

TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

VOLUME 10

TOTC

1 CHRONICLES

This work is dedicated to those churches where
I have learnt to love the Lord and his word:

Holy Trinity Parish Church, Wallington
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Stoneleigh Baptist Church, Epsom

TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

VOLUME 10

GENERAL EDITOR: DONALD J. WISEMAN

1 CHRONICLES

AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

MARTIN J. SELMAN



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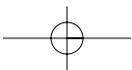
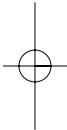
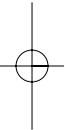
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GENERAL PREFACE

The aim of this series of Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, as it was in the companion volumes on the New Testament, is to provide the student of the Bible with a handy, up-to-date commentary on each book, with the primary emphasis on exegesis. Major critical questions are discussed in the introductions and additional notes, while undue technicalities have been avoided.

In this series individual authors are, of course, free to make their own distinct contributions and express their own point of view on all debated issues. Within the necessary limits of space they frequently draw attention to interpretations which they themselves do not hold but which represent the stated conclusions of sincere fellow Christians.

Though the two books of Chronicles are much neglected they have, as Dr Martin Selman skilfully shows, an abiding message of hope for today's church. Readers who study them with the aid of this commentary will surely come to a new appreciation of their place in the Old Testament canon.

In the Old Testament in particular no single English translation is adequate to reflect the original text. The version on which this commentary is based is the New International Version, but other translations are frequently referred to as well, and on occasion the author supplies his own. Where necessary, words are transliterated in order to help the reader who is unfamiliar with Hebrew to identify the precise word under discussion. It is assumed throughout that

the reader will have ready access to one, or more, reliable rendering of the Bible in English.

Interest in the meaning and message of the Old Testament continues undiminished, and it is hoped that this series will thus further the systematic study of the revelation of God and his will and ways as seen in these records. It is the prayer of the editor and publisher, as of the authors, that these books will help many to understand, and to respond to, the Word of God today.

D. J. Wiseman

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It is the strange privilege of every commentator to recommend that the book his readers really ought to read is not the one he has written. In that sense, his role is not unlike John the Baptist's, whose ability to point away from himself to someone far greater ought to make him the patron saint of commentators.

My real desire, therefore, is that you come to read the books of Chronicles for yourself. That is the end for which this commentary has been written, in the hope that you will receive some guidance in understanding and praying over this part of the word of God.

Though the Chronicler has been my companion for several years, I have not ceased to be filled with admiration for the breadth of his vision and his extraordinary perception. His conviction that God's message is also essentially a hopeful one justifies his work being described as 'the good news according to the Chronicler'. I have been amazed too at the relevance of his work for the modern world, especially for Christians who form a minority in their society, perhaps even suffering for their faith, and with little hope of seeing positive change in the political context in which they live; those who have lost hope of ever seeing for themselves the glorious times experienced by Christians of former generations; those who are concerned for the spiritual health of their nation and would like to discover what role Christians could have in being an influence for good; those who want to have a broad vision of God's purposes for their lives and for the church; and those who want to understand what the Old Testament as a whole is about and why it is included in the Bible.

Maybe in the past you have been dissuaded from reading the books of Chronicles because of their length, or because they contain ancient history, or above all because of their lists of strange names, especially in the first nine chapters. None of these presents an insurmountable obstacle to enjoying Chronicles, however. Especially if you have never attempted to read Chronicles seriously before, may I suggest that you start at 1 Chronicles 10 and simply leave out the lists until you feel you are ready for them. It would be a shame to miss out on all that God has to say simply because of a problem about where to start.

The Chronicler's concern is that his readers should experience genuine healing, and what he has to say on the subject goes far deeper than most contemporary discussion and teaching. It is my prayer that each of you will receive something of this healing and restoration, and that in doing so you will discover more of God's own heart (cf. 2 Chr. 7:14, 16).

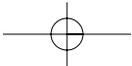
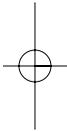
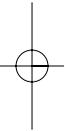
A special feature of this commentary is the information which occurs at the beginning of each section. First of all a quotation is given, selected from the section of biblical text which follows. This quotation is intended to summarize the thought of the section. It is remarkable how frequently the Bible itself crystallizes the theme of a passage in a succinct and apposite manner. The quotation is then usually followed by some biblical references, which may be quite extensive. These refer to passages which are in some way parallel with the passage under consideration. In fact, they probably indicate the sources which the Chronicler has used. Identification of these sources is an essential feature of this volume, since it is argued in the commentary that the Chronicler assumes that his readers are reasonably familiar with this earlier material. It seems as if the Chronicler is actually commenting on these earlier parts of Scripture, and that he does so by various methods. If the books of Chronicles are read with this perspective in mind, the modern reader will often find it useful to refer to the relevant parts of the Old Testament at the same time as reading the text of Chronicles. This will help considerably in illuminating the meaning of the biblical text, and will bring a much deeper awareness of the potential significance of God's word both then and now.

The basic version of the English Bible to which this commentary refers is the New International Version, which is usually quoted

without any further details. However, other versions have been used extensively throughout, such as the New English Bible, the Revised English Bible, the New Revised Standard Version, the Revised Standard Version, the Good News Bible, and the Jerusalem Bible. Readers should be able to use this commentary with whatever modern version is available to them, since the commentary is ultimately based on the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, usually known as the Massoretic Text. Since no single modern version can convey all the richness of the original Hebrew, the use of several versions in the commentary actually gives the reader a genuine advantage in understanding what God is saying.

Only those who have actually written a book can appreciate how much an author is indebted to others. Their contributions are a vital part of the whole enterprise, and I acknowledge with deep gratitude the help of everyone who has encouraged me, especially when it involved putting up with my absence from other activities. I am especially grateful to my colleagues at Spurgeon's College who have carried responsibilities for me at various times in order that the project might eventually be finished, and to the publishers for patiently waiting much longer than they originally expected. The Councils of Spurgeon's College and of Tyndale House, Cambridge, generously provided essential financial support. Previous commentators, and especially those who have written recent books and monographs on Chronicles, have constantly stimulated my thinking. A number of churches have had to suffer unexpected sermons on the Chronicler, and the commentary is dedicated particularly to those churches which first gave me a love of the Scriptures and have accepted me and my idiosyncrasies as part of their fellowship. Lastly, and above all, words of gratitude are quite inadequate to express the encouragement of my family who often have been deprived of my company, and who have endured my preoccupation with the Chronicler from beginning to end. I am deeply humbled by the support of all who have had a part in the production of this volume, and I have not the slightest doubt that it has been greatly improved by their involvement.

Martin Selman
Spurgeon's College, London



CHIEF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AASOR</i>	<i>Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research.</i>
AB	Anchor Bible.
<i>AHwb</i>	W. von Soden, <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> , 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965 ff.).
Albright	W. F. Albright, 'The chronology of the divided monarchy of Israel', <i>BASOR</i> 100, 1945, pp. 16–22.
<i>ANET</i>	J. B. Pritchard (ed.), <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950).
<i>AOAT</i>	<i>Alten Orient und Alten Testament.</i>
Aram.	Aramaic.
Ass.	Assyrian.
BA	Biblical Archaeologist.
Barthélemy,	D. Barthélemy, <i>Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien</i>
CTAT	<i>Testament</i> , vol. 1, <i>Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis</i> 50/1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982).
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.</i>
<i>BBET</i>	<i>Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie.</i>
Begrich	J. Begrich, <i>Die Chronologie der Könige von Israel und Juda</i> (Tübingen: Mohr, 1929).
<i>Bib.</i>	<i>Biblica.</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin.</i>
<i>BZAW</i>	<i>Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.</i>

- CAD* A. L. Oppenheim, et al., *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956ff.).
- CBC* Cambridge Bible Commentary.
- CBOTS* *Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series*.
- CBQ* *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.
- Childs B. S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (London: SCM Press, 1967).
- ET English translation.
- Exp. T.* *Expository Times*.
- FOTL Forms of Old Testament Literature.
- GK E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley (eds.), *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910).
- HAT* *Handbuch zum Alten Testament*.
- HTR* *Harvard Theological Review*.
- Hughes, *Secrets* J. Hughes, *Secrets of the Times, JSOTS 66* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).
- IBD* *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Leicester: IVP, 1980).
- ICC International Critical Commentary.
- IDB* *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, vols. I–IV, 1962; Supplement, 1976).
- IEJ* *Israel Exploration Journal*.
- Japhet, *Ideology* S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1989).
- JBL* *Journal of Biblical Literature*.
- JETS* *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*.
- JQR* *Jewish Quarterly Review*.
- Johnstone, 'Guilt' W. Johnstone, 'Guilt and Atonement: the theme of 1 and 2 Chronicles', in J. D. Martin and P. R. Davies (eds.), *A Word in Season, JSOTS 42* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), pp. 113–138.
- JSNTS* *Journal for the Study of the Testament, Supplement Series*.
- JSOT* *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*.
- JSOTS* *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series*.
- JTS* *Journal of Theological Studies*.

