

BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES

**The Books
Of
Chronicles**

By

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FIRST AND SECOND CHRONICLES

As the Hebrews prepared to leave Mount Sinai and move toward the conquest of Palestine, at Jehovah's command a census was taken. "They declared their pedigrees after their families" (Numbers 1:18). The term "pedigree" literally means "a crane's foot". The leg of the crane terminates in three distinct branches or toes. The crane's foot is simply the extension of the bird's leg. In that regard it is similar to the family tree and thus the word "pedigree" is used to refer to a register of a line of ancestors. Jehovah's order at Sinai meant a careful counting of the entire assembly along with a detailed registration of ancestors. From the time that God had separated the Hebrews as His peculiar people they were conscious of their spiritual destiny. Names of fathers and sons became very important. Mothers and daughters were important too, but the line of descent through the male was especially emphasized. As the godly line of descent came to be clearly distinguished, Jehovah made certain that there was a succession of Chroniclers and historians who would record and trace the details of the revelation. So the Books of Chronicles begin with Adam and conclude with Cyrus' decree liberating the captive Hebrews. These records survey the whole sweep of Jehovah's self-revelation up to the time of the return from Babylonian captivity. Jerome said that the Books of Chronicles "are an epitome of the Old Testament. They are of such high moment and importance, that he who supposes himself to be acquainted with the sacred writings, and does not know the Books of Chronicles, only deceives himself."¹

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, New York, Carlton and Porter, n.d., p. 574.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

The Books of Chronicles provide a remarkable summary of the entire Old Testament record. Our English Bible (Old Testament) begins with Genesis and concludes with Malachi. The Hebrew Bible begins with Genesis and concludes with the Books of Chronicles. Our Lord knew this same order for the books or canon of the Old Testament. In Matthew 23:35 Jesus reminded the Pharisees of the fact that religious leaders had killed the prophets from the time of Abel (Genesis 4:8) until the murder of Zachariah (II Chronicles 24:21). The entire Old Testament was included in this wonderful reference. Just as the Book of Revelation brings to fulfillment the purposes of God for all people everywhere, so the Chronicles bring the student of Hebrew history to that vantage point from which he can look for the promised Saviour. Harrison, in his Introduction to the Old Testament says, "the two books of Chronicles comprise a history of the Hebrew people from Adam to the time of Cyrus, paralleling the writings from Genesis to Kings, with Ezra and Nehemiah as a conclusion."¹

The title or name of a Bible book is an important key to the content of that particular record. "In the Hebrew Bible the two books of Chronicles form a single work and bear the title "the words of the days" (divere hayyamin). As is seen from I Chr. 27:24, the term is used in the sense of annals. The LXX divided the book into two and called them Paraleipomena, i.e., things omitted or passed over."² The original Hebrew title suggests that these were regarded as historical records. The Greek title used in the LXX would tend to regard these records as supplementary to other Old Testament accounts. The English title "Chronicles", dates from about the time of Jerome (c. 400 A.D.)³ The name "Chronicles", signifies an historical account of events in the order of time.

¹Harrison, Ronald K., *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1969, p. 1152.

²Young, Edward J., *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1949, p. 381.

³Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, Vol. 13, New Ed., Funk and Wagnalls Co., London, n.d., p ii.

FIRST CHRONICLES

The authorship and date of each of the books of the Bible are matters of primary concern to the Bible student. When one has examined the evidence and has made up his mind with regard to the complete inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God and when he is certain that the books in the Bible are the only authentic records of God's revelation, a base is established for the examination of the authorship and date of each Bible book. The position held and maintained by this writer is that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God and that the thirty nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty seven books of the New Testament, and these books only, comprise the inspired written record of God's will for man.

There is ample evidence supporting the inclusion of the books of Chronicles in the canon of the Old Testament. The content of these books is credible and well attested in cross references to many other parts of the Old Testament. Archer, in his book, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, presents a good summary with regard to the authorship and date of these books.

Like the other historical books, Chronicles does not specify the name of its author. Internal evidence points to a period between 450 and 425 B.C. as its time of composition. It is quite possible that the Talmudic tradition (Baba Bathra 15a) is correct in assigning the authorship to Ezra. As the chief architect of the spiritual and moral revival of the Second Commonwealth he would have had every incentive to produce a historical survey of this sort. As a Levite from the priestly line his viewpoint would have been in perfect agreement with that of the author of this work and he would be very apt to lay the stress just where the Chronicler has.⁴

The conservative viewpoint is that the books of Chronicles were written by the priestly scribe, Ezra about 450-425 B.C.⁵ James Orr in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says that

⁴Archer, Gleason G., Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p.

⁵Young, Edward J., *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 383, 384.

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the books of Chronicles "were completed within the lifetime of Nehemiah, not later or not much later than 400 B. C.⁶ He also holds that since the books of Chronicles conclude the Hebrew Scriptures, their very position would indicate that they are the latest Old Testament writings.

The books of Chronicles contain lists of genealogies in the first seven chapters of I Chronicles which go back to the very beginning and proceed through the times of the Babylonian captivity. There is a brief section in I Chronicles 9:1-34 which describes the re-establishment of ancient inheritances after the return from the Captivity. The primary content from I Chronicles 9:35 to the conclusion of II Chronicles has to do with the history of the kingdom of Judah to the time of the Captivity and the restoration. There is a considerable body of material recorded only in the Books of Chronicles. The same is true with regard to the Books of Samuel and Kings. There are many parallel accounts in the books of Chronicles and Kings.

