

I AND II CHRONICLES

THE HISTORY OF JUDAH

Authorship:

Hebrew scholars have traditionally accepted the Chronicles as a composite work of multiple writers with one compiler. That editor/compiler has been generally accepted as Ezra, though this is still a matter of some discussion and debate. If Ezra was indeed the one to compile the records, the assembling of Chronicles would have come anywhere from about 515 B.C. all the way to 300 B.C.

Setting:

The setting of Chronicles is very diverse as it spans a significant number of years. Opening chapters are set during the early years of the Israeli monarchy, David's reign, and closes in the Judean captivity by the Babylonians. It records the events of the southern kingdom, Judah, rather than the northern kingdom, Israel.

Its place in the canon is a matter of some discussion also. Chronicles is second only to Genesis in rejection by the critical deniers. These often cite an obvious bias by the editor who omits David's sins, neglects the apostasy of Solomon, dwells on the good character of the Hebrew kings, seems to moralize and theologize the accounts of Samuel and the kings (I Chron. 21:1 and II Sam. 24:1), adding historical material (II Chron. 33:18-20), and possibly exaggerate the numbers found in Samuel and Kings (II Sam. 23:8 and I Chron. 11:11).

Content:

As one might assume, these books *Chronicle* the progress of the monarchy of Judah. I Chronicles opens with an extensive genealogy starting with the patriarchs and moving through several families who descended from them, to David. His kingship is a matter of significant record, filling chapters 10-29. II Chronicles opens with the reign of Solomon, then tracing through the reigns of the kings of Judah, from Rehoboam through Zedekiah. The final verses of II Chronicles describe the exile.

It is obvious that the Chronicler had some goals in compiling the information he did, though we recognize that his intent was secondary to that of the Holy Spirit. His first intent was to promote the theme of worship. A careful reading of the books indicates the importance of worship, from Hezekiah's celebration of two Passovers in one year (II Chron. 30:13-22), to a call for the world to individually worship (I Chron. 16:23-27).

His second intent was to bring relationship with Yahweh to bear. There is an emphasis on *repentance* (II Chron. 12:6-12 in light of Exodus 32:11-14). He uses terminology that demonstrates an understanding of inner and outer factors in relationship: "a pure heart" (I Chron. 28:9; 29:9; 19), "giving and faithfulness" (I Chron. 29:1-9, 14, 17), "thankful and joyful celebration and worship" (I Chron. 16:4, 7; 23:30).

Finally, he brings up the matter of types (which is dangerous in our hermeneutics), talking about David as a *second* Moses, and Solomon as a *second* Joshua (I Chron. 22:8).