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# The Message of Chronicles: Rally 'Round the Temple

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OFTEN NEGLECTED BY CASUAL BIBLE READERS AS WELL AS BIBLICAL SCHOLARS, the books of Chronicles offer an important theological interpretation of Israel's history. The author delineates the Chronicler's perspective and compares it with that of the Deuteronomistic History.

The books of Chronicles are no doubt among the least read books of the Old Testament. To a degree this is understandable. The reader has two strikes against him when he ventures into these 64 chapters of terra incognita. First, the opening nine chapters of the work, which consist primarily of genealogies, provide little incentive to pursue the matter much further. Second, the reader who does reach the narrative portion of the work in 1 Chronicles 10 may be disappointed to find there the account of Saul's death, which is familiar from 1 Sam. 31. To the reader who can overcome these hurdles and immerse himself sympathetically in Chronicles, however, the writer has a provocative message to proclaim that may prove as relevant to our own day as it did to his, some 23 centuries ago.

Our neglect of Chronicles is unfortunate for a number of reasons. Perhaps the chief of these, apart from the failure to hear the message the books have for us, is the failure to be instructed by the unique opportunity Chronicles presents when read together with Samuel and Kings for viewing a period of Israel's history through the eyes of two different writers. To grasp this

opportunity is to learn much about both the nature of historical writing in Israel and the manner in which God used His inspired writers to speak a message to their own day.

## THE CHRONICLER AND THE DEUTERONOMIST

The Old Testament contains two accounts of Israel's history during the monarchical period (ca. 1020—587 B. C.). The first is found in the books of Samuel and Kings, which together with Joshua and Judges form a unified historical work that reached its final form during the exile. This work is called the Deuteronomistic History because of the many concerns it shares with the Book of Deuteronomy, which serves as its introduction.<sup>1</sup> The second,

<sup>1</sup> For previous study of this history, see Carl Graesser Jr., "The Message of the Deuteronomistic Historian," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXXIX (1968), 542—51, and the references cited there. To these may be added Gerhard von Rad, "The Deuteronomistic Theology of History in I and II Kings," *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), pp. 205—21; and Walter Bruggemann, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historian," *Interpretation*, XXII (1968), 387—402.

commonly called the Chronicler's History,<sup>2</sup> is usually considered to include not only the books of Chronicles, but the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as well, and is dated some two centuries later.<sup>3</sup>

The existence of two "histories" covering the same period reminds us that it could not have been the writer's purpose to write history in the sense in which we often think of it. Therefore to omit the study of Chronicles because it covers the

same period as Samuel-Kings, or to consider it a kind of supplement of items somehow omitted from Samuel-Kings,<sup>4</sup> is to do it a grave injustice. The prophetic writers were more concerned with the *interpretation* of history than they were with the orderly arrangement of details from the past. Rather, from their study of the past they derived a message for the present, and that message they proclaimed with a fervor that tended to make the historical "facts" of secondary concern.<sup>5</sup>

We must assume that the Chronicler, too, had a message that he wished to proclaim—a message that he found inadequately expressed in the earlier history. Furthermore, we must assume that this message is to be sought out and valued for its own sake. Not to do so is to avoid hearing the message of a large and significant portion of the Old Testament. It is as an aid to such a sympathetic hearing that this study is directed.

#### THE CHRONICLER'S METHODOLOGY

The reader of the Chronicler's History has at his disposal a significant aid for

<sup>2</sup> The definitive work on the Chronicler's History is that of Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1943), pp. 110—80. The best commentary is that of W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, First Series, Vol. XXI in *Handbuch zum Alten Testament* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949). The best offerings in English are those of E. L. Curtis and A. A. Madsen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles*, Vol. XI of *The International Critical Commentary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), and Jacob M. Myers, *I Chronicles and II Chronicles*, Vols. XI and XII of *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1965). Recent periodical articles of particular value include Peter Ackroyd, "History and Theology in the Writings of the Chronicler," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXXVIII (1967), 501 to 515; W. Rudolph, "Problems of the Books of Chronicles," *Vetus Testamentum*, IV (1954), 401—09; D. N. Freedman, "The Chronicler's Purpose," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, XXIII (1961), 436—42; Jacob M. Myers, "The Kerygma of the Chronicler," *Interpretation*, XX (1966), 259—73; and R. North, "Theology of the Chronicler," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXII (1963), 369—81.

