

## FIRST KINGS

### I. Scope

- A. Chronology: I Kings flows from David's death (971) into the first 79 years of the divided kingdom (till the time of Jehoshaphat and Ahab). The appendices of II Kings (25:27ff.) go as late as 562 b.c. in the time of the exile:

2 Kings 25:27 Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh *day* of the month, *that* Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison.

- B. Dynasties: As may be expected, the focus will be on kings and kingdoms. Between the two books, the 20 wicked kings of the north and the 20 Judaeian monarchs are recorded. Only eight of the Judean kings were upright.

The author "...omitted even those passing achievements which would have assumed great importance in the eyes of a secular historian. His prime concern was to show how each successive ruler dealt with God in his covenant responsibilities." —Archer, p. 287

- C. Literary Approach in contrast to the Samuel Books and Chronicle Books (per *EBC IV*)

1. Perspective: whereas the Books of Samuel are biographical in nature and Chronicles is strongly theological, Kings is largely "narrative-annalistic."
2. Thematic Considerations: whereas I&II Samuel "...features human responsibility in the stewardship of the divine economy and Chronicles emphasizes the divine sovereignty, Kings attempts to effect a balance between the two." (*EBC IV*:9,10)

### II. Authorship

- A. Jeremiah is a strong candidate

1. Jewish tradition from Talmud, *Baba Bathra*, 15a
2. Similarities to Jeremiah

a. Style similarities to Jeremiah (prophetic viewpoint). Jeremiah did have literary abilities, as opposed to critical claims that say that Jeremiah was probably illiterate (!) since he had to have his scribe Baruch write for him; (*Bible Review*, April 1990, p. 15)

b. Content similarities (Jer. 52 = II Kgs. 24:18-25:30).

### 3. Prophetic point of view

a. Religious and social sins blasted: anti-Baalism; judgment against Ahab for stealing and killing from Naboth.

b. Emphasis on prophetic ministries of Elijah and Elisha, as well as other prophets

c. “Certainly no other prophet was so intimately involved in the final stages of the history of the Book of Kings. \*\*\* Since [Jeremiah] was descended from the priestly line of Abiathar, and since in all probability his father, Hilkiah, was active in communicating both the traditional facts and the teaching of Israel’s past, it is very likely that Jeremiah had access to historical and theological source materials. Furthermore, he would have had more ready entree to the royal annals than any other prophet.” —*EBC*, IV:6

Keep in mind that access to several primary sources would have been necessary:

- 1) “Book of the Annals of Solomon (I Kings 11:41);
- 2) “Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel;” and
- 3) the “Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah.”

4. The author lived before the Judean captivity as indicated by the recurring phrase, “...unto this day...” (e.g. 8:8; 12:19)

5. No mention of Jeremiah, a close confidant of Josiah, in II Kings, while many other prophets are named. Possibly a case of Jewish modesty and self-abnegation.

B. The main argument against Jeremiah is that the last chapter probably was written from Babylonian exile since there is a clear record of Jehoiachin’s elevation in exile. On the other hand, Jeremiah went into Egypt (Jer. 43:1-8) with a remnant from Judah.

2Kings 25:26 And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans. 27 Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. 28 He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon.

### C. Sources

Because of the lengthy time span of I & II Kings, no one eye-witness could have recorded all the events. Many original sources are cited in both books of Kings, several of them probably being records of the royal court (11:41; 15:7; 14:19; Is. 36-39).

### III. Archaeological/historical notes

- A. According to Assyrian records, Israel comes under Assyrian tribute during the days of Ahab whose 12 member opposition coalition met Shalmaneser III at the Battle of Qarqar in 853. At best, the clash was a stalemate (Merrill, p. 348). Actually, subjugation of the North began in earnest in 841 in the reign of Jehu. This was Shalmaneser's 5th campaign.

- B. Assyrian Black Obelisk (in British Museum)

—Only extant picture of a Hebrew king, it shows **King Jehu** (II Kings 10) bowing before the Assyrian monarch and bringing tribute.

- C. Moabite Stone, sometimes called the Mesha Stone (ca. 845)

—This Moabite record of King Mesha shows that province's emancipation (II K. 3:4) from Israelite domination from the days of King Omri (ca. 885). It is important for dating Israelite history and especially for linguistic studies of ancient Palestinian writing (paleographics).

See Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts*, p. 209.

2Kings 3:4 Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheepbreeder, and he regularly paid the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams. 5 But it happened, when Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

- D. Northern History Highlights

Jeroboam II (fl. 800-750) was the most powerful and affluent northern king. It was during his reign that the borders of Israel were reestablished and the Assyrian yoke was thrown off temporarily. **Jonah** the prophet (II K. 14:25) ministered during this time and would have had no love for Nineveh.

2Kings 14:23 ...Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, \*\*\* 25 He restored the

territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hopher.

During this golden economic era, the prophets **Amos and later Hosea** would blast the social decadence manifesting itself in injustice, oppression of the poor, and empty worship. Amos describes the opulence of the time with its ivory inlaid furniture and immoderation (3:15; 6:1,4ff.)