- KB L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner (eds.), *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon* (Leiden: Brill, 31967ff.).
- Keil C. F. Keil, *The Books of the Kings* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 21883).
- Kleinig, *Song* J. Kleinig, *The LORD's Song: The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles*, JSOTS 156 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).
- McKenzie *Use* S. L. McKenzie, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 33 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).
- Mason, *Preaching* R. A. Mason, *Preaching the Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Mosis, *UTCG* R. Mosis, *Untersuchungen zur Theologie des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes*, Freiburger Theologische Studien 29 (Freiberg: Herder, 1973).
- NCB New Century Bible.
- NIDNTT* C. Brown (ed.), *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3 vols. (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1975–78).
- OTL Old Testament Library.
- OTS* *Oudtestamentische Studien*.
- PEQ* *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*.
- Polzin, *Typology* R. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose*, HSM 12 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976).
- SBB* *Stuttgarter Biblische Beiträge*.
- SBLMS* *Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series*.
- SVT* *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*.
- TB* *Tyndale Bulletin*.
- TC* R. Le Déaut and J. Robert, *Targum des Chroniques*, 2 vols. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971).
- TDOT* G. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974ff.).
- Thiele E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 31983).

- Throntveit, *Kings* M. A. Throntveit, *When Kings Speak*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 93 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987).
- TOTC Tyndale Old Testament Commentary.
- VE *Vox Evangelica*.
- von Rad, *GCW* G. von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930).
- VT *Vetus Testamentum*.
- WBC Word Biblical Commentary.
- Willi, *CA* T. Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972).
- Williamson, *IBC* H. G. M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
- WTJ *Westminster Theological Journal*.
- ZAW *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*.

Texts and versions

- Ar Old Arabic version of the Old Testament.
- AV Authorized (King James) Version, 1611.
- EVV English versions.
- GNB Good News Bible (Today's English Version), 1976.
- JB Jerusalem Bible, 1966.
- LXX Septuagint (pre-Christian Greek version of the Old Testament).
- LXX (A) Septuagint, Codex Alexandrinus.
- LXX (L) Septuagint, Lucian recension.
- MT Massoretic Text (the standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament).
- NEB New English Bible, 1970.
- NIV New International Version, 1984.
- NRSV New Revised Standard Version, 1989.
- OL Old Latin translation of the Bible.
- P Peshitta (the Syriac translation of the Bible).
- REB Revised English Bible, 1989.
- RSV Revised Standard Version, 1952.

RV	Revised Version, 1881.
Tg.	Targum.
VSS	Versions, i.e. the ancient translations of the Bible, especially Greek (LXX), Aramaic (Tg.), Syriac (P), Latin (Vulg.).
Vulg.	Vulgate (the main, late fourth-century, Latin translation of the Bible by Jerome).

Commentaries

Commentaries on 1 and 2 Chronicles (introductory commentaries are marked with an)*

Ackroyd	P. R. Ackroyd, <i>I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah</i> , Torch Commentary (London, SCM Press, 1973).
Allen	L. C. Allen, <i>1, 2 Chronicles</i> , The Communicator's Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1987).*
Bertheau	E. Bertheau, <i>Commentary on the Books of Chronicles</i> (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1857).
Braun	R. L. Braun, <i>1 Chronicles</i> , WBC 14 (Waco: Word Books, 1986).
Coggins	R. J. Coggins, <i>The First and Second Books of Chronicles</i> , CBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).*
Curtis and Madsen	E. L. Curtis and A. L. Madsen, <i>The Books of Chronicles</i> , ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910).
de Vries	S. J. de Vries, <i>1 and 2 Chronicles</i> , FOTL 11 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).
Dillard	R. B. Dillard, <i>2 Chronicles</i> , WBC 15 (Waco: Word Books, 1987).
Japhet	S. Japhet, <i>I & II Chronicles</i> , Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1993).
McConville	J. G. McConville, <i>Chronicles</i> , Daily Study Bible (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1984).*
Michaeli	F. Michaeli, <i>Les livres des Chroniques</i> (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé 1967).
Myers, <i>1 Chronicles</i>	J. M. Myers, <i>1 Chronicles</i> , AB 12 (New York: Doubleday, 1965).

- Myers, J. M. Myers, *II Chronicles*, AB 13 (New York: Doubleday, 1965).
- Rudolph W. Rudolph, *Die Chronikbücher, HAT* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1955).
- Wilcock M. Wilcock, *The Message of Chronicles*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester: IVP, 1987).*
- Williamson H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982).
- Commentaries on 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings*
- Anderson A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1989).
- Cogan and M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1988).
- Tadmor
- Gray J. Gray, *I and II Kings*, OTL (London: SCM Press, 1977).
- Hertzberg H. W. Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel*, OTL (London: SCM Press, 1964).
- Hobbs T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1985).
- Jones G. H. Jones, *I and II Kings*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1984).
- McCarter P. K. McCarter, *II Samuel*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1984).
- Nelson R. D. Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987).
- Šanda A. Šanda, *Die Bücher der Könige* (Munster: Aschendorffscher Verlag, 1911–12).
- Wiseman D. J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, TOTC (Leicester: IVP, 1993).

INTRODUCTION

1. Title

The English title of the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles has an unusual history. It originates neither from the original Hebrew, nor (despite the fact that ‘chronicle’ comes from a Greek word *chronikon*) from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It was not in fact until the fourth century AD that Jerome, the famous Bible translator, first applied the term ‘Chronicle’ to these books. He suggested in the prologue to his Latin translation of Samuel and Kings that in place of the Greek title *Paraleipomena* (see below) usually given to the work, ‘we might more plainly call it the chronicle (*chronikon*) of the whole of sacred history’. Though Jerome wrote no commentary on Chronicles and retained the traditional Greek title, his proposal eventually became the basis of the title now used in the English Bible. The mediating influence came from Luther, whose German title, *Die Chronika*, passed into English when Bible translations proliferated during the Reformation period.

Despite its comparatively late appearance, ‘chronicle’ is a good

idiomatic translation of the expression *dibĕrê hayyāmîm*, the accepted Hebrew title of the work. This phrase means literally ‘the events of the days’, i.e. ‘annal, chronicle’, and though it appears only once in the body of Chronicles (1 Chr. 27:24), it became associated with the work through its frequent appearance in Kings (cf. e.g. 1 Kgs 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31). It may well have been used as a title for Chronicles from quite early on, judging by the similar usage of the phrase in other Old Testament books of the same general period (cf. Neh. 12:23; Esth. 2:23; 6:1; 10:2). The Greek translators of the Old Testament, however, produced a quite different title, *viz.*, *Paraleipomena*, ‘the things omitted’, i.e. omitted from Samuel and Kings. This reflected a rather different understanding of the book from that implied by the Hebrew title, and it is the Greek approach which has had much the greater influence on the church’s view of Chronicles down the centuries. Unfortunately it also contributed to the book’s widespread neglect, since the Greek title implied that Chronicles was a kind of supplement or appendix and was therefore of only marginal value in the Old Testament.

The division of Chronicles into two parts, *viz.* 1 and 2 Chronicles, goes back to the Septuagint, though it is attested no earlier than the third century AD. In the Hebrew tradition, it is no older than the first printed edition of the Hebrew Bible in 1448 AD. This division was probably made for practical reasons, and has no other significance. On the contrary, the textual history of the Hebrew Bible as well as the contents and ideology of 1 and 2 Chronicles show that the two books are really a single unit. Once this is recognized, the length and scope of the work make clear that it is an extremely important part of the Old Testament. Its subject matter covers the whole of Israelite history from creation (1 Chr. 1:1) to near the author’s own time (1 Chr. 9:2–34), and in terms of the number of chapters it is the third largest compilation in the Old Testament, after Psalms and Isaiah.

2. What kind of book is Chronicles?

The existence of different titles for the book raises a fundamental question as to its nature and purpose. This issue must be considered at the outset, since the reader’s expectations of the book are bound

to have a direct effect on the way he or she interprets it. If people fail to grasp its real character, they are likely to miss the heart of what the author is saying. Out of the variety of alternative understandings that have been put forward, four will be examined here.

(a) First of all, Chronicles can be treated as a history book. This assumption is implicit in both the Hebrew and Greek titles, though each involves quite different understandings of what type of historical writing is involved. If the book is really a chronicle, for example, the reader is likely to expect a record of actual events in Israelite national life during the period under consideration. On this basis, Chronicles would be a parallel or alternative version of the historical record in Samuel and Kings. This approach to the interpretation of Chronicles has long been followed by Jews and Christians alike, and on this basis Chronicles was frequently regarded until the late nineteenth century as an additional source for pre-exilic Israelite history.¹ Although in more recent times the Chronicler's contribution as a historian has sometimes been understood more in terms of the provision of an overall framework of interpretation rather than in compiling an objective record of events, categorizing Chronicles as a work of history is still a frequent approach.²

However, it is doubtful whether this description is adequate, even allowing for differences in attitudes to historical writing in biblical as compared with modern times. One immediately obvious problem is that it is hard to see why a second historical account of the monarchy period is necessary alongside Samuel and Kings and the frequent references to the period in many prophetic works. More importantly, the selectiveness of Chronicles' content and structure does not support this approach. The extensive lists and genealogies, for instance, mark out Chronicles as distinct from

-
1. Classic examples of this approach are J. G. Eichhorn in the eighteenth century (*Einleitung im Alte Testament*, Leipzig: Weidmann, 1780–83, 3rd edn, 1803) and C. F. Keil in the nineteenth century (*Apologetischer Versuch über die Bücher der Chronik*, Berlin: Oehmigke, 1833; *The Books of the Chronicles*, ET, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872 [1980]), though Keil specifically excludes the idea that Chronicles is annalistic.
 2. Cf. de Vries, pp. 15–16.

