, Jahaziel (son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah), Azubah (daughter of Shilhi), Ahaziah, Athaliah, Hazael, Joram (son of Ahab), Jehu (son of Nimshi), Jehosheba, Joash, Jehoiada, unit commanders (2 Chronicles 23:1), Zibiah, Zechariah (son of Jehoiada), Zabad (son of Shimeath), Jehozabad (son of Shimrith), Amaziah, Jehoaddin, Edomites, Jehoash (son of Jehoahaz), Uzziah, Jecoliah, Jeiel, Maaseiah, Hananiah, Azariah (the priest), Isaiah (son of Amoz), Jerusha (daughter of Zadok), Pekah (son of Remaliah), Zicri, Maaseiah (the officer/official), Azrikam, Elkannah, Oded, leaders in Ephraim (2 Chronicles 28:12), Tiglath-Pileser, Hezekiah, Abijah (daughter of Zechariah), Levites who served under Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29:12-14), Levites under Hezekiah in charge of Temple contributions (2 Chronicles 31:12-13), Kore (son of Imnah), Levites who distributed contributions (2 Chronicles 31:15), Sennacherib, envoys from Babylon, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Shaphan (son of Azaliah), Maaseiah (an official), Joah (son of Joahaz), Hilkiah, Jahath, Obadiah, Ahikam (son of Shaphan), Abdon (son of Micah), Asaiah, Huldah, Shallum (son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah), Zechariah and Jehiel (Temple administrators), Levitical leaders (2 Chronicles 35:9), Neco, Jehoahaz, Eliakim (Jehoiakim), Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, Jeremiah, Cyrus

**People mentioned:**

Adam, Abraham, Israel (Jacob), Jesse, Isaac, Moses, Samuel, Ahijah (the Shilonite), Iddo the seer, Asaph, Omri, Aaron, Elijah, Gad

**Places:**

Jerusalem, Mount Gilboa, Jabesh Gilead, Hebron, fortress of Zion, Ziklag, Jordan, Shihor River, Egypt, Lebo Hamath, Kiriath Jearim (Baalath), Perez Uzzah, Valley of Rephaim, Baal Perazim, Gath, Moab, Hamath, Euphrates River, Canaan, Damascus, Tebah, Cun, Edom, Valley of Salt, Aram Naharaim, Aram Maacah, Zobah, Medeba, Rabbah, Gezer, Beersheba, Dan, threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, Gibeon, Kue, Tyre, Mount Moriah, Succoth, Zarethan, Wadi of Egypt, Hamath Zobah, Tadmor, Upper Beth Horon, Lower Beth Horon, Baalath, Lebanon, Ezion Geber, Elath, Edom, Ophir, Arabia, Palace of the Forest of Lebanon, Shechem, Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth Zur, Soco, Adullam, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, Mount Zemaraim, Bethel, Jeshanah, Ephron, Mareshah, Valley of Zephathah, Gerar, Kidron Valley, Ramah, Aram, Ijon, Abel Maim, Geba, Mizpah, Samaria, Hazazon Tamar (En Gedi), Ammon, Mount Seir, Pass of Ziz, Desert of Jeruel, Desert of Tekoa, Valley of Beracah, Libnah, Valley of Salt, Beth Shemesh, Ephraim Gate, Corner Gate, Elath, Jabneh, Ashdod, Gur Baal, Upper Gate, hill of Ophel, Valley of Ben Hinnom, Negev, Gederoth, Gimzo, Gihon, Fish Gate, Carchemish, Megiddo, Babylon, Persia

