

Chronicles

Introduction

In Chronicles, the cause of the exile is clear along with God's sovereignty over the nations. The Israelites of the north went into exile because "they broke faith with the God of their fathers...so the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of ...Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and he took them into exile" (1 Chr 5.25-26). Judah also went into exile (to Babylon) "because of their breach of faith" (1 Chr 9.1).

1A. Outline/contents

Contents:

- Genealogy (from Adam to the returnees from exile) 1 Chr. 1-9
- Saul 1 Chr. 10 [why and how of his death]
- David 1 Chr. 11-29 [shepherd king in city of David, death]
- Solomon 2 Chr. 1-9 [mainly building of temple]
- Kings of Judah to the exile 2 Chr. 10-36 [all attention is on the South]

Outline:

- Genealogies 1 Ch 1-9
- Monarchy 1 Ch 10-2 Ch 9
- Postschism southern kingdom, exile, and proclamation of return 2 Ch 10-36

2A. Comparison with Samuel & Kings

The fact that the genealogies extend to "the first to dwell again in their possessions" indicates that Chronicles is a post-exilic historical book (written after 536). Thus, the record looks back at Saul, David, Solomon, and Judah through post-exilic eyes. This is definitely a reading cue. Accordingly, there are differences between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings.

1) Emphasis is on the good kings and their sterling qualities (omitting their faults, which remain firmly on record in Samuel and Kings). Discussion about Saul is very brief (1 Chr 10 versus 1 Sam 9-31). The concentration is on the history from the very beginning to David and his descendents in the southern kingdom; this is the chosen line of descent in the fulfillment of God's will. Is the glorious picture of the kings revisionist distortion of history? No, it is selective "messianic historiography" (IOT, 174) that sifts the history to accent the glory in order to anticipate the coming of the true David and the greater than Solomon.

2) There is no development of the history of the northern kingdom beyond bare mention of her sin and judgment. However, stress is put on David's rule over all Israel (1 Ch 11.1-3).

3) In the life of David, the principal events "have to do with the nation's worship" and thus with preparations for the building of the temple.

4) In the life of Solomon, concentration is on the building of the Temple and its dedication rather than on the personal life of the king.

5) Formal worship is more prominent including Temple singers. Note that Hezekiah's cleansing of the temple and keeping Passover is cited in 2 Chronicles 29-31 whereas all this is omitted in 2 Kings 18:1-9 (each passage leads up to the coming of Sennacherib of Assyria).

The narrator of Chronicles mentions singing repeatedly as an expression of praise and thanksgiving in contrast to little mention of singing in Samuel and Kings (cf. 1 Ch 16.9; 16.23; 16.33; 2 Ch 20.21; 20.22; 29.30; 1 Ch 25.7; 2Ch 23.18; 30.21; 35.25).

It is interesting per 2 Ch 5.12 that music ministry was the task of the priests for both singing and playing instruments. There is plausibility here for an argument in favor

of congregational singing versus choirs since the choirs were Levitical priests; now the whole congregation makes up a choir of believer-priests to sing praises to the Lord.

3A. The purpose of the book (of 1 & 2 Chronicles)

The genealogies (1 Ch 1-9) bring us from Adam to the restoration community. They tie both Israel and Judah into this history and into the promise of Genesis 1. God's purpose of bringing his image through history to ultimate rest is being accomplished graciously (despite sin and judgment).

The purpose of the book is to show returned exiles the "true glory of their nation as the theocracy and to show them the rights and importance of the Davidic dynasty" (Young, 401). It is to show "the continuity of the restoration community with Israel of old" to show "Israel's continuity and her election as God's people" (IOT 173). The true David is coming and He will rule all Israel as one shepherd with one flock (1 Ch 11.2b-3; Ezek 37.24).

The purpose of the book is to assure the beleaguered resettlers that God is king ruling in the affairs of history. Battle victories are the direct work of God with a suppression of means (2 Ch 13.15-18; 17.10; 20.22-25).

These things encourage faith and faithfulness (though the exile was harsh and the resettlement is difficult). Note how the matter of consequences surfaces in the record of the death of Saul (1 Ch 10.13f versus the silence on these things in 1 Sam 31.8f).

In summary, per Chronicles, God's rule comes to expression in direct actions as a divine warrior, in pursuing individual retribution (not simply based on the father's sins), in giving authoritative Scripture (the chronicler cites earlier OT books as divine authority, cf. La Sor, 646), and in calling for, guiding, and receiving worship.

4A. Theological Implications

1) The letter of the law is important (cf. 2 Ch 6:16; while law is not cited in 1 Ki 8:25). Notably, 2 Corinthians 3:6 and 4:2 show that the letter of the law stands in contrast with the Spirit versus merely letter).

2) The remnant principle emerges again (2 Ch. 30:1, 6-12)

Note that there is a remnant from each of the northern tribes (the lost ten tribes due to the Assyrian conquest). Their identity (as Israel, children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-Israel) was perpetuated in Judah (II Chron. 31:6, after the fall of Samaria during the days of Hezekiah). "Israel" again became a term for the 12 (2 Ch. 30:6; Ezra 9:1; 10:5; Neh. 1:2). So on into the new testament, Acts 26:7. Now Jewish Christians dispersed abroad are a remnant of the 12 tribes (James 1:1), but the book of James can hardly be restricted to Jewish Christians. The nature of the book suggests that James does what Peter and Paul do: he refers to the new Israel of Jews and Gentiles representatively by reference to Jewish Christians. Jewish Christians represent all Christians in terms of their exile (James 1.1) that made them "not my people" and one with the Gentiles. Thus, Peter refers to the "elect exiles of the dispersion" as "once not a people, but now you are the people of God" (1 Pet 2.9-11; cf. Rom 9.24-26). Ultimately the restoration flows into the new heaven and new earth. The restored land is the new earth (Ezek. 37:16-28; Rev. 21:3,12), and the temple that abides forever (Ezek 37.26) is the Lord Himself (Rev 21.22).

Famous text: 2 Ch 7.14

Summary text: 2 Ch 36:15-23