
1 CHRONICLES PART I: THE PREFACE

For most people, their Bible could be whittled down to a dozen to three dozen chapters, along with a couple dozen miscellaneous verses, and they would never know the difference. The purpose of the entire Bible has eluded them, as has its importance. God did not choose to give us a pamphlet by which our lives are to be guided. Give most Christians the first two chapters or so of Genesis, one gospel, perhaps the book of Romans, maybe a favor psalm or two, and the book of Revelation for entertainment, and that is their Bible. Obviously I have left out the verse where they, in times of great stress, close their eyes, open their Bible to anywhere, and let their finger drop down upon a verse which is intended to solve everything for that particular crisis. And even for the most ardent Bible student, they pretty much ignore, or give lip service at best, to portions of the Bible like the first nine chapters of this book.

In September of 2000, I made the decision to work on the genealogies from Chronicles before beginning with the narrative of Samuel. I quite frankly did not know how this would go or if I could stay at it. The longest chapter was 81 verses and that dealt with the Levites and the priests; and, I didn't know whether I could stay with such a project. Part of my problem is wondering whether my interest would wain; and part of it was the organization which would be involved. These genealogies covered several millennia (although the bulk of them occurred during the period of one millennium), and that requires a great deal of historical background. I was somewhat daunted by this fact, and uncertain as to whether I would be equal to the task.

Another concern of mine is *who the heck would ever teach these first nine chapters?* On the one hand, I realized that this was the Word of God, and, on the other, even though this information has been covered before by many tremendous exegetes, could I do anything to add to it? Would the finished product be of any assistance to anyone? Once I got a few chapters into this work, I was put at ease concerning all of these questions. This is both a neglected and undervalued portion of Scripture. Probably not one pastor in a thousand teaches from it or even references it. However, this is packed with information, historical value, spiritual lessons, and an appreciation for God's relationship to Israel.

To the Reader: I happen to be, in my exegesis of these first nine chapters, fairly detail-oriented (which is unusual for me). I have attempted to correlate the genealogies found within with those found without. Many times this was easy, as with the descendants of Asher; many times, there was a key to the basic understanding of the line found in these chapters (as with the line of Ephraim); and on occasion, I could not reconcile the lines at all (as was my experience with the difficult line of Benjamin). Some of the charts which you will find herein (e.g., a chart which compares the times and lines of the priests with those of the kings of Judah) will be invaluable for a cohesive examination of the study of the divided kingdom of Israel; other charts, e.g., those which outline the lines of the sons of Jacob, are also invaluable in the study of the history of Israel. Also, quite helpful to you, will be the thumbnail sketches of some of the men found in these genealogies, particularly the kings of Judah, which line is followed out in 1Chron. 3. There will be other times when the attention to detail (e.g., some of the charts which compare the names of individuals in the Hebrew, who apart from their place in these genealogical lines, are unknown to us) will become tedious to you and you will want to skim.

Source Material: I cannot over emphasize how indebted that I am to the authors who have gone before me. In many ways, I don't function as much as an author as I do an editor. I have an original thought here or there, but the problems and issues raised in these few chapters have been carefully raised and examined by many who have come before me. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the commentaries of Keil and Delitzsch. For instance, I was 50 pages into the examination of 1Chron. 6, thinking that I would find little if anything from Keil and

Delitzsch which would supplement what I had already written. I was completely wrong about that. One issue which I mentioned, but did not ever give any real thought to was the dual priesthood which seemed to exist during the time of Saul and David. I got that there was a dual priesthood, but never realized why. Keil and Delitzsch carefully explained the reason for, and gave additional background information and theories which helped tie everything together. For whatever reason, their commentaries are not as accessible as those found in the NIV Study Bible or in Barnes' commentaries. I tried to make their thoughts more accessible in this study.

Speaking of said commentaries, I must again pay tribute to the NIV Study Bible, which, of all the translations that I have studied, has probably the best running commentary. They are not always correct, but they are accurate about 90% of the time, which is head and shoulders above most commentaries. Only Scofield's notes are more accurate (in fact, the problems with Scofield can be listed on the fingers of only one hand). However, Scofield's notes do not give the same depth of coverage as do the NIV Study Bible notes.

Barnes, although he does not cover this area in the depth that he normally does, always provides additional information that I would have otherwise missed. Now several times in examining his work, I did find some problems. However, given the scope of the genealogies, most exegetes will have problems. I possibly even have a mistake in one of these chapters.

Why is this the best commentary on 1Chron. 1–9? Certainly, I have distilled the best of outstanding commentaries and exegetes; however, what distinguishes this study is the prolific use of charts. In reading the Bible, it is quite difficult to see name after name after name; several of these names being the same; and matching only in part with a parallel passage elsewhere. Even with the outstanding work done by Keil and Delitzsch and Barnes, being able to follow who is who was quite difficult. Trying to correlate this information with other Scriptures was also very difficult. Which priest functioned under which king? What was the time period? How many lines of High Priests were there? How many lines of kings were there? I cannot overemphasize how difficult it is to put many of these things together. There are misunderstandings, misapplications, and alleged contradictions based upon an incomplete understanding of the genealogies found in this book. Throughout these nine chapters, you will see who was related to who and how; which priests served under which kings; it will be clear to you the various lines of High Priests; and you can, at a glance, compare not only parallel passages, but, in many cases, compare the Hebrew manuscripts to the Greek.