<sup>3</sup> In this study we shall be confined to the message of Chronicles, omitting consideration of Ezra-Nehemiah. Although the unity of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah is assumed by the great majority of scholars, this position has been challenged recently by Freedman, *op. cit.*, as well as by Sara Japhet, "The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew," *Vetus Testamentum*, XVIII (1968), 330—71. The present writer counts himself among those who see many difficulties in asserting a common authorship.

<sup>4</sup> It is unfortunate that the name "Chronicles," which is often associated with the idea of history as the recital of a series of historical facts, should have been attached to the writing. The title given the books in the Septuagint, *Paraleipomena*, that is, the things omitted or passed over, is equally unfortunate.

<sup>5</sup> Compare the manner in which the Chronicler expresses his dogma of retribution, below, pp. 510 f. It is today commonly recognized that there is no completely objective, uninterpreted history, since every writer must at a minimum determine which events to include in his presentation, thus marking some events as significant and others as insignificant. Histories, therefore, must not be evaluated on the basis of their objectivity but on the basis of the validity of their interpretation of the historical facts.

understanding the author's purpose and message—an aid that exists for no other prolonged section of the Old Testament—in that he has a second history covering the same period. A comparison of the text of Chronicles with the text of Samuel-Kings indicates that the Chronicler was not only familiar with the earlier work of the Deuteronomist but actually utilized it as his primary source. A study of the Chronicler's methodology in the use of this source, for which the attached chart may serve as an introductory guide,<sup>6</sup> reveals the following characteristics of the Chronicler's use of his source: (1) In numerous cases he has taken over the material of Samuel-Kings with little or no alteration. We may assume that the Chronicler was in general agreement with this material. (2) The Chronicler has omitted a considerable amount of material entirely, both smaller blocks (see 2 Sam. 5:4-5; 9:1-13) and more extensive portions as well (see 2 Sam. 11—21). The Chronicler apparently either disagreed with the contents of this material or found it of no particular interest to him. (3) In some cases the Chronicler has reorganized the materials available to him (note his use of 2 Sam. 23:8-39). (4) In some cases the Chronicler has added material of his own (see 1 Chron. 10:13-14; 11:10; 13:1-4; 22:1-19; and so on). (5) While observable only from detailed study of passages found in both histories, the Chronicler has frequently altered the text of Samuel-Kings through brief additions, deletions, and substitutions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Below, pp. 513—14.

<sup>7</sup> Compare, for example, 1 Chron. 21 with 2 Sam. 24. Here some of the alterations are clearly tendential; compare 1 Chron. 21:1, which says that *Satan* incited David to take a census

All these various kinds of materials must be considered in determining the Chronicler's message. However, it seems probable that the writer's views would be most apparent in the sections that he himself has introduced into the text, where he appears to have been composing independently of any known source.<sup>8</sup> To these sections we will devote particular attention in considering the Chronicler's message.

#### STRUCTURE

The books of Chronicles may be viewed under four major heads:

- I. Introductory Genealogies, 1 Chron. 1—9
- II. The David History, 1 Chron. 10—21 (Transitional Unit, 1 Chron. 22 to 29)
- III. The Solomon History, 2 Chron. 1 to 9
- IV. Post-Solomonic Kings of Judah, 2 Chron. 10—36

Even such a brief outline as this raises questions significant for understanding the Chronicler's purpose. Why does he begin his account of Israel's history with David, bypassing such significant events as the promise to Abraham, the exodus, the con-

of Israel, with 2 Sam. 24:1, which claims that the Lord had incited David; or 1 Chron. 21:25, which says that David paid 600 shekels of gold for the temple site, as contrasted with 2 Sam. 24:24, which says that the prince was given 50 shekels of silver; as well as the additions of vv. 28-30. In other cases, such as 21:2, 3, 6, 7, 14-17, the reasons for the alterations are less clear. Some differences like these are probably to be attributed to different textual traditions.

<sup>8</sup> This represents somewhat of a departure from the methodology exhibited in most studies in the past, which have tended to concentrate on the differences in texts found in both the Chronicler's History and the Deuteronomic History.

quest of Palestine, the judges, and even the beginnings of the monarchy itself? Why has such a disproportionate amount of attention been given to David and Solomon? Why has the writer restricted his history to the southern kingdom after the split with the north? These questions we shall keep in view as we survey the narrative portions of the Chronicler's History.

