

TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

VOLUME 11

TOTC

2 CHRONICLES

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where I have learnt to love the Lord and his word:

Holy Trinity Parish Church, Wallington
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TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

VOLUME 11

GENERAL EDITOR: DONALD J. WISEMAN

2 CHRONICLES

AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

MARTIN J. SELMAN



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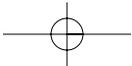
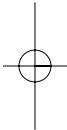
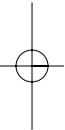
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GENERAL PREFACE

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 renderings 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

CHIEF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AASOR</i>	<i>Annual of the 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 Testament</i> ,
<i>CTAT</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 and Juda</i> (Tübingen: Mohr, 1929).
<i>Bib.</i>	<i>Biblica.</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin.</i>
<i>BZAW</i>	<i>Beibeft 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, 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, 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, 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 New 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).
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- 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 Studiën*.
- 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, G. von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes*
GCM (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930).
VT *Vetus Testamentum.*
 WBC Word Biblical Commentary.
 Willi, *CA* T. Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung* (Göttingen:
 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972).
 Williamson, H. G. M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of*
IBC *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).

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- Myers, *1 Chronicles* J. M. Myers, *1 Chronicles*, AB 12 (New York: Doubleday, 1965).
- Myers, *2 Chronicles* J. M. Myers, *II Chronicles*, AB 13 (New York: Doubleday, 1965).
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³1977).

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ANALYSIS

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- ii. The descendants of Noab (1:4b–23)*
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- iv. Abraham (1:28–34)*
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 - iii. *Concluding formula for Solomon (9:29–31)*

3. THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH (2 CHR. 10:1 – 36:23)

- A. Rehoboam (10:1 – 12:16)
 - i. *Israel separates from Judah (10:1–19)*
 - a. Rehoboam's abortive coronation plans (10:1–5)
 - b. Advice for Rehoboam (10:6–15)
 - c. Division of Israel and Judah (10:16–19)
 - ii. *Rehoboam's strength (11:1–23)*
 - a. Peace between Israel and Judah (11:1–4)
 - b. Judah fortified (11:5–12)
 - c. True worship maintained (11:13–17)
 - d. The royal family extended (11:18–23)
 - iii. *Rehoboam's repentance (12:1–12)*
 - a. Attack by Shishak of Egypt (12:1–4)
 - b. Judah's humble repentance (12:5–12)
 - iv. *Concluding formulae (12:13–16)*
- B. Abijah and Asa (13:1 – 16:14)
 - i. *Abijah (13:1 – 14:1)*
 - a. Introductory formula (13:1–2a)
 - b. Civil war between Judah and Israel (13:2b–19)
 - c. Abijah's strength (13:20–21)
 - d. Concluding formula (13:22 – 14:1)
 - ii. *Asa (14:2 – 16:14)*
 - a. Asa seeks God and is prosperous (14:2–7)
 - b. Asa trusts God and is victorious (14:8–15)
 - c. Asa obeys a prophet's word (15:1–8)
 - d. Asa's covenant with God (15:9–19)
 - e. Asa's covenant with Ben-Hadad (16:1–6)

- f. Asa rejects a prophet's word (16:7–10)
- g. Asa fails to seek God (16:11–12)
- h. Concluding formula (16:13–14)

C. Jehoshaphat (17:1 – 21:1)

- i. *Overture* (17:1–19)
 - a. Jehoshaphat strengthens his kingdom (17:1–6)
 - b. Jehoshaphat's blessings (17:7–11)
 - c. Jehoshaphat's military resources (17:12–19)
- ii. *Jehoshaphat, Ahab and the prophets* (18:1 – 19:3)
 - a. An alliance for war (18:1–3)
 - b. The prophets and the war (18:4–27)
 - c. Fulfilment of Micaiah's prophecy (18:28–34)
 - d. Jehu's prophecy (19:1–3)
- iii. *Jehoshaphat's legal reforms* (19:4–11)
 - a. Religious renewal (19:4)
 - b. Appointment of judges (19:5–7)
 - c. Appointment of other officials (19:8–11)
- iv. *Jehoshaphat's faith* (20:1–30)
 - a. Judah invaded (20:1–2)
 - b. Jehoshaphat prays (20:3–13)
 - c. Jahaziel prophesies (20:14–19)
 - d. Judah believes (20:20–26)
 - e. Jerusalem rejoices (20:27–30)
- v. *Concluding formula* (20:31 – 21:1)

