

## 1-2 Chronicles Twitter Commentary

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## Introduction, 1 Chronicles 1:1-54

### Introduction

Chronicles is a big book (not 2, that's a later manuscript division), one of the longest in the HB, and most people don't know what to do with it. It begins with 9 chapters of genealogies, and has tons of lists. Looks hard.

It works with the same material but doesn't have many of the fun stories that 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings have. It does have a very pious David and wise Solomon. They seem kind of boring. But they're boring for interesting reasons!

This is not a history book. It's a book about Levites. Who are Levites? They're temple workers who do just about everything. David is the guy who sets them up, and Solomon is the guy who gives them a place to work.

More on Levites when we meet them. But before we meet them we have to see where they fit in the universe. After we meet them we'll see where they work (i.e. the temple in Jerusalem).

Another thing about Chronicles: it's made up of lots of pieces of texts that we know from other biblical books, along with other pieces that we don't know from elsewhere. I think of it as an archive in scroll form.

The pieces we don't know from elsewhere are mostly the product of the scribe, the archivist, although there might be some that the archivist (= Chr) didn't produce. I'll point out the pieces the archivist used and produced.

### 1 Chronicles 1:1-4

Here we go. Nine chapters of genealogies. BORING, right? Not at all. (Well, not to me.)

Scholars who study genealogies suggest that there are two basic types of genealogies: Linear and Segmented.

Linear genealogies trace a line from parent to child to grandchild etc. They're interested in either the beginning or the end of the line (or both).

Segmented genealogies map the children, and then the children's children, etc. - these look more like a "family tree." They're interested in showing the relationships between the different branches.

Chronicles has both, and switches back and forth between them a lot. But there are ways to tell (most of the time) what kind of genealogy we're dealing with. I'll point those out as we go.

We also have to deal with the fact of manuscript transmission. Simply put, scribes made a lot of mistakes in copying genealogies. Eyes easily skip whole chunks, and unfamiliar names get garbled.

Adam Sheth Enosh Qenan Mahalal-el Yered Hanok Methushelach Lemek Noach Shem Cham and Yephet. Yep, just a list of names. Except that the LXX inserts after Noach and before Shem “the sons of Noach.”

We know these names from Genesis 5 & 10, and that’s likely where Chr (= the archivist) knew them too. Chr excerpts from the archive to make this list, a linear genealogy from Adam to Noah.

Reading with the LXX we see the first bit of segmented genealogy: Noah and his three sons. Reading with the MT it would look like a linear genealogy from Adam to Japhet, so reading with the LXX is probably right.

Like any list made from a longer text, or an index, or a table of contents, this genealogical list points to the texts it came from. Like a hyper-linked list in a Wikipedia page.

This list takes us from Adam, the first human, to Noah, the time of the flood. That’s all that’s important, ten generations from creation to flood. After the flood it branches out, signaled by the phrase “the sons of.”

#### 1 Chronicles 1:5-28

We’ll see a lot more of that phrase “the sons of” because now we’ve got three segmented genealogies that then also segment. They go in reverse order from 1:4: Japhet, Ham, and Shem.

Japhet has seven sons listed. Two of them then have their sons given as well, so seven sons and seven grandsons. They are the ancestors of the Cimmerians (Caucasus region), Greeks, and other Anatolian groups.

This genealogy in 1 C 1:5-7 is taken right from Genesis 10:2-4. Except v. 7 preserves the correct Rodanim (Rhodians) rather than the Dodanim (Dodians?). (The letters equivalent to R and D look almost the same in Hebrew.)

Ham has four sons listed: Kush, Mitzrayim (Egypt), Put, and Kanaan (Canaan). All except Put are given sons and even some grandsons. They are the ancestors of African and Levantine groups.

This genealogy in 1 C 1:8-16 is excerpted from Genesis 10:6-19. Chr preserves a little notice about Nimrod the mighty man (LXX includes “hunter” as well). These little notices pop up here and there in the genealogies.

Shem has five sons listed. Well, nine if we read with the MT. But we should probably read with the LXX and Genesis 10:23 and see the last four as the sons of Aram, Shem’s last son.

They and their sons are the ancestors of the groups in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Arabia. The genealogy in 1 C 1:17-23 is taken right from Genesis 10:22-29.

Then we switch back to a list of names in 1:24-27, from Shem to Abraham, ten generations from after the flood to the ancestor of the Israelites. V. 28 mirrors v. 4, showing another switch to a segmented genealogy.

There's a rhythm: line then tree then line. Like a snake swallowing a mouse. And we've been introduced to all the nations of the world and shown how they're related to Abraham. Pretty efficient in about one page of Hebrew text!

#### 1 Chronicles 1:29-42

"These are their generations," referring back to Isaac and Ishmael in v. 28. תלדות or "generations" is a clue that we're hitting a new archival fragment in vv. 29-31, now from Genesis 25:13-16.

It closes with "they were the sons of Ishmael." We saw this in v. 23 as well: "all of these were the sons of Joktan."

Now v. 32 begins a whole new fragment: the sons of Qeturah, Abraham's pilegish. It takes until this point for a woman to show up after a whole lot of birthing has been going on.

What's a pilegish? She's a woman contracted long-term to a man in order to provide sexual service. Her children aren't recognized as legal heirs to that man. She's like a housekeeper or a cook, but for sex.

So Qeturah's sons, who are the ancestors of groups in Arabia, are wedged in here between Ishmael and Isaac. This fragment (vv. 32-33) comes from Genesis 26:1-4.

And now we come to Isaac: or, literally, Abraham caused Yitzhaq to be born. Does Isaac have a mother? Doesn't matter. And all that matters about Isaac is that he has two sons: Esau and Israel/Jacob.

Now Esau. See the pattern? We're getting closer and closer to the whole point of this: Israel/Jacob. Each one of the genealogy's segments is dealt with, dusted, finished, and on to the next, getting nearer to Israel.

This fragment and the next come from Genesis 36, by the way. And we also see something else that happens a lot in genealogies: someone who comes completely out of nowhere!

The sons of Seir in v. 38. Who is Seir? He's not listed as a son of Esau. And while Esau and Seir are kind of equated elsewhere, Esau has sons listed too. Whoever the Seir-ites are, somehow they're connected with Esau.

Whew! Let's take a break before finishing chapter 1.

#### 1 Chronicles 1:43-54

This fun text comes right out of Genesis 36:31-43. All of a sudden we're talking about kings of Edom. Why? And why did they have kings before Israel had kings? So many questions.

So this makes sense being placed here in the archive because Esau = Edom in many biblical texts. We're still dealing with a genealogy of Esau, in a way. But this isn't a genealogy, it's a list of kings.

Notice anything about this list? The kings aren't father and son. Instead, each king dies and is replaced by a guy from a completely other family, often a completely other place, who makes a new capital city.

And we've finally got another woman: Hadad's wife Mehetab-el ("God does well"), the granddaughter of Me-zahab ("Gold-water"). Hadad did indeed do well if he got hold of her gold. He's the last Edomite king.

Then we've got a list of Edomite chiefdoms. These "chiefs" are actually more like "colonels," because the word means "leader-of-thousand." The fragment ends just like a genealogy: "these were the chiefs of Edom."

So in just a couple of pages of Hebrew text we've run through everyone not-Israel. Not coincidentally, the map here - Iran to Ionia, Caucasus to Cush - looks pretty much like the Persian Empire.

But the sharp-eyed among you may have noticed that there's no Moab or Ammon. In Genesis, these two are sons of Lot, also not mentioned in Chronicles.

From Genesis, Chr only uses or maybe only knows P (and post-P) and ch 49. Pentateuch folks, take note. We'll see use of Genesis 46 too - but I defer to others on whether that's P or what. Anyway, I think it's likely Chr doesn't have a Pentateuch.

If Ben Sira doesn't seem to know Ezra, what's stopping us from thinking that Chr doesn't know the Pentateuch? Right - tradition that says that when Ezra read the Torah it was the Pentateuch, and therefore Chr had the Pentateuch. Maybe not.

## 1 Chronicles 2:1-41

### 1 Chronicles 2:1-2

Now we can turn to Israel, who's still part of the "generations" mentioned way back in 1:28, the generations of Isaac.

The introduction "these are the sons of Israel" is unusual for a segmented genealogy – we'd expect "the sons of Israel:" But it's probably for emphasis that we're beginning a new section

The sons of Israel given here are in an order attested nowhere else: Reuben Simeon Levi and Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, Dan Joseph and Benjamin, Naphtali Gad and Asher. The closest is in Genesis 35:23-26...

...which is Reuben Simeon Levi Judah Issachar Zebulun, Joseph Benjamin, Dan Naphtali, Gad and Asher. In Genesis 35 they're grouped by mother. Dan is the one who gets his position moved between the two lists.

As we'll see, Dan doesn't have a genealogy later on, but it may have dropped out. Where to locate Dan and how to even keep track of Dan seems to be a problem for our archivist.

And what's wild is that the order we have here doesn't get replicated in the genealogies that follow. Noah's sons were introduced as Shem, Ham, and Japhet and then their genealogies followed the order Japhet, Ham, Shem.

In the genealogies that follow, we get the order Judah Simeon Reuben Gad Manasseh Levi Issachar Benjamin Naphtali Manasseh Ephraim Asher Benjamin. Yes, some are divided in two.

Judah at the beginning, Levi in the middle, and Benjamin at the end have the longest sections. They are our anchors, and Levi is the most important. Tomorrow, onto Judah.

### 1 Chronicles 2:3-8

Okay, now it starts getting weird. We begin with "the sons of Judah." These are Er, Onan, and Shelah, and look – they have a mother! A Canaanite mother, Bath-shua, but a mother nonetheless.

This is the only bit that I think might be from non-P: Canaanite mother, evil son. But it's not a direct use of the text of Genesis 38. It has more in common with Genesis 46 = Numbers 26.

So lest you think nasty Canaanite lineage will contaminate Judah, never fear. Er is disqualified. Judah's only descendants are from his daughter-in-law Tamar: Perez and Zerah, and this is one confusing segmented genealogy.

Perez's sons, then Zerah's sons, then back to Perez's son Hezron. We dispose of Zerah's family because one of his line is Achar/Achan "who committed sacrilege with respect to the ban."

Sacrilege – מעל – is one of our archivist's favourite words, used to particularly devastating effect for all the people he doesn't like. Our poor Achar/Achan and his genealogy comes from Joshua 7.

And the text of 1 Chronicles 2:7 is a bit garbled – we can only connect Achar/Achan with Zerah’s family if we read with Joshua 7:1, because otherwise his father is Carmi who comes out of nowhere. Probably a bit dropped out.

#### 1 Chronicles 2:9-17

This is where the previous chunk of the chapter was going – right to David. We begin with three sons of Judah’s grandson Hezron, but we immediately focus on the middle one, Ram. (There’s a fourth son, who we’ll meet tomorrow.)

Two fragments are placed here: a linear genealogy of Ram (vv. 10-12) and a segmented genealogy of Jesse, giving his seven sons (David is the seventh), two daughters, and the daughters’ sons (vv. 13-17).

The linear genealogy of Ram gets picked up in Ruth – I don’t think it’s the other way round.

The genealogy of Jesse is assembled from bits and pieces throughout 1-2 Samuel. We’ll come back to David, but not until we’ve gone through most of Hezron’s segments. Everyone else has to be disposed of before we get to David. Kind of.

#### 1 Chronicles 2:18-24

Now we’re into genealogies that don’t have parallels elsewhere. I still call these archival fragments, and it’s possible that our archivist had texts that we don’t have. It’s also possible he made this stuff up.

This guy Caleb, third son of Hezron, gets around. Three wives, two with names, the third – well, the text is so garbled here that it’s hard to figure out.

But it looks like – looks like – he married his father’s wife Ephratha. Maybe. Ancient scribes get twitchy about this kind of thing, so maybe that’s why the text is so garbled.

And in the middle of this we get more genealogy of Hezron who marries someone simply known as the daughter of Machir. Then we get Gileadite towns and villages in here because Machir is also the father of Gilead.

Caleb shows up in a lot of other texts, and what we see here is an effort to make him a Judahite. He’s connected with a lot of place names, as is Segub, Hezron’s fourth son. And the Gileadites are being connected in as well.

#### 1 Chronicles 2:25-41

This is an enormous collation of fragments giving genealogical segments for Jerachmeel. Like you really need to draw a picture (pro tip – Klein’s Hermeneia commentary does this, highly recommend).

The issue that ties all these together is a lack of sons. Seled died with no sons (v. 30), Jether died with no sons (v. 32), Sheshan had no sons, only daughters (v. 34). (Except Sheshan has a son in v. 31!)

Sheshan’s daughter (who never gets a name) stands in as a son because Sheshan marries her off to his Egyptian slave. And we get a 13-generation linear genealogy starting with her son.

Counting generations is important. Sheshan's daughter and David are the same generation. So her descendant Elishama is the same generation as Hezekiah. Lots of the genealogies we'll see end at about that time.

But the length of Sheshan's daughter's genealogy means that the last few generations can be part of the community according to Deuteronomy 23:2. Yes, Chr knows Deuteronomy.

Lots of anxiety in this whole section about defining boundaries around who's in and who's out of this branch of the Judahites. Not coincidentally we also have a bunch of mothers showing up.

## 1 Chronicles 2:42-4:8

### 1 Chronicles 2:42-55

And he's back! Caleb, that is. With a whole new family! Including his daughter Achsah, who you may know from Joshua 15 and Judges 1.

So Caleb's descendants in this fragment are pretty much all names of towns and villages, and then names of clans or groups. There are a lot of claims being made here for this territory and these people.

Genealogies are flexible. If we think of them as fragments, they can be attached to other texts with very little trouble. They can also be mutually contradictory, as we saw with Sheshan (has a son, doesn't have a son), and here with Caleb.

Fragments can also be inserted. Because the genealogy of Hur that begins in v. 50 gets interrupted by the genealogy of David, and doesn't pick up again until 4:2.

The last bit here is a notice about the clans of the scribes living in Jabez, Kenites from Hamath. How are they connected? They aren't! But by inserting them in here, they become Calebites and thus Judahites.

But keep these descendants of Hur in mind, because they're about to be interrupted for DAVID! Yes, who's at the centre of the Judahite archive? David and his descendants, the kings of Judah.

## 1 Chronicles 3:1-9

David's sons. Three fragments collated: vv. 1-4a come from 2 Samuel 3:2-5; v. 4b comes from 2 Sam 5:5; vv. 5-9 come from 2 Sam 5:14-16.

But the piece from 2 Sam 5:14-16 also shows up in 1 Chronicles 14:4-7. This isn't the only time Chr uses a fragment more than once. What's fun about this one is that it's got a line here in 1 C 3:5 that doesn't show up in 1 C 14:

"Four [sons born] to Bath-Shua, daughter of Ammiel." There are a few other places in Chronicles where names are different from the equivalent text elsewhere. This is Bathsheba and the only place where she is named as the mother of other sons of David.

But there's more! Both 1 C 3:6-7 and 14:5-6 preserve names that have dropped out of 2 Sam 5:15. The Hebrew text of Sam had many adventures. The best-preserved scroll of Sam from Qumran shows a Heb text much closer to ..

.. what we see in both Chronicles and the LXX of Sam (particularly the Lucianic Recension) than MT of Sam. Rule of thumb: when comparing Chronicles to Sam-Kgs, if you see a difference, check LXX of Sam-Kgs: ..

.. if Chronicles agrees with LXX of Sam-Kgs, then Chr most likely did not alter his source text. This isn't always the case, but unless you're planning to do a word-by-word analysis across the mss, it's your best bet.

Btw, the LXX of 2 Sam 5 is a mess, with several different versions preserved. And we can never rule out that the LXX of Sam-Kgs was corrected towards MT/LXX Chronicles. Happens frequently enough that we can suspect it in other places.

Chr also cuts through all the confusion over who David did and didn't rule over from Hebron by simply not saying in 1 C 3:4b. The equivalent in 2 Sam 5:5 is a horrible mess textually, but none of the versions preserve what Chr has.

So this is probably a case of Chr's work as an archivist, and not him copying a text he has.

Anyway, three bits of Samuel combined into a coherent text to make a list of David's sons. Only his legitimate sons: the children of the pilegish-es don't count. But his daughter Tamar does.

### 1 Chronicles 3:10-19

This is a continuation of the previous section. A linear genealogy from Solomon to Josiah and then a segmented genealogy of Josiah's sons. Everything after Josiah is a mess, genealogically, and in the story (2 Chronicles 36).

There are two Zedekiah's: Jehoiakin (called Jekoniah here) has the second of them as a son and then has more sons while he's "a prisoner." Unless the second Zedekiah is his brother, although the text wouldn't really support that reading.

Jekoniah's third son Pediah is the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel has two sons and Shelomith their sister. So the two sections of David's genealogy are marked by endings "X, their sister." Very neat.

In Ezra and Haggai-Zechariah, Zerubbabel is son of Jekoniah's first son Shealtiel. Chr either doesn't know or has a different text. My guess: Chronicles is original, Ezra/Hag/Zech make Zerubbabel a first-born of a first-born for other reasons.

Remember that in Chronicles Zerubbabel isn't an important figure for his actions. His only importance is as a carrier of Davidic lineage, and we've seen that birth-order isn't important for Chr in that respect.

### 1 Chronicles 3:20-24

This is a complete muddle of a text. Just putting that out there now. It seems that something is missing at the beginning that would make the link between Zerubbabel and the following genealogy.

And then, depending on whether you read with the MT or LXX of Chronicles, there are either eight or twelve generations after Jekoniah.

This is the only genealogy to extend past the return to Jerusalem called for at the end of 2 Chronicles 36. (Except for 1 Chronicles 9, which has its own problems.) Reading 8 generations, we're down to c. 350 BCE; reading 12, c. 250 BCE.

This text is also one of the ones used to argue for a date for Chronicles – but because of the textual problems, there's nothing definitive.

And many have argued that it's a later addition, thereby conveniently allowing for a late 6th or early 5th century date for the book. By which the proponents mean "the REAL book," because the book as we have it can't possibly be real.

I'm all for identifying scribal glosses and other problems of the manuscript transmission process. (Rodanim/Dodanim, e.g.) But texts weren't fixed until considerably later.

And why wouldn't this 8 or 12 generation genealogy be original? There's nothing in the form to argue against it: it's a typical blend of linear and segmented genealogies that we see throughout these chapters.

#### 1 Chronicles 4:1-8

Back to Judah. More precisely, back to Hur. Remember him? In 1 C 2:50-52 we had Hur, his son Shobal, and Shobal's descendants. In 1 C 2:20 we had Hur and his son Uri.

Because David's genealogy has been placed in the centre of Judah's genealogy (more or less), it has interrupted Shobal's line. Except Shobal's line is now a completely different genealogy from that of 2 C 2:50-55.

v. 1 looks like the introduction to a segmented genealogy: "the sons of Judah: Perez, Hezron and Karmi and Hur and Shobal." But we know from ch. 2 that it's a linear genealogy. So it's a summary, similar to what gets called a "resumptive repetition."

Except that the genealogy of Shobal is now completely different from what we saw in ch. 2. Yes, more mutually contradictory fragments. But this one has a form more like what we saw in the earlier parts of ch. 2.

It suggests that the Shobal stuff in 2 C 2:50-55 interrupts the line of Hur that picks up here. Again, internal consistency is not the aim: wedging in all the Judahite clans and place-names, past and present, is the aim.

## 1 Chronicles 4:9-5:2

### 1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Jabez and his prayer. @drheard wrote a great piece on this for [www.jhsonline.org](http://www.jhsonline.org) in 2002, when the prayer of Jabez was making the rounds in certain Christian circles.

But where does Jabez come from? He's not linked into the previous genealogy. His name shows up in 1 C 2:55 as the town of the Kenite scribes (who are also not firmly stitched into the Judahite genealogy).

I like @drheard's reading of מרעה as pasture-land, because – as he argues – it fits better in the context of the chapter where the word shows up a few more times. Thus: “may you make pasture-land so that I am not in pain.”

But what doesn't get a lot of mention in the scholarship is the connection between Jabez being “more honoured” than his brothers and his mother bearing him “in pain” (thus the pun on his name: יעבץ from עצב).

I like to read נכבד here in one of the other senses of כבד: to be heavy. “Jabez was heavier than his brothers, and his mother called his name ‘Jabez,’ because ‘I bore him in pain.’”

And then the final bit of his prayer: “May you make pasture-land (for me) so that I am not the cause of pain [like I was to my poor mother; I've never been able to live that one down].”

First bit of direct speech in Chronicles, it's a prayer, and it gets answered. Seeking-finding Yhwh is a key motif in the book. Why here? Maybe because it fits with the pasture-land stuff we'll see with Simeon in a little while.

It also provides an intermezzo (if you will) between two Calebite genealogies.

I think it's likely an original composition by Chr because of the syntax: ויהי נכבד. Although נכבד is pointed as suffix-form in MT, it could just as easily be participle; the היה plus participle syntax is a common feature of LBH.

Also Nifal tends to replace Qal passive participle forms in LBH. In short, this phrase reads like LBH (Late Biblical Hebrew). Could be framing the etymology and prayer from an earlier text, though.

## 1 Chronicles 4:11-23

And he's back, again. Caleb, that is. Nice little textual problems to start us off. In 1 C 4:1, the summary of Shobal's genealogy, we had Carmi (not Caleb), even though Caleb is in the text in ch. 2. Here we're back to Caleb.

Copyists had real problems with Caleb, and it might be because Caleb was getting swapped in for Carmi. And now here in v. 11 Caleb is named as “brother of Shuha” (MT) but some LXX mss call him “father of Achsah.”

Shuha might be an error for Husha in v. 4 (transposition of shin and cheth). Or it could be an error for Achsah, although that's a stretch. What we see in the LXX mss is an attempt to stitch one of the Calebs we already know in here.

Otherwise we've got a whole new line of Calebites to consider! These ones are charioteers. And there are more Calebites in v. 15, this Caleb being the son of Jephuneh (i.e. the "real" Caleb).

We've also got sculptors (v. 14) and linen-workers (v. 21) and potters (v. 23) being tied into this straggling end of the Judahite genealogy.

But my favourite line is in v. 22: והדברים עתיקים, "the(se) things are ancient." So a lot of what we've got in ch. 4 (and ch. 2, I think) was also confusing to our archivist. He's just trying to arrange the fragments in a way that makes sense to him.

The word for "ancient" here is an Aramaism, which I think shows us a scribe used to working in archives: in Imperial Aramaic the word is used in contract attestations (no document, new or old, is valid now that we have agreed to this one).

And that's the end of Judah. Wow.

### 1 Chronicles 4:24-33

Simeon. He has five sons. Yay – we know about Simeon's sons from Gen 46:10, Exod 6:15, and Num 26:12-14.

Except what we've got here in v. 24 doesn't correspond exactly to any other text. It's closest to Gen/Exod, but one name is from Num and one is unique to here. (Syriac of Chronicles corrects to those other texts, by the way.)

Then vv. 25-27 run through a linear genealogy of Shallum – who is connected how, exactly, to Simeon? Not sure. But we are sure they're Simeonites because they just are. And not as numerous as the Judahites.

Now we come to a fragment from Joshua 19: Simeon is in the southern area around Beer-Sheba, at least until David was king (a nice touch from Chr here).

The fragment wraps up with a phrase we're going to see a lot more (or a similar phrase): "It was enrolled to them by genealogy." Not in Joshua. It's a signal that our archivist is concluding here.

### 1 Chronicles 4:34-43

The rest of Simeon. And more textual problems.

v. 34 is the start of a new fragment, not so much because it looks like the start (it doesn't) but because v. 33 was the end of the previous one.

The Syriac of Chronicles omits vv. 34-37, which I would too if I were trying to figure out what's going on here. The LXX (Lucianic recension) construes the first two words in v. 34 as verbal forms, not names: "the returning one became king." OK, doesn't help.

v. 38 looks more like the start of a fragment (although endings also look like this). From here we have Simeonites running around looking for pasture and smiting people.