#### THE DAVID HISTORY

The materials included in 1 Chron. 10 to 21 emphasize two aspects of David's career: (1) the legitimacy of his rule, which was both in accord with God's will and given unanimous assent by all Israel; and (2) his concern for cultic matters such as the ark, the Levites, and the temple. Virtually all else is excluded from the Chronicler's presentation.

The first emphasis is particularly strong in 1 Chron. 10—12, which describes David's rise to power. Because the Chronicler begins the narrative portion of his history with Saul's disastrous battle with the Philistines, it is apparent that Saul's death has been included only as a prolog to the reign of David. This interpretation is borne out by the remarks the Chronicler adds in 1 Chron. 10:13-14, giving a theological justification for Saul's death ("he was unfaithful to the Lord") and establishing David's right to rule ("the Lord . . . turned the kingdom over to David").

This note of God's approval of David's reign recurs in other additions of the Chronicler's History (see 11:3, 10), but the point that 1 Chron. 11—12 drives home to the reader is Israel's unanimous acceptance of David as its king. The Chronicler omits entirely 2 Sam. 1—4 from

his account, since those chapters recount the great opposition that David received in the early part of his reign. He proceeds instead to tell of David's covenant with *all Israel* at Hebron (11:1-3). By the omission of 2 Sam. 5:1-3 the Chronicler accomplishes two purposes: (1) he avoids mention of David's lengthy rule over only a portion of Judah at Hebron (see 2 Sam. 2:4); and (2) the resulting juxtaposition of the conquest of Jerusalem (1 Chron. 11:4-9) suggests that David proceeded immediately from his anointing to the capture of Jerusalem, which was destined to become the seat not only of the dynasty but also of the temple. By a slight alteration of v. 4 (see 2 Sam. 5:6, which sees the conquest as achieved only by *the king and his men*), the Chronicler adds once again the note of the participation of *all Israel*.

This emphasis on all Israel's support for David's kingship reaches its climax in 11:10—12:40, where the Chronicler has marshaled several lists of warriors as evidence of the support given David. The first list (11:11-41a) has been transferred by the Chronicler to this location from 1 Sam. 23:11b-39, where it stood almost as an appendix. While the origin of the remaining lists is disputed, the inclusion of various introductory statements (see 11:10; 12:1, 8, 16, 19, 22, 23), together with the description of the feast surrounding David's anointing (12:38-40), makes the author's intention plain: "All these . . . came to Hebron with full intent to make David king over all Israel; likewise all the rest of Israel were of a single mind to make David king" (12:38). Such an acceptance, the Chronicler reasoned, would surely have been accorded the divinely chosen king!

With David established as king, the Chronicler moves immediately to his second theme, the cult, bypassing for the moment 2 Sam. 5:11-25. The introduction added by the Chronicler in 13:1-4 again points to the significance he attached to the event and to the participation of all Israel in it. David secures the agreement of the entire assembly to invite all Israel, including the priests and Levites, to join with them in bringing the ark to them. Once again, we are assured, "all the assembly agreed to do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people." (V. 4)

After the narrative of the unsuccessful attempt to bring up the ark (13:5-13), the Chronicler includes in chapter 14 the material previously bypassed, which he has used to point to the spread of David's fame (v. 17). Chapters 15 and 16 deal exclusively with cultic concerns. While the unity of these chapters is problematic, the opening section (15:2) states emphatically that only the Levites are to bear the ark (15:2). With the participation of all Israel once again duly noted (15:3), six Levitical heads are instructed to sanctify themselves to bring up the ark (vv. 11-12), the ark is safely brought into Jerusalem (15:25—16:3), and David appoints Levitical assistants for both the Jerusalem shrine (16:4-5a) and the tabernacle.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The Chronicler's History, unlike other Old Testament traditions, places the tabernacle, together with the altar of burnt offering, at Gibeon (1 Chron. 21:29; 2 Chron. 1:3-6), perhaps on the basis of 1 Kings 3:4. On completion of the temple the ark is brought to the temple from its place in the city of David, and the tabernacle (or tent of meeting) and sacred vessels are brought up from Gibeon (2 Chron. 5:5). The similar passage in 1 Kings 8:4 is probably a later addition on the basis of the Chronicler's

With 1 Chron. 17, the Chronicler returns to his *Vorlage*, so that chapters 17 to 21 are essentially identical to 2 Sam. 7, 8, 10, and 24. The reason for the inclusion of 2 Sam. 7 is apparent, since it contains the well-known oracle of Nathan introducing the topic of the temple itself. While the reason for the inclusion of 2 Sam. 8 and 10 is not apparent and is probably due only to the author's dependence on his source, the Chronicler's omission of 2 Sam. 9, which related David's kindness to Saul's grandson Mephibosheth, was necessary in view of his previous statement that all of Saul's house had perished at the hands of the Philistines (1 Chron. 10:6, contrast 1 Sam. 31:6). Many reasons have been suggested for the omission of 2 Sam. 11—20, most of which emphasize the unfavorable view of David painted in those chapters (including especially his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah). It may well be, however, that the Chronicler did not consider the chapters relevant to the cultic interests that he was pursuing.