**Places mentioned:**

Paravaim

**Key Themes and Events:**

**1 Chronicles:** Israel's ancestors to the time of the monarchy are listed / the death of King Saul is remembered / David is anointed as king at Hebron / King David conquers Jerusalem / warriors and armed men join themselves with King David / King David motions that the Ark of the Covenant be brought to Jerusalem / Uzzah is killed for touching the Ark of the Covenant, as it was placed on a cart / King David defeats the Philistines / the Ark of the Covenant is brought by King David to Jerusalem in the midst of great praise and celebration to God / David sings a great psalm of praise before the Lord (16:8-36) / the Lord decrees that King David's successor will be able to build a house for Him / King David is granted more military victories / King David defeats the Ammonites in battle / Joab captures Rabbah for King David, and David takes the gold crown of its king / Israel experiences victories over the Philistines / a plague is unleashed upon Israel for King David counting up the fighting men / King David purchases the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite / King David makes preparations for the building of God's Temple, entrusting his son Solomon with the actual construction responsibilities / Solomon is made king of Israel / all of the people who will serve in and service the functions of the forthcoming Temple are listed / the divisions of David's army are listed / overseers of Israel's economy (primarily agricultural) are listed / King David presents the architectural plans for the new Temple to Solomon and his courtiers / freewill contributions are made by many of the people in Israel for the construction of the Temple / King David praises God for the offerings made for the construction of the Temple / Solomon is recognized as David's successor a second time / David dies and Solomon begins his reign / **2 Chronicles:** having become king, Solomon asks the Lord to give him wisdom / King Solomon asks King Hiram of Tyre to send him the necessary supplies to build the Temple / the structure of the Temple is built / the ornateness of the Temple furniture is detailed / the Ark of the Covenant is brought to the Temple, and the glory of the Lord fills the structure / King Solomon issues a great prayer of dedication for the completion of the Temple / following the dedication of the Temple, the Lord appears to King Solomon, adjuring him to be faithful to His commandments / King Solomon experiences military victories, fortifying his kingdom, and builds up his kingdom / the Queen of Sheba visits King Solomon, having heard that the reports of his wisdom were not exaggerated / King Solomon is attested to have had a great wealth in gold, and in particular some of the finest imported horses / King Solomon dies / Rehoboam succeeds Solomon as king, pledging to make the labor required by Solomon seem like nothing / only the people of Judah remain faithful to the House of David / God does not permit King Rehoboam to retake the disparate tribes in military conquest / King Rehoboam fortifies cities within Judah / Rehoboam dies and Abijah succeeds him as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Abijah goes to war against Jeroboam of the Northern Kingdom, and tells them that by fighting against the Lord they will not succeed / King Abijah is successful in battle against the Northern Kingdom / Abijah dies and Asa succeeds him as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Asa removes much idolatrous worship from the Southern Kingdom, and experiences a reign marked with relative peace / King Asa experiences victory against Zerah the Cushite / King Asa assembles the people to pledge themselves corporately to the Lord, including both