Interestingly, the smiting happens in the days of Hezekiah, which as I said before seems to be a key temporal marker in many of these genealogies.

W. Schniedewind suggested some time ago that the reign of Hezekiah is key for the textualization of Judahite traditions – these genealogies are part of the evidence to support that claim (although I can't remember if he uses them).

Thus ends Simeon. As we move on to other tribes, we can see that the organizing principle is geography: starting with Judah, moving south, then east, then around to the north, and ending with Benjamin.

1 Chronicles 5:1-2

Reuben. And here we get the explanation for why: a. Reuben doesn't have the birthright, b. Joseph does, and c. Judah doesn't, even though Judah is a more powerful tribe and the tribes' ruler.

This all comes pretty much out of Genesis 49. The phrase "defiled the bed" is both here and Gen 49:4, and only in these two places.

But Chr uses different language than that of Gen 49 to talk about Judah, although the sense of Judah's rulership is in both texts. Joseph as firstborn is also in both Gen 49:25-26.

The "enrolled by genealogy" terminology here is distinctive of Chr. As is the horrid syntax. Pet peeve: translations (i.e. all of them) that smooth out Chronicles', uh, distinctive style.

It's not just that it's Late Biblical Hebrew, it's that it's fractured LBH. I wish translations captured the effect. Oh, wait, I'm going to be doing a translation for the commentary.

Anyway, these two verses condense and comment on key aspects of Gen 49. Shows how curatorial our archivist can be – Chr has texts that he doesn't embed but summarizes or excerpts instead.

## 1 Chronicles 5:3-41

I'm going to work through 1 Chronicles 5:3-26 in three parts (today, Tuesday, Wednesday) and then on Thursday work on the three sections together.

### 1 Chronicles 5:3-10

Reuben, for real this time.

So we begin with v. 3, the resumptive repetition of "Reuben the firstborn of Israel" that signals the incorporation of the fragment in vv. 1b-2.

The four sons here are from Genesis 46:9, and this is the only piece that reflects a source we have. But there's a little textual problem because there's no link between this list and the linear genealogy that follows.

The LXX suggests that Joel is the son of Carmi, and makes the link. The end of the genealogy is Beera, who was exiled by the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser. Now, there's not nearly enough generations to bridge Reuben to Beera.

So here we don't count generations, we look at the beginning and end-points, and this genealogy ends at (roughly) the time of Hezekiah. Like Simeon's reckoning, and Sheshan from Judah.

The term "reckoned by genealogy" – שתיחש – that we first saw with respect to Simeon in 1 C 4:33 also shows up here. It shows up a lot from here on out.

The Reubenites are placed geographically in Gilead, and their territorial expansion to the time of Saul.

### 1 Chronicles 5:11-22

Gad and the trans-Jordanian tribes' adventures.

So there doesn't seem to be any effort to link Gad with what follows. Chr doesn't follow Genesis 46 here, although he knows it and uses it elsewhere.

There are a couple of bits of genealogy in vv. 12-16, one segmented and one linear. v. 17 claims they were reckoned by genealogy in the days of Jotham (Hezekiah's grandfather) – so had they already vanished before the Assyrian exile?

The last bit here gives an account of the military adventures of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (who we'll see next) that gains them land that they hold until the exile.

Why is this here? It's a prototype for all successful battles that we'll see in Chronicles: those who call out to God in battle are rewarded with victory, and victory is due only to God's intervention.

And they get a lot of stuff, like, a lot. That's something we'll also see later in battle accounts.

### 1 Chronicles 5:23-26

Manasseh, part 1. This isn't a genealogy at all, really. It's another settlement list with a list of Manassehite chiefs.

The really good part is where they are described as committing sacrilege – מעל – against the god of their fathers by “whoring after the gods of the peoples of the land whom God had destroyed before them.”

Lots to unpack there. Reminder that מעל is one of Chr’s characteristic words. And the whoring bit is closest in language to Deut 31:16 and Judges 2 & 8. Nice synthesis on Chr’s part. (Not fond of the zona-language, to be clear.)

And it ends with all of the trans-Jordanian tribes being carted away to Assyria, “until this day.” Whose day? When? If these are archival fragments, then are we talking about the time of the fragment or the time of the archivist?

Does it matter? Because if the archive is being constructed by the archivist, then it’s relevant to the archivist.

Archives in the ancient eastern Mediterranean were pretty time-limited. You kept what was important, disposed of what wasn’t. Studies on the Persepolis tablets suggest an active life of 10-12 years, after which sealed away.

Why were these fragments kept from the time of Hezekiah to the time of Chr? Or are they Chr’s own creation?

#### 1 Chronicles 5:1-26

Untangling the fragments. I am not a source-critic as that term is usually understood in biblical studies (viz. Pentateuch). But one is always a source-critic when working with Chronicles, because, well, you’ve seen why.

In ch. 5 we don’t have the Chr’s “sources” available to us (except a little snippet that could come from Gen 46:9).

But in analogy with what Chr did with his sources to construct a genealogy of David, I think we can reconstruct Chr’s sources with respect to the trans-Jordanian tribes and how he worked with those fragments.

Many commentators note that Chr HAD sources that he could have used (e.g. Gen 46) for Reuben, Gad & Manasseh here – he uses them elsewhere. But he didn’t. That’s ok – Chr is selective in lots of places about what he uses (e.g. much of 1 Sam).

Manasseh also shows up again in ch. 7 with material that looks a lot more genealogical. So what we have here is an account structured around a story of all three: Reuben, Gad and Manasseh.

There’s a genealogical account: vv. 1a, 3b-8a, 11a, 12-15, 17, 23a, 24. I think a bit of the Manasseh account dropped out between vv. 23 and 24 - maybe the work of Chr, maybe not.

Then there’s a settlement-battle account: vv. 8b-10, 16, 18-19, 20aβ, 22b, 23b, 26b.

Chr takes the two of them and interweaves them and adds his own commentary: vv. 1b-3a (the Reuben firstborn bit), 11b (connecting Gad to Reuben), # of warriors in v. 18, 20aα & 20b-22a (help in battle), and vv. 25-26a (sacrilege & punishment).

Chr's bits are actually pretty easy to pick out: characteristic vocabulary, fractured syntax, big numbers in battle accounts, themes of immediate reward or retribution. There could be a few more than what I've listed.

Once that's done, the other two unwind themselves and then we see that: the genealogical account is focused around the time just before the Assyrian deportation; and the battle account is focused around the time of Saul.

They've been chosen and arranged by Chr to highlight his key themes. Where did he get them from? That I don't know. The "reckoned by genealogies" language might indicate that he wrote that one.

Or not, and he used that language elsewhere like he picked up toledot language from Genesis and used it in a couple of places.

#### 1 Chronicles 5:27-41

Levi, the beginning. In English Bibles, this marks the start of chapter 6. Hardest part of working with the Levi texts is figuring out the verse references in the scholarship.

This is pretty basic. First a segmented genealogy from Levi through Kohath to Amram to Aaron, Moses and Miriam, and then to Aaron's sons.

Then a linear genealogy from Eleazar to Jehozadak. This is the line of descent from Aaron, running through Zadok, to the exile. (The line from Aaron to Zadok gets repeated in ch. 6 – fragment reused!)

There's a ghastly textual displacement here: v. 36b needs to be relocated to the middle of v. 35.

The problem is that Jochanan had both a father and son named Azariah. The grandfather was "priesting" at Solomon's temple, but the note about the priesting is attached to the grandson. Easy mistake to make when copying.

Nowhere here does it say high priest. But that's what it is: a line of descent from Levi to the exile for the high priest. BUT NOT AFTERWARD! If many genealogies end at about the time of Hezekiah, this one ends with the exile.

What establishes continuity between the before-exile and after-exile is the Davidic line we saw in ch. 3. Not the priesthood. David establishes the Levites (that we'll see next in ch. 6). As long as there are Davidides, Levites have warrant.

Levites aren't dependant on a high priestly line for their offices and functions. And maybe it doesn't matter who the (high) priests are. Or maybe the high priests don't have an authorizing story or archive? So many possibilities...

## 1 Chronicles 6:1-66

### 1 Chronicles 6:1-15

A segmented genealogy of Levi. v. 1 has another resumptive repetition: “The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.” So we really did have a high priestly-lineage fragment in 5:27-41.

Now into the genealogy. v. 2 gives the sons of Gershom, v. 3 the sons of Kohath, v. 4a the sons of Merari. Then v. 4b serves as transition to further segments.

vv. 5-6 is a linear genealogy of Gershom. vv. 7-9 is a linear genealogy of Kohath. vv. 14-15 is a linear genealogy of Merari.

What about vv. 10-13, you ask? Excellent question! It’s a linear genealogy from a certain Elkanah through nine generations to Samuel, ending with Samuel’s two sons.

There are three Elkanah’s in the line. The first one is presumably the same one as the Elkanah in v. 8. This is how the genealogy of Samuel is connected into the Levites.

In 1 Samuel, Samuel is not a Levite: his father is from Ephraim. Yet he ends up as a priest. Here Chr has found a way to insert Samuel into Levi and clear up what from his perspective was obviously a mistake.

The sharp-eyed may have noticed that the sons of Kohath in 1 C 5:28 do not include Amminadab who is here the son through whom the line is traced. More contradictory fragments.

It’s always fascinating to see which contradictions Chr couldn’t abide (Samuel not being a priest), and which ones he was perfectly happy to live with (differing names of Kohath’s sons).

### 1 Chronicles 6:16-34

This is a new fragment, indicated with “These are...” This particular group is now defined not by their genealogy alone but by their role or service.

That is, in the previous fragment we had a genealogy of Levites, in their three clans, but kind of in general. Now we have our first occurrence of the “Levitical singers.” These guys will be showing up a lot more in the book.

Each of the three clans – Kohath, Gershom, Merari – has a sub-lineage of singers. Heman for Kohath, Asaph for Gershom, Ethan for Merari. Each gets a linear genealogy back to Levi. Here we’re temporally located at the time of David.

This fragment also positions their bodies: standing before the “Tabernacle”, with Heman in the centre, Asaph on his right, and Ethan on his left.

This is the founding moment of the Levitical singers. Their continuing genealogy isn’t given here, only their genealogy up to this point when David stations them.

We wrap up with two items. First in v. 33 the rest of the Levites’ service at the Tabernacle is cursorily mentioned.

Finally, in v. 34 “Aaron and his sons” – so we’re back at the time of Moses, which v. 33 suggested. What do Aaronides do? They make animal and incense sacrifice and they atone on behalf of Israel “according to all Moses” commanded.

So David is the patron of the Levitical singers, and Moses is the patron of the sacrificial priests, and the fragment conflates the two time-periods to make it seem like it happened all at once.

#### 1 Chronicles 6:35-38

Quick little fragment here about Aaronides.

Another linear genealogy from Aaron to Ahimaaz. Ahimaaz is a kind of liminal fellow. If Zadok is David’s high priest, and his grandson Azariah is priesting at Solomon’s temple, Ahimaaz is the last pre-temple high priest.

We’ve already seen this genealogy back in chapter 5, so here’s another re-used fragment. What this fragment does here is link the time periods of Moses and David through the high priests.

Each time Chr re-uses a fragment, it serves a different purpose. We just have to figure out what that purpose is each time.

#### 1 Chronicles 6:39-66

This is a nice long fragment paralleled by Joshua 21:10-39, the Levitical districts. But it’s not as simple as that.

1 Chron 6:39-45 = Josh 21:10-19, then 1 Chron 6:46-50 = Josh 21:5-9, and finally 1 Chron 6:51-66 = Josh 21:20-39.

And in some of the MT mss, including the Leningrad Codex, and in some of the Targum mss Josh 21:36-37 is missing. 1 C 6:63-64 preserves it, as does LXX of Josh. Place names: so much fun, so prone to copyist error.

And on top of the movement of Josh 21:5-9 to the middle of the fragment, the Chronicles text doesn’t follow the Joshua text exactly. This has led to all kinds of pleasing speculation about the relationship of the two texts.

Does Chr know Josh as we know it and just make all kinds of changes? Does Josh correct towards Chronicles? The mss of all the versions are such a mess, and each ms trad has had its own interesting journey.

So best to not parse out every difference but look at the overall effect. G. Knoppers in his AB commentary concludes that Chr’s text of Joshua is not represented by any of the extant versions but is an earlier text.

But – Chr’s text of Joshua likely did follow the order preserved in the versions, so moving the chunk from Josh 21:5-9 to the middle, between Josh 21:10-19 and 20-39 was his own arrangement. Why? That’s tomorrow.

1 Chronicles 6:39-66, con't

Why does Chr organize his text in the way we have it? He moves Josh 21:5-9 between Josh 21:10-19 and 20-39.

It's actually quite logical. 1 C 6:34 ended with Aaron and his sons. Then vv. 35-38 repeats the Aaronide genealogy from ch. 5. Finally, v. 39 introduces the districts for the Aaronides, running through v. 45.

So we move from Aaronide function to genealogy to territory. All neatly tied up together, by beginning the fragment about territory with Josh 21:10 rather than Josh 21:5.

Then we return to the Levitical families of Kohath, Gershon, and Merari and their settlements. By moving Josh 21:5-9 to this spot we get two sequences of Kohath-Gershon-Merari, the first running 1 C 6:46-50 and the second running 1 C 6:51-66.

The settlement list shows territory for the Levites in all the territories of the tribes. Levi is EVERYWHERE!

The whole chapter makes the move genealogy-service-territory. So by the end we know who the Levites are, what they do, and where they live. We know more about them than we do about anyone else.

## 1 Chronicles 7:1-29

### 1 Chronicles 7:1-5

Issachar. Back to the rest of the tribes after the long section about Levites. Remember that the organization of the genealogies is basically geographical: starting with Judah, swinging across the Jordan...

...and now back to the west side of the Jordan. We'll wander around here for a bit before ending up in Benjamin in ch. 8, although Benjamin shows up here in the next fragment.

1 C 7:1 comes from our friend Genesis 46 (v. 13), and serves as the heading for the fragment. It's a segmented genealogy, but it only goes down four generations.

What we get instead of a detailed genealogy is what some scholars have called a "muster list," with warriors at the time of David being numbered at 22,600.

Then there's another number – 36,000 – and finally a third number – 87,000. So Issachar is a growing tribe of warriors.

Unlike the trans-Jordanian tribes we saw back in ch. 5, we don't get an ending story for Issachar or any of the subsequent tribes in this chapter.

To me this fragment looks like an interweaving of a very brief 4-generation genealogy with some kind of chronologically-based muster list. Kind of like what happened with ch. 5.

### 1 Chronicles 7:6-11

Benjamin, part 1. This is a weird text because we don't expect Benjamin next. We expect Zebulun. A genealogy of Zebulun never appears, and the versions don't preserve one.

So we assume that there probably was a Zebulun genealogy, but it dropped out very early in the manuscript tradition, before any of the versions. (It's interesting that the LXX authors never inserted one.)

That doesn't explain why Benjamin here. We do get Benjamin later, in ch. 8 and again in ch. 9. One theory is that this was originally a Zebulunite genealogy but Benjamin was erroneously swapped in as the header.

The problem with that theory is that v. 6 comes out of Genesis 46 (v. 21), and these names are really, really Benjaminite. And these three sons (Bela, Bekar, Jediael) form the headings for brief segmented genealogies through v. 11.

Really, this can't be a Zebulunite genealogy unless we throw away half the names and swap in other ones.

But the names given here for Benjamin's sons do not agree with the names of Benjamin's sons given in ch. 8, except for Bela, on whom everyone agrees.

Each segment of the Benjaminites is then described as having warriors reckoned: 22,034 for Bela, 20,200 for Bekar, 17,200 for Jediel. Only a couple of generations of the segments is given – just like for Issachar yesterday.

So to me it does look like Zebulun has dropped out entirely and this is a Benjaminite muster list from the same document as the Issachar muster list. It looks similar to Number 26, but not the same.

### 1 Chronicles 7:12-13

Naphtali, and whatever happened to Dan?

I'm going to deal with v. 13 first, then go back to the disaster that is v. 12. We have a one-verse segmented genealogy of Naphtali here for one generation. It comes from Genesis 46:24.

It ends with the phrase "the sons of Bilhah" (cf. Genesis 46:25a), which suggests that Dan should probably also be in here. And Dan precedes Naphtali in Genesis 46:23.

So let's return to 1 C 7:12. The MT reads: "And Shuppim and Huppim; the sons of Ir: Husham; the sons of Acher." The LXX (B) reads: "And Saphein and Haphein and the sons of Raom, his son Aer." LXX (A) includes Asob (Husham) instead of Raom. It's a mess.

Genesis 46:23 is also messed up: "And the son of Dan: Hushim," with the LXX supporting something more like Husham.

But Numbers 26 (which also has parallels to Chronicles that I haven't been drawing much attention to) in vv. 39-42 has Benjaminite clans of Shephupham and Hupham, which could be the origins of Shuppim and Huppim...

...and Dan's clan is Shuham, which is a transposition of Husham. So what we seem to have in ch. 7 is Chr trying to combine Gen 46, Num 26, and maybe something else, with perhaps a later copyist mangling it beyond recognition (and maybe dropping out Zebulun).

But we saw earlier in 1 C 2 that Dan is a bit problematic there too. All in all, Dan is tricky, we don't have much about Naphtali, and no continuation of the muster list for these two.

### 1 Chronicles 7:14-19

Manasseh, again, a genealogy this time. Remember that back in ch. 5 we didn't get any genealogical material about Manasseh, just its involvement in the trans-Jordanian adventures.

And, oh God, Huppim and Shuppim are back. They're now somehow connected with Manasseh's son Machir the father of Gilead. Remember Machir? Back in ch. 2 he was connected to Judah.

Prime example – along with the multiple Calebs – of contradictory fragments being archived. And this fragment has a bunch of unconnected segmented genealogies that are kind of confusing.

The muster list doesn't seem to be continuing here. Someday I'm going to work more systematically on that – I can see a nice little article maybe.

This fragment is loaded with women: Manasseh's Aramaean pilegish, Machir's sister Maacah, Zelophehad's daughters, then Maacah the wife (not sister) of Machir, and Gilead's sister Hammoleketh.

I can't think of another part of the genealogies that has so many women in so few verses. Julie Kelso pointed out in her book that whenever there's a cluster of women in the genealogies the text gets confused. This is the signature example.

#### 1 Chronicles 7:20-29

Ephraim. Now we know for sure that Chr's got something like Numbers 26, because Ephraim's son here Shuthalach is the name of a clan in Num 26:35.

We've got a few things going on here. There's a long linear genealogy (7 generations) ending with three brothers killed by the men of Gath on a cattle-raid.

What's weird is that Ephraim mourns for them, but surely he's long dead! Anyway, then there's another linear genealogy (11 generations in total) from his second son Beria – with a nice note about Beria's daughter Sheera.

v. 23 has a nice little birth and naming story, no idea where it comes from, but it's like the Jabez one in ch. 4.

Then the genealogy ends with a settlements list like we saw for Simeon. The list brings together Ephraim and Manasseh and concludes with "here lived the sons of Joseph, son of Israel."

What I see here is two fragments of Ephraimite genealogical material being combined in a less-than-logical fashion with a third fragment of Ephraimite settlements, and all bound together with Manasseh at the end.

Probably the cattle-raid story and mourning of Ephraim belonged to someone else (Shuthelach) and Beria is Shuthelach's replacement son rather than Ephraim's. Could be a copying error.

## 1 Chronicles 7:30-8:40

### 1 Chronicles 7:30-40

Asher. Last tribe before we get back to Benjamin. The beginning is right out of Genesis 46:17, but with a little segment for the sons of Beria.

Then we get quite a mixture of forms for the next segmented genealogy of Heber – this combination of using forms of  $\text{בן}$  as well as the usual “sons of” form is seen elsewhere in Chr’s fragments.

I think it happens when Chr is trying to combine a bunch of materials and tries to build consistency by using “standard” language. Like a scribal exercise. Another thing I want to think more about.

We end this fragment with another bit that looks like those muster lists we saw earlier.

Now why we’ve got so much more for Asher than, say, for Manasseh, is one of the little enduring mysteries of the genealogies. But that’s just what we’ve got.

### 1 Chronicles 8:1-7

Benjamin, again.

Remember we saw Benjamin back in 7:6-11, where it looked like it was part of a muster list document. What we have here is a different genealogy except for Bela as Benjamin’s firstborn.

So, Benjamin, the beginning. And the beginning is strange. With just about every other son of Jacob the genealogy begins “the sons of x.” This one begins with “Benjamin caused to bear Bela, Ashbel, etc.” –  $\text{הוליד}$ .

“Holid” is used in Chronicles in two contexts: in linear genealogies (which this is not), and in segmented genealogies in combination with other terms of relationship, but only in Judah and Asher – which is right before Benjamin.

And in v. 3 we get “And Bela had sons: Addar and Gera...” This phrasing is most like the parallel text in Numbers 26:40.

The list of Benjamin’s sons here in 1 C 8 is not identical to either Genesis 46 or Number 26, and the list in 1 C 7 is also not identical to either of those lists.

This is where the heuristic of archival fragments comes in handy. Chr collects a bunch of lists, and includes each one where it makes the most sense.

I do like how our hero Ehud from Judges 3 is neatly stitched in here. Some readers think v. 6a should be moved to the beginning of v. 4, making Ehud the father of Abishua et al. OK, but it also works where it is, and I think it shows a seam.

vv. 6-7 are kind of confusing anyway, what with someone taking away the inhabitants of Geba into exile. First mention of exile in a while.

In all, vv. 3-7 are “real” Benjaminites, from the line of Bela, who are exiled to Manahath. We get the use of holid, followed by the language of “chiefs of the fathers.” That’s relevant for what comes next.

#### 1 Chronicles 8:8-10

This little fragment about Shaharaim seems out of place. But there’s a cool logic to it.

This is the first and last time we ever see this fellow Shaharaim. But this is a lot like those fragments about Caleb that we saw back in chs. 2 and 4: simply placed into Benjamin, Benjaminite by association.

And the format is the same as the previous genealogy of Bela: holid, sending out to Moab (a form of exile), and the “chiefs of the fathers” language.

So is this fragment grouped here because of the similarities in language and theme? Or is it written in order to have those similarities? And wait, there’s more... for tomorrow.

#### 1 Chronicles 8:11-28

We begin here with Mehushim, also with no discernable connection to Benjamin, so stitched in.

And we get the holid language again, and building Ono and Lod (not really Benjaminite cities at all), chasing out the inhabitants of Gath, and “chiefs of the fathers” language.

So what we’ve got are three families of Benjaminites all being described using the same words and phrases. It’s kind of like how we had Simeonites looking for pastureland in ch. 4.

But instead it’s Benjaminites behaving badly, seemingly to each other. The exile that’s happening here is Benjaminites exiling each other.

And with that nice little tie-in of Ehud back in 1 C 8:4-6, we’ve got a concrete link to the book of Judges. I think what’s going on here is an allusion to the kind of behaviour that we see in Benjaminites in Judges.

I also think that v. 28 is the conclusion of the whole Israelite genealogy, or at least a conclusion. If we read from 1 C 8:28 and skip to 1 C 9:2, the collection makes sense.

But v. 28 also comes from the next fragment which probably has its original form in 1 C 9:34-44. In that context this verse is referring to Levites – and here the word Levites is omitted.

1 C 9:1 is the resumptive repetition that marks the insertion of the next fragment, the genealogy of Saul.

#### 1 Chronicles 8:29-40

The Gibeonites. Who cares about Gibeonites? Well, we care about Gibeonites if we care about Saul. This is another example of a fragment being used twice, as it shows up again in 1 C 9:34-44.

Like in the previous fragments, the father of Gibeon is not firmly attached into the Benjaminite genealogy. Vv. 29-32 is a segmented genealogy of Gibeon, who lived in Gibeon, but whose descendants are also connected with Jerusalem.