With 1 Chron. 21 (= 2 Sam. 24) the Chronicler begins the narrative of the construction of the temple, which reaches its conclusion only with Solomon's dedicatory prayer in 2 Chron. 6. Both the large number of alterations introduced into this chapter and the Chronicler's additions in vv. 26b, 27-30, which signify the divine approval of the site of the future temple, point to the significance of this chapter for the Chronicler. Following the divine approval of the site, the transitional unit is introduced with the royal decree initiating the construction of the temple. (1 Chron. 22:1)

History, since the Deuteronomist knew of no such separation of tabernacle and ark.

## SOLOMON

In depicting Solomon's reign the Chronicler continues his emphasis on the two concerns that are central in his account of David's reign — the legitimacy of the king, together with the recognition of that legitimacy by all Israel, and the king's involvement in the cult.

Solomon's concern for the temple was foremost already for the writer of Kings (see 1 Kings 5—8). However, the Chronicler's concern is even more pronounced and exclusive than that of the Deuteronomist. Omitting most of the material of 1 Kings 1—4, the Chronicler introduces the subject of the temple already in 2 Chron. 2:1, and this theme remains dominant until his conclusion in 8:12-16. In addition to the retention of the editorial formulas of the Deuteronomist in 2 Chron. 5:1, 7:11, and 8:1, a second introductory notice has been added in 3:1, which significantly relates Solomon's building operation to the Lord's appearance to David (1 Chron. 22:1). The most important events associated with the new temple—the transfer of the ark and the dedicatory prayer—are also set apart by the divine epiphanies that accompanied them. (2 Chron. 5:14; 7:1-3)

There is yet another indication of the Chronicler's great interest in this section. In the David History, the Chronicler has confined himself largely to the deletion and addition of larger blocks of material, with the occasional transfer of larger blocks of material from one location to another, minor alterations, and a few interpretative comments. However, his account of Solomon's reign, although dependent to some degree in almost every case on Kings,

amounts to a virtual rewriting. This marks a significant shift in his methodology.

A few examples must suffice here. After the initial statement of the temple theme (2 Chron. 2:1), the Chronicler continues by relating Solomon's arrangements for workers for the project (v. 2), a passage relocated from 1 Kings 5:15-16. In vv. 3-16 the Chronicler has included Solomon's correspondence with Hiram of Tyre (see 1 Kings 5:1-12). However, the Chronicler has used this correspondence not only to convey Solomon's request for timber for his building operations, but has also through the rewriting of Solomon's message included both a confession of faith for Solomon and a significant statement of the purpose of the temple (vv. 3-5). Solomon's request for a craftsman to direct the more delicate work, which had stood quite alone in the Deuteronomic History (1 Kings 7:13-14), is at the same time made a part of Solomon's original request. Hiram's reply is similarly altered. (Vv. 12-13)

While 2 Chron. 3—8 is largely parallel to 1 Kings 6—9, here, too, the Chronicler has added characteristic emphases: 5:11-13 (the participation of the Levitical singers); 6:41-42 (the temple as the resting place for the ark; compare Ps. 132:8-9); 7:1-2 (Solomon's prayer answered with fire; the participation of the worshipers and priests); 7:9-10 (the extension of the dedicatory feast for an additional 7 days); 7:12-15 (a passage full of theological ideas important for the Chronicler); and, most important, the conclusion added in 8:12-16, which affirms that the work of the temple found its completion only with the inauguration of the regular sacrifices and the installation of the priests and Levites

in their offices. The concluding chapter of this portion (2 Chron. 9 = 1 Kings 10), the visit of the queen of Sheba, demonstrates the prestige and riches with which Solomon ended his reign.

Most significant for understanding the Chronicler's view of Solomon is his omission of 1 Kings 11, which relates Solomon's later apostasy in constructing high places for his wives and thus places on him the burden for the division of the kingdom that followed. According to the Chronicler, Solomon, like David before him, ended his reign as he had begun it, in complete obedience and service to Yahweh and His cult.