Judahites and those from the Northern Kingdom who had settled in the Southern Kingdom / King Asa is remembered as one dedicated to the Lord / King Asa enters into an alliance with Ben-Hadad of Aram to attack the Northern Kingdom / King Asa is rebuked for not relying on the Lord for protection, with the remaining years of his reign marked by war / Asa dies and Jehoshaphat succeeds him as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Jehoshaphat has various officials and Levites go throughout the Land of Judah, teaching people from the Torah / King Jehoshaphat is feared by his neighbors, having a significant standing army / King Jehoshaphat enters into an alliance with King Ahab to attack Ramoth Gilead / the Prophet Micaiah does not give the planned attack a positive word / King Ahab, although disguised, is killed in the battle with Aram / King Jehoshaphat appoints judges throughout the Southern Kingdom, urging them to follow the demands laid forth by God's Torah / being threatened by the Moabites and Ammonites, King Jehoshaphat calls on the people of Judah to turn before the Lord / going out to battle the Moabites and Ammonites, the Lord laid an ambush, with the Ammonites and Moabites defeating those from Mount Seir, and then turning on one another / King Jehoshaphat is remembered as a relatively godly ruler who was faithful to the Lord, but who was rebuked in later years for entering into an alliance with Ahaziah of the Northern Kingdom / Jehoshaphat dies and Jehoram succeeds him as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Jehoram falls into the idolatrous ways of the Northern Kingdom, having married a daughter of Ahab / King Jehoram is rebuked in a letter sent to him by the Prophet Elijah, specifically for promoting idolatry in Judah and for murdering his extended family / King Jehoram dies of a painful bowel disease, not being remembered very fondly / Jehoram is succeeded by his youngest son, Ahaziah, as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Ahaziah is encouraged by his mother Athaliah to continue the sin of his father / King Ahaziah enters into an alliance with Joram of the Northern Kingdom / while visiting King Joram in Samaria, King Ahaziah is killed while Jehu executes God's judgment upon the House of Ahab / seeing that her son was dead, Athaliah proceeds to have the royal family of Judah eliminated / Jehosheba escapes to the Temple with Joash, where he is hidden for six years / Athaliah rules as queen of the Southern Kingdom for six years / the priest Jehoiada initiates a coup against Queen Athaliah, having her executed / Joash becomes ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Joash inaugurates a program of restoring and refurbishing the Temple, having been tutored by Jehoiada / after Jehoiada's death, King Joash and the people of Judah fall into idolatry / Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, plots against King Joash because of his promotion of sin / by King Joash's orders Zechariah is stoned to death / Aram marches against King Joash and kills the leaders of the Southern Kingdom / King Joash is wounded in the invasion, and is later assassinated by his officials for having murdered Zechariah the priest / Amaziah succeeds Joash as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Amaziah begins his reign loyal to the Lord / King Amaziah is victorious against the Edomites, but brings their gods back with him as spoils / King Amaziah is rebuked for following the Edomite gods / King Jehoash of the Northern Kingdom attacks, capturing King Amaziah / King Jehoash plunders Jerusalem and the Temple of all its gold / King Amaziah flees to Lachish, and is assassinated by his own / Uzziah succeeds Amaziah as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Uzziah has a relatively prosperous reign, being a relatively godly king / King Uzziah is struck with leprosy when pridefully marching into the Temple to offer incense / King Uzziah lives with leprosy in a separate house / King Uzziah's son Jotham rules as regent / Uzziah dies and Jotham succeeds him as ruler of

the Southern Kingdom / King Jotham is faithful to the Lord / King Jotham conquers the Ammonites / Jotham dies and Ahaz succeeds him as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Ahaz falls into the idolatry of the Northern Kingdom, including sacrificing his own children in the fire / the Southern Kingdom under King Ahaz became the victim of the Arameans / the Northern Kingdom inflicts heavy damages on the Southern Kingdom, but does not take any permanent prisoners, returning them when reminded of their own sin / King Ahaz is attacked by the Edomites and Philistines, and pleads to the Assyrians for help, but to no avail / King Ahaz worships the gods of the Arameans, the people who defeated him, compounding his sin / Ahaz dies and Hezekiah succeeds him as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Hezekiah rules as a godly king, seeing that the Temple is purified / a great time of rejoicing is inaugurated, as the Temple is rededicated / King Hezekiah celebrates the Passover, and invites people from the Northern Kingdom to actually come and join them / many people from the Northern Kingdom celebrate Passover with King Hezekiah and are restored to the Lord / a massive amount of contributions and tithes are made to the Levites, and King Hezekiah sees that they are properly distributed / Sennacherib of Assyria taunts the people of Judah by insulting their king, but most significantly the Lord / King Hezekiah and the Prophet Isaiah cry out to the Lord for deliverance against Assyria / the Lord kills the leaders of the Assyrian army / when Sennacherib returns home, he is assassinated by some of his sons / King Hezekiah amasses great wealth, and also great pride / envoys from Babylon visit King Hezekiah, who is tested by the Lord for fostering pride / Hezekiah dies and Manasseh succeeds him as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / the reign of King Manasseh beings with him inaugurating a great season of idolatry in Judah, including child sacrifice / despite the Lord's appeal to him to change, King Manasseh is not moved, and is taken captive to Babylon for a time / King Manasseh repents before the Lord while in captivity, and returns to Jerusalem, refurbishing the city / in spite of King Manasseh's repentance, the people of Judah still continue in sin / Manasseh dies and Amon succeeds him as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Amon continues the evil started by King Manasseh / King Amon is assassinated by his officials / Josiah becomes ruler of the Southern Kingdom at the age of eight / King Josiah sees that places of idolatry are removed from Judah / King Josiah sees that monies are collected to refurbish the Temple / the Book of the Law (Deuteronomy) is discovered in the Temple, and it is read to King Josiah / the Prophetess Huldah speaks of a great calamity that will not befall King Josiah's country because his heart was responsive to the Lord / King Josiah has the Book of the Law read publicly to the people, who commit themselves to the Lord / King Josiah celebrates a massive Passover in Jerusalem / King Josiah is killed in battle while fighting Neco of Egypt / Jehoahaz replaces his father Josiah as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / Pharaoh Neco replaces King Jehoahaz with his brother, the renamed King Jehoiakim / Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacks King Jehoiakim, taking spoils from the Temple and deporting him to Babylon / Jehoiachin succeeds Jehoiakim as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Jehoiachin is summoned to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar / Zedekiah, Jehoiakin's uncle, succeeds him as ruler of the Southern Kingdom / King Zedekiah is unfaithful to the Lord, in spite of the words delivered to him by Jeremiah / King Zedekiah continues in gross idolatry / extreme judgment is issued against Judah by the Babylonians, including the destruction of both Jerusalem and the Temple / survivors from the onslaught are deported to Babylon / seventy years of exile in Babylon are

