

1 CHRONICLES

Comments by L.C. Allen in NIB

INTRODUCTION

“The first nine chapters of the genealogies are like lions guarding the gates, driving away the faint-hearted from the treasures inside.” (L. C. Allen – NIB) Written after the bulk of Ezra-Nehemiah (quotes from both), probably first half of 4th BCE (400-350). Written as **history** and also a **metaphor** for a continuing experience, meaning that although the Israelites had returned to their homeland, they were still to be in exile for another 490 years as predicted by Daniel in 9:29 (this was literally 7 x 70 weeks, but Gabriel altered this to 7 x 70 years). (See NIB pp. 301-303 for a detailed discussion on how the chronicler merges these two concepts.) /// The chronicler used the four books of Samuel and Kings as the basis of 1 & 2 Chronicles, but adapted that narrative to teach the people of his time, sometimes reproducing history, sometimes making a grand tale out of a minor incident. /// L. C. Allen considers Chronicles to be inspirational literature despite the fact that there is never a reading from it in the three-year common lectionary.

- 1) 1:1 -2:2 – The genealogy from Adam to the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel), plus in one place some kings and chiefs (1:43-54), which was taken verbatim from Genesis 36:31-43.
- 2) 2:3-4:23 – The genealogy of Judah – the longest and most artistic genealogy emphasizes its importance to the chronicler. Both Matthew and Luke took the chronicler’s genealogy to preface the accounts of the ministry of Jesus. /// Note the reference to **Jabez** and his prayer in 4:9-10. Jabez was also territory (2:55) where three obscure tribes lived. V. 9 presents a paradox which is resolved in v. 10. The chronicler puts a strong emphasis on prayer changing things.
- 3) 4:24-5:26 – Shows how important land was to Israel, with God giving it to believers and taking it away when they disobey him.
- 4) 6:1-81 – The space given to the Levites indicates the importance of the Temple to post-exilic Israelites, with a message for today, that communal worship is central to one’s faith. This defies the individualism “rampant” in modern Western societies: worshiping alone with or without a TV preacher/service. /// Note in vv1-3 the lineage of Levi to Moses covers 400 years.
- 5) 8:34 – Meribbaal was the alternate name of Mephiboseth, the crippled son who was five years old when Saul and Jonathan were killed at Gilboa.
- 6) 10:1-14 – Repeats 1 Samuel 31, but shorter than the MT of same. /// Adds that Saul’s head is hung in the temple of Dagon, contrasting with the taking of Goliath’s head to Jerusalem. /// vv13-14 show the chronicler’s belief that Saul’s death was a divine judgment.
- 7) 11:1-3 – David is anointed king at Hebron. (Taken from 2 Samuel 5:1-3.) The chronicler omits the seven years that Ish-bosheth was king of Israel, Abner's defection, the dynastic dispute between Solomon and Adonijah. This gives a false picture of what actually happened, but the chronicler was attempting to show the central thread of the Davidic monarchy from his viewpoint, not ours, leaving out what he thought were obscuring irrelevancies.
- 8) 11:4-9 – David captures Jerusalem. (Taken from 2 Samuel 5:6-10.) Introduces David’s army

commander. Saul and David shown as archetypes of exile and restoration. Leaves out the taunting by the Jebusites.

- 9) 11:10-47 – (Taken from 2 Samuel 23:8-39) List of high-ranking soldiers at Hebron coronation. Emphasizes that David is the king of “all Israel” and is divinely willed to the kingship.
- 10) 12:1-22 – Flashbacks to tribal groups who supported David at two earlier periods, especially his stay in Ziklag (1 Samuel 27:6), with added information from a non-biblical source.
- 11) 12:23-37 – David’s coronation at Hebron with lists of tribal contingents and account of the celebration. The grand total of 340,822 warriors contrasts with 2 Samuel 6:1 where 30,000 are present.
- 12) 12:38-40 – Continues where 11:1-3 left off.

13) REFLECTIONS ON CHAPTER 11 & 12

“The chronicler uses David’s coronation as an opportunity to encourage his fellow Judeans to think big about the dimensions of community faith.” Exclusive Christian churches should pay attention! Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (4:3-4) emphasizes this doctrine of “one body” and “one Spirit.” This single body can progress if each part is working properly. It was a leap of religious and political courage for “all Israel” to abandon the house of Saul when David’s fortunes were so low. But a divine thread holds these two chapters together – Saul fatally ignored the Lord’s word, so that David’s followers could make that leap to a divine kingship. The motif of help from God and help from each other runs through Chronicles. The element of help from God is accentuated by the names of some of David’s supporters: Eleazer (God helps), Abiezer (the divine father helps), Ahiezer (the divine brother helps), Joezer (the Lord helps).