And then we get the family of Ner, who is not attached to either Gibeon or Benjamin except by being placed here in the archive. We are very familiar with this technique by now.

From Saul through Jonathan and then Meriba'al we have a further 10-11 generations, which takes us down to the time of Hezekiah (again!).

The last two verses are not duplicated in 1 C 9, but looks again like it's from a muster list, concluding with "all of these were from the sons of Benjamin." This concludes Benjamin, and also ties all of the fragments into Benjamin.

In 1 Samuel, Saul is from Gibeah. In Chronicles, he's from Gibeon. There are many things that could be said about this difference...

...but I think the relevant one doesn't become clear until 2 Chronicles 1 – Solomon goes to Gibeon, to the altar of Yhwh. Saul is from Gibeon, and yet, as we'll see in 1 C 10, he doesn't seek Yhwh, whose altar is RIGHT THERE!

## 1 Chronicles 9:1-44

### 1 Chronicles 9:1

A transitional verse. It closes the genealogies, so the new chapter is a bit misleading. It's a summary that lays out all kinds of things that are key for Chr:

1 – “All Israel”. Chr is very big on this; even though Judah and the Levites are important, it's all-Israel that forms the community of the temple.

2 – “reckoned by genealogy”. That's what we've just been reading – the topic of the entire previous 8 chapters.

3 – “they are written in the sefer of the Kings of Israel and Judah”. Chr is presenting all of the previous material as being from a coherent source. We know that's not the case. Chr uses source citations in interesting ways.

4 – “they were taken into exile in Babylon”. We've seen that previewed in a few places with respect to the tribes taken to Assyria. But here we're talking about those tribes taken to Babylon, which hasn't been spelled out previously.

5 – “on account of their sacrilege”. Chr's all-time favourite word, ma'al. Exile is caused by ma'al.

This should be the end of the story. But we know it's not, and the rest of this chapter talks about what happens after the “return” from exile. Without this verse, the rest of the chapter wouldn't make sense in this location in the archive.

### 1 Chronicles 9:2-18

#### Inhabitants of Jerusalem after the exile

This fragment parallels Nehemiah 11:3-19. But while there are many similarities, there are few places where there's exact correspondence.

Best way to think of it is that Chr and Neh have a common source that we possibly could reconstruct, but it's gone through multiple independent expansions and editions (and the LXX of both Chronicles and Nehemiah shows even more).

In Nehemiah 11, this fragment is centred on Judah and Benjamin. In 1 C 9, v. 3 adds Ephraim and Manasseh. This is part of Chr's focus on an all-Israel community in Jerusalem.

There's been lots of effort to try to read this text in Chronicles as pertaining to some originary Davidic settlement of Jerusalem and the surrounding area. But in its context it really does follow on from the statement at the end of ch. 8 about the exile.

Chr organizes the inhabitants of the territories into four categories: Israel, Priests, Levities, Netinim (i.e. temple servants). From those categories, representatives live in Jerusalem.

V. 13 is key for understanding priests and Levites – the whole family of Levi, really – in Chronicles: they are warriors in the service of the temple.

The temple is an armed camp, with valiant warriors (same language as in the muster lists earlier in the book) defending it. Remember this for later in 2 Chronicles.

### 1 Chronicles 9:19-23

Gatekeepers. The previous fragment listed the levitical families who lived in Jerusalem, ending with porters at the Gate of the King.

But what about all the other kinds of Levites? Chr would have wondered why only porters were mentioned when Levites did all kinds of important temple work.

1 C 9:19-34 elaborates on the other Levites. In vv. 19-23 we have the gatekeepers. Gatekeepers of course flow naturally from the mention of the Gate of the King in v. 18.

Gatekeepers come only from the family of Korah, and they claim their authority from David and Samuel. But the Korahites we know from Exod 6:24 and Num 26:58.

David we get, but Samuel? Samuel because this is the Tent of Meeting. Before there's a temple, there's a Tent of Meeting, and the levitical gatekeepers were needed there.

The "reckoned by genealogies" bit in v. 22 tries to align this section with the previous fragment. It's all a bit repetitive here with the garbled syntax that's typical of Chr.

Phineas son of Eleazar we know from 1 Chronicles 5:30 and 6:35 as an Aaronide. The textual juxtaposition of Korahites and Phineas we see in Exodus 6, so I think that's what's behind this text.

Phineas is very definitely an Aaronide so having him named as a gatekeeper might seem odd. But what is he known for otherwise? In Numbers 25 he protects the Tent of Meeting – he functions as a gatekeeper.

To Chr it makes sense that if Phineas functioned as a gatekeeper then he was a levitical gatekeeper. It's a way of claiming him not as a leading priest but as a leading Levite.

### 1 Chronicles 9:24-34

Porters, bakers, singers. I sectioned off the gatekeepers yesterday, but vv. 19-34 is all one unit.

Gatekeepers in vv. 19-23, porters and subgroups in vv. 24-30, bakers in vv. 31-32, singers in v. 33. The whole section is wrapped up by v. 34 with the summary statement about the families of Levites who lived in Jerusalem.

The porters aren't just porters, they're also guardians of the storehouses, the caretakers of the temple vessels and supplies, and the mixers of incense. Inventory clerks, really.

The levitical bakers don't just bake, they also arrange the product in the sanctuary. And we'll see lots more about singers later in the book.

Now we might consider that doormen, inventory clerks, bakers, and background musicians aren't priestly vocations. But we'd be wrong. Contemporary evidence from Babylonia suggests that all these roles were priestly, and hereditary to boot.

It's our word "priest" to translate כהן that's the problem. A kohen is a sacrificial priest. A Levite is a non-sacrificial priest. In order to serve any function, no matter how "menial," in the temple, the temple servant had to be sanctified.

Anyone coming into the near presence of the deity had to have the right credentials (family) and status (sanctified). Temple worship wouldn't have been able to function without the non-sacrificial priests (i.e. Levites).

And from a Levite's perspective, anybody can do the work of ritual slaughter. I mean, anybody can butcher a pigeon, right?

Keeping track of the incense and the sacred bowls, on the other hand, that's difficult technical work. You can't trust that to just any one.

#### 1 Chronicles 9:34-44

Genealogy of Saul, again.

Although vv. 34-44 looks like more genealogy (and it is), it's a repeat of 1 Chronicles 8:28-38. Pretty much exactly, in fact. So it's a reused fragment.

Verse 34 was reused in 1 Chronicles 8:28 – where it ended the entire genealogy of Israel. Here it ends the listing of the Levites in temple service. It's possible to read this entire fragment as a resumptive repetition...

...that shows that 1 C 9:2-33 was inserted. Not necessarily by a later author/editor, although that's possible. Arguments for it being original include that it shows there's continuity between the before-exile and after-exile.

Anyway, after that detour, we're back to the family of Gibeon, from whom comes Saul. In light of what comes next, here it's important to note that Saul appears roughly half-way through the fragment.

That is, there's continuity even though it might look like the family of Saul gets annihilated. In a way, it's parallel to what we just saw with Israel/Judah/temple: there's continuity even though it might look like the temple community was annihilated.

And since Saul is the exemplar of מעל "sacrilege," yet his family continues, so Israel/Judah – carried off into exile because of sacrilege – continues.

Thus ends nine chapters of genealogies. Did you have fun? I did!

## 1 Chronicles 10:1-14

### 1 Chronicles 10 – an introduction

As I said, 1 C 9:35-44 is really the intro to the story of Saul, in a way a microcosm for how 1 C 1-9 is the intro for the entire book.

But people usually focus on 1 C 10:1 as being the beginning of the “real” book, by which they mean narratives.

That’s due, I think, to a misunderstanding of the genre of the book. Most readers of the HB, in my experience, have a functional definition of “narratives about the past” = history-writing (Brettler’s 1995 formulation).

Yet in our own experience of texts we know that there are all kinds of “narratives about the past” that are not history-writing. Historical romance novels, anyone?

“But .. but ..” I hear you say “Ancient authors who wrote about the past were writing history.” Nope. Some were, some weren’t. Is the book of Daniel history-writing? Jubilees? How about Chaereas and Callirhoe?

“OK” you say “But ancient authors who wrote about past political events (like about kings and cities) were writing history.” Not always. Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* is a book of political philosophy set in the past.

(I wrote my diss on the *Cyropaedia* and Chronicles. The two most boring books to have survived Mediterranean antiquity.)

Similarly, I think Chronicles is a book of political philosophy set in the past. I don’t like to use the term “theology” because that has other connotations I’m trying to avoid, but “political theology” might work.

The “political” part is important, because government and rulers play a key role, and are theorized. Whether you want to use “philosophy” or “theology” really depends on how you see the role of deities in the ancient world.

I’m comfortable with philosophy because in an ancient context philosophy encompasses the divine. But if you think that’s too .. Greek, or something, then theology works too. We don’t know what Chr would have called it.

Anyway, the very first piece I ever had published was on 1 Chronicles 10. Then about 15 years later I went back and wrote another piece that included talking about writing about 1 Chronicles 10.

Basically, writing about 1 Chronicles 10 is the gateway drug to Chronicles. Some people write about it and never move on to the hard stuff. Others go full throttle.

## 1 Chronicles 10:1-7

On Mount Gilboa. The first few verses are pretty much verbatim from 1 Samuel 31. The Philistines fight Saul and defeat him. He chooses death over capture. His sons also die.

In v. 6, we read “Saul died, and his three sons and all his house died together.” Now this is very interesting.

This phrasing makes it look like although the Israelites lost the battle – and many of them died – the biggest loss was borne by Saul’s house.

Except that we just read in ch. 9 that Saul’s house didn’t all die. So did they all die or didn’t they?

Then in v. 7 we read that all the Israelites in the valley who saw what happened abandoned their cities and the Philistines came and settled in them. Seems like a fairly limited defeat, then.

When we compare vv. 6-7 with 1 Samuel 31:6-7, we see the point Chr is making here, and why it seems a little contradictory.

In 1 Sam 31, it’s “Saul and his three sons and all his men died together on that day” and all the Israelites in the whole country saw that Israel had fled, so they abandoned their cities. It’s a massive defeat.

Chr wanted to limit the scope of the defeat and the territory taken by the Philistines. But in doing so, he created a contradiction with the genealogy he’d just finished.

But that contradiction doesn’t matter! In the archive, fragments are arranged to make a certain point. In ch. 9, the point was that the lineage can recover from disaster.

Here in ch. 10 the point is that the Philistines’ victory had only the limited effect of killing off the family of Saul. We don’t know yet why they needed killing off, but that will come.

#### 1 Chronicles 10:8-12

Dealing with the bodies. This section roughly parallels 1 Samuel 31:8-13.

So after the battle the Philistines come to loot the bodies and they find Saul and his sons. They take his armour and his head and use them as trophies to show everyone they’ve killed him.

This takes some time. Thus by the time the trophy circuit has ended, all that’s left of his head is a skull. Armour goes to one temple, skull goes to another.

I’m just going to put this here – an event from last week:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/egerton-ryerson-statue-caledonia-land-back-lane-1.6059513>

And then, at some point, the warriors of Jabesh-Gilead go to the battlefield and collect the bodies, which are now only bones, and bury them. That’s it, that’s all.

In 1 Samuel 31, the head and armour go on the trophy circuit and then we never hear about the head again. The body is nailed up on the wall of Beth-Shan.

So when the warriors of Jabesh-Gilead go overnight and take the bodies, it’s a raid. They burn the bodies because they are actual corpses, and then bury the bones.

This makes sense in the context of 1 Samuel because of Saul's previous rescue of Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sam 11). The men of Jabesh are repaying the favour through their heroic act. In 1 C 10, they're simply being nice guys at no risk to themselves.

So Chr solved the problem of what happened to Saul's head and downplayed the retrieval of his body. But why was any of this needed in the first place? That's tomorrow.

1 Chronicles 10:13-14

Why did Saul die and why does Chr care?

These two verses are Chr's own creation. How can we tell? First, they're not in 1 Samuel 31. But even if we didn't have Samuel, we would still be able to tell. It's the hideously garbled syntax that we've seen before in the seams of the genealogies.

Roughly translated below; making my own decisions about punctuation and versification. Still trying to decide how to translate each of the vavs.

"Saul died for his sacrilege which he sacrileged against Yhwh, on account of Yhwh's word which he did not keep, and also for asking a necromancer to seek and he did not seek Yhwh. And he put him to death and he turned the kingdom over to David, Jesse's son."

These two verses pack in an awful lot. First, the duplication of the root מעל which I've been translating as "sacrilege." My friend the cognate accusative in action (I love it so much).

What was his sacrilege? He didn't keep Yhwh's word – yeah, that's pretty vague. If we read it with 1 Samuel we can probably come up with some references, but that's not the point here. It's a general flaw in Saul's disposition.

But more specifically, he asked (שאל – so he "sauled") a necromancer to seek instead of seeking Yhwh. Again, duplication of a root, in this case דרש, which is one of Chr's favourites. Seeking and finding Yhwh is a big trope for Chr.

So in these two verses we have two occurrences of four different roots: שאל, מעל, דרש, and מות (die). We also have the parallel "Yhwh's word – not keep" and "Yhwh – not seek."

As a result, Yhwh turned the kingdom over to David. So Saul serves as both negative example – David will be everything Saul was not – and as paradigm for Israel/Judah that is now turned over to new rulers (Cyrus and his successors).

Could Chr have gone right from 1 C 9:34 to 11:1? Sure. David was introduced in the genealogies, and there's no reason to include Saul from a narrative perspective. But how would we know David's so great if we don't have someone to compare him to?

The Saul fragments (two genealogies and ch. 10) serve so many purposes in the book, especially if we're not stuck on reading it as history-writing.

## 1 Chronicles 11:1-12:41

### 1 Chronicles 11:1-9

David's anointing and capture of Jerusalem. Parallels 2 Samuel 5:1-9, more or less.

The very first thing that David actually does in Chronicles is get anointed as king at the request of "all-Israel." Pay attention to the "all-Israel" because everything important in the book happens because of "all-Israel."

This happens at Hebron (this is important for later). And it happens "according to the word of Yhwh through Samuel." Not by Samuel himself – normally it's a priest who does the anointing – but authorized by him.

Samuel is important enough that he's been given a priestly genealogy back in ch. 6 and is the authorizing figure here. Why doesn't he do it in person? Because he's dead! Chr assumes we know that.

Off to Jerusalem. Chr makes this nice and simple, no particular heroics, but does introduce Joab as an important figure.

The acropolis is named "City of David" because David lived in it and because he built it. Joab built everything else.

This account of Jerusalem is a flash-forward, because in the next fragment we're going back to Hebron for David's enthronement festival.

But it's vital for Chr that Jerusalem's capture is the first narrated event of David's reign. Messing with the timeline is how that happens. A clue that Jerusalem, or JERUSALEM!!! is really important.

### 1 Chronicles 11:10-19

David's mighty men. Vv. 10-47 is all one fragment, paralleled by 2 Samuel 23:8-39 with a new chunk at the end, but I'm splitting it into two sections.

What we see is even now that we've moved into more or less following Samuel-Kings, Chr is still arranging his material. This fragment comes from the "appendix" at the end of 2 Samuel,

.. but it's been moved up here to almost the beginning of David's reign. It's one of those bits of Samuel that people typically find a bit tedious and skip over.

Except that each of these names here has a little story. These are all the heroes, each with their own mighty deed(s). I think of them as being like Robin Hood's Merry Men.

The fragment is introduced with v. 10, which is Chr's own composition, wonky syntax and all. Besides the syntax, we have the use of the hitpael of  $\text{קָטַן}$ , "to strengthen oneself," which is one of Chr's favourite words.

About half of all the occurrences of this root's stem in the HB are in Chronicles. It usually is used with reference to kings, but occasionally elsewhere (as here). David himself is never the subject of this verb, but here his men are.

It's often translated as "established oneself," which I think really doesn't get at the meaning of קָרַן. I'm still working on a good translation.

### 1 Chronicles 11:20-47

David's mighty men, continued. This is still part of the same fragment that began in v. 10. Through v. 41a it runs parallel with 2 Samuel 23, but adds several more names to the list at the end.

More little hints of stories of these heroes through v. 25. Lots of ink has been spilled trying to distinguish between the Three and the Thirty, in part because the story itself seems to try to make the distinction.

But the text is badly garbled in places and the manuscript tradition has been through many adventures, both in Samuel and in Chronicles. So I think it's a lost cause and not really the point anyway.

The point is that David has lots of really good, competent, heroic warriors who support him from the very beginning of his reign. David himself is not the hero-warrior. He has people for that.

From v. 25 through v. 47 we just get a list of names. And they add up to far more than thirty, because the text from 2 Sam 23 has thirty, but Chr adds sixteen more.

This should not surprise us, as we know that logical consistency is not something Chr always values.

In all, through chs. 11-12 there are three large fragments, each one introduced with "these are." This first fragment seems to refer to a jumble of events from all periods of David's career.

### 1 Chronicles 12:1-23

This is the second fragment dealing with David's mighty men. It deals specifically with David's allies during Saul's reign.

It has no parallel in Samuel, although it may be an expansive play on 1 Samuel 27:2 that mentioned David's 600 men in Ziklag.

We've got men from Benjamin, Gad, Benjamin & Judah, and Manasseh. This reads like some of those muster rolls we saw in the genealogies. But it also has little heroic stories too.

I like how the least of the Gadite warriors was worth a hundred (of the enemy) and the greatest was worth a thousand.

One thing I need to look more into is the description in several places of some of these warriors as equipped with large shield and spear. That sounds like the hoplite phalanx to me, but I don't know nearly enough about ancient warfare to be certain.

The fragment ends with a description of how many men came to David at Ziklag: "until the camp was great like the camp of God." This is a divinely-sanctioned army, amassed not to fight the Philistines or Saul, but to be loyal to David and his god.

## 1 Chronicles 12:24-41

Back to Hebron.

The third fragment takes us back to the enthronement at Hebron. So of these three fragments dealing with David's warriors, the first is kind of a-temporal but does look forward, the second is before Hebron, and the third is at Hebron.

This is a muster list, with representatives of just every tribe: Judah, Simeon, Levi, Benjamin, Ephraim, half-Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, Dan, Asher, and the trans-Jordanians: Reuben, Gad, half-Manasseh.

This is geographical, radiating outward from Judah. Note how Levi is included so we've got thirteen tribes. Also note that the tribes further away contribute more men – everyone's enthusiastic!

Numbers are important in Chronicles, but I personally don't know what most numbers mean. Neriah Klein has done some interesting work on battle accounts, but we could do with some more work on the numbers generally.

Did you know our friend Zadok, already known to us as a priest, had a first career as a warrior: "Zadok as a young man was a mighty warrior." Levites/priests as warriors – not the first time we've seen it, won't be the last.

The final three verses here bring the temporal mixing to an end: we're firmly back at the enthronement, where everybody has contributed to the party, "because there was joy in Israel."

Joy is important in Chronicles. Joy happens when all-Israel is doing something – in this case, making David king.

So in chs. 11-12, we have a fragment from 2 Sam 5, another from 2 Sam 23, joined together with a seam at 1 C 11:10, and then two fragments with no parallel. A terrific case of how Chr worked as an archivist ..

.. assembling fragments to show how total David's support was, before, during, and after his enthronement, and from every tribe, and with "real men" as his warriors.

## 1 Chronicles 13:1-14:17

### 1 Chronicles 13:1-5

David's first act as king is to bring the ark into Jerusalem. That's because we ended the previous fragment with the feasting at David's anointing at Hebron.

Clever archivist, who organizes his material so that the capture of Jerusalem is folded into the anointing and enthronement of David. That way we move smoothly from enthronement to ark, so David's very first act is cultic, not military.

This bit is all Chr. Note the characteristic language: "all the assembly," "all Israel" – even "all the assembly of Israel" in v. 2; priests and Levites. Everyone's involved.

And there's a bit of a dig in at Saul: "we didn't seek to do it in Saul's day" – linking Saul and "not seeking" yet again.

The whole of Israel is geographically described: from the Nile to Lebo-Hamath (near Damascus), so a merismus from south to north.

These verses provide the archival frame for the next fragment.

### 1 Chronicles 13:6-14 – textual problems

This bit comes from 2 Samuel 6:2-12. But here it becomes clear that Chr has a different text of Samuel than what we've got in MT.

Yes, Chr makes changes to his text. But his text of Samuel is much more like the text in 4QSam(a), which is partially preserved for this section. Not identical, mind you.

But we can see that in places Chronicles preserves a shorter reading than in MT Samuel or preserves a different reading:

E.g. the musical instruments in the 4QSam(a) ms are the same as in 1 C 13:8, not 2 Sam 6:5 MT.

E.g. "to bring up [from there the ark of] God which is ca[lled there Yhwh-]dwelling-on-the-cherubim" (4QSam(a)) is much closer to 1 C 13:6 "to bring up from there the ark of God Yhwh-dwelling-on-the-cherubim which it's called there" ..

.. than it is to MT 2 Sam 6:2 "to bring up from there the ark of God which is called there Name-of-Yhwh-Sebaoth-dwelling-on-the-cherubim." MT looks a bit expansionistic here. Plus Name Theology.

And Chronicles may preserve the place-name correctly: Kiryat-Jearim (Josephus has it too), which it looks like 4QSam(a) does not.

But sometimes 4QSam(a) is wacky: it has "ark of] the priests" in 2 Sam 6:4 where that must obviously be and everywhere else is, including in 1 C 13:7, "ark of God."

Although it's a bit hard to learn how to use, once learned, the best reconstruction of 4QSam(a) is not the DJD but Fincke (2001) The Samuel Scroll from Qumran, which compares the ms with close to a dozen other mss.

Tl;dr – many of the differences between Chronicles and MT Samuel are not differences in Chr's source text. But many of them are, and deciding which is which is hard!

### 1 Chronicles 13:6-14

The first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem. Lesson: don't try this at home.

So David and all-Israel head out to Kiryat-Jearim (City-of-Forests) to get the "ark of God, Yhwh-dwelling-on-the-cherubim." Music, partying, a great time for everyone. The ark is riding along on an ox.

But then, as is likely to happen when you balance something on a moving animal and you're partying alongside, the ark slips. The guy responsible for keeping the ox moving, Uzza, reaches out to steady it.

Uzza's just a guy, nobody in particular. So when he reaches out to touch the ark – which is where Yhwh is resting, remember – he is doing something that no regular guy should be doing: he's touching Yhwh.

Yhwh is NOT HAPPY, and kills poor Uzza, who was only trying to keep Yhwh's chair from hitting the ground. Lesson: better for the chair to hit the ground than for some random dude to touch it.

David's afraid, for good reason, because deities who get angry and kill people who touch them are beings that you should be afraid of.

So instead of bringing the ark into Jerusalem, David takes it to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. A foreigner – so if Yhwh gets upset again, no big loss, right? But instead, Obed-edom's household prospers over the next three months. End of episode.

In 2 Samuel 6, the episode ends with David noticing that Obed-edom's household seems blessed, and we can infer that he thinks that he should get some of that blessing or that the ark isn't that scary. Not here.

Little trims of the text by Chr like this are all it takes, really, to reinforce a characterization of David as acting out of cultic responsibility rather than self-interest.

### 1 Chronicles 14:1-7

This fragment and the next one are positioned between the two attempts to bring the ark into Jerusalem. The events can't possibly take place in the three-month period that we've been given.

Again, logical consistency isn't what's important. And these two fragments in 1 C 14 come from 2 Samuel 5. Chr has rearranged his source some more.

What we have here is David finally establishing himself in his kingdom. This is signalled by being recognized by the neighbouring king of Tyre (always called Hiram in Chronicles, not Hiram) and building a fancy palace.

Then we get a list of his sons. We saw this list before in 1 C 3:5-8. But here it's pretty much identical to the source-text in 2 Sam 5, whereas in 1 C 3 it was more carefully enumerated.

In 2 Samuel, we get enthronement, recognition, palace, sons, battles, and then the ark. In Chronicles it's enthronement, ark, and then recognition, palace, sons, battles (next fragment). Pretty much the same words, but...

