

“The Books of 1st & 2nd Chronicles” (Route 66)

Let’s turn in our Bibles... to 1st & 2nd Chronicles... **WHILE** you’re turning there...

If you have ever read these Books of the Bible and thought: *“Wow! These are a LOT like 1st & 2nd Samuel AND 1st & 2nd Kings.”* – You would be RIGHT! – They **ARE**!

But that is their INTENDED PURPOSE. – These books present a SUMMARY—or, a **RE**-TELLING of the history of Israel—but from a SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE... and FOR SPECIFIC REASONS...

Now, before moving on, this is where I always like to encourage people to go BACK, and make sure you’re listening to ALL of the previous messages in our series... because CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING when studying the Bible...

And, we have tried to be REALLY FAITHFUL to PRESENT THESE MESSAGES... in as CLOSE-TO a “chronological order” as possible...

And so—where we’re AT—OVERALL—in this series—is the Northern Kingdom of Israel has been CONQUERED and TAKEN into CAPTIVITY by the ASSYRIANS... the Southern Kingdom of Judah has been CONQUERED and CARRIED INTO CAPTIVITY by Babylon...

We have seen the exploits of Daniel and his friends in Babylon... Esther in Persia...

And—through prophets like Jeremiah & Isaiah—God had prophesied that a Persian King named Cyrus would make a proclamation allowing His people to return to their land, and rebuild their temple in Jerusalem... after 70 years of captivity in Babylon...

In 538 BC this HAPPENS... And, we see this proclamation in the OPENING VERSES of the Book of Ezra (where we’ll be NEXT week)... But, we ALSO see it in the CLOSING VERSES of 2nd Chronicles, this morning...

When we COMPARE these two passages, we notice something interesting... 2nd Chronicles 36:22 says: **“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and... put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:**

‘All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!’”

Now, we CAN’T really tell it **HERE**, but... when we look in the original HEBREW language, the last statement of this Book cuts-off MID-SENTENCE... it is an **INCOMPLETE THOUGHT**...

[And, THESE books are actually the LAST to appear in the Hebrew Bible, so this “incomplete thought” seems to point to a FUTURE where God will CONTINUE His work... Of course, we know this is the New Testament]...

BUT... When we compare the closing verses of 2nd Chronicles with the OPENING VERSES of Ezra... the text is almost VERBATIM, but the thought is COMPLETED...

Ezra Chapter 1 reads: **“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up...”** – So, that’s where CHRONICLES LEAVES OFF...

But Ezra writes: **“May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel... And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.”**

SIDE-NOTE: The ‘Cyrus Cylinder’—which was discovered in 1879—is a clay artifact, that dates-back to the 6th century B.C... It’s on display in the British Museum... One article writes:

“Discovered in Babylon, it corroborates the Biblical account of Cyrus’s policies. While it does not specifically mention the Jews, it records Cyrus’s general decree allowing displaced peoples to return to their homelands and restore their temples. This artifact provides historical validation for the Biblical narrative...”

EZRA tells of the FIRST WAVE of exiles to return to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel... But 2nd Chronicles **ENDS** with Cyrus’ proclamation...

Now... If we notice how these books BEGIN... 1st Chronicles Chapter 1, Verse 1, simply BEGINS by saying: **“Adam...”**

These books—LITERALLY—present a history of the Nation of Israel, ALL THE WAY FROM the CREATION OF ADAM to the RETURN TO THE LAND AFTER the Babylonian Exile...

And, I’m JUST GONNA TELL YOU: I use a LOT of quotes, this morning... In a SENSE, I am SUMMARIZING several authors SUMMARIZING... two books which SUMMARIZE the history of Israel! – So... BE WARNED... One author writes:

*“1st Chronicles covers the period from Adam to the death of David—around 971 BC—covering the same period of time **as the first 10 books of the Bible**. Without the genealogies in the opening chapters... 1st and 2nd Chronicles cover about the same time as first and second kings.”*

Dr. Graham Scroggie writes—all-told—*“These books span about **3,500 years.**”* – That’s a LOT of time! – *“This fact alone gives uniqueness to the Chronicles, & invests them with peculiar interest.”*

Now, although the author of these books is **NOT SPECIFICALLY STATED**... Jewish tradition ascribes them to EZRA... Ezra is INTRODUCED in Scripture as **“a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses...”**

David Guzik writes: *“[This] sounds like a glorified secretary... But that is not the idea... A skilled scribe was an expert in the Law of Moses... like a highly trained lawyer in the Word of God.”*

