

## Lesson #20

**PREPARATION FOR LESSON:** read: **1 Samuel 31; 1 Chronicles 10, 29; 2 Chronicles 7, 20, 35, 36**

### BACKGROUND

**Names:** (From *Explore the Book*, J. Sidlow Baxter, Vol. 2, p. 176)

**Hebrew** *Events of the Times* – but this book did not include **all** events.

It had details not found in Samuel and Kings, so the title was changed when translated into Greek.

**Greek** *Things Left Out - Paraleipomenon*

But this sounded like the book was left-over information that other writers forgot.

So Jerome changed the name again when he translated the book into Latin.

**Latin** *Liber Chronicorum – Book of Records / Chronicles*

**Author and Date:** Levite **historians** record events as they happen over 474 years, from 1010 - 536 BC.

Levite **scribes** select parts of it that show God's actions and the people's response. From it they form the sacred writings. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition was c. 420 BC; Ezra is the final editor c. 400 BC.

**Theme:** A new religious history for new generations in a new era – from 400 BC to 30 AD.

When the Jews return from exile, over the next 130 years, they rebuild their homes, build a new temple and repair the walls of Jerusalem. There is great progress. But like their ancestors, they do not remain faithful to God. So God sends them prophets, a teacher and a godly governor to correct and guide them. For awhile they respond, but then they turn even further from God. Altho they understand, they completely reject the message of the prophets. So from 400 BC onward, God does not send any more prophets. The Jews will not have another prophet until 30 AD when John the Baptist appears. During these 400 silent years, some Jews will be glad; they can live as they want. But others will seek God and need instruction.

**Purpose:** These books are to be their prophet during the 400 silent years, reminding them of the consequences of disobedience and giving encouragement that God's promises of the past are still available to them.

### OUTLINE

Genealogies	1 Chron. 1 - 9
David's Reign	1 Chron. 10 - 29
Solomon's Reign	2 Chron. 1 - 9
Kings of Judah	2 Chron. 10 - 36

### EXPLANATIONS

**Chronicles repeats Jewish history**, but is different in content, style and purpose

<u>Samuel &amp; Kings</u>	<u>Chronicles</u>
biographical	statistical
personal	official
viewpoint of prophet	viewpoint of priest
history of Israel & Judah	history of Judah only
emphasis on throne	emphasis on temple
exposing their guilt	encouraging their obedience
record of major events	selective events to fit purpose
written before or during exile	written 116 yrs. after exile
taken from <i>Explore the Book</i> by J. Sidlow Baxter	

### Reasons for Chronicles

#### To update their family records

The tribe of Levi needs family records for a religious purpose

To be a Levite priest one had to prove he was from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron.

To be a scribe, musician, judge, guard, teacher or custodian was determined by other Levite family clans.

Genealogies need to be updated so Levites can prove they are qualified and to know their place of ministry.

## EXPLANATIONS continued

### Reasons for Chronicles

#### To update their family records (continued)

The tribe of Judah needs records for a civil purpose – their Messiah has to come from Judah and line of David  
Records need to be current so when the Messiah comes, people have evidence to know He is qualified.  
The safest place to have them is in the Jewish sacred writings which God Himself will protect.  
Moses had the beginning of family records in *Genesis*, *Exodus* and *Numbers* in the 1400's.  
It is now the 400's BC, so 1000 years of records need to be transferred from civil documents to the sacred writings.  
Jesus came in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, when records were available in sacred writings and civil documents. Gal. 4:4

#### To explain historical events

It is one thing to know **events** of history; it is another to know *why* they happened and *how* God was involved  
Why Saul lost the battle 1 Sam. 31:1-7 cf. 1 Chron. 10:13-14 (cf. means *compare*)  
1 Samuel gives the historical facts; 1 Chron. gives the spiritual explanation  
Why ships were wrecked 1 Kings 22:48 (49) cf. 2 Chron. 20:35-37  
consider highlighting the words *therefore*, *since*, *so*, *because* or *then* in 1-2 Chronicles to see how God was involved

#### To change the focus of the Jews

Even tho the Jews returned to the land of Judah, they would never have another king until their Messiah.  
So in the 400's God changes their focus from political to spiritual – from the throne to the Temple  
We can see this change by comparing Kings with Chronicles  
in the story of Solomon in 1 Kings - 45% of the chapters tell about the temple  
in 2 Chron - 66% of the chapters tell about the temple  
in the story of Hezekiah in 2 Kings - 3 verses describe the spiritual events and temple reform  
in 2 Chron - 3 chapters describe spiritual events  
Chronicles begins with David's **desire** to build the temple; then tells about its building and burning and ends with permission to **rebuild** a new temple

