

2 CHRONICLES (Teacher's Edition)

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AUTHOR-

As a brief review from our discussion of 1 Chronicles, 1 & 2 Chronicles were originally **one book**. Some believe Ezra & Nehemiah were also one book, not just with each other, but also along with the Book of Chronicles. The author is unknown, but most scholars believe that there was **one author** for all four books and the most likely writer was **Ezra**. Since the authorship of Ezra is not definitive, the title "The Chronicler" is commonly used of the author. See study on 1 Chronicles for a more thorough discussion.

WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN-

Although the exact time of the writing cannot be established, because of internal evidence in the Book of Chronicles as a whole, we know it was written near the end of the **fifth century** B.C. and probably somewhere between **425-400** B.C. See a more thorough discussion in our study of 1 Chronicles.

ABOUT THE BOOK-

The book of 2 Chronicles covers the period of time beginning in the reign of **King Solomon** (around 971 B.C.) to the end of the Exile (around 538 B.C.)

The book itself was written in the background of time after the exile during the time of the reign of the Persian Empire. 2 Chronicles was written from a priestly perspective as **theology in the form of historical narrative**. Its purpose was to provide encouragement and exhortation to those who were coming out of exile and back to Jerusalem. This is in contrast to the Book of Kings that was written from a prophetic viewpoint to those in exile.

The emphasis in 2 Chronicles on the people's **spiritual heritage** in the temple, David, Solomon, and the priesthood was meant to refresh them to the realization that their God was a **promise-making, promise-keeping** God, who, though in righteous anger had to judge them because of their willful, stubborn disobedience, was also good to His promise that He would forgive and bless them once again, and bring them back to the Promised Land. Nowhere is this more evident than in **2 Chronicles 7**, recording things not detailed in the Book of Kings (compare 2 Chronicles 7:11-22 with 1 Kings 9:1-9).

Specifically as to its content, the book of 2 Chronicles begins by accenting the construction of the temple and the wealth and wisdom of Solomon. But the narrative **ends abruptly** and makes **no mention** of Solomon's **failure** as is recorded in 1 Kings 11. The rest of the book concentrates almost exclusively on the kingdom of Judah, with scant reference to the northern kingdom of Israel. Interestingly, almost all references to the kings of the south are mostly positive. This probably indicates that the author was interested in tracing the line of David and showing Judah as the "faithful" nation to the Covenant. This fact certainly would have been an encouragement to exiles returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. They probably felt as if they were continuing the forms and traditions that set them apart as the true worshippers of God and gave them a sense of identity as His Covenant People.

As mentioned in our study of 1 Chronicles, this book accentuates the sovereign deliverance of God and tells the story of a God who is true to His Word and the promises He makes to His people. It exhorts us to learn from the mistakes of God's people from the past and **not repeat them!**

See the study on 1 Chronicles for a more in-depth discussion.

A BASIC ASSESSMENT OF 2 CHRONICLES (BASIC THEMES)-

If you noticed, the book has an interesting set of beginnings and endings. It begins with the construction of the temple and ends **with its destruction**. It begins with the appearance of **God's glory** (7:1,2)

and, ultimately because of the destruction of the temple, you can say it ends **with its withdrawal**. The reason this is important to notice is because of the lessons we can learn in this wonderful book of the causes that both bring and remove God's glory.

And remember: God's purpose in Christ is to **display His glory** in and through **the church** (Ephesians 3:21). [*We should define what we mean by the term "glory". In this particular case (there are various usages of the term Biblically), we simply mean **God's moral beauty and perfection as a visible presence**. While God's glory is not necessarily a substance (although one term used Biblically is "**kabod**" and literally means "weightiness"), God does reveal His perfection to man at times in a visible or tangibly felt way. Such a display of the presence of God can be seen as fire or dazzling light or as an act of power. Some examples from the Old Testament are the pillar of cloud and fire (Ex 13:21), the Lord's deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea (Ex 14), and especially His glory in the tabernacle (Lev 9:23-24) and temple (1 Kings 8:11). His presence is also felt as a weightiness, one I describe as either an "**electric**" presence or a heaviness not unlike **the lead apron dentists use while X-raying patients**.]*

Here are some of the lessons we learn:

Solomon's early leadership invites God's glory:

- **He sought wisdom and knowledge in order to faithfully and effectively serve His people- 1:7-12**
- He strives to build for the name of the Lord, indicating a motivation to glorify the Lord and not please people- 2:1
- **He discerns between what is common and what is holy and commits to keeping the two separate- 8:11**
- He obediently worship God God's way, not his own- 8:12-16
- He was not ashamed to pray in front of others, humbly, and acknowledge both God's awesomeness AND willingness to answer prayer- 6:12-21
- **He understood that God's glory abided only when God's people were faithful- 6:22-42**

If we would learn from the above, we too would see and abide in God's glory! Unfortunately, many times we do as Judah did with the result of the loss of that glory. The record of their gradual slide away from God (as shown in the accounts of various kings) teaches lessons on how to lose that glory presence:

- Ahaziah followed evil council from those who had the world's wisdom when he could have sought the Lord- 22:1-4
- **Joash forgot that earlier blessings had come because of obedience and not from his own goodness and ingenuity, and he lost his sensitivity to conviction and resisted God's Word- 24: 15-22**

- Uzziah allowed spiritual pride to destroy him by trying to assume roles he was not called by God to do- 26:16-23
- Manasseh replaced spiritual leadership with carnal manipulation, leading to corrupt, demonic confusion- 33:1-9
- Many of the kings simply disregarded the Word of God until "there was no remedy"- 36:16

In summation, one great lesson of this great book is that God will not let His glory abide on anything or anyone who compromises the founding principles of His rule- see Isaiah 42:8.