Amos 6:3 Woe to you... 4 Who lie on beds of ivory, Stretch out on your couches, Eat lambs from the flock And calves from the midst of the stall; 5 Who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments...

Assyria reenters the picture in the days of Isaiah. King Ahaz of Judah sends a monetary inducement to Assyria to invade Israel (under King Pekah) and Syria which were ganging up on Judah (II K. 15:27ff.; Is. 7:3-17).

Israel is subjugated in 732 and, after it rebels, is finally conquered in 722. The land is devastated with most of its inhabitants being deported and many foreign captives being imported. This would be the beginning of the mixed race and religion of the **Samaritans**.

- E. Assyrian King Sennacharib invaded Judah in 701. He razed most of the cities of Judah, but could not conquer Hezekiah in Jerusalem. Hezekiah had made siege preparations by digging a tunnel from the Spring Gihon to the Pool of Siloam inside the city's walls. Poor Sennacharib consoled his ego by listing all the Judaeian cities that he had destroyed and recording that he had "...shut up King Hezekiah like a bird in his royal city." (See "Prism of Sennacharib" as found in Pritchard, pp. 199,200)
  
- F. Jewish tradition is that **Isaiah** was sawn asunder under wicked King Manasseh (cf. Heb. 11:37); Josephus says there were daily executions of prophets under King Cruel (*Ant.* X.3.1). Also, see pseudepigraphal "Martyrdom of Isaiah," chpt. 5, (Charlesworth, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the OT*), based on Manasseh's prayer of repentance, II Chron. 33:13.  
Manasseh's pseudepigraphal prayer shows linguistic/content similarities to Psalm 51, a personal lament (Charlesworth, II:634f.).
  
- G. Nineveh was finally destroyed by Babylon in 612. **Nahum** inveighed against the city for its brutality.

#### IV. Outline and highlights

- A. The kingdom's glory — 1-11

1. House cleaning in a new era

- a. End of Eli the Priest's line when Abiathar is defrocked (2:27) for supporting Adonijah's coup. Abiathar returned to Anathoth where tradition says that he was the ancestor of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1).

Therefore, Hilkiah the high priest of the line of Zadok, probably is not the same Hilkiah named as Jeremiah's father in Jer. 1:1.

- b. Troublesome Joab and Saulide Shimei dispatched for earlier crimes

2. Solomon's wisdom — 1-3

- a. Wisdom was requested at Gibeon after God's appearance to him in a dream; (cf. Mt. 6:33)

- b. Illustrated in the case of the two harlots, and displayed before Queen of Sheba

3. Solomon's wealth — 4-10 Note 10:22,27 (II Chron. 1:15 includes abundance of gold)

1Kings 10:22 For the king had merchant ships at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys. 23 So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. 27 The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland.

- a. 40,000 (cf. more accurate number in II Chron. 9:25 than I Kgs 4:26) horse stalls at Megiddo, etc.; at least 450 such stalls have been discovered in the dig at Megiddo

2Chron. 9:25 Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots,

- b. 12 administrative districts(1 Kings 9:15-22) to oversee his domain; not according to original tribal boundaries which helped dampen sectionalism. Each district supplied the king's commonwealth for one month each year.

- c. God's temple (ch. 6,7)

(1)**Built** in 7 years on the pattern of the Tabernacle. The latter is doubled in size with the addition of outer courts.

- (a) Furnishings

i) Most of the tabernacle furnishings were multiplied by 10 (7:38,39,49)

IKings 7:38 Then he made ten lavers of bronze; each laver contained forty baths, and each laver was four cubits. On each of the ten carts was a laver. \*\*\* 49 the lampstands of pure gold, five on the right side and five on the left in front of the inner sanctuary,

ii) “Jachin and Boaz,” (“he shall establish” and “in it is strength”) brass pillars at the sanctuary door; suggested function is that they were used as incinerators to dispose of unused parts of sacrifices

(b) 150,000+ laborers from among non-Jewish Palestinians prepared the materials for the temple, 5:15,16; II Chron 2:2,17,18

(c) Limestone quarries found 200 yards under old Jerusalem

(2) When the temple was **dedicated** (chpts. 8,9), only the stone tablets remained inside the ark (8:9).

1Kings 8:9 Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb,

Solomon dedicated the temple with

(a) the longest prayer in the Bible

i) many allusions to the covenant

ii) desire for other nations to know the Lord, 8:60

59 "And may ... He maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, 60 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.