One particular group of charts that you will find very helpful and easy to understand and those which trace out the lines of the various patriarchs. You may get down to 20 or 30 verses in your Bible and become confused as to which line you are following, or you may wonder, *is there any organization to this chapter at all?* After considering several alternatives, I organized the lines of the patriarchs in outline form. At a glance, you can see who has descended from whom and through whom. Furthermore, most of the genealogical outlines are hypertext-ed to the appropriate text, making it easy to maneuver throughout these documents.

Throughout this study of Chronicles, there are going to be some technical terms used. For some people, they have heard these terms again and again and understand what they mean. For others, these terms may seem to be a little bizarre.

Great credit should be given to R. B. Thieme, Jr. for most or all of this terminology. He made several great contributions to theology during his lifetime ministry at Berachah Church in Houston, Texas: (1) he taught his congregation theology, as if they were sitting in a seminary course; (2) he made much of the history come alive with his vast knowledge of ancient history and his ability to provide historical context for any passage studied; (3) he reintroduced the importance of the teaching of the Word of God, and emphasized this by the number of times each week that he taught (as many as 10 on a typical week) and through the emphasis upon the teaching of the Word of God (1.25 hour long sessions); (4) he brought in both the Greek and Hebrew text in order to explain this or that point; (4) he taught clear spiritual mechanics, a topic virtually ignored by nearly every church; and (5) he provided a new up-to-date Christian vocabulary, which helped to explain concepts, mechanics and theology.

Definition of Terms	
Client Nation	Client-Nation, is a national entity in which a certain number of spiritually mature Christians (the salt of the earth) have formed a pivot sufficient to sustain the nation and through which God specifically protects this nation so that believers can fulfill the divine mandates of evangelism, communication and custodianship of Bible doctrine, providing a haven for Jews, and sending missionaries abroad. The United States is a client-nation to God. A client nation must have freedom: Freedom to seek God, freedom to use one's own volition and self-determination to succeed or fail, freedom from anarchy and tyranny, freedom for evangelism, freedom for believers to hear Bible teaching without government interference and, therefore, to grow spiritually, and freedom to send missionaries to other nations.
Cycles of Discipline	A national entity which is a client nation to God is under both God's protection and His discipline (much like the individual believer). As a nation moves further and further from God, God may impose disciplinary measures on that nation, which include economic disaster, illness, civil unrest, military defeat, and even invasion which may include a slavery or dispersion of the people. These cycles are found in Lev. 26. Although these warnings are designed for Israel, all client nations to God may face similar downward historical trends.
Fifth Cycle of Discipline	The fifth cycle of discipline involves complete loss of personal and national sovereignty, the destruction of the family and the nation. Offerings to God are unacceptable. Nations which have undergone this destruction have experienced slavery, cannibalism, and the assimilation of its surviving citizens into other cultures.
Most of these terms were coined by R. B. Thieme Jr. during his 50+ year ministry at Berachah Church.	
Some of these definitions may have been taken from http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml http://www.bigrick.org/pubs/terms.pdf http://www.gbible.org/_files/pdf/Doctrine_of_The_Divine_Decree.pdf http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d&sf=rea&did=28 http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/chastisement.html	

The Outline of 1Chronicles:

The Genealogies (1Chron. 1–9):

- I. The Genealogy of Adam to the Father of Abraham (1Chron. 1:1–26).
- II. The Family of Abraham (1Chron. 1:27–54).
- III. The Genealogy of Israel (Jacob) to the Father of David (1Chron. 2:1–11).
- IV. The Genealogy to David (1Chron. 2:12–17).
- V. The Family of Caleb (1Chron. 2:18–55).
- VI. The Family of David (1Chron. 3).
- VII. The Families of Eleven of the Twelve Sons of Jacob (1Chron. 4–8).
 - A. Judah (1Chron. 4:1–23).
 - B. Simeon (1Chron. 4:24–43).
 - C. Reuben (1Chron. 5:1–26).
 - D. Levi (1Chron. 6).
 - E. Issachar (1Chron. 7:1–5).
 - F. Benjamin (1Chron. 7:6–12).
 - G. Naphtali (1Chron. 7:13).
 - H. Manasseh (1Chron. 7:14–19).
 - I. Ephraim (1Chron. 7:20–29).
 - J. Asher (1Chron. 7:30–40).
 - K. Benjamin (1Chron. 8:1–28).
 1. The Genealogy of King Saul (1Chron. 8:29–40).
- VIII. The People of Jerusalem (1Chron. 9:1–34).
- IX. The Genealogy of Saul (1Chron. 9:35–44). This appears to be a repeat of his aforementioned genealogy.