Samuel–Kings and are inappropriate in a primarily historical work. More detailed comparison with the Deuteronomic History (a common term for Deuteronomy to 2 Kings) confirms this view, for it is clear that the Chronicler's concerns are more narrowly focused. In place of a history of Israel's monarchies, the Chronicler concentrates on the southern kingdom and on individual kings such as David, Solomon, or Hezekiah, though he also appears to adopt a more favourable attitude towards the north than the author of Kings. His preoccupation with specialist matters such as the temple, prayer, worship, and the Levites also indicates that his real interest lies outside the purely historical sphere.

If Chronicles is not an historical alternative to Samuel and Kings, then neither is it an historical supplement to these books in the sense implied by the Septuagint title, 'things omitted (from Samuel–Kings)'.³ Though the Greek version rightly recognizes that Chronicles is dependent on earlier parts of the Old Testament, the implication that it relates only to Samuel and Kings is too limited. It is also erroneous to see it as filling in some of the gaps in the earlier books, as though it simply supplied extra information from sources otherwise unknown. In reality, the Chronicler omits as much material as he adds; he replaces and rewrites passages and restructures whole sections, and quotes a much wider range of biblical material than just Samuel and Kings.⁴ He also has distinctive aims and emphases, reflected throughout the book in his own individual purpose, style, setting and theology.

These comments are not meant to imply that the Chronicler is not interested in what actually happened in Israelite history, though it is true that his historical reliability has often been questioned.⁵ While the Chronicler's primary concern is not to record the story of Israel's past, it would be illogical to deduce from this that his

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3. Cf. e.g. W. F. Albright, 'The Chronicler's method in redacting the Book of Kings was to supplement, not to rewrite', *JBL* 40, 1921, pp. 104–124 (quotation from p. 120).
 4. Cf. J. Goldingay, 'The Chronicler as a theologian', *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 5, 1975, pp. 99–126, especially pp. 99–108.
 5. E.g. de Vries, pp. 11–12; Coggins, pp. 4–5.

presentation of historical matters is thereby suspect. In fact, the Chronicler treats what is written elsewhere in the Old Testament very seriously, and uses much of the history of Samuel–Kings as a basis for his own contribution. His own interest in historical method can be seen in his explicit reference to source material, the frequency with which he quotes various kinds of sources in their own style, and his willingness to retain the content of his additional sources even where it appears to create problems of inconsistency. Where the Chronicler has provided a fuller picture of particular incidents than Samuel–Kings, it has been recognized that the additional material has independent historical value, and that ‘where we are able to check his record against extrabiblical data, the picture is that of a careful author.’⁶ Two further comments may be added. The first is that where the Chronicler’s material remains uncorroborated in other ancient sources, biblical or otherwise, a certain humility is appropriate on the part of the modern reader, given the large gaps in our knowledge of all ancient history. In fact, in quite a number of passages, the Chronicler is clearly developing aspects of earlier biblical texts which may not previously have received much attention. Secondly, all historical writing, modern as well as ancient, involves some element of interpretation. That the interpretative level lies closer to the surface in Chronicles than it does even in other biblical histories implies no necessary criticism of the Chronicler’s historical method.

(b) If Chronicles’ historical features are of secondary rather than primary interest, greater attention should perhaps be given to its theological emphases. Dillard, for example, has summed up the work as ‘through and through a theological essay; ... it is a tract’,⁷ and the Chronicler has even been described as ‘the first Old Testament theologian’.⁸ The attraction of this approach arises from two factors in particular. The first is that the Chronicler seems to treat his historical material as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. He shows greater interest in the underlying meaning of events

6. Dillard, p. xviii; cf. Myers, *I Chronicles*, pp. xv, xxx.

7. Dillard, p. xviii.

8. P. R. Ackroyd, ‘The Chronicler as exegete’, *JSTOT* 2, 1977, p. 24.

than in the events themselves, as illustrated by his special interests. These include, for example, frequent speeches and prayers, the repetition of themes, an interest in the basic institutions of society such as the system of worship or the monarchy, and a concern for God's direct intervention in human affairs. Though each of these is present in Samuel and Kings, their theological role in Chronicles is much more prominent.

Equally important, however, is the context in which the Chronicler is writing, since it is notable that his total preoccupation with the past excludes any direct reference to his own time. This is all the more significant in that the author emphasizes features of Israel's former years that completely outshone anything that was achieved in his own era. Solomon's glorious temple and the divinely chosen monarchy are very much to the fore even though they no longer existed, and in contrast to the story of Israel's previous status as an independent nation or nations, by the time the work was compiled God's people had been reduced to nothing more than a cog in a vast imperial wheel.

All this indicates that the author was doing more than simply informing his readers about what had happened in the past, and intended to explain the meaning of Israel's history. Unfortunately, however, his precise purpose is never made explicit, so that readers are left to infer it for themselves. One obvious suggestion, given the prominence of the temple, is that he wished to show that the Jerusalem temple was the only legitimate place of worship for God's people.⁹ This is to overlook, however, the considerable attention given to the Davidic monarchy, though commentators cannot agree about the exact significance of this emphasis. According to one view, 'the person and dynasty of David' are 'the heartbeat of all the Chronicler's theology', though another thinks that the interest in David indicates the Chronicler as 'the guardian of the messianic tradition'.¹⁰ Other interpreters read the Chronicler's theological emphasis quite differently. Some of the more important proposals are that the book is an extended parable about the importance of seeking

9. Cf. Braun, p. xxviii.

10. R. North, 'Theology of the Chronicler', *JBL* 82, 1963, p. 376; G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 351.

God,¹¹ that it presents a God-given way of atonement for Israel's deep-seated guilt,¹² or that it points to a way of restoration for Israel through exile and judgment.¹³ More cautious approaches argue that no one theme is more important than any other,¹⁴ or else that the author was content to underline the value of continuity with the past rather than advocate major changes.¹⁵

Such failure to agree on the book's aim suggests either that the author has not made himself very clear or that the nature and purpose of the book lie elsewhere. Though, therefore, the next two approaches agree that Chronicles is theological in character, they attach greater weight to other aspects of the book.

(c) The frequency of speeches or sermons in Chronicles has led some to the conclusion that the author was "preaching" his people's history, or that he was 'a preacher of pastoral theology'.¹⁶ More specifically, it is said that 'his whole work takes on the parenetic character of a "Levitical sermon", warning and encouraging his contemporaries to a responsive faith which may again call down the mercy of their God'.¹⁷ The idea of the 'Levitical sermon' is based on the observation that many of the speeches are homiletic in style, even though most of them are given by kings and prophets.¹⁸ The teaching role ascribed to the Levites in 2 Chronicles 19:8–11 is also reckoned to be of special significance.

Though it is true that the speeches are fundamental to the

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11. C. Begg, "Seeking Yahweh" and the purpose of Chronicles', *Louvain Studies* 9, 1982, pp. 128–141; cf. G. E. Schafer, "The significance of seeking God in the purpose of the Chronicler", Th.D., Louisville, 1972.
 12. Johnstone, 'Guilt', pp. 113–138.
 13. P. R. Ackroyd, 'The theology of the Chronicler', in *The Chronicler in his Age*, JSOTS 101 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 273–289.
 14. Cf. Williamson, p. 24; Japhet, *Ideology*, p. 7.
 15. Cf. Coggins, p. 6.
 16. Ackroyd, p. 27; Allen, p. 20.
 17. Williamson, p. 33; cf. J. M. Myers, 'The kerygma of the Chronicler', *Interpretation* 20, 1966, p. 268.
 18. G. von Rad, 'The levitical sermon in 1 and 2 Chronicles', in *The Problem of the Hexateuch* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), pp. 267–280.

structure of the work, it is questionable whether it is correct or helpful to describe them as sermons or preaching. For one thing, the Chronicler's written style is rather different from the practice of preaching today. Further difficulties include the lack of clear criteria for defining the Chronicler's concept of a sermon, and the wide variation in the form of these supposed sermons. Though the relevant passages show a genuine acquaintance with earlier Scripture, they are rarely based on a specific text, for example. What is even more damaging to this theory, however, is that the supposed 'Levitical sermons' are hardly ever spoken by Levites!¹⁹ It is therefore preferable to speak of 'speeches' or 'addresses' rather than sermons. The frequency of these speeches is also an insufficient basis for applying the term 'preaching' to Chronicles as a whole.²⁰

(d) Finally, the Chronicler has been described 'as a person interacting with texts', or in other words he has produced a work of interpretation or exegesis.²¹ Although this view shares some features with the previous one, it is more broadly based. Whereas the idea of the Chronicler as a preacher is effectively derived only from the speeches, this approach takes the whole work into account.