It's all in how Chr arranges the text – so that we see that David's first thought is cultic, not for himself.

1 Chronicles 14:8-17

David's success against the Philistines.

Again, this fragment comes from 2 Samuel 5, except for v. 17, which is Chr's editorializing. We can tell it's from Chr because of the plural ארצות, which is pretty rare in SBH but much more common in LBH.

There are lots of minor differences between the MT of Samuel and the MT of Chronicles here, but they're all pretty much typical and inconsequential: substitution of ha-elohim for yhwh, different prepositions, some different verbal forms.

All what we'd expect from oral variants and/or updating during ms transmission. It's hard to say whether it's part of Chr's work or already in his source text.

Except maybe for one: when the Philistines abandon their gods on the battlefield. (Chr preserves elohim which was changed to "idols" at some point in the transmission of Heb. Sam but not in LXX Sam.)

In 2 Sam 5, David and his men cart away the gods/idols as trophies. Chr has David doing the "right" thing and commanding that they be burned. Except this is also what happens in LXX Samuel.

So was Chr following his source-text of Samuel here? Or did the LXX of Samuel get influenced by Chronicles? I tend to think the latter, because the burning makes sense in Chronicles, but the trophies make sense in Samuel.

Burning shows up later in Chronicles (taken from the source-texts in Kings) but is unusual in Samuel. I think it's a case of the source-texts of Kings being used as patterns for Chr's reworking of the fragment from Samuel.

Anyway, are we having fun yet? Next we'll be back to the second attempt to bring in the ark.

## 1 Chronicles 15:1-16:7

### 1 Chronicles 15:1-10

Second attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem.

So let's try this again. Now everyone's ready to bring the ark into Jerusalem. David's found a good spot and set up a tent (because Yhwh lives in a tent at this point).

This wasn't done last time – no foresight, no planning, they were just going to bring the ark in .. and then what? Now it's all organized. Chr likes things organized. So does Yhwh, not a coincidence.

Now we get the big announcement – no oxen this time, only the Levites will carry the ark, because that's their appointed task. Not only to carry the ark, but to “serve [Yhwh] forever.”

Once that's lined up, then David gathers all-Israel to start the party. He also gathers the Aaronides and Levites. The Levites get listed in a muster roll by levitical family – five families rather than the usual three.

Each has a captain and several dozen Levites. Not just a couple of guys with an ox this time, then.

This passage is the Levites' big entrance into the story: they will be inextricably linked with the ark, and later, once the ark is in the temple, with the temple. Their job, stated over and over again, is to serve God.

This root, שרת “minister/serve,” is used far more often of Levites than of priests in Chronicles, while it's used often of priests in books like Ezekiel. We could get into whether Chr is anti-(sacrificial) priest.

But I don't think he is. I think for him (sacrificial) priests have a particular set of duties that are reserved for them. He's making the claim that so do Levites.

### 1 Chronicles 15:11-15

The heart of the matter – why did Yhwh REALLY kill Uzza?

Now we get to David's big speech. He gets Zadok and Abiathar (the priests) and the five captains of the Levites we just met and tells them what really happened before.

Yhwh didn't kill Uzza – he “burst out at us for we had not sought him according to the statute.” Small comfort for Uzza, I'm sure. The statute in question? That the Levites and priests hadn't been part of the party.

It's not enough to seek Yhwh (דרש, that word for seek, again). You have to seek him according to the mishpat. We'll get to what a mishpat is.

The priests and Levites sanctify themselves (lit. make themselves holy), and the Levites lift up the ark on poles. Not just perched on an ox. Only a sanctified human can carry the ark.

And mishpat? It's "the commandment of Moses according to the word of Yhwh." So this authorization of the Levites by David is traced back through Moses to Yhwh. It's not an innovation. It's how Moses himself prescribed it.

What we have here, then, is an interpretation of the failure of the first attempt, with the interpretation placed in the mouth of David. The first attempt didn't fail merely because Uzza touched the ark.

Uzza should never have been put in the position of having to touch the ark in the first place. If it had been done properly from the beginning, with Levites carrying the ark, it would have been successful, and no-one would have died.

David hasn't spent the three months watching the ark bring blessing to Obed-edom's household and being jealous. No, instead, he's pondered the question of how it could have gone so wrong that first time.

If Yhwh is inherently good (which he is – as we'll see soon), then the failure of the first attempt was not because Yhwh was petty or capricious. It was because the proper human response to Yhwh's goodness was not enacted.

The proper human response to Yhwh's goodness is to abide by the mishpat, Yhwh's word through Moses. Someone who does that is truly seeking Yhwh.

Chr takes a kind of banal story from 1 Samuel and makes it profoundly theological. 1 Samuel is all surface fun and games, while Chronicles reflects deeply. I think there's a lesson in there somewhere.

#### 1 Chronicles 15:16-24

Party! And what's a party without music?

Remember back in 1 C 13 that we had musicians along for the procession? This time we have MUSICIANS!!! Not just musicians, but levitical musicians, so sanctified musicians.

We've got singers, lute-players, lyre-players, cymbal-crashers, all Levites, named and ranked. Oh yes, we've got seven priests on trumpets. Remember that only (sacrificial) priests play trumpets. In vv. 20-21 we've got some terms that seem to suggest men singing in falsetto and men singing in natural voice. I kind of imagine a cathedral choir, but all men instead of boys and men.

And we even have the maestro, Kenaniah. We have more text describing the musicians than we have about the actual event of the procession. Procession, pfft. What's really important is the music.

We've got a couple of porters for the ark – out of a whole list of them. And this is the end of Chr's own framework for the story. Next fragment joins us up again with 1 Samuel.

#### 1 Chronicles 15:25-16:3

Finally, bringing the ark into Jerusalem.

This fragment comes from 2 Samuel 6:12b-19a. Chr inserts in between 2 Sam 6:19a and 19b a whole separate fragment that we'll start on tomorrow.

But Chr has made lots of changes to this fragment with the effect of heightening the role of the priests, Levites, and musicians, and emphasizing the total community engagement.

For example, in v. 28, Samuel's "David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark" has become "All-Israel was bringing up the ark." On its own, maybe a ms variant. But as part of the whole pattern in Chronicles, a deliberate change.

Chr adds more music and musicians, including the maestro Kenaniah. To Samuel's "with war-cry and horn-sound," Chr adds trumpets, cymbals, lutes, and lyres – all introduced in the previous fragment.

Interesting that Chr keeps the war-cry and horn – and the horn wasn't mentioned in the previous fragment.

My daughter is studying horn performance @WesternU , and is home for the summer, so this bit jumped out at me. One horn makes a lot of noise; you may not need more than one. Yes, I know it's a different kind of horn.

It's not only David wearing the fancy clothes, it's also the Levites carrying the ark and the musicians (and the maestro).

And the sacrifices at the beginning of the procession are more carefully described, while the sacrifices in the ark's new home are offered by everyone, not just David. David does bless everyone at the end and give them party food.

The overall effect is to maintain the elements of a war-procession but to add the elements of a sacral procession. It becomes a community-forming event.

The icing on the cake is the line about Michal – the daughter of Saul, whose relationship to David isn't specified. She sees David celebrating and despises him. Implication: Saul despises proper worship.

### 1 Chronicles 16:4-7

The Levites' next job.

As I said before, Chr inserts in between 2 Sam 6:19a and 19b a whole separate fragment: 1 C 16:4-42. Most of that is a psalm. But there's a narrative frame, and here's the opening.

Unsurprisingly, it's got Levites. Specifically, the levitical musicians of the family of Asaph, along with the two priest-trumpeters we saw in 1 C 15. All nicely named and organized.

The kicker is that this is the day that David first (or David was the first) thanked Yhwh through the music of Asaph and the Asaphites.

These Asaphites are given Davidic warrant here – unlike the Levites carrying the ark, which was presented as a Mosaic command, the authorization of the Asaphites is an innovation initiated by David.

Next we get the actual psalm of thanksgiving that Asaph and his colleagues sang.

## 1 Chronicles 16:8-43

### 1 Chronicles 16:8-36 – the psalm

I think this psalm should be way better known than it is. I think it should be used as a THE classic example of text composition.

That's because we have this lovely psalm that fits beautifully into its context. And we also have three other psalms (in the book of Psalms) that this psalm seems to be drawn from.

It seems unlikely that this psalm is the source for all of those other three. That's because only a portion of each of those other psalms is used. I'd be happy to entertain arguments, though (and I have thoughts about one of those psalms).

Anyway, the psalm has three sections. Sections one (vv. 8-22) and three (vv. 34-36a) each begin with הודו ליהוה, "give thanks to Yhwh," while section two (vv. 23-33) begins with שירו ליהוה, "sing to Yhwh."

The first line of the 2<sup>nd</sup> section (v. 23) is also the mid-point of the psalm: "Sing to Yhwh, all the earth; bring daily the good news of his saving action."

The three sections all interrelate through use of keywords and various parallel constructions. It's a coherent psalm. More coherent than some psalms in the book of Psalms.

However, each section is also from a different Psalm! The first section is from Ps 105:1-15; the second from Ps 96:1-13a; the third from Ps 106:1, 47-48a (although I have thoughts about this that we'll get to).

The text in Chronicles differs only in very minor ways from the MT of the Psalms, and mostly in the second section. There is some ms evidence to suggest that MT Chron has been corrected towards MT Psalms.

Chr does do something very interesting compared to the end of Ps 106, though, which we'll look at when we get there.

So what we have is an educated and creative scribe who has created a psalm perfect for the occasion of the arrival and dedication of the ark in Jerusalem from other psalms in the repertoire.

It's a mash-up (in the best possible sense). Or an homage. It's like the relationship of Star Trek: Into Darkness to the Wrath of Khan. It's just so clever.

And the best part is that if we didn't have those psalms, we'd never know that this one wasn't "original." Except that it is original in this form and in this context.

## 1 Chronicles 16:8-22

### Yhwh's relationship with Israel.

This first section of the psalm makes the connection between Yhwh's mishpat (statute, usually and poorly translated as "judgment") and his word, his covenant with Israel, and the gift of the land of Canaan.

Remember that Yhwh's mishpat about the ark was a major point in ch. 15, and was connected with Yhwh's word through Moses.

Chr would have liked this psalm and drawn on it because of its commandment to sing and play music and to do so joyfully – all part of the ritual in ch. 15.

V. 10 is identical in the MT to the MT of Ps 105:3. But the LXX of 1 C 16:10 seems to reflect the reading of 11QPs(a). Just one example of where I think the MT of Chronicles has been "corrected" to the MT of Pss...

... but an earlier version of Heb. Chronicles probably had something more like the 11QPs(a) text.

And taking seriously the ms history of the Qumran Pss scrolls, as @EvaMroczek has argued, means thinking that maybe, maybe Chr's Pss scroll wasn't a "canonical" Pss scroll but had a selection of pss in different order.

I don't think anybody working on Chronicles has done this work. I guess I'll have to do it if I'm going to take seriously Chr's work as an archivist.

Anyway, this section talks about the gift of the land to the wandering Israel, and Yhwh's saving power of Israel against foreign oppressors. Since in Chronicles we don't have any of this story, I think this psalm is talking to Chr's audience.

That is, Yhwh has protected them during their recent history. So when the section ends with a warning to not attack Yhwh's anointed or his prophets, I think we should read this as aimed at Yhwh's current anointed and prophets...

.. the anointed being whatever foreign ruler has power, and the prophets being people like Chr. Lots of other possibilities here, of course.

### 1 Chronicles 16:23-33

Yhwh's place among the gods of the nations and the cosmos.

This second section moves from describing Yhwh's relationship to Israel to Yhwh's relationship to creation and the gods of the nations.

So we're moving from a presentation of Yhwh as a deity with a specific relationship to Yhwh as a universal deity, and it's from that status of universal deity that his power to maintain his covenant with Israel flows.

Yhwh's status as creator deity leads him to be the rightful ruling deity over that creation. And because he is Israel's particular deity, his status as creator and ruler lends Israel a particular status within the cosmos.

Within the story of Chronicles this section might seem a bit out of place because there hasn't been much emphasis on the place of Israel among the nations: we've only seen the Philistines so far.

But remember that the first chapter of the book placed Israel among the nations. So we're picking up that relationship here from a more theologically reflective perspective.

Positioning Yhwh's covenant with Israel in this context of Yhwh's status as creator and ruler of the nations is also something I think Chr is doing to speak to his own context.

### 1 Chronicles 16:34-36

Connecting the two themes.

This final section of the psalm explicitly connects Yhwh's special covenant with Israel with his status as universal creator and ruler.

Yhwh is described as "good" (טוב) (like his creation in Genesis 1) and his  $\tau\omicron\eta$  ("covenant loyalty," not, for God's sake, "loving kindness") as forever.

Then he is described as saving Israel from the nations, with the proper response being to thank his holy name and to bless him. And to boast about him. From the second section we know that Yhwh is able to save Israel because he is the supreme deity.

V. 36b is part of the story, giving the response of the people to the psalm: "All the people said, 'Amen and praise Yhwh!'" What's fun about this is that in Ps 106:48b this is a command in the psalm itself:

"Let all the people say, 'Amen.' Praise Yah!" That final "Hallelujah" is widely considered to be the coda to book 4 of the book of Psalms, but here in 1 C 16 it's incorporated into the narrative.

This interesting little difference has led a number of commentators to suggest that Chr was working with a book of Pss that was complete at least through Ps 106, or that Chr was working with psalm collections that look like the current collections.

But I think it's just as possible that Chr's psalm collection didn't look like, say, the canonical book 4 of the Psalms. That is, his collection may have had a different grouping that ended with the coda of Ps 106.

Or that Ps 106 was edited in order to include the verse from Chronicles, or even that this section (which is the beginning and final verses of Ps 106) was used to create Ps 106.

Unhooking Chronicles from a canonical reading opens up a lot of possibilities. Since we can plausibly conclude that in some places the manuscripts of Sam-Kgs were "corrected" towards Chronicles during the transmission process ...

.. why shouldn't we hypothesize that some biblical books were shaped more generally by Chronicles? Especially since in the case of Psalms we already know that there were various ways the canonical book was shaped:

e.g. the splitting of Pss 9 and 10, Ps 151, etc. Not to mention the evidence of the Qumran Psalm scrolls that I mentioned before.

## 1 Chronicles 16:36b-43

End of the party.

So v. 36b I already covered from a textual perspective. It does provide the end of the liturgical response to the ark being brought into Jerusalem.

But David's not done. The levitical singers and gatekeepers are assigned to take care of the ark.

And Chr has noticed that the tabernacle and altar are still at Gibeon, so he has David assign Zadok and other priests to serve there. No temple in Jerusalem, so no priests either. It's like Yhwh now has two homes, which is a bit weird.

The priests need to make the daily offerings and all the other things "written in the torah of Yhwh that he had commanded to Israel." This is the first occurrence of the word תורה in Chronicles.

Back in 1 C 15 we had the mishpat of Yhwh and the commandment of Moses from the mouth of Yhwh – neither of which were designated as being written.

The next mention of a written torah is in 2 C 17:9, when a sefer-torat-yhwh occurs. Then there are a few more references to a written torah. But most references to torah in Chronicles aren't specified as written.

And most references to writing aren't to written torah, but to written records of kings, prophets, etc. So I don't think we can take this reference to written torah as being anything like the Pentateuch or even just Deut (as often supposed).

It might be something like P. But whatever it is, it's still fluid in form, if not in content.

But priests can't be left unattended. David also assigns musicians and gatekeepers to the sanctuary at Gibeon. (It's why only Asaph is in Jerusalem in v. 37. Heman and Jeduthun go to Gibeon.)

Ok, it's not that priests can't be left unattended, it's that sanctuaries need Levites just as much as they need (sacrificial) priests. At least so thinks Chr – no authorization of the torah of Yhwh here.

V. 43 is where we pick up 2 Samuel 6 again, 6:19b-20a. Chr leaves out the rest of 2 Sam 6 and Michal, because she's not needed. And Chr thus makes a neat transition into the next fragment that begins the temple building project.

This concludes the entire ark narrative of Chronicles, which spans four chapters. Chr puts together fragments from different parts of 2 Samuel along with some psalms, and creates a coherent account.

And because Chr operates according to patterns, this pattern of initial thought of David's, first (unsuccessful) attempt, intervening activities, second (successful) attempt that includes priests and Levites is one we'll see again.

## 1 Chronicles 17:1-27

### 1 Chronicles 17:1-2

Now on to the real thing.

Chr worked in patterns. Numbers meant things, names meant things, the order of events meant things. Just lots of patterns.

I'm not talking about "Bible Code" or anything like that, just that Chr's world-view was one where there was no random chance or inexplicable coincidences. The "doctrine of immediate reward/retribution" that's evident in the book is one example.

What we see, I think, is the result of the combination of P's theology of the goodness of God (e.g. in the previous psalm) with DtH's theodicy (cause and effect on steroids - no skipping generations).

What does this have to do with this chapter? It's the introduction to the temple construction narrative that will carry us through 2 Chronicles 7.

And this construction narrative follows the same pattern that we saw in the ark narrative: David's idea, first attempt ending in failure, pause that includes war accounts, second attempt begun with inclusion of Levites, success.

1 C 17 is taken from 2 Samuel 7, but with a few key modifications. There are lots of differences between the two texts, and sorting out which of them are simple ms variants and which are deliberate takes a bit of work.

In these first two verses we have David's idea. Time to build a permanent house for the ark! He runs it by his handy prophet Nathan, who says, "Yep, God likes that idea."

Several minor differences between the two texts. One big deliberate one: 2 Sam 7:1 has "when Yhwh had given him rest from all his enemies." Not here. Because Yhwh hasn't done that yet – we've still got lots of battle accounts to come.

(It's a bit jumping the gun in Samuel – David's still got fighting to come there too, including against his own family. Chr leaves those fights out, but he makes David's warlike nature key to the plot later.)

One that I still need to do a bit more work on: Samuel calls it the "ark of God," but I think האלהים there is a scribal emendation away from Yhwh. Chr preserves the Yhwh but adds "covenant of": "ark of Yhwh's covenant."

Or that might already be in his source – but I don't think so. Hence needing to do more work. The Yhwh-haElohim flip-flop we see throughout the mss and versions of Sam and Chronicles. So it might already also have been in Chr's text of Sam.

So, not sure how much to make of that in terms of Chr's own thinking about the ark and what he's taking over from his source.

## 1 Chronicles 17:3-6

Nathan's night-time revelation, part 1.

In Samuel, Nathan's another spokesman for Yhwh who doesn't know what's what. But here in Chronicles we don't have that background.

I'm more inclined to think that this is demonstrating what happens when you don't seek Yhwh and just make plans. Turns out Yhwh doesn't like plans being made without him. (Like moving the ark.)

Nobody asked Yhwh if he wanted a house. So Yhwh's got to make himself clear on this point – if he's going to have a house, he's going to be the one who says so. His house, his rules.

In 2 Sam 7:5 Yhwh asks a rhetorical question: "Is it you who will build...?" In 1 C 17:4 Yhwh makes a declarative statement, "You will not build..." This is consistent with Chr's work elsewhere, so I tend to think it's deliberate, not a transmission variant.

Chr's not big on rhetorical questions. Rhetorical questions, even though they only have one right answer, technically could be answered in more than one way. When you want to be clear, make a statement; don't ask a question.

And in the two places where Samuel has "sons of Israel," Chr puts simply "Israel," which leads in 2 C 17:6 to "all-Israel" rather than "all the sons of Israel." I don't think that's a transmission variant; that's Chr's change.

## 1 Chronicles 17:7-15

Nathan's night-time revelation, part 2. AKA the promise to David.

Very similar to the equivalent verses in 2 Samuel 7:8-17. Many small differences in terms of prepositions etc. that would come from ms variants and transmission.

A couple of interesting ones though: in v. 10, Yhwh says "I have humbled all your enemies" rather than "I have given you rest from all your enemies." Since כנע is a favourite word of Chr's, I'm going with intentional change here.

A few places where words from the בנה-בין-בית trio are used (bayit-ben-bana: house-son-build) in place of other words in Samuel. Just pumping up that word-play a little more.

One of them in v. 11 places emphasis on the recipient of the promise as being "from among your sons" rather than "from your loins," which also pumps up the beneficiary as being Solomon (who builds the temple) rather than David.

But there's a couple big ones too: no mention of the discipline of the recipient by human agents; and, Saul is not mentioned, only "I will not take away my covenant loyalty from you as I did to the one before you."

That's nice and vague. Because in Chronicles Saul didn't lose Yhwh's hesed – he never sought it out in the first place.

This is all Nathan's vision, which he goes and reports to David.

### 1 Chronicles 17:16-22

David's response, part 1.

One might wonder: where did David go to be "before Yhwh"? Usually this means at the altar (which is in Gibeon), or perhaps in this case at the ark. For Samuel this isn't a problem; it's ok for the king to go into priestly space.

But in Chr's world this is a big problem. He must be in front of the ark, but that's space guarded by our friends the Levites. I don't have a solution.

Again, lots of small differences compared to the parallel passage in 2 Sam 7:18-24. Differences in divine name, prepositions, etc.

The last half of v. 17 is textually very confused and confusing. The equivalent text in 2 Sam 7:19 is not confused at all. But it mentions תורת האדם, "human law/instruction." No way Chr would want to keep that...

...but in the history of transmission, it kept slipping back into the text. Probably best to read with some of the MT mss here: בתוך instead of כתור, "in the midst of humanity" instead of "like Tyre of humanity."

I don't think this is a source-text issue; the Sam versions seem fine here. This is a Chronicles text issue that I think speaks to some anxiety around the word torah, specifically, a torah that is human-related.

### 1 Chronicles 17:23-27

David's response, part 2.

So after David says how great Yhwh is, how he (David) is so honoured, etc., then he tries to finesse the promise a bit. He wants to get a blessing on his house.

It's all pretty much like the parallel text in 2 Samuel 7:25-29, but less wordy. More condensed.

That old text-critical principle *lectio brevior* (the shorter reading is preferred)? I don't think it holds here. That is, I don't think Chr is working from a briefer text that's been expanded in MT Samuel.

This text reads like good LBH rather than the rather elegant SBH of Samuel. This is a text that's been stripped down from its stylish original.

E.g. This chapter in Samuel has several cognate accusatives and other forms of root duplication (which I love so much). The chapter in Chronicles doesn't.

The whole fragment – corresponding to the chapter – is a briefer, late biblical Hebrew version of the Samuel text, with the effect of emphasizing the role of Solomon in the temple building and promise.

But we're no closer to getting the temple built.

## 1 Chronicles 18:1-19:5

### 1 Chronicles 18:1-8

David fights lots of people.

This fragment parallels 2 Samuel 8:1-8 with one key omission and one key addition.

Chr is following the Samuel order here because it makes sense – in Samuel it doesn't make sense because David is supposed to be secure from his enemies at the beginning of ch. 7. Remember that Chr changed that.

So just like after the first attempt to bring the ark into Jerusalem, when David went and fought a bunch of battles (against the Philistines), after the first attempt to build the temple, David goes and fights a bunch of battles.

The first is against the Philistines and he takes Gath and its villages. The text of Samuel is weird here, so hard to know if Chr was "fixing" it or preserving an earlier text. Probably fixing it.

Then he fights Moab – and the key omission is here: no torturing the Moabites.

Then on to Hamath, up in Aram, where Chr makes it clear that David sets up a monument at the Euphrates (reading  $\text{דַּי}$  here as "monument" rather than simply power because of the verb  $\text{נָצַב}$ ).

David captures chariots – excellent. And he defeats Aram-of-Damascus, and sets up more monuments (reading with the versions here). And he captures lots of bronze.

The key addition is here: Solomon will use the bronze to make the "bronze sea," the pillars and other temple vessels for the temple when he builds it. Except it may not be an addition because LXX Samuel has it (although 4QSam(a) doesn't).

Or LXX Samuel was corrected towards Chronicles – also possible. The effect is that David's battles are for a greater good (provisioning the temple), and he's not a torturer.