The Failure of King Saul and the End of Saul's Dynasty (1Chron. 10):

- X. Saul and His Sons Die at the Hands of the Philistines (1Chron. 10).

The Rule of King David over Israel and Judah (1Chron. 11–21):

The Transition from King David to King Solomon, with an Emphasis upon the Construction of the Temple (1Chron. 22–29):

Authorship: See intro to 1Chron. 14.

1CHRONICLES PART I: AN INTRODUCTION

1Chronicles 1–9

The Dreaded Genealogies

Introduction: At this point in time, we are going to stop with our going book-by-book through the Old Testament and cover the first nine chapters of the book of Chronicles. This will give us an overview of the history of Israel, going back to Abraham (actually, Chronicles goes further back than that) and reaching all the way to six generations beyond those who returned to Israel after the dispersion. You may not feel as though nine chapters of names will have anything to say to you—and you would be wrong—but, we get an excellent overview of from where we have come and to where we are going.

Paul wrote to Timothy in 1Tim. 1:3–4: **As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach heretical doctrines, nor become preoccupied with endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than the dispensation of God, which is by doctrine.** Paul wrote something similar to Titus, also a pastor, at the end of his letter to him (Titus 3:8b–9): **Concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for man. However, avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.** So, this means that we should avoid these genealogies altogether? In fact, if anything, they should not be taught in the church? Certainly, if you are basically stupid, I guess you could take these two passages to mean this. However, that is not what is being taught. You must realize that much of the church was made up of Jews, and they attached no little importance to both their heritage and to the Law. The Law clearly revealed our shortcomings and our inability to approach God on our own. It set a standard that we could not attain. It also, ceremonially, taught the Israelites of the One Who Was To Come, the Prophet Who Was Like Moses, the One Whose function was akin to that of the High Priest. In fact, it was through the ceremonial portion of the Law that Old Testament people were brought to Christ. They trusted in Jehovah, the God of Israel, and what He had provided for them ceremonially for their cleansing (all of which was [a shadow of the good things to come](#)¹). Since we are to avoid foolish controversies and disputes about the Law, does this mean that the Law should not be taught? Hell, no. One of the reasons that believers are so confused today is that we have no clear understanding of God's plan for Israel and what came before us. The growing believer today at best had a rudimentary knowledge of what occurred in the New Testament and only knows the Old by a few Bible stories, superficially covered now and again in Sunday School. In fact, some of the lamest doctrines to come down the pike—e.g., the Catholic view that sex between man and wife is designed for procreation and not for recreation—are based often on poorly taught and therefore misunderstood passages from the Old Testament. So, yes, we should examine the Law carefully, even though we are no longer under the Law. You may not realize this, but the bulk of Jewish literature *clarified* the requirements of the Law, laying down to the most minuscule detail what could and could not be done according to the Law. For instance, one of my favorites was that, if, on the Sabbath, a carriage or animal goes along side you and splashes mud on you, then you may (1) wait for the mud to dry and then, (2) grasp it once with one hand and let go. These kind of controversies about the Law were to be avoided. They were meaningless and, at one time, blasphemous.

Genealogies are similar to the Law, in some ways. Some Jewish believers attached an inordinate amount of importance to their particular line and to their ancestors. Obviously, their line could be in dispute and certainly, given the problems that we will encounter in 1Chron. 1–9, there is room for disputes as to the correct interpretation

¹ Heb. 10:1

of the various lines of Jacob. If our text today is corrupt, it would not be farfetched that their text was corrupt as well. Now, if I tell you that the Shuppim and Huppim in Gen. 46:21 are not equivalent to Shepphuphan and Hiram of 1Chron. 8:5, and some other pastor tells you that they are—this is not a big deal. There is no reason to have any sort of controversy about this. This is not a major doctrinal issue. And if I am from the royal tribe of Judah, and some other believer is from the (apparently) cursed tribe of Dan, this is not a factor which clearly gives me clear superiority over him. Our spiritual lives are between ourselves and God. There is no room in God’s plan for us to compare ourselves to one another; and certainly not because of our ancestors.

What you must recognize is that God the Holy Spirit chose to place genealogies throughout Scripture, and for divergent reasons. We find them in Gen. 10, which gives us an idea as to the way mankind spread out after the Great Flood. We find them in Matt. 1 and Luke 3, which confirm the royal bloodline of our Lord, and track His legal line and His bloodline (in fact, Luke, the Gentile, impressively tracks His legal line all the way back to Adam). If for no other reason, we find them in 1Chron. 1–9 as a brief history lesson—something which orients us to the time frame of the Old Testament. If we were not to give any thought to genealogies, then they would not be found in God’s Word. Now, are they less pertinent in general than, for instance, the correct understanding of the Holy Spirit’s role in our lives today? Certainly. Are they therefore to be ignored? Absolutely not.