Though Samuel and Kings clearly provide the framework for Chronicles' main historical section (1 Chr. 10–2 Chr. 36), the author ranges much more widely over what we now call the Old Testament. The beginning and end of the work provide a good example of this. Chronicles starts with Adam, mentioned in the first book of the Old Testament (1 Chr. 1:1; cf. Gen. 2:20; 5:1), and ends with the edict of Cyrus in Ezra–Nehemiah, a book dating approximately to the Chronicler's own time (2 Chr. 36:22–23; cf. Ezra 1:1–3). In between, quotations from and allusions to other parts of the Old Testament are frequent. Parts of the Pentateuch, for example, are found in the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9, as in the use of passages such as Genesis 46:9–10, 12 and Numbers 26:5–6, 12–13, 19–22 (cf. 1 Chr.

19. E.g. Mason, *Preaching*, pp. 133–144; cf. Throntveit, *Kings*, p. 127.

20. Cf. Mason, *ibid.*

21. Dillard, p. xviii; cf. Willi, *CA, passim*; P. R. Ackroyd, 'The Chronicler as exegete', *JSOT* 2, 1977, pp. 2–32; K. Strübind, *Tradition als Interpretation in der Chronik*, *BZAW* 201 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991).

2:3–8; 4:24; 5:3). The genealogies also contain excerpts from the historical books, such as the settlement lists from Joshua 21:4–40 (1 Chr. 6:54–81) or the summary of the reasons for exile in 2 Kings 17:7–23 (1 Chr. 5:25–26; cf. 2 Kgs 15:19, 29). The Psalms play an important role in Chronicles, especially in the use of parts of Psalms 96, 105, and 106 in 1 Chronicles 16:8–36 and the adaptation of some verses from Psalm 132 at a crucial point in 2 Chronicles 6:41–42. The prophetic books are also frequently mentioned, as in the use of parts of Ezekiel 18 to form the structure of the account of Joash (2 Chr. 24) and of the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (2 Chr. 27–32). Key phrases in Chronicles can turn out to be quotations from almost any part of the Old Testament. For example, one of Chronicles' most important principles, that those who seek the Lord will surely find him, is found in both the law and the prophets (1 Chr. 28:9; 2 Chr. 15:2; cf. Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:13–14; Isa. 55:6). Other examples include the use of Exodus 14:13–14 and Numbers 14:41 in the important prophecies of 2 Chronicles 20:17 and 24:20 respectively, or the quotation of Zechariah 4:10 in 2 Chronicles 16:9.

These somewhat random examples clearly demonstrate that the Old Testament as a whole plays a central role in Chronicles. In fact, it is the conclusion of this commentary that the Chronicler's overall aim was to offer an interpretation of the Bible as he knew it. More precisely, his guiding principle was to demonstrate that God's promises revealed in the Davidic covenant were as trustworthy and effective as when they were first given, even though the first readers lived centuries after almost all the events he recorded. The evidence on which this assessment is based will now be examined in more detail.

3. The Chronicler as interpreter

Any appreciation of the Chronicler's purpose must take account of the distinctive structure of the work. The author is an orderly thinker and an artist of considerable literary merit whose message can be properly grasped only by taking an overall view of his achievement. The work has been constructed by combining the author's own contributions with extensive biblical and other sources, resulting in a series of clearly defined units woven together by means of a complex variety of patterns.

At the simplest level, three main sections can be identified:

1 Chr. 1 – 9	Genealogies from Adam to the post-exilic era
1 Chr. 10 – 2 Chr. 9	The United Monarchy of David and Solomon
2 Chr. 10 – 36	Judah under the Divided Monarchy

Though the central section is sometimes further subdivided into the reigns of Saul (1 Chr. 10), David (1 Chr. 11 – 29) and Solomon (2 Chr. 1 – 9), recent study has emphasized that these kings, especially David and Solomon, are presented as a single unit. Indeed, it is precisely in the combined account of David and Solomon that the main thrust of the entire work is to be found. The first section of the work containing lists and genealogies (1 Chr. 1 – 9) is clearly preparatory, emphasizing Israel's original unity and its preservation by God's grace. The third section looks back to the basic principles by which God deals with his people by tracing the varied responses of kings and people. The heart of the work is therefore the central section, which contains two words from God which are of fundamental theological significance. The first of these is generally known as the Davidic covenant (1 Chr. 17:3–14). By this, God promised that he would build an eternal house or dynasty for David and that one of David's offspring would build a house or temple for God. The second word is God's message to Solomon in response to his prayer at the dedication of the temple (2 Chr. 7:11–22). This is also in the nature of a promise, namely, that God is always ready to forgive and restore his people, though they will ultimately be removed from their land and see its temple destroyed if they fail to take advantage of this gracious offer. The fact that both divine words are unparalleled in Chronicles in terms of both length and detail testifies to their significance, and indicates that the Davidic monarchy and the temple are central to the Chronicler's understanding of history. This view is confirmed by the development of both themes in the rest of the work.

In addition to this basic structure, the Chronicler uses a number of further refinements to amplify what he has to say.

(a) First of all, the second and third major sections are subdivided in various ways in order to highlight particular themes:

1. The United Monarchy of David and Solomon

(i)	1 Chr. 10 – 12	David becomes king over all Israel
(ii)	1 Chr. 13 – 16	David brings the ark to Jerusalem
(iii)	1 Chr. 17 – 21	God's promise to David and the final occupation of the land
(iv)	1 Chr. 22 – 29	David prepares for the temple
(v)	2 Chr. 1 – 9	Solomon builds the temple

2. Judah under the Divided Monarchy

(i)	2 Chr. 10 – 12	The patterns of repentance and resistance
(ii)	2 Chr. 13 – 16	The benefits of trust in God
(iii)	2 Chr. 17 – 23	An unholy alliance results in compromise and disaster
(iv)	2 Chr. 24 – 26	Three kings start well but finish badly
(v)	2 Chr. 27 – 32	Three contrasting kings
(vi)	2 Chr. 33 – 35	Three kings and humble repentance
(vii)	2 Chr. 36	Four kings, exile and restoration

These subsections can be identified by two distinct literary devices. One is the repeated use of key words and phrases, such as in 2 Chronicles 13 – 16 where 'to seek (God)' appears nine times and 'to rely (on God)' a further five times. The other, which is used in the account of the Divided Monarchy, is the way in which trios of kings are brought together according to distinct behaviour patterns, demonstrating in different ways the importance of individual responsibility for sin and the value of individual repentance (2 Chr. 24 – 35). Joash, Amaziah, and Uzziah all fall away after showing evidence of faith (2 Chr. 24 – 26), Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah each deliberately reject the ways of their respective fathers (2 Chr. 27 – 32), and Manasseh, Amon and Josiah illustrate contrasting attitudes to repentance (2 Chr. 33 – 35).

This kind of patterning supports the view that the Chronicler's aim was to draw out spiritual and theological principles rather than produce an alternative history to Samuel and Kings.

(b) A second feature is the Chronicler's predilection for dividing history into periods. This characteristic has already been recognized in the division of Israel's history into three periods, before, during, and after the time of David and Solomon, and in the grouping of kings in 2 Chronicles 24–35. The same phenomenon is also evident within the reigns of individual kings. David's reign, for example, is divided into four sections marking his recognition as king and the various stages of his preparation for the temple. Another instance is Asa's reign. After periods of blessing (2 Chr. 14) and of reformation (2 Chr. 15), towards the end of his life he turns completely and abandons God (2 Chr. 16). Joash (2 Chr. 24) and Uzziah (2 Chr. 26) provide further striking examples. Joash totally changed his policies once his high priest and mentor Jehoiada had died (2 Chr. 24:17), while 'after Uzziah became powerful' (2 Chr. 26:16), the blessing he had previously known was replaced by divine judgment because of his pride.

(c) A further pattern is where persons or events are modelled on one another as examples to follow or avoid. The most obvious case is David's portrayal as a second Moses, and therefore worthy of the same kind of recognition as his illustrious predecessor. David received divine revelation as Moses did (e.g. 1 Chr. 28:11–19) and amended Moses' laws to the circumstances of later times (e.g. 1 Chr. 15:23). This is no rigid scheme, though, since Solomon also followed in the Mosaic tradition. Many details of Solomon's temple followed Moses' blueprint for the original Tent or tabernacle (2 Chr. 3–4) and the basic pattern of temple worship was faithful to Mosaic principles (2 Chr. 8:13). Joshua also functions as a model for David and for Solomon. Solomon formed a kind of team ministry with David just as Joshua had done with Moses (1 Chr. 22:6–9, 11–13, 16; 28:3, 7–10, 19–20), and David followed in Joshua's footsteps by completing the conquest of the Promised Land (cf. 1 Chr. 18–20). A variation on the same theme is the way in which Solomon continued David's work (cf. 2 Chr. 1:8–9; 6:16–17; 8:14–15), as though it was merely a further stage in the same era.