### 1 Chronicles 18:9-11

David receives tribute instead of fighting.

Continuing to parallel 2 Samuel 8 with only minor textual differences.

In this instance the king of Hamath buys David off with gold, silver, and bronze, which David promptly consecrates to Yhwh.

We get a little summary note here that all the loot from the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines and Amalekites was consecrated to Yhwh. Just in case anybody was wondering: no, David didn't keep the good stuff.

In case anybody's been keeping track, after the initial foray against the Philistines in this chapter, we've been heading east and north.

### 1 Chronicles 18:12-14

Edom is conquered.

Now we swing down to the southeast, to Edom. Again, following 2 Samuel 8, but it starts to get interesting.

Because 2 Sam 8:13 in the MT doesn't make any sense, having David defeat Aram in the "Valley of Salt," which is in Edom. Throughout Samuel-Kings/Chronicles the mss confuse ארם and אדם fairly often.

Josephus and some of the Sam versions agree with Chronicles here: it was Abishai (Joab's brother) who defeated Edom. (Plus the superscription to Ps 60 has Joab.)

It also makes sense that it's someone other than David because v. 11 read like a summary of what happened to all of David's loot.

Here we get another summary: David was king over all-Israel and did mishpat and tzedqah. "Justice and righteousness" I guess – a pretty common word-pair.

But since mishpat is clearly not "justice" but something more like "statute" earlier in Chronicles, I'm wondering if Chr is taking over the word-pair or if we should be thinking more generally about how Chr uses mishpat.

I'll put it on my list of things to do. I'm planning to do a list of Chr's distinctive vocabulary.

### 1 Chronicles 18:15-17

David's officials.

There are SO MANY versions of this list, in a few different places.

But we're continuing to follow 2 Samuel 8 here, and Chr makes use of the list in front of him pretty closely.

Except for the very last bit: 2 Sam 8:18 ends with "And David's sons were priests."

Now obviously this is going to be a problem for Chr. But it was also a problem for the early versions of Samuel, which is reflected in the LXX, most usually by replacing כהנים with ἀρχαγοι (court-archons, lit. "court-firsts").

And that's what we have here in Chronicles: "And David's sons were first on the king's hand." So Chr may have been reflecting his text of Samuel where the change was already made.

It's just so important to look at the versions when trying to decide if Chr was emending his sources as he incorporated them. Chr did make some really big changes. But he also could replicate pretty faithfully.

### 1 Chronicles 19:1-5

Ammonite troubles.

And finally we swing up north to Ammon. Geographically this whole sequence doesn't make a lot of sense because Chr is following the text of Samuel rather than organizing it himself.

He's left out 2 Sam 9, which shows the logic in the grouping of fragments: all to do with battles against the neighbouring kingdoms.

But when he rejoins Samuel at 2 Sam 10, he follows it pretty closely. But probably what he's following isn't like the MT.

Anyway, the new Ammonite king humiliates David's messengers and thus David himself. David doesn't set out to attack those with whom he's in a treaty arrangement – only after they break the treaty themselves.

How he deals with the Ammonites is similar to how he dealt with the Edomites. He's done fighting himself.

## 1 Chronicles 19:6-20:8, plus introduction to ch. 21

### 1 Chronicles 19:6-15

Joab solves the Ammonite troubles.

So this continues to parallel 2 Samuel 10 but very much not as it is in the MT. 4QSam(a) – but not LXX mss – shows a text much closer to what we see here in Chronicles.

So although we have a focus on numbers and amounts in the first few verses, which is congenial to Chr's general approach, it comes from Chr's source text, and is not from his own changes.

Anyway, David continues to be finished with his own battles, and here we have Joab and Abishai fighting the combined forces of Ammon and Aram.

Joab's strategic planning is highlighted – and then his job is finished and he returns to Jerusalem. Joab is important for later on, so remember that he shows initiative here.

### 1 Chronicles 19:16-19

David fights Aram.

But it turns out David's not done with fighting yet. Again, this continues following 2 Samuel 10, but in a different version than what we have in MT.

What we have is unfinished business – Joab and Abishai defeated the Ammonites (except not for good) and Arameans (also except not for good).

So David goes out to finish off the Aramaeans in order to isolate the Ammonites, thus setting up the next and final battle against the nations to the east.

### 1 Chronicles 20:1-3

More Ammonites.

Great text. Because it's a coherent narrative, and if we didn't have 2 Samuel we'd have no way of telling otherwise.

It parallels 2 Samuel 11:1 and 12:30-31. Of course that leaves out the whole David-Bathsheba-Uriah and Nathan's parable and Solomon's birth thing. But the episode makes sense, especially with the couple of small changes Chr makes.

Joab goes to fight the Ammonites (again) because their capital Rabbah hasn't yet been captured. This is really important: Joab takes an armed force. In 2 Sam 11:1, Joab takes "all-Israel."

Only David would take "all-Israel." So Joab is leading only a partial army, and not the cultic-military gathering of the entire people.

David stays behind because Joab is perfectly able and permitted to take a smaller force – like he did in the battle against the Ammonites and Aramaeans. Joab takes Rabbah.

Next thing we know David is there taking the loot and the prisoners. No notice that he'd left Jerusalem, but that's not all that unusual in Hebrew narrative.

There is some anxiety in v. 3 about what David did to the prisoners; while 2 Sam 12:31 (MT) reads "he set them to work with [a variety of iron tools]," our text seems to suggest that they themselves were hacked to bits with those tools.

But it's a dubious Hebrew word where it appears elsewhere. Unfortunately it's also well supported in both the LXX mss of Samuel and the MT mss of Chronicles: so Chr probably inherited it.

Since there seems to have been some effort to exonerate David of prisoner-torturing in previous chapters, what's this doing here?

Translators really struggle with this one (so too the editor of BHS) and usually read with MT Samuel. No answers yet for me.

### 1 Chronicles 20:4-8

More Philistines.

Now we've got another fragment wedged in here, which suggests to me that all these battles are being grouped together; in fact, this is the last battle report from David's reign.

This one comes from 2 Samuel 21:18-22. We've seen texts from the "appendix" to 2 Samuel used before: 2 Samuel 23 showed up in 1 C 11.

Chr obviously doesn't know anything about any place named "Gob," but to be fair, many of the mss and versions of Samuel don't know it either. Chr's Gezer makes as much sense as anything else.

David began his wars with battles against the Philistines, and he ends his wars with battles against the Philistines: full circle. All done.

### 1 Chronicles 21

Introduction.

Remember when David decided to bring the ark into Jerusalem in 1 C 13 but he didn't really have a plan for where it should go?

So now he's decided to build a temple but doesn't have a plan for where it should be. This episode deals with that problem. The fragment here parallels 2 Samuel 24, that final episode at the end of the "appendix" to 2 Samuel.

Because David is so "idealized" in Chronicles, a lot of scholarship has tried to figure out why this fragment is included because it seems to show him acting inappropriately.

But David models being the repentant sinner here – which is important, because there will be more repentant sinners in Chronicles.

If David is standing in for Judah/Israel here, then there's no sense that just because someone is chosen that they're without sin. An important point for a Persian/Hellenistic-period community that's wrestling with notions of identity.

(And, btw, probably a good lesson in many times and places: perfection isn't necessary to remain in divine favour – or human favour. Own your mistakes, everyone, and things will probably work out. I should do this.)

So what's the sin? That's one question to explore.

And the punishment – plague – is one that has a particular resonance now for me that it didn't really have before March 2020. We'll talk about that too.

1 Chronicles 21:1-30

1 Chronicles 21:1-6

A census.

This is actually a lot of rewriting of the equivalent section in 2 Samuel 24. It gets nice and condensed and cleaned up.

Of course the census numbers are different – bigger for Israel, smaller for Judah. They definitely mean something, but I don't know what.

And Joab, in addition to telling David not to do the census, takes the initiative to leave out Levi and Benjamin. Not that it makes a difference in the end.

But the really really big thing is why David decides to take a census. In 2 Sam 24, it's because Yhwh was angry with Israel. Obviously Chr is not going to go with that because what could Yhwh be angry about?

Chr takes Yhwh's anger and moves it to after the census. The census is what makes Yhwh angry.

Now, why a census would make Yhwh angry is bewildering, at first glance, because genealogies and such are the results of things like censuses. But – if the census is for determining potential military numbers (which it is), then...

... there's no need for a census. Because David has conquered all his enemies and is therefore finished with war and the need for an army. Joab knows this and can't understand why David doesn't.

David doesn't because SATAN!!! has incited him because SATAN!!! is standing against Israel. So not only is Yhwh's anger not what causes the census, it's an external force that causes the census.

Everywhere else that haSatan shows up in the HB it's with the article: "the satan," i.e., "the opponent." It's haSatan's job to keep Yhwh honest, as it were.

In the Westminster parliamentary system we talk about "Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition." That's usually what haSatan is. But not here. Here it's a name.

In Achaemenid thought, it's "the Lie" that opposes the great god Auramazda, and I think we've got something like that going on here. Achaemenid Mazdaean thought doesn't yet have a personified divine adversary...

... but later Zoroastrianism does have one. I think we've got something similar going on here. In Samuel, Yhwh is the origin of Saul's "evil spirit" and is the one who gets angry at Israel and gets David to commit a census.

Here, because David is the ideal ruler to create all-Israel, David does not sin of his own volition. He must be deceived (or incited) to sin. This is a lot like the idea that "the Lie" is what causes disorder in Auramazda's creation.

Note that I DO NOT frame this in terms of the old “Zoroastrian dualism enters Judaism” framing. 1. There’s no Zoroastrianism yet; 2. There’s no “pure” Judaism free from a variety of cultural influences.

The Mazdaism of the Achaemenids isn’t radically dualistic – there’s simply a force that has entered and corrupted the world, and this force (the Lie) is what the Achaemenids have to vanquish.

Satan, here, is the personified force that corrupts Yhwh’s perfect creation, with all-Israel as Yhwh’s crowning glory. David has to recognize and defeat that force for himself.

And, unfortunately for me, it’s because of all this that I think I need to be reading Enoch and Jubilees – where does the personification of the corrupting force come from?

[1 Chronicles 21:7-12](#)

Punishment.

Yhwh doesn’t care about the cause of David’s sin, though. But Yhwh punishes Israel for David’s sin, not David. I think v. 7 is the heading for this section rather than being the ending of the previous one.

That is, instead of Yhwh striking Israel and David then realizing he’s sinned, v. 7 previews that Israel is punished for David’s sin.

David realizes he’s sinned all by himself. He defeats “the Lie” that has corrupted his thought. But he has to be punished. How do you punish a king? You inflict something on his people.

2 Sam 24 kind of implies that David communicates directly with Yhwh in a dream. That’s not here, but it’s not clear how David communicates with Yhwh, because, again, where would he go to do it?

In the end, that’s not important. Yhwh communicates with David through the seer Gad. It’s Gad who brings word of the punishment and tells David to let him know the choice so he (Gad) can pass that along.

Chr makes it clear that these are Yhwh’s options, not Gad’s, by using the phrase “Thus says Yhwh.” Similarly, Chr introduces the character of the messenger of destruction here in the options.

David gets three choices: three years of famine, three months of military defeat, or three days of Yhwh’s plague, literally, “three days of Yhwh’s sword, plague in the land.”

Not coincidentally, I think, in the Achaemenid royal inscriptions, Darius asks that Auramazda protect him from the enemy army, from famine, and from the Lie (DPd 12-22, for those interested).

So what will David choose?

[1 Chronicles 21:13-18](#)

David’s choice and its consequences.

David chooses plague, because he says, “Don’t let me fall into human hands.” In any case, to the military defeat, then. He says “Yhwh’s compassion is great” so he figures that Yhwh’s sword (plague) is the way to go.

Notice that military defeat would look bad for David. Three years of famine would require him to do something if anyone’s going to be alive at the end. How bad can three days of plague be?

This reasoning makes me a lot angrier now than it did before March 2020. Plague can be plenty bad, and leaders choosing to unleash plague rather than hurt their own interests is something we’ve all seen a lot of in Europe and North America in the last year.

So not feeling a lot of sympathy for David here myself. Selfish jackass. In my view, that’s his sin.

Going with the parallel to the Achaemenid inscriptions, David’s just agreed to allow the Lie to ravage the land for three days. Pretty sure Darius wouldn’t have chosen that.

Now, yes, Yhwh’s compassion is great. It’s just not running on David’s timetable.

It’s not until 70,000 men have fallen in Israel (thinning out that army a bit) and the messenger of destruction has reached Jerusalem that Yhwh changes his mind.

What does Yhwh change his mind about? “The evil thing.” Which evil thing – David’s census (i.e. sin) or the punishment? Not clear.

When he tells the messenger of destruction to stop, the messenger is on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and that’s where David and the elders of see him: standing between earth and heaven, with his sword aimed at Jerusalem.

What are they doing there? No idea, but they repent in sackcloth. And then David takes full responsibility for his sin: ordering the census. So Yhwh did change his mind about the punishment and not about the census.

But the census itself was evil, according to David. And then he asks, more or less, “why should the people suffer for my sin?” Indeed, excellent question. Maybe he should have thought of that earlier.

David’s punishment, then, was to watch his people die of plague. Such a framing assumes that a ruler would feel that to be a punishment. This past year has suggested that not all leaders feel that way.

The messenger of destruction is still hovering there – what will make him vanish? An altar, built on this very threshing floor. That is, a place where the requisite sacrifices can be made that will remove the impurity caused by David’s sin.

(I’m also assuming that all those dead bodies will also cause ritual impurity that needs to be removed – on that large a scale, something beyond bathe and wait until morning is probably going to be needed...

Indeed, it’s the land itself that would have ritual impurity, and short of it being abandoned – wait, that comes later – something will need to be done for it.)

## 1 Chronicles 21:19-26

An altar.

Meantime, all this is going on and Ornan and his four sons ARE STILL THRESHING THEIR GRAIN! Well, Ornan is still threshing, but his four sons have hidden themselves once they saw the messenger of destruction.

I'm with the four sons, myself – I see scary messenger hovering in the air with a sword, I take cover. Ornan doesn't stop working until he sees David, and then he goes out and prostrates himself.

Unlike in the parallel episode in 2 Sam 24, Ornan doesn't ask the question "Why are you here?" In 2 Sam 24 that's not a stupid question because David's just arrived, but here it would be a stupid question because David's already on site.

Now David asks to buy the threshing floor. There's some urgency, because that altar needs to go up ASAP in order to stop the plague.

Btw, it's this threshing floor that's important and not any other site, because this is the place where divine and human realms are intersecting – that messenger of destruction with his sword is still hovering.

The boundaries between the world and the beyond-the-world are thin here. It's like a portal that needs a gate to guard that boundary. Now that the portal is open, it can never be quite closed, so it has to be guarded.

That's what the altar – and, later, the temple – will do.

Anyway, David and Ornan engage in a bit of haggling. Important to note that Ornan gets good value for his property, but that's not the point.

The point is that David has to offer to Yhwh what belongs to him, not what belongs to someone else. If Ornan gives it to him, then it would be Ornan making the offering, not David. I think I need help from the P people here to get the nuances.

Then the altar goes up, the sacrifices get made, and Yhwh "answered him in fire." So this is an effective consecration and reparation.

## 1 Chronicles 21:27-30

A conclusion.

These last three verses are unparalleled in 2 Samuel 24, which simply ends with the plague being over. But here in Chronicles, there are some loose ends to tie up.

First, because we've been waiting all this time, Yhwh tells the messenger of destruction to resheath his sword.

Second, Yhwh's answer in fire is what shows David that building the altar and sacrificing on it had worked. We get no notice that the plague was over – we have to infer that it would now be over.

Third, in case we'd forgotten, Chr reminds us that the tabernacle and altar were at Gibeon. There didn't need to be a new altar, and in fact, David should have gone there.

Chr absolves David of this deficiency ("David wasn't able to go before [the altar at Gibeon] to seek God because he was terrified in the face of the sword of Yhwh's messenger.")

Remember that seeking Yhwh is really, really important for Chr. Seeking Yhwh in the right way and in the right place is also really important. But in this one instance, faced by dire emergency, David gets a pass.

Eventually, the importance of this pass will become clear, because this is where the temple will be built. So now David has a site for the temple: he's already built an altar on it.

This whole passage, like 1 Chronicles 17, follows the contours of the source in Samuel while being somewhat abridged in Late Biblical Hebrew.

I need to think more about the places where Chr duplicates his source fairly closely versus where he is freer to retell in LBH.

It's the difference between: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife," and, "Everybody knows that a rich single man must want to get married."

Why keep the Austen-esque language in some places and not others? Especially as I think about scribal production and reproduction, I think this is important, but I don't have any answers (yet).

## 1 Chronicles 22:1-19

### 1 Chronicles 22:1-5

Altar site becomes temple site.

From here through the end of 1 Chronicles we no longer have parallel passages in Samuel-Kings.

This whole chapter is really a continuation of the previous one, so maybe I shouldn't have broken it up with the recap yesterday. Because now we see the link between the site for the altar and the site for the future temple. Oh well.

Something to note is that this site was Ornan's threshing floor. A threshing floor has to be on an elevated place so that the chaff gets blown away by the wind.

(Gideon threshing in a pit in Judges 6 is both a coward and causing more work for himself – is he going to pick each grain individually from the chaff in the pit? Stupid. But I digress.)

Now that we have a site, we have David gathering the materials for the temple. He's got foreigners doing the stone carving. I'm not sure if this is enforced labour or not (the line is blurry about forced labour anyway in the ancient world).

It reminds me a bit of the Susa foundation deposit inscription where Darius boasts about his Ionian and Lydian stone carvers. (DSf)

It might be here that foreigners are simply known as skilled stone carvers, so if you need good stone work done you get yourself some foreign labour. They might not have much choice in the matter.

The iron and bronze David's got from his military endeavours. And of course the Sidonians and Tyrians send him cedar from Lebanon because that's where all of that comes from. (See again DSf.)

Why does David do all this? There are two answers to this question. 1. The text's answer: Solomon is a young lad and tender / delicate / gentle (גַּר). This phrase shows up 3 times in the HB, all in Chronicles: 1 C 22:5, 1 C 29:1, 2 C 13:7.

There's more to say about it, but I'll leave it aside for now. 2. Chr's answer: Solomon is the temple builder but David is the dynastic and cult founder – he should be the temple builder according to ANE norms.

Chr can't change (and maybe doesn't want to change – see tomorrow) who builds the temple, but he can make David responsible for everything about the temple building. So he does.

## 1 Chronicles 22:6-10

David summarizes 1 Chronicles 17 for Solomon

This is an interesting speech because it encapsulates the gist of 1 C 17 while at the same time interpreting it.

The first main point is that David emphasizes his blood-shedding as the reason he can't build the temple. This is in contrast to the second main point –

Which is to set up Solomon as the “man of peace” who will build the temple, and to whom the dynastic promise is made.

The doubled statement about blood is mirrored by the doubled mention of shalom (once in Solomon's name, once as a man of peace).

In Chr's priestly logic, shedding blood makes one ritually impure. Of course one could be made ritually pure again, but why not just have the ritually pure from birth person build the temple?

In 1 C 17, remember, the logic for David not building the temple is that Yhwh doesn't want one (yet). Here the logic is that David is ritually impure. These are not incompatible.

And all this means that Solomon was born with only one purpose: to build the temple and thereby embody the dynastic promise. All the rest of it is irrelevant.

#### 1 Chronicles 22:11-16

David commissions Solomon

David continues his speech to Solomon with what is basically Chr's creed: keep/guard Yhwh's torah; be strong and don't fear. If you do these things, Yhwh will be with you and you'll succeed.

Success in temple-building comes from guarding Yhwh's torah – not the other way round: success in guarding Yhwh's torah does not come from temple-building.

What's the torah? It's the ordinances and statutes that Yhwh commanded through Moses. As with most references to torah by Chr, it's not necessarily to a written torah.

And on a practical note, Solomon doesn't need to worry because David's providing all the materials and artisans that will be needed. Solomon doesn't need to organize any of it.

Solomon is the magic child, the talisman, the wind-up toy, whatever you want to label him. Even his famous wisdom is foreshadowed, but only as the means by which he will guard Yhwh's torah.

#### 1 Chronicles 22:17-19

David commissions Solomon's assistants

And we wrap up the whole thing with David commanding everyone else to help Solomon, with another one of Chr's creeds: seek Yhwh, which in this case means building the temple and bringing the ark into it.

David's exhortation is, I think, meant on two levels. On the level of the text, we continue the theme of rest that repeats a few times in this chapter and that looks back to 1 C 17.

But it's also aimed at Chr's audience because it's just way too grandiose for its context. It looks back to the psalm in 1 C 16:

"Isn't your god Yhwh with you (pl.)? Hasn't he given you (pl.) rest from round about? He's given the earth's inhabitants into my hand, and the earth is subdued before him and before his people."

You could read ארץ here as "land," which is what it means in Numbers 32 (where this phrasing comes from, I think). But I think here it does mean "earth," and is making a universal claim.

One final note – we've got a couple of instances in this chapter of the temple as being for Yhwh's name, which I think indicates knowledge of Deuteronomic "Name Theology."

But it's not systematic in Chronicles – most of the time the temple is for Yhwh, not for his name.

## 1 Chronicles 23:1-32

### 1 Chronicles 23:1-5

Levites, Levites, more Levites.

All of a sudden David's old. How did that happen?

We had enthronement, ark-battles-ark (3 months, right after David became king), plan for temple (right after ark), battles (some period of time), census-altar-temple planning.

Now he's old and full of days, but with no sense of anything else happening. Oh, we know things happened – he had children, for example. But we don't even get a birth narrative for Solomon.

Once we free ourselves from the trap of thinking Chronicles is history-writing, we can see the other ways that it makes sense.

Chr obviously had a sense of temporality – he uses phrases like “after this.” But this is not a temporally-based narrative, if that makes sense. It's an archive, with fragments arranged in a particular way to make a point.

Because the statement about David being old and full of days and making Solomon king occurs here, but then doesn't seem to get acted upon until ch 28, lots of commentators have seen chs 23-27 as a secondary insertion.

But I don't think so, for a couple of reasons. First, I don't see a resumptive repetition, I see an inclusio between this verse and 1 C 29:28.

Second, it's a pattern that we saw with the ark. Get the place picked out and then organize the Levites. We've got the place for the altar and temple, and now we need to organize the Levites.

Some interpreters have suggested that here we have a private king-making followed by the public one in ch. 29. I have argued for that myself, in my younger more foolish days.

Now I see v. 1 as the heading for the entire rest of 1 Chronicles. Almost all of it is unparalleled by Samuel-Kings, but there are bits and pieces from all over the place being tied in here.

One indication of the nature of the text as archive is in the recording of the Levites, those men aged 30 and up. Not a census – the verbs are different from 1 C 21. For the age Chr is drawing on Numbers 4...

But we'll see that in v. 27 the Levites are recorded from age 20 up; Chr there is drawing on e.g. Numbers 1 and a more general assumption of age 20 as male adulthood.

The numbers here are obviously symbolic, based on multiples and factors of 12. The Levites are denoted as warriors – which we've seen before. In the past, David had warriors. Now he has levitical warriors.

The functions of the Levites here are: “officials and judges” (שטרִים וּשְׂפִטִים), gatekeepers, musicians. We've seen the gatekeepers and musicians before.

I dislike “judge” for שופט in Chronicles; I don’t think the English word covers the semantic range of the Hebrew. Would love suggestions. It’s a function we’ll see the Levites having in later passages as well.

### 1 Chronicles 23:6-11

#### Gershonites

The first verse here is a heading, and then we get into the Gershonites. Yes, in the genealogies we had Gershom, not Gershon.

David takes the three families of the Levites that we know from the genealogies (Gershon/m, Kohath, Merari) and organizes them into levitical divisions. This language echoes the language of Joshua dividing the land.

