

2 Chronicles

Original Historical Setting

Author: Unknown (Traditionally Ezra)

Written: Perhaps around 425 B.C.

Audience: Probably Israelites living in Jerusalem who have returned after being exiled.

Occasion: With 1 Chronicles, to answer important questions for Israelites who had returned after years of exile in Babylon as to their position and purpose in God's plan.

Timeline:

- 970 BC – Solomon begins reign as king
- 960 BC – Solomon finishes building the Temple
- 722 BC – Northern nation (Israel) destroyed by Assyria
- 586 BC – Southern nation (Judah) captured by Babylonia
- 550 BC – Cyrus begins rule in Media and Persia

World Events that occur simultaneously

- ~800 BC – Homer writes the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*
- ~750 BC – False teeth invented in Italy
- ~565 BC – Buddha is born
- 551 BC – Confucius is born

Genre/Literary style

A very selective account written in Hebrew

Features and Structure

- The author notes the kings who initiated repairs to the temple and thus initiated religious reform and renewal.
- The Chronicler made use of at least 14 named historical sources (i.e. "The Books of the Kings of Judah") revealing that a) the author was well informed and b) that he was using well-known documents showing the authentic nature of his work.

- 2 Chronicles can be divided into **2 sections:**
Solomon's reign (1-9) Kingdom of Judah (10-36)

Key text(s)

7:14 – My people who are called by My name

16:9 – The LORD's eyes run to and fro for someone whom He can use to show Himself strong

What to look for

- Notice that even though 2 Chronicles describes the same time period as 1&2 Kings, its approach is to concentrate on the kings of Judah. It is a priestly perspective of the reigns of the kings of Judah. The Chronicler was concerned mainly with the state of the temple and whether the Davidic king was following the LORD.
- The author seems to alternate between relatively brief accounts of evil kings and longer accounts of good kings.
- 1&2 Kings (the parallel books to Chronicles) mentions the Levites (priests) one time, whereas 2 Chronicles mentions them sixty-five times.

Interesting facts

- The cedar wood that Solomon imported from Lebanon and used in constructing the temple was valued by ancient builders above all other trees. Its warm red wood was slow to decay, free of knots, and filled with a fragrance that pleases humans but repelled insects. Cedar trees can live 3,000 years. But because of the widespread demand for Lebanon's cedar, only remnants of the once great forest remain.
- In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles (both 1&2 combined) was the last book. Therefore, just as modern Christians use the phrase "Genesis to Revelation" to mean the entire canon, Christians living in the 1st century thought in terms of "Genesis to Chronicles."

Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 7:14