(b) sacrifices: 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep

i) These are extravagant figures for an opulent occasion, yet even in the time of Christ it is projected that 320,000 lambs were sacrificed in the temple on the Passover.

ii) God displays His approval by once again sending fire from heaven (II Chron. 7:1); the antecedent is dedication of the tabernacle in the wilderness, Ex. 40

d. Solomon’s palace just south of the temple took 13 years to build. — ch. 7

e. Materialist search for happiness (Eccl. 2:1-23), I Kings 9:15-28; II Chron. 8

(1) Public works, especially in the royal cities of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, v. 15

- (2) Fleet of ships from Ezion-Geber (modern Elath) brought gold from Ophir, phps. identified as the coast of Arabia or Africa, or some suggest India because of the trip of 3 years (10:22)

f. Queen of Sheba, 10:1-13; II Chron. 9:1-12

(1) Sheba

- (a) Phps. descendant of Cush (Gen. 10:7; Ps. 72:10) or of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25:3)
- (b) Generally identified by the kind of gifts as from the region of southern Arabia

(2) Queen

- (a) Probably came seeking trading concessions and free access to Israel's key trade routes
- (b) Her gifts may have inspired the writing of Psalm 72 (note vss. 10,15,17)

4. Solomon's wickedness — 11

- a. 300 prickly "porcupines" and 1,000 mothers-in-law; Solomon early had married the daughter of Pharaoh in political alliance with a major power
  - (1) Disregard of Dt. 17:17
  - (2) Foreign wives influenced him to build idolatrous shrines, 11:5,7
- b. Three political adversaries arise to nettle Solomon: Hadad of Edom, Rezon of Damascus, and Jeroboam of Ephraim.
- c. Before his death Solomon had written 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs (4:32) as well as his philosophical essay on life, Ecclesiastes.

B. The Divided Empire — 12-22

1. Chronology

- a. Methodology. For a reasonable explanation of the chronology of this chaotic period, see Edwin Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. He handily harmonizes the dates and reigns of the kings through a proper recognition of several chronological reckonings used in ancient dating:

—co-regencies that overlapped

- accession year in Judah vs. non-accession year in Israel (“accession year reckoning” counted only the first, full year of rule on the calendar)
- civil calendar vs. religious calendar (viz., Tishri in Judah vs. Nisan in Israel)
- inclusive vs. non-inclusive time periods  
(See also Harrison, *OT Times*, p. 212)

b. Dating the era on our B.C. calendar

- (1) Assyrian reigns can be established from references to solar eclipses in the particular year of a monarch’s reign.
- (2) Assyrian records and monuments mention Hebrew kings or events that they were involved in.
  - (a) Battle of Qarqar on the Orontes River, Shalmaneser III vs. Ahab et.al. in 853, the 6th year of Shalmaneser’s reign and apparently in the last year of Ahab’s reign
  - (b) Black Obelisk from the 18th year of Shalmaneser’s reign, (= 841), showing Jehu (apparently in his first year) paying tribute to Shalmaneser.

2. Revolt of the ten tribes under Jereboam I (Solomon’s forced labor supervisor), after Rehoboam appeals to them at Shechem — 12

Note conditional covenant to Jereboam in 11:26-38

3. Pharaoh Shishak (14:25,26; see Pritchard illustration #94)

- a. Had harbored Jereboam I (11:40)
- b. His father had given a daughter to Solomon to wife

C. The early Northern kingdom

1. Five main dynasties (Jereboam I, Baasha, Omri, Jehu, various)

- a. Omri’s dynasty was quite significant; even though only a few verses are devoted to him in his building of Samaria, the Assyrian records [mistakenly] refer to most subsequent northern kings as from the “house of Omri;” e.g., Jehu on the Black Obelisk is called the “son of Omri.”
- b. Jehu’s dynasty was the most prosperous, reaching its zenith under Jeroboam II.

The prophets Amos and Hosea weighed in against the sins of this affluent and decadent society.

2. All 20 of the Northern kings did evil before God; still, God does not immediately abandon the northern tribes, as evidenced by His sending the prophets to call them back
3. Jeroboam I, an Ephraimite, defaults on God’s conditional promise to give him an enduring throne, 11:38.

- a. Golden calves at Bethel and Dan did not represent the images of Baal or Yaweh; Albright suggested they served as the depiction of the throne/pedestal for Yaweh. However, the bull was a Canaanite symbol of reproductive strength, and Jeroboam also had recently returned from Egypt where the golden bulls of Memphis were worshiped.

I Kings 12:28 — note the language of Ex. 32:4; apparently Jeroboam was replaying the Exodus imagery and arrogating a sacerdotal role to himself as well as the kingly.

12:28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!"

Other parallels between Jeroboam’s calf and Aaron’s

Aaron	Jeroboam I
Abihu and Nadab	Abijah and Nadab
Both of Aaron’s sons die before their time	Both of Jeroboam’s sons die before their time
Calf was a “great sin” (Ex. 32:30-31)	Calf was a “great sin” (2Kgs 17:21)

- b. Josiah is predicted by name (13:2) to be the reformer 300 years hence who will purge the land of this idolatry; cf. name prediction in Is. 44:28ff.

4. Nadab was assassinated by Baasha, 15:27
5. Baasha builds fortifications four miles north of Jerusalem, which prompts Asa to bribe Benhadad to attack Baasha’s flank, 16
6. Elah, son of Baasha, is assassinated by his chariot commander, Zimri, while on a drinking binge, 16:8ff.
7. Omri, commander of the army, expedites the demise of the short-lived usurper, Zimri, before beating his competitor, Tibni
  - a. Builds new capital, Samaria, located on N-S trade route and easily defensible on a high hill; also neutral location, 16:24

- b. Made Moab a tributary of Israel until its rebellion under King Mesha who left the Moabite Stone behind in the era of Joram (II Kings 3). This monument was found by a German missionary in 1868 on the Arnon River.