- 14) **Chapter 13** – Repeats 2 Samuel 6. V.5 – Shihor (eastern-most branch of the Nile) to Lebohamath (in Syria). Kiriath-jearim – “City of forests.” V. 10 – See note # 16 in 2 Samuel for an alternate (and probably correct) interpretation.
- 15) Chapter 14 – Three incidents that represent “a flood of divine blessings” on David: 1) Hiram’s gifts to David, 2) his growing family, 13 in Jerusalem (including Solomon), though historically they come much later, 3) his double victory over the Philistines. These result from David’s seeking God via the ark. This chapter fills a three-month gap between the two attempts to bring the ark to Jerusalem. /// the David of 14:2 and 17 find a parallel in the Christ of Ephesians 1:20-22: “God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head of all things, for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”
- 16) 15:1-24-28 – Added by the chronicler to the account in 2 Samuel 6:12a-19a. Had in mind Psalm 132:3-5. David found the proper way to transport the ark in Deuteronomy 10:8, which orders it to be **carried on poles** to keep people a safe distance away from the ark as was ordained in Numbers 4:15: “They must not touch the holy things or they will die.” /// Introduces the musicians Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, but not Jeduthun as in an earlier stage (16:37-41). /// A major change from the 2 Samuel text: the ark is now called the “ark of the covenant,” triggered by Deuteronomy 10:8.
- 17) 15:29 – Michal fails to perceive the significance of the event and chooses to follow Saul’s path away from God and God’s people.

18) REFLECTIONS 15:1-16:

A sacred pattern for moving the ark was revealed in the Torah. We Christians have no biblical basis for our rituals other than the bare framework to which all cultures and denominations have added their appropriate customs. From a broader perspective, however, we think alike, basing our beliefs and understanding on scripture. And to this base we add continued revelations of God through prayer. As the Levites began a new form of worship (dance and music) so must we change our form of worship to meet changing times. With the Saul/Michel decision contrasted with David's decision, we see the importance of every generation to seek anew the proper road to take.

- 19) 16:4-43 – Touches on 2 Samuel only in 16:43, having no use for David's bitter confrontation with Michal in 2 Samuel 6:20-23. An anthology drawn from Psalm 105:1-15 (the Lord's saving work), Psalm 96:1b-13a (celebrating divine kingship), Psalm 106:1, 47-48 (community lament), all post-exilic, all anchored in his story of David. /// vv 19-22 refer to David's time as a mercenary with the Philistines and at Hebron. Vv 12 and 24 refer to the exploits of David and his troops in chapters 11,12, and 14. Vv 8-22 – praise from Israel, vv 23-30 – praise from the entire earth, vv 31-33 – praise from the cosmos.
- 20) 17:1-27 – Follows 2 Samuel 7 closely. Important to notice that in v 2 David calls the ark "the ark of the covenant of the Lord." /// The chronicler and his readers knew from 2 Samuel that it would be Solomon who would build the temple, but it was not yet time to say that in this story. Note that in 2 Samuel 7:14b, the Lord promises to punish Solomon "with the rod," but this now becomes irrelevant to the chronicler after 1 Chronicles 17:13a. /// David's prayer (vv 16-19) follows an OT convention of disparaging oneself when chosen for a divine mission, as Moses in Exodus 3:1 and Gideon in Judges 6:11. This chapter, especially David's prayer, shows clearly how the chronicler felt that "the kingdom of God" was to take on new meaning, much the same as when Jesus came and was a new Son of God, heir to the royal promise.
- 21) 18:1- 20:8 – Long passages from 2 Samuel 8, 10, 21, describing David's takeover of neighboring kingdoms, especially the archenemy the Philistines. However, he leaves out David's affair with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah in 2 Samuel 10-12. Also omits the executions of the Moabite army in 2 Samuel 8:2. Considerable variation in who led the victors in 1 Chronicles compared to 2 Samuel. In 20:6, David kills an unnamed giant with 24 digits, but in 20:4-8 Elhanan kills the brother of Goliath. In 1 Samuel 17:50, David kills Goliath, whereas in 2 Samuel 21:19 Elhanan kills Goliath. Unresolvable tension.
- 22) 21:1 – Why was it a sin to take a military census? Because it indicated a lack of trust in God as the giver of victory no matter how many men David had. David trusts human resources, not God. (See Exodus 30:12-17 for Moses' requirement for being counted – an "atonement shekel" from rich and poor.) /// "Satan" was a post-exilic notion. In the pre-exilic version, it was **God** who ordered David to make the census (2 Sam 24:1). In this version, it is "a satan." Before the exile, the Hebrew word "satan" meant merely "adversary." After the Babylonian Captivity, Zarathustra (Zoroaster) in Persia influenced them to consider Satan as a supernatural power for evil. Later, the concept of Satan as a fallen angel appeared and placed him in Eden first and then ruling all the forces of evil in the world.
- 23) 21:18-19 – The chronicler had in mind the story of Balaam in Numbers 22:31, 35. In NIV and 2 Samuel, Ornan is Araunah.

