

Maranatha Bible Church 2020

Equipping Hour: OT Historical Books

Weeks 4: 1 & 2 Samuel...Kings...Chronicles

1 & 2 Samuel

Author and Date¹: Jewish tradition ascribed the writing of “Samuel” to Samuel himself or to Samuel, Nathan, and Gad (based on 1 Chr. 29:29). But Samuel cannot be the writer because his death is recorded in 1 Sam. 25:1, before the events associated with David’s reign even took place. Further, Nathan and Gad were prophets of the Lord during David’s lifetime and would not have been alive when the book of Samuel was written. Though the written records of these 3 prophets could have been used for information in the writing of 1 and 2 Samuel, the human author of these books is unknown. The work comes to the reader as an anonymous writing, i.e., the human author speaks for the Lord and gives the divine interpretation of the events narrated.

The books of Samuel contain no clear indication of the date of composition. That the author wrote after the division of the kingdom between Israel and Judah in 931 B.C. is clear, due to the many references to Israel and Judah as distinct entities (1 Sam. 11:8; 17:52; 18:16; 2 Sam. 5:5; 11:11; 12:8; 19:42–43; 24:1, 9). Also, the statement concerning Ziklag’s belonging “to the kings of Judah to this day” in 1 Sam. 27:6 gives clear evidence of a post-Solomonic date of writing. There is no such clarity concerning how late the date of writing could be.

However, 1 and 2 Samuel are included in the Former Prophets in the Hebrew canon, along with Joshua, Judges, and 1 and 2 Kings. If the Former Prophets were composed as a unit, then Samuel would have been written during the Babylonian captivity (ca. 560–540 B.C.), since 2 Kings concludes during the exile (2 Kin. 25:27–30). However, since Samuel has a different literary style than Kings, it was most likely penned before the Exile during the period of the divided kingdom (ca. 931–722B.C.) and later made an integral part of the Former Prophets.

Originally, the books of 1 and 2 Samuel were one book. The translators of the Septuagint separated them, and we have retained that separation ever since. The events of 1 Samuel span approximately 100 years, from c. 1100 B.C. to c. 1000 B.C. The events of 2 Samuel cover another 40 years. The date of writing, then, would be sometime after 960 B.C.

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/bible-introductions/MSB09/first-samuel> 11/27/2018

Background and Setting: The majority of the action recorded in 1 and 2 Samuel took place in and around the central highlands in the land of Israel. The nation of Israel was largely concentrated in an area that ran about 90 mi. from the hill country of Ephraim in the N (1 Sam. 1:1; 9:4) to the hill country of Judah in the S (Josh. 20:7; 21:11) and between 15 to 35 mi. E to W. This central spine ranges in height from 1,500 ft. to 3,300 ft. above sea level. The major cities of 1 and 2 Samuel are to be found in these central highlands: Shiloh, the residence of Eli and the tabernacle; Ramah, the hometown of Samuel; Gibeah, the headquarters of Saul; Bethlehem, the birthplace of David; Hebron, David’s capital when he ruled over Judah; and Jerusalem, the ultimate “city of David.”

The events of 1 and 2 Samuel took place between the years ca. 1105 B.C., the birth of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:1–28), to ca. 971 B.C., the last words of David (2 Sam. 23:1–7). Thus, the books span about 140 years of history. During those years, Israel was transformed from a loosely knit group of tribes under “judges” to a united nation under the reign of a centralized monarchy. They look primarily at Samuel (ca. 1105–1030 B.C.), Saul who reigned ca. 1052–1011 B.C., and David who was king of the united monarchy ca. 1011–971 B.C.

Historical and Theological Themes: As 1 Samuel begins, Israel was at a low point spiritually. The priesthood was corrupt (1 Sam. 2:12–17, 22–26), the ark of the covenant was not at the tabernacle (1 Sam. 4:3–7:2), idolatry was practiced (1 Sam. 7:3, 4), and the judges were dishonest (1 Sam. 8:2, 3). Through the influence of godly Samuel (1 Sam. 12:23) and David (1 Sam. 13:14), these conditions were reversed. Second Samuel concludes with the anger of the Lord being withdrawn from Israel (2 Sam. 24:25).