#### DAVID AND SOLOMON

The Chronicler presents the reigns of David and Solomon in a very similar manner. Both are dedicated almost exclusively to cultic concerns. David captures Jerusalem, brings up the ark, makes arrangements for the ordering of the priests and Levites, and determines the future site of the temple. Solomon continues the preparations for the temple, builds it on the site determined by David, transfers the ark to it, and places the priests and Levites into their offices. Both David and Solomon complete their reigns, as they had begun them, in complete obedience and service to Yahweh.

The parallels between David and Solomon are further magnified in the transitional unit by which the Chronicler has connected the reigns of these two kings, 1 Chron. 22—29. While most scholars would consider chapters 23—27 to be a later addition amplifying the theme of Levitical organization, chapters 22, 28, and 29 seem to complete the parallels between

David and Solomon. Just as Solomon had made preparations for the temple, so did David (22:2-5; 29:2-5).<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, just as David had been cited as receiving the unanimous support of the people, this unit notes that Solomon too was greeted enthusiastically and unanimously by all Israel (including David's other sons!) as David's successor. (1 Chron. 29: 23-25)

But the major apologetic concern of these chapters is surely to affirm that Solomon is the legitimate, God-chosen heir to the throne and therefore the legitimate temple builder. The Chronicler "proves" this legitimacy in several striking ways. Among these should be listed 22:8-10, which demonstrates that Solomon, whose name means "peace," is already destined to build the temple on the basis of that name, which is symbolic of the peace and rest that was to be the prerequisite for the construction of the temple.<sup>11</sup> The Chronicler therefore applies the dynastic oracle of 2 Sam. 7 directly to Solomon (v. 9). Verses 11-13, which are modeled on the account of Joshua's induction in Joshua 1, point decisively to Solomon's task as temple builder. This divine choice is reaffirmed in 1 Chron. 28:5-10, where the Chronicler states that Solomon was "chosen" (*bāḥar*) to build the temple.<sup>12</sup> We shall return to the reason for both the equating of David and Solomon and the emphasis on Solomon's legitimacy when

<sup>10</sup> The greater part of 28:12-18, which deals more extensively with these preparations, is commonly denied to the Chronicler.

<sup>11</sup> See Deut. 12:8-11; 1 Kings 5:3-4.

<sup>12</sup> The Chronicler has applied the root *bāḥar* to Solomon, although no other Old Testament tradition applies it to any king after David.



we discuss the purpose of the Chronicler's History.

#### POST-SOLOMONIC KINGS OF JUDAH

For a writer who emphasized so strongly the unity of all Israel around David, Solomon, and the temple they had constructed, the division of the kingdom into opposing political and religious factions that occurred under Rehoboam (922—915 B. C.) was an event of momentous importance. Nevertheless, the Chronicler's narrative of the post-Solomonic kings continues to emphasize both the Jerusalem cult and the all-Israel theme, although especially in the latter case a marked shift was essential.

#### THE TEMPLE

Nowhere is the centrality of the temple and its cult more apparent in this portion of the Chronicler's History than in the description of the reign of Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29—32). The account of Hezekiah's religious reforms and the reinauguration of the temple cult, which, according to the Chronicler, had ceased completely during the reign of the wicked Ahaz (2 Chron. 29:24), is absent from Kings and no doubt marks the high point of the period for the Chronicler. The celebration of the great Passover under Hezekiah marks a return to the *status quo* under Solomon (2 Chron. 30:26), and the fact that the Chronicler has in each case introduced a 14-day celebration (v. 23) is hardly accidental.

In various other ways too, the Chronicler has placed greater emphasis on the temple than had the Deuteronomist before him. Additional activity of the priests and Levites is introduced sporadically (see 2 Chron. 30; 35:7-15); earlier sections con-

nected with the temple are expanded (compare 2 Chron. 23—24 with 2 Kings 11—12); the disposition of the temple and its vessels at the time of the fall of Jerusalem is noted more carefully than in the Deuteronomic History (2 Chron. 36:1-19). Good kings are regularly represented as zealous for the temple and its precincts, while the apostasy of wicked kings is similarly noted.<sup>13</sup>

It is not surprising that this emphasis on the temple should reappear in the first instance where the Chronicler has occasion to discuss the problem of the divided kingdom, 2 Chron. 13. In the discourse placed in Abijah's mouth before his battle with Jeroboam, the North is taken to task for its apostasy from both the Davidic dynasty and the Jerusalem cult. However, the major emphasis here and throughout the remainder of the work is clearly on the temple.<sup>14</sup> The North has forsaken the true God, since the people there have driven out Yahweh's priests, the Aaronides and Levites, and installed priests like other nations (v. 9). Judah, on the contrary, has not forsaken Yahweh, for its people have the legitimate priesthood and also keep the prescribed ceremonies (vv. 10-11). The result is that God is with the South (Judah), and its victory is assured. There is no indication that the Chronicler ever deviated from this view of the unique position of the Jerusalem sanctuary.

