

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES - BIBLE SURVEY

The books of Chronicles give another view of Jewish history than that which was recorded in 2 Samuel through 2 Kings.

1 AND 2 Chronicles Background: 1 and 2 Chronicles, like 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Samuel, were not divided into two parts in the Hebrew manuscripts. Chronicles as one book originally went by the name of the “Dairies” or “Journals”, being that they were was court records kept by the different kings.

Greek translators of the Old Testament referred to these books as “the things omitted”, because they supply much information that is not found in the books of the kings. The records of the Chronicles cover a period from the death of Saul (1010 B.C. to the decree of Cyrus (536 B.C.), about a 475-year period.

The whole book for 1 Chronicles, like 2 Samuel, is dedicated to the life of David. It begins with the genealogy of the royal line of David (Chapter 1-9), before surveying key events of the reign of David (chapters 10-29).

(For greater depth on the Kings read: Understanding the Kings.)

Author: although the author and date are not stated in the text, the Jewish tradition says that Ezra penned Chronicles. Some believe that Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah had the same author. The final verses of Chronicles (36:22) are repeated in Ezra 1:1-3.

1 Chronicles

Background: First chronicles places a disproportionate emphasis on the tribes of Judah and Benjamin because Chronicles is not concerned with the Northern Kingdom, but with the Southern Kingdom and the Davidic Dynasty.

The whole book of First Chronicles is dedicated to the life of David. It begins with the life of David, and the genealogy of the royal line of David (chapters 1-9), before surveying the key events of the reign of David (chapters 10-29). David desired to build a house (temple) for God. God promised instead to build an everlasting house (dynasty) for David (17:1-15). See 2 Samuel 7:16.

Note: the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles often overlap, telling the same history from different perspectives.

Key Text: 1 Chronicles 17:11-12

Key Term: “Dynasty”

Summary: First Chronicles focuses on how God established the everlasting dynasty of David; Jesus the greatest descendant of David fulfills this promise of everlasting kingship.

Dates: During David’s reign (about 1010-970 B.C.)

1 Chronicles 1-9: the writer listed the people of God from Adam through the captivity.

1 Chronicles 10-12: Saul was killed as his army fought the Philistines. David replaced Saul as King of Israel.

1 Chronicles 13-16: King David defeated the enemies of Israel, and brought the ark of God back to Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 17: Speaking through the prophet Nathan, God promised that a son of David would have a kingdom without end. David thanked God for his goodness and his wonderful promised.

1 Chronicles 18-20: David and his army won victories against the Philistines, the Moabites, the king of Zobah, the Ammonites, and other surrounding nations.

1 Chronicles 21: David sinned by counting his army, rather than trusting God.

1 Chronicles 22-27: David began preparation for building the temple. He organized workmen, priests, singers, and other officials.

1 Chronicles 28-29: David gave final instructions for building the temple. He gave gifts and asked the people to give gifts so Solomon could complete the work. Solomon was made king. Then David died.

2 Chronicles

2 Chronicles tells the history of Solomon, the divided kingdom, and the kings of Judah.

Background: The book begins with Solomon's plans to build the temple in Jerusalem and ends with its destruction. Between the dedication and destruction of Solomon's temple is (about 384 years, from 959 to 586 B.C.).

Although 2 Chronicles describes the same time period as (1 and 2 Kings) it concentrates only on the Kings of Judah. The author's perspective on the northern Kingdom is plain "and Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day(10:19). The chronicles was concerned mainly with the state of the temple, and whether the Davidic king was devoutly following the Lord.

The Temple, Kings, and approximate year:

Event	King	Text	Approximate Year
Temple dedication	Solomon	5:1	959 B.C.
First repair and reform	Asa	15:8	895 B.C.
Second repair and reform	Joash	24:13	830 B.C.
Third repair and reform	Hezekiah	29:3	715 B.C.
Fourth repair and reform	Josiah	34:3	622 B.C.
Temple destruction	Zedekiah	36:19	586 B.C.

Key Texts: 2 Chronicles 7:1 and 36:19 "now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house."

"They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there."

Key Term: "temple"

Summary: After the temple was built, it was sometimes neglected, and sometimes refurbished, but it was always the most important building in Israel.

Dates: From the beginning of Solomon's reign until the first year that Cyrus, King of Persia ruled over Babylon was 432 years, about 970-538 B.C. During this time three successive Mesopotamian superpowers took their turn at world dominion.

The first superpower was Assyria, after conquering the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C., Assyria was conquered by the second superpower, Babylon. Babylon conquered Assyria in 609 B.C. and Judah in 586 B.C. The third superpower Persia conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.

2 Chronicles 1-9: Solomon, David's son, became the richest and wisest king on earth. He made the nations strong, and built a beautiful temple in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 10-11: The United Kingdom divides

Israel (the Northern Kingdom/ten tribes) and Judah (the Southern Kingdom/two tribes)

Jeroboam I reigned in Israel (930-909 B.C.) See 1 Kings 11:26-33

Rehoboam reigned in Judah (930-913 B.C.) See 1 Kings 12:1-23

2 Chronicles 10-35: the people of Israel divided into two nations, Israel and Judah (930 B.C.)

2 Chronicles 13-36: the author only names the kings of Judah

2 Chronicles 36: Because the people of Judah often turned to worshipping idols, God allowed them to be defeated. They were taken as prisoners to a foreign country (Babylon). The temple of Jerusalem was destroyed and the wall around the city was broken down. The Babylonians did this in 586 B.C., thus ending the nation or kingdom of Judah.

The book ends by telling what the king of Persia did 70 years later. He gave permission for God's people to return and rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 36:17-23) the text tells about how the Jewish people were under two different empires:

1. The Babylon Empire
2. The Persian Empire

See: 2 Kings 25:1-11, 2 Chronicles 36:17-23

2 Chronicles 36:17) the king of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) was king Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned from 605-562 B.C. He became an instrument of God's judgment through Judah's last 20 years (605-586 B.C.) and well into the Babylonian exile (586-539 B.C.)

2 Chronicles 36:20) Until the rule of the Kingdom of Persia. Cyrus the King of Persia conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. and allowed the Jews to return back to Jerusalem the following year (538 B.C.).

2 Chronicles 36:21) Word fulfilled by Jeremiah: Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10.

Seventy years is the approximate length of the Babylonian captivity (605-539 B.C.)

Note: In 2 Chronicles 36:20-22 there is a "gap" in time. There are about 47 years unaccounted for from 586 to 539 B.C. From the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. to the time Cyrus King of Persia conquered the Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C.

This verse/the Bible is "silent" on what the Jewish people did in Babylon during this 47-year period. It is assumed that the Jewish people built homes, and had businesses in Babylon; they lived, grew up, and had children and families there like Jeremiah told them to do (29:4-6).

2 Chronicles 36:22) Don't miss this: here is the "changing of the guards" or better said, the changing of the Empires. From Babylon being the world power, to Persia becoming the world power.

First year of Cyrus: He captured Babylon in 539 B.C. (See Isaiah 44:28, 45:1, 13)

First year: 538 B.C. when the people began to return back to Jerusalem.

Note: the length of the Persian captivity went from 539-330 B.C.