During the years narrated in 1 and 2 Samuel, the great empires of the ancient world were in a state of weakness. Neither Egypt nor the Mesopotamian powers, Babylon and Assyria, were threats to Israel at that time. The two nations most hostile to the Israelites were the Philistines (1 Sam. 4; 7; 13, 14; 17; 23; 31; 2 Sam. 5) to the W and the Ammonites (1 Sam. 11; 2 Sam. 10–12) to the E. The major contingent of the Philistines had migrated from the Aegean Islands and Asia Minor in the 12th century B.C.

After being denied access to Egypt, they settled among other preexisting Philistines along the Mediterranean coast of Palestine. The Philistines controlled the use of iron, which gave them a decided military and economic advantage over Israel (1 Sam. 13:19–22). The Ammonites were descendants of Lot (Gen. 19:38) who lived on the Transjordan Plateau. David conquered the Philistines (2 Sam. 8:1) and the Ammonites (2 Sam. 12:29–31), along with other nations that surrounded Israel (2 Sam. 8:2–14).

1) There are four predominant theological themes in 1 and 2 Samuel.

- a) The first is the Davidic Covenant. The books are literarily framed by two references to the “anointed” king in the prayer of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:10) and the song of David (2 Sam. 22:51). This is a reference to the Messiah, the King who will triumph over the nations who are opposed to God (see Gen. 49:8–12;

Num. 24:7–9, 17–19). According to the Lord’s promise, this Messiah will come through the line of David and establish David’s throne forever (2 Sam. 7:12–16). The events of David’s life recorded in Samuel foreshadow the actions of David’s greater Son (i.e., Christ) in the future.

- b) A second theme is the sovereignty of God, clearly seen in these books. One example is the birth of Samuel in response to Hannah’s prayer (1 Sam. 9:17; 16:12, 13). Also, in relation to David, it is particularly evident that nothing can frustrate God’s plan to have him rule over Israel (1 Sam. 24:20).
- c) Third, the work of the Holy Spirit in empowering men for divinely appointed tasks is evident. The Spirit of the Lord came upon both Saul and David after their anointing as king (1 Sam. 10:10; 16:13). The power of the Holy Spirit brought forth prophecy (1 Sam. 10:6) and victory in battle (1 Sam. 11:6).
- d) Fourth, the books of Samuel demonstrate the personal and national effects of sin. The sins of Eli and his sons resulted in their deaths (1 Sam. 2:12–17, 22–25; 3:10–14; 4:17, 18). The lack of reverence for the ark of the covenant led to the death of a number of Israelites (1 Sam. 6:19; 2 Sam. 6:6, 7). Saul’s disobedience resulted in the Lord’s judgment, and he was rejected as king over Israel (1 Sam. 13:9, 13, 14; 15:8, 9, 20–23). Although David was forgiven for his sin of adultery and murder after his confession (2 Sam. 12:13), he still suffered the inevitable and devastating consequences of his sin (2 Sam. 12:14).

Interpretive Challenges: The books of Samuel contain a number of interpretive issues that have been widely discussed:

- 1) Which of the ancient manuscripts is closest to the original autograph? The standard Hebrew (Masoretic) text has been relatively poorly preserved, and the LXX often differs from it. Thus, the exact reading of the original autograph of the text is in places hard to determine (see 1 Sam. 13:1). The NKJV uses the Masoretic text with significant variant readings in the marginal notes.
 - a) The Masoretic text will be assumed to represent the original text unless there is a grammatical or contextual impossibility. This accounts for many of the numerical discrepancies.
- 2) Is Samuel hesitant for the establishment of the human kingship in Israel? It is claimed that while 1 Sam. 9–11 presents a positive view of the kingship, 1 Sam. 8 and 12 are strongly anti-monarchical.
 - a) It is preferable, however, to see the book as presenting a balanced perspective of the human kingship. ***While the desire of Israel for a king was acceptable (Deut. 17:15), their reason for wanting a king showed a lack of faith in the Lord.***
- 3) How does one explain the bizarre behavior of the prophets? It is commonly held that 1 and 2 Samuel present the prophets as ecstatic speakers with bizarre behavior just like the pagan prophets of the other nations.
 - a) There is nothing in the text which is inconsistent with seeing the prophets as communicators of divine revelation, at times prophesying with musical accompaniment.
- 4) How did the Holy Spirit minister before Pentecost?

- a) The ministry of the Holy Spirit in 1 Sam. 10:6, 10; 11:16; 16:13, 14; 19:20, 23; 2 Sam. 23:2 was not describing salvation in the NT sense, but an empowering by the Lord for His service (see also Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14).
- 5) What was the identity of the “distressing spirit from the Lord”? Is it a personal being, i.e., a demon, or a spirit of discontent created by God in the heart (cf. Judg. 9:23)?
- a) Traditionally, it has been viewed as a demon.
- 6) How did Samuel appear in 1 Sam. 28:3-5?
- a) It seems best to understand the appearance of Samuel as the Lord allowing the dead Samuel to speak with Saul.
- 7) What is the identity of David’s seed in 2 Sam. 7:12–15? It is usually taken as Solomon.
- a) However, the NT refers the words to Jesus, God’s Son in Heb. 1:5.

1 & 2 Kings²

Title: First and Second Kings were originally one book, called in the Hebrew text, “Kings,” from the first word in 1:1. The Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint (LXX), divided the book in two, and this was followed by the Latin Vulgate (Vg.) version and English translations. The division was for the convenience of copying this lengthy book on scrolls and codex’s and was not based on features of content. Modern Hebrew Bibles title the books “Kings A” and “Kings B.” The LXX and Vg. connected Kings with the books of Samuel, so that the titles in the LXX are “The Third and Fourth Books of Kingdoms” and in the Vg. “Third and Fourth Kings.” The books of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings combined are a chronicle of the entire history of Judah’s and Israel’s kingship from Saul to Zedekiah. First and Second Chronicles provides only the history of Judah’s monarchy.

Author and Date: Jewish tradition proposed that Jeremiah wrote Kings, though this is unlikely because the final event recorded in the book (see 2 Kin. 25:27–30) occurred in Babylon in 561 B.C. Jeremiah never went to Babylon, but to Egypt (Jer. 43:1–7), and would have been at least 86 years old by 561 B.C. Actually, the identity of the unnamed author remains unknown. Since the ministry of prophets is emphasized in Kings, it seems that the author was most likely an unnamed prophet of the Lord who lived in exile with Israel in Babylon.

Kings was written between 561–538 B.C. Since the last narrated event (2 Kin. 25:27–30) sets the earliest possible date of completion and because there is no record of the end of the Babylonian captivity in Kings, the release from exile (538 B.C.) identifies the latest possible writing date. This date is sometimes challenged on the basis of “to this day” statements in 1 Kin. 8:8; 9:13, 20, 21; 10:12; 12:19; 2 Kin. 2:22; 8:22;

² <https://www.gty.org/library/bible-introductions/MSB11/first-kings> 11/27/20

10:27; 14:7; 16:6; 17:23, 34, 41; 21:15. However, it is best to understand these statements as those of the sources used by the author, rather than statements of the author himself.