<sup>13</sup> See 2 Chron. 15:8; 20:1-19; 28:24; 29:3; 33:15; and others.

<sup>14</sup> The function of the Davidic dynasty, which is certainly emphasized on occasion, seems to have been realized in the construction of the temple (2 Chron. 6:10-11). There is no indication in Chronicles (or in Ezra-Nehemiah) of the expectation of a Davidic messiah.

### THE ALL-ISRAEL THEME

To be sure, the situation following the split of the united monarchy demanded a revision in the Chronicler's presentation of the all-Israel theme. While before the disruption he could with some justification point to the support that David and Solomon received as kings of all Israel, it was not possible to do so at any later time. Nevertheless, the Chronicler has maintained his interest in all Israel in two significant ways: (1) Various kings of Judah consistently show themselves as interested and involved in political and religious events in the North;<sup>15</sup> and (2) the Chronicler repeatedly points out that some representatives from the North recognized the legitimacy of the Jerusalem temple and came there to worship.

It is again significant that the first mention of such a happening is found immediately after the disruption, when the Chronicler notes that priests and Levites from "all Israel" resorted to Rehoboam in Jerusalem and that these were followed by others who came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to Yahweh (2 Chron. 11:13-17). A similar notice in connection with Asa's reforms mentions that great numbers from Israel also had defected to him (2 Chron. 15:9). Hezekiah extends an invitation to all Israel "from Beersheba to Dan" to come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and it is noted that while his messengers met with some ridicule, some representatives of the North responded favorably (2 Chron. 30:11, 18, 25). Both Hezekiah's prayer for these ritually unclean worshipers and the positive portrayal of the "good Samari-

<sup>15</sup> See 2 Chron. 15:8; 19:4; 30:1-12; 31:1; 34:6,9.

tans" of 2 Chron. 28:8-15 indicate that the Chronicler continued to think of the inhabitants of the North who recognized the legitimacy of the Jerusalem temple as his brothers. These he invited and encouraged to come to participate in the Jerusalem cult.

### RETRIBUTION

While somewhat removed from the Chronicler's central emphasis on the temple and its cult, various other theological motifs occur with such frequency as to be considered a significant part of the Chronicler's message. Among these might be noted, for example, the emphases on generosity and joy as a necessary part of Israel's religious celebrations;<sup>16</sup> on actions flowing from a perfect, undivided heart;<sup>17</sup> and on the need for complete trust in Yahweh and avoidance of every other kind of reliance, whether on idols or on foreign powers.<sup>18</sup> Particular attention needs to be called, however, to the dogma of retribution, which is first enunciated in David's second speech to Solomon (1 Chron. 28:9) and is reiterated several times in almost identical phraseology through prophets whom the Chronicler has appear from time to time: "The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2 Chron. 15:2, cf. 12:5; 14:7; 16:7, and so on). It is of more importance in understanding the methodology of this historian, though, to note that every case in which the Deu-

<sup>16</sup> See 1 Chron. 12:40; 29:9,22; 2 Chron. 7:10; 15:15; 23:18; 29:36; 30:23-27.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Chron. 12:38; 28:9; 2 Chron. 15:12; and so on.

<sup>18</sup> 2 Chron. 12:1-8; 13:18; 14:9-12; 16:7 to 10; and so on.

teronomist might be considered deficient in his presentation of the post-Solomonic kings in this respect has been carefully altered by the Chronicler. Several samples must suffice. The Deuteronomist had reported matter of factly the invasion of Judah by Shishak of Egypt during the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:25). The Chronicler, however, provides a theological reason for this invasion that conforms to his dogma of retribution: Judah had forsaken the Law (2 Chron. 12:1, 2, 5). Similarly, the Deuteronomist had reported that although Azariah (Uzziah) had done what was right, the Lord had smitten him with leprosy (2 Kings 15:3-5). The Chronicler, however, as is often the custom, divides the reign of this king into two distinct periods. The first of these was marked by faithfulness and prosperity (2 Chron. 26:1-15). The second, however, is indicated in a unit (vv. 16-21) added by the Chronicler, which attributes Uzziah's leprosy to his having entered the temple to burn incense, an action reserved for the priests.