Other analogies are also evident, with Hezekiah as the focus of

several comparisons. His reorganization of the temple and its worship mirror the Davidic-Solomonic era (2 Chr. 29 – 30), for example. Hezekiah's closest connections, though, are with Asa (2 Chr. 14 – 16; 29 – 32). Both kings prospered by seeking God from the heart and obeying his laws, and both invited Israelites from the north to participate in renewing the covenant (2 Chr. 15:9–15; 29:10; 30:1–5, 10–11). On the other hand, Hezekiah is clearly contrasted with Jeroboam I of Israel (as described by Abijah, 2 Chr. 13:8–12) and with his own father Ahaz (2 Chr. 28:22–24), especially in their attitudes towards idolatry. Further behaviour patterns to be avoided are those in which Ahaz followed Jeroboam I (2 Chr. 13:8–12, 16–17; 28:1–8, 22–25) and Manasseh followed Ahaz (2 Chr. 28:2–4, 25; 33:2–6). Even Josiah's death is modelled on that of Ahab, because both of them failed to listen to what God was saying (2 Chr. 18:19–34; 35:22–24).

Different events can also be associated with each other, of which the shadow cast over the whole work by the exile offers the most significant example. Exile is seen as a consistent punishment for unfaithfulness to God in both the northern and southern kingdoms (1 Chr. 5:25–26; 2 Chr. 36:14–20). On the other hand, the reversal of exilic-type judgments experienced by Saul (1 Chr. 10) and Ahaz (2 Chr. 28) shows that all was not lost even when the worst seemed to have happened (1 Chr. 10:14; 2 Chr. 29:5–11). The value of repentance in such situations is well illustrated by David. David's rebelliousness is indicated in Chronicles by his disastrous census (cf. 2 Sam. 11 – 12; 2 Sam. 24; 1 Chr. 21), but his simple confession, 'I have sinned', repeated from the famous Bathsheba incident (2 Sam. 12:13; 24:10; 1 Chr. 21:8), illustrates a path to forgiveness which becomes one of the Chronicler's regular principles (2 Chr. 7:14).

Several patterns are associated with the temple. Solomon's succession to David as the temple-builder is based on a genre of installation or commissioning previously illustrated by the handover from Moses to Joshua. The important feature is that neither the temple nor the occupation of the land can be attributed to the work of an individual but is the result of teamwork. The value of prayer is highlighted by the so-called 'request-response' pattern in the account of Solomon, confirming that God regularly goes beyond human expectations when he answers prayer (2 Chr. 1:8–12; 6:14–42; 7:1–3, 12–22). This analogy even extends to the activity of providence in

Solomon's exchange of letters with Hiram (2 Chr. 2:3–16). Finally, Israel's pattern of worship is revealed by a 'Festival schema' in which major celebrations are brought together according to a common format. In each case, details are given of the date, the participants, the detailed ceremonies, and the joy of each occasion of worship (2 Chr. 7:4–10; 15:9–15; 30:13–27; 35:1–19).²²

These examples show that this use of models is both extensive and detailed, and individual analogies can sometimes share as many as half a dozen features in common. Their overall effect is to underline that the principles by which God deals with his people remain consistent across the centuries, and the Chronicler's readers can take appropriate encouragement as a result. In all this, one example stands out above the rest, namely, that David, Solomon and the temple occupy a place in God's purposes that is equally foundational to that of Moses, Joshua, and the Tent (cf. 1 Chr. 17:10–14; 22:11–13; 28:8–10; 2 Chr. 7:12–22). The Davidic monarchy continues the work that God began under Moses, and is required to maintain the same standards. The message seems to be that if Israel seeks hope for the future, it must continue in the same tradition.

(d) A further structural feature is the way in which various speeches or addresses, including both prophecies and prayers, are used to bring out the special emphases of the work.²³ Some of the royal speeches, for instance, are regularly located at the beginning of sections where they function rather like policy documents or manifestos.²⁴ A good example is David's first speech in Chronicles (1 Chr. 13:2–3), where David's plan for restoring the ark to its rightful place at the centre of

22. De Vries, pp. 264–265. Though de Vries' form-critical approach to Chronicles offers many more examples of literary schemes, genres, and formulae, few can be accepted with confidence.

23. Cf. above, p. 24.

24. The speeches by kings of Judah are as follows: 1 Chr. 13:2–3; 15:2, 12–13; 17:1; 22:1; 22:5, 7–16, 17–19; 23:25–26; 28:2–10, 20–21; 29:1–5, 20; 2 Chr. 2:3–10; 6:3–11; 8:11; 13:4–12; 14:7; 19:6–7, 9–11; 20:20; 28:23; 29:5–11, 31; 30:6–9; 32:7–8; 35:3–6. Speeches are also made by foreign kings (2 Chr. 35:21; 36:23), high priests (2 Chr. 26:17–18; 31:10), and by leaders in Israel (2 Chr. 28:11–13).

Israel's life sets the tone for the whole of the following section (1 Chr. 13–16). In the same way, David's encouragements to Solomon form a kind of ideological blueprint about God's purposes for the temple (e.g. 1 Chr. 22:7–16; 28:2–10, 20–21). Speeches by some of the 'good' kings during the Divided Monarchy also fulfil a similar role. The main points of the Chronicler's message are summed up in Abijah's appeal to Jeroboam I of Israel, for instance (2 Chr. 13:4–12), where it is made clear what is expected of the kings who will follow Abijah. The same themes are also resumed in Hezekiah's messages to the priests and Levites and to the population at large, especially in his emphasis on the priority of worship in the temple at Jerusalem (2 Chr. 29:5–11; 30:6–9). What makes the addresses of these two kings particularly strategic is their context, for the very identity of the Israelite nation was under threat in both cases. Hezekiah's Judah was endangered by a combination of Ahaz' paganism and the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, while Abijah's fledgling kingdom of Judah could have easily been obliterated by Jeroboam I. The speeches of Abijah and Hezekiah therefore rescued God's people from the consequences of apostasy and set them back on God's desired pathway. A final example of the importance of the addresses is the role played by Cyrus' edict at the end of the book (2 Chr. 36:23). Though like Hezekiah's letter (2 Chr. 30:6–9) it is in written form, it is really a royal manifesto for the next stage of the history of God's people. Cyrus' invitation to the exiles to return to the Promised Land is also a call to return to God's ways, and shows that the future with God is never closed.²⁵

Prophecies and prayers are equally as important as the royal speeches. Both of them recur frequently and are located at strategic points.²⁶ The central significance of the prophetic words in

25. For a different view of the structural significance of the royal speeches, cf. Throntveit, *Kings*, pp. 113–120.

26. The following may be regarded as prophecies, though they are not always identified as such: 1 Chr. 12:18; 17:4–14; 21:9–12; 2 Chr. 7:12–22; 12:5, 7–8; 15:1–8; 16:7–10; 18:7–27; 19:1–3; 20:14–19, 37; 21:12–15; 24:20; 25:7–9, 15–16; 28:9–11; 34:23–28. Prophecies are also described in summary form (e.g. 1 Chr. 11:2–3; 21:18–19; 25:1–3; 2 Chr. 24:19, 27; 35:26; 36:12, 21, 22), and as sources of further information.

1 Chr. 17:4–14 and 2 Chr. 7:12–22 has already been mentioned, but the crucial role of prophecy is illustrated by several other examples. Sometimes the course of future events is changed by a particular prophecy, as in the case of Asa's covenant renewal or Josiah's reformation (2 Chr. 15:1–7; 34:23–28). By contrast, when the word of a prophet is rejected, a further prophecy can form the basis for God's judgment (2 Chr. 16:7–10; 2 Chr. 24:20; 25:15–16). The references to prophecy in Jehoshaphat's reign are particularly instructive. A kind of model prophecy given by someone who is not himself a prophet suggests that in principle the prophetic gift is available to anyone who is open to the Spirit's inspiration (2 Chr. 20:14–17). Prophecy is thereby democratized in Chronicles, though not for the first or only time in the Bible (cf. Num. 11:29; Joel 2:28–29; 1 Cor. 14:1). Even more remarkably, in the same passage faith in the word of the prophets is regarded as the equal of faith in God (2 Chr. 20:20). There can be no clearer testimony to its significance.²⁷

The prayers in Chronicles have an equal place with the prophecies in the structure of the work. The accounts of David and Solomon, for example, frequently include important prayers.²⁸ David shows the importance of responding to what God has said and done, by giving thanks for the ark's safe arrival in Jerusalem (1 Chr. 16:8–36), for God's promise of an eternal dynasty (1 Chr. 17:16–27), and for the provision of the necessary resources for the temple (1 Chr. 29:10–20). Prayer is often closely linked with the temple. The chain of events through which the temple was built arises out of David's prayer of confession (1 Chr. 21:8), the real source of the building funds is beautifully expressed by David's praise, and Solomon's prayer at its completion is doubly answered by fire from heaven and God's programmatic promise of restoration (2 Chr. 7:1–3, 12–22).