A POSSIBLE KEY WORD-

We have already understood from our previous study the idea of the "priestly view". This could be a great key phrase for this book. However, I chose as my key word: **Judah**. The reason I did this is that the whole book's focus is this **tribe** in a historical, divine editorial of the Davidic dynasty.

KEY VERSE(S) AND CHAPTER(S)-

I thought I would have only one, but I could not eliminate either of the two verses I chose as my key verses. They are: **2 Chronicles 7:14 & 16:9**. These speak to the essence of the promise of God: if you are committed to God, **He is with you**, if you disobey, you will be **punished**. But if, when punished, you turn back to God with prayer, humility and repentance, He **will forgive and restore**.

While I could have chosen one of the chapters that my key verses came from as key chapter, I chose something else that is related to my second key verse. My key chapter (and I truly believe there are a number of them that could be chosen) is: **2 Chronicles 34**. The reason for this is because in **Josiah** we see the **last great chance for Judah**, as he leads **a tremendous revival** because his heart was completely God's. In fact you read something incredible in the chapter 35 regarding the revival- **the Passover had not been observed like Josiah** had the people do in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; and none of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah!

JESUS REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- ✓ Jesus is clearly seen in the temple- in fact He said the temple needed to be destroyed (because of sin) and rebuilt- and He was referring to Himself!
- ✓ **We see Jesus pictured in the Ark (the mercy seat as His throne) and in the Most Holy Place (His throne room)**
- ✓ We see Jesus in the burnt offering for sin as He is our sacrifice

- ✓ Solomon, in his early days, is a type of Jesus in that he was a king and man of peace, and his wisdom and answers are reminiscent of Jesus' in the gospels
- ✓ The offices of priest, prophet and king were all fulfilled in Jesus
- ✓ The Passover speaks to Jesus, our Passover lamb
- ✓ The book of the law is pointing to Jesus who is the fulfillment of the law- in fact, it is truly the law of Christ, as is mentioned in the New Testament

THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- ✓ The cloud of glory in the temple was the Holy Spirit
- ✓ Three clear references to the Holy Spirit are mentioned in 15:1, 24:20, and 20:14. They related to the giving of prophetic utterance through Azariah, Zechariah, and Jehaziel. All prophetic ministry is the working of the Spirit
- ✓ The symbols of rain found in 6 & 7 are symbols of the Holy Spirit
- ✓ The fire that came down and consumed the sacrifice in response to prayer is the Spirit- see 7:1,2
- ✓ Jehoshaphat's victory in battle through praise was the working of the Spirit
- ✓ God speaking to Solomon was through the Spirit

SOME TRUTHS AND APPLICATIONS-

2 Chron. 12:14; 15:12-15

Set your face and heart to follow God once and for all! Understand that you will fall to sin if you don't burn the bridge to the world and worldliness. Put to death friendships and habits that tempt you. Become loud and passionate in your wholehearted devotion to Jesus!

2 Chron. 13:18

Choose not to worry, but rather rely on God's wisdom, strength and ability when you are confronted with spiritual and physical opposition and trial. Your prayer closet is the surest and quickest way to victory.

2 Chron. 16

Beware of backsliding and guard your heart. Stay near people who are on the cutting edge and are striving to go after God. We have a tendency to walk away from our first love and passionate faith and lose trust in God. Rebuke this tendency and be open to correction when someone points out you are losing your fire. Fast and pray to get your trust and fire back!

2 Chron. 24:15-19; 26:3-5

Never underestimate the importance of Godly old people in your life. Seek them out, ask them their advice, recruit their prayers and let them teach you.

2 Chron. 25:7-10

Never let finances determine your obedience. Confess and repent of any poor stewardship. Obey God and know that He will supply all your needs according to His riches.

2 Chron. 26:16-21

Guard against spiritual pride! Be willing to confront those that are acting outside of their giftedness and spiritual area of responsibility. Understand that there are great consequences for those who get puffed up spiritually because they have been used in the past. Heed Jesus' words on Luke 17:10!

2 Chron. 33:10-20

Never give up on a soul! Only God knows when someone is too far gone to be saved! Remember: God's judgments are designed to ultimately lead you to repentance.

2 Chron. 36: 11-16

There is point when God says, "Enough". But it only comes after many warnings. There is no judgment that is decreed that is unjust or without prior foreknowledge and disobedience on the part of the one who is being judged. When the final moment comes, there is no one and nothing that can save from God's wrath. Fear Him, the One who has authority to throw body and soul into Hell- fear Him alone!