Examples could be multiplied for almost every king of Judah. The Chronicler records the repentance of the apostate Manasseh, whom the Deuteronomist considered the worst of Judah's kings and because of whom Judah was eventually exiled. Apparently the Chronicler felt that his long and prosperous rule of 55 years required some such explanation (2 Chron. 33). The violent death of good King Josiah is attributed to the fact that he had disobeyed God's voice spoken through none other than Necho of Egypt (2 Chron. 35:20-22)! Perhaps nowhere else is it more apparent that the Chronicler was not interested so much in presenting the facts

of history as in providing an interpretative framework according to which all of history might be understood.

#### THE MESSAGE AND AUDIENCE OF CHRONICLES

It has become scholarly orthodoxy to see the primary purpose of the Chronicler's History in the author's opposition to the inhabitants of the North after the exile and in his positive statement of the role of the Levites, among whose number he is often counted. Our study, however, would alter the focus of both of these supposed purposes. First, it appears that the central emphasis of the Chronicler focuses on all aspects of the cult rather than on the Levites in particular, although they are surely to be included among the Chronicler's cultic interests. But second, and more important, it is difficult to believe that the author of such passages as 2 Chron. 28:8-15 and 2 Chron. 30 could have been so utterly opposed to the North as he is commonly pictured.

We have seen rather that the Chronicler is concerned with all Israel, both North and South, throughout his work. During the reigns of David and Solomon he points repeatedly to the enthusiastic and unanimous consent given by all Israel to the reigns of these kings and their efforts on behalf of the cult. After the dissolution of the united monarchy the Chronicler continues to be concerned for the northern tribes, admonishes them for rejecting the Jerusalem temple, and exhorts them to return to it and to participate in its ceremonies as brothers. Apart from 2 Chron. 13, where the necessity for the recognition of the Jerusalem temple is expressed in unequivocal terms, the

writer is not at all negative in his appraisal of the North and does not hesitate to report the positive response of at least a portion of the northern tribes. There appears to be no valid reason to assume that the Chronicler altered this basically positive view.<sup>19</sup>

The books of Chronicles then appear to date from a period prior to the final decisive rupture between North and South as it is known to have existed in New Testament times (see John 4:9).<sup>20</sup> Al-

<sup>19</sup> Passages such as 2 Kings 17 and Ezra 4:1-4 are often cited as examples of an intense anti-North hostility at a very early date. Neither of these passages, however, speaks of the descendants of northern Israel, but rather of various foreign elements who had been imported into Palestine by Assyrian kings. (See T. H. Gaster, "Samaritans," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. G. A. Buttrick, IV [New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962], 192.) Elsewhere in Ezra the opposition encountered by the returning exiles in the construction of the temple is attributed not to native Israelites but to the officials of Persian provinces, such as Sanballat, governor of Samaria; Tobiah, governor of Ammon; and Geshem the Arab, whose political authority would have been diluted by the intrusion of the Jerusalem community. The opposition to the Jews on the part of such rulers was therefore no doubt more political than racial or religious. That Sanballat remained on friendly terms with Judean leaders is apparent from the fact that one of the grandsons of Eliashib the priest was married to his daughter (Neh. 13:28). Two of Sanballat's children known from the Elephantine papyri, Delaiah and Shelemiah, as well as the governor Tobiah himself, have names into which the Yahweh element *-iab* is compounded.

<sup>20</sup> There is mounting evidence that the final schism with the Samaritans, which has customarily been dated quite early, perhaps at the time of Ezra, is to be dated much later, perhaps about 100 B.C. See especially Bruce Waltke, "The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Text of the Old Testament," *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne (London: Word Books, 1970), pp. 212-39, and the references cited there.

though the writer is insistent on the prerogatives of the Jerusalem temple, he has not written off his northern brethren, but has appealed to them to join with the true Israel in worship at the sole legitimate sanctuary of Yahweh.

