



My Drift

Title: Bible – The Book of 2 Chronicles

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The book of 2 Chronicles continues the story of Israel begun in 1 Chronicles. It offers an interpretation of the history of Judah's kings from Solomon to Zedekiah. Significantly, the book does not narrate the history of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Author: It was probably written by the Jewish priest Ezra.

Date Written: 517-400 BC

Date of Narrative: 970-538 BC

Key Characters

Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, Rehoboam, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Ahab, Jehoram, Joash, Uzziah, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Josiah.

Outline

Solomon prepares, builds, and dedicates the temple – 2 Chronicles 1:1-7:22.

Solomon's achievements and fame – 2 Chronicles 8:1-9:31.

Reign of Rehoboam, Solomon's son – 2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16.

Reigns of good and wicked kings – 2 Chronicles 13:1-36:16.

Exile into Babylon – 2 Chronicles 36:17-21.

Restoration of God's people to Israel – 2 Chronicles 36:22-23



Solomon prepares, builds, and dedicates the temple

The book begins with the reign of Solomon and the building of the Temple (2 Chronicles 1-9). Solomon and his workmen construct the Temple out of the richest materials, and they spend seven years on the project. The Chronicler highlights the dedication of the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant and all the Temple furnishings. At the dedication, the Lord sends fire from heaven and he fills the Temple with a cloud of glory. Solomon's reign is marked by fame, riches, and wisdom. 2 Chronicles does not focus on Solomon's sins like 1 Kings does.

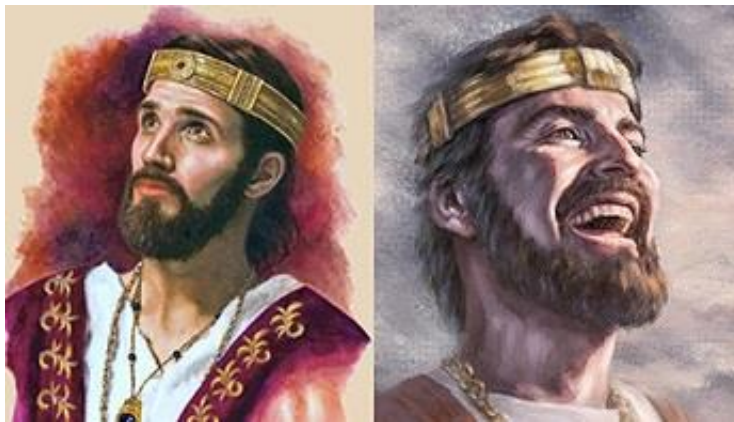
After Solomon's reign, the kingdom splits under Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 10). The line of kings in Judah goes back and forth between faithfulness and unfaithfulness to the covenant with the Lord. At one point, the line of David is almost completely wiped out by the evil Queen Athaliah, but a priest saves the young heir, Joash (2 Chronicles 22). Several kings are extremely wicked. For example, Jehoram murders all his brothers, and he is even cursed by the prophet Elijah (2 Chronicles 21).



Again and again, the Chronicler directs our attention to the Temple. Solomon constructs it in response to David's orders and Asa, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah repair it. Uzziah desecrates it by trying to offer incense (2 Chronicles 26). Manasseh sets up pagan idols in it (2 Chronicles 33). The Temple represents the whole covenant. It is the sign of the nation, the symbol of the Lord's relationship with his people. The Temple's final destruction by the Babylonians represents the collapse of the covenant.



Temple's final destruction by the Babylonians



Hezekiah and Josiah

Two kings stand out in the story of 2 Chronicles: Hezekiah and Josiah. Hezekiah tears down pagan places of worship (2 Chronicles 29-32). He rebuilds the Temple, offers sacrifices and reinstitutes the Passover feast. The prophet Isaiah assists and advises King Hezekiah. The two pray for Judah at the time of the Assyrian invasion and the Lord saves Jerusalem. Unfortunately, Hezekiah's pride causes him to die of illness. Josiah also destroys pagan places of worship, repairs the Temple, and reinstitutes the Passover (2 Chronicles 34-35). Under his reign, the priests find the Book of the Law (probably Deuteronomy) in the Temple. The prophet Jeremiah advises King Josiah. Jeremiah prophesies that the people will be sent into exile for 70 years, which they are (2 Chronicles 36:21).

When the Babylonians take over the Assyrian empire, they proceed to conquer Judah during the reign of Jehoiachin (2 Chronicles 36). The king and many important persons are exiled to Babylon. The Babylonians place Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, on the throne of Judah. When he rebels against the empire, the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and the Temple and drag him into exile.



The exile of the Jews from Canaan to Babylon

Yet 2 Chronicles ends on a hopeful note. Cyrus, king of Persia, takes over the Babylonian empire and decides to send the Jewish people back to Judah: the exile ends. Yet we are left wondering how the Lord will fulfill his promise to David of an everlasting dynasty. Only in Jesus, the Son of David, is the promise finally fulfilled.



For today's Christian, 2 Chronicles serves as a reminder that idolatry still exists, though in more subtle forms. Its message is still relevant: Put God first in your life and allow nothing to come between yourself and your relationship with him. It will change your life for the better.

Themes

Three themes permeate the book of 2 Chronicles: God's promise to David of an eternal throne, God's desire to abide in his holy temple, and God's ongoing offer of forgiveness.

God honored his covenant with David to establish David's house, or reign, forever. Earthly kings could not do that, but one of David's descendants was Jesus Christ, who now reigns in heaven for all eternity. Jesus, the "Son of David" and King of Kings, also served as Messiah, the perfect sacrifice who died for the salvation of humanity.

Through David and Solomon, God established his temple, where people could come to worship. Solomon's temple was destroyed by the invading Babylonians, but through Christ, God's temple was re-established forever as his Church. Now, through baptism, the Holy Spirit dwells within every believer, whose body is a temple (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Finally, the theme of sin, loss, coming back to God, and restoration runs throughout the second half of 2 Chronicles. Clearly, God is a God of love and forgiveness, always welcoming his repentant children back to him.

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