

Studying 1st Chronicles

Why study 1st Chronicles? The book of 1st Chronicles is about the benefits of seeking the Lord in all things and the consequences of forsaking Him. Those who seek the Lord are to do so and to obey and worship Him with wholeheartedness. 1st Chronicles emphasizes the loyalty of God to His covenants with Abraham and David. God has not forsaken His covenant people and they can look to the future with confidence that God will faithfully fulfill all of His promises to them.

The “books” of 1st and 2nd Chronicles were originally one book with the title of “the words of the days” and were also known as “the things omitted (left behind).” In c. 400 A.D. Jerome issued his Latin Vulgate translation and split the book into two with the title of “The Chronicles of the Entire Sacred History” which has been shortened since that time to first and second Chronicles. History does not record who wrote these records, but Jewish tradition has identified Ezra and Nehemiah as successive authors. It is best to understand that under God’s superintendence, Ezra, Nehemiah or others compiled the records that in their finished form are what we now have as the final books of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Basic Outline of 1st Chronicles

History from Adam to Saul: 1:1-10:14

History of David’s Life and Reign: 11:1-29:30

Themes of 1st Chronicles: (1) God is loyal to His Covenant Promises. (2) Blessings for Faithfulness to the LORD. (3) Hope for the Future Presence of God

Summary of 1st Chronicles

1st Chronicles presents a brief history of the forefathers of David and then a positive account of the life and reign of David. This account demonstrates the loyalty of God to His covenant promises with Abraham and David ensuring that the Davidic throne and kingdom will be everlasting. The book opens with a genealogy stretching from Adam and Seth to Abraham and many of His descendants. In the second chapter a brief history of the people and events from (Israel) Jacob’s line is given. In the third chapter, the descendants of both David and Solomon are listed. Chapters 4 to 8 present a selected history of the sons of Jacob. Chapter 9 gives a brief account of those from the line of Judah who returned to Judah after the Babylonian exile and then recounts the family history of Saul. Chapter 10 relates the story of the death of king Saul.

Chapters 11 to 29 recount the history of David’s life and reign in mostly positive terms. Chapters 11 and 12 present the anointing of David as king and the early days of his reign. Chapters 13-16 are an account of David’s concern for the ark of the covenant. Chapter 17 is the record of the LORD’s covenant with David. Chapters 18-20 provide a brief account of various battles between David and the enemies of Israel. Chapter 21 is the sad account of David’s census of Israel and God’s righteous indignation against David and its consequences. Chapter 22 relates the plans for the building of the temple and David’s charge to Solomon to oversee the temple construction. Chapters 23-26 relate David’s organization plan for those who would participate in temple worship, including the Levites, the Priests, musicians, gatekeepers, treasurers and other officials. Chapter 27 is the account of David’s instructions for the military and leaders of the tribes of Israel. Chapter 28 is the record of David’s charge to Israel and to His son Solomon. The final chapter relates David’s instructions for offerings for the temple, his prayer for the temple assembly, the anointing of Solomon to succeed David as king and a brief statement of the death of David. Note: For a chart on the Kings of Judah and Israel see Studying 1st Kings.

Verses to memorize from 1st Chronicles (ESV).

4:10 Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!” And God granted what he asked.

16:8 Oh give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples.

16:10 Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

16:23-24 Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

16:31 Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, The Lord reigns!

16:34 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

16:36 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!

29:11-12 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all.

12 Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule overall. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

Resources for studying the book of 1st Chronicles.

See the article on how to study the Bible for suggestions on the method of Bible study and recommended resources to obtain. Suggested commentaries and studies are listed below for a more extensive study. Some are available on-line in a pdf format.

One Hour – One Book

Scroll down to video on 1st and 2nd Chronicles.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSrCJNW5eUWQMyVw_2VqW_w

Commentaries

Constable, Thomas. *Notes on 1 Chronicles*, latest edition. Online at Plano Bible Chapel.

Hill, Andrew E. *1 & 2 Chronicles*, NIV Application Commentary, Zondervan, 2003.

Merrill, Eugene, H. *1 Chronicles*, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Victor, Cook Communications, 2004.

Payne, J. Barton, *1, 2 Chronicles*, The Expositors Bible Commentary, Vol. 4, Zondervan, 1988.

Sailhamer, John, *First and Second Chronicles*, Everyman's Bible Commentary, Moody, 1983.

Thompson, J. A. *1, 2 Chronicles*, New American Commentary, Broadman & Holman, 1994.

Zuber, Kevin D. *1 Chronicles*, The Moody Bible Commentary, Moody Publishers, 2014.

Studies

Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook*. Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis series. Kregel Publications, 2006.

Cooper, David L. *Jabez An Example of a Faithful Servant*, Biblical Research Monthly, January 1944, Online: <https://www.biblicalresearch.info/page5.html>

Dumbrell, William J. Dumbrell, *The purpose of the Books of Chronicles*, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 27.3 (Sept. 1984): 257-266.

Dyer, Charles H., and Eugene H. Merrill. *1 Chronicles*, Nelson's Old Testament Survey. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001.

Hanna, Kenneth G. *From Moses to Malachi: Exploring the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. CrossBooks, 2014.

Merrill, Eugene H. *A Theology of Chronicles*, A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament, Moody Publishers, 1991, pages 157-187.

Merrill, Eugene H. *The Theology of the 'Chronicler: What Difference Does It Make?* Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 59:4 (2016):691-700.

Merrill, Eugene, H. *1 Chronicles 17: The Davidic Covenant (II)*, The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy, Moody Publishers, 2019, pages 425-435.

Shields, Peter E. (2019) *Chronicles as the Intended Conclusion to the Hebrew Scriptures*, Channels: Where Disciplines Meet: Vol. 3: No. 2, Article 1 (DOI: 10.15385/jch.2019.3.2.1) Available online: <https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/channels/vol3/iss2/1>