

Overview and Outline of 2 Chronicles (detailed)

May our outline of 2 Chronicles assist you as you seek God in the pages of Scripture.

1 and 2 Chronicles form a single book in the Hebrew Scriptures and is the last book in the third section of the Hebrew Scriptures called “the Writings,” effectively closing the canon of the Old Testament. Our Scriptures divide this single book into two books, with the first chronicling the life of David and the second chronicling the life of David’s kingly line until the end of the kingdom. After Chronicles, the next king in David’s line to appear is our Lord Jesus Christ.

The chronicler is most likely Ezra, the priest (compare 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-3). Even though the chronicler records the same history as the authors of the Samuel/Kings books, the perspective is quite different. Samuel/Kings are written from the perspective of the prophets and appears to be recorded by those prophets who were contemporaries of the kings (Nathan, Gad, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah). In them, you have a major portion of their stories devoted to the interaction of the prophets and the kings (Samuel/Saul and David; Nathan/David; Ahijah/Jeroboam; the prophet from Bethel/Jeroboam; Jehu the son of Hanani/Baasha; Elijah/Ahab; the unnamed prophet/Ahab; Micaiah/Ahab; Elijah/Ahaziah; Elisha/Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, Jehu, and Joash; Jonah/Amaziah; and Isaiah/Hezekiah). In contrast, though the list is as long, the text devoted to these interactions is considerably shorter in Chronicles, with only one short mention of Elijah (2 Chronicles 21:12-15) and surprisingly not a single mention of Elisha.

Chronicles are written from the perspective of the priests, devoting a great deal of space to the temple and the worship of God (see 1 Chronicles 6; 9:10-34; 13, 15-16; 22-26; 28-29; 2 Chronicles 2-7; 24:1-14; 29-31; 34:8-35:19). Because this is an account of David’s line of kings and the temple worship, the kings of Israel are mentioned only when they interact significantly with the kings of Judah. As would be expected for a priests’ recounting (see Hebrews 5:11-3), the chronicler tends to hide over sins the prophets expose and show repentance the prophets ignore. For instance, there is no account of Bathsheba, the census by David is seen as Satan’s doings, the falling away of Solomon is not mentioned, and we are told only here of Rehoboam’s and Manasseh’s repentance. Nevertheless, both the Samuel/Kings and the Chronicles leave us little doubt as to which kings walked with God and which did not.

Perhaps, the best framework to read Chronicles is as a divine retrospective on the kings of Judah, an historical explanation for the ups and downs of Judah. From the first to the last, we have these little heavenly editorial comments on the earthly reign of David’s descendants (2 Chronicles 1:1; 10:15; 11:17; 12:12, 14; 13:18; 15:15, 17; 16:12; 17:3-6, 10; 20:30; 21:7; 24:18-19, 22, 24; 25:20; 26:5; 16; 27:6; 28:19, 22-23; 31:20-21; 32:31). Perhaps most sobering are the words of the last of these editorial comments found in 36:15-16:

¹⁵ And Yahweh, the God of their fathers, sent to them, by the hand of His messengers, rising early and sending so that He may have compassion upon His people and upon His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But this is the way they were: jesting at God’s messengers, despising His words, and mocking His prophets,

until the burning anger of Yahweh soared against His people, until there was no cure.

The lessons of 2 Chronicles are both sobering and encouraging.

- When we sin grievously, God is willing to listen to our prayers and forgive us. We see this with both Rehoboam and Manasseh; great examples of the compassion of God.
- No one is doomed because of their parents. From wicked king Ahaz comes good king Hezekiah. From wicked king Amon comes good king Josiah. Conversely, no one is saved by their parents. From good king Jotham comes wicked king Ahaz. From good king Hezekiah comes wicked king Manasseh. From good king Josiah comes wicked king Jeconiah.
- God responds to us. We often emphasize that God is the initiator and we are the responders. And this is true. But, as in any relationship, our relationship with God is a two-way street. The story of 2 Chronicles, as told from God's perspective, is the history of God responding to those who seek and to those who forsake Him. A key verse, but by no means a unique idea in the book, is 2 Chronicles 16:9.
- God takes delight in the prayers and praises of His people. The temple (the house of the LORD), trained musicians, the priests, the festivals, sacrifices, the services; these all are major focuses of God's retrospective. Perhaps no better place is this illustrated than with Jehoshaphat and the victory over Ammon, Moab, and Edom. It is not missed on some of us that the first victory God gave Israel in the promised land was at Jericho with the ark, the trumpets, the shout, and the collapse of the walls. Here in the last book of the Hebrew Scriptures, we have a good king who gains victory in a similar way, by singing and praising Yahweh (2 Chronicles 20:21-23).

Date:

Around 971 B.C. to 538 B.C. (From Solomon to the first return after the Babylonian captivity under Cyrus, the Mede)

Key Ideas:

The house of the LORD is mentioned over 100 times in the book. The book begins with its construction and closes with its destruction and a call to build another house for God. The name "Yahweh" is mentioned 387 times in the book and God is mentioned in nearly half of the verses of the book.

Divisions: The book of 2 Chronicles may be divided as follows:

I. Solomon 1-9 (971-931 B.C.)

- A. Commencement of Reign 1
- B. The Temple 2-7
- C. Other Achievements 8-9

II. Rehoboam to Ahaz 10-28 (931-715 B.C.)

- A. Rehoboam 10-12 (931-913)

- B. Abijah 13 (913-911)
- C. Asa 14-16 (911-870)
- D. Jehoshaphat 17-20 (873-848)
- E. Jehoram 21 (853-841)
- F. Ahaziah & Athaliah 22-23 (841-835)
- G. Joash 23-24 (835-796)
- H. Amaziah 25 (796-767)
- I. Uzziah 26 (791-739)
- J. Jotham 27 (750-731)
- K. Ahaz 28 (743-715)

III. Hezekiah to Judah's End 29-36 (715-538 B.C.)

- A. Hezekiah 29-32 (715-686)
- B. Manasseh & Amon 33 (697-640)
- C. Josiah 34-35 (640-609)
- D. Judah's End 36 (609-538)