

2 Chronicles Chapter 1

This second book of Chronicles contains in brief the contents of the books of 1 and 2 Kings. That is, from the reign of Solomon to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity. In this book, some things are told in more detail than in the books of the kings and therefore help greatly in the understanding of the prophets. Three things are chiefly to be considered here. First, that when the godly kings saw the plagues of God prepared against their country for sin, they turned to the Lord and by earnest prayer were heard, and the plagues were removed. Secondly, while the good rulers always loved the prophets of God and were zealous to set forth his religion throughout their dominions, it offended God greatly that the wicked hated his ministers, deposed them and set up idolatry and attempted and served God according to the fantasy of men. Therefore, we have the chief acts from the beginning of the world to the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the 32nd year of Darius, in total 3568 years and six months.

2 Chronicles is actually a continuation of 1 Chronicles. It has to do with the reign of Solomon in Israel. Toward the end of the book it deals with the 12 tribes of Israel breaking into 10 tribes of Israel, and 2 tribes making up Judah. This takes place before the Babylonian captivity. It was, probably compiled by Ezra from records he found, when he returned from exile. 1 and 2 Kings cover the same period of time. Kings was written before the exile, and Chronicles was written after the return. The two tribes that made up Judah had a form of religion, which possibly, centered in the temple in Jerusalem, but they had wandered away from God Himself. There is very little mention in this of the ten tribes. This book is basically about the tribe of Judah.

Verses 1:1 – 9:31: This section continues from 1 Chronicles and covers the rule of Solomon (ca. 971 – 931 B.C.; compare 1 Kings chapters 3-11). The major theme is Solomon's building God's temple in Jerusalem for the purpose of centralizing and unifying the nation in the worship of God.

2 Chronicles 1:1 "And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God [was] with him, and magnified him exceedingly."

A detailed account of "Solomon's" reign is found (in 1 Kings chapters 2-11). The audience of (2 Chronicles), exiles who had returned to Israel from captivity in Babylon, were likely aware of Solomon's whole story. The record from (1 Chronicles), continues in this book and is condensed to focus on the covenant God made with David (1 Chron. Chapter 17).

We must remember that Solomon was quite young when he began to reign. Many scholars believe he was as young as twelve years old. David was alive for a short period of Solomon's reign, and possibly guided him in the beginning. When God is for you, who can be against you? His strength lay in the fact that God was guiding everything he did. At this point in time, Solomon put his faith in God and not in his own abilities. God was with Solomon, and he grew in the sight of God and man.

2 Chronicles 1:2 "Then Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers."

As in (1 Chronicles), “all Israel” worships together. After the 40 years of Solomon’s reign, however, the nation would be divided into two kingdoms, with each having its own king. (2 Chronicles), traces only the story of the southern kingdom, Judah, because David’s descendants rule there.

These were the same people that David had encouraged (in the last lesson), to give for the construction of the temple, and they responded greatly. The temple had not been built at this time. The Ark was in Jerusalem, but the tabernacle was still in Gibeon. Solomon had brought them together so there would be unity of purpose.

2 Chronicles 1:3 "So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that [was] at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness."

“Gibeon” (see notes on 1 Chron. 16:39 and 21:29). The tabernacles remained at Gibeon while the Ark resided in Jerusalem, waiting for the temple to be built.

“Tabernacle of the congregation”: Built in the days of Moses, this tent was where God met with the people (compare Exodus 25:22; 29:42-43; 40:34-38). The center of worship was there until the temple was built (compare verse 6).

(See the notes on 1 Chron. 16:37-42).

This “high place” was termed a great high place (1 Kings 3:4), inasmuch as worship was carried on at several high places before the erection of the temple in Jerusalem.

The congregation that was with Solomon, was the leaders of the various groups of people. Solomon led them to the spot where the tabernacle was located. At this time, there was no other central place of worship. The Ark had been moved to Jerusalem, but the other things of the tabernacle that Moses had brought from the wilderness, were at Gibeon. Solomon wanted to honor and give thanks to God in the only way he knew how.

2 Chronicles 1:4 "But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to [the place which] David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem."

“Kirjath-jearim” (see note on 1 Chron. 13:5 and 2 Sam. 6:2).

He separated the Ark from the tabernacle, and brought it to Jerusalem, because there he intended to build a far more noble and lasting habitation for it. David's pitching of the tent for it is recorded emphatically (1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1; 2 Sam. 6:17).

(See the note on 2 Sam. 6:12).

When David brought the Ark to Jerusalem and erected a tent to protect it, he was saying this would be the place where the LORD would dwell with His people. The Ark symbolized the

presence of God. Temporarily, the Ark was separated from the brasen altar that they used for burnt sacrifices.

2 Chronicles 1:5 "Moreover the brasen altar, that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD: and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it."

“Bezaleel”: The Spirit-enabled craftsman who built the bronze altar for the tabernacle (compare Exodus 31:1-11; 38:1-2).

There had to be a central place to sacrifice unto the LORD. The brasen altar was the original one that Bezaleel had made for the tabernacle in the wilderness. Solomon would know that this altar was acceptable to God. This was a large group of people who went with Solomon to worship and sacrifice to God, as we see in the size of the sacrifice.