D. Judah and the house of Ahab (21:2 – 22:12)

- i. *Jehoram* (21:2–20)
 - a. God preserves the house of David (21:2–7)
 - b. God punishes Jehoram (21:8–20)
- ii. *Ahaziah* (22:1–9)
 - a. Ahaziah and the house of Ahab (22:1–4)
 - b. Ahaziah's downfall and death (22:5–9)
- iii. *Athaliah* (22:10–12)

E. Three declining kings (23:1 – 26:23)

- i. *Joash* (23:1 – 24:27)
 - a. Joash's accession under Jehoiada's leadership (23:1–21)

- b. Joash's faithfulness while Jehoiada lives (24:1-16)
 - c. Joash's apostasy after Jehoiada's death (24:17-27)
 - ii. *Amaziah* (25:1-26:2)
 - a. Amaziah's strength (25:1-4)
 - b. War against Edom (25:5-16)
 - c. War against Israel (25:17-24)
 - d. Amaziah's end (25:25-26:2)
 - iii. *Uzziah* (26:3-23)
 - a. Uzziah seeks God and is successful (26:3-15)
 - b. Uzziah's pride and downfall (26:16-23)
- F. Three alternating kings (27:1-32:33)
 - i. *Jotham's obedience* (27:1-9)
 - a. Jotham's contrast with his father (27:1-2)
 - b. Jotham's continuity with his father (27:3-6)
 - c. Jotham rests with his fathers (27:7-9)
 - ii. *Ahaz' unfaithfulness* (28:1-27)
 - a. Ahaz' apostasy (28:1-4)
 - b. Massacre and mercy (28:5-15)
 - c. False help (28:16-21)
 - d. Ahaz' further apostasy (28:22-25)
 - e. Ahaz' burial (28:26-27)
 - iii. *Hezekiah's reforms* (29:1-31:21)
 - a. Invitation to consecrate the temple (29:1-11)
 - b. Renewing temple worship (29:12-36)
 - c. Invitation to the Passover (30:1-12)
 - d. Celebrating the Passover (30:13-31:1)
 - e. Reorganizing tithes and offerings (31:2-21)
 - iv. *God saves Judah through Hezekiah's faith* (32:1-33)
 - a. Hezekiah defends (32:1-8)
 - b. Sennacherib attacks (32:9-19)
 - c. The Lord saves (32:20-23)
 - d. Hezekiah's successes and failures (32:24-33)
- G. Three kings and repentance (33:1-36:1)
 - i. *Manasseh* (33:1-20)
 - a. Manasseh's unparalleled evil (33:1-9)
 - b. Manasseh's repentance and God's favour (33:10-20)

- ii. *Amon is unrepentant (33:21–25)*
- iii. *Josiah (34:1–36:1)*
 - a. Josiah seeks God faithfully (34:1–7)
 - b. Josiah repents over God's word (34:8–33)
 - c. Josiah celebrates the Passover (35:1–19)
 - d. Josiah's death (35:20–36:1)

- H. Four kings and the end of the kingdom (36:2–20)
 - i. *The fall of Jehoabaz (36:2–4)*
 - ii. *The fall of Jehoiakim (36:5–8)*
 - iii. *The fall of Jehoiachin (36:9–10)*
 - iv. *The fall of Zedekiah and of the kingdom (36:11–20)*

- I. Beginning to rebuild God's house (36:21–23)

