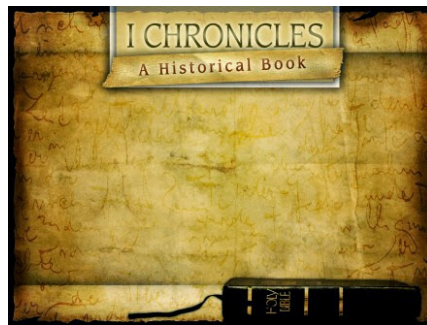




The Book of 1 CHRONICLES



AUTHORSHIP, DATE, AND COMPOSITION

The book does not name an author.

A rabbinic tradition maintains that Ezra wrote Chronicles.

However, it is doubtful that this tradition is trustworthy.

Some scholars assume that the author was a minister, perhaps a Levite, due to his intense concern for the temple and worship.

The language of Chronicles is close in form, vocabulary, and Aramaic influence to other later biblical books such as Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel.

It is also similar to the language of the Isaiah Scroll of Qumran and the Samaritan Pentateuch.

These similarities in style, and the fact that there are no traces of Hellenistic influence, call for a date of composition within the Persian Period.

Chronicles was probably written sometime in the fourth century b.c. (Japhet, 533).

What sources did the chronicler use?

He does not mention parallel biblical books, but he cites - non canonical materials.

Royal annals, designated by the title “The Book of the Kings,” are usually qualified by the name of a specific kingdom (2Ch 16:11; 20:34; 24:27; 25:26; 27:7; 33:18; 35:27).

The use of the names Judah and Israel in these phrases is not consistent, so they may refer to variations of the same annalistic work.

Other sources are associated with the ministry and writing of prophets (1Ch 29:29; 2Ch 9:29; 12:15; 13:22; 20:34; 26:22; 32:32; 33:19). The author points to other documents, such as “the words of David and of Asaph the seer” (2Ch 29:30), “the directions written by David king of Israel and by his son Solomon” (2Ch 35:4), and - “the laments” (2Ch 35:25).

What was the chronicler’s main source? Though some have doubted that the canonical books of Samuel-Kings were his primary source, it is apparent that the chronicler was making use of authoritative Scripture to tell the nation’s story to his contemporaries. His text was probably related to, but not identical with, the Masoretic tradition.

How did the chronicler handle his authoritative source?

Sometimes he omitted materials, perhaps assuming that his audience was familiar with the contents of Samuel-Kings.

He virtually ignored the history of the North.

He deleted narratives regarding Absalom, Amnon, Adonijah, the apostate Solomon, and David's adultery.

The chronicler controlled his source material to stress themes such as God's promise to David and the centrality of the temple.

What about the emendations to the stories recounted in Samuel-Kings?

Some of these supplements came from the sources noted earlier.

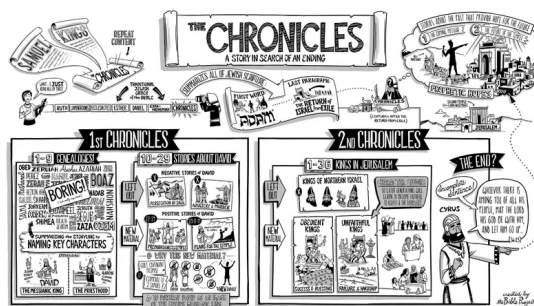
Some scholars have considered these stories as figments of the chronicler's imagination or revealing only the historical circumstances of the author's day.

These additions may reflect reliable historical data.

However, there is no scholarly unity regarding the nature of the sources.

Did the chronicler use oral tradition, other written sources, or an enlarged form of Samuel-Kings? We do not know

I. STRUCTURE, CONTENT, AND SIGNIFICANCE



The chronicler wrote to Jews living in Canaan in the Persian Period.

His major focus is God's eternal covenant with the Davidic monarchy and how this vow should engender hope for renewed existence in the Promised Land.

The covenant initiated by God is conditional, requiring human obedience for the nation to enjoy the benefits of that pact.

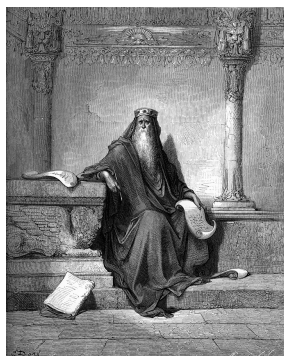
Chronicles has three divisions: 1Ch 1-9, genealogical lists; 1Ch 10-2Ch 9, the united monarchy; 2Ch 10-36, the Judahite monarchy from the schism after Solomon's death to the return from exile in Babylon.