Now, apart from the introduction to the many and varied characters of Scripture via these chapters, you may see very little reason to examine this book in the same depth that I have. However, what it does do is provide a resource so that, whenever you choose to make a conjecture about this person or that person, or their lineage, I will have already done the research which would indicate whether your conjecture is reasonable or not. This way, you won’t read about a *Caleb* who had a dozen children while living in Egypt, and mistakenly confound him with the *Caleb* that served under Moses.

Charts

The Purpose of 1Chron. 1–9: If the Old Testament is neglected by Christianity today, the genealogies even more so. Not one Christian in ten has a good grasp of just who and what Israel is and where is her proper place in history and in the future. Not even one in a hundred believers has a clue as to why do we have all these genealogies, apart from, perhaps, the genealogies of Joseph and Mary (and usually, those are misunderstood as well).

The New Living Translation gives us a good overview of this portion of Chronicles: Even as many families do today, the Jewish people of Bible times kept detailed family histories. These were important records that helped determine inheritances and provided identification and continuity with the past. These lists of descendants also helped identify the people who were qualified to serve as priests—descendants of Levi and the house of Aaron.

During the Hebrews years of wilderness wandering, the military organization of the tribes was established by these family records, or genealogies (Num. 1:2–4). These lists were also used to allocate taxes and offerings for the sanctuary (Num. 7:11–89)².

The first and primary purpose of the first section of the book of Chronicles is tied directly to its time of writing. Israel had been taken from the Land of Promise, removed from the land which God gave them as an eternal inheritance, and now they had been moved back into the land at the graciousness of a foreign power. There were no miracles, no undeniable power of God demonstrated for the world to see; there was no firstborn dying, there were no rivers of blood, there was nothing spectacular. They returned to the land a tired and broken and shamed people. They were God’s chosen people and they had been moved about at the whims of a foreign power. The chronicler traced their lineage—those who returned to the land had a genealogy—a genealogy of the chosen ones, and that line indicated clearly that God had chosen them. NIV Study Bible: *[These] genealogies...serve the very*

² *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 539.

*practical purpose of legitimizing the present. They provide the framework by which the ethnic and religious purity of the people can be maintained. They also establish the continuing line of royal succession and the legitimacy of the priests for the postexilic temple service.*³ Now, just because the first and primary purpose of these first nine chapters may seem irrelevant to us now, does not mean that they are without purpose for our generation and without value to us.

The book, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, gives us several reasons for the genealogies found in the first portion of 1Chronicles: One reason for these genealogies is that this provides us an historical review of the history of Israel in outline form, if you will. There is also a literary connection between the death of King Saul (1Chron. 10) and the returning exiles in 1Chron. 9. Thirdly, although many names are included in these chapters for the sake of completeness, the various lines give us a sense of God's purpose and His moving mankind toward a predetermined goal. The author of Chronicles goes from Adam all the way to the decree of Cyrus the Great to allow Israelites to return to the land to rebuild the temple. God's hand can be seen from the very beginning of history to the hope that was set before Israel at that time⁴.

Gleason L. Archer gives a clearly pragmatic reason for the careful recording of the genealogies of the Israelites: *After a long ordeal of the Babylonian captivity, which lasted from 586 to 539, a group of Jewish colonists was led back by Zerubbabel and Jeshua to establish a new commonwealth of Israel in their ruined homeland. The Israelites had lost every material possession—every building, every home—as a result of the Chaldean devastation. All that was left were the people, their memories, their traditions, and their Bible—and, of course, the God who had given it to them and who had kept His promise by restoring them to their land after the Exile was over. It was therefore of utmost importance to establish their lines of descent, from Abraham and the twelve sons of Jacob, and from the later ancestors to whom specific territories, cities, and towns had been assigned back in the days of Joshua.*⁵ Furthermore, it was simply important to establish, of those who returned to the land, which families were represented. Perhaps there was only 10% of the Jews under exile who chose to return (this was by Archer's estimation), and their responsibilities and territories were interwoven with their ancestral heritage. Finally, God had made a promise to Adam and Eve that in the Seed of the Woman was their collective hope. Genesis begins the tracing of the promised line, which continues throughout Genesis, which 1Chronicles summarizes and completes (up until that time), at which point, Luke and Matthew pick up the genealogy and trace it out to Mary and to Joseph.

Israel was a nation unlike any other in history. Men and their families were given, as an eternal inheritance, specific plots of land. Ideally speaking, this land was to return to the family every 49 years, no matter what. The transfer of land titles was really only an extended lease. In this way, the sons were not penalized for the father's inability to keep his land (which may have been due to hardship as much as to financial ineptitude). Not that this was followed as it should have been, but the careful recording of the lineage of any family identified who belonged to what portion of land. Furthermore, as has been mentioned, when the Israelites returned to the land after being dispersed, this also was an indication of who occupied what territory (although, they did occupy a much smaller piece of real estate than they had under David and Solomon. The Levites had a peculiar place in Jewish society, making up the religious groups (priests, singers, those who tended to the Temple) who were supported by the other tribes. It was important for these families to be identified as well.

