

1 CHRONICLES

1 CHRONICLES 1-9 — GENEALOGIES AND PEDIGREES

INTRODUCTION

With this begins the study of those historical books of the Old Testament written shortly after the return from the Babylonian captivity, the remainder of the series including 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

"Chronicles" means "diaries" or "journal," and the books recapitulate sacred history from the time of Adam, in which the earlier books of the Old Testament are drawn upon and occasionally supplemented. The Holy Spirit, who is the real Author, has a right to do this when the occasion calls for it.

The closest relation exists between the Chronicles and Kings. The last-named were written, it is thought, by Jeremiah, and the first-named by a priest or Levite. Kings must have been compiled shortly after the people went into exile, Chronicles after their return. Kings deal more with the inner spiritual condition of things, Chronicles with the external modes of worship.

There are differences in the two records here and there. Not only are genealogies differently grouped, but names and places are changed, speeches of persons are presented from dissimilar aspects, religious festivals have more than one description given them, and things of that kind; but there is no contradiction not explainable by the changes incident to time, the later writer's point of view, the object in mind, negligent transcribing and the like.

Why Chronicles were written is difficult to say, but there must have been some good reason for going over the ground again, "some new aspect of the history to signalize, and some new lesson to convey to the people of

God on returning from the captivity." What these things may be must appear as we proceed.

SUBDIVISIONS

The first nine chapters contain the genealogies of the patriarchs, the twelve tribes, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem till the beginning of the kingdom, the purpose being to connect David, the great forerunner of the Messiah, as well as the priests and Levites of his time with the antediluvian patriarchs. They have been subdivided as follows:

The Patriarchs from Adam to Jacob and Esau, with the descendants of the latter till the era of the Edomite Kings (chap. 1). At first these names may not seem of importance to us, but we remember that the Holy Spirit caused them to be written and that is enough. And when we know how to awaken them from their sleep, they do not remain so dead as they at first appear, but revive the most important traditions of the ancient nations and families, like the petrifications and mountain strata of the earth, which rightly questioned, tell the history of long vanished ages.

The Sons of Jacob, or the Generations of Judah till David, with David's Posterity till Elioenai and His Seven Sons (2:1-4:23). In this we discover a biographic gem in the story of Jabez and his prayer (4:9-10) of whom we are told nothing further. Verse 10 has homiletic value in the three things for which Jabez prayed and which he received — prosperity, power, and protection.

Another homiletic suggestion is in the words, "There they dwelt with the king for his work" (v. 23). These potters "that dwelt among plants and hedges," may have been artistic craftsmen adjacent to the royal gardens at Jerusalem, not merely in the reign of one king but all of them. Remains of these potteries have been found in recent times.

The Descendants of Simeon and the Tribes East of the Jordan till the Assyrian Captivity (4:24-5:26). This division is interesting, as it records two conquests or migrations of the Simeonites (4:38-43), and corroborates what we learned earlier about the small size of this tribe (compare 5:27 with ~~GEN~~ Numbers 1-4 and ~~GEN~~ Joshua 19:1-9). In the same way compare the reference to Reuben, Joseph and Judah, chapter 5:1-2, with the earlier account in Genesis 49. Nor should we permit such an inspired comment as chapter 5:20 to escape us.

The Levites and Their Locations (6:1-81). This division may be broken up, thus: The sons of Levi (vv. 1-3); the priests down to the captivity (vv. 4-15); the families of Gershom, Merari and Kohath (vv. 16-48); the office of Aaron and his line unto Ahimaaz (vv. 49-53); the cities of the priests and the Levites (vv. 54-81).

The Remaining Tribes (chaps. 7-8). These tribes include Issachar (7:1-5); Benjamin (vv. 6-12) Naphtali (v. 13); Manasseh (vv. 14-19); Ephraim (vv. 20-29); Asher (vv. 30-40); the chief men of Benjamin (8:1-32); the house of Saul (vv. 33-40). Dan and Zebulun are omitted, but why, no one knows. In the case of Dan, perhaps, it is judicial punishment because of their early and almost total fall into idolatry. They are omitted again in the list of ~~680~~ Revelation 8. Zebulun's omission is more difficult to explain. It was a small tribe, especially just before and after the exile, but it was the tribe whose territory included Nazareth where Jesus dwelt.

The Inhabitants of Jerusalem Till the Times of the Kings (chap. 9).

QUESTIONS

1. Name the post-exilic historical books.
2. Give the scope and general contents of the books of Chronicles.
3. Contrast Kings and Chronicles as to their history and character.
4. What are some of the points of difference between Kings and Chronicles, and how are they explained?
5. Give the contents of I Chronicles 1-9 in outline.
6. What can you recall of the history of Jabez?
7. Which two tribes are altogether omitted from these genealogies?

1 CHRONICLES 10-29 — DAVID'S REIGN

THE DOWNFALL OF SAUL (CHAP. 10)

In reading this chapter with whose general contents we became familiar in ~~680~~ 1 Samuel 31, it is important to note the inspired comment at its close (vv. 13-14).

