2 Kings and Chronicles

INFORMATION FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

For information on 2 Kings see Small Group Discussion Guide for weeks 16 and 17.

1-2 Chronicles:

The Hebrew title of the work, Dibre Hayyamin, is derived from 1 Chronicles 27:24 and may be translated “the events of the years” or “annals.” In the Septuagint (Greek translation), it is known as Paraleipomena or “the things omitted,” indicating that it was considered a supplement to the books of Samuel and Kings. The English title derives from a suggestion by Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate (a Latin translation), that a more suitable title would be “the chronicle of the whole sacred history.” Martin Luther adopted this proposal, titling his translation of the books Die Chronika, and versions ever since the Reformation have followed his practice.

Theme

The central theme of Chronicles is the significance of the Davidic covenant as the enduring basis of Israel’s life and hope. The Davidic covenant is expressed in the two institutions that derive directly from it: the monarchy and the temple. These institutions are mutually related (1 Chron. 17:10b–14), and together they represent God’s kingdom in Israel (2 Chron. 13:5, 8). The Davidic covenant does not replace the Mosaic covenant but builds on it for the new age of the monarchy and the temple. Further dimensions of the Davidic covenant are discussed below under Key Themes.
Purpose, Occasion, and Background

The Babylonian campaign against Judah, which began in 605 B.C. under Nebuchadnezzar, climaxed in the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 586 and the deportation of many of its leading people to settlements near Babylon. The conquest meant the overthrow of the Davidic monarchy and the end of Judah as a nation-state. Babylon, in turn, fell in 538 B.C. to the Persians under Cyrus II. The Persians followed a more benign policy of permitting the exiled people groups to return to their lands (now provinces in the Persian Empire) to rebuild their cities and reestablish their religious practices. Groups of exiles from Judah, including priests and civil leaders, returned in 538 B.C., but the temple was not completely rebuilt until 516. This initial restoration was followed by those who returned in 458 B.C. with Ezra, who came to reestablish the Law of Moses as the rule for the community’s life, and Nehemiah, who arrived as governor in 445 to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Basic Chronology of 1–2 Chronicles

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History of Salvation Summary

God chose Israel to be his people, through whom he would bless all peoples, especially by raising up the ultimate heir of David to rule them. He gave his people the privilege of worshiping and obeying him, but sadly, they were unfaithful, and he disciplined them severely. For all that, the exile was not the end of Israel’s story. Members of the restoration community were the heirs of Israel, both of its mission and of its privileges.
Key Themes

1. The Davidic covenant. God’s promissory covenant with David (1 Chron. 17:10b–14, 23–27; 2 Chron. 6:10, 15–17, 42; 7:17–18; 13:8; 23:3) is the source of the Davidic dynasty and Solomon’s temple. God’s commitment to “build a house” for David is fulfilled in the accession of Solomon and the line of his descendants, while the temple is completed as God promised (2 Chron. 6:10). The covenant has its origin in God’s purpose and initiative in electing David to be his king (1 Chron. 28:4) and Solomon to be his temple builder (1 Chron. 22:9–10; 28:5).

2. The temple. Solomon’s temple looms very large in Chronicles, all the more so in comparison to the books of Samuel and Kings. Much of the presentation of David’s reign is taken up with his preparations for the temple, including the ark narrative (1 Chronicles 13, 15–16), which is really a harbinger of the building that will house the symbol of God’s presence (1 Chron. 17:1; 2 Chron. 5:4–5; 6:41). Moreover, David’s wars (1 Chronicles 18–20) have their primary meaning for the Chronicler in securing “rest” for the land as the condition for temple building (1 Chron. 22:17–19). The portrayal of Solomon’s reign is also taken up almost entirely with describing the construction and dedication of the temple (2 Chron. 2:1–8:16). In post-Solomonic history, the temple plays a central role in the reigns of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29–30) and Josiah (2 Chronicles 34–35).