The materials in the books of Chronicles were not designed merely to supplement the other historical records. The author concerns himself with the great tribe of Judah. It is estimated that five-sixths of the entire work is devoted exclusively to the history of Judah. Much attention is given to the Temple, her priests and services. Looking to the re-establishment of God's people after the Captivity and return, the books of Chronicles formed an authoritative reference with regard to the Temple, territorial assignments, and civil service. These books formed "the charter of the reconstruction of a shattered kingdom on its proper historical basis."⁷

⁶Orr, James, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, The Howard Severance Co., 1915, p. 633.

⁷Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 13, p. xiii.

A GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

(As presented by Merrill F. Unger in
Introductory Guide to the Old Testament)¹

Part I.	Genealogies from Adam to David	I Chr. 1:1-9:44
	a. From Adam to Jacob	1:1-2:2
	b. Jacob's generation	2:3-9:44
Part II.	History of King David	10:1-29:30
	a. The Death of Saul	10:1-14
	b. Capture of Zion and David's Heroes	11:1-12:40
	c. David's prosperous reign	13:1-22:1
	d. David's accomplishments in behalf of ritualistic worship	22:2-29:30
Part III.	History of King Solomon	II Chronicles 1:1-9:31
	a. Solomon's wealth and wisdom	1:1-17
	b. His building and dedication of the Temple	2:1-7:22
	c. His various activities and death	8:1-9:31
Part IV.	History of the Kings of Judah	10:1-36:23
	a. From Rehoboam to Zedekiah	10:1-36:21
	b. The edict of Cyrus	36:22,23

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

SCHEDULE OF LESSONS

LESSON ONE I Chronicles, chapter 1-3, The Descendants of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Esau, Jacob, Judah, and David.

LESSON TWO I Chronicles, chapter 4-6, The Descendants of Judah, Simeon, Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, and Levi.

LESSON THREE I Chronicles, chapters 7 and 8, The Descendants of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher.

LESSON FOUR I Chronicles, chapters 9 and 10, Return from Babylon, Tribal Settlements, The Overthrow of Saul's House.

¹Unger, Merrill F., *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Zondervan Publishing House, 1951, p. 407.

SCHEDULE OF LESSONS

LESSON FIVE I Chronicles, chapters 11 and 12, The Life and Times of David and His Warriors.

LESSON SIX I Chronicles, chapters 13 and 14, David and the Ark of the Covenant. David's Family. War with Philistia.

LESSON SEVEN I Chronicles, chapters 15 and 16, The Ark of the Covenant Brought to Jerusalem. David's Song of Thanksgiving. The Ministers and Worship.

LESSON EIGHT I Chronicles, chapters 17 and 18, David and the Temple. Israel Goes to War.

LESSON NINE I Chronicles, chapters 19 and 20, Israel's Conflict With Ammon. The Conquest of the Philistines.

LESSON TEN I Chronicles, chapters 21 and 22, A Military Census and a Plague.

LESSON ELEVEN I Chronicles, chapters 23 and 24, David's organization of the Levites.

LESSON TWELVE I Chronicles, chapters 25 and 26, The Appointment of Musicians, Doorkeepers and Stewards of the Temple Treasury.

LESSON THIRTEEN I Chronicles, chapters 27-29, David's Military Organization, His Counselors, His Charge to Solomon, His Prayer for the Temple, His Death.

LESSON FOURTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 1-4, Solomon's Kingdom. The Temple and its Furnishings.

LESSON FIFTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 5-8, The Ark and The Temple. Solomon's Prayer of Dedication. A Great Festival. Solomon as King.

LESSON SIXTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 9-11, A Queen comes to Jerusalem. Rehoboam and the Kingdom.

LESSON SEVENTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 12-14, Egypt Invades Israel. Jeroboam and the Northern Kingdom. Asa and the Ethiopians.

LESSON EIGHTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 15-17, Asa, the Reformer. Hanani, Man of God. Life and Times of Jehoshaphat.

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LESSON NINETEEN II Chronicles, chapters 18-20, Jehoshaphat and Ahab. War with Moab and Ammon.

LESSON TWENTY II Chronicles, chapters 21-23, The Life and Times of Jehoram. The Reign of Ahaziah. Athaliah's Death. The Coronation of Joash.

LESSON TWENTY-ONE II Chronicles, chapters 24-26, The Reign of Joash, Amaziah's Rise and Fall. Uzziah's Life and Times.

LESSON TWENTY-TWO II Chronicles, chapters 27-29, The Reign of Jotham. Ahaz and His Allies. Hezekiah, the Religious Reformer.

LESSON TWENTY-THREE II Chronicles, chapters 30-33, Hezekiah and the Passover. Reorganization of the Temple Procedures. Assyrian Invasion. The Reign of Manasseh and Amon.

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR II Chronicles, chapters 34-36, Josiah's Reformation. The Last Days of the Southern Kingdom. Babylonian Captivity. The Decree of Cyrus.

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