DAVID'S HEROES (CHAPS. 11-12)

In the history of David in this book, the writer dwells chiefly on its prosperous side, passing over the rest as lightly as possible. His anointing at Hebron (vv. 1-3) reveals nothing of what we learned earlier of the rival kingdom of the house of Saul, and the seven years before his exaltation over all Israel. Again, in the list of warriors (11:10-47), there is an omission of Joab's treachery and barbarous conduct in the cases of Abner, Uriah and Absalom.

Chapter 12 contains a supplemental list of braves who attached themselves to David earlier, and during the days of Saul, and of whom we have no record until now.

DAVID'S VICTORIES AND FESTIVALS (CHAPS. 13-16)

These begin with the bringing up of the ark as far as the house of Obed-edom (chap. 13). Then follows the account of battles with the Philistines (chap. 14), which occupies a different position from that in ~~1~~2 Samuel 5 (the reason why can only be conjectured). After this the ark is brought up to Jerusalem (chaps. 15-16), the record being more detailed than in Samuel.

Note, for example, the preparation and act of transfer. A tent is erected (15:1), possibly in the vicinity of the palace, after the model of the old tabernacle. Then a consultation is held (v. 2), the representative men assemble (v. 3), the bearers are chosen (vv. 12-15), the singers appointed (vv. 16-24). Then the act itself, with its rejoicings, sacrifices and distribution of gifts (15:25-16:3). Then the initial service and the psalm of thanksgiving (vv. 4-36).

Another way to analyze the eight strophes of this psalm:

- (1) summons to praise (vv. 8-11);
- (2) to think on the wonders and judgments of the Lord (vv. 12-14);
- (3) to think of the covenant made with the fathers (vv. 15-18);
- (4) the reasons to remember this covenant (vv. 19-22);
- (5) affirmation that all the world shall concur in the greatness and glory of God (vv. 23-27);

- (6) all nations shall worship Him (vv. 28-30);
- (7) the inanimate creation will exult before Him (vv. 31-33); and
- (8) closes with a repeated summons to praise and prayer (vv. 54-36).

DAVID AND THE TEMPLE (CHAPS. 17-22)

Except as to its location the record in chapter 17 is in substance the same as in ~~107~~2 Samuel 7. The "group of war reports" (chaps 18-20) runs parallel to four sections in 2 Samuel which in that case are separated from one another by other matters. The story of the plague following the census (chap. 21), contains some deviations from that in Samuel, as for example, its position in the record, the fact that the offense was instigated by Satan, that Benjamin and Levi were not numbered, and that the threshing-floor was thereafter the constant place of sacrifice by David. These things are additions and not contradictions. As to the last named the words in verse 28, "At that time.., he sacrificed there," have been rendered by Luther and others, "was wont to offer there," meaning that he did it repeatedly, with frequency. In an earlier lesson it was stated that this threshing-floor subsequently became the site of Solomon's temple.

After the episode represented by these chapters the author returns to the subject of the temple (chap. 22), speaking of David's preparation of the materials (vv. 1-5), his charge to Solomon (vv. 6-16), and finally his appeal to the princes to assist (vv. 17-19).

THE TEMPLE AND MILITARY OFFICERS (CHAPS. 23-27)

The opening comment of this section gives the reason for what follows. David was old and felt the need of putting things in readiness for his son (v. 1). There are two things that concern him chiefly, the worship of God and the strengthening of the kingdom, and it is significant that the worship of God receives attention first.

The chapters arrange themselves thus: Chapter 23 deals with the Levites, their number and classification for work; chapter 24 does the same for the priests, except that the closing verses refer again to the Levites; chapter 25 speaks of the singers; chapter 26 of the porters, treasurers and other business officers; and chapter 27 of the army, including its divisions and commanders.

DAVID'S LAST DIRECTIONS AND DEATH (CHAPS. 28-29)

The last directions of David concern the building of the temple where all the princes, the captains, the courtiers and the heroes are addressed (vv. 1-2), and Solomon in their presence is invested with power and authority as his successor (vv. 5-21).

Note the words in verse 12. "And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit." We use a capital S believing the Holy Spirit to be intended, and that the words should be read in the light of verse 19, "All this, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern." Are we not to understand, difficult as the words may be, that as God revealed the original of the temple to Moses in the wilderness when He revealed the tabernacle, so now also He controlled and directed David when the time came for the actual erection of the temple?

Do not pass chapter 29 carelessly. Note David's example of giving (vv. 3-5), and the lever it affords to make an appeal to others. See the working of the Spirit of God among the people in the gladness of it all (v. 9), a fact David recognizes and for which he praises God, verse 10 and the following.

When it says "they made Solomon king the second time" (v. 22), it is in contrast with 23:1. In that case the first proclamation was made, but now the actual anointing took place. (Compare ^{<10132>}1 Kings 1:32 and the following verses.)

QUESTIONS

1. What book gives the fuller history of Saul?
2. How would you compare this history of David's reign in 1 Chronicles with that in the earlier books?
3. What explains the successful transfer of the ark in this instance, as compared with the earlier attempt?
4. Have you read the psalm contained in this lesson, and noted its analysis?
5. What evidence of the personality of Satan does this lesson contain?
6. How does it show David's loyalty to God?
7. What may explain David's particularity as to the details of the temple?