G. Campbell Morgan said: *“[The Scribes] took the place of the prophets, **WITH THIS DIFFERENCE**... instead of receiving **new** revelations, [the Scribes] explained and applied the old. Ezra was... the founder and **type** [of this new order].”*

Derek Kidner said: *“[Ezra]... came to be regarded as a second Moses... More than any other, [it was he] who stamped Israel with its lasting character as a people of [the] book.”*

And—SINCE the closing Verses of 2nd Chronicles are repeated in the OPENING VERSES of Ezra, ONE MORE AUTHOR says: *“Not only does this add to the case for Ezra’s authorship, it [may] also indicate that Chronicles and Ezra were once a consecutive work.”* – He says: *“All [three] books share a similar style, vocabulary, and contents. Though we cannot be certain, it is **reasonable** to assume that [Ezra was the author of chronicles].”*

Larry Richards—in the Bible Reader’s Companion—says that fragments of an actual manuscript of Chronicles were found [amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls] at Qumran, which make a date in the Persian period (around 538 BC) almost certain.

So—it **SEEMS**—that 1st & 2nd Chronicles were compiled by Ezra... when Judah RETURNED to Jerusalem (after the Babylonian Captivity) in an attempt to PRESERVE—as well as EMPHASIZE certain events FROM—their HISTORY...

As we said, these Books are **SIMILAR** to 1st & 2nd SAMUEL and 1st & 2nd KINGS, but they ARE **DIFFERENT**... Dr. Graham Scroggie writes:

“Determining the purpose of these books is only done by [closely] comparing them with Samuel & Kings. When we do, we find that there are identical passages, additions, but several clear omissions.”

In fact, in the Septuagint—which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament—the title for these Books is *“Omissions”* (or *“Things Passed Over”*).

He says: *“Unless the viewpoint of these books is understood, there [is] no appreciation of them. The material contained herein was collected and selected with a specific end in view.”*

Jon Courson compares the **repetition** of history here to the Gospels... He says: *“The gospels are repeated four times, because the Father does not want... us to miss the message of Jesus.”*

Another author adds: *“In the same way there are four accounts of [Jesus]... there are two accounts of [Israel’s] history... offering two different perspectives... for two different purposes... [and presenting] two different political vantage points.”*

Dr. Scroggie says: *“The books of Kings are [mainly] political and royal, the Chronicles are sacred and ecclesiastical...”* – He describes them as “essentially **Levitical** [in] character.”

These Books are written to tell Israel’s history through the LENS of the **PRIESTHOOD**... And—KNOWING THAT GOING IN—helps us understand WHY certain details may have been LEFT-OUT, or ADDED-IN... Chuck Swindoll writes:

“The chronicles devote significant attention to the proper worship of Yahweh and adherence to... [the] Law. Telling Israel’s history through [this lens] was... to prepare [them] for a future Messiah... [and the hope for a new temple]. The centrality of Jerusalem—where the temple was built—falls in line with the book’s overarching focus on the priesthood...”

So, these **BOOKS** fall into **4 MAIN SECTIONS**:

- Chapters 1—9 of FIRST Chronicles provide genealogies...
- Chapters 10—29 focus on the REIGN of King David...
- Chapters 1—9 of SECOND Chronicles describe the reign of King Solomon...
- And Chapters 10—36 of 2nd Chronicles trace the reign of the 20 Kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah alone... [we’ll talk more about that in a moment]...

FIRST... Let’s talk about these genealogies... 1st Chronicles Chapters 1—9 is one of those passages where we might think: *“Why are there so many genealogies in the Bible???”*

But—according to Larry Richards, in the Bible Reader’s Companion—*“Genealogies serve many different purposes... 1) They demonstrate the legitimacy of a person’s claim to a particular rank or role... 2) they preserve the purity of the chosen people and its priesthood... 3) they affirm the continuity of the people, despite having been expelled from the Land [for 70 years].”*

In other words, these opening genealogies... demonstrate how the people living in the land **NOW** [after the 70 years of captivity] REALLY **WERE** descended from the ORIGINAL ANCESTORS TO WHOM the Covenant—and the Promise of Messiah—had been given...

And so—they MIGHT NOT seem that important to US—but they would have been EXTREMELY IMPORTANT to the people living in the land!

