

A LOOK AT THE BOOK 1 & 2 CHRONICLES

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AUTHOR AND DATE

These books were originally written as one single volume.

Although the book doesn't identify the author, the Talmud attributes the book to Ezra.

It was written from a priestly perspective; the temple is central. Ezra was a priest and demonstrated the same perspective (Ezr. 7:1-5, 11). The genealogies include the days of Ezra and support an author contemporary with him. A comparison of the introduction to Ezra with the conclusion of 2 Chronicles indicates that Ezra is a deliberate continuation of Chronicles.

The author used other historical records. As a scribe, Ezra would have had access to the records and would have known how to use them. The use of other sources would not discredit divine authority. God is able to direct the author as he investigates historical sources so as to guarantee the veracity and value of the message He wishes to communicate to His people.

Concerning the date of the book, the events cover nearly the entire Old Testament period, from Adam up to the restoration of Israel (1-9). The more detailed part of the story looks at the period from Saul (1051 B.C.) until Cyrus' decree allowing the people to return to Israel and reconstruct the temple (538 B.C.). The author must have written near the end of this period, most likely after his return to Jerusalem in 458, probably between 450 and 425 B.C.

BACKGROUND

Although its genealogies refer to the entire Old Testament period, the principal focus is on the Davidic dynasty (1011-586).

It concludes with a summary concerning the time of the captivity (606-536).

Politically, the period reflects the conditions of the times of David and of Solomon when there was little foreign intervention and Israel controlled all the territory around them.

2 Chronicles shows the growing influence of Mesopotamia in the area.

The area was more and more affected by the potent nations to their north and east; first Syria, then Assyria, Babylon and finally, Persia.

The most notable political power at the beginning of the period was the Davidic dynasty over the united kingdom.

The division of the kingdom after the reign of Solomon produced conflicts between the northern and southern kingdoms.

When the northern kingdom of Israel was taken captive in 722 B.C., the Davidic dynasty went on in the south until 586 B.C.

The political environment became unstable because of the religious instability of the people with their God.

The story concludes with the fall of Judah.

Cyrus' decree allowing them to return to the land and start over affirms the hope of future restoration.

PURPOSE AND THEME

Three reasons for writing:

New start in the land

Discouragement because of their loss

Loss of throne

Loss of temple

Neglect of the temple

Three purposes:

Exhort them to be faithful to Yahweh.

Encourage them to trust Him.

Demonstrate the importance of reverence for the temple.

WHAT LESSONS SHOULD WE LEARN FROM THESE BOOKS?

1 & 2 CHRONICLES

THE TEST OF FAITHFULNESS

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