

The Half Hour That Changes the World

2 Chronicles

Book 14

Basic Questions behind the book:

How do you keep the main thing, the main thing?

Summary of book:

See notes on 1 Chronicles for introductory material that will help you understand something of the context and themes of this book. As we noted before, in the Hebrew Bible our two books are simply one. They appear to have been divided at the time when they were translated into Greek in the 2nd century BC, possibly because two scrolls were easier to handle than one long one. 2 Chronicles parallels the story of 1 & 2 Kings, from the life of Solomon, to the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the destruction of the temple. After the North and South divide this book relates largely to the southern Kingdom of Judah, with the main concerns again being about the Temple and religious life. The various Kings are judged good or bad entirely on whether they follow the Lord or other gods. For that reason the book is very selective in its history. Indeed the Greek translators called the book 'things missing'. But – praise God – there are no more lists of names.

Vital Statistics:

Purpose: To unify the nation around true worship of God by showing his standard for judging kings. The righteous kings of Judah and the religious revivals under their rule are highlighted, and the sins of the evil kings are exposed.

Author: An unknown Chronicler, although a long tradition associated the book with Ezra.

Recipients: To the Jewish Community once they had returned from exile as they sought to rebuild their life and identity.

Dating: Approximately 430 BC after the return from exile, but chronicling the events from the end of David's reign (960 BC), through the reign of Solomon, the divided kingdom up to the beginning of the Babylonian exile around 587 BC.

Setting: II Chronicles parallels I & II Kings and serves as their commentary. It is written after the exile from a priestly point of view. II Chronicles emphasizes the religious history of Judah, in particular only mentioning the north when it has importance for the south's history.

Other Notes:

The temple built by Solomon is the first of three in Jerusalem. The temple of Solomon was destroyed at the beginning of the Babylonian exile. The second temple is the one that was built after the people returned from exile. It was never finished. The third one was built by Herod and would have been incomplete still during the time of Jesus. This was destroyed during the Fall of Jerusalem under the Romans in AD 70. The 'wailing wall' in Jerusalem is believed to be part of the second temple.

"If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (7:14)