God's Word is eternal. The names which are recorded in it will stand eternally. We often will lack the appreciation of running across the names of people whom we do not recognize. However, if it was our name—well, that would be a different story. God chose to recognize certain men by placing their names eternally in His Word.

Sometimes as we read historical passages in Scripture, we have men walking in from stage left, often without a history or lineage for us, and they walk off stage right before we know who they are, only to return again after we have forgotten the little that we know about them. In these chapters, we will be able to sit back, stop now and

³ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 577.

⁴ These reasons are paraphrased from *Hard Sayings of the Bible*; Walter Kaiser Jr., Peter Davids, F.F. Bruce, Manfred Brauch; InterVarsity Press; ©1996; p. 238.

⁵ *The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*; Gleason L. Archer; Zondervan Publishing House; ©1982; p. 216.

again, and view a man's life as a whole, so that when he walks on and off the stage, we will have some clue as to who the whole man is. One of the slightly confusing times of intrigue occurred when Athaliah, the mother of a king of Judah who died, usurped the power and authority of the throne of Judah. There are nearly a dozen key players in the subsequent years of her reign and deposition. Furthermore, you may reasonably wonder as to how could a seven-year-old child assume the throne of Judah. Examination of the line of David and the line of Levi helps to explain to us who everyone was (although one key player, the High Priest Jehoiada, is still somewhat of a mystery). When we examine name after name after name, what will be included is a mini-history of the United Kingdom and of Judah (and only, incidentally, Israel, the Northern Kingdom). I developed a much greater understanding as to who many of the less well-known players in the Old Testament were and how they were related and what part exactly did they play. Certainly, there will be lists of name after name of people whom we will meet in heaven, but will not know anything about here; however, there we will also get a grasp of the characters.

In our study of the narratives presented in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, we lose the forest for the trees. We may follow a series of historical events, but we have a very difficult time dropping these events carefully into an uninterrupted history of Israel. First of all, the narratives of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles are not complete (what single narrative could be?); and there are several things which occur *off camera*, if you will, that we lose in the narrative. This book of Chronicles—specifically, these first nine chapters—allow us to take a stand above the history of man and of Israel, and see down into groups of successive generations, which, (1) give us a more complete view of Israel's history (although some things will have to be inferred); and, (2) this gives us a good idea as to who each person is that we come across in the narrative. As I go through these groups of genealogies, I will also be giving you a mini-history of Israel which will be more comprehensive than you will find anywhere else. Now, it will lack many details, which will be filled in by the narratives of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, but it will give you the view of the forest.

Human relationships are complex; family dynamics are complex. You may become confused when, in your study of Samuel and Kings, that both Abiathar and his son Ahimelech, are mentioned as priests in connection with Saul and David. You may become confused as to the fact that they are not descendants of Eleazar, which is generally the priestly line. You may become more confused that Solomon later banishes Abiathar and Ahimelech is not mentioned at all, but a descendant of Eleazar is the priest. From a high enough vantage point given to us from Chronicles, we can make assumptions, draw inferences, organize relationships, generations, families, and get a rough idea as to what happened, as well as fill in the blanks of the incidents which are recorded. We will not walk away from this study having a perfect understanding of every family, incident or succession of events recorded in the narratives—but our understanding will be more complete and contiguous, less confused and fragmentary, and supplemented considerably. Where we are unable to determine exactly what happened, I will give you the best guesses that we can come up with.

History is a multilevel, multilayered subject, which complexity few people appreciate. In my studies of ancient history, principally through the books of Will Durant, he might follow a story in one direction and I desire to follow it in a different direction. For instance, let's say that you begin studying a particular country and that country goes to war with another country and there is an exchange of real estate. At what point do you study the military leaders of the second country? At what point do you examine the history of the second country? Do you simply examine a continuous progression of events, or do you examine a progression of events within a particular geographical location, or do you examine the portraits of the men who set these events into motion? How do you deal with events which occur simultaneously, but are, essentially, unrelated? You cannot pursue one approach to history without losing sight of another. Scripture recognizes this—it examines the genealogy of the men of history, and does so as early as Gen. 10; it examines a chronological sequence of events in particular geographical areas, e.g., the books of Samuel and Kings. It takes snapshots of individuals who place in history is crucial, but who could easily have been lost if only a chronological perspective were taken (e.g., the stories of Ruth or Esther). The Bible examines history from a geographical stance, organizing the distribution of the cities in the book of Joshua. The genealogies found throughout Scripture are underappreciated and their value is underestimated; however, they afford us another approach to a very convoluted subject, the history of Israel. **These things happened as examples for us...** (1Cor. 10:6a).

One of the things which is fascinating in this list of names is that these are men who either moved to Egypt, while the land was suffering from a famine; others of them lived under slavery to Egypt, along with their families; some of these people walked with Moses out of Egypt in the great exodus; of this group, some of them were struck down in the desert and others survived to take the Land of Promise which God had promised Abraham a half a millennium previous. All we see are a list of names. Their lives and where they were in history is not really told to us in these verses. However, with a little work, we can determine where most of them belonged in history.