We have three sons of Ladan and two sets of sons (a trio and a quartet) of Shimi. And while Shimi is a son of Gershom in 1 C 6, Gershom’s other son there is Libni, not Ladan. And v. 9b seems out of place.

So what I see in vv. 7-11 is two lists of Gershonite divisions that have been combined. The goal seems to have been to make six divisions – that’s why Jeush and Beria are counted as one.

What this fragment reminds me of is some of the lists of names in the Elephantine papyri. There are a few documents that are just names. Presumably someone at some point knew what a particular list was for.

But what would happen if an archivist were trying to assemble a list of levitical families and came across a few name-lists? He might try to figure out how they go together – and include them all, whether they fit or not.

### 1 Chronicles 23:12-20

#### Kohathites (and Moses)

Now this list seems to bring together some pieces from 1 C 6 in a more coherent way than the previous list of Gershon/Gershom.

The four sons of Kohath? Same as in 1 C 5:28 & 6:3. (Not like the linear genealogy a few verses later.)  
The sons of Amram? Aaron and Moses, same as in 1 C 5:29.

The duties of Aaron and his lineage? Described! And also, they’re not Levites. They’re priests. So we don’t get names here.

Chiefs of each of the three other families of Kohath (Itzhar, Hebron, Uzziel)? Yes. But what about the first family of Kohath, Amram? Now we’ve got a problem. Because the Aaronides are removed to be priests, who’s left?

The sons of Moses, that’s who! Wait, Moses had sons in our earlier genealogy? No, he didn’t. The only mention of Moses’ sons’ names is in Exodus 18. And maybe Judges 18:30 – there’s a scribal problem there.

But I'm not convinced that Chr necessarily knows Exodus 18, because what we've got here is a little fragment of the chiefs of the Gershon and Eliezer families that slides into the other three Kohathite families.

Again, these are lists of levitical families with their leaders purportedly at the time of David. Chr is assembling them in a coherent framework.

#### 1 Chronicles 23:21-24

##### Merarites

The bit dealing with the family of Merari is pretty short, and like Kohath, agrees with 1 C 6 on the names of Merari's sons.

But after that there are inconsistencies, that like with Gershon/m demonstrate that we're dealing with different kinds of lists: lists of Levitical families, not genealogies.

Unlike the Kohath and Gershon fragments, we don't get names of the chiefs of the Merari families.

The final verse, v. 24, is the summary, telling us exactly what we've already figured out: this is a list of Levitical families.

But it seems to contradict what we saw at the beginning of the section: Levites do their work from the age of 20 up – remember it was 30 in v. 3.

We've got both numbers in the book of Numbers, which Chr is working with. He isn't reconciling them – they both stand. That's because they refer to different things:

In v. 3 it was warriors for the temple, and here it's the servitude of the temple. I think we see here Chr doing the kind of thing that the authors of the Serekh texts did later – thinking about particular jobs for particular age ranges.

#### 1 Chronicles 23:25-32

##### Jobs for Levites

So why did David gather and record the Levites? Because now that the ark has been brought to Jerusalem, and the temple has been planned, there will be no need for the tabernacle, so the Levites need new jobs.

Here those new jobs are described – for age 20 up (again). The Levites stand next to the Aaronide priests, and their work is described as “the servitude of Yhwh's house.” I've been working on how to translate עבודה here:

“Service” doesn't quite get the meaning, I think. Because “service” in modern English suggests something that one enters into by choice. But this work of the Levites is not something they have a choice about.

Their whole purpose is to do the temple's work, especially in keeping it holy. In a way they're the temple's slaves. Not "temple slaves" but "the temple's slaves."

They are even responsible for guarding the holiness of the sacrificial priests. @JoelBaden has described the priests as part of the sanctuary's furniture in Leviticus, and I think that logic is demonstrated here.

The Levites' jobs, therefore, are what allow the sanctuary to remain sanctified and thus to function. The sacrificial priests (Aaronides) are the technicians – we've seen that attitude before in Chronicles.

Just as David and Moses are Yhwh's slaves, the Levites are the temple's slaves. Their mission – about which they have no choice – is to guard the temple and its sanctity at all costs.

## 1 Chronicles 24:1-25:6

### 1 Chronicles 24:1-5

Priests come AFTER Levites

Once we've gotten the Levites numbered and organized by families, and their duties described, it's time to move on to the priests.

Remember that whenever we say "priests" really we should be understanding "sacrificial priests." The family of Levi has levitical priests (= Levites) and sacrificial priests (= priests).

Anyway, quick little recap of Leviticus 10 here in vv. 1-2 (without the drama): Aaron had four sons, but only two who survived him and had sons themselves.

So there are two priestly families: Eleazar and Ithamar. David then appoints one priest from each, presumably as the head of the family. We know one of these guys: Zadok.

The other, Ahimelek, appears in this chapter and never again – where he appears elsewhere (e.g. 1 C 18:16), he shows up as Abimelek. He's Ahimelek in Samuel. Oh, the fun of our archives!

Anyway, there are 16 chiefs from Eleazar and 8 from Ithamar. Note all the military terminology here. And "servitude" – like the Levites, the priests are slaves to the temple, without choice.

### 1 Chronicles 24:6-19

Twenty-four priestly rotations.

Our little drama continues, with lots being drawn to assign and then record the 24 priestly rotations.

Little problem here: in the previous section we had twice as many lineages from Eleazar as from Ithamar, but here Chr suggests that they are even: alternating lots between Eleazar and Ithamar.

So the previous section suggests that the Eleazar (Zadokites) are twice as important as the Ithamar family, but this one suggests they're equal.

Does this discrepancy reflect some real-world situation of shifting power in priestly families? If you've been reading for a while, you'll know that I find that reasoning a bit facile.

Instead, I prefer to see these differences as a reflection of archival material that Chr is trying to control – this list of names for the priestly rotations, for example, is the kind of thing that is contextualized by the previous section.

Unlike with the Levites, the duties of the priests, described at the end of this list, are pretty vague: "to come to the house of Yhwh according to the Aaronide statute." (I'm translating מִשְׁפָּט as "statute", but maybe "orders" is better.)

Everybody knows what the Aaronide statute is – it doesn't need to be explained like for the Levites. It's sacrifice, and all that is subsumed within sacrifice.

## 1 Chronicles 24:20-25

### More Levites?

This is a weird bit. Who are the remaining Levites? Why are they here? Didn't we already have Levites? What's going on?

So, yes, we did already have Levites. But that was a record of the Levites. These are Levites to stand with the Aaronides in their rotations.

But these names here are a whole jumble of things. Sons of Amram, sons of Shubael, etc. etc. Plus v. 22 has all kinds of horrible textual problems.

None of this coheres with anything we've already seen, although it all looks "levitical," specifically, Kohathite.

## 1 Chronicles 24:26-31

### And even more Levites?

This follows on from the previous bit, but it has the Merari families Mahli and Mushi and some familiar names after that.

The way it's arranged by Chr, vv. 20-31 have the Levites who lined up with the 24 priestly rotations in the casting of lots. It's all a bit chaotic.

I think what Chr had was a bunch of different lists that he then arranged as best he could.

It really reminds me of when I was doing a lot of work on the Yehudite temple archive from Elephantine, specifically on the less-popular bits that include various lists and similar records.

Sometimes the lists have headings, sometimes they don't. The names repeat across some of the documents. It's not clear what a lot of these documents were for. Unrelated documents ended up on the same scroll.

I imagine the Jerusalem temple archive as being similar. So if you're Chr, and working on defining a levitical temple, you've got lots of material. You just need to provide a framework.

## 1 Chronicles 25:1-6

### Musicians!

After the priestly and levitical rotations, now we've got musicians: the families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. We've seen these guys before.

Note that it's David and the captains of the army who divide up the families of singers/musicians. It's not divine action (which is what casting of lots is), but human action.

Each of the musician families has a list of its members given in the same format as the levitical families of the previous family: Of X, the sons of X: A, B, C.

Each of the families does something different. Asaph prophesies, Jeduthun “prophesies on the lyre for thanks and praise,” Heman is the king’s seer.

Clearly “prophesy” means something different than what the English word implies. All of these tasks – and the playing of the instruments – is their servitude to the temple.

But unlike the priests and the Levites we saw in the last chapter, these guys are “at the hand of the king” as well as in temple servitude. They play a bridging role between the royal and divine realms.

Heman’s 14 sons and 6 daughters – the list actually has 15 sons but that’s easily explained through scribal duplication of a name or two – the daughters being included might suggest a role for women musicians, but the evidence otherwise is thin.

## 1 Chronicles 25:7-27:15

### 1 Chronicles 25:7-31

This is a continuation of the presentation of the musicians. Like the priests back in ch. 24 we have the portioning of 24 rotations of musicians by lot.

What I like is that the groups include “teacher and student” side by side. Each group has 12 members – 24 times 12 = 288, the count in v. 7.

A little textual problem in v. 9, where Yoseph is replaced or supplemented with Asaph, and the phrase “his sons and his brothers: 12” is missing, but that’s easily sorted.

These 24 courses of musicians aren’t divided up by the musician families of Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman – the corruption of Yoseph to Asaph is a mistake some copyist made in trying to make such a division.

It’s like in the priestly list of rotations where Eleazar and Ithamar aren’t given specific lots. So we can speculate that each of the three musician families is represented in each rotation (as in the priestly lists)

...

Or that the rotations alternate between the three families. Doesn’t really matter – the text certainly doesn’t seem to care about that detail.

The format, e.g. “The third was Zakkur, his sons and his brothers, twelve,” carries through the list with just a few minor variations, particularly above twelve when Hebrew ordinals get dodgy.

This format is pretty standard administrative format that we see in places like Elephantine, where something like it is used for a variety of purposes.

If this is an actual list, originally it would have used hieratic numerals or similar for the number twelve, rather than writing it out as “twelve.” I find it interesting that those numerals aren’t used.

I wonder if they were originally – whether this was an actual list or an artificial list – and if so, when the word replaced the numeral. Something to think about as I ponder scribal practices and Chronicles.

## 1 Chronicles 26:1-11

### Gatekeepers, by family

We’ve got two lists of gatekeepers in this chapter. This one is by family, and includes the families of Korah (which we saw in 1 Chr 9) and Merari (more on that).

First Meshelem-yahu of the Asaphites (what? Asaphites are singers!) and his sons, starting with Zechariah, who we saw in 1 Chr 9:21.

I think we’ve got somebody trying to connect a bunch of things here, because a Zechariah is listed as Asaph’s second in 1 Chr 16:5. It’s a common name, of course.

Meshelem-yahu's family is listed in vv. 1-3 and 9, forming an inclusio around the family of Obed-Edom in vv. 4-8.

Obed-Edom we remember from 1 Chr 15 and 16, where he was both a porter for the ark and then gatekeeper once the ark was deposited. He's from the Levitical family of Yeduthun there – but not restated here

Then in vv. 10-11 we have Hosah from the family of Merari – he's named in 1 Chr 16 as well, but not given as from Merari.

So what we've got in this section is a bunch of fragments being combined together to make a systematic list of some gatekeepers we saw in 1 Chr 9, 15, and 16.

### 1 Chronicles 26:12-19

#### Gatekeepers, by gate

This list makes more sense than the previous one, because it gives responsibilities by gate and not by family.

It uses the same format of lots, side-by-side, as for the singers in 1 Chr 25:8. This list probably goes with that list of singers, meaning that 1 Chr 26:1b-11 is an interruption.

East gate first, then north, then south plus storehouses, then west. Same guys as in the previous list.

Each day requires 24 gatekeepers in total, divided up among the various families: 6 for the east, 4 for each of the north and south gates, 4 for the storehouses, and 6 for the west.

There's a textual problem in v. 18, but the 6 gatekeepers for the west are divided into 4 for the gate and 2 for the vestibule.

Verse 19 ties the two sections together: gatekeepers by family and gatekeepers by gate.

### 1 Chronicles 26:20-28

#### Treasurers

Remember back in the Levitical genealogy in 1 Chr 6 we had three families: Gershom/n, Kohath, and Merari.

What now seems clear is that we've got a conflation of Korah with Kohath in the gatekeepers, because after the Korah-ites and Merarites as gatekeepers we've got the Gershomites as treasurers.

Where did the sacred treasures come from? This one is interesting, because the treasuries themselves were from David's battles, and consecrated by him and his officers –

But also from Samuel, Saul, Abner, and Joab. In other words, everyone who won battles in 1-2 Samuel.

## 1 Chronicles 26:29-32

Finally, working outwards from the gates, to the treasuries, to the outer courts, we get the general overseers.

This little piece functions as a bridge between the sacred precincts and Israel as a whole, or, if you like, tying Israel as a whole into the sacred precincts.

There's two sets of overseers: one for the Israelites west of the Jordan river, and one for the Israelites on the east side.

Both sets of overseers oversee the Israelites "for all the work of Yhwh and the servitude of the king" (v. 30) / "in every matter of God and the king" (v. 32).

Work of deity and king is intimately linked, and the same words are used: work and servitude.

## 1 Chronicles 27:1-15

### Israelite officials

Now we've got 12 divisions, one for each month, of Israelites who serve the king.

Each division is 24,000 men. All kinds of perfection here.

Lots of the names are those we've seen before, particularly in the lists of David's mighty men in 1 Chr 11-12. Again, I think we've got some kind of systematization of those lists.

But they mimic or take the form of actual inventory or rotational lists that we know epigraphically.

## 1 Chronicles 27:16-28:10

### 1 Chronicles 27:16-24

#### Tribal officials

The previous list was a list of the monthly officials. This one is a list of the “princes,” one over each tribe.

The order of the tribes: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Aaron, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, Ephraim, half-Manasseh, half-Manasseh of Gilead, Benjamin, Dan.

Obviously we have here 12 tribes (Manasseh being one tribe but split in two). But we have Levi and Aaron, and no Gad or Asher.

The order isn't the same as in 1 Chr 2:1 after Zebulun. And it isn't the same as any other list in Chronicles. Of course as @ATobowlosky will tell you, no two tribe lists are the same anywhere.

So the important thing is that number 12 – again. And splitting Levi into Levi and Aaron, which is pretty consistent with how Chr sees these two groups of priestly officials.

The list ends with a comment on the census, which probably refers back to 1 Chr 21, but gives a comment as to why youngsters weren't included: because Yhwh had said that Israel would be as numerous as the stars in heaven.

And why don't we have tribal numbers the way we have numbers for the monthly divisions? Because the census was aborted and therefore not included in the annals of David's reign.

I need to do something with this and the “muster lists” that we saw back in 1 Chr 1-9.

## 1 Chronicles 27:25-34

#### Royal stewards

And finally, we wrap up all these lists of officials, captains, tribes, divisions, etc. of David's reign.

Here we have the list of the officials working on David's personal estates (vv. 25-31). These are the stewards of: the king's lands in Jerusalem (meaning the lands around Jerusalem, not in the city itself, as is clear from the next title);

the king's lands in the other cities, villages, and forts; the field-workers; the wine-presses (vineyards in the sense of wineries); the vineyards (i.e. where grapes are grown); the olive and sycamore groves in the Shephelah; the other oil-producing lands;

the cattle-herders in the Sharon; the cattle-herders in the other valleys; the camels; the donkeys; and the sheep.

Each area of the king's wealth has its own bureaucrat. This is the king's wealth, not the temple's wealth, and the temple doesn't have its own means of production of wealth. Hence what comes in the next couple of chapters.

And at the end (vv. 32-34), a list of what we might call David's cabinet. This list is definitely not the same as the list back in 1 Chr 18, with the exception of Joab as captain of the army. It looks, I don't know, more Greek?

#### 1 Chronicles 28:1

David's farewell speech begins

So back in 1 Chr 23:1 we had the beginning of the transition from David to Solomon: "David was old and had his fill of days and he made his son Solomon king over Israel."

1 Chr 28:1 would flow naturally from that verse: "David assembled all the captains of Israel..." So that's led many to see chs 23-27 as a secondary insertion.

And it might be. But if it is, then it's explaining just who the captains of Israel are. We can see chs 23-27 as leading up to this verse, or we can see chs 23-27 as explaining this verse.

I'm agnostic at this point – I can see the arguments going either way. But in the end, why does it matter? What's more interesting to me is how these chapters work as a scribal composition.

#### 1 Chronicles 28:2-7

David's initial speech, part 1

This is a bit of a recap, rehearsing what was already said in 1 Chr 22:6-10. So if chs 23-27 are an insertion, then is this speech (vv. 2-10) one as well?

Except there's differences between the two speeches. In 1 Chr 22 David planned to build a house for Yhwh's name; but here it was a house of rest for the ark and a footstool for God.

1 Chr 22 is Deuteronomic, but this is Priestly (specifically a lot like Ezekiel?). But here David's recollection of God's response was still to not build a house for the name.

What they both agree on is that David was a man of war and had shed blood.

Next we have David rehearsing how he was chosen: Judah then the house of Jesse then David. From many possibilities came one.

This is followed by a similar selection process for Solomon: from many sons comes one. Unlike in 1 Chr 22 which foresees only one son worth mentioning, the man of rest.

Both 1 Chr 22 and here agree that Yhwh becomes Solomon's father and establishes his kingdom, and that Solomon will build the temple.

But here we have the condition that Solomon's kingdom will be forever "if he is strong in doing my commandments and my ordinances like today." That part was in David's charge to Solomon, not Yhwh's words, in 1 Chr 22.

Is this important? I'm not sure – it elevates David's advice to divine command, and maybe that's what was missing in 1 Chr 22.

1 Chronicles 28:8-10

David's initial speech, part 2

Also a bit of a recap, rehearsing what was already said in 1 Chr 22:11-19. But shorter.

Same mixture of 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular and plural forms – David's speaking in both instances to the assembly and to Solomon. Similar language, Chr's characteristic vocabulary.

David's entire speech, then, concludes with "be strong and do it!" This is new, because back in 1 Chr 22 David was foreseeing what Solomon would be doing in the future, but now, this is what Solomon is going to start doing NOW.

In a way, it's all both a-temporal and temporal: the two speeches of 1 Chr 22 and here are similar, but take place in different narrative contexts. They tie the whole of David's post-census reign together.

Note that Solomon isn't any longer designated as a young man, as he was in 1 Chr 22. So some time has passed. Chronicles is both time-less and time-ful.

## 1 Chronicles 28:11-29:25

### 1 Chronicles 28:11-19

David the architect and interior designer

I probably mentioned this at some point, but in case I didn't, there's something important to keep in mind about how David and Solomon are depicted in Chronicles.

As many commentators have noticed, in the ANE it was typical for the dynastic founder to also be the builder of the temple of the dynasty's patron deity.

At least that's the usual presentation (whether it happened that way or not). REAL dynastic founders build a temple.

Thus normally we would expect David to have built Yhwh's temple in Jerusalem. But it seems that the Iron Age temple in Jerusalem was known as Solomon's temple.

So was David not a real dynastic founder? This is the problem that our biblical texts set out to solve.

Samuel-Kings solves it by saying that David WANTED to build the temple but Yhwh stopped him. Solomon does all of the building.

Chronicles solves it by agreeing with Samuel-Kings that David wanted to build the temple but Yhwh stopped him, BUT David then did everything necessary so all Solomon had to do was execute David's plan.

This has the effect of tying the two of them together tightly as father and son builders, and it has the effect of David being the builder in every way that matters.

This passage has David receiving the plans for the temple and all of its furnishings and equipment directly from Yhwh, and then passing it all on to Solomon.

It's like buying a "Yhwh-temple LEGO kit." All materials and instructions are included. All you have to do is follow the instruction booklet and snap all those pieces together.

Like, my daughter and I assembled that LEGO Eiffel Tower sitting next to the TV, but did we really build it?

(Maybe it's Yhwh who's the temple builder – which is a whole other possibility for another day.)

### 1 Chronicles 28:20-21

David's charge to Solomon

This is the end of David's speeches that primarily address Solomon. He's given Solomon everything, and this is the final charge.

It begins with more or less the same refrain that we saw in 1 Chr 22:13: "Be strong, have courage, and do it. Do not be afraid, do not be dismayed."

Although this refrain may have started its textual life in the DtH, it's a big favourite of Chr's. It's always followed by an assurance of Yhwh's presence, as it is here.

Alongside Yhwh's presence and support, David promises Solomon that the priests and Levites will support him in the work of the temple and the captains and the people will support him in his other work.

The word I'm translating as "servitude" appears three times in these two verses, always in reference to the servitude of the temple. It's enslavement, really (not service), because no-one has a choice in the matter.

The two realms of work – the temple and the other royal affairs – are the same as how the work was separated in the lists in chs 23-27.

### 1 Chronicles 29:1-9

Everybody gives stuff to the temple

Again we get this "Solomon is an untried young man" stuff – now to support collecting the resources to build the temple, when before it was why David had to organize everything and provide plans.

Interesting little textual problem in v. 1: Leningrad Codex reads "God chose him alone" while other mss don't include "alone."

It's a small difference, and maybe it's inconsequential, but it doesn't appear in either ch. 22 or ch. 28 when the choice of Solomon as David's successor is described.

The temple is named here not as "the house of Yhwh/God," but as a "fortress" or "citadel" (bira). That's a word also used in Esther and Daniel. Maybe it's the whole temple complex – not just the temple building itself.

Anyway, David says he's gathered good stuff for the temple, and also gives from his own personal finances. Then he asks everyone else to follow his example.

Which they do, and they do it happily.

Another interesting word here is adarkon "daric." It's an Old-Persian loan word (probably having journeyed through Akkadian somewhere along the way). Not to self-promote, but I've written on this word recently.

More than you probably ever wanted to know: <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685330-12341385>

### 1 Chronicles 29:10-19

David makes another speech

Here's a terrific prayer of praise and thanksgiving. It begins with a statement of Yhwh's greatness beginning with "Blessed are you..."

Then it shifts to a statement of the assembly's praise (v. 13): "And now ... we are praising you." That "And now" is a standard scribal form for transition to a new topic.

What's the new topic? We are so insignificant, and you have given us everything.

Then another shift (v. 17): "And I know..." Here's a statement of David's and the assembly's worthiness to give, and to give freely and happily.

And then two petitions (vv. 18-19): to keep the people of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob thinking of Yhwh, and to make Solomon keep the commandments wholeheartedly and build the "citadel."

Note that it ends with "to build the citadel that I have planned" – even to the end, tying David and Solomon together.

### 1 Chronicles 29:20-25

#### Solomon's enthronement

The whole scene ends here, with Solomon being enthroned. After David's prayer of praise, he asks the assembly to bless Yhwh, which they do – and they also do obeisance (prostrate themselves) before Yhwh AND David.

We saw back in the lists of chs. 23-27, particularly ch. 27, that the affairs of the king are tightly tied up with the affairs of Yhwh. And the king is treated very much as Yhwh is treated.

But this is a story anomaly. There are only three enthronement scenes in Chronicles: David's (in 1 Chr 11-12), Solomon's (here), and Joash – and Joash's is given only because in a way it's a refounding of the dynasty.

It's also an anomaly in that David's not dead yet. It ensures a clean and clear succession, unlike in 1 Kings. No mess, no fuss, no plots.

## 1 Chronicles 29:26-28, Introduction to 2 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles 1:1-13

### 1 Chronicles 29:26-28

#### David's death

Finally, after all that, David dies. But we don't get any death-bed scenes, merely the notice that he died "in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour" (v. 28).

The annalistic notice in v. 27 is taken from 1 Kgs 2:11, but it's inserted very neatly into the text. The usual formula of "his son ruling in his place" is included in place of 1 Kings' less usual phrasing of "Solomon sat upon his father David's throne."

And then the usual annalistic notice that we find almost everywhere in 2 Chronicles is included in v. 29: the affairs of the king are written in such-and-such books.

Unlike what we see in those subsequent notices, his deeds aren't written in the annals of the kings of Israel/Judah. Instead, they're written in the words of Samuel, Nathan, and Gad.

Since we know how important prophetic authority is to Chr, it's tempting to see these "texts" as more authoritative than any annals. Except that in other places annals AND prophetic texts are cited.