“Omri, king of Israel . . . oppressed Moab many days because Chemosh was angry with his land. And his son succeeded him, and he also said, ‘I will oppress Moab.’”

- c. Established close relations with the Phoenicians. Marriage of Omri’s son to Jezebel the Phoenician was a political alliance.

## 8. Ahab and Jezebel

- a. Jezebel of the Sidonians brings in wholesale Baal fertility/agricultural worship, thus setting the stage for a judgmental famine which culminates in the contest on Carmel. Dorsey (*The Literary Structure of the OT*, p. 139) notes that the Mt. Carmel narrative is the crux of a chiasmic outline in chpts. 17,18.

- b. Baalism is projected into Judah with the political marriage of their daughter Athaliah to Jehoshaphat’s son, Jehoram

21:10,13 = “gere-kethibh” text question where Naboth is accused of cursing God (cf. Job 2:9)

- c. Their two sons will not keep the throne for long: Ahaziah dies from a fall and Jehoram is assassinated by Jehu, II Kings 1.

## 9. Reforms of Elijah — 17-19

Elijah finds himself at the Brook Cherith, literally, a Brook “cut off.” Cf. 18:4 where Jezebel has “cut off” all the prophets of the land

- a. A second prophetic Moses (for more parallels see Hamilton’s *Handbook*, p. 433)

- 1) Contest with demonic forces behind the idols/gods
- 2) Fire from heaven to establish God’s authority
- 3) Apostates at Carmel are given to the sword
- 4) Return to Sinai for personal refuge: Elijah’s cave vs. Moses’ cleft in the rock

## EXCURSUS on JESUS AND ELISHA

Elijah and John the Baptist are parallel harbingers of a new epoch. Hamilton (p. 446) finds parallels between the prophetic heirs of those two forerunners of Elisha and Jesus. There are also parallels between Elijah and Jesus as dramatic founders in their times

1. The Spirit rests on Elisha (2Sam 2:15) and upon Jesus (Isa 11:2)
2. Elisha and Jesus raise the dead
3. Elijah and Jesus at their departures put the Spirit upon their disciples
4. Elijah and Jesus are both taken up (ἀναλαμβάνω) to heaven

END EXCURSUS

b. God's contest with Baal, fertility god of the crops

c. 18:21 = challenge like Joshua 24

1 Kings 18:21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. <sup>21</sup> And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

d. Fire from heaven as divine approval; cf. Lev. 9:24, approval of Aaron's sacrifice

e. Still small voice

1) Theophany not in the elements of naturalistic Baal worship

2) No new revelation at the cave in Sinai

a) The Torah is sufficient vs. no new revelation in the fire and wind and quake

b) Trust and serve the Lord on His terms; there are still 7,000 faithful who have not bowed the knee to Baal

D. Early kings of Judah after the death of Solomon in 931

1. Rehoboam

a. 925 Invasion of Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak (14:21-25-28; Shishak = Sheshonk I; his gold masked mummy found at Tanis), son of the Pharaoh who had given his daughter to Solomon in a political marriage, and he himself had given asylum to Rehoboam's rival, Jeroboam I

b. Migration of northern Levites to Judah in this era

(Significantly, the term "Levite" occurs only once in the books of the Kings; Chronicles, on the other hand, is replete with references to the Levites.)

II Chron. 11:15 Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made. 16 And after *the Levites left*, those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers. 17 So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah,

## 2. Wicked Abijam, 15

### 3. Asa, 15:9ff.;

#### a. Key lessons of faith

II Chron. 14:11 And Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude.

II Chron. 16:8 "Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. 9 "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him.

#### b. Possibly ailed by hydropikos, swollen feet (16:12)

## 4. Jehoshaphat, I Kings 22:41ff.; II Chron. 17-20

### a. God's call for separation from apostasy and moral compromise, II Chron. 19:2

19:2 And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, "*Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD?* Therefore the wrath of the LORD *is* upon you.

### b. Social and judicial reforms; cf. charge to judges, II Chron. 19:7,9

19:7 "Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do *it*, for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes." 8 Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, when they returned to Jerusalem. 9 And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart:

### c. Two close calls

(1) Ill-fated alliance with Ahab vs. Benhadad I of Syria

(2) Invasion of south Judah by Moabites, Ammonites, and Arabs (II Chron. 20)

## E. Emergence of Assyria around 850 b.c.

1. Tiglath-pileser I, fl. 1100; founder of Assyrian empire

2. Ashur-nasir-pal, fl. 870

3. Shalmaneser III, fl. 840; vs. Ahab & Jehu; Jonah flourishes ca. 760 b.c.

4. Tiglath-pileser III, fl. 730, vanquishing Israel in 732
5. Shalmaneser V, fl. 725; conquered rebellious Samaria again, 722
6. Sargon II, fl. 715; redistributed population of the Israel
7. Sennacherib, fl. 700
8. Ashurbanipal, fl. 650; last great king of Assyria who conquered Egypt and Ethiopia; had a great library including the Gilgamesh Epic
9. The capital of Nineveh fell to rebellious Babylon in 612; the empire's coup de grace came in 605 at the Battle of Carchemish.
10. The prophet Nahum exults in the impending demise of Nineveh.