2 Chronicles 1:6 "And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the LORD, which [was] at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it."

One of the first acts of the new king was to worship at “the bronze altar before the Lord. David had prayed that Solomon would have a loyal heart for the Lord’s commands, and Solomon did (1 Chron. 29:19). He led the people in worshipping God as well as praying, that they might know the will of God.

When it says, Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings it means he carried the animals to be sacrificed. The priests did the actual act of the burning of the sacrifice. It was Solomon's offering however. It was as if Solomon could not offer enough in his own sight. He was grateful to God for this great honor He had bestowed upon him.

Verses 7-13: The account is paralleled (in 1 Kings 3:5-15). Every king of Israel needed to heed God’s instructions recorded (in Deut. 17:14-20).

Since Solomon’s concern was for the people, God gave him so much more than he asked, including “riches and wealth and honor” (1 Kings chapter 3). Blessing others often leads to being blessed.

2 Chronicles 1:7 "In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee."

The parallel account (in 1 Kings 3:5), tells us the way in which "God appeared to Solomon," viz. by dream.

"And said, Ask what I shall give thee": God bid him ask what he would. Not only that he might put him in the right way to obtain the favors which were intended him.

It was either in a vision or a dream, and it does not matter which. The message is the same. God was so pleased with Solomon at this point, that He offered to grant him a wish.

2 Chronicles 1:8 "And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast showed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead."

"Thou, thou hast showed great mercy unto David" (the regular phrase; compare Luke 1:72). From this point, the relation here is briefer on the whole than that of Kings. The greater part of the long verse (1 Kings 3:6), is omitted, and the variations between the two texts become numerous, though the general sense is the same in each.

"And hast made me to reign in his stead": Compare (1 Kings 3:7); and the similar language of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria (681-668 B.C.).

Solomon did not immediately ask for his wish. He first thanked God for His goodness to David and to him. It had to be very humbling for God to choose him, when he had older brothers whom God could have put in the office of king. He could not understand, but did appreciate the confidence God had placed in him.

2 Chronicles 1:9 "Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude."

"Thy promise": A reference to the Davidic Covenant (in 2 Sam. chapter 7; 1 Chron. Chapter 17).

It is thought by some that the "promise" here challenged is not very distinctly recorded anywhere, but surely passages like (1 Chron. 17:12-14; 22:10; 28:6-7), amply meet the case (see also 2 Samuel 7:12, 15).

"Over a people numerous as the dust of the earth": This last clause freely corresponds with (1 Kings 3:8).

The twelve tribes were a very large number of people. Just those who David had gathered together for the twelve different watches, were a tremendous number. 24,000 times 12 is 288,000, and they were just those in service to the king. At this time, the 12 tribes would have been several million people. Solomon had learned his lesson from David, and was not about to number them. His statement showed a fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham. Solomon wanted to rule in the manner God would have him rule.

2 Chronicles 1:10 "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, [that is so] great?"

Solomon had agreed with his father (compare 1 Chron. 22:5 and 29:1) on his need for wisdom, and that is what he sought from God (compare 1 Kings 3:3-15; Prov. 3:15; James 1:5).

(See the note on 1 Kings 3:12).

Solomon was aware that he was not capable of ruling so great a people without supernatural wisdom and knowledge from God. This then, was his request. He wanted to be a good ruler. He knew with the power of God working in his life, he could be that leader. He asked for wisdom to lead his people. In (1 Kings 3:9), his request was expressed that he might have an understanding heart to judge thy people. He wanted to be able to discern between good and evil. In a sense, that is the same thing. If he had the gift of wisdom from God, he would have this ability.

2 Chronicles 1:11 "And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:"

With this verse, the answer to Solomon's prayer begins. It is here concisely given in two verses, but occupies five (verses 10-14). in the parallel place, including the verse not found here, which says, "The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing."

Otherwise there is no essential difference of any importance, though it may be noted that the parallel gives voice to the promise of "length of days," on the condition of Solomon fulfilling his part in showing obedience to the Divine will, and in following the steps of his father.

"Riches, wealth": The most elementary idea of the former of these two words seems to be "straight growth," "prosperity;" of the latter, "to gather together" or "heap up."

This request had to please God. It was very unselfish. God knew from this, that Solomon had a pure heart. He loved God and His people more than he loved himself. The word "because" is strong here. The blessings Solomon did receive hinged on this word.

2 Chronicles 1:12 "Wisdom and knowledge [is] granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that [have been] before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like."

Which thou hast asked for.

"Is granted unto thee": The Hebrew expression is found only here and (in Esther 3:11). The parallel passage gives three verses for this one (1 Kings 3:12-14).

"And I will give thee": "I have given." The perfect tense (I will certainly give), is more idiomatic than the chronicler's simple imperfect.

"Such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee": These words were sadly ominous of the short-lived glory of the kingdom. Only two kings had reigned before Solomon in Israel, and the glory of the kingdom too surely culminated in his reign. And even before the end of it (2 Chron. 9:22-23; 29:25; Eccl. 2:9).

