

Lecture #1 – Introduction and Overview of I & II Samuel, I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles

I. Thematic Overview

These six books create a narrative of over 620 years of history. During this time, the people of Israel shift from being twelve somewhat disconnected tribes to one united kingdom to a division into two kingdoms then to captivity at the hands of Gentile world powers.

In these we find record after record of God's interaction with mankind. We see His hand of blessing and the rod of his correction. We find mighty displays of His matchless power. Most of all, we see His providential guidance of human history.

Practical lessons abound. There is hardly a sermon that cannot find a fitting anecdote in the pages of the books.

The richest veins are those that deal with the future Messiah. The course of events leading to His ministry grow deeper and stronger in these books. His great earthly ancestor David is marked. God promised that from His lineage the Messiah would appear to rule and everlasting kingdom.

These books are also the "backbone" for the books that follow them in the Old Testament. You cannot appreciate Esther, Nehemiah, or Ezra without knowing the backstory found here. The poetry of the Psalms and of Solomon hang on the events of these books. Most of the prophets proclaimed God's word during the history contained here.

Our study of these books will be primarily expository – studying the very words of the inspired pages. When necessary, we will step back and look at broader themes and historical context. But the emphasis will remain on "thus saith the Lord".

II. Harmonizing the Six Books

Our study will be primarily *expository* analysis of the six books in order.

I & II Samuel and I & II Kings are one continuous narrative from the birth of Samuel (c. 1160 B.C.) into the Babylonian Captivity (561 B.C.). It begins with the last days of the Judges under Eli and Samuel, tells of the establishing of the monarchy under Saul and its heights under David and Solomon, then follows a combined history of the Divided Kingdom until both Israel and Judah fell into captivity.

I & II Chronicles form a parallel account. It begins with David's genealogy traced back to Adam, followed David's heirs through the Kingdom of Judah, and ends with an addendum concerning Cyrus's decree to rebuild the Temple in 538 B.C.

The following chart¹ by John Phillips on the differences in Kings and Chronicles illustrates the differences between the two narrative accounts:

Kings	Chronicles
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was written before the Captivity.• Was written from the standpoint of the Prophets.• Embraces the history of the Northern Kingdom• Is compulsive – was written in the dust and din and distraction of the time and place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was written after the Captivity.• Was written from the standpoint of the Priests.• Ignores the history of the Northern Kingdom• Is contemplative – was written in the quiet and calm of a library, far from the sounds and scenes involved

Since these books cover the same narrative history, it is often useful to compare the accounts when possible. Additionally, the history covered here is the structure upon which much of the rest of the Old Testament rests. Two examples of this: to understand Psalm 51 we need to know the story of David and Bathsheba in II Samuel 11 and 12, and to understand the Book of Hosea we need to understand its place in the history of the Divided Kingdom (II Kings 14 and II Chronicles 26).

A good study Bible or commentary should point toward these historical connections. I personally like most of the chronology in *The Reese Chronological Study Bible* and use it very often in study. There are other harmonies of these books available. Another book that is often mentioned is *A Harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles* by William Day Crockett (1869-1930), but the text is the Revised Version.

III. Analysis of I & II Samuel

These two books are considered one book in the Hebrew Bible.

Title – It takes the first major figure in the books, the prophet Samuel. These two books are largely the story of Samuel and the two kings he anointed (Saul and David).

Dates Covered – c. 1160 (birth of Samuel) to 1018 B.C. (David's numbering of the people), a period of roughly 140 years.

¹ *Exploring The Scriptures (Revised)* by John Phillips. Moody Press, 1989. p. 106

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Author – Unknown, but Jewish tradition says it was Samuel (I Samuel 10:25) up to I Samuel 25 and then after that the prophets Nathan and Gad (see I Chronicles 29:29).

Other Books Cited – the book of Jasher (I Samuel 1:18) and perhaps Psalms (II Samuel 22).

Date of Writing – Perhaps written as ongoing register of events as they happened, so maybe 1100-970 B.C. Evidence that will point to a relatively close, yet still somewhat-removed, time of writing include:

- The “in those days” in I Samuel 3:1 shows the author was writing in a time when prophecy was more common.
- The explanation of the term “seer” in I Samuel 9:9 which was no longer used when the account was created.
- The explanation of the clothing the king’s daughters wore in II Samuel 13:18.
- The use of the phrase “unto this day” in I Samuel 5:5, 6:18, 27:6, 30:25, and II Samuel 4:3, 6:8, 18:18.
- The total length of David’s reign given in II Samuel 5:5
- A reference to the kings of Judah (which must mean after the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam in 975 B.C.