3. The people of Israel. The Chronicler sought to address some urgent questions in his day concerning the identity of Israel and to instill fresh confidence in the people. The genealogies of Israel that begin the work (1 Chronicles 1–9) start by tracing the people’s ancestry back to Adam, a striking reminder that Israel lay at the center of God’s purpose from the very beginning of creation. Although only a “remnant” and a provincial outpost in a great empire, Israel must remember that its security and destiny rest with Yahweh, “who rule[s] over all the kingdoms of the nations” and has given the land to Abraham’s descendants “forever” (2 Chron. 20:6–7).

Book Outline

I. A Genealogical Presentation of the Tribes of Israel (1 Chron. 1:1–9:44)
   A. Adam to Esau (1:1–54)
   B. The sons of Israel (2:1–2)
   C. The tribe of Judah (2:3–4:23)
   D. The tribe of Simeon (4:24–43)
   E. The Transjordanian tribes (5:1–26)
   F. The tribe of Levi (6:1–81)
   G. Other northern tribes (7:1–40)
   H. The tribe of Benjamin (8:1–40)
   I. The resettlement of Jerusalem (9:1–34)
   J. The genealogy of Saul (9:35–44)

II. The United Kingdom of David and Solomon (1 Chron. 10:1–2 Chron. 9:31)
   A. David’s rise to power over Israel (1 Chron. 10:1–12:40)
B. David’s transfer of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem (13:1–16:43)
C. The dynastic promise to David (17:1–27)
D. David’s wars (18:1–20:8)
E. David’s census and preparation for the temple (21:1–29:30)
F. Solomon’s temple preparations (2 Chron. 1:1–2:18)
G. Solomon’s building of the temple (3:1–5:1)
H. The dedication of the temple (5:2–7:22)
I. Solomon’s other accomplishments (8:1–16)
J. Solomon’s international relations and renown (8:17–9:31)

III. The Kingdom of Judah down to the Exile (2 Chron. 10:1–36:23)
A. Rehoboam (10:1–12:16)
B. Abijah (13:1–14:1)
C. Asa (14:2–16:14)
D. Jehoshaphat (17:1–21:1)
E. Jehoram and Ahaziah (21:2–22:12)
F. Joash (23:1–24:27)
G. Amaziah (25:1–28)
H. Uzziah (26:1–23)
I. Jotham (27:1–9)
J. Ahaz (28:1–27)
K. Hezekiah (29:1–32:33)
L. Manasseh (33:1–20)
M. Amon (33:21–25)
N. Josiah (34:1–35:27)
O. The last four kings (36:1–21)
P. Restoration (36:22–23)

FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

BIBLE STUDY FOCUS – “CLEANING HOUSE”

MAIN TEXT: 2 Kings 22:1-4, 8-13

Instructions for Small Group Time:

Option 1: Send the main text to small group members so they can read it ahead of time.

Option 2: Read the text together when you meet

Basic Bible Study Practices:

1. As people read the text, ask them to pay attention to key words
2. As people read the text have them highlight key words, people, and places
3. As people read the text have them pay attention to repetition of key terms, ideas, and people
4. If people are given the opportunity to read the text ahead of small group time, have them read it at least twice so they become familiar with its contents.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Read 2 Chronicles 34:1-2. What are these verses communicating about the protagonist of this narrative? Why is verse 2 significant? (Compare Josiah’s description with the other kings who reigned before him)...how are they described?
2. Josiah was a reformer...list the things he did to reform the land. How can we as believers be part of reformation within the church today?
3. What’s significant about Hilkiah’s discovery in 2 Chronicles 34:14-16? What is the book of the law?
4. Why do you think Josiah reacted the way he did in verse 19? What does it communicate about God in this story?
5. What is it about God’s word that caused people to tear their clothes off?

Extra Resources

The Gospel Project
Overview of Chronicles: https://youtu.be/HR7xaHv3Ias

Social Media Sharables:
“For great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book.”

(2 Chron. 34:21)

And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.