1 and 2 Chronicles

Hope for the Restoration of the Davidic King
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ date and authorship?

• What are the key theological issues in 1 and 2 Chronicles?

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ structure and content?

• How do 1 and 2 Chronicles point us to Jesus and the NT?
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ date and authorship?

- We know that Chronicles was one of the last, if not the last, book written in our OT. Trying to date the book has several components.

  - Cyrus’ decree (2 Chron 36:22-23): given in 538 BC, this book would’ve been written after this.

  - The Davidic Genealogy (1 Chron 3:17-24): extended at least two generations beyond Zerubbabel.

  - Persian money (1 Chron 29:7): part of the people’s giving for the construction of the Solomonic temple was reported in darics, a Persian coin that was not minted until 515 BC.
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ date and authorship?

  • We know that Chronicles was one of the last, if not the last, book written in our OT. Trying to date the book has several components.

  • Relationship to Ezra-Nehemiah: because of the overlap in several places—from Cyrus’ decree to vocabulary and syntax—there was some thought that perhaps they were written at the same time. Evangelical scholarship recently has tended not to view them as connected.

  • All of this leads to a date somewhere, perhaps, between 450-400 BC. If so, it would be the contemporary of Malachi.
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ date and authorship?

  • The date question connects to the authorship question. Jewish scholarship historically claimed Ezra has the author.

  • This was based upon supposed connections between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, especially in its focus upon the 2nd Temple.

  • While it certainly could have been Ezra, because the book itself is anonymous, it seems best to view it that way.
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ date and authorship?

• While not directly related to the authorship question, one of the things that is important to notice is how the Chronicler used Samuel-Kings for his own theological purposes (see chart from ESV Study Bible)

• One writer suggested that the Chronicler produced the “first Bible commentary” as he told Israel’s sacred history using Samuel-Kings.

• But he also used other extra-biblical sources to craft this history (1 Chron 29:29; 2 Chron 12:15, 13:22, 20:34, 32:32).
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ date and authorship?

• Also important to remember is where Chronicles shows up in the Hebrew Bible versus our Bibles (which follow the LXX).

• In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles is included in the “writings” after Ezra-Nehemiah:

• After the rebuilding of Jerusalem and Temple, a story about the Davidic Kings and their relationship to the Temple.

• A further exploration of the questions about monotheism, covenant, exile, and kingship.
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Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

- What are the key theological issues in 1 and 2 Chronicles?
  - Kingship and Temple
    - The genealogy: Judah/Levi focus
    - David/Solomon: overwhelming focus on worship and temple (see esp 1 Chron 17:10-13)
    - Subsequent kings: decline or restoration happens in relationship to the king’s attitude toward right temple worship.
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What are the key theological issues in 1 and 2 Chronicles?

  • Seeking and Forsaking God

    • Saul/David: set forward as paradigms of those who sought or forsook God:

      • Saul: 1 Chron 10:13-14

      • David: 1 Chron 13:1-4

    • The condition: David (1 Chron 28:9); Solomon (2 Chron 7:14)

    • All subsequent kings are set forward either as those who sought God or those who forsook God (2 Chron 10-36)

    • The promise of hope, even when Israel was wayward, if they would turn and seek the Lord.
What are the key theological issues in 1 and 2 Chronicles?

- Exile, Covenant, Forever King/Kingdom
  - Israel was back in the land; the temple was rebuilt. But the exile wasn’t really over and wouldn’t be over until the Davidic King was reinstalled over his people.
  - Because the central question centered on God’s covenant promise to David (1 Chron 17):
    - Where was the Forever King ruling a Forever Kingdom?
    - Were those promises applicable to the post-exilic generation?
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ structure and content?
  • A Genealogical Sacred History (1 Chron 1-9)
    • Are the Davidic Promises still applicable to the post-exile generation? Does God still care about Israel/Judah/Levi? Yes!
      • A demonstration of national identity—from Adam to post-exile
      • The centrality of Judah/Levi in God’s purposes—royal and priestly lines
      • The northern tribes too are part of “All Israel” even in their failure and rebellion
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ structure and content?
  
  • Two Paradigmatic Royal Histories (1 Chron 9:35-2 Chron 9): Saul and David
    
    • How did David (Solomon) keep faith with God? He/they sought the Lord as God commanded and provided for Temple worship.
      
      • Ark of the Covenant (1 Chron 13-16)
      
      • Temple location (1 Chron 21-22)
      
      • Temple provisions (1 Chron 23-29)
      
      • Building the temple (2 Chron 2-7)
      
    • David/Solomon’s glory as kings was result of/reflected in attitude toward temple worship (1 Chron 18-20; 2 Chron 8-9)
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ structure and content?

• The Paradigms Illustrated in history of Judah (2 Chron 10-36)

  • Unlike Samuel-Kings, which had Deuteronomy in the background and promised ultimate divine judgment, Chronicles holds out the possibility of restoration and revival all along the way.

  • This is seen the cyclical nature of the book as the restoration kings sought the Lord, pictured in a proper attitude toward Levitical priests/temple.

    • Kings who sought the Lord initially but then forsook him are punished (Rehoboam, Asa, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah).

    • Kings who forsook the Lord from the beginning were punished painfully (Jehoram)

    • Kings who forsook the Lord but later repented were shown mercy in their generation (Manasseh)
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• What was 1 and 2 Chronicles’ structure and content?

  • A final word of hope: the proclamation of Cyrus brings the story full circle to 1 Chron 9.

  • This was an example of God keeping his prophetic word ("That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled")

  • This was an example of God being able to use even his enemies to honor his promises regarding the Temple (cf. 1 Chron 17:10-13)

  • If God could do this, surely he could keep his promise about a Forever King and a Forever Kingdom.
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• How do 1 and 2 Chronicles point us to Jesus and the NT?

  • Remember where Chronicles is placed in the Hebrew Bible: it is the last book in the OT canon.

  • That means the open question at the end of the OT is: will God finally end his people’s exile by keeping covenant through bringing the Davidic King?

• How does Matthew open?

  • With a genealogy—replicating 1 Chron 1-9, from Adam through Abraham and David and exile to Jesus

  • With a declaration—“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt 1:1)

  • With worship of the Davidic King—the Magi (Matt 2)
Approaching 1 and 2 Chronicles

• How do 1 and 2 Chronicles point us to Jesus and the NT?

• And so, the question that Chronicles closes with regarding God, covenant, exile, and king is answered decisively in Jesus: he is the promised Forever King.

• He announces a forever Kingdom: “From that time, Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (Matt 4:17).

• And he speaks about the Temple as his house, which he truly honors (Matt 21:12-17)

• Jesus stands in the David line as a righteous king who seeks God and honors the temple (which is his house as the Son of God).