I think this is a nod to there not being any source citation in 1 Kings (which is where Chr usually gets them from). So Chr simply makes one up – he doesn't call these sources books (which also happens in Chronicles).

There's a lot of tweaking that Chr has had to do to his sources in order for them to make sense in his archive. This is just one more instance.

## 2 Chronicles – introduction

### Why are there two books?

This question holds also for 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings. And the answer is the same in all cases: Originally each of these was one book: Chronicles, Samuel, Kings.

In the Massoretic tradition they remained each as one book, with the division into two coming only with the first printed Tanakh in the 16th century.

If you look up the Leningrad Codex or Aleppo Codex online, you'll see that aside from 2 Chr 1:1 starting on a new line (as is usual for new sections), there's no separation from the end of 1 Chr.

(You'll also find Chronicles at the beginning of the Writings, rather than the end.)

The Masorah – the notes by the Massorettes – also put the midpoint verse of Chronicles at 1 Chr 27:25. (By word-count the midpoint is somewhere in 2 Chr 5.)

Although the oldest Hebrew manuscripts are 10th-11th century, the system is considerably older – no one's arguing that Leningrad or Aleppo invented the Masorah. So it's one book.

But if you go look up the oldest Greek manuscripts, like Codex Vaticanus from the 4th century, you'll see that it has 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles (well, Paraleipomenon alpha and beta; Chronicles comes from the Latin Vulgate).

Of course Vaticanus is a Christian Bible manuscript, with the NT. But its OT reflects the Septuagint (LXX), which was an Alexandrian Jewish translation effort.

I am not an LXX expert, and definitely not an expert on the LXX manuscript tradition. I can't tell you the ins and outs of the book titles in the LXX.

So I don't know if the division into two books is from the pre-Christian LXX or if it's a Christian manuscript innovation. Anyone?

My point is that it's easy to think of Chronicles as two books because that's how they appear in our Bibles today (whether Christian or Jewish). But it is one book in conception.

### 2 Chronicles 1:1-6

#### Solomon goes to meet God

This text is pure Chr, riffing on 1 Kgs 3:4. It's exposition of everything that we should already know.

It begins with Solomon "strengthening himself" or "establishing himself" over his kingdom. The verb קָרַח in the hitpael is one of Chr's favourite words, and about half of the occurrences of the verb in this stem in the whole HB are in Chronicles.

Literally it means "to make oneself strong." Good kings do this, and almost every king we see from here on out in Chronicles does this at some point. Usually it's noted at the beginning (sometimes the end) of the account of a king's reign.

Sometimes it's kind of vague, but sometimes it's spelled out as to what it means. Here I think it's referring to the whole next episode – Solomon strengthens himself by going to seek and meet God.

But because David's kind of sort of messed up the whole "where do we meet God" thing with bringing the ark into Jerusalem, Solomon goes to the place where the altar is, Gibeon.

And these verses recapitulate everything we had in 1 Chr 15-16 about where the ark, the altar, and the tabernacle are.

Because you can only meet Yhwh if you sacrifice to him, and the proper place to do that is on his altar in front of the tabernacle.

But if the ark is Yhwh's footstool, and it's in Jerusalem, then where is Yhwh? Maybe he has really long legs. The point is that Chr sees all the problems with a partial move of the furniture.

### 2 Chronicles 1:7-13

#### Solomon's conversation with God

Unlike in 1 Kgs 3, we are never explicitly told that this encounter was a dream. It does happen at night, and we could assume that it's a dream.

But it's presented as a conversation. If that's the case, then Solomon is the only individual to whom Yhwh appears in person (as it were) in Chronicles. Yes, he really is that special.

This passage very roughly parallels 1 Kgs 3:5-15. It's got the big hits: "ask me what I should give you?" And Solomon asks for wisdom and Yhwh is happy with that request.

Yhwh also gives him all the things he didn't ask for: riches, property, and honour, unlike any other king past or future.

In 1 Kgs 3, Yhwh also gives him a long life, conditional on keeping the commandments, statutes, etc., but we don't have any of that here.

This passage is very much a paraphrase or retelling of the 1 Kgs 3 text – it comes across as much the same, but in details it's quite a different text. Welcome to Chronicles.

## 2 Chronicles 1:14-3:14

### 2 Chronicles 1:14-17

#### Solomon's stuff

You may recall that in 1 Kgs 3 after Solomon returns from getting wisdom we have the episode of the two women and the baby. In Kings, this demonstrates that Solomon did indeed receive wisdom...

... and this wisdom consisted of being able to discern how to get the knowledge that he needed in order for the "correct" answer to be revealed.

Here, after Solomon returns from Gibeon, he gets stuff: chariots, horses, silver, gold.

Because, as you may recall, what Yhwh promised to give Solomon was not only wisdom, but all the things he HADN'T asked for: namely, stuff.

In terms of composition, this little fragment is fascinating, because it appears twice in Chronicles: here, and in 2 Chr 9:25-28. Both come from 1 Kgs 10:26-29, so the 2 Chr 9 bit corresponds with the source location.

And each appearance in 2 Chr uses the source text differently: 2 Chr 9:26 includes a verse from 1 Kgs 5, while omitting 1 Kgs 10:28b-29, while here the entire 1 Kgs 10:26-29 text is included.

So here the 1 Kgs 10 text is out-of-sequence, but more closely copied, while in 2 Chr 9 this episode is in-sequence, but modified.

## 2 Chronicles 1:18-2:9

### Solomon starts building

Now Solomon's got what he needs from Yhwh, and lots of stuff, so it's time to get building! 1:18 is a marker of a new section.

To build, you need labourers. So that's what we start with, assembling the workers.

Then Solomon realizes that while he's got lots of raw materials, he doesn't have the capacity to make all the specialized equipment and fancy decorating items that he needs.

So he sends a message to the ancient equivalent of Gucci, King Hiram of Tyre. This follows the plot of 1 Kgs 5, but the message is almost entirely different in wording.

One big difference is that Solomon names how much he's willing to pay – and it's a lot. Solomon's got spending power. He doesn't need to rely too much on any treaty promises, he'll just buy what he needs.

This is a text that could only be written at a time when there were big empires, and where ostentatious displays of wealth were part of how royal power was constructed and expressed.

Solomon's a big-league king, who behaves like a big-league king, and has the resources of a big-league king.

By the way, Solomon's request doesn't read like a letter, but like a speech.

2 Chronicles 2:10-17

Huram's letter

In Chronicles, Hiram's response is specifically described as being in a letter (בכתב). I find this interesting, and again, symptomatic of how big imperial administrations operated.

It also shows that Solomon's request was not necessarily in a letter – just the usual Hebrew idiom of “X sent to Y, saying:” which suggests a messenger.

But in the Achaemenid Persian empire, if you were a subordinate, you darn well wanted to put things in writing, because only by that writing could you be vindicated if something went wrong.

Now Hiram's a pretty canny guy. He agrees to take Solomon's money (which is a one-time payment rather than annual as in 1 Kgs 5), but then says we only deliver to the warehouse in Joppa. It's up to you to get the stuff to Jerusalem.

Like when I order from Ikea – we don't have one here, so they'll deliver to the designated drop-off point, and then I have to figure out how to get it home.

So that's why Solomon conscripts all the immigrants to bring the stuff to Jerusalem. That Hiram, he made Solomon do it. At least it was only the immigrants and not the citizens <insert huge eye roll here>.

2 Chronicles 3:1-7

Finally, let's get building!

What's interesting about these temple-building passages in Chronicles is how abbreviated they are. The corresponding passages in 1 Kings are A LOT longer.

Nice little detail linking Mount Moriah with the threshing floor of Ornan, the place where Yhwh appeared to David in 1 Chr 21. Mount Moriah only shows up in one other place in the HB: Gen 22.

Then, a great big honking textual problem with the height of the porch: 120 cubits. Like six times as high as the temple itself (probably, because the height isn't given). Except it's not a textual problem.

All the manuscripts and versions except the Syriac have this. Josephus has it. If it's a textual corruption it's really early.

Or maybe they thought the whole temple was that height since the height isn't given.

Anyway, it's either a really tall temple, or it's a phallic porch (reading with the measurements of the temple in Kings). Take your pick.

2 Chronicles 3:8-14

The holiest place and the cherubim

This is more or less taken from 1 Kgs 6:19-27, condensed quite a bit, and with a bit added on.

The holiest place (“holy of holies” if you must, but it’s just the normal Hebrew superlative) is all gold. Even the nails are gold.

The cherubim are just that – winged creatures that take up the width of the space. Eventually the ark is going to go under them, but we’ll get to that later in the story.

The curtain, with cherubim worked into it, is Chr’s addition.

2 Chronicles 3:15-5:10

2 Chronicles 3:15-4:10

Fancy decorations

In quick succession, we've got the last bit of temple architecture and then a bunch of furnishings.

3:15-17 describe the two pillars, Jakin and Boaz, on the outside of the temple. Again, much abbreviated from 1 Kgs 7:15-22.

I can see why the chapter division goes after this bit, since from here we go onto the furnishings, but to be honest, all of 3:3-4:10 goes together and I had to divide it up into something manageable for this series.

It's interesting in that what Chr has done is taken all of the temple building and temple furnishing texts from 1 Kgs 6-7 and condensed them down into a systematic list.

Anyway, then we're on to the furniture and some of the equipment.

The altar gets one verse, which is one more verse than it gets in 1 Kgs. Funny, isn't it? Obviously Chr thought so.

Then onto the big "tank" (as the NJPS translates "sea" here) and the ten basins, again taken from 1 Kgs 7, but now they're explained: why do we have a big tank and ten small basins?

The tank is for the priests to wash in, and the basins for everyone else to "wash off the work of the sacrifice." That is, with the outdoor altar, once you've taken your sheep or whatever up there for sacrifice ...

... things can get a bit messy. You, as sacrificer, need somewhere to clean up the bits of sacrifice that have landed on you. That's what the basins are for. The tank is for the priests to maintain ritual purity as well as tidy up.

Ok, on to ten lampstands, ten tables, and 100 bowls. This stuff is for inside.

Finally we have the place made where the tank will go: the courtyards, with the tank in the south-east corner.

In all of this, as with the description of the temple structure in ch 3, the subject is Solomon. All the repeated "And he made..." refers to Solomon.

Now obviously he didn't make all this stuff – the verb back in 3:3 is **וַיַּעַשׂ**, a lovely hofal infinitive. Oh, Chr and his Late Biblical Hebrew! Lots more infinitives rather than indicatives.

So, probably translate "These were the arrangements Solomon made" and this heading governs all the "And he made..." phrases.

## 2 Chronicles 4:11-17

Who's really doing the work?

So what's happened here in chs. 3-4 is that Chr has taken a whole lot of material from 1 Kgs 6-7 and condensed it into a briefer and systematic description of the temple and its furnishings.

But the material in 1 Kgs is divided into two sections, one that deals with the temple and a second that deals with the furnishings. The craftsman sent by Hiram of Tyre only appears in the second.

So when Chr takes all of it and mashes it together, all of a sudden we have Hiram (the craftsman, not the king) appearing. He's the one who actually does all the fancy metalwork.

This bit is pretty much verbatim from 1 Kgs 7:40-46 – describing all the metalwork that we've just heard about.

## 2 Chronicles 4:18-22

Who's really doing the work? No, really.

And, although we're continuing on pretty much verbatim from 1 Kgs, now 7:47-50, we're back to Solomon making all this stuff.

Just a little reminder for us that some of this stuff is gold, not bronze. Pure gold, terrific gold, best gold ever.

## 2 Chronicles 5:1-6

Finishing the temple

This bit and tomorrow's bit come almost verbatim from 1 Kgs 7:51-8:9. Solomon assembles all the Israelites to dedicate the temple.

Remember how David had messed up the whole "where do we meet God" thing by bringing the ark away from the altar at Gibeon?

So to complete the temple the ark needs to be brought in. That's what happens here – we get an echo of that procession in 1 Chr 15-16.

And importantly, Chr makes one very significant change: in 1 Kgs 8:4 it's the priests who lift up the ark to bring it in the temple. But in 2 Chr 5:4 it's the Levites. BECAUSE LEVITES CARRY THE ARK!

## 2 Chronicles 5:7-10

The ark goes in

Except now we've got a problem. The Levites are carrying the ark, but only priests can go into the holiest place. So somehow now it's the priests who are carrying it.

In 1 Kgs 8 this isn't a problem because it's the priests who've been carrying the ark the whole way. Chr doesn't describe how the transfer takes place because he's following his source text pretty closely.

Just remember that Chr isn't concerned about logic the same way that we might be. He's got his own logic, which is: Levites carry the ark, priests enter the holiest place. So that's what happens.

It's interesting that Chr retains the formulation "they (the ark poles) are there until today" from 1 Kgs, because usually Chr cleans that stuff up. Just a little hint of the archive he's working with.

## 2 Chronicles 5:11-6:21

### 2 Chronicles 5:11-14

Levites, of course

From 2 C 4:11 through 2 C 6:39 Chr follows 1 Kgs 7:40-8:50 pretty closely, with two exceptions. He inserts 5:11-13 here, in the middle of 1 Kgs 8:10. (The other one is between 1 Kgs 8:22 and 23; we'll get to it soon.)

1 Kgs 8:10 reads "When the priests came out from the sanctuary, a cloud filled the house of Yhwh."

Chr inserts this bit between "sanctuary" and "a cloud." (He also messes up the syntax of the last clause, sure sign of his insertion: "the house – a cloud filled the house of Yhwh.")

What does this bit do? It introduces Levites, of course!

It first explains that all available priests were there already, which maybe suggests that there weren't enough of them to do all that needed to be done? (See 2 C 29:34, a really fun bit that I've recently written on.)

Then we get Levitical musicians (and the priestly trumpeters, don't forget about them) praising and thanking Yhwh with that timeless phrase:

"[Yhwh] is good, for his covenant loyalty lasts forever."

Then rejoining the source text, we see the priests can't do their job because the cloud, the "glory" of Yhwh (kabod) has filled the temple.

In Kgs I think this shows how amazing this whole event was. But in Chronicles, esp since we've seen there maybe aren't enough priests, this feels like a bit of a slur.

## 2 Chronicles 6:1-6

Solomon's big speech begins

This follows 1 Kgs 8:12-17, with the last clause of 2 C 6:5 seeming to be an addition, but it's more likely dropped out of the Kgs MT tradition. It's there in the LXX of Kgs.

It's a recap of what we saw in 1 C 17 / 2 Sam 7, but along with Yhwh not having chosen a place to live in until now, he hadn't chosen a prince over Israel until now. (Sorry, Saul.)

Jerusalem and David are chosen by Yhwh.

## 2 Chronicles 6:7-11

Solomon recaps the promise to David

And now, for the third time, we get the telling of the story of the promise to David. We had the original event in 1 C 17, and David's retelling in 1 C 22 and 1 C 28.

So, in total, the promise is recounted four times in Chronicles, twice following the source text, and twice in Chr's own text. This promise is really important for Chr.

This iteration shows that the promise has now been fulfilled: temple built, son established.

## 2 Chronicles 6:12-18

### Solomon's prayer begins

The other major insertion into Chr's source text is here: 2 C 6:13 is inserted between 1 Kgs 8:22 and 23. Nicely marked by the resumptive repetition of "opening his mouth in prayer."

What it's doing, I have no idea. It's the description of Solomon's podium in front of the altar. Like, it's important that he's standing on a podium when he prays to Yhwh? I think I need to look at iconography from the period, might give me a hint.

Anyway, Solomon's prayer begins with a standard invocation of Yhwh's claims in heaven and earth, and moves quickly to the covenant promises.

Differently from 1 Kgs, the requirement to follow torah is necessary for the covenant to be adhered to. Not just walking in Yhwh's ways. Is this unique to Chr? Might have been in his source text.

This opening section of the prayer concludes again with the inadequacy of the temple to live up to Yhwh's claims in heaven and earth.

## 2 Chronicles 6:19-21

### General pattern of the cases that follow

The rest of the prayer lays out a series of cases in which temple worship will be efficacious. These three verses set it up.

The temple is Israel's telephone to Yhwh. He's always monitoring, so prayers addressed to him in the temple – or maybe just in the direction of the temple – will be seen and heard.

(Maybe not a telephone, more like that annoying chat window that pops up on e-commerce sites.)

## 2 Chronicles 6:22-42

### 2 Chronicles 6:22-25

#### Solomon's prayer, specific cases, part 1

All the way through 6:39 is pretty much verbatim from 1 Kgs 8:31:50. The format is usually conditional, like a lot of legal material: IF this, THEN that.

Because it's all from 1 Kgs 8, I'm going to just briefly lay out all the various cases over the next couple of days.

6:22-23 IF an individual sins against someone else and thereby curses himself and then comes before the altar, THEN may Yhwh deal with him according to his sin or righteousness

6:24-25 IF Israel as a collective is defeated in war because of their sin and then repents, THEN may Yhwh forgive them and bring them back to their land.

Pattern: individual sin, collective sin; conditional. The two "IF" clauses here are Chr's change from Kgs, making it clear that these are possibilities, not definite.

### 2 Chronicles 6:26-31

#### Solomon's prayer, specific cases, part 2

6:26-27 WHEN (not IF) there is drought and the people repent and pray in/towards the temple, THEN may Yhwh forgive them and bring rain.

6:28-30 WHEN (not IF) there is famine, due to whatever cause (disease, locusts, enemies) and they pray in/towards the temple, THEN may Yhwh forgive them, each as appropriate.

The phrasing here is important. The previous two petitions were IF – THEN, because those cases were not possibilities, not definites.

But drought and famine things that do happen, not things that might happen. This will be important later. The remedy, however, is the same.

v. 31 gives the reason why Yhwh should do these acts of forgiveness and restoration: so that the people may fear him.

In other words, WHEN there is drought or famine, Yhwh should act so that he maintains his sovereignty and hold up his end of the treaty relationship.

### 2 Chronicles 6:32-35

#### Solomon's prayer, specific cases, part 3

6:32-33 This might be an IF or a WHEN, as the syntax can lead to either implication as there's no specific conjunction. So IF/WHEN a foreigner comes from a distant land because he's hears about how great Yhwh is and prays in/toward the temple site ...

THEN may Yhwh answer his prayer. Why? Same as the previous petitions, but expanded: so that all the peoples of the earth may know him and fear him and know about Solomon's temple.

6:34-35 There's a conjunction here, but 'ו can mean either IF or WHEN. In this case I tend to think WHEN the people go out to fight enemies, and pray towards Jerusalem & temple, THEN may Yhwh do "justice."

(They obviously can't pray in the temple because they're on the battlefield.)

I think it has to be WHEN because our authors (whether of Kgs or the Chronicler) know that the whole next bit of the story is about kings going out to war.

In other words, it's not IF there is war, but WHEN there is war.

### 2 Chronicles 6:36-39

Solomon's prayer, specific cases, final

This is the biggie. It's petition number 7 of 7 – such a nifty number, seven. And like the previous petition, 'ו can mean either IF or WHEN. And again, I think it's WHEN.

WHEN the people sin, Yhwh allows the enemy to exile them, and they repent, THEN may Yhwh forgive them and do "justice."

The specific prayer of repentance is also spelled out, and they pray towards the land, city, and temple. Because they're in exile.

What the "justice" that Yhwh should do is not specified, but "justice" means acting in a way that is appropriate to the situation.

The sequence of petitions as a whole, then, goes from possibilities to probabilities to definites. And the biggest definite is the exile from the land as a response to sin AS WELL AS the restoration due to repentance.

Chr's very small changes make the sequence clearer than it is in 1 Kgs 8, adapting the fragment perfectly into his own archive.

### 2 Chronicles 6:40-42

Solomon's prayer, conclusion

This bit is Chr's own, not really taken from 1 Kgs 8, although kind of following along.

Except it's not really Chr's own, because vv. 41-42 are from Ps 132:8-10. Nice way to wind up the prayer.

So v. 40 is a reiteration of the telephone/chat box nature of the temple as conduit to Yhwh.

And vv. 41-42 remind Yhwh that this is a treaty (covenantal) relationship. It replaces the language in 1 Kgs 8 about Yhwh's role in bringing Israel out of slavery in Egypt.  
Long prayer. All done.

## 2 Chronicles 7:1-8:10

### 2 Chronicles 7:1-3

Zap!

After Solomon's prayer is finished, we get a really quite spectacular response.

FIRE comes down from heaven and zaps everything on the altar. This is not in 1 Kings 8. In 1 Kgs 8, after this prayer, Solomon faces the people and blesses them. That's kind of – boring? And it gives Solomon the final word.

Here, Yhwh gets the final word. It's a demonstration that Solomon's prayer is acceptable and will be granted.

In case you'd forgotten from 5:14, we're reminded that the "glory" (כבוד) of Yhwh has filled the sanctuary and even the priests couldn't enter.

That means that everyone sees the zap and previous saw the entry of Yhwh into the temple.

What's the proper response to a theophany? Obeisance, of course, so they all bow down and proclaim the phrase, again, "Yhwh is good, his covenant loyalty (טוֹן) is forever."

### 2 Chronicles 7:4-11

More sacrifices

This bit parallels, although not exactly, 1 Kgs 8:62-9:1. Solomon does more sacrifices, because we've got to get this dedication absolutely right.

And speaking of absolutely right, what Chr adds here (v. 6) is Levitical musicians singing, again, about how Yhwh's covenant loyalty is forever. Along with trumpeting priests. I love these guys.

Along with all-Israel. So we've got here: priests, Levites, Israel. Just like back in 1 Chronicles 9.

And I like the little detail about the altar that Chr changes from Kgs: it's not that the altar is too small for all the sacrifices, it's that there are SO MANY sacrifices that the altar can't hold them all.

Distinction without a difference? Maybe. But it's consistent with how Chr sees overflowing wealth, piety, Levites, joy, everything really.

Verse 11 wraps it all up: Solomon finished it all: temple, palace, everything.

### 2 Chronicles 7:12-16

Yhwh's second appearance

Remember back when Solomon went to Gibeon and Yhwh appeared to him, in person as it were? Well, it happens again.

And Chr adjusts his source text accordingly – so it says Yhwh appeared to him by night. In 1 Kgs 9:2 it says Yhwh appeared to Solomon “just as he did in Gibeon,” i.e. in a dream.

In 2 Chr 1 it wasn't a dream, and it isn't a dream here either.

The episode runs through v. 22, and parallels reasonably closely the text from 1 Kgs 9:2-9. Except there's a big insertion in the middle of 1 Kgs 9:3, comprised of 2 C 7:12b-16a.

This insertion reiterates that Yhwh has heard Solomon's prayer and approves of it: Solomon asked that Yhwh do certain things when the people pray in or toward the temple, and here Yhwh says he will.

The insertion is marked by the repetition of “I have chosen.”

My other recent thoughts about this passage you can find here:

<https://twitter.com/CMitchellSask/status/1492212004332912649>

And here:

<https://twitter.com/CMitchellSask/status/1494039875896627200>

Who ever said that Chronicles wasn't fun and relevant?

2 Chronicles 7:17-22

End of Yhwh's appearance

Pretty much the same as the 1 Kgs 9 text, although Chr uses some of his favourite words: “If you abandon” rather than “if you don't keep.” “Abandon” is one of Chr's favourite words.

It is the stick to the carrot in the previous part of Yhwh's response. In the previous verses we saw that Yhwh will listen to prayers, but now we see that Yhwh won't like it when people abandon the covenant.

2 Chronicles 8:1-10

Solomon does other things besides build temple and palace

This bit parallels 1 Kgs 9:1-23, but with a lot less detail.

Solomon does go out and do a bit of conquering, but we don't really call it conquering, just that he prevailed over one city that he went out to fight. So still a man of peace, then.

Mostly what he does is build. And how does he build? you might ask. Well, not with Israelite forced labour, oh no.

He uses the remnants of those nasty Hittites, Amorites etc. (using 1 Kgs, so has DtH's standard list of Canaanites). How on earth there can be any of these guys left is an excellent question.