## SECOND KINGS

“The Decadence that began under Solomon resulted in the Division under Rehoboam and grew into the Deterioration of the monarchy which finally culminated in the Deportation of the divided kingdom.”  
 –NLG/APSOT

### V. General Outline

#### A. Deterioration of Israel and Judah — 1-17

##### 1. Final significant kings of the North

###### a. Jehu

(1) Exacts God's justice on Jezebel and her seed, and he commences a new dynasty. II Kings 17 indicates that judgment fell because the king failed to follow the prophetic word

(2) Four kings in his line follow him: Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Zechariah

###### b. Jeroboam II, ca. 800-750

(1) Contemporary of prosperous Uzziah of Judah

(2) Borders restored and Israel reaches its zenith under this king

(3) Contemporary prophets

(a) Jonah, a real historical prophet, 14:25

(b) Amos also inveighed against the sins of that affluent age, e.g., Amos 3:15ff.

c. Pekah, ca. 752-732

(1) Opposition from

(a) anti-kings Menahem and then Pekahiah

(b) Assyrian imperialism

i) Conspired with Rezin of Damascus to coerce Ahaz of Judah into their anti-Assyrian coalition, Is. 7:3-17

ii) Tiglath-Pileser III (=“Pul” of 15:19 and I Chron. 5:26, related to his Babylonian name of “Pulu”) answers Judah’s bribe to invade the North, bringing the beginning of the end in 732

(2) King Hoshea, last king of the northern kingdom

(a) The first non-biblical reference to Hoshea turned up in late 1993 when a royal seal bearing his name sold at Southby’s Auction in NYC for \$80,000. The inscription reads, “Belonging to Obadiah, the servant of Hoshea.” See Nov/Dec 1995 issue of *BAR*, 21:6:49-52.

(b) Assassinate Pekah in 732

(c) Falls to Shalmaneser V in 722

2. Captivity of Israel, II Kings 17

a. Result of breach of the Mosaic covenant, vv. 7-12, 15, 16, despite God sending cov’t messengers to call them back to the terms of the cov’t, v. 13

2 Kings 17:13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments *and* My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.”

b. Dispersion

(1) Israelites carried east to Babylon and the Euphrates, notwithstanding British Israelism's claim that many went West to the British Isles

(2) By the time of the return from captivity, the 12 tribes were represented in the territory of Judah

(a) See genealogies in Ezra-Nehemiah; note Anna of Asher in Jerusalem (Lk. 2:36)

(b) From the times of Jeroboam I many refugees from the Northern tribes had resettled in Judah

(3) Annals of Sargon II

“At the beginning of my royal rule, . . . the town of the Samaritans I conquered. . . . I led away as prisoners 27,290 inhabitants of it. . . . The town I rebuilt better than it was before and settled therein people from countries which I myself had conquered. I placed an officer of mine as governor over them and imposed upon them tribute as is customary for Assyrian citizens” *ANET*, p 284.

c. “Samaritans” = syncretists and half-breeds who early were excluded from Judean orthodoxy, (Ezra 4:1-3)

B. Degeneration of Judah — 18-25

Jeremiah will be active from the days of Josiah (630) down till the final fall of Jerusalem

1. Decline of Davidic dynasty: Solomon's seed to be cut off, chpts 18-23b

2. Line of David threatened

a. Ahaziah ben Jehoram/Athaliah was killed by Jehu after he had killed all his brothers

b. Athaliah bath Ahab/Jezebel killed all the children of son, Ahaziah, except Joash who was hidden by the high priest, Jehoiada

Joash in Archaeology

\*A wonderful archaeological find from the time of Joash was recently discovered (announced in early January 2003—see supplemental news release).

A sandstone tablet from this king's reign gives us the earliest extant reference to Solomon's temple: King Joash commands the priests to take “. . . holy money . . . to buy quarry stones and timber and copper and labor to carry out the duty with the faith.” It adds that if the work is well completed, “the Lord will protect his people with blessing.”

### 3. Later kings of Judah

a. Uzziah, ca. 800-750, was strongest king of South

b. Ahaz receives most intense biblical condemnation because he made his sons pass through the fire

c. Hezekiah, ca. 715-685

(1)“...did according as his father David had done.”

(a) Purged idols, including symbol of brass serpent

(b) Restored observance of the Passover, II Chron. 29,30

(2)Siloam Tunnel from Spring Gihon outside the walls, *ANET*, p. 321

(3)Leader in rebellion of coalition against Sennacharib, II Chron. 32. The Prism of Sennacharib records his capture of 46 Judean fortified cities, including Lachish (see Archer).

“As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, ...himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage.” “Sennacharib Prism in *ANET*, p. 288. See this prism in *Ancient Near East*, pictures 101 and 80.