It is clear that the author used a variety of sources in compiling this book, including “the book of the acts of Solomon” (1 Kin. 11:41), “the chronicles of the kings of Israel” (1 Kin. 14:19; 15:31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39; 2 Kin. 1:18; 10:34; 13:8, 12; 14:15, 28; 15:11, 15, 21, 26, 31), and “the chronicles of the kings of Judah” (1 Kin. 14:29; 15:7, 23; 22:45; 2 Kin. 8:23; 12:19; 14:18; 15:6, 36; 16:19; 20:20; 21:17, 25; 23:28; 24:5). Further, Is. 36:1–39:8 provided information used in 2 Kin. 18:9–20:19, and Jer. 52:31–34 seems to be the source for 2 Kin. 25:27–29. This explanation posits a single inspired author, living in Babylon during the Exile, using these pre-Exilic source materials at his disposal.

Background and Setting: A distinction must be made between the setting of the books’ sources and that of the books’ author. The source material was written by participants in and eyewitnesses of the events. It was reliable information, which was historically accurate concerning the sons of Israel, from the death of David and the accession of Solomon (971 B.C.) to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem by the Babylonians (586 B.C.). Thus, Kings traces the histories of two sets of kings and two nations of disobedient people, Israel and Judah, both of whom were growing indifferent to God’s law and His prophets and were headed for captivity.

The book of Kings is not only accurate history, but interpreted history. The author, an exile in Babylon, wished to communicate the lessons of Israel’s history to the exiles. Specifically, he taught the exilic community why the Lord’s judgment of exile had come. The writer established early in his narrative that the Lord required obedience by the kings to the Mosaic law, if their kingdom was to receive His blessing; disobedience would bring exile (1 Kin. 9:3–9). The sad reality that history revealed was that all the kings of Israel and the majority of the kings of Judah “did evil in the sight of the LORD.” These evil kings were apostates, who led their people to sin by not confronting idolatry, but sanctioning it.

Because of the kings’ failure, the Lord sent His prophets to confront both the monarchs and the people with their sin and their need to return to Him. Because the message of the prophets was rejected, the prophets foretold that the nation(s) would be carried into exile (2 Kin. 17:13–23; 21:10–15). Like every prophecy uttered by the prophets in Kings, this word from the Lord came to pass (2 Kin. 17:5, 6; 25:1–11). Therefore, Kings interpreted the people’s experience of exile and helped them to see why they had suffered God’s punishment for idolatry. It also explained that just as God had shown mercy to Ahab (1 Kin. 22:27–29) and Jehoiachin (2 Kin. 25:27–30), so He was willing to show them mercy.

The predominant geographical setting of Kings is the whole Land of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba (1 Kin. 4:25), including Transjordan. Four invading nations played a dominant role in the affairs of Israel and Judah from 971 to 561 B.C. In the tenth century B.C., Egypt impacted Israel’s history during the reigns of

Solomon and Rehoboam (1 Kin. 3:1; 1:14–22, 40; 12:2; 14:25–27). Syria (Aram) posed a great threat to Israel’s security during the ninth century B.C., ca. 890–800 B.C. (1 Kin. 15:9–22; 20:1–34; 22:1–4, 29–40; 2 Kin. 6:8–7:20; 8:7–15; 10:32, 33; 12:17–18; 13:22–25). The years from ca. 800–750 B.C. were a half-century of peace and prosperity for Israel and Judah, because Assyria neutralized Syria and did not threaten to the south. This changed during the kingship of Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kin. 15:19, 20, 29).

From the mid-eighth century to the late seventh century B.C., Assyria terrorized Palestine, finally conquering and destroying Israel (the northern kingdom) in 722 B.C. (2 Kin. 17:4–6) and besieging Jerusalem in 701 B.C. (2 Kin. 18:17–19:37). From 612 to 539 B.C., Babylon was the dominant power in the ancient world. Babylon invaded Judah (the southern kingdom) 3 times, with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple occurring in 586 B.C. during that third assault (2 Kin. 24:1–25:21).