- 24) 21:22-25 – Details from Abraham’s bargaining for a burial place for Sarah in Genesis 23. In Genesis the plot is the first land owned by the Israelites in the Promised Land, a comparable landmark for the chronicler. The difference in price from 2 Samuel is that the 50 shekels was only for the thrashing floor, but the 600 is for the site of the temple, a much larger area. Also, David in 2 Samuel paid as a member of the tribe of Judah, whereas here he pays 12 times as much for the entire 12 tribes.
- 25) 21:26-27 – David’s prayer is modeled on Elijah’s in 1 Kings 18:36-37. Elijah asked for fire and got it. David’s prayer is answered by fire here and in 2 Chronicles 7:1, both dependent on Leviticus 9:24 where the Lord sends fire to burn Aaron’s sacrifice.
- 26) 21:28-22 – Obscure in the original. Allen interprets it to mean that David was making the ultimate sign of repentance, was finding God anew, by not going to Gibeon to sacrifice at the tabernacle and altar that Moses had built on the high ground there. “David serves as a model for every back-slider.”
- 27) 22:9 – “Solomon” (Shelomah) sounds like – and may be derived from – the Hebrew word for “peace” – “shalom” (and the Arabic “salaam.”)
- 28) 22:13 – A deliberate parallel between Joshua as successor to Moses (and crossing the Jordan instead of him), and Solomon as successor to David (and building the temple instead of him).
- 29) 22:14 – Purposeful hyperbole, an attempt to convey in words God’s incomparability. Similar to modern English idioms like “thanks a million,” and “a thousand pardons.” Gold: 3,750 **tons**. \$3 billion. Silver: 37,500 tons.

30) REFLECTIONS ON CHAPTER 22

- David is the warrior king, Solomon the peacetime king and builder. Like Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:6,8, “I planted the seed...but God made it grow.” The typological comparison between Joshua and Solomon also fulfills a task begun by others. Christians are reminded that this temple language can be applied to Jesus and the new church, the old and new elements intermingled in the New Testament. “Their significance cannot be understood, however, until the Old Testament is taken seriously...”
- 31) 23 :1 – Summarizes 1 Kings **chapters 1 and 10**, omitting the long struggle for succession.
- 32) 23:2-5 – No censure here for taking a census. The figure 38,000 is thought to be exaggerated. The NRSV has David **making** the musical instruments, generally accepted by scholars, but the NIV says, “provided.”
- 33) 23:6-23 – The value of the list for the chronicler is the 4-fold division of duties to be detailed later: 23:6-24 (maintenance of the temple), 25:1-31 (musicians), 26:1-19 (gate keepers), 26:20-32 (secular administration). Otherwise a totally uninteresting discussion of the later priestly redactors to show that the priests are on a higher level than the Levites. “Perhaps the most difficult part of Chronicles for Christian reader to apply.” **AMEN.**
- 34) 24:1-31 – The 24 divisions reflects the over-abundance of priests, giving each a week two times a year of 48 weeks (the lunar calendar). The line of Aaron is enumerated in vv 1-19, of Levi in vv 20-31. But the final pattern didn’t reach its full order until after the exile, during the Persian period. The entire system fell in 70 CE.
- 35) 25:1-31 – Asaph (God has gathered), v 2, and Jeduthun, v.3, “prophesied.” Heman (faithful), v 5, was the “king’s seer.” The rank and file also prophesied. The consensus is that the words in their psalms were inspired by God. /// The Mishna later states the “choir” consisted of nine lyres, two harps, and one cymbal. In later times, the Talmud states that the choristers underwent five years of training.

- 36) 26:1-19 – Completes the exposition of the various groups of Levites appointed by David. The temple gate keepers were the security police, responsible for keeping ritually unclean people out of the temple.
- 37) 26:20-32 – Two types of treasury: one stored sacred vessels and materials such as flour, wine, and oil. The other was a bank and museum, spoils of war and of value.
- 38) 27:1-15 – The first list models the secular list on a religious background, the Temple being regarded as a pattern for society, much like Christian societies like the Puritans tried in New England.
- 39) 27:16-24 – The second list challenges the reader to endorse the larger ecumenical dimension of the people of God, but recognizing as “separatists” any small group that claims to be the whole – like certain Christian “sects” the claim to be the only one who have the “truth.”
- 40) 27:25-31 – The third list emphasizes the OT theology of the land – love of the soil and devotion to agricultural enterprises.
- 41) 27:32-34 – The fourth list sets out the members of David’s privy council, those who were in a position to counsel him, like Joab in 2 Samuel 19:5-8.
- 42) 28 – The public charge to Solomon to build the temple. Several references to Psalm 132 which was sung later when the Ark was brought to the Temple, especially 132:7,8,14. Other references: v 4 – 1 Samuel 16; v 7 – Deuteronomy 30:11-14, 1 Kings 11:31-34; v 8 – Deuteronomy 4:22-23, 6:17-18, Jeremiah 29:13-14; v 12 – Ezekiel 1:3, 3:10-11, 14. V 21 – Exodus 35:10.
- 43) 29:1-9 – “With one eye on” Exodus 35:20-29 and Exodus 25:1-7, where Moses collects money for the tabernacle.
- 44) 29:10-19 – A prayer that the chronicler meant for his own generation to hear.
- 45) 20: 22b-25 – This second coronation may reflect the chronicler’s view that the ceremony in 1 Kings 1:38-40 was a hasty, improvised affair. David’s sons reported as in support of Solomon summarizes the long tale in 2 Samuel 19-20 and 1 Kings 1 & 2.