accomplished in order for the Promised Land to have a Sabbath rest / King Cyrus of Persia issues a decree allowing the Jews to return and rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem

**Key Scriptures:** **1 Chronicles** 13:1-4; 15:12-15; 16:23-26, 34-36; 17:20-22; 21:8-12; 22:6-13, 17-19; 28:5-10, 20-21; 29:10-13; **2 Chronicles** 1:7-12; 2:5-6; 5:13-6:2; 6:32-33, 41; 7:12-22; 9:5-8, 22-24; 10:19; 11:4; 15:1-7, 9, 12-15; 17:7-9; 19:5-10; 24:20-22; 30:6-9, 18-20; 34:23-28; 35:16-19; 36:15-16 / **The Genealogies of Israel** (1 Chronicles 1:1-9:44); **The Reign of David** (10:1-29:30) / **The Reign of Solomon** (2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31); **The Kingdom of Judah** (10:1-36:23)

**Theological Summary:** The Hebrew title of the Books of Chronicles is *Divrei HaYamim* (דִּבְרֵי הַיָּמִים), meaning “the Events/Annals of the Days/Years.” Similar terminology appears in Kings (1 Kings 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:45). The Greek Septuagint actually titled this text *Paraleipomenōn* (ΠΑΡΑΛΕΙΠΟΜΕΝΩΝ) meaning “things omitted,” which some consider “not a very suitable name” (*NBCR*).<sup>1</sup> Its translators likely considered the text to be a supplement to Samuel-Kings, and they were the first to divide the text into two books. Jerome suggested that the Latin title *Chronicon totius divinae historiae*, “a chronicle of the whole of sacred history” (Harrison),<sup>2</sup> be used. It has since been adapted as “Chronicles.”

Chronicles is a very unique text when compared to its predecessor, Samuel-Kings. It does not focus on the Northern Kingdom of Israel, except in passing.<sup>3</sup> This work attempts to summarize events beginning with Adam all the way to Cyrus the Great of Persia. Chronicles jumps over and overlooks many people and events seen in Samuel-Kings, which is undeniably the author’s main source of information. Because of its irregular style of composition “The Chronicles have long been among the most neglected books in the Hebrew Bible” (Dillard and Longman).<sup>4</sup>

Protestant Christian tradition, following the order of the Septuagint and Vulgate, places 1&2 Chronicles among the Historical Books between 2 Kings and Ezra-Nehemiah. 1&2 Chronicles is actually the last book of the Tanach in the Jewish order, placed among the Writings.