Adam Clarke writes: *“The design of the writer [is]... to point out, from the public registers... what had been the state of the different families prior to the captivity, that at their return they [could]... repossess their respective inheritances. He [focuses on] the functions, genealogies, families, and orders of the priests and Levites; and this was... [so that] the worship of God might be re-established in the same way as before, and by the proper legitimate persons.”*

So—in these genealogies—we move from Adam to Abraham... There is a particular focus on the family of David, and Solomon, and the Tribe of Judah... The family of Aaron and the Levites...

These **books** are written to emphasize TWO MAIN THINGS: the hope of a Messiah, and the hope for a new temple. – We’ll mention that more than ONCE this morning...

“Throughout the genealogies,” one author writes, “we see two particular lineages connected to these ideas: MUCH space is dedicated to Judah—which leads to David, TO WHOM the messianic promise passed. The SECOND family that gets a lot of emphasis is the [family] of Aaron—the Priesthood—who served in the temple.”

So—AFTER these opening genealogies—by the time we come to **Chapter 11** of 1st Chronicles, it’s **ALL ABOUT David**... And this CONTINUES until the END of the Book...

In Chapters 11 & 12, we see David set on the throne, the City of Jerusalem, we read of David’s Mighty Men and his army...

In Chapters 13 - 17, Chuck Swindoll writes: *“The author details **David’s** decisions on the proper manner... to... [move] the ark, and... its return to Jerusalem.”* – Again, there’s a LOT of **ATTENTION** paid here... towards doing things according to God’s WORD, and the LAW

Chapter 16 includes one of David’s **THANKSGIVING PSALMS** (with portions lifted from Psalm 96, Psalm 105, Psalm 106)...

In Chapter 17, we see God **MAKING HIS COVENANT WITH DAVID**... (which we’ve devoted ENTIRE STUDIES TO in the past)...

In Chapters 18—20, we see David’s Military Exploits... we see details of his administration... There’s MORE accounts of GIANT KILLING...

And—in Chapters 21—27—we find David’s **PREPARATIONS for building the temple**... These Chapters are **SO MUCH MORE DETAILED** than anything we read in Samuel or Kings...

Interestingly, 1st Chronicles 28:12 tells us that the plans for the temple were given to David **“by the spirit”**—which is one of only 2 REFERENCES to the Spirit of God in these books.

And, it’s 1st Chronicles 22 which sheds light on **WHY** God told David that **HE** would **not** be the one to actually BUILD the temple... We read:

“[David] called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. And David said to Solomon: “My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; but the word of the LORD came to me, saying... ‘You... shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth... Behold, a son shall be born to you... His name shall be Solomon,” and “He shall build a house for My name. I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.””

The Bible Project writes: “There’s a **block** of chapters [in 1st Chronicles] in which David makes preparations for the temple, arranging for builders, Levites, and [musicians]. The author... goes so far as to portray David as a figure like Moses. God gave **David** the plans for building the temple, just as he gave [Moses the] plans... for the building of the tabernacle.” – And then, the last two Chapters of 1st Chronicles deal with David’s last days.

Now—in SECOND CHRONICLES—the FIRST NINE Chapters deal with Solomon... His WEALTH, his administration, and his BUILDING OF—and DEDICATING—the Temple...

Solomon’s PRAYER OF DEDICATION in Chapters 6 and 7 are a very WELL-KNOWN PASSAGE of Scripture... See if you recognize THIS verse, where the Lord says:

“...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 will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

I know that Verse is OFTEN PLUCKED today, and used to RELATE various RELIGIOUS or POLITICAL HAPPENINGS in the United States of America...

But—CONTEXTUALLY—this was the LORD speaking to SOLOMON at the DEDICATION of the FIRST TEMPLE in Israel...

Now—by Chapter 10—Solomon PASSES FROM THE SCENE, and the REST of the Book is dedicated to the Kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah **ALONE**... And, this is UNIQUE...

In 2nd Samuel, and 1st & 2nd Kings, we read of ALL the Kings—both of the NORTHERN KINGDOM of Israel, and the SOUTHERN KINGDOM of Judah... But here, we read of **ONLY** the SOUTHERN KINGS... Now, why would that be?

Because—one another author writes—“Only the history of Judah is given, because Judah was the royal tribe, of which Christ was to come.” – And because this is the writer’s **intention**: “The history of the Northern Kingdom—the 10 tribes of Israel—is intentionally left out.”

Now, this RAISES an important question when it comes to the Books of 1st and 2nd Chronicles: “Why is all the NEGATIVE STUFF left out?” – I mean, is this an **ancient** example of FAKE NEWS???