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27. On prophecy in Chronicles, cf. R. Mischeel, *Die Seher- und Prophetenüberlieferungen in der Chronik*, BBET 18 (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1983); I. L. Seeligmann, 'Der Auffassung von der Prophetie in der deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtsschreibung', *JVT* 29, 1979, pp. 254–284.
28. The prayers of David and Solomon are found in 1 Chr. 14:10, 13; 16:8–36; 17:16–27; 19:13; 21:8, 17; 29:10–20; 2 Chr. 1:8–10; 6:1–2, 14–42.

The temple was certainly a house of prayer in the Chronicler's view (cf. Isa. 56:7; Matt. 21:13, etc.). All the prayers in the record of the Divided Monarchy period illustrate the principles set out in 2 Chronicles 7:12–22.²⁹ Like the royal speeches and the prophecies, they tend to occur at critical points, such as the invasion in Jehoshaphat's day (2 Chr. 20:3–13) or the decisive moment in Manasseh's conversion (2 Chr. 33:12–13).

There can be no doubt that the various speeches, prophecies and prayers summarize and expound essential elements of Chronicles' main themes. As with other structural features, they tend to concentrate on the Davidic covenant and the temple, underlining their priority in God's purposes and in Israel's national life.

(e) Finally, the Chronicler is fond of using what is known as the chiasmus or chiasitic pattern. This is a literary structure commonly found in Hebrew literature where form or meaning is repeated with variation. In a chiasmus, the outer and inner parts of a literary unit are balanced with each other, and are usually focused on statements at the centre of the unit. There can, however, be considerable variation in the number of parts and in the nature of the balance, and none of the chiasitic patterns in Chronicles are identical with each other. Indeed, it is this very creativity which stimulates the reader's interest.

A chiasmus can be found on a large scale, as in the account of Solomon (2 Chr. 1–9), or on a small scale, as in one of David's prayers (1 Chr. 29:10–13). The primary meaning of individual chiasitic patterns can be based on the relationship between the inner parts (2 Chr. 2:2–18), on the relationship between pairs of sub-units (1 Chr. 11:1–12:40; 2 Chr. 14:2–16:12), on a large central section (1 Chr. 16:1–43), or even on one chiasm embedded with a large chiasm (1 Chr. 2:3–4:23). A chiasitic structure can even imply a sense of movement. For example, 1 Chr. 11:1–12:40 confirms the increasing support for David by a momentum from the outer parts

29. Prayers recorded from the time of the Divided Monarchy are found in 2 Chr. 14:11; 20:3–13; 30:18–20, 27; 32:20, 24; 33:12–13. The prayers mentioned in the genealogies follow these same principles (cf. 1 Chr. 4:10; 5:20).

(11:1–3; 12:38–40) to the centre (12:8–15, 16–18), while the chiasm of Solomon's reign highlights the development towards the climax of the temple dedication (cf. the role of 2 Chr. 3:1–5:1 and 5:2–7:22 within the account of Solomon).

The books of Chronicles are clearly a carefully crafted work of literature. The author is equally skilled, however, in integrating into the patterns already described a large number of external sources, taken partly from other sections of the Bible and partly from extrabiblical documents. In order to appreciate the Chronicler's method more accurately, the next stage of investigation is to analyse the manner in which these sources have been transformed. In practice this means that only the biblical material can be examined, since unfortunately none of the extrabiblical sources are available for comparison.

This process has to be carried out in two stages. The obvious place to begin is the narrative framework of Chronicles which the author has derived from the biblical books of Samuel and Kings. The basic story from Saul's death (1 Chr. 10; cf. 1 Sam. 31) to the exile is the same in both works, but closer examination reveals that the Chronicler has made extensive adaptations.

(a) Substantial sections of Samuel and Kings have been omitted. The two most notable instances are the lack of direct interest in the northern kingdom and the omission of most of the personal details of individual kings. It is now widely recognized that the first of these is not the result of the author's prejudice against northerners, whether they belonged to the kingdom of Israel or the Samaritan community. Rather it reflects his preoccupation with God's long-term purposes for the representatives of David's dynasty who ruled in Jerusalem. It is for the same reason that many incidents from the personal lives of Judah's kings, especially David and Solomon, have also been left out. This omitted material includes not only the ups and downs of David's family life (2 Sam. 9–20), his adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11–12) or the murky details of Solomon's accession and his financial and marital excesses (1 Kgs 1–2, 11), but also the much more positive accounts of David's early anointings and rise to power (1 Sam. 16–2 Sam. 4) and his testimony to God's goodness (2 Sam. 22:1–23:7).

One of the reasons for omitting this material is that the reader is

expected to have a working knowledge of much of Samuel and Kings, and also of many other parts of Scripture. Enough of the earlier text is included to identify particular incidents, but the author is sometimes liable drastically to reduce whole sections of Samuel or Kings, summarizing them even in a single phrase. 'The word of the LORD' which Saul failed to keep, for instance (1 Chr. 10:13), refers in fact to a series of messages given to Israel's first king, but only the reader who knows the record of Saul in 1 Samuel would be familiar with the underlying details. A quite different instance of an assumed awareness of the books of Samuel concerns the omission of David's adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11 – 12). In this case, the Chronicler includes sufficient hints to show he is well aware of the original story but wishes to interpret it in a fresh way. The beginning and end of the original story about Bath-sheba reappear unmistakably in 1 Chronicles 20:1–3, but other vital elements of the structure and vocabulary of the earlier account have been interwoven into the narrative about David's infamous census (1 Chr. 21; cf. 2 Sam. 24). In this way, readers who know something of 2 Samuel will recognize not only the creative way in which the author has combined the two narratives but also that David's sins have been highlighted rather than suppressed.

(b) On other occasions, the Chronicler has extensively summarized the text of Samuel and Kings. David's military victories, for example, have been brought together from various parts of 2 Samuel into a single section but in a much reduced form (1 Chr. 18 – 20). The author's care in selecting those sections most relevant to his purpose while preserving the order of the original text shows his respect for the biblical text which had been passed down to him (cf. the chart in the commentary on 1 Chr. 18). The account of Solomon is also much shorter in Chronicles than in Kings. Anything that is not germane to the temple theme is clearly superfluous to the Chronicler's needs, even though that includes such achievements as Solomon's wisdom, his administration, his wives and his wars (1 Kgs 3:16 – 4:34; 11:1–40). A distinct method of summarizing has been employed for the final period before the exile (2 Chr. 36). The reigns of four kings have been presented almost as though they are one, and the increasing brevity of their descriptions most effectively underlines the increasingly unstoppable threat of exile.

(c) Small changes can be made in order to highlight particular features already present in the earlier material. An important example concerning the theme of the kingdom of God is the change from 'your [i.e. David's] house and your kingdom' to 'my house and my kingdom' (1 Chr. 17:14; cf. 2 Sam. 7:16). A related series of changes shows how God's promises about David (1 Chr. 17:10–14) have been developed and applied to various new circumstances. These include Solomon's role as the temple builder (1 Chr. 22:7–10), themes in 1 Chronicles 28:2–8 such as rest, election, and the kingdom of God, and thanks for the temple's completion in 2 Chronicles 6:4–11. A different set of important minor alterations involves the references to 'Israel' in 2 Chronicles 10:16–19 (cf. 1 Kgs 12:16–19). The Chronicler's point, which is absent from Kings, is that under Rehoboam David's house has really been separated from Israelites in the south as well as the north, in contrast to the tribal unity experienced under David.

(d) Substantial portions of text can be added to Samuel and Kings. The most outstanding example concerns David's temple preparations (1 Chr. 22–29), where a brief passage in 1 Kings 2:1–12 has been expanded to include detailed instructions about Levites and priests and extended encouragements to Solomon and the people. Other important additions include details of Jehoshaphat's good deeds and of Ahaz' wickedness (2 Chr. 17; 19–20; cf. 1 Kgs 22:41–50; 2 Chr. 28:5–25; cf. 2 Kgs 16:5–18), and especially the information about Josiah's early life which has no parallel in Kings (2 Chr. 34:3–7). Each of these passages raises important questions of interpretation, but none more so than the inclusion of 2 Chronicles 7:12b–16a, a section which is at the heart of the Chronicler's theology. Its offer of undeserved forgiveness is significantly different from the call to obedience in the equivalent passage in 1 Kings 9:3, and understanding the reasons for this kind of change is essential if the Chronicler is to be correctly interpreted.

The Chronicler's additional material sometimes even appears to contradict earlier parts of the Old Testament, of which Manasseh's conversion undoubtedly presents the most taxing problem (2 Chr. 33). Having previously been described as the worst king in the Davidic line (2 Kgs 21:1–18), Manasseh is unexpectedly portrayed in Chronicles as an outstanding example of repentance. One aspect

of this problem that has not always been recognized is that other instances of the same phenomenon also exist in Chronicles. A case in point involves Rehoboam, who according to Kings 'did evil in the eyes of the LORD' (1 Kgs 14:22), but who now illustrates the value of humble repentance (2 Chr. 11 – 12). Equally, the Chronicler's emphasis on Abijah's faithfulness is in direct contrast with the earlier assessment that 'he walked in all his father's sins' (1 Kgs 15:3). Closer examination of all three instances, however, suggests that Chronicles in each case does refer to the previous record. The Chronicler's point is that while recognizing the serious failures in the lives of these leaders, God always responds graciously to those who repent. No-one is disqualified, not even those who publicly commit serious offences. Though this kind of explanation makes no attempt to address all the issues raised by the Chronicler's apparent contradictions, it does at least show the author's respect for the earlier text, even where he makes significant alterations to it.