Theme – Transition

Purpose – Trace the foundation of the Davidic dynasty.

Practical Lessons

- God honors those that honor Him (I Samuel 15:22-23). Hannah’s son Samuel was favored over Eli’s sons. David was favored over Saul.

Misc. Notes:

- The first chapters of I Samuel overlap with the final chapters of Judges. Reese, for example, puts I Samuel 1 between Judges 12 and 13. This is key to remember that I Samuel is the story of the transition from a theocratic government led by the judges to the monarchy.

Basic Outline (by John Phillips²)

- The Dying Theocracy – I Samuel 1-7
- The Dawning Monarchy – I Samuel 8-31

² *Exploring The Scriptures (Revised)* by John Phillips. Moody Press, 1989. p. 62

- David's Patient Years – II Samuel 1-4
- David's Prosperous Years – II Samuel 5-12
- David's Perilous Years – II Samuel 13-24

IV. Analysis of I & II Kings

These two books are considered one book in the Hebrew Bible.

Title – Based on the contents of the book. It is the story of the kings of Israel and Judah.

Dates Covered – 1016-560 B.C.

Author – Unknown, but there is a tradition that it was Jeremiah.

- A.C. Gaebelein – “Much has been written on the possible instrument who was used in putting these records together as we have them now. Critics have much to say on the different compilers, redactors, editors, etc., who all had a hand in putting these histories together. They speak of proximate sources and primary sources and later additions and redactions. To say the least it is bewildering and unprofitable to follow, what they term, their scientific method. That the author of these two books had certain sources or documents, besides traditional accounts at his disposal, cannot be denied. But we maintain that he was chosen by the Lord to write these records of the kings and was guided by the Holy Spirit as he wrote. The books of the Kings have the mark in every way of being the work of one person and not a number of persons, followed by others who edited their writings. Unity of style can be clearly followed throughout the books; there is uniform mode of expression which would be quite impossible with a number of authors or compilers. See and compare I Kings 22:43 with II Kings 14:3-4; I Kings 12:31 with II Kings 17:32; I Kings 11:43 with II Kings 13:13. Jewish tradition declares that the prophet Jeremiah was the instrument chosen to write the two books of the Kings. While no one can say with certainty that this is true, much is in favor of this view. There is a striking similarity of style and idiom between the language of Kings and the language employed by Jeremiah. Perhaps no one was better fitted to write the wonderful history of Solomon's failure, the division of the Kingdom, the apostasy of Israel, the chastisements of the Lord, than the prophet of tears, the man of God whose loving messages were to a backslidden Israel.”³

Other Books Cited – the Book of the Acts of Solomon (I Kings 11:41), the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (I Kings 14:19), the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (I Kings 14:29).

Date of Writing – Perhaps around 550 B.C.

³ *Annotated Bible*, by A.C. Gaebelein. E-Sword module.

Theme – The decline and fall of the kingdom(s).

Purpose – These books were not written to just record history, but to also analyze the events spiritually.

Practical Lessons

- No nation can be great unless it follows God.

Misc. Notes:

- Albert Barnes - “The language of Kings belongs unmistakably to the period of the captivity. It is later than that of Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Joel, and Nahum, earlier than that of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah. In general character it bears a close resemblance to the language of Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and may be assigned to the sixth century before our era.”⁴
- Albert Barnes – “The history is, however, written - not, like most history, from a civil, but from a religious point of view. The Jews are regarded, not as an ordinary nation, but as God’s people. The historian does not aim at exhibiting the mere political progress of the kingdoms about which he writes, but intends to describe to us God’s treatment of the race with which he had entered into covenant. Where he records the events of the civil history, his plan is to trace out the fulfillment of the combined warning and promise which had been given to David (II Samuel 7:12-16)”⁵

Basic Outline (by Harry Adams⁶)

- Solomon Reigns – I Kings 1-11
- The Kingdom Wanes – I Kings 12-22
- The Deterioration and Fall of Israel – II Kings 1-17
- The Deterioration and Fall of Judah – II Kings 18:25

V. Analysis of I & II Chronicles

These two books are considered one book in the Hebrew Bible.

Title – Based on the contents, it is the history, or chronicles, of the house of David and the Kingdom of Judah.

⁴ Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, E-Sword module.

⁵ Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, E-Sword module.

⁶ *The AMG Concise Bible Survey* by Dr. Harry Adams. AMG Publishers, 2003. p. 56-58

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Dates Covered – Creation (the genealogies start with Adam) to 538 B.C.

Author – Ezra, according to tradition.