The questions that Chronicles asks largely pertain to the Jewish people having returned from Babylonian exile.<sup>5</sup> Is God still interested in His people? Is He still faithful to His covenants? What do the Jewish people do under foreign (Persian) rule? Was God going to fulfill His promises? As a result of these, and other questions, the history presented in Chronicles presents itself with a more definite “slant” than Samuel-Kings, as it is designed to be uplifting and a message of hope to those who read it. Chronicles attempts to answer the question of who the returned Jewish exiles are as the people of God. The occasion for writing Chronicles is probably to call the people back to the Instruction of God (cf. Ezra 7:10) so that they may fulfill His Divine purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> H.L. Ellison, “1 and 2 Chronicles,” in *NBCR*, 369.

<sup>2</sup> Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1152; J. Barton Payne, “1, 2 Chronicles,” in *EXP*, 4:304.

<sup>3</sup> Gary N. Knoppers, “Chronicles, Books of,” in *EDB*, 243; Richard J. Coggins, “1 and 2 Chronicles,” in *ECB*, 282.

<sup>4</sup> Dillard and Longman, 169.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

Jewish tradition in the Talmud regards the priest Ezra as the author of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah (b.*Bava Batra* 15a).<sup>6</sup> This cannot be established with certainty as the text does not state an author directly.<sup>7</sup> It may be that Ezra was the principal composer of an early draft of the text. Harrison indicates, "Ezra [presumably] carried the narratives down to his own time."<sup>8</sup> If Ezra were the principal composer, then it is no surprise that the various priestly genealogies seen in 1 Chronicles chs. 1-9 carry their way to him. Ezra-Nehemiah does pick up where Chronicles leaves off, and many conservatives believe that these two texts once made up a single work.<sup>9</sup>

There is a trend among conservative scholars today to not consider Chronicles a unified work with Ezra-Nehemiah,<sup>10</sup> as there have likely been redactions made to the text. In the original composition, the Chronicler indicates that he considered many sources, notably Samuel-Kings. Additional sources used by the Chronicler probably included the Torah, Judges, Ruth, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Zechariah (although probably not in their final, current form). References are made throughout Chronicles to other sources, including: the Book of the Kings of Israel (1 Chronicles 9:1; 2 Chronicles 20:34), the Book of the Annals of King David (1 Chronicles 27:24), the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel/Israel and Judah (2 Chronicles 16:11; 25:26; 27:7; 28:26; 32:32; 35:27; 36:8), and the Annotations on the Book of the Kings (2 Chronicles 24:27). These sources are all admittedly vague and no longer extant.<sup>11</sup> A number of non-extant prophetic writings are also mentioned throughout Chronicles.

Conservative theologians often date the composition of Chronicles in the late Fifth Century B.C.E., although a date in the late Fourth Century B.C.E. is probable if one accepts a unified composition with Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>12</sup> It is asserted that the text had to have been written during the Persian period as there are no references to either Hellenism or the rise of Alexander the Great.<sup>13</sup>

Liberal theologians largely deny any kind of unified composition for Chronicles. Earlier liberals considered Chronicles to be a kind of sequel to P or the so-called Priestly Code<sup>14</sup> seen in their documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch (see **Genesis** entry for a summarization of the JEDP documentary hypothesis). It has been advocated that Chronicles reflects a distinctly

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<sup>6</sup> "Ezra wrote the book that is called by his name and the genealogies of the book of Chronicles up to his own time. *That accords with the position of Rab, for said R. Judah said Rab, 'Ezra left Babylonia to go up to the land of Israel only after he had written his own genealogy.'* *Who finished the book of Chronicles? Nehemiah b. Hachaliah* (b.*Bava Batra* 15a; *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*).

<sup>7</sup> J. Barton Payne, "Chronicles, 1 and 2," in *NIDB*, 210; Coggins, in *ECB*, 282; Dillard and Longman, 170.

<sup>8</sup> Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1153.

