

The Whole Story:



2 Chronicles

Main Theme: God will remain faithful to his promise even in the darkest of times.

Payoff: By reading 2 Chronicles you will see how God remains faithful, even through generations of human rebellion.

Overview: Second Chronicles continues to tell the story of God's covenant with the house of David beginning with his son Solomon and then following the many subsequent kings leading all the way to exile. The early chapters detail the wisdom and prosperity of King Solomon and how he entreated the Lord as he built the temple. Through all of this we see constant recall to the covenant that God made with David and Israel's plea for God to always remember the covenant even when the people forsake him. After Solomon we get the account of how the kingdoms split and how the cycles of idolatry eventually end in exile. Throughout the book the leaders may differ in character but the remaining constant is that the Lord is good, and his steadfast mercy endures forever.

There are three main sections of 1 Chronicles to consider as you read through.

2 Chronicles 1-9 The reign of Solomon and the building of the temple

2 Chronicles 10-28 The many wars and kings of the divided kingdom

2 Chronicles 29-36 The final kings and eventual fall of Judah

As the plot unfolds, some key theological themes emerge:

1. **The Cycles of Idolatry** By this point in the historical books we are decidedly not strangers to the recurring plotline of how God's people forsake their covenant and turn to idols. We saw Abraham continually doubt God and try to make his own way. We watched the as the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness and doubt God's provision time after time. We watched even a conquering nation refuse to follow the Lord's commands and drive all the people out of the land. We saw generations turn and forget in the time of the judges. Now we recount how the same cycles unfold as the people follow the leadership of their kings for better or worse.

These cycles in Chronicles will focus specifically on whether or not the king follows in the way of "his father David." (2 Chron 34:2) This language is chosen specifically to show the reader that the story is not about human kings, but about the covenant that God has made with his people. As Christians we can now look back and see that not only was Jesus the one king who would never fall into idolatry and perfectly follow in the way of his father David, but that he is also the one that David himself would look forward to and call Lord. (Matt. 22:45)

The idolatry and failure of these kings is spoken of side by side with their rebellions to remind an Israelite nation returning from exile that they should turn to God and await the coming messiah instead of following the ups and downs of fallible earthly leaders. The long prayer of Solomon in chapter 6 is specifically placed to remind the people to turn back to God when they have wandered, and the presence of God, not prosperity is what they must seek. Page after page we see reminders that we are to seek God's leadership regardless of worldly circumstances

2. God Keeps His Word. Much like first Chronicles we see that this book is written to remind an Israelite nation returning from exile that God has always remained faithful to his promise in both the high and low points Israel's history. The description of God's presence overshadows the grand description of the temple because God is greater than the most prosperous of times. (2 Chr. 7:1-3) We see the passover celebrated to remind the reader that God has preserved his people through generations of persecution. (2 Chr. 30:1-27) We see the book of the law rediscovered to show us that God is always faithful to reveal himself to those who seek him. (34:8-19) Even the many wars, occupations, and eventually exile in Chronicles remind us that God will go to great lengths to keep his word and steer his people back to himself.

This theme is best summed up though by the repeated phrase that carries over from first to second Chronicles: "For he is good, his steadfast love endures forever." (2 Chr. 5:13) This repeated phrase reveals to us the author's intention for writing this book to the Israelites as they return from exile. As they face the naturally human tendency to either long for the glory days or reject the past all together, the author of Chronicles reminds them that the one constant past, present, and future is the goodness of God. The same God that has been good from before the dawn of time will not cease to be good now. He will not break his promise to establish the throne of David forever. He will not break his promise to heal those who repent. He will not break his promise to establish his kingdom on the earth forever. As modern day Christians we can look back now and now that God accomplished all of these things by sending Jesus.

Advice for Reading: Just like the first book of the Chronicles paints a much more idealistic picture of David, the second book paints a highly idealized picture of Solomon. Don't be confused by this and fall into the common error of believing that these are simply allegorical characters for us to emulate. This idealized picture is about these men fulfilling the promise that God has made. They have no merit on their own without the blessing, guidance, and mercy of God himself. The author wrote these idealized descriptions to remind us of God's faithfulness, not the deeds of men. He also acknowledges openly that he does not write an exhaustive story when he asks us at the end of each description "are not all the deeds written" and refers us to other books.

Also, don't get too lost in the timeline and geography of the kingdoms when they split in chapter 10. Instead know that this particular viewpoint on the story focuses on the southern kingdom and only mentions the northern kingdom when their paths intersect. This is because the author is tracing the line of David to remind his people that the messiah will come from the house of Judah. This is not an exhaustive history of both kingdoms, but an encouragement for the contemporary audience to trust in God as he unfolds his plan.

Finally, don't fall into the prosperity Gospel fallacies that many have tried to impose when they interpret these narratives. Many read this book and ignore the context to conclude that is we are well behaved then God will give us peace and wealth. 2 Chronicles 7:14 is often quoted in political rhetoric suggesting that is we simply prayed more in the United States then we would have peace and prosperity. These types of interpretations treat God as little more than a means to an end, and ignore the the author's exhortation to us that "he is good, his steadfast love endures forever." 2 Chronicles shows us that in the most abundant season of prosperity God's presence is better than any wealth we can attain, and that in the most difficult of circumstances that he is working all of history to reveal himself and bring his people to repentance. Let these books help you to see past your circumstances and marvel and the unfailing promises of God, "for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever."

Main Application: *The exact same as first Chronicles* Even in difficult times we can have faith in God's plan because he has proven that he will preserve his people and establish his kingdom forever.