Having constructed his basic framework from Samuel and Kings, the Chronicler has incorporated into it a range of Old Testament sources. These wider references are used in two different ways. One small but significant group of them has been used to provide an outer framework, while the majority have been made part of the inner fabric of the text throughout the book. Taken together, the two approaches demonstrate conclusively that Chronicles' perspective is much broader than simply that of Samuel and Kings.

The outer framework comprises a summary of Genesis (1 Chr. 1) and a quotation from Ezra–Nehemiah (2 Chr. 36:22–23). The significance of this arrangement is greater than it appears at first sight. It must be remembered first of all that Genesis and Ezra–Nehemiah cover the earliest and latest stages respectively of Israelite history, and that apart from Chronicles, they form the first and last books in the present Hebrew Bible.³⁰ Secondly, a quotation from Ezra–Nehemiah also occurs at the end of the genealogies, that is, the end of the book's first main section. In other words, the extract from Ezra 1:1–2 in 2 Chronicles 36:22–23 has an analogy in the use of Nehemiah 1:3–19 in 1 Chronicles 9:2–17, 22. Even though Ezra 1:1–2 and

30. Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one book rather than two.

Nehemiah 11:3–19 refer to different points in the post-exilic era, the fact that quotations from the same Old Testament book are found at the conclusion to two of the three major sections of the Chronicler's work is surely not accidental. Thirdly, the two passages borrowed from Ezra–Nehemiah are closely related to each other, in that they both refer to Israelites returning to the land of Israel. In fact, the invitation in 2 Chronicles 36:22–23 to go up to Jerusalem and rebuild the house seems to be fulfilled in 1 Chronicles 9:2–17, 22 by those who reinstated temple worship. In other words, God's purposes for the temple were transmitted via Cyrus' edict (2 Chr. 36:22–23) into the post-exilic period by the Levites and others in their concern for proper worship.

So far, the outer framework has hinted at a possible relationship between the Chronicler's work and the generations that immediately preceded his own era, which is the period to which 1 Chronicles 9:2–34 seems to refer. Is there any way in which that link can be further elucidated? A solution begins to emerge when one compares the beginning and the end of the genealogies. These two passages bring together the creation of the human race in Adam and the restoration of temple worship, a connection that also applies to the beginning and end of the book. In other words, the genealogies and the outer framework of the book demonstrate that the rebuilt temple represented in some way the continuation or the restoration of the work that God had begun in creating Adam. The temple could therefore be no optional extra, but was a central element in God's intentions for Israel and for humanity itself. When Chronicles is seen in this light, Samuel and Kings occupy no more than a chapter, albeit an important one, in a story that still remained unfinished in the Chronicler's day.

The material which has been woven into the body of the work is equally as significant as the outer framework. It too offers an interpretation of Samuel and Kings, but this time based on principles enunciated throughout the law and the prophets. This approach enables the author to show that what God had said and done during the monarchy period was consistent with the rest of the Old Testament, and that neither had been obscured by the disaster of the exile. This message is conveyed by a variety of methods which offer further evidence of the Chronicler's creativity.

(a) As with his treatment of Samuel and Kings, the Chronicler frequently summarizes other parts of Scripture. This is done either by the use of quotation or even by condensing the message of an entire section of Scripture into a single sentence. One example is the way in which the sections in Genesis which begin with the words, 'these are the generations of ...' (Gen. 10:1–29; 25:1–4, 12–16; etc.), have been selected to form the structure of the main sections of 1 Chronicles 1. In this way, the whole of Genesis has been spectacularly reduced to a single chapter. Even though the original information has been converted entirely into genealogical lists, the underlying message of God's electing love in the associated Genesis narratives has been clearly preserved. An instance where a quotation has been used to summarize an even broader area of Scripture is found in Jehoshaphat's encouragement to 'have faith in his [i.e. God's] prophets and you will be successful' (2 Chr. 20:20). Though the identity of the prophets of whom the king speaks is not absolutely certain, it is probable that here, as elsewhere, the Chronicler is summarizing the message of the prophets as a whole (cf. 2 Chr. 24:19; 29:25; 36:16).

(b) The Chronicler's preferred method of referring to the rest of the Old Testament is by the use of allusions. His knowledge of a vast range of the Old Testament Bible and his fluency in incorporating its distinctive phraseology into his work reminds one of C. H. Spurgeon's assessment of John Bunyan, 'Prick him anywhere; and you will find that his blood is Bibline!'³¹ Individual passages can contain references to several different biblical books, as in the case of David's census (1 Chr. 21). Though the underlying foundation of this chapter is based on a combination of elements from 2 Samuel 11 – 12 and 24, a whole variety of biblical allusions have also been incorporated. These include the destroying angel in the Egyptian Passover (v. 15; cf. Exod. 12:23), Abraham's purchase of a burial ground (vv. 22–25; cf. Gen. 23), Gideon's meeting with an angel (vv. 20–21, 26; cf. Judg. 6:11–24), and fire from heaven in Aaron's time (5:26; cf. Lev. 9:24)! Another example rich in biblical associations is David's prayer

31. C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 2 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1973), p. 159.

of thanksgiving and praise (1 Chr. 29:14–19). As well as containing passing allusions from the Psalms such as the idea that God's people are 'aliens and strangers' (v. 15; cf. Ps. 39:12) and that life itself is but a shadow (v. 15; cf. Ps. 102:11), it focuses on the known ways in which God deals with the human heart. Though he tests the heart (v. 17; cf. Jer. 12:3), he looks for inner attitudes which are loyal to him (v. 18; cf. Gen. 6:5).

(c) Direct quotation is equally significant, and, though used more sparingly than allusion, two distinctive methods are evident. Sometimes a particular phrase or verse can sum up a whole section, as in the use of Exodus 14:13–14 in 2 Chronicles 20:15, 17 or Numbers 14:41 in 2 Chronicles 24:20. This practice has a loose analogy with a sermon text, though the differences of character and function between Chronicles as a piece of literature and an orally delivered sermon suggest this kind of comparison should not be pressed too far. On other occasions, the Chronicler borrows significant phrases from elsewhere in the Old Testament as a vehicle for his own message. Two examples of this stand out above all others. The first is the principle that those who seek God will find him but that God rejects those who forsake him. This is a fundamental tenet of the Chronicler's theology, and is based on phrases in both the law and the prophets to which only minor alterations have been made (Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:13–14; Isa. 55:6). This is twice regarded as the explicit theological standard by which Israel's relationship with God is compared (1 Chr. 28:9 and 2 Chr. 15:2), and also frequently illustrates the contrasting ways in which God deals with his people. The other instance is Moses' famous encouragement to Joshua, 'be strong and courageous' (cf. Deut. 31:7, 23; Josh. 1:6–9). This phrase is spoken in Chronicles by David (1 Chr. 22:13; 28:20) and Hezekiah (2 Chr. 32:7) on three separate occasions, none of which is paralleled in the earlier texts, and a similar expression is also attributed to Joab (1 Chr. 19:13; cf. 2 Sam. 10:12). In this way, Moses' original words have become a model by which others are encouraged to exercise bold faith for themselves.

(d) Sometimes the Chronicler applies passages and concepts taken from other parts of the Old Testament as a pattern or paradigm for his own description of events. The major instance of this is undoubtedly the use of Moses' Tent or tabernacle as a blueprint

for the building of the temple. This device occurs several times, and includes the revelation of the building plans to David (1 Chr. 28:11–19; cf. Exod. 25:9, 40), the fund-raising efforts (1 Chr. 29:6–9; cf. Exod. 25:1–7; 35:4–9, 20–29), the need for consecration to the task (1 Chr. 29:5; cf. Exod. 28:41; Lev. 8:33), the order in which the building is constructed (2 Chr. 3–4; cf. Exod. 36:1–39:32), and the appearance of God's glory at the opening ceremony (2 Chr. 5:13–14; cf. Exod. 40:34–35). Ezekiel's teaching about the need for individual repentance offers two further examples of the same process. First, the description of a righteous person who departs from his former ways and commits sins (Ezek. 18:24–32) fits exactly the circumstances of Joash, Amaziah, and Uzziah (2 Chr. 24–26). The second example is furnished by Judah's next three kings, where the godly reigns of Jotham and Hezekiah are separated by the idolatrous Ahaz (2 Chr. 27–32). This matches precisely the scheme of Ezekiel 18:1–20, where three succeeding generations refuse to follow their respective father's righteous or wicked behaviour. The whole of 2 Chronicles 24:32 is clearly presented as a living commentary on the prophet's word.