<sup>9</sup> Ellison, in *NBCR*, 369; G.F. Hasel, "Chronicles, Books of," in *ISBE*, 1:667; Payne, in *EXP*, 4:305-307; Dillard and Longman, 171.

<sup>10</sup> Dillard and Longman, 172.

<sup>11</sup> R.H. Pfeiffer, "Chronicles, I and II," in *IDB*, 1:578-579; Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp 1159-1161; Payne, "Chronicles, 1 and 2," in *NIDB*, 210; *ISBE*, 1:668; Payne, in *EXP*, 4:309-311; Ralph W. Klein, "Chronicles, Book of 1-2," in *ABD*, 1:996-997; Gary N. Knoppers, "Chronicles, Books of," in *EDB*, 242.

<sup>12</sup> Ellison, in *NBCR*, 369; Hasel, "Chronicles, Books of," in *ISBE*, 1:670.

<sup>13</sup> Coggins, in *ECB*, 282.

<sup>14</sup> Pfeiffer, "Chronicles, I and II," in *IDB*, 1:573-574.

religious history from a Levite,<sup>15</sup> placing the Levites in a very positive light and “glorifying Judaism and the Jews through the centuries beyond all possibilities...[rewriting] the history from David to Cyrus: he freely omitted from his sources, added to them, modified them, being blissfully unaware of anachronisms and impossibilities” (*IDB*).<sup>16</sup>

Liberals have commonly argued that Chronicles was composed over a broad period of time from the Fourth-Third Centuries B.C.E., and was intended to be the “first apology [meaning, defense] for Judaism” (*IDB*).<sup>17</sup> Some liberals even place the composition of Chronicles as late as the Second Century B.C.E.<sup>18</sup> Generally, liberals agree that Chronicles itself is pieced together from sources, such as the sections dealing with David and Solomon, as well as other individual kings, and over time were strung together and unified.

Liberal criticism against Chronicles has been immense. Most consider it to have some severe theological inconsistencies.<sup>19</sup> Criticism against Chronicles is nothing new, going back to the time of the writing of the Talmud, with many considering Chronicles to be “didactic or homiletical in nature” (Harrison).<sup>20</sup> Most liberal problems with Chronicles concern its historicity and reliability.<sup>21</sup>

Conservative theologians have largely responded to liberal criticism with the need to consider Chronicles as first theological, then historical. Harrison indicates, “it should be noted at once that the writings of the Chronicler did not lay claim to be considered as history in the contemporary occidental sense of that term.”<sup>22</sup> Our interpretation of Chronicles is directly connected to Samuel-Kings, and one must consider their unique vantage points: one before or during the Babylonian exile, and one after it.

The way the Chronicler records Israel’s history is not inconsistent from what we see among the documents at Qumran.<sup>23</sup> A modern reader cannot subject Chronicles to his or her expectations of historical accuracy, recognizing that among its contemporary ancient histories Chronicles demonstrates a strong level of affinity. “What the reader of the Chronicler needs is sensitivity to the method of writing history in biblical times together with some knowledge of the milieu in which the work came into existence, the need which it was intended to fill, and the audience to which it was addressed” (*ISBE*).<sup>24</sup> Current trends in liberal studies of Chronicles indicate an “emphasis...more on the Chronicler’s use of additional material, rather than upon that material’s historical value” (*ABD*).<sup>25</sup>

Both Aramaic and Hebrew are present in the Books of Chronicles. Its Septuagint Greek translation is important, but is often considered to be “paraphrastic...[and] bears witness to

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<sup>15</sup> Pfeiffer, “Chronicles, I and II,” in *IDB*, 1:575; Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp 1161-1162; P.R. Ackroyd, “Chronicles, I and II,” in *IDBSup*, 157; Coggins, in *ECB*, 283.

<sup>16</sup> Pfeiffer, “Chronicles, I and II,” in *IDB*, 2:577.

<sup>17</sup> Pfeiffer, “Chronicles, I and II,” in *IDB*, 1:577; cf. Klein, “Chronicles, Book of 1-2,” in *ABD*, 1:994-995.