Part of our problem with understanding the purpose of 1Chronicles is its position in the Greek and English Bible—it falls in the first half of the Bible. In the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles is the last book. Therefore, just as Genesis is the book of beginnings, and has several genealogies strewn throughout, Chronicles sums these up for us, as well as sums up the final history of Israel as a nation prior to its being removed from the land, and the last few verses record that Israel was removed from the land, and then restored to the land (although never to achieve the same level of greatness again). In other words, in the Hebrew Bible, Chronicles acts as a bookend, closing out God's inspired Word to the Hebrews, tying together what has come before with the almost final divine record of Israel's history. Given this, a consolidation of the genealogies seems only appropriate.

From a Gentile point of view, what do these genealogies mean to us? Early on in history, God's people recorded the human succession from Adam on down to the major nations at that time. Given that man began with two people, Adam and the woman, it would seem only appropriate that they and their ancestors be recorded in the most permanent record that we have, God's Word. If man was one million years old, then what we would not expect to find would be any sort of a genealogy. Insofar as the historical documents would be concerned, as soon as man was able to write anything down, at that point in time, there were far too many people on this planet to attempt to put together any sort of a genealogy. Under evolution, by the time man began to write, a genealogy would just not make sense—particularly not one which traced itself back to the first man. However, if man was created, it would be a natural thing to do. Many people my age and older have become quite fascinated with their own genealogies, spending hours researching and putting together a list of their ancestors, recording any significant events that they are able to unearth. This is normal behavior; the Bible is both a book written by man and by God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a recording of our principle ancestors is both right and logical.

Our understanding as Christians of the Jews' place in history is pathetic. Most Christians simply *spiritualize* either the Jews or the Church and say that we are the *spiritual* heirs of Israel and that being a Jew means little or nothing; that there are Jews living today is a nonissue; whether or not the nation Israel has a future, is perhaps a matter of interest to some people, but not necessarily to Christians. When we take this lame, poorly thought-out position, these genealogies tell us with each successive name, "*You are so wrong; you are so confused; you are so mistaken about Israel.*" God cares who Israel is; God cares about the genealogical succession of the people of Israel; God has a future purpose and plan for Israel. You cannot look at page after page after page after page of the names of the people of Israel and think that it means little or nothing. God did not put my family tree in the Bible (except, of course, in the most general terms going way back to the inception of mankind); God did not place your family tree in the Bible either. But every Jew has his early lineage given in greater detail than he even knows his immediate ancestors. This is because there is a relationship between God and Israel which has not disappeared and has not been spiritualized away. Certainly, in our present Age, **there is no Jew or Greek**; but that is not the case for the past or for the future. If we are unable to understand the role of Israel in God's plan, then we imperfectly understand our own roll in history, as well as in the future. My intent in covering these rarely covered books of the Old Testament is to give you a better appreciation, as well as understanding, of God's plan, past, present and future.

The Author and Time of Writing of Chronicles: The person most often named as the author of Chronicles is Ezra—armed with a great deal of source material. If he died circa 431 B.C., as Barnes suggests, then the line of David was appended by another author. Whoever penned that last portion of 1Chron. 3 would have to have written those last couple verses in 400 B.C., recording the various linages that he deemed appropriate. 1Chron. 3 appears to be the line which goes out the furthest and probably takes us past the time of Ezra. The priestly line in 1Chron. 6:1–15 takes us as far as Jehozadak, who was the High Priest when Judah returned to the land; however, his son, Joshua, who appeared to be more active, was not listed in this line. This is approximately 520 B.C.

The historical events of the book of Kings takes us to approximately 561 B.C. and Chronicles to approximately 538 B.C. The final verse of Chronicles is the last verse in the Hebrew Bible. However, the book of Nehemiah takes us to circa 425 B.C. and some of the genealogies in Chronicles seem to take us almost to 400 B.C.

One strong argument against Ezra being the author of Chronicles is the difference of the spelling of Jehozadak, the High Priest when Judah returned. In Ezra, his name is spelled *Jozadak*, which can be a simple shortening of the name (Ezra 3:2, 8 5:2 10:18).

The history of this time period may help to understand more about who or how Chronicles came to be. The Northern Kingdom had long been removed and overrun by heathen Gentiles (721 B.C.). Some of the tribes escaped to Judah (the Southern Kingdom), but the Northern Kingdom was no longer a Jewish nation. Judah fell into great apostasy and God removed them from their land in 586 B.C. Their captors, the Chaldeans, also destroyed Solomon's Temple. This is where their Bible was, separated into containers of various manuscripts, and intermixed with other scrolls of ancient writings. We do not know how it survived. The Jews did understand that these were sacred writings, even during this time of apostasy, but we do not know how they were preserved. Were they carried into Babylon? Did some remain in the land and preserve them? Were Chaldeans persuaded to preserve them? Were some manuscripts taken by Jeremiah into Egypt? We do not know; but the sacred scrolls and many other historical records were somehow preserved, despite the destruction of Solomon's Temple.