Saul and David had reigned before Solomon, and they had been very wealthy. It is hard to believe that he could have even more than they had. Solomon would become so wealthy and

build such magnificent things, that even the Queen of Sheba would come to see if it was true. She came partially because of the great wisdom he possessed, as well. Wisdom and knowledge is the greatest gift, aside from salvation, that any person could ever receive. The riches, wealth, and honor are a by-product of wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom is a gift from God, and knowledge is accumulated learning. The gift of knowledge here, is a quickening of his ability to learn and retain knowledge. This is similar to what the Holy Spirit does as our Teacher and our Guide.

2 Chronicles 1:13 "Then Solomon came [from his journey] to the high place that [was] at Gibeon to Jerusalem, from before the tabernacle of the congregation, and reigned over Israel."

Or rather without the supplement, the words may be read as in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions.

"Solomon came from the high places": Having sacrificed there, so Vatablus; being put for as R. Jonah observes; but the Targum agrees with us, he "came to the high place which is in Gibeon, and from thence to Jerusalem. "And to the same purpose Kimchi; having been there, he came to Jerusalem.

"From before the tabernacle of the congregation": Which was at Gibeon, where he had been sacrificing.

"And reigned over Israel ": In great splendor and prosperity. From here to the end of the chapter, the same things are said as in (1 Kings 10:26; see notes on 1 Kings 10:26-29).

Solomon had been empowered of God to rule over Israel justly. The tabernacle was of the congregation. It was a place where they could go and feel they had been in contact with God. It was their place of contact. The tabernacle was to benefit the people.

Verses 14-17: 1 Kings 10:14-29 and 2 Chron. 9:13-28), also extol Solomon's wealth.

2 Chronicles 1:14 "And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem."

"Chariot cities": Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo were among the chief cities.

One of the best ways to avoid war, is for your enemies around you to realize that you would win if they attacked you. This show of force, would help bring peace. David had defeated many of these enemies before his death, and had set up taxes against those defeated. There would be a constant flow of wealth to the king of Israel because of these defeated foes, who had to pay tribute.

2 Chronicles 1:15 "And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem [as plenteous] as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that [are] in the vale for abundance."

God had blessed Israel with plentiful crops. Their neighbors needed grain. They gave cedar trees in abundance to Israel, and Israel gave them grain. We have been studying (in 1 Chronicles), about the vast amount of gold and silver that David had gathered for the building of the temple. Solomon would gather even more it seems. The wealth of Solomon would be widely known in the world of that day. Without the expense of war, the wealth grew mightily. Sycamore trees are abundant in Israel. The cedars were floated in for building purposes, because the wood does not decay easily.

2 Chronicles 1:16 "And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price."

Solomon horses were "brought out of Egypt" and Kue, which is possibly Cilicia.

All things that the king desired were purchased for him. He had so much wealth, that he could have all the things his heart desired.

2 Chronicles 1:17 "And they fetched up, and brought forth out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred [shekels] of silver, and a horse for an hundred and fifty: and so brought they out [horses] for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, by their means."

Literally, and they caused to come up and to come out. The book of Kings has: "And there came up and came out a chariot from Egypt." This passage is very nearly identical with (1 Kings 10:26-29, see the notes there).

"Chariot ... six hundred shekels": Assuming a shekel weights .5 oz. of silver this represents 18-3/4 pounds of silver for one chariot.

"And a horse for a hundred and fifty": Assuming the weight is in shekels, this would be about 4-3/4 pounds of silver. (Deut. 17:16), warned against the king's amassing horses.

"The Hittites": People, once expelled from Palestine, who lived north of Israel and northwest of Syria.

A shekel is a half-ounce of silver. Notice, Solomon's generosity to the kings of the Hittites and of Syria.

2 Chronicles Chapter 1 Questions

1. What does 2 Chronicles cover?
2. What tribe is covered in this book?

3. Who compiled the book?
4. What other book in the Bible is about the same thing?
5. How was Solomon strengthened in his kingdom?
6. How old do many scholars believe Solomon was, when he began to reign?
7. Who did Solomon gather to him in verse 2?
8. Where was the tabernacle at this time?
9. Where did Solomon and the representatives of the congregation go to sacrifice?
10. Where was the Ark at this time?
11. The Ark symbolized the _____ of God.
12. The brasen altar at Gibeon had been built by _____.
13. How many offerings did Solomon offer on the brasen altar?
14. When did God appear to Solomon?
15. What did God offer Solomon?
16. What did Solomon do, even before he asked for anything?
17. What did Solomon ask for?
18. How did Solomon describe the people he was leading?
19. How did God answer the request of Solomon?
20. What all did Solomon receive of God?
21. When Solomon left Gibeon, what did he do?
22. How many chariots did Solomon have?
23. How many horsemen did he have?
24. What is the easiest way to have peace, besides from God?
25. Where did Solomon get his horses?
26. How much did a chariot cost?
27. What is a shekel?

28. How much did a horse cost?

29. Who did Solomon give horses to?