COMMENTARY

F. Solomon prepares for the temple (2 Chr. 1:1 – 2:18)

Despite the break between 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles, the account of Solomon basically continues the story of David. The reigns of the two kings are really a single unit, as Solomon's involvement in David's temple preparations has illustrated (1 Chr. 22, 28 – 29). The sense of partnership continues here, particularly in several passages unique to Chronicles where David is linked with Solomon (e.g. 2:3, 7; 3:1; 6:42; 7:10; 8:14). Another sign of this co-operation is the way the Davidic covenant is developed (1 Chr. 17), with Solomon fulfilling the first stage of God's promises by ascending David's throne and building the temple (especially 2 Chr. 6:4–11; cf. also 1:8–9; 5:4–11; 6:14–17; 7:17–18). The covenant theme in fact underlies Chronicles' entire presentation of Solomon, which is much more concerned with Solomon's significance in the purposes of God than listing the major events of Solomon's life. It is for this reason that Chronicles has left out many important features found in the Kings account, such as Solomon's personal details. Included in the omissions are not only the negative aspects like his polygamy, his idolatry, and his military disasters (1 Kgs 11:1–40), but also his accession (1 Kgs 1 – 2), his

famous wise ruling (1 Kgs 3:16–28), his administration and wisdom (1 Kgs 4:1–34), and even some of the details of the building of the temple (e.g. 1 Kgs 6:4–19; 7:27–37) and the royal palace (7:1–12).

By removing those elements deemed unnecessary to his purpose, Chronicles has produced a simplified but distinctive portrayal of this king. This is best demonstrated by setting out the total structure of Solomon's reign, which shows a basic chiasmic formation:

- 1:1–17 Solomon's wisdom, wealth, and fame
- 2:1–18 Solomon prepares for the temple
- 3:1 – 5:1 Construction of the temple
- 5:2 – 7:22 Dedication of the temple
- 8:1–16 Solomon completes the temple and other building work
- 8:17 – 9:28 Solomon's wisdom, wealth, and fame

This layout immediately reveals a number of inner connections. Clearly the actual building and dedication of the temple form the centre of the account (chapters 3 – 7). However, an obvious link between chapters 1 – 2 and 8 – 9 is also evident, and further examination confirms that the temple theme extends even to these opening and closing chapters. This is most easily seen in Solomon's correspondence with Hiram (ch. 2) which is directly concerned with temple preparations, but it emerges too from the parallel passage (8:1–16) where the nationwide building work is understood as the extension and completion of the temple project. Additional confirmation comes from a series of editorial markers, several of which are wholly or in part the Chronicler's own contribution (cf. 2:1; 3:1; 5:1; 7:11; 8:16). Even the outer parts of the structure support the same theme. The description of Solomon worshipping at the Tent of Meeting (ch. 1) clearly anticipates his worship at the temple (cf. e.g. 1:6 with 5:6; 7:5–7), while the temple provides the chief evidence of Solomon's divinely given wisdom (1:12; cf. 9:4). In fact, Solomon's wealth and wisdom (1:1–17; 8:17–9:28) are best understood as a theme parallel to that of the temple, since they are all visible symptoms of the effectiveness of God's kingdom in human affairs (cf. 1 Chr. 28:5–6; 29:11; 2 Chr. 9:8). In comparison with Kings, therefore, where the temple is merely the central section in a varied narrative about Solomon (1 Kgs 5:1 – 9:9,

i.e. four and a half chapters out of eleven), the Chronicler has given it such prominence that it completely dominates his account.