The Persians defeated the Chaldeans and inherited their land, their wealth, and their slaves, which included the Jews. The Jews were allowed to return to their land and to rebuild not just the Temple, but the walls of Jerusalem as well.

Somewhere between 516 B.C. (when the Jews returned to their land) and 400 B.C., the book of Chronicles was written. The writer (or writers) had many manuscripts at their disposal, some of which may have been damaged. There were genealogical records, the records of previous kings, the writings of the Jews, and various Scriptures. Whoever began this project preserved some of the genealogical information (quite of bit of it, in fact), and then he begins with the death of Saul as his starting point. It is undeniable that he quoted long passages verbatim. The passages from Samuel and Chronicles are too close to have been written by someone who reproduced this material simply from memory. Entire chapters are nearly identical word-for-word.

What would seem logical would be that, the writer of Chronicles knew the Scriptures, no longer had them, and reproduced them from memory in order to preserve them. Such an explanation would help to explain chapters of Samuel where all but a handful of words in each verse are in agreement. However, the weakest text of Scripture is Samuel. There are more textual problems in the book of Samuel than in any other. It is also logical that a newer book like Chronicles is better preserved than an older book, like Samuel, given that both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were overrun and dispersed after the book of Samuel had been written. But that leads us to many questions: how was the Samuel text preserved? Who preserved it? How accurate was the Samuel text that the writer of Chronicles used? How much did the writer of Chronicles update the text of Samuel? How much did he intentionally change? How different was his text from the original text of Samuel? How different was his text from the text of Samuel which we have today?

At best, I can give you theories to answer these questions. However, most of the time, the best I can do is offer up more questions. Some chapters are particularly disconcerting, e.g., 2Sam. 7 and 1Chron. 17. In these chapters, we have direct quotes from God and from David. That is, in fact, the bulk of these two almost-identical chapters. Unfortunately, they are not identical. Therefore, we may quibble about a phrase here and there, expecting them to be exactly the same, when they are not. There are some portions which can be simply explained: the writer of Chronicles edited out this or that phrase, paraphrased the words found in Samuel, or moved from 1st person (God speaking) to 3rd person (telling what God said). The writer of Chronicles may have seen fit to update some of the words (e.g., we do not use the terms *thee* or *thou* today; but we cause no harm to the KJV by changing those words to the more modern *you*). These logical explanations would explain, perhaps, 40–60% of the textual differences in 2Sam. 7 and 1Chron. 17. However, there is a lot of text remaining—and again, these are direct quotations—where those explanations do not adequately explain the differences.

That being said, it is important to recognize that there are no doctrinal differences between the texts of Samuel or the texts of Chronicles. Do you recall those jokers in Corinth who said, “We are Paulites” and other who claimed to be *of Jesus* or *of Apollos*? That did not occur among Jews reading these two books. No believer or unbeliever in the Jewish community claimed to be *of Samuel* in opposition to someone who is *of Chronicles*. Despite the differences, they are quite trivial in nature.

The Motivation of the Author/Editor of Chronicles: This ought to be a fascinating study, and I don’t know if I can provide any insight here. When the writer/editor of Chronicles sat down to write this book, he had before him several texts, some of which were considered to be the inspired Word of God, and others of which were not. I think the key to this motivation, is to examine the first 8 or so chapters of Chronicles, which are all genealogies. The writer had a ton of genealogical records before him, and he decided that he needed to record the most important records for each tribe, and that is what he began to do. At 1Chron. 9, the writer records some contemporary history, about the return of the people to the land after the end of the 5th cycle of discipline. Here is my initial theory: he’s covered the genealogies and the return of the people to the land, and then he thinks to himself, *how did this come to pass in the first place?* Or, he thought, *how did we get to this point in history?* The rest of the book of Chronicles is in answer to that.

The Style of Writing: There are a variety of styles of writing found in the book of Chronicles, not suggesting, necessarily, a group of authors, but widely variant types of material.

The genealogy style: Extent lists of Assyrian kings and their genealogies bear a striking resemblance to 1Chron. 1–9—there is no introduction, some lists are presenting without terms of relationship (e.g., 1Chron. 1:1: [Adam, Seth, Enosh](#)), and there are both segmented and linear genealogies found (a segmented genealogy follows several lines of descent, and a linear genealogy follows one particular line of descent). The NIV Study Bible describes an Assyrian king list: *There is no introduction, and the scribe has drawn lines across the tablet dividing it into four sections, two of which are lists of names without kinship terms, alternating with two lists in which relations are specified; both segmented and linear genealogies are used. This suggests that the Chronicler was following a known literary pattern for his composition.*⁶ Given that this style occasionally breaks form and follows various portions of Genesis word-for-word, is an indication that there might be small portions of 1Chron. 1 which were added sometime later (see the introduction to the first chapter for more information).