For instance, there is LITTLE EMPHASIS on King Saul in these books... We read of his FAMILY TREE in Chapter 8, and his END in Chapter 10... There is VERY LITTLE SAID about the Babylonian Captivity...

When we come to Chapter 9, we read: “All Israel was recorded by genealogies, and... were inscribed in the book of the kings of Israel.” – And, the very next line reads: “But Judah was carried away captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness.”

THAT'S IT! – That is **ALL** that is said about the Babylonian Captivity before the writer just MOVES ON to start LISTING the people who NOW live in Jerusalem AFTER the exile...

Chuck Swindoll writes: “*1st Chronicles does not include David’s adultery with Bathsheba...*”

There’s no mention of Absalom’s treason, or Amnon and Tamar, or ANY of the family issues that plague David’s house... There’s no mention of the sin of Solomon, which led to the Division of the Kingdom...

The Bible Project writes: “*...the author leaves out all the negative stories which [portray] David as weak or immoral. Saul chasing him around the desert and persecuting him, the [murder of Bathsheba’s husband]... We are left only with the stories that portray [David] as a good guy. [And] There is... new material that [portrays] David in a very positive light.*”

Now, it ISN’T that those details are **UN-IMPORTANT**, or that the writer is some kind of **HISTORICAL RE-VISIONIST**... wanting to GLOSS-OVER Israel’s failures...

Those events are very WELL-DOCUMENTED in the Books of Samuel and Kings... Anybody could go READ them...

The PURPOSE of **THIS** WRITER is to POINT PEOPLE FORWARD... to ENCOURAGE THEM in the HOPE of a COMING MESSIAH and the HOPE OF A NEW TEMPLE...

One author writes: “*1st Chronicles was written to give encouragement and exhortation to the Jews after the captivity. The remnant... needed... to keep their faith alive in the midst of difficult circumstances, and they needed hope for the future.*”

Also, remember when 1st and 2nd Chronicles are written... these are written AFTER the “Period of the Prophets”—which we’ve studied... (unlike Samuel and Kings, which were written **BEFORE**-hand)...

By **THIS** point... prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel have come on the scene, setting forth the **Messiah** as a type of “**new David**.”

And so, the writer of Chronicles writes to present David as a “forerunner”—or a **TYPE**—of the coming Messiah. – Charles Swindoll writes:

“*[These books]—written after... the exile—focus on the elements of history that God wants the returning Jews to meditate upon: obedience that results in God’s blessing, the priority of the temple and priesthood, and the unconditional promises to the house of David.*”

And—honestly—I see a SIMILAR THING in our RELATIONSHIP with Jesus... When the Pharisees brought the woman caught in adultery to Jesus... He doesn’t say:

“*Look... you and I BOTH know what you did wrong. Let’s go over it again to make sure you REALLY understand.*” – He says: “**Go, and sin no more.**” – **HE POINTS HER FORWARD...**

Peter VEHEMENTLY DENIED that he would betray Jesus... and yet, he DID. – But, after the resurrection... Jesus doesn't meet Peter on the shore and say, *"I told you so... I KNEW you were gonna do it, Peter."*

He says: *"Do you LOVE Me? Feed My sheep."* – He **POINTS HIM FORWARD...**

Psalms 103:12 says: **"As far as the east is from the west, so far has [the Lord] removed our transgressions from us."** – It's interesting it doesn't say *"As far as the north is from the south."*

You can travel around the earth until you REACH a point where you STOP going north, and you're going SOUTH again... the NORTH and SOUTH will INTERSECT...

But you can NOT travel so far around the earth that EAST ever becomes going WEST... THAT'S HOW FAR the Lord has separated our transgressions from us!

The GLORY of the New Covenant is that God says: **"Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."** – Isaiah 43 says: **"I... am He who blots out your transgressions... I will not remember your sins."**

It isn't that God **"FORGETS"** our SINS... God **CAN'T** FORGET anything... He CHOOSES **not** to REMEMBER them... And—as we read through 1st and 2nd Chronicles—we SEE that in THE re-telling of Israel's history...

Now, there is **ONE** SPECIFIC ERROR of David that is INCLUDED in this account... 1st Chronicles 21, Verse 1, says that **"Satan stood up... and moved David to number Israel."** – In other words, to TAKE A CENSUS...

David Guzik points-out that: *"In... ancient cultures, a man only had the right to count or number what belonged to him. [And] Israel did not belong to David; [but] to God."*

Incidentally, 2nd Samuel 24 says: **"The anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David"** to number Israel... So, WHICH IS IT? Was it GOD that moved David to Number Israel, or was it SATAN? – The answer is 'YES.'

