

1 Chronicles

The books of First and Second Chronicles cover the same period of Jewish history described in Second Samuel, First Kings, and Second Kings, but the perspective of Chronicles is different. It is a divine editorial on the history of God's people. While Second Samuel and Kings give political history of Israel and Judah, Chronicles gives a religious history of the Davidic dynasty of Judah. Chronicles is written from a priestly and spiritual perspective. The Book of First Chronicles begins with the royal line of David, then traces the spiritual significance of David's righteous reign.

INTRODUCTION

Chronicles was written to provide a spiritual perspective on the historical events from the time of David to Cyrus' decree in 538 b.c. It traces Israel's lineage back to the dawn of the human race and forward to the end of the Babylonian captivity. It reveals God's faithfulness and continuing purpose for His people. Because it was written to the returning Remnant, Chronicles has a more positive perspective than Samuel or Kings. It does not deny failures but concentrates on the messianic line, the temple, and spiritual reforms. The readers needed encouragement in rebuilding their heritage. Chronicles teaches that Yahweh is still with them - He brought them back and enabled them to rebuild the temple. All is not lost; though the glory has departed and they are under the control of Gentile powers, God still has a future for them. The throne of David was gone but the line of David still stood.

The books of First and Second Chronicles were originally one continuous work in the Hebrew. The title was *Dibere Hayyamim*, meaning "The Words (accounts, events) of the Days." The equivalent meaning today would be "The Events of the Times." Chronicles was divided into two parts in the third century b.c. Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint). At that time, it was given the name *Paraleipomenon*, "Of Things Omitted," referring to the things omitted from Samuel and Kings.

AUTHOR

Although the text does not identify the author, several facts seem to support the tradition in the Jewish Talmud that Ezra the priest was the author. The content points to a priestly authorship because of the emphasis on the temple, the priesthood, and the theocratic line of David in the southern kingdom of Judah. The narrative also indicates that Chronicles was at least written by a contemporary of Ezra. Chronicles is quite similar in style to the Book of Ezra, and both share a priestly perspective: genealogies, temple worship, ministry of the priesthood, and obedience to the law of God. In addition, the closing verses of Second Chronicles (36:22-23) are repeated with minor changes as the opening verses of Ezra (1:1-3). Thus, Chronicles and Ezra may have been one consecutive history as were Luke and Acts.

Ezra was an educated scribe (Ezra 7:6), and according to other historical writings, Nehemiah collected an extensive library which was available to Ezra for his use in compiling Chronicles. Scholars of Israel accumulated and compared historical material, and the author of Chronicles was a compiler who drew from many sources under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

DATE & SETTING

The genealogies in chapters 1-9 cover the time from Adam to David. Chapters 10-29 focus on the thirty-three years of David's rule over the united kingdoms of Israel and Judah (1004-971 b.c.).

Ezra probably completed Chronicles between 450 and 430 b.c. and addressed it to the returned Remnant. Ezra leads some of the exiles to Jerusalem in 457 b.c. and ministers to the people as their spiritual leader. During Ezra's time, Nehemiah is the political leader and Malachi is the moral leader. Chronicles spends a disproportionate time on the reigns of David and Solomon because they bring the nation to its pinnacle. The book is written to remind the Jews of their spiritual heritage and identity during the difficult times they were facing.