Sennacharib was killed by his own sons in his god’s temple (2Kgs 19:37).

d. Wicked Manasseh, ca. 685-642

(1)Gross idolatry worse than the Canaanites

(2)Persecution of the prophets; cf. the “Martyrdom of Isaiah,” part of the Pseudepigraphal “Ascension of Isaiah.” Cf. Heb. 11:37; Josephus’ *Dialogue with Trypho*, 120

(3)End of Manasseh, II Chron. 33

(a)Judgment in chains of captivity

- (b)“Prayer of Manasseh” = pseudepigraphal work (ca. 10 b.c.) built on the narrative of II Chron. 33:12,13 and parallel to Psalm 51; exhorts national repentance before national restoration
- e. Josiah, slain in 609 by forces of Pharaoh Neco
- (1)Climax of eight godly kings (II Kings 23:25); he left three wicked sons and grandson to succeed him
  - (2)Restoration of the temple and rediscovery of the Law, II Chron. 34,35
  - (3)Reformation in 621 b.c.; celebration of the best Passover since Samuel, II Chron. 35:18
4. Deportation (the first in 605) of Davidic dynasty to Babylon 23-25
- a. Jehoahaz deported to Egypt by Pharaoh Necho, 609
- b. Jehoiachim his brother installed by Egypt
- (1)Clashes with Jeremiah. He cuts the scroll of God’s Word, whereas his father had rent his own clothes when the scroll was read to him.
  - (2)After Egypt and Assyria were defeated at Carchemish in 605, Nebuchadnezzar subjugated Judah and carried off some of the royal household as hostages; = first captivity
  - (3)Jehoiachim’s dishonorable burial (Jer. 22:19)
- c. Jehoiachin his son rules only 3 months before carried captive to Babylon in the **second captivity, 597**.
- (1)After 35 years (in 561), Emperor Eval-merodach elevates him and gives him a royal portion, II Kings 25:27-30; Jer. 52:31-34. Record of these royal portions has been found among Babylonian records.
  - (2)Jehoiachin’s line terminated (Jer. 22:24-30)
- d. Zedekiah, Josiah’s last son, is vanquished in the **third captivity** of 587-6. In his last days he sees the invading army, as predicted (Jer. 34:3) but never sees (II K. 25:7) the land to which he is carried captive as predicted (Ezk. 12:13).

e. Three captivities

(1)605 = royal hostages; Daniel, et.al.

(2)597 = upper crust of economic system; King Jehoiachin and Ezekiel (II Kings 24:14)

(3)587 = all but the dregs of society

f. The land of Judah keeps her **70 year sabbath rest** (II Chron. 36:21; Jer. 25:11,12)

(1)After about 490 years of neglecting God's commanded observance (Lev. 25:1,18; 26:34,35)

(2)Datings of Captivity

(a)From first captivity till return and laying of temple foundation, 605-536 b.c. (the preferred view per Daniel 9 and II Chron. 36:22)

OR (b)From destruction of Jerusalem and the temple till completion of the temple, 586-516

C. Babylonian Kings

1. Merodach-baladan (721-10,703), friendly to Hezekiah in their dislike of Assyria
2. Shamash-shumukin (670-650), brother of Assyrian Assurbanipal; drew Manasseh into his revolt against Assyria
3. Nabopolassar (626-605), secured Babylonian independence and destroyed Nineveh
4. Nebuchadnezzar (605-562), crushed Assyria at Carchemish; three Judean captivities
5. Evil-merodach (562-560), elevated Jehoiachin before he himself was assassinated.
6. Neriglissar
7. Labashi-Marduk
8. Nabonidus (556-539)
9. Belshazzar (553-539)

# FIRST CHRONICLES and SECOND CHRONICLES

## VI. Background

### A. Relation to the Canon

1. No historical debate in including Chronicles in the canon.
2. The Greek LXX named Chronicles “**Paralipomenon**,” meaning “**Omissions**” [i.e., those things not included in the other historical books of Samuel and Kings].

The Hebrew title is “Words of the Days,” i.e., Journals. Our English title comes from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate title which, for once, is closer to the Hebrew identity than to the LXX.

Following its own thematic purpose, Chronicles omits blocks of material itself:

- History of the northern kingdom
- David’s early life before Saul
- David in Hebron during the anti-reign of Ishbosheth
- David’s sin against Bathsheba and Uriah
- Solomon’s struggle against Adonijah
- Solomons later sins

“The idealization of the reigns of David and Solomon could be dismissed as a kind of glorification of the ‘good old days.’ Yet when coupled with the Chronicler’s emphasis on God’s promise to David of an enduring dynasty (1 Chron. 17:11-14; 2 Chron. 13:5; 21:7; 23:3), the Chronicler’s treatment of David and Solomon reflects a ‘messianic historiography.’ –Dillard & Longman, p. 174f.

David and Solomon are the ideals to live up to in the hope of the restoration of Davidic rule. Also, David and Solomon are “temple men:” they are paramount in the author’s eyes because of their important connection to God’s temple representing the Immanuel and true worship.