The second and third divisions may in turn be subdivided:

2.1—History of King David (1Ch 10-29);



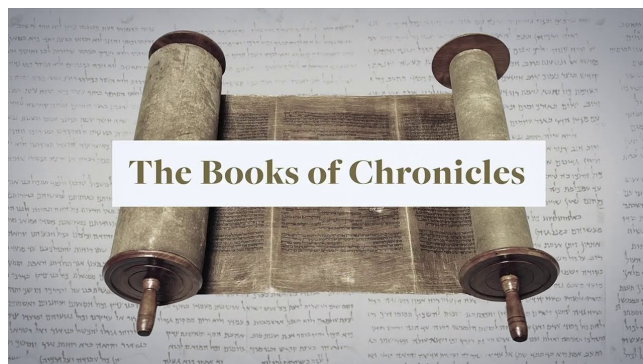
2.2- King Solomon (2Ch 1-9);



3.1—the southern kingdom from the division to the fall of Samaria (2Ch 10-28);

3.2—the kingdom from the reign of Hezekiah to the Exile (2Ch 29-36).

Some scholars have denigrated Chronicles since, to them, it contains material of uncertain historical worth that supplements the more important works of Samuel-Kings.



In their view, the chronicler had so modified or falsified his sources as to make it impossible to reconstruct the events behind his story.

In light of this assumption and with the rise of the historical-critical method, there was a prevailing negative assessment of Chronicles (Childs, 637-55; cf. Miller and Hays; Aharoni and Avi-Yonah).

In the nineteenth century, Julius Wellhausen's *Prolegomena* presented the epitome of this negative evaluation.

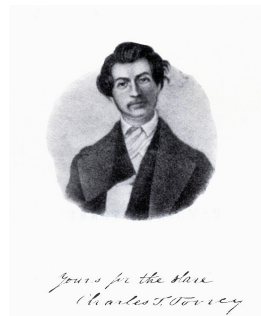


He concluded that Chronicles, heavily influenced by the Priestly Source, was essentially worthless as a historical document.

He saw Chronicles as a later Jewish commentary on the superior canonical sources of Samuel-Kings (Wellhausen, 227).

A movement toward a more positive evaluation of Chronicles began at the turn of the century.

C. C. Torrey appreciated the chronicler's literary creativity- (Torrey, 157-73; 188-217).



William F. Albright defended the historical accuracy of some of the separate traditions (Albright, 274).



Others, such as Gerhard von Rad, became interested in the theology of the chronicler (von Rad, 347-54).



Recent works attempt to understand Chronicles on its own terms and not simply as a supplement to Samuel-Kings (Ackroyd, 501-15; Williamson).

The author tells the nation's story from his point of view and, in the process, encourages his community to obey God.

In 1Ch 1-9 the chronicler delineates the ancestry of "all Israel" (9:1).

The writer uses this inclusive term with a religious rather than political connotation.

The genealogies, due to the presence of some later additions, lead the reader up to, and perhaps slightly beyond, the chronicler's own day.

The lists introduce the author's interest in the constitution of God's people, which he develops in the later narrative.

Connections with the primeval past demonstrate to the post-exilic audience the continuity of God's dealings with his chosen people.

The chronicler is interested in the Israelite monarchy, particularly developing the stories of David and Solomon.



He focuses on their obedience to the divine word and holds up these kings as the standard of evaluation for future Judahite rulers.

The chronicler makes reference to the North only when the information is significant for his narrative about the South.

It is immediately apparent that the chronicler did not intend to provide a complete history of the nations of Israel.

The temple is central for the chronicler. He almost belabors the story of construction and maintenance of the sanctuary.

This is the place of God's choosing and dwelling.

The Lord provides David with the "blueprints."

It is the site where God manifests himself and around which the community, whether pre- or post-exilic, is organized.

The king's relationship to the temple is one of the criteria used to evaluate each monarch.

The chronicler sadly notes that the fall of the nation was accompanied by the razing of the temple, Israel's symbol of divine grace and glory.



In evaluating the nation's history, the chronicler presumes that actions are directly related to results and that each generation must be obedient to the divine word.

If the nation is righteous, God will grant blessing.

If, on the other hand, the nation is wicked, he will send wrath.

However, the chronicler modifies this harshly simplistic doctrine by noting that God provided repeated opportunities for repentance and restoration.

A key interpretative verse for the narrative is [2Ch 7:14](#).

2 Chronicles 7:14 New International Version

14 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 I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

God promises, in response to Solomon's dedication prayer, forgiveness and healing to distressed people if they seek him.

Indeed, the chronicler records several instances where humble repentance averts judgment.

In some biblical texts there is a tension between the writer's report and the historical event. In the case of Chronicles, the major tension, which concerns the relationship of the text to other canonical texts, sometimes reaches contradiction.

The chronicler shaped the material in a different way from the author of Samuel-Kings.

These differences, and the reasons for them, help define the exegetical task for the reader.

By adapting the historical books, the chronicler helped his generation to appreciate and appropriate God's word in their situation.

In part, he tried to answer the question, "How did we get back to the land and how should we live?"



Please remember friends, that You can't buy your way into heaven or out of hell.

Rev. Jesus Del Rio, ED