<sup>18</sup> Hasel, “Chronicles, Books of,” in *ISBE*, 1:670.

<sup>19</sup> David Rothstein, “First Chronicles,” in *Jewish Study Bible*, 1712.

<sup>20</sup> Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1163.

<sup>21</sup> Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp 1157-1158; Rothstein, in *Jewish Study Bible*, 1712.

<sup>22</sup> Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1158.

<sup>23</sup> Hasel, “Chronicles, Books of,” in *ISBE*, 1:667; Coggins, in *ECB*, 284.

<sup>24</sup> Hasel, “Chronicles, Books of,” in *ISBE*, 1:669.

<sup>25</sup> Klein, “Chronicles, Book of 1-2,” in *ABD*, 1:997.

an older and often shorter form of the text” (*ABD*).<sup>26</sup> Others consider its LXX version to be extremely literal.<sup>27</sup> The Hebrew MT witness of Chronicles is in a “fair state of preservation” (Payne, *EXP*),<sup>28</sup> but due to its young date among Tanach books infrequent copying may have actually caused more textual errors<sup>29</sup> that could have been redacted—particularly with its numbering system. “[S]maller numbers [are] supplied by the LXX [and] seem to indicate that the larger ones of the Hebrew have not been transmitted in their original form, or that the compiler was scaling them down in the interests of factual reality” (Harrison).<sup>30</sup>

The author of Chronicles affirms a continuity to the past, with the Temple in Jerusalem being rebuilt by the approval of the Persian king (2 Chronicles 36:22-23), mirrored by his earlier references regarding Kings David and Solomon. The author focuses on the successes and failures of Israel’s earlier kings, and emphasizes how being faithful to the Torah and Prophets is more important than whether the Jews of his generation have a king. The author is often thought to consider his own Jewish people to represent “all Israel,” as the Southern Kingdom had absorbed a sufficient number of Northern Kingdom Israelites (2 Chronicles 34:9; 35:17-18). This can present some challenges to those who *overemphasize* the futuristic expectation of prophecies detailing the restoration of Judah and Israel, who fail to recognize the Jews as being “Israel.” Yet, exclusively relying on such references in Chronicles, though, to somehow claim that the Southern *and* Northern Kingdoms corporately, were restored in ancient times subsequent to the Babylonian exile—and using it as a reason to ignore prophecies that speak to the contrary—would be most ill-advised (cf. 2 Chronicles 10:19).

The author of Chronicles wants to sustain a hope for a Deliverer to come, i.e., a Messianic son of David (2 Samuel 7). He indicates that God has been faithful to His people going back through the recorded generations (1 Chronicles 1:1). God has chosen Israel for special purposes, but Israel’s relationship to God is contingent upon its obedience. As a result, the Chronicler is also concerned with God’s retribution upon His people.<sup>31</sup>

The dominant parts of Chronicles are dedicated to David (1 Chronicles 11-29) and Solomon (2 Chronicles 1-9), with negative information regarding these two kings largely omitted.<sup>32</sup> This has led to intense speculation that this is intentional, with the Chronicler portraying the “Messianic” qualities of these two leaders.<sup>33</sup> It may be that the author intends to use the lives of David and Solomon to address some serious post-exilic questions.<sup>34</sup>

Issues in interpretation largely regard the relationship of Samuel-Kings to Chronicles, and how to synthesize Samuel-Kings’ accounts of Ancient Israel’s history with how they are often “explained” in Chronicles.<sup>35</sup> “It is clear that Chronicles read by itself would give an

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:995.

<sup>27</sup> Payne, in *EXP*, 4:311.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1170.

<sup>31</sup> Hasel, “Chronicles, Books of,” in *ISBE*, 1:671-672.

<sup>32</sup> Klein, “Chronicles, Book of 1-2,” in *ABD*, 1:999-1000; Dillard and Longman, pp 174-175.