3. In the OT canon Chronicles is located among the Writings (*kethubim*) instead of the “former prophets” like Samuel and Kings. In fact, it closes the Hebrew Bible. Jesus may allude to this canonical location in his remark about all the martyrs from Abel to Zechariah (Mt. 23:35, cf. II Chron. 24:20ff.)

### B. Unity

1. Like the other major historical books, the two books of Chronicles were originally one book
  - a. Witness of Josephus (*Contra Apion* I:8), Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 15a), and Peshitta
  - b. Massoretic Text has notation at I Chron. 27:25 marking it as the middle verse

2. Chronicles was divided by the LXX translators. The Hebrew text similarly was divided for convenience' sake in 1448 a.d.

### C. Perspective

#### 1. Compared with Kings

(1) Chronicles is more from the **religious/priestly** perspective, whereas the book of Kings emphasizes the political/prophetic history of the covenant people. Because of this, little reference is made to the northern kingdom. Still, there are several notations of participation of northern inhabitants in the true religion of the south (e.g., I Ch. 11:1-3; 12:23-40; II Ch. 19:4; 30:1,2; 34:6,7).

(2) Where events are parallel between Kings and Chronicles, the latter often tends to editorialize an event by giving a theological explanation. According to Payne (*EBC* 4:315), this is particularly true when it comes to matters of divine retribution:

#### Events in Kings

Shishak's invasion (1 Kings 14)

Asa's illness (2 Kings 15)

Uzziah's leprosy (2 Kings 15)

Manasseh's long reign (21)

#### Explained in 2 Chronicles

due to Rehoboam's sin (12)

for distrust and oppression (16)

when invading the temple (26)

explained by his late conversion (33)

(3) A message of hope after judgment

“If Kings, composed after the final collapse of the kingdom in 586 B.C., concentrates on how sin leads to defeat (2 Kings 17:15,18), then Chronicles, coming after the two returns from exile in 537 and 458 B.C., recounts, from the same record, how ‘faith is the victory’ (2 Chron 20:20, 22). Readers today may therefore find strength from God, knowing that his moral judgments (Kings) are balanced by his providential salvation (revealed in Chronicles). —J.B. Payne in *EBC* on Chronicles, p. 303

(4) Along this line, Kings answers the question of how could exile happen to God's people: “was Marduk of Babylon stronger than Jehovah?”

whereas Chronicles answers the post-exilic questions about the Jews' relation to their past: “has God ended His covenant with Israel?”

No wonder Chronicles begins with nine chapters of genealogies that ties the contemporary generation in with God's people of the ages!

2. The focus in Chronicles is on the Davidic line and the temple. David is the benchmark for later kings in his dynasty, and the test is whether his sons would “walk in the ways of David their father.”

### D. Scope

1. With its theological and messianic perspective, Chronicles necessarily begins with Adam and traces the movement of God's dealings with His people up through the return from exile—the “re-creation” (restoration) of the covenant people.
2. The focus is on Davidic rule as the Messianic ideal, and upon the temple as the zenith of worship and religious fealty under the Mosaic covenant.  
The narrative focus that begins in chapter 10 stresses Saul's “unfaithfulness” (10:13,14) that led to his demise and that will culminate in the demise of the nation due to the same “unfaithfulness” of the nation's leaders (2Chr 36:14).
3. I Chronicles roughly covers the same period as the books of Samuel, while II Chronicles approximates the books of Kings.

#### E. Authorship

According to tradition (Talmud, *Baba Bathra*, 15a), **Ezra the priest**. This determination is commonly held by many modern scholars (evangelicals, E.J. Young, R.L. Harris, G.L. Archer, J.B. Payne; and critics as Albright and John Bright).

Other evangelicals (R.K. Harrison, Yamauchi) hold that a close disciple of Ezra penned the Chronicles while Ezra is credited with his name's work.

#### F. Terminus of Chronicles

1. The Book ends with the Cyrus declaration (538) that the Jews could return to their land.
2. I Chronicles 3:17-24 gives a genealogy, listing six names in the line of Zerubbabel which might cover 100 years, from 535 to 425 when the book might have been completed.  
= Zerubbabel → Hananiah → Shecaniah → Neariah → Elieoenai → Etc.

#### G. The priestly emphasis fits with Ezra the priest (Ezra 7:1-7)

#### H. Literarily, Chronicles is close in style and viewpoint to the book of Ezra/Nehemiah, also, originally one book. (see *EBC*, IV:575)

1. II Chronicles ends with the same passage that begins Ezra: the decree of Cyrus.

## 2. Chronicles parallels Ezra/Nehemiah in its emphasis on

- a. genealogies
- b. lists
- c. emphasis on Levitical ritual, festivals, and Mosaic laws

I. If we may trust the witness of II Maccabees 2:13, that Nehemiah “...founded a library and collected books about kings and prophets and the writings of David...,” then a contemporary of Nehemiah (Ezra) would have had access to historical documents in chronicling the theocratic kingdom.