(e) One especially fascinating feature is the author's ability to conflate passages from different parts of Scripture. The temple preparations provide a number of instances. The ark's arrival in the new temple, for example, combines aspects of David's bringing of the ark to Jerusalem with the dedication ceremonies for Moses' Tent (2 Chr. 5; cf. Exod. 40:34–35; 1 Chr. 13–16). The temple site is similarly associated with God's appearing to Abraham and to David (2 Chr. 3:1; cf. Gen. 22:2, 11; 1 Chr. 21:16). Such an approach underlines the continuity of God's purposes which the temple represented, an issue of great importance to the Chronicler. A similar point emerges from the way the length of the exile is described. The fact that the seventy-year period fulfilled both the law and the prophets (Lev. 26:34–35; Jer. 25:11–14; 29:10) is intended to convey that the exile's end as well as its existence was part of God's known will. The Chronicler's first readers had no need to live in its shadow any more.

All these examples show very clearly the importance of the whole of Scripture to the Chronicler's task of interpretation. Though Samuel and Kings provide much of the raw material, his real

context is the entire Old Testament. His work is in fact a good example of what has become known as ‘inner-biblical exegesis’, though the Chronicler’s treatment is unparalleled in the Old Testament in terms of both scope and thoroughness.³² While the development of earlier material is quite common in the Old Testament, as in the use of Israel’s historical traditions in worship (e.g. Pss. 78, 105, 106) or the fulfilment of passages from both the law (cf. Josh. 23:14–15) and the prophets (Jer. 26:18; cf. Mic. 3:12), Chronicles stands apart in its attempt to interpret the Old Testament from beginning to end. It is also appropriately placed at the end of the canon in the Hebrew Bible, as that book of the Old Testament which sums up the rest. Those who were responsible for arranging the order of the books of the Hebrew Bible perhaps understood more of its character than they are usually given credit for. Though this view is somewhat at variance with the usual approaches to Chronicles, the overdependence in contemporary Christian (though not Jewish) approaches to Chronicles on its place in the Greek Bible is part of the reason why its real nature is not always appreciated. Modern readers should not therefore be over-influenced by its position between Kings and Ezra–Nehemiah in translated versions, whether in English or any other language. The Hebrew Bible is a safer guide, in terms of its position as well as its structure and contents.

Detailed analysis of the Chronicler’s approach to exegesis requires a distinction to be made between his secondary and primary methods. In the former category must be included those grammatical and lexical changes which do not affect the overall message of the book.³³ They include the updating of the spelling of proper names (e.g. Ornan for Araunah, 1 Chr. 21:15 ff.; Abijah for Abijam, 2 Chr. 13:1 ff.) or linguistic developments such as a tendency to turn nouns into verbs (e.g. ‘to repair’, 2 Chr. 34:10; cf. 2 Kgs 22:5; ‘to tax’,

32. See e.g. M. Weiss, *The Bible from Within* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984); M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

33. For the effect of the texts available to the Chronicler on his work, see below, p. 77.

2 Chr. 36:3; cf. 2 Kgs 23:33).³⁴ In the same category is the natural inclination to smooth out some of the difficulties and antiquated language of the original text. Examples range from simple alterations such as replacing an obscure word like ‘tamarisk’ (2 Sam. 31:13) by the better known ‘oak’ tree (1 Chr. 10:12) to a possible correction of the inexplicable reference to continual war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam I during Abijah’s lifetime (2 Chr. 13:2; cf. 1 Kgs 15:6).

Though these adjustments to earlier texts are very important for a proper understanding of the Chronicler’s overall method, they are not of the essence of what the author is about. He is much more than a scribe and modernizer of ancient texts. He engages above all in theological exegesis, undertaken according to the principle of allowing Scripture itself to interpret Scripture. At the heart of this enterprise is a conviction that ‘the word of our God stands for ever’ (Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:25). The word of God is both the subject which the author addresses and the method by which he addresses it.

This preoccupation with God’s word leads the Chronicler to underline two distinctive features. The first is that God’s word is the ultimate standard upon which his dealings with his people are based in every generation. The principles underlying his word are unchanging though the ways in which they can be applied to new situations are surprisingly adaptable. This is well illustrated by both the law and the prophets. God’s laws remain valid, for example, in matters as varied as the transportation of the ark (1 Chr. 15; cf. Deut. 10:8; 18:5) or the date of the Passover (2 Chr. 30:2; cf. Num. 9:9–13). A particularly interesting illustration of the effectiveness of God’s word is provided by two contrasting experiences in the life of Josiah. In one incident, the king takes very seriously a prophetic confirmation about the threat of divine judgment contained in a recently discovered scroll of the law, and even though the threat was real, judgment was delayed as a result (2 Chr. 34:14–31). Later, however,

34. For further examples, see e.g. Willi, *CA*, pp. 78–91; Polzin, *Typology*, pp. 28–69. The same phenomenon is also evident in borrowings from American English into British English!

Josiah deliberately ignored what is fascinatingly described as ‘what [Pharaoh] Neco had said at God’s command’ (2 Chr. 35:22), and paid for his negligence with his life. In the Chronicler’s view, God’s word, whether it is ancient or modern, written or spoken, is no dead relic of history but something that remains living and effective (cf. Heb. 4:12).

The second feature is the special emphasis given to the two ‘words’ from God which have already been identified as being at the heart of the Chronicler’s work. Writing at a time when Israel’s severely reduced circumstances seemed to have rendered God’s word impotent, these two passages are interpreted in a fresh way for the Chronicler’s generation. The author shows how God’s covenant promises to David could take on new meaning even though the Israelites lived in a greatly diminished version of the Promised Land, the temple was neglected and they had no king of their own. By means of several small but significant amendments to the earlier version of the first ‘word’, God is shown to be eternally committed to his covenant promises and to Solomon as David’s successor and temple builder (1 Chr. 17:1–15; cf. 2 Sam. 7:1–17). The second ‘word’ concentrates on the temple’s potential significance for the Chronicler’s readers, though the textual adaptations are more extensive in this case (2 Chr. 7:11–22; cf. 1 Kgs 9:1–9). The earlier association in Kings between the temple and obedience to God’s word is replaced by an emphasis on God’s promise of restoration through answered prayer and his personal presence in the temple (cf. 1 Kgs 9:3). This new message is established by directly linking Solomon’s prayer with God’s response (cf. 2 Chr. 7:13 with 2 Chr. 6:26, 28 = 1 Kgs 8:35, 37), and also by incorporating various scriptural promises about God’s forgiveness (2 Chr. 7:14; cf. Lev. 26:41; Jer. 30:17; 33:6). Between them, the two ‘words’ highlight God’s continuing commitment to Israel and the central role played by the temple as a house of prayer and a symbol of God’s eternal will to forgive.

A sign of the importance of these two ‘words’ in Chronicles is the recurrence of their main themes and the repetition of key phrases, often in passages unparalleled in the earlier books. Major references to the Davidic covenant appear in 1 Chronicles 22:6–13; 28:2–10; 2 Chronicles 6:4–11, 14–17; 13:5, 8; 21:7; 23:3; 36:23, while the restoration promise recurs in one form or another in 2 Chronicles

12:5–12; 13:13–18; 20:1–30; 32:24–26; 33:10–23, with its converse in 2 Chronicles 16:12; 24:17–26; 33:22–25; 36:15–20. The promise of restoration is dealt with in a programmatic way throughout 2 Chronicles 10–36, with a variety of illustrations of how the basic principles could be applied. Especially notable examples occur in the case of Rehoboam, the first king of the southern kingdom (2 Chr. 12:5–12), and of Manasseh, who according to Kings was the worst king of Judah (2 Chr. 33:10–23; cf. 2 Kgs 21:1–16). The themes of the two words are also often combined. The Davidic covenant, for instance, is much more closely tied in with the ideology of the temple than in Kings, as in David's temple manifesto (1 Chr. 22:6–13; 28:2–10), or in the Chronicler's view of the future. Though God finally pronounced a verdict of (lit.) 'no healing' (2 Chr. 36:16; cf. 2 Chr. 7:14) on Israel, meaning that they were apparently beyond redemption, a fresh start was still possible through Cyrus' allusion to the Davidic covenant and a new temple. The strategic importance of this reinterpretation of God's words is unmistakable.

4. The Chronicler's message

(a) Covenant

According to Chronicles, the Davidic covenant is that element which most clearly expresses the meaning of Israel's continuing life as the people of God. Though this form of covenant is explicitly mentioned in only three passages (2 Chr. 7:18; 13:5; 21:7), it is frequently referred to, especially in relation to God's promises to David (e.g. 1 Chr. 17:18, 23, 26; 2 Chr. 1:9; 6:10, 15, 42; 21:7; 23:3). It is also the headstream out of which flow two of the major tributaries running through the books of Chronicles, namely the Davidic dynasty (1 Chr. 28:5; 29:23; 2 Chr. 6:10, 16; 2 Chr. 13:8; 23:3), and the Solomonic temple (1 Chr. 17:12; 22:6–11; 28:2–10; 2 Chr. 6:7–11). In its foundations and visible expressions, therefore, the Davidic covenant is clearly central to the thought of Chronicles.

The primary feature of Chronicles' presentation of the Davidic covenant is that its very existence depends on God's promise. Everything hangs on what God purposes, says and does. David's good intentions about building a temple, for instance, must be put aside