<sup>33</sup> Hasel, “Chronicles, Books of,” in *ISBE*, 1:672; Rothstein, in *Jewish Study Bible*, pp 1715-1716.

<sup>34</sup> Hasel, “Chronicles, Books of,” in *ISBE*, 1:669-670; Knoppers, “Chronicles, Books of,” in *EDB*, 243.

<sup>35</sup> Payne, in *EXP*, 4:315.

unbalanced view of Israelite history" (*NBCR*),<sup>36</sup> as the author has a definite theological agenda.<sup>37</sup> Genealogies in Chronicles (1 Chronicles 1:1-9:44) are segmented in places compared to their listings in other Tanach Scriptures,<sup>38</sup> with the process of telescoping purposefully omitting names to make an important theological or ideological point (cf. Matthew 1; Luke 3).

Furthermore, there are serious issues in Chronicles regarding numbers and census accounts that may be a result of textual corruption. A notable one appears in 2 Chronicles 14:9 which refers to a million man army accompanied by only 300 chariots.<sup>39</sup> The Greek Septuagint is sometimes helpful in providing a more realistic number, but not always. Difficulties such as the spelling of proper names is a challenge to modern readers, but not to the Ancient Near Eastern worldview.

The Apostolic Scriptures do occasionally quote from Chronicles,<sup>40</sup> and undoubtedly formed an important part of the worldview of Yeshua and His Disciples.

Messianic handling of Chronicles is difficult to determine at the present time, concurrent also with its handling of Samuel-Kings, largely due to the overemphasis on the Torah in our Bible studies. Too frequently, when interpreters do examine Chronicles, the witness of Samuel-Kings is not considered, or vice versa. Even more issues may have to be considered with the possible unity between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah that is often proposed. Parallels are most certainly seen between characters in the Torah (i.e., Moses and Joshua) and how they are compared to some figures in Monarchist Israel (i.e., David and Solomon). The Chronicler is undeniably influenced by his position as a Southern Kingdom Jew, and is one who is ultimately interested in giving the returned exiles hope for the future in the covenant faithfulness of their God.

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<sup>36</sup> Ellison, in *NBCR*, 370.

<sup>37</sup> Payne, "Chronicles, 1 and 2," in *NIDB*, 211.

<sup>38</sup> Dillard and Longman, pp 173-174.

<sup>39</sup> Pfeiffer, "Chronicles, I and II," in *IDB*, 1:574; Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1165; Hasel, "Chronicles, Books of," in *ISBE*, 1:669; Payne, "Chronicles, 1 and 2," in *NIDB*, 211; Payne, in *EXP*, 4:562.

<sup>40</sup> Payne, in *EXP*, 4:312.

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## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION ON CHRONICLES:

- 1. What strikes you as being different in the portrayals of King David in 1 Kings versus 1 Chronicles?**
  
- 2. What are the important things that King David charges his son Solomon to do after he dies?**
  
- 3. Do you think there is anything significant about King Solomon's prayer of dedication for the Temple (2 Chronicles 6:12-42)?**
  
- 4. Does anything strike you as being important from the testimony of the Queen of Sheba during her visit to King Solomon's court?**
  
- 5. How are the Books of 1&2 Chronicles a definite reflection on the Southern Kingdom of Judah?**
  
- 6. Of the kings of Judah depicted in 2 Chronicles, which one(s) intrigues you the most? Was he a good king or a bad king?**
  
- 7. How important was the reign of King Uzziah? (hint: see Isaiah 6)**
  
- 8. Summarize the steady decline of the Southern Kingdom.**
  
- 9. How important were the reforms of King Josiah? Why do you think that after his death the Southern Kingdom of Judah collapsed?**
  
- 10. What do you think makes 1&2 Chronicles unique when compared to Samuel-Kings?**

**11. What lessons might today's Messianic community learn by listening to the message of 1&2 Chronicles?**

REFLECTION ON CHRONICLES' PLACEMENT IN THE CANON

*Write two short paragraphs about what struck you about reading the Books of Chronicles:*