Historical and Theological Themes: *Kings concentrates, then, on the history of the sons of Israel from 971 to 561 B.C. First Kings 1:1–11:43 deals with Solomon’s accession and reign (971–931 B.C.). The two divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah (931–722 B.C.) are covered in 1 Kin. 12:1; 2 Kin. 17:41. The author arranged the material in a distinctive way in that the narration follows the kings in both the N and the S.*

For each reign described, there is the following literary framework. Every king is introduced with: 1) his name and relation to his predecessor; 2) his date of accession in relationship to the year of the contemporary ruler in the other kingdom; 3) his age on coming to the throne (for kings of Judah only); 4) his length of reign; 5) his place of reign; 6) his mother’s name (for Judah only); and 7) spiritual appraisal of his reign. This introduction is followed by a narration of the events that occurred during the reign of each king. The details of this narration vary widely. Each reign is concluded with: 1) a citation of sources; 2) additional historical notes; 3) notice of death; 4) notice of burial; 5) the name of the successor; and 6) in a few instances, an added postscript (i.e., 1 Kin. 15:32; 2 Kin. 10:36). Second Kings 18:1–25:21 deals with the time when Judah survived alone (722–586 B.C.). Two concluding paragraphs speak of events after the Babylonian exile (2 Kin. 25:22–26, 27–30).

1) Three theological themes are stressed in Kings.

- 2) *First*, the Lord judged Israel and Judah because of their disobedience to His law (2 Kin 17:7–23). This unfaithfulness on the part of the people was furthered by the apostasy of the evil kings who led them into idolatry (2 Kin. 17:21, 22; 21:11), so the Lord exercised His righteous wrath against His rebellious people.
- 3) *Second*, the word of the true prophets came to pass (1 Kin. 13:2, 3; 22:15–28; 2 Kin. 23:16; 24:2). This confirmed that the Lord did keep His Word, even His warnings of judgment.
- 4) *Third*, the Lord remembered His promise to David (1 Kin. 11:12–13, 34–36; 15:4; 2 Kin. 8:19). Even though the kings of the Davidic line proved themselves to be disobedient to the Lord, He did not bring David’s family to an end as He did the families of Jeroboam I, Omri, and Jehu in

Israel. Even as the book closes, the line of David still exists (2 Kin. 25:27–30), so there is hope for the coming “seed” of David (see 2 Sam. 7:12–16). The Lord is thus seen as faithful, and His Word is trustworthy.

Interpretive Challenges: The major interpretive challenge in Kings concerns the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah. Though abundant chronological data is presented in the book of Kings, this data is difficult to interpret for two reasons. First, there seems to be internal inconsistency in the information given.

- 1) For instance, 1 Kin. 16:23 states that Omri, king of Israel, began to reign in the 31st year of Asa, king of Judah, and that he reigned 12 years.
 - a) But according to 1 Kin. 16:29, Omri was succeeded by his son Ahab in the 38th year of Asa, giving Omri a reign of only 7 years, not 12.
- 2) Second, from extrabiblical sources (Greek, Assyrian, and Babylonian), correlated with astronomical data, a reliable series of dates can be calculated from 892 to 566 B.C. Since Ahab and Jehu, kings of Israel, are believed to be mentioned in Assyrian records, 853 B.C. can be fixed as the year of Ahab’s death and 841 B.C. as the year Jehu began to reign.
 - a) With these fixed dates, it is possible to work backward and forward to determine that the date of the division of Israel from Judah was ca. 931 B.C., the fall of Samaria 722 B.C., and the fall of Jerusalem 586 B.C.
 - b) But when the total years of royal reigns in Kings are added, the number for Israel is 241 years (not the 210 years of 931 to 722 B.C.) and Judah 393 years (not the 346 years of 931 to 586 B.C.).
 - c) It is recognized that in both kingdoms there were some co-regencies, i.e., a period of rulership when two kings, usually father and son, ruled at the same time, so the overlapping years were counted twice in the total for both kings. Further, different methods of reckoning the years of a king’s rule and even different calendars were used at differing times in the two kingdoms, resulting in the seeming internal inconsistencies. The general accuracy of the chronology in Kings can be demonstrated and confirmed.
- 3) A second major interpretive challenge deals with Solomon’s relationship to the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants. First Kings 4:20, 21 has been interpreted by some as the fulfillment of the promises given to Abraham (cf. Gen. 15:18–21; 22:17).
 - a) However, according to Num. 34:6, the western border of the Land promised to Abraham was the Mediterranean Sea. In 1 Kin. 5:1ff., Hiram is seen as the independent king of Tyre (along the Mediterranean), dealing with Solomon as an equal. Solomon’s empire was not the fulfillment of the Land promise given to Abraham by the Lord, although a great portion of that land was under Solomon’s control.
 - b) Further, the statements of Solomon in 1 Kin. 5:5 and 8:20 are his claims to be the promised seed of the Davidic Covenant (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12–16). The author of Kings holds out the possibility that Solomon’s temple was the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to David.