Chronicles makes use of 32 sources, more than any other biblical work. These sources include

the Chronicles of Samuel the Seer; the Chronicles of Nathan the Seer; the Chronicles of Gad the Seer (I Chron. 29:29); the History of Nathan the prophet (II Chr. 9:29); the Chronicles of Shemaiah the prophet and Iddo (II C. 12:15); the Story of the prophet Iddo (II C. 13:22); the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel (II C. 16:11); the Chronicles of Jehu (II C. 20:34); and the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (II C. 33:18).

## J. Purpose for writing Chronicles in the Post-exilic era

1. Provide an up-to-date historical/theological background for the new generation of returned exiles as they struggled for identity

a. True identity would come through renewal of the terms of the Mosaic Covenant in a restored Jewish state

b. Emphasis is placed upon genealogies for the sake of

(1) Guaranteeing racial and religious purity as a homogeneous people. The genealogies not only address continuity with the past, but also legitimacy and legality in the present.

(a) Two tribes are emphasized (chpts. 3,4): Judah (through which God was working His messianic purposes) and Benjamin (which was loyal to the Davidic house)

(b) Ezra will also stress racial/religious purity of the covenant people in Ezra/Nehemiah

(c) Particularly important is a continuing unity with the northern tribes. The schism under Rehoboam is not considered permanent nor desirable. Rather, an eschatological hope is implied of a united nation being exalted in the promised land of God’s covenant. –see Dillard and Longman, *Introduction to the OT*, p. 173f.

- (2) Restoring tribal property allotments to the rightful families for proper stewardship before God and military service for property owners

2. Hence, in reviewing the nation's sacred history, Chronicles would provide justification for

- a. The re-establishment of the temple and its service. Chronicles shows that "...God's sovereignty was more effectively achieved through David's care for the temple than through his empire (I Chron 29:11,12)" —Payne, *EBC* IV:313

- b. Nehemiah's new organizational reforms on the line of reforms by King David, the innovator

3. Chronicles may probably be dated around **450-425**, being written to the growing remnant to remind them of the dangers of covenant breaking and to encourage them with the blessings that come from obedience.

Key to the choice of content in Chronicles is an understanding of the situation discouraging the V century Jews.

"Their disillusionment in the face of contemporary hardships accounts for his omission of David's initial lack of success (as found in 2 Sam 1-4), his subsequent sins and defeats (11-21), Solomon's failures (1 Kings 11), and the entire history of the apostate kingdom in northern Israel. What was needed among mid-fifth-century Palestinian Jews was not censure but morale building, through hope in the messianic house of David." —Payne, *EBC* IV:314.

## J. Theology of Chronicles

### 1. View of God.

The post-exile Jews have a new reverence for God and respect His **other-worldliness**; this is evidenced by reference to His presence in "His name," e.g., II Chron 12:13, I Chron 22:7; 29:16. See Exodus 34:6, 33:19 for the significance of the Lord's Name.

2Chron. 12:13 Thus Rehoboam ... reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there.

Still, Chronicles views **God as imminent** in the affairs of men as He directly intervenes in history (1 Ch 12:18; 2 Ch 20:13) and answers prayer (2 Ch 14:11; 18:31; 20:9-12).

1Chron. 12:18 Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the captains, *and he said*: "We are yours, O David; We are on your side, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, And peace to your helpers! For your God helps you."

### 2. Covenant promises and threats

God is sovereign and men are responsible for their actions in a “cause and effect world” based on God’s unchanging laws.

“Unlike the Book of Esther, where God operates behind the scene, in Chronicles the Lord takes center stage and leaves no doubt as to who is in charge. ...the author presents God as the Lord of history and the cause of its events.” —Payne, IV:316

### Theology of “Immediate Retribution”

“In his emphasis on immediate retribution the Chronicler is warning the restoration community against any complacency or presumption that punishment might be deferred as it had been in the past [as developed in the Book of Kings, viz., through the time of monarchy, apostasy culminating in exile]. For a nation once again ‘serving the kingdoms of other lands’ (2 Chron. 12:8), survival and blessing were found through seeking God and humbling oneself before him.” —Dillard & Longman, p. 177

The burden of obedience in Chronicles is placed upon the shoulders of the Davidic king. Although they reap what they sow, God graciously sends covenant messengers (prophets) to remind them of obligations and to warn them of wrong actions.

### 3. Proper worship

a. Emphasis is placed upon proper ritual and worship and the proper shrine in the face of the northern tribes’ religious apostasy. Three chapters are given over to Josiah’s temple renewals.

b. True worship in approaching God is emphasized by vocabulary like, “a perfect heart.” This phrase is found in Chronicles nine out of the 16 times in the OT.

For another good example of a proper sensitivity and flexibility in worship, see Payne on Hezekiah’s Passovers, *EBC*, IV:318.

c. Chronicles emphasizes that true worship in Israel was not maintained so much by a godly priesthood as by godly Davidic kings, e.g., Hezekiah and Josiah. Jehoiada is the only High Priest mentioned.

This fact perhaps foreshadows the Melchizedekian King-Priest, (Zech. 6).