It is in this connection that the reason for the author's emphasis on David and Solomon and the unanimous assent accorded their reigns becomes significant. It was only during the reigns of these two kings that the North and South had been united. Moreover, it was during the reigns of these two kings that the ark, the focal point of Israel's existence as the people of God, was moved to Jerusalem and the temple was built. Therefore in returning to the period of David and Solomon the author has based his appeal on a period that belonged to the common history of both North and South. Both had participated in the events involved in the establishment of Solomon's temple and in so doing had recognized Jerusalem as the legitimate site of that temple (2 Chron. 6:6). Now, some time after the restoration of a temple in Jerusalem following Cyrus' edict, the Chronicler was appealing to the North again to join with the South in common worship at the Jerusalem temple.

It is probable that the author was at the same time speaking a word of admonition to some of the people of the South as well. It is no doubt true that already shortly after the exile some tensions between the returning exiles of Judah and those who had remained in Palestine were beginning to be felt. Perhaps the Chronicler's invitation to the North was at the same time a gentle rebuke to certain parties in the South, reminding them that the inhabitants

of the North were their brethren (2 Chron. 28:15), a part of the "all Israel" who were to be united in their common allegiance to Yahweh at a common sanctuary.

Beyond this, the writer's constant focus on the joy that was to attend Israel's worship, on the wholehearted devotion that was to characterize the people of God, and on the need for generosity in support of the temple and its services points to a situation that seems to have been constant throughout the postexilic period. At that time the worship of Yahweh seemed more like a demand than a privilege, and the support of the temple appeared to many to be an unjustified extravagance. In the face of such party spirit and diminishing devotion, the message of the Chronicler's

History is clear and unequivocal. The first response to God's revelation of Himself is pure adoration and worship, and it is in this act of worship that the people of God are made one. As Gerhard von Rad has stated, it is difficult to see where a theology that saw Israel's existence as being so strongly conditioned by praise could have strayed so very far from the proper road.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, I (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962), 354.

Further elaboration of many of the themes found in this study are found in the writer's doctoral dissertation, "The Significance of 1 Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Structure and Theology of the Work of the Chronicler," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1971.

CHART: SYNOPTIC AND NONSYNOPTIC PASSAGES IN 1 CHRONICLES 10—29

Passages listed in both columns have been borrowed by the Chronicler with little or no alteration; passages found in Samuel only have been omitted by the Chronicler; passages with no parallel listed in Samuel have been added by the Chronicler, either on the basis of other (unknown) sources or from his own knowledge.

<i>Samuel-Kings</i>	<i>1 Chronicles</i>	<i>General Description of Contents</i>
1 Sam. 1—30	—	Samuel, the institution of the monarchy, Saul and his conflict with David
1 Sam. 31:1-13	10:1-12	Death of Saul
—	10:13-14	Reason for death of Saul
2 Sam. 1—4	—	David's struggle with Saul's house
5:1-3	11:1-3	David anointed king over all Israel
5:4-5	—	David's rule over Judah (only) at Hebron
5:6-10	11:4-9	The capture of Jerusalem
—	11:10	Introduction to David's mighty men
23:8-39	11:11-41a	Listing of Davidic warriors
—	11:41b-47	Additional to previous list
—	12:1-40	Additional warriors who came to David
—	13:1-4	Introduction to the ark narrative
6:1-11	13:5-14	First attempt to bring ark to Jerusalem
5:11-25	14:1-16	David's prosperity
—	14:17	David's fame: summary
—	15:1-24	Organization of priests and Levites
6:12b-19a	15:25—16:3	Ark brought to Jerusalem
—	16:4-42	Further ordering of Levites; psalms

## THE MESSAGE OF CHRONICLES: RALLY 'ROUND THE TEMPLE

6:19b-20a	16:43	David and his people return home
7:1-29	17:1-27	Dynastic oracle
8:1-18	18:1-17	Philistine wars
9:1-13	—	David's kindness to Saul's house
10:1-19	19:1-19	Ammonite wars
11:1; 12:26	20:1	Introduction to Uriah episode
11:2—12:25	—	David and Bathsheba, Uriah
12:27-29	—	Joab's message to David
12:30-31	20:2-3	David's victory over the Ammonites
13:1—21:17	—	David's court history
21:18-22	20:4-8	A Philistine war
22:1—23:7	—	Two songs of David
24:1-25	21:1-27	David's census
—	21:28-30	Explanation of David's sacrifices
—	22:1—29:30	Transitional unit: David and Solomon

The following portions of the Chronicler's History listed above, which consist normally of lists of various kings, are generally considered later additions to the work: 12:1-22; 15:4-10, 16-24; 16:5b-36, 42; chapters 23—27.