- c) However, while the conditions for the fulfillment of the promise to David are reiterated to Solomon (1 Kin. 6:12), it is clear that Solomon did not meet these conditions (1 Kin. 11:9–13). In fact, none of the historical kings in the house of David met the condition of complete obedience that was to be the sign of the Promised One.
- d) *According to Kings, the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants did not take place in Israel's past, thus laying the foundation for the latter prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve) who would point Israel to a future hope under Messiah when the Covenants would be fulfilled* (see Is. 9:6, 7).

1 & 2 Chronicles³

Title: The original title in the Hebrew Bible read “The annals (i.e., events or happenings) of the days.” First and Second Chronicles were comprised of one book until later divided into separate books in the Greek OT translation, the Septuagint (LXX), ca. 200 B.C. The title also changed at that time to the inaccurate title, “the things omitted,” i.e., reflecting material not in 1, 2 Samuel and 1, 2 Kings. The English title “Chronicles” originated with Jerome’s Latin Vulgate translation (ca. 400 A.D.), which used the fuller title “The Chronicles of the Entire Sacred History.”

Author and Date: Neither 1 nor 2 Chronicles contains direct statements regarding the human author, though Jewish tradition strongly favors Ezra the priest (cf. Ezra 7:1–6) as “the chronicler.” These records were most likely recorded ca. 450–430 B.C. The genealogical record in 1 Chr. 1–9 supports a date after 450 B.C. for the writing. The NT does not directly quote either 1 or 2 Chronicles.

Background and Setting: The Jews’ three-phase return to the Promised Land from the Babylonian exile:

- 1) Zerubbabel in Ezra 1–6 (ca. 538 B.C.);
- 2) Ezra in Ezra 7–10 (ca. 458 B.C.);
- 3) Nehemiah in Neh. 1–13 (ca. 445 B.C.).
- 4) The prophets of this restoration era were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The Jews had returned from their 70 years of captivity (ca. 538 B.C.) to a land that was markedly different from the one once ruled by King David (ca. 1011–971 B.C.) and King Solomon (971–931 B.C.)

³ <https://www.gty.org/library/bible-introductions/MSB13> 11/27/20

- 1) There was no Hebrew king, but rather a Persian governor (Ezra 5:3; 6:6);
- 2) There was no security for Jerusalem, so Nehemiah had to rebuild the wall (Neh. 1–7);
- 3) There was no temple, so Zerubbabel had to reconstruct a pitiful semblance of the Solomonic temple's former glory (Ezra 3);
- 4) The Jews no longer dominated the region, but rather were on the defensive (Ezra 4; Neh. 4);
- 5) They enjoyed few divine blessings beyond the fact of their return;
- 6) They possessed little of the kingdom's former wealth
- 7) God's divine presence no longer resided in Jerusalem, having departed ca. 597–591 B.C. (Ezek. 8–11).

To put it mildly, their future looked bleak compared to their majestic past, especially the time of David and Solomon. The return could best be described as bittersweet, i.e., bitter because their present poverty brought hurtful memories about what was forfeited by God's judgment on their ancestors' sin, but sweet because at least they were back in the Land God had given Abraham 17 centuries earlier (Gen. 12:1–3).