#### To remind the Jews during the 400 years of silence when they have no prophets

Disobedience brought exile to their ancestors; disobedience and defiance of God will have consequences for them. 1 Chron. 5:25-26; 2 Chron. 15:2-7; 16:7-9; 21:11-20; 29:5-10; 36:12-21

#### To encourage the Jewish remnant

As in the past, so in the future, God will forgive and respond when there is repentance.  
2 Chron. 7:14; 13:18; 14:6-7 (5-6); 15:14-15; 17:9-13; 20:2-30  
2 Chron. 7:14 was a special agreement that Solomon made between God and the Jews. Because the land of Israel was God's land that He gave to the Jews, He guarantees that when His people repent as a nation, if there is famine or locust plague, the land will be healed. If they are defeated or in exile, their land will be restored to them. This will be completely fulfilled in the future when Jesus returns as their King to set up His Kingdom in Israel. (2 Chron. 6:24-25; 28-31 are some of the requests. Chapter 7:12-18 is part of God's answer.)

## APPLICATION: Patterns and principles of how God works with nations

### In General

God uses one nation to punish another. When a nation rejects the knowledge they have about God or becomes cruel and proud, He raises up another nation to bring her down. Sometimes it is thru war; other times it is thru economics or politics. When Gentile nations respond and wisely use what God gives them, He blesses them. When they become proud or cruel, He brings them down.

### Specifically – the United States

America is not Israel and His promises to Israel are not for the United States. God made unconditional and absolute promises about the Jews and about their land of Israel. He never made those kind of promises about any Gentile peoples or Gentile lands. America is not in Scripture and God has never guaranteed that our country will endure forever.



A quotation used frequently over the last 50 years is a powerful observation.

*A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover they can vote themselves largesse (generous gifts) from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury. The result is that a democracy always collapses due to loose fiscal policy, which then is always followed by a dictatorship.* (author unknown)

Other writers have noted that *democracies only remain strong for about 200 years and then begin to deteriorate.*

The Bible has told us the sinful nature makes people naturally selfish. So in a democracy where the majority wins and the majority does not want God, the majority will be selfish and the nation is doomed to fail.

Because our nation has rejected its knowledge of God and has become proud, God is going to follow His pattern to use politics and economics to bring *us* down.

Then what about **2 Chron. 7:14**? If we follow that verse, won't God make our nation great once again? No.

That specific promise is only made to the Jewish nation. It says if they repent, God will remove His punishment from the land of Israel. Because God guaranteed a physical land to the Jews, He also guaranteed to heal or restore it.

However there are principles in that verse that are also in the New Testament. They do apply to us as believers.

*God's people* as a **nation** are and always will be the Jews. But in the New Testament, *God's people* also refers to the Church. We are not a nation, but made up of individuals. World-wide we are called by *His name*, Christ-ones, Christians. As individuals, we are commanded to *humble* ourselves, *pray* and *seek* Him. When we do, He will *hear* and *forgive our sin*. We are also commanded to *pray* for the country we live in and for the leaders. But the part about *healing or restoring our land* does not apply. God never gave any geographical land to the Church, His Body. Therefore we do not have any land for Him to heal or restore.

We should be concerned about our nation. When issues are on the ballot, we need to vote our conscience. But in a democracy, until there are changed hearts of individuals, there will not be changed values in society. At the moment, we are living in Satan's world. According to Scripture, this world is not going to get better.

God never commanded us to save our country; He commanded us to give His message to individuals. In order to save a country we would have to make laws that force people into certain behavior. But when Hezekiah and Josiah made laws to force obedience, it did not bring true repentance. Obeying God does not begin thru outward laws; it starts with an inward change of our desires and thinking – a new heart. This can only come thru the Gospel message that God has entrusted to us.

Can we change our nation? No, because God is following His pattern. As a nation we have become proud and have rejected the knowledge of God. So He is letting us reap the natural consequences of choices we've made – nationally and individually.

Does that mean all is lost and everything is hopeless? Absolutely not

God wants to use *us* to share His message. But first we need to look at our own lives.

Are we living in obedience - within God's boundaries?

Do we know our Bible well enough to give God's answers when people start asking?

Does our life and attitudes show the difference that God has made in our life?

If we can answer *yes*, then God is ready to bring across our path those who are searching.

There are so many ways that God wants to use us to reach individuals. Our part is very simple. We are to keep growing in our knowledge of Him and obey in whatever He puts in front of us to do at the moment.

-----  
Another famous quote (H. W. Prentis, 1943) "In self-government, the historical cycle seems to be:

from bondage to spiritual faith  
from spiritual faith to great courage  
from courage to liberty  
from liberty to abundance  
from abundance to selfishness  
from selfishness to apathy  
from apathy to dependence  
from dependence back to bondage"

