

**BOOK OF FIRST & SECOND CHRONICLES**

1. These two books are full of genealogy and have a large amount of repetition from the two books of Kings. So why did God include these two books in the Bible?
2. In the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, the books of Samuel and Kings are books that were placed very far away from the book of Chronicles. They were not placed next to each other, unlike in the English version of the Old Testament.
3. Also, the book of Chronicles in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, is just one book and not split into First Chronicles and Second Chronicles as in the English version. The book of Chronicles is actually the last book in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament.
4. The book of Chronicles was written by Ezra long after the exile of the Jews.
5. The books of Samuel and Kings showed the deterioration of the spiritual state of Israel and were written by Jeremiah to tell the Israeli exiles why Israel were exiled by God. These books were written to a different audience from the book of Chronicles. The book of Chronicles was targeted at the Jews after they had returned to Jerusalem from the exile. Hence the purpose of writing the book of Chronicles was also different from that of writing the books of Samuel and Kings.
6. The book of Chronicles recorded why the Israelites had hope while being in exile. King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and they were expecting the prophecies of Prophet Jeremiah to be fulfilled. They knew that a new 2<sup>nd</sup> temple would be built and the Son of David, the Messiah, would come into this 2<sup>nd</sup> temple.
7. However, the Jews were discouraged because:
  - a) The 2<sup>nd</sup> temple was a poor replica of the 1<sup>st</sup> temple (built by King Solomon) which was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. before their exile.
  - b) Also, after the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple was completed, the Messiah did not appear as prophesied by Jeremiah.
  - c) The prophecy by Jeremiah that many nations would flock to a new temple in Jerusalem, also did not happen.
8. Therefore, Ezra had to write this book of Chronicles to tell them that there would be another time when a final temple in the New Jerusalem would be built and that what they had completed as the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple was not the final temple. He had to clarify that the temple which the Messiah would come back and which all the nations would gather to worship was to be the final temple or 3<sup>rd</sup> temple in the New Jerusalem.
9. This book was to written to encourage those Jews who had abandoned their prosperity in Persia (i.e. the Babylonian area where the Jews were exiled to) and returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and were therefore discouraged and needed hope.

**What is the difference between the books of Samuel/Kings and the books of Chronicles?**

1. The books of Samuel and Kings covered the period known as the Age of Princes (or Age of Kings) which is the period of about 500 years between 1000 BC and the exile in 586 BC. On the other hand, the book of Chronicles covered the entire history of mankind as it commenced with Adam and ended in the hope for the eternal future.

2. The books of Samuel and Kings covered both the kings of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms whilst the book of Chronicles focused only on the kings of Judah (i.e. the Southern Kingdom). Hence the book of Chronicles is less confusing as it does not refer to two sets of kings who reigned in parallel in the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.
3. The books of Samuel and Kings describe the political activities of the kings like the wars they engaged in, etc. BUT the book of Chronicles focused more on the religious activities of the kings.
4. The books of Samuel and Kings cover the immoral acts of the kings BUT the book of Chronicles covers the ritual acts of temple worship.
5. The books of Samuel and Kings included all the negative happenings and how the kings messed up in Israel which resulted in the exile, therefore exposing men's failures. The book of Chronicles on the other hand was centred on the positive aspects about the royal line of David and how God fulfilled His promise to preserve the royal line for the Messiah to come, giving hope to the Jews. It shows God's faithfulness to His promises.
6. The books of Samuel and Kings were written from the prophet's point of view to warn the kings against sins because the prophets were concerned about the behaviours of kings. However, the book of Chronicles was written from the priest's point of view, focussing on the temple, the Levites, the choir, etc. as the priests were concerned about temple worship.
7. Hence there is a contrast in the style adopted between these sets of books as well as a totally different focus, although similar events were mentioned.

### BOOK OF FIRST CHRONICLES

This book can be divided into two parts.

#### First Chronicles Part 1 in Chapters 1 to 9

1. The first 9 chapters of the book is on genealogy. As this book was targeted at the religious Jews who had returned to Jerusalem from exile, this genealogy served to remind them of their history.
2. Ezra reminded them that they all came from the first created man, Adam, who produced generations leading to Abraham and then subsequently all the way to King David.
3. He showed that the royal line of Judah was preserved and that only the tribes of Judah and Levites came back to Jerusalem from exile. The rest of the 10 tribes were "lost" tribes. Hence the genealogy given in this book traced only the royal line and the priestly line.
4. In writing the genealogy, Ezra was like a grandfather telling the Jews their roots and the royal line they came from, to show God's faithfulness to the promises He made to Abraham and David.
5. Hence, the genealogy is, in effect, a summary of the Jewish history, by way of the names of their ancestors. It was important for these Jews who were very poor in Jerusalem after their return from exile. Ezra reminded them that they were God's chosen priests and royalties because they had forgotten their illustrious ancestors.

6. Primarily Ezra was telling them that this royal line would also be where the Messiah would come from and hence there was HOPE!
7. In a sense, this history is also our Christian root. We come from Christ and Christ's roots is in this same genealogy. Christ is not a man of unknown roots.

#### First Chronicles Part 2 – Chapters 10 to 29

1. This part is all about King David. There is hardly any mention of King Saul who was from the Benjamin tribe and his failures. David was the focus in this book because he is of the royal blood line unlike King Saul.
2. This part also parallels the book of 2 Samuel which starts with the death of King Saul and focuses on the reign of King David.