In addition to the basic chiasmic structure, the Chronicler has used several other literary patterns. The central chapters have a consecutive arrangement, dealing with the construction of the building (ch. 3), its furnishing and equipping (ch. 4), the installation of the ark (ch. 5), the dedicatory prayer (ch. 6), and God's response (ch. 7). The effect is to make chapter 7 the climax of the entire temple account, and indeed of the entire work of the Chronicler. Comparison with Kings also reveals that Chronicles is more interested in the temple's significance than in its architecture. Another literary scheme is the request–response pattern, of which there are three major examples. Explicit answers to Solomon's requests are given not only by God (cf. 1:8–10 and 1:11–12; 6:14–42 and 7:12–21) but even by a pagan king (2:3–10, 11–16). The first two examples show clearly that prayer works! A further pattern is that of fulfilment, which has both literary and theological features. Again, three different examples must suffice. Firstly, God's promises of wisdom, wealth, and fame are fulfilled in Solomon's own life (8:17–9:31). Secondly, Solomon testifies that God's covenant promises to David have been fulfilled in specific ways (6:4–11). Finally, Solomon's temple is repeatedly shown to fulfil the principles underlying Moses' Tent or tabernacle. For instance, Solomon and the temple architect Hiram-abi follow in the tradition of Bezalel and Oholiab who were responsible for the Tent's construction, Solomon like Moses carries out the divinely revealed blueprint, and the shekinah glory which dominated the opening ceremonies for the Tent has the same effect at the temple dedication. All these examples provide ample evidence of the Chronicler's creativity and flexibility as an author.¹

Alongside the major themes of covenant and temple, a number of other emphases are worth noting. Far from exhibiting a ritualistic approach to religion, there is a strong emphasis on God's

1. For a different understanding of the chiasmic nature of the Chronicler's Solomon, cf. Dillard, pp. 1–7. It should be noted in particular that Dillard's scheme has no room for 3:1–5:1, and fails to draw attention to the variety of Chronicles' literary patterns.

sovereignty and presence. He is unique in heaven as well as on earth, and exercises his freedom to invade the temple and disrupt its services at his own convenience (e.g. 2:5–6; 5:13–14; 6:14, 18; 7:1–3). He is also a God who reveals his will directly in a way that surpasses his people's expectations (1:7–12; 7:12–21). Worship is another major interest, where prayer and sacrifice form a regular partnership. Prayers occur at key points, such as 1:8–10; 6:14–42, and these serve as encouragements to everyone, whether Israelite or not (cf. 6:32–33), to seek God in prayer for themselves (cf. 1:5; 7:14). Sacrifice frequently takes place alongside prayer. God accepts the temple as a 'house of sacrifice' (cf. 7:12), and the regular pattern of sacrificial worship (2:4; 8:12–15) is just as important as the special dedicatory offerings (5:6; 7:1, 5, 7). Worship, however, is acceptable only if it is offered in a wholehearted spirit (6:7–8, 14, 30; 7:10), providing further evidence of the Chronicler's concern for the heart as well as the form of worship. Despite the preoccupation with Solomon, Chronicles does not lose sight of Israel's role. In some passages (1:2, 3, 5; 9:8), Israel as a whole is given greater prominence than in Kings, as are the Levites in 5:11–13. Their contribution is also underlined in passages such as 5:2–3, 6; 6:3, 12–13, 22–39; 7:8–10. Solomon's wisdom, wealth, and fame (1:1–17; 8:17–9:31) as a sign of God's blessing is also shared by the people as reflected glory.

Finally, the Davidic-Solomonic era serves as a standard for Israel's future life. Covenant obedience, which includes the Mosaic as well as the Davidic versions, provides the measure against which all must be compared (e.g. 6:16–17; 7:17–22). However, Chronicles' real emphasis is to underline that God's forgiveness is constantly and unexpectedly available to anyone who comes to him in humble repentance. The prime motive for prayer in the temple is that there is always hope for sinners, as God affirms in his remarkable promises in 7:12–16. Such is the background against which the rest of Israel's history will unfold (chs. 10–36).

i: Solomon's splendour (1:1–17)

'God ... said to him, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you"' (1:7).

1:2–13a – cf. 1 Kings 3:4–15

1:13b – cf. 1 Kings 4:1