The chronicler's selective genealogy and history of Israel, stretching from Adam (1 Chr. 1:1) to the return from Babylon (2 Chr. 26:23), was intended to remind the Jews of God's promises and intentions about:

- 1) The Land;
- 2) The nation;
- 3) The Davidic king;
- 4) The Levitical priests;
- 5) The temple;
- 6) True worship, none of which had been abrogated because of the Babylonian captivity.
- 7) All of this was to remind them of their spiritual heritage during the difficult times they faced, and to encourage them to be faithful to God.

Historical and Theological Themes: First and Second Chronicles, as named by Jerome, recreate an OT history in miniature, with particular emphases on the Davidic Covenant and temple worship.

In terms of literary parallel, 1 Chronicles is the partner of 2 Samuel, in that both detail the reign of King David. First Chronicles opens with Adam (1:1) and closes with the death of David (29:26–30) in 971 B.C.

Second Chronicles begins with Solomon (1:1) and covers the same historical period as 1 and 2 Kings, while focusing exclusively on the kings of the southern kingdom of Judah, thus excluding the history of the northern 10 tribes and their rulers, because of their complete wickedness and false worship. It ranges from the

reign of Solomon (1:1) in 971 B.C. to the return from Babylon in 538 B.C. (36:23). Over 55 percent of the material in Chronicles is unique, i.e., not found in 2 Samuel or 1 and 2 Kings. The “chronicler” tended to omit what was negative or in opposition to the Davidic kingship; on the other hand, he tended to make unique contributions in validating temple worship and the line of David. Whereas 2 Kings 25 ends dismally with the deportation of Judah to Babylon, 2 Chronicles 36:22–23 concludes hopefully with the Jews’ release from Persia and return to Jerusalem.

These two books were written to the repatriated Jewish exiles as a chronicle of God’s intention of future blessing, in spite of the nation’s past moral/spiritual failure for which the people paid dearly under God’s wrath.

The historical themes are inextricably linked with the theological in that God’s divine purposes for Israel have been and will be played out on the stage of human history. ***These two books are designed to assure the returning Jews that, in spite of their checkered past and present plight, God will be true to His covenant promises.*** They have been returned by God to the Land first given to Abraham as a race of people whose ethnic identity (Jewish) was not obliterated by the deportation and whose national identity (Israel) has been preserved (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:5), although they are still under God’s judgment as prescribed by the Mosaic legislation (Deut. 28:15–68).

The priestly line of Eleazar’s son Phinehas and the Levitical line were still intact so that temple worship could continue in the hopes that God’s presence would one day return (Num. 25:10–13; Mal. 3:1). The Davidic promise of a king was still valid, although future in its fulfillment (2 Sam. 7:8–17; 1 Chr. 17:7–15). Their individual hope of eternal life and restoration of God’s blessings forever rested in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31–34).

Two basic principles enumerated in these two books prevail throughout the OT, namely, obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings judgment. In the Chronicles, when the king obeyed and trusted the Lord, God blessed and protected. But when the king disobeyed and/or put his trust in something or someone other than the Lord, God withdrew His blessing and protection. Three basic failures by the kings of Judah brought God’s wrath: 1) personal sin; 2) false worship/idolatry; and/or 3) trust in man rather than God.

Interpretive Challenges: First and Second Chronicles present a combination of selective genealogical and historical records and no insurmountable challenges within the two books are encountered.

A few issues arise, such as:

- 1) Who wrote 1 and 2 Chronicles? Does the overlap of 2 Chr. 36:22–23 with Ezra 1:1–3 point to Ezra as author?
- 2) Does the use of multiple sources taint the inerrancy doctrine of Scripture?
- 3) How does one explain the variations in the genealogies of 1 Chr. 1–9 from other OT genealogies?
- 4) Are the curses of Deut. 28 still in force, even though the 70 year captivity has concluded?
- 5) How does one explain the few variations in numbers when comparing Chronicles with parallel passages in Samuel and Kings?