Difficulties Peculiar to these Chapters: Nobody likes lists of cities of genealogies, except for God the Holy Spirit and a few oddball believers. Therefore, when it comes to these kinds of lists, there are a lot of variant readings, meaning that some scribes did not accurately transcribe what was before them, or, more likely, when it came to copying over a manuscript, it was in such poor condition from disuse and neglect as to preclude an accurate copy being made. Therefore, we do not have a completely accurate record here, as some names have been messed up, and some relationships have been confused. Also, we will try to periodically fill in some gaps, and placing these people in time will also be difficult to do. I will do my best and occasionally take one side or the other of a disagreement, but it is impossible to become too dogmatic about some positions. Even Luke 3, a manuscript that you would feel would be accurate, has a plethora of different readings when it comes to the genealogical portion.

The Septuagint: The Septuagint was the first known translation of a book ever made. It is the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. I have made mention of it before, and it is important in some cases. Some Bible translations, e.g., the NEB, lean heavily upon the Septuagint for corrected readings. The reason for this is simply time. Our earliest Hebrew manuscripts date back to the 9th or 10th centuries A.D., whereas we have portions of the Septuagint which date back to the 1st century B.C. It is determined, by some, that older is better. The reason is simply because of the writing medium used. The Greeks recorded much of their literature on clay tablets, which means that we still have some of these tablets today. The Hebrews first recorded their libraries on papyrus and later on vellum, which is made from animal skin, and does not last near as long. Furthermore, when a manuscript was copied, then the older manuscript was destroyed. However, older does not mean better. The Greek was a translation, and a rather uneven translation at that. Because this was put together by a committee, and different small groups or individuals were responsible for different sections, we have the problem that some were more

⁶ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 577.

adept than others in the field of translation; some were more free-form in their translating (like the *Living Bible* or like the *Good News Bible*), and others were very literal (like *Young's Translation* or the KJV). So, one book of the Septuagint might be very faithful, almost ultra-literal; and one next to it may be less helpful. However, and this is the important part, genealogies and lists of cities do not leave a lot of openings for variance in the text. It doesn't matter whether a free-form translator or whether a very anal-retentive translator has been assigned a portion of Scripture to translate with lists of cities, because whoever has this responsibility just cannot mess it up too much. Therefore, apart from the differences in the languages (the Hebrew and Greek both have letters and sounds not found in the other language), the translation of a passage with a list of names is going to be rather straightforward. For these reasons, the Septuagint is a marvelous source of information for these first few chapters of Chronicles. Therefore, I will often refer to the Septuagint for alternate readings or to back up this assertion or that.

The Original Sources: The chronicler covers a time period from Adam (1Chron. 1:1) to the exile of the northeastern tribes (1Chron. 5:26) in these first nine chapters. He obviously did not write this from memory or from an oral tradition. He therefore needed records. From the information in these nine chapters, he clearly had access to the book of Genesis. There are portions of Chronicles which are obviously copied word-for-word from the book of Genesis. However, there were other sources. First of all, we have various lines covered in great detail beginning with and continuing on from the time of Jacob's move to Egypt. Although the beginning of these lines could obviously be gotten from Genesis, a couple generations into the various lines (e.g., 1Chron. 2:9ff) require additional records. Apparently, the chronicler had access to some documents from the libraries of Jotham, the king of Judah and from Jeroboam, the king of Israel (1Chron. 5:17), two kings who lived a half-century apart in different parts of Palestine. The person who wrote Chronicles appears to have written after the dispersion of both Israel and Judah, and following the return of Judah to the land. It is not clear if Chronicles is the work of one man or several. It is likely that some of the records employed were military census records (1Chron. 5:12, 18, 24) as well as records of border conflicts which resulted in expansion of the land or a change in the boundaries (e.g., 1Chron. 4:34–43 5:7–10, 16, 20–22), as well as miscellaneous census lists (1Chron. 5:14–15).

I think that the writer of Chronicles had 3 main sources: the genealogical records of the king; the historical records of the king (possibly called the Chronicles), and most of the Old Testament Bible, where he particularly drew from Samuel and Kings.

The Themes and Purpose of the Chronicles: The NIV Study Bible lists several themes and purposes of the books of Chronicles, most of which are not pertinent to the first nine chapters. However, one theme which comes into play is the concept of *immediate retribution*. You cannot break God's Laws nor can you fight God's people apart from the retribution of God. There is a careful weaving of the purposes of God which often confuses the uninitiated. God has His people, the Israelites, who would often rebel against Him. He would raise up prophets to warn them, and then He would raise up Gentile nations to discipline them. However, if the Gentile nations acted out of hatred and rebellion against God in their persecution of the Jews, God would discipline them as well. So, understand that God, on the one hand, would raise up a Gentile nation to discipline Israel; however, most of the time when they disciplined Israel, God would discipline that Gentile nation for disciplining Israel. Occasionally, in the first nine chapters, this theme is played out (e.g., 1Chron. 5:18–26).