

Read the Bible in a Year

Week 28 – December 12th, 2021

Read on Your Own this Week:

Psalms 82-84
Proverbs 21-24

Readings in Class:

1 Chronicles 13-29
2 Chronicles 1-2

Introduction to Chronicles

Chronicles is inspired by the needs of a community that has been destroyed and is seeking to forge the future by looking back into the past to find out who they are. The book of Chronicles is a book written after the return from exile. Perhaps penned by Ezra or Nehemiah or one of their contemporaries. It is a book that seeks to do a couple of things:

Tie the story of the exiles back into the past. It goes all the way back to Adam and traces his lineage to the current people of God. This roots the people in the present back to a story that is much bigger than them. It gives them legitimacy as the current inheritors of the promises of Adam, Noah, Abraham and David. It also summarizes their story and how they own this story and are now picking up the pieces.

It also is here to give the people answers for where their story went wrong. Chronicles focuses solely on the Kings of Judah and shows that when they were faithful, times were good. And when they were not faithful, times were bad. This is used to stir the community of the Jews in the present day of the Book's writing to seek being faithful so that they will not be ousted from their land again.

Chronicles has never had a fair shake. The LXX, the Greek Translation of the Old Testament, calls this book "The Omitted Things." Everyday readers of the Bible see it as a repeat of Kings and therefore easy to skip, especially because it begins with those hard to read genealogies. Critical scholars, with an eye to tampering, accuse the book of omitting details and smudging character flaws. But the book highlights the fact that the past gives us an eye to the future and a hope of what God can still bring.

Despite these unfair assumptions there are several treasures to find in the book of Chronicles and stories that are included that flesh out more of the story already told that we would otherwise miss. In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles is the last book of the Bible because of how it ends with an incomplete sentence, "Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him. Let him go up..." It ends with the charge for people to continue to make their way to Jerusalem, where God will make the next move in the story of his people.

A Brief Overview of Chronicles

1. Origin of the People of God 1:1-9:34
 - a. Adam to Jacob 1 Chronicles 1
 - b. David 1 Chronicles 2-3
 - c. Jacob's Sons 1 Chronicles 4-7
 - d. Saul 1 Chronicles 8
 - e. The Exiles 1 Chronicles 9:1-34
2. David's reign & the Ark of Covenant 1 Chronicles 9:35-17:27
 - a. Replacing Saul 1 Chronicles 9:35-10:14
 - b. How David Organized Himself 1 Chronicles 11-12
 - c. David's Reign as King and God's Promise To David's Son 1 Chronicles 13:1-17:27
3. David's Military Triumphs 1 Chronicles 18-20
4. David Makes Preparations for the Temple 1 Chronicles 21-29
 - a. The Place for the Temple 1 Chronicles 21-22
 - b. Worship in the Temple 1 Chronicles 23-26
 - c. David Passes off the Job to Solomon 1 Chronicles 27-29

This Again?

For many readers of the Bible, Chronicles is an easy book to skim over. Genealogies, repetition, and palace administration are not exciting reads on a good day. But the good does this to reconfirm the status of the people of God, and to also reorient their attention to their story as God's people, which is also our story since we are God's people now. Readers will be blessed to discover hidden stories often overlooked that shed light on a period of history that is often forgotten and neglected.

How to be a Faithful King

1 Chronicles focuses on David. He is seen as the perfect example of a king that then 2 Chronicles then uses to grade the rest of the kings. David is seen to show special care into the establishment of liturgical orders, service parameters, the set up and blue prints for the temple and the place where the temple was to be built. His faithful care into the worship life of the people and the care and attention given to the priests is how each of the kings after him find their blessing. The kings who work with the priests and the worship in the temple fair well and are blessed. Those who do not care about the work and the worship of the temple are bad kings and unfaithful.

Added and subtracted?!

Details that are not found in kings are listed here and several glaring omissions are noted in this book. Notably, the sins of David, found in 2 Samuel and 1 Kings are missing. Only a brief passing mention of the sin of Bathsheba and the killing of Uriah are mentioned.

This literary tool though, is used not to hide David's sins or to cover the shame of his failings, but to present him as a type of what the Messiah will be when he comes. David is presented as perfect because of the hope that they have that when the Messiah does come, he will fit the description that they paint David as in this book as the book notes in 2 Chronicles 21:17 that the sins of Jehoram were not enough to remove David's line from the throne because of the promise God made to David's house, which is repeated in 1 Chronicles 17 as found in 2 Samuel 7.