#### Why did God bother to repeat this story of David?

1. This book comes from a different angle about David compared to that in the book of 2 Samuel.
2. This is similar to the 4 books of the Gospel which depicts the different angles of Christ, namely, as King, as Servant, as Man and as Son of God.
3. This book of 1 Chronicles shows that David was of the royal ancestry and hence was to be the ancestor of the Messiah.
4. Some parts of David's life in the book of 2 Samuel have been removed and is not in this book, for example:
  - a) The anointing of David by Samuel is not included because Samuel was not the key to the act of anointing of David. It was God who anointed David. Samuel was just an instrument of God.
  - b) There is no mention of Saul persecuting David here unlike in 1 Samuel because there is no need to record about a future king running around to escape King Saul.
  - c) There is also no mention of David's adulterous sin with Bathsheba and the rebellion of David's son, Absalom. Basically all the failures of David were not included.
5. Hence it is history from a very different angle. The book of 1 Chronicles shows David as a glorious king who was a type of the Messianic King. It is not to hide the sins of David which were already exposed in earlier books.
6. The Jews knew the prophecy in Jeremiah 30:9, which says that they would come back to the Promised Land and serve David their King forever BUT David was dead long ago! Actually this prophecy refers to the Son of David being the King forever. Unfortunately the Jews thought and anticipated another earthly king like David. Ezekiel prophesized (in Ezekiel 37:25) the same message that God would raise up the Messianic Son of David. Ezra wrote this book to remind them that God did not forget David nor His promise to David.
7. There are also parts in this book that were not in the book of 2 Samuel:
  - a) 1 Chronicles Chapters 22 to 29. These 8 chapters described the preparation of the building of the temple by King David. We see a clear parallel of the

extensive preparation for worship here by David to that by Moses when Moses built the Tabernacle.

- b) In Exodus Chapter 25, God showed Moses the blueprint for the Tabernacle. In 1 Chronicles 28:18, David received the blueprint or pattern for the temple to be built although David did not build the temple himself. God wanted his son Solomon to build it instead.
  - c) Ezra described David as an amazing king equivalent to Moses' leadership of the Israelites. Ezra wanted to encourage the Jews that they were not nobodies but that the tribe of Judah remained special to God and Ezra wanted to build their confidence for the future.
8. The fact that there are 8 chapters of worship preparation shows that God is very concerned about our worship because the temple is God's presence. What God wants from us is to look to Him and worship Him! Note that the word "Jews" come from the word "Judah" and the word "Judah" means "praise". This is also the reason why Ezra lifted David up in his description by excluding the sinful parts of his life.

#### BOOK OF SECOND CHRONICLES

1. All 36 chapters of this book focus only on the kings of the Southern Kingdom, Judah. But only 6 kings were mentioned because only 5 were good kings and all the bad ones were dropped (forgotten) except for one bad king. In the eyes of God, there were only 5 good kings (besides King David and King Solomon) in Judah and hence only these were in the record.
2. The 6 kings recorded were:
  - a) King Asa in Chapter 14. He removed the high places and threw out his mother because she was a worshipper of idols.
  - b) King Jehoshaphat in Chapter 17. He sent the Levites to teach the Law in all Israel.
  - c) King Jehoram in Chapter 21. He was not a good king. He married the daughter of King Ahab and tried to kill all the seeds of David but he missed out King Joash because God preserved David's royal line. The record of this bad king was an exception to show the faithfulness of God in keeping His promises.
  - d) King Joash in Chapter 24. He restored the temple and got rid of the idols in the temple.
  - e) King Hezekiah in Chapter 30. He repaired the temple.
  - f) King Josiah in Chapter 34. He reformed worship.
2. Hence the 5 good kings were recorded not because they conquered vast lands but because they focused on fixing the worship of Judah. We should know therefore that WORSHIP is all that is important in the eyes of God. All the things we do should be to glorify Him as in 1 Corinthians 10:31.
3. The ending of this book is interesting. The last verse of this book is 2 Chronicles 36:23 which is a proclamation by King Cyrus of Persia. King Cyrus said that it was God who commanded him to build the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple in Jerusalem. As the last book of the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, this is indeed a strange ending and it seems to be

waiting for an ending! The last phrase was “let him go up”, but one may wonder, go up to do what?

4. However in the English version of the Old Testament, the last book is the book of Malachi. Malachi 4:5-6 (the last two verses of the book of Malachi) prophesy the coming of Elijah and ended the Old Testament with a curse in Malachi 4:6. This is a stark contrast to the book of Genesis when God completed all His creation on the 6<sup>th</sup> day and said, “It is very good”. To us who have the New Testament, the book of Malachi is not the ending, Jesus will come back, after the 400 years of silence from God that followed the curse in Malachi 4:6.
5. BUT until today, the Jews still have no New Testament. So their last book in the Hebrew Bible is the book of 2 Chronicles and it ends with 2 Chronicles 36:23, which is a cliff-hanger. Romans 11:25 says that there is “blindness in part” happening to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles. The Jews have not believe and accept Jesus as their Messiah yet, so they are still in limbo, so, the question of “Go up to do what?” remains for them. They do not know their future. BUT one day after the fullness of the Gentiles, God will call back the Jews. There will be a new temple in the New Jerusalem. The Jews today are still wondering how God will build a new temple!
6. For the Jews, their last book of the Hebrew version of the Old Testament ends without a proper ending; but for us, our last book of the Old Testament is Malachi which ended up with a curse yet we have a happy ending in the New Testament in the book of Revelation.
7. If Christians have no New Testament today, then the Old Testament is to us, just a book of unexplained ceremonies such as the animal sacrifices on the altar, Holy of Holies which only the Jewish High Priest can enter, etc. Only when we see Christ, then we will realise that the Old Testament is an unfulfilled testament without the New Testament. Without the New Testament, we will not be able to see the fulfilment of the prophecy that David’s throne indeed is forever. Therefore the New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old Testament. Without the New Testament, the Old Testament is just a book of unsatisfied yearnings of people who could not reach God. We thank God that we now have the complete Bible which is a beautiful and perfect book.