Other Books Cited – the book of the kings of Israel and Judah (II Chronicles 27:7, 35:27, 36:8), the book of the kings of Judah and Israel (II Chronicles 16:11, 25:26, 28:26, 32:32), the book of the kings of Israel (II Chronicles 24:27), the story⁷ of the book of kings (II Chronicles 24:27), the books of Samuel, Nathan and Gad (I Chronicles 29:29), the books of Nathan, Abijah, and Iddo (II Chronicles 9:29), the books of the prophets Shemaiah and Iddo (II Chronicles 12:15), the book of Jehu (II Chronicles 20:34), the story of the prophet Iddo (II Chronicles 13:22), and writings by Isaiah (II Chronicles 26:22, 32:32).

Date of Writing – around 450 B.C.

Theme – Commentary on Judah.

Purpose – A theological analysis of the glory and fall of the kingdom of David, Solomon, and their descendants on the throne of Judah.

Misc. Notes:

- Albert Barnes - “The style of Chronicles is simpler and less elevated than that of Kings. Excepting the psalm of David in I Chronicles 16 and the prayer of Solomon in 2 Chr. 6, the whole is prosaic, level, and uniform. There are no especially striking chapters, as in Kings; but it is less gloomy, being addressed to the restored nation, which it seeks to animate and inspire. The captive people, weeping by the waters of Babylon, fitly read their mournful history in Kings: the liberated nation, entering hopefully upon a new life, found in Chronicles a review of its past, calculated to help it forward on the path of progress, upon which it was entering.”⁸
- B.H. Carroll - “It must be studied as the record of the divine preparation for the incarnation of the Son of God. The whole of the Old Testament is a preparation for the New Testament. The Old Testament not only contains prophecies, but the whole history itself is a prophecy.”⁹

Basic Outline (by Harry Adams¹⁰)

- Genealogies from Adam to Saul – I Chronicles 1-10
- The Reign of David – I Chronicles 11-29
- The Reign of Solomon – II Chronicles 1-9

⁷ Gill, Gaebelien, and others suggest these are ancient “commentaries”.

⁸ Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, E-Sword module.

⁹ *An Interpretation of the English Bible: The Hebrew Monarchy* by B.H. Carroll. Broadman Press, 1942. p. 155

¹⁰ *The AMG Concise Bible Survey* by Dr. Harry Adams. AMG Publishers, 2003. p. 64-65

- The Succeeding Kings of Judah – II Chronicles 10-36

VI. Prophetic Glimpses

We would be amiss to not mention that, even though these books are historical, they are not without prophetic elements. As A.C. Gaebelien writes:

“Israel had to have a monarchy established in her midst to fore- shadow the true King and His Kingdom. That true King of Israel, the promised One, and His dominion had already been mentioned by Balaam. ‘A sceptre shall rise out of Israel’—‘Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion.’ (Numbers xxiv: 17-19.) Hannah, in her inspired outburst of praise and her prophetic vision, beheld that true king. ‘He shall give strength unto his King and exalt the horn of his Anointed.’ (1 Sam. ii:10.) It is Israel's true King, the Anointed, the Christ, she beheld.

“Saul, the first king, is the people's choice and ends in complete failure. Then David comes upon the scene; he is God's choice; the king after His own heart. But he also fails. However, he is a type of Him who is both David's Lord and David's son, the root and off- spring of David, our Lord Jesus Christ, the true King of Israel. David and Solomon are faint shadows of the true King and His work both in judgment and in the Kingdom of peace. The historical records in the Books of Samuel are especially rich in typical and dispensational lessons and teach many spiritual truths.”¹¹

VII. Notes on These Notes

I make a ton of typos and am trying to find and correct them as we go.

Footnotes are included to document sources and provide additional commentary.

For most books I have tried to include page numbers of the sourced material. For many I am using electronic versions so the exact page or (if a commentary) Scripture reference may not be included. A simple search should be able to locate the exact source locations.

All dates are from Reese's Chronological Bible unless otherwise noted.

The following symbols will be used:

↺ indicates a parallel passage to the one being discussed.

♪ indicates a psalm that would have been written at this time, according to Reese's Chronological Bible.

¹¹ *The Annotated Bible, Vol. II: Joshua to Chronicles* by A.C. Gaebelien. p. 133

📖 indicates a book or passage that would be written or occur at around this time. I am following Reese's Chronological Bible¹² unless otherwise noted. This information is not meant to be exhaustive; I am simply providing it to supplement the primary material in the books we are covering.

¹² My copy is the 2016 version, which may differ from earlier editions.