SATAN can ONLY do what **GOD** ALLOWS. – And, ULTIMATELY, he is ONLY allowed to do whatever will ACCOMPLISH GOD'S PURPOSES... We see this in the account of JOB, and JUDAS, and the ANTI-CHRIST... Even the cross!

MOST LIKELY—This is GOD **ALLOWING** SATAN to INFLUENCE DAVID to TAKE A CENSUS of ISRAEL to ACCOMPLISH God's purposes... And, JOAB—David's General—KNOWS this is a BAD IDEA... He tries to TALK DAVID out of it, in Verse 3...

"Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed... Therefore Joab... went throughout all Israel and came to Jerusalem." – And, **"gave... the number of the people to David."**

But 1st Chronicles 21:7 says: “God was displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel. [And] David said to God, “I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing...”

So, “the LORD spoke to Gad, David’s seer, [and said], ‘Go and tell David, saying... “I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself...” – “Either three years of famine... three months to be defeated by your enemies... or three days the sword of the LORD—a plague in the land...”

“And David said... ‘I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.” – And so, Verse 14 says that: “the LORD sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell.”

But I believe **THIS** SPECIFIC ACCOUNT is included for **THIS** REASON... David SEES “the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having [a drawn sword] in his hand...”

We read: “...the angel of the LORD commanded... that David should go and [build] an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.” – “So David came to Ornan, and... said... ‘Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the LORD... that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.”

“And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the LORD; and [God] answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering.”

Martin Selman points-out that: “David’s altar was the only one in pre-exile times which God explicitly commanded to be built.” – And, what’s AMAZING is...

THIS THRESHING FLOOR of Ornan... BECOMES THE EXACT SPOT where SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE... [We LEARN that from 1st Chronicles Chapter 22]...

And, David Guzik points-out that: “2 Chronicles Chapter 3 says that [this] threshing floor of Ornan was on Mount Moriah—the same hill where Abraham offered Isaac... and the same set of hills where Jesus died on the cross.”

This author writes: “1st Chronicles 21 explains that – as a consequence for sin – a death plague breaks-out amongst God’s people. David... buys a piece of property from Ornan on which to make a sacrifice that stops the plague. According to 2nd Chronicles 3, this site... becomes the very place where Solomon builds the temple... This was the very [same] mountain where Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac. In the New Testament, three times Paul refers to believers as “the temple of God.” – **It is Christ, who has purchased the ground for this spiritual temple. And it was His sacrifice that delivered us from the death plague.**”

Philip Payne writes: “[This] decision of God to establish His altar and temple at Moriah in Jerusalem has affected all history... for this mountain became the focus of the Holy City, where

[God's] Son was crucified. And it will continue to affect history; because from this city... [Jesus] will—one day—rule the nations of the earth.” – Absolutely amazing!!!

I've always said that—IF NOTHING ELSE—God is an **INCREDIBLE** WRITER!

Now—as we said—the Books CONCLUDE with something of an UNFINISHED THOUGHT...

I'll repeat 2nd Chronicles 36:22—just to “set the stage” for next week... We read: **“in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and... put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: ‘All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!’”**

Of course—as we've mentioned—only a SMALL PORTION of God's people ACTUALLY RETURN to the land of Jerusalem... MOST of them REMAIN in Persia...

But this is EXACTLY where the narrative picks-up NEXT week in the Book of Ezra... We'll see the FIRST WAVE of exiles return under the leadership of Zerubbabel...

And so, we are—TRULY—coming into the **LAST** SECTION of the Old Testament, which deals with the people RETURNING TO THEIR LAND, and REBUILDING THEIR TEMPLE... in the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah...

Check them out, they're VERY EASY TO READ—very LINEAR, a GREAT STORY!

A few QUOTES TO CLOSE our study of the Books of 1st & 2nd Chronicles, this morning...

Philip Payne writes: *“Unlike the Book of Kings, with its central message of stern moral judgments, Chronicles exists essentially as a book of hope, grounded on the grace of our sovereign Lord.... [Chronicles shows that] History is a process, not of disintegration, but of sifting... selection... and development.”*

Martin Selman writes: *“In the end... the end is... a fresh start. God's promises continue through the exile—through [the Chronicler's] own generation—and into the future.”* – And so, there we have the Books of 1st & 2nd Chronicles...

So, be sure to read the Book of Ezra for next week, and be sure to come back... that's where we're headed next... as Route 66 continues!