Israelites were warriors, not menial slave-labour.

Again, Chr leaves the forced labour “until this day” from 1 Kgs 9 in place. I mean, it would have been pretty obvious to Chr’s audience that there’s no such thing going on in their day.

But it’s a great marker that this is an archive being assembled.

2 Chronicles 8:11-9:30

2 Chronicles 8:11-18

Solomon's work is finished

This passage parallels 1 Kings 9:24-28 but with a big insertion in the middle.

Chr keeps the bit about Solomon bringing his wife Pharaoh's Daughter into a special palace, but gives it a good twist. That is, he explains why Solomon had a special house for her rather than her living in his palace:

It's because David's palace is joined with the temple: it's all one complex. By bringing her into his palace, Solomon would be committing some kind of sin – or so he thinks. Is it because she's a woman or because she's an Egyptian woman?

I have to think about this a bit more. I think it's connected with 2 Chr 22-23, the only other time in Chronicles that a woman is mentioned in connection with the temple.

Anyway, next in 1 Kgs 9 is a one verse description of Solomon making sacrifices. Chr of course expands this into a long description of all the daily, weekly, monthly, and annual sacrifices – the festivals of Unleavened Bread, Weeks, Booths.

Not Passover, mind. I think this is important for later as well. Solomon doesn't have a Passover.

Chr also reiterates that Solomon organizes the priests and Levites according to David's rules.

Chr finishes this insertion with a very telling comment: "All of the work of Solomon was done from the day of the foundation of the house of Yhwh until its completion; the house of Yhwh was perfect."

That was Solomon's only job – to finish the work of his father.

Then we're back to following 1 Kgs 9 as Solomon gets more gold.

2 Chronicles 9:1-12

The Queen of Sheba

I've written on Solomon and the Queen of Sheba here:

<https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/queen-of-sheba>

Not much more to add: it follows the text of 1 Kgs 10:1-13 pretty closely. (The difference in versification is because 1 Kgs 10:1-2 = 2 Chronicles 9:1, because of a difference in syntax in Chronicles.)

Why is this story here at all, given how little Chr is concerned with women?

Queen serves as our eyes on how grand and wise Solomon is; she brings him even more wealth; and she praises him. She serves as a stand-in for the reader and she serves as the example of rulers acknowledging him.

2 Chronicles 9:13-24

Solomon's wealth

Again, follows 1 Kgs 10:14-25 closely. Solomon is SUPER RICH!

He has fancy golden shields (remember them, because they come up later).

He has a great big ivory and gold throne, with steps, footstool, armrests, and guardian lions.  
Like this, maybe:

<https://twitter.com/iragesque/status/804003968573669376?lang=sv>

He drinks from golden vessels, lives surrounded by golden furniture and other utensils.  
I'm going to put this here:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/inside-trump-mar-a-lago-club-photos-2018-1>

He is so wise that kings come from all over the earth (like the Queen of Sheba) to hear him and bring him more wealth.

He makes his money from his wisdom, not from war.

2 Chronicles 9:25-30

More of Solomon's wealth; Solomon's death

We've seen this bit before! Yes, we're still following along with 1 Kgs 10:26-29, but you may recall that it was also used in 2 Chronicles 1:14-17.

And while in 2 Chronicles 1 it followed the 1 Kgs 10 text pretty closely, here there's a bit more rewriting, and the insertion of v. 26, claiming for Solomon rule over the whole Levant.

It's a nice wrap-up to Solomon's reign, and then we switch quickly to his death, which comes from 1 Kgs 11:41-43.

There's an addition with respect to the sources: the various prophets of Solomon's reign are noted as having written the books of his reign, parallel to what we saw with David at the end of 1 Chronicles 29.

## 2 Chronicles 10:1-11:17

### 2 Chronicles 10-36 Introduction

So by my reckoning I've spent 31 weeks working through the genealogies, David, and Solomon in Chronicles. It's about 3/5 of the text of Chronicles; 38 out of 65 chapters. This last 2/5 of the book, is 27 chapters.

We've got 15 kings from Rehoboam through Josiah, chs. 10-35, plus the final four kings and destruction of the temple in ch. 36.

Chr isn't interested in the northern kingdom Israel, only Judah. The only times those Israelite kings show up is when they impinge on the story of the Davidic kings of Judah.

As far as source text(s) go, there's really only 1-2 Kings, not the whole library used for 1 Chronicles that included Pentateuch, 1-2 Samuel, Pss.

The formation of the text of Chronicles is not difficult to sort out from now on – we've already seen this trend emerging in dealing with Solomon in 2 Chronicles 1-9.

The only tricky bit from a text-critical perspective is that Chr seems to have known 1-2 Kings in a form closer to the LXX than MT in some places. Similar to how he knew 1-2 Samuel, but we don't have a decent Qumran scroll to verify.

Big chunks of 1-2 Kings are left out, of course, because they deal with affairs of the northern kingdom. Plus all the fun Elijah-Elisha stories.

Chr structures his whole story of Judah's kings through a series of father-son pairs. David and Solomon are, of course, the first pair.

Then we have Rehoboam-Abijah, Asa-Jehoshaphat, Jehoram-Ahaziah, Joash-Amaziah, Uzziah-Jotham, Ahaz-Hezekiah, Manasseh-Amon, Josiah-last 4 kings.

Athaliah doesn't count for Chr, as we'll see. The last 4 kings are all bound together as one reign.

David-Solomon is the high point, of course, and there are two nadirs before 2 Chronicles 36: the almost-extinction of the Davidic line in 2 Chronicles 22, and the almost-extinction of the temple in 2 Chronicles 28.

Both are overcome, but both are repeated in 2 Chronicles 36, with the extinction of both Davidic line and temple.

Keep an eye out for the Levites!

## 2 Chronicles 10:1-19 (all of 2 Chronicles 10)

### Rehoboam's accession

This is just about identical, with minor textual differences due to transmission, to 1 Kings 12:1-19.

But it serves a different purpose than does the text in 1 Kgs 12, because in 1 Kgs the blame for the split in the kingdom is placed on Solomon.

Because Chr doesn't include any of the negative stuff about Solomon, he has to explain the split in the kingdom differently.

Or, to look at it from a different angle, because the split in the kingdom happens under Rehoboam, he must have caused it, not Solomon, and therefore there's no sin in Solomon.

Chr's doctrine of immediate retribution (and reward) that we see throughout makes me think that it's the latter explanation that's better.

That is, for Chr, if Solomon had sinned, the split in the kingdom would have to occur in his reign. Because it didn't, Solomon didn't sin. So all the stuff about Solomon's sins can be safely omitted.

And Rehoboam's actions give plenty of reason for the split in the kingdom, so Chr can use them quite well to explain the split.

We get that nice signal again that Chr is using a fragment to construct his archive: "Israel has been transgressing against the house of David until this day." Whose day?

#### 2 Chronicles 11:1-4

Rehoboam doesn't fight Israel

This little piece comes right from 1 Kings 12:21-24, although it's a bit more concise. Personally, I think it actually reflects a version of 1 Kgs 12 no longer extant.

For those not up on your text-criticism of 1 Kgs 12, the various recensions of the LXX show that this bit of Kgs had many adventures.

But why I think Chr is more faithful to his source than one might think is due to 11:2, where we read "the word of Yhwh came to Shemiah." In 1 Kgs 12:22, the MT reads "the word of God came to Shemiah."

Chr often swaps out "God" for "Yhwh" in his source. He (almost) never swaps out "Yhwh" for "God." If he uses "Yhwh," then it was almost definitely in his source.

Anyway, why is this here? It shows a prophet making a speech and the king and people obeying it. That's a big deal for Chr, as we'll see in the following stories about various kings.

#### 2 Chronicles 11:5-12

Rehoboam gets busy doing things

This is all Chr's text, inserted neatly into his source, which he rearranges slightly, as we'll see later.

So Rehoboam didn't go and attack Jeroboam to get Israel back. Instead he sits back and fortifies. Lots of fortified cities, big list.

He also puts supplies in them, food and weapons. Logistics are important – without supplies you can't really do anything. He strengthened these cities – that word is so important for Chr.

The net result: Judah and Benjamin stay loyal to him.

2 Chronicles 11:13-17

Rehoboam benefits from Jeroboam's cultic shenanigans

You can read this without knowing the rest of 1 Kgs 12 that Chr didn't use. Because Chr gives you all the background you need.

v. 15 is pretty close to 1 Kgs 12: 32, or at least uses all the same vocabulary: Jeroboam made his own priests for the high places and the golden calves.

What happened to all the Levites who lived in Jeroboam's territory you might ask? Chr gives you the answer that 1 Kgs 12 doesn't: they abandoned their lands and came to Jerusalem.

This wave of Levitical immigration has the effect of strengthening (that word, again) Rehoboam's kingdom. But only for three years.

## 2 Chronicles 11:18-13:23

### 2 Chronicles 11:18-12:1

Rehoboam gets busy doing even more stuff

What we've got in 2 Chronicles 11:1-12:1 is three fragments, organized in such a way that the cultic bit is in the middle. Building & fortifying cities; cultic actions; having sons and putting them in charge of the fortifications.

The first and third fragments are kind of a-temporal, as distinct from the middle one which was specifically located as being in effect for three years.

So here we've got a record of Rehoboam's wives and sons and how he got his sons jobs and wives. He's building up his whole fortification system.

12:1 has that particular word התהזק "to strengthen himself" – this appears usually at the beginning of a king's reign in Chronicles, like we saw in 2 Chr 1 with Solomon.

But here it's put in contrast with Rehoboam's next action: after strengthening himself, he abandons (another favourite word of Chr's) the torah of Yhwh.

This is not going to end well.

## 2 Chronicles 12:2-8

### Shishak's invasion

12:2 is taken right from 1 Kgs 14:25, but given Chr's little interpretive twist: Shishak invaded because Rehoboam and the people had done מַעַל against Yhwh. Remember ma'al? That's what Saul died for in 1 C 10:13-14.

That's the reason for the success of Shishak's invasion. And in case you hadn't figured it out, we get the prophet Shemiah coming to tell Rehoboam (and us).

Chr's typical formulation here: "You have abandoned me (Yhwh), so I have abandoned you to Shishak."

But good news! When Rehoboam and his generals hear this, they humble themselves (another favourite word of Chr's). When Yhwh sees it, he sends another message:

"I won't destroy them, but I'll make them a remnant and give them a taste of slavery, so they know the difference between being enslaved by me and being enslaved by earthly kingdoms."

Yeah, because it's all about who you're enslaved to. Freedom isn't really a thing.

## 2 Chronicles 12:9-16

### Shishak conquers Jerusalem; Rehoboam dies

This comes pretty much from 1 Kgs 14:26-31, but with 1 Kgs 14:21 neatly interpolated. Like this:  
2 C 12:9-11 = 1 Kgs 14:26-28

2 C 12:12

2 C 12:13 = 1 Kgs 14:21

2 C 12:14-16 = 1 Kgs 14:29-31

There are a few changes to these verses that I won't get into.

1 Kgs 14:21 is part of the summary of Rehoboam's rule, so it gets moved out of its original context of Chr's story and placed here.

And Chr's original contribution in v. 12 is a lot like what happened to David in 1 Chr 21: after he'd humbled Rehoboam Yhwh didn't destroy him completely.

In all, Chr gives us a lot more about Rehoboam than 1 Kgs did, and organizes it into a nice scheme. Note that all of Rehoboam's fortification activities didn't do squat against Shishak. From Yhwh alone comes victory.

2 Chronicles 13:1-12

Abijah, part 1

In the MT of Kgs, this fellow is called Abijam. But both the LXX and Chr calls him Abijah. Another indicator that Chr's version of Kgs isn't quite like the MT.

There are plenty of textual problems in the MT of 1 Kgs 15 too, and 2 Chronicles 13, where it parallels Kgs, is probably close to Chr's source. But LXX is also problematic here.

Abijah gets only a few verses in Kgs, but he gets a whole story in Chronicles. In Kgs he's a sinful king, but in Chronicles he's awesome! Like totally for Yhwh and all that.

Chr takes the notice that Abijah and Jeroboam were constantly at war and spins it out into a whole story.

First, Abijah gathers a really big army. But Jeroboam gathers one that's twice as big! The numbers here are just outrageous.

And then Abijah goes up on a hillside to yell at the Israelites, recapping the whole sequence of events that led to the split in the kingdom, and, incidentally, blaming it all on Rehoboam.

I like how he claims Rehoboam was just a simple-minded (maybe soft-minded?) lad at the time Jeroboam rebelled. Rehoboam was forty-one.

Then he goes on to castigate them for expelling the Aaronide priests and Levites and instead ordaining any old dude to the priesthood of "No-god."

Judah, on the other hand, has priests and Levites doing their thing. And the priests are there at the battle with their trumpets! So many mentions of priestly trumpets in Chronicles.

He concludes that Israel hasn't got a chance because Judah has Yhwh and Israel doesn't.

2 Chronicles 13:13-23

Abijah, part 2

Now that Jeroboam's a pretty sneaky guy. And he's got a big army. So he splits his up while Abijah is up there yelling, and surrounds Abijah's army.

Oh no! Whatever shall happen?

Well, Judah shouts its war cry and the priests blast their trumpets, and God strikes down Israel's army. Of course – because it's not by might but by trust in Yhwh that Judah wins.

This episode reminds me quite a bit of Judges 6, but with Chr's characteristic language all over it.

Then Abijah strengthens himself and has wives and children. He's only king for three years, remember, so most of this must have happened earlier – that a-temporality that Chr employs a lot.

Vv. 22-23 are the only bits that draw on 1 Kgs 15: Abijah's death, Asa's accession, with Chr's additional touch: the notice that "the land had rest for ten years." Yeah, that's Judges, pretty much.

So what we've got for Abijah is 8 verses from Kgs, of which 5 are deleted, leaving only the beginning verse and end two verses, with a story inserted.

And the story hits all of Chr's main points, drawing on the model of the judges, and turns Abijah into a good king!

## 2 Chronicles 14:1-15:19

### 2 Chronicles 14:1-6

#### The beginning of Asa's rule

So the first verse is from 1 Kgs 15:11, but then Chr just goes off into his own thing.

First thing Asa does is remove the "foreign altars" and "high places" and break down the masseboth (standing stones) and asherim (wooden poles?).

This is totally language from other places in 1-2 Kgs but just out of left field in Chronicles – like, say what?

Then he commands Judah to seek Yhwh and follow the torah and commandments. Again, say what? We have no real indication that Judah had been doing anything but.

In fact, you may recall that Abijah's reign was successful precisely because he'd been following Yhwh.

What we've got here is a mish-mash of all kinds of things that are showing how Asa was a good Yahwistic king and Judah prospered accordingly.

## 2 Chronicles 14:7-14

### Asa fights

Now Asa's got an army of five hundred eighty thousand. (For all things numerical about these armies, I highly recommend @KleinNeria's article in JHS).

But the Cushite king Zerah's got a million-man army, plus chariots!

Does Asa trust in his large army (still smaller than Zerah's)? Of course not! He prays to Yhwh, and Yhwh beats up the Cushites.

Why the Cushites? I think it's because they're from the ends of the earth, beyond Egypt. They're a bolt from the blue.

Then Asa gets all the good loot. Because – and this should not be news by now – FROM YHWH ALONE COMES VICTORY!

## 2 Chronicles 15:1-7

### Azariah's speech

Just in case you didn't get why Asa was succeeding, Chr gives us a prophet to explain it all.

On Asa's return to Jerusalem after looting the Cushites, Azariah son of Oded comes to him and makes a long speech with all the language we've come to expect.

"Yhwh is with you when you are with him."

“If you seek him, he will be found by you.”

“If you abandon him, he will abandon you.”

But then the whole tone of the book of Judges comes back – remember we’ve been seeing hints of this already with the idea that the land had rest for ten years.

“There were many days when Israel did not have the true god or a teaching priest or torah” – I think this is an interpretation of the book of Judges.

But the lesson here – when Israel sought Yhwh, Yhwh was found by them.

Even though there was no peace and they were being hammered by the nations and in distress – I think this verse is displaced – it should go before the lesson of seeking and finding Yhwh.

Anyway, the speech ends with Asa being exhorted to “be strong” – that word again!

## 2 Chronicles 15:8-15

Results of prophetic speech?

Ok, this is a bit confusing and just shows the generally fragmentary and archival nature of this text. Because now the prophet that a few verses ago was called Azariah son of Oded is called simply Oded.

You’d think someone would have fixed this along the way. And indeed, BHS suggests that we do so, on the very scant evidence of some of the LXX manuscripts. Some translations do it (NRSV), others (NJPS) don’t.

I mean, obviously there’s a textual problem here, but do we think Azariah dropped out of v. 8 or got added to v. 1? Does it matter?

Anyway, Asa takes it all to heart and has another go round of removing “detestable things” and follows it up with a good old-fashioned refurbishing of the temple of Yhwh.

Followed by a big covenant-renewal ritual, complete with – you guessed it – trumpets.

And we get rest from round about, just like in the book of Judges.

## 2 Chronicles 15:16-19

Joining up fragments

This bit is parallel with 1 Kgs 15:13-16. So what we had was Chr’s big insertion of Asa’s early reign, his battle against the Cushites, Azariah’s speech and its aftermath – all of this spun out of 1 Kgs 15:12 and inserted between 1 Kgs 15:11 and 13.

But it leaves us with the problem that Asa here is explicitly said NOT to have removed the high places. But that’s ok, because it explains why we get war in the next episode!

Chr neatly cleans up that logical problem by replacing Kgs' "there was no war between Asa and Baasha all their days" (which is patently false given what's next) with "there was no war until the 35<sup>th</sup> year of Asa."

## 2 Chronicles 16:1-17:18

### 2 Chronicles 16:1-6

#### Asa's war with Baasha of Israel

This piece parallels 1 Kgs 15:17-22, but is introduced with Chr's own framing: "In the 36<sup>th</sup> year of Asa's rule..."

It follows on nicely from Chr's amendment to the previous bit that clarified that there was peace for 35 years of Asa's reign. Chr makes this all hold logically together.

What's clear is that Baasha was the aggressor and Asa was trying to defend his territory. What Asa does is buy help from the Aramaeans in Damascus.

As current world events show, when somebody more powerful attacks you, it makes sense to ask for help from other political entities.

And indeed, with Aramaean help, Asa is able to recapture his territory. But in Chr's worldview this is terribly problematic – as we'll see tomorrow.

### 2 Chronicles 16:7-10

#### Hanani's speech

After Asa's victory over Israel, he's confronted by the prophet Hanani.

Hanani expresses the theology we've come to expect: because Asa depended on human powers (the Aramaeans) rather than on God, there's gonna be trouble.

Because, as Hanani points out, when Asa relied on Yhwh against the Cushites, he won. What made Asa think it wouldn't be enough to rely on Yhwh this time? We don't know.

It doesn't matter – the point is that Asa forgot what he knew about Yhwh and gets punished for it.

(Also, Asa gets angry when his faults are pointed out. Understandable, but definitely not good – in Chr's view, prophets are sent to give the warnings and teachings that people need.)

### 2 Chronicles 16:11-17:1a

#### Asa's death

This bit comes from 1 Kgs 15:23-24, with considerable expansion on Chr's part.

I don't like the versification here, because I think the account of each king's reign ends with "and his son reigned instead of him," which for Asa is 2 C 17:1a. Jehoshaphat's story begins in v. 1b.

Anyway. The big expansion here has to do with the pun on Asa's name. Chr likes to do this with the kings' names. "Asa" means "healer."

And what happens to Asa? He gets sick! Ooooh, the irony! (Chr is also big on the irony.)

This gives Chr another opportunity to do the whole “trust in Yhwh” thing, because Asa calls on physicians to heal him, not Yhwh.

Not a fan of that particular bit of Chr’s theology, I have to say. Too much like “my immune system will protect me, so I don’t need a vaccine (or mask, or other protective measures).” Or, worse, “Jesus is the vaccine.”

The illness is, of course, Yhwh’s punishment for the whole not relying on Yhwh thing, but it’s also a test – has he learned from the last time? And, no, he hasn’t.

He also gets a fantastic funeral with burning of incense and stuff, which has confused commentators ever since. It’s Chr’s addition, but is it a good thing or a bad thing?

It seems to be a good thing, but if so, why is Asa the first king to get this treatment?

## 2 Chronicles 17:1b-9

### Jehoshaphat’s accession

This is all Chr’s own invention. He turns Jehoshaphat into a really good king, when in the book of Kings Jehoshaphat is a kind of middling king.

It’s part of Chr’s exegetical work with kings’ names. “Yhwh-has-judged/governed” needs to live up to his name.

First thing Jehoshaphat does is strengthen himself (that word, again) against Israel. He’s successful because he sought (that word, again) Yhwh, not the Baals (who, by the way, are just now introduced into our story).

He gets everything organized, and then, in his third year, he sends out a bunch of Levites – we’re told their names – to teach in the cities of Judah. Ok, there’s a couple of priests with them, too.

What do they teach? For the very first time, they teach from the “book of the torah of Yhwh.” We’ll start to see this phrase a bit more. Up to now “torah” hasn’t really been much of a thing in Chronicles. Now it will be.

## 2 Chronicles 17:10-18

### Jehoshaphat’s kingdom and his army

Because of the teaching of torah, or so we can infer, Jehoshaphat gets peace and wealth.

He also gets a big army, well organized. With individual named officers and heroes. We haven’t seen these since the time of David.

Will he use them? Or will he learn from the negative example of his father?

## 2 Chronicles 18:1-19:11

### 2 Chronicles 18:1

Jehoshaphat is Ahab's relative

2 Chronicles 18 is the longest piece of shared text between Kings and Chronicles after the death of Solomon. It has very few differences, compared to its close second, the crowning of Joash.

In its 1 Kgs 22 version, this is the well-known story of Ahab's death, capping off the Ahab story that runs from 1 Kgs 17-22.

But in Chronicles it's the story of Jehoshaphat's miraculous escape from the battle of Ramoth-Gilead.

I think it's really neat how this same fragment, depending on its placement, can be either the end of Ahab's story or the middle of Jehoshaphat's. This fragment demonstrates how important context is.

To call it the story of Ahab's death (which I've done, to my everlasting shame) is to mis-state its whole purpose in Chronicles.

The first verse of the chapter is Chr's framing: Jehoshaphat was Ahab's relative by marriage. We learn this later on in the book of Kings when we find out that Athaliah was Ahab's sister/daughter.

Hebrew narrative usually introduces facts at the time they'll be relevant. In Kgs it's not relevant for this episode. Since Chr introduces the relationship here it must be important.

That is, Jehoshaphat is bound by kinship ties to Ahab, and for kings that means military alliances. Jehoshaphat is not necessarily eager for this war.

### 2 Chronicles 18:2-27

Jehoshaphat goes to war alongside Ahab

Chr finds that many of his favourite themes pop up in this episode. But I think the word that led to him repurposing the whole episode is in 1 Kgs 22:5 (becoming 2 C 18:4): "Seek" (דרש).

This is one of Chr's favourite words, particularly when applied to seeking Yhwh, which is what Jehoshaphat asks Ahab to do before going to war.

Once we see this, then it makes absolute sense of one of Chr's biggest changes to the episode, in 2 C 18:2.

He changes the introduction to the episode in Kgs to a very simple one. Ahab "incites" Jehoshaphat to go with him against Ramoth-Gilead.

This word is the same one used in 1 Chr 21:1, when satan "incites" David to count the Israelites. In other words, these are tests of loyalty to Yhwh.

In 1 Chr 21 it is satan (now an actual being rather than a title), and in 2 Chr 18 it is Ahab. But Ahab is only an instrument of Yhwh's testing ...

... as we see from Micaiah's account of his vision in vv. 19-22. In that vision, Yhwh asks the heavenly court for a volunteer to deceive Ahab, and the one who volunteers says that he will be a lying spirit.

It takes only a small change – that Ahab incited Jehoshaphat – to make Chr's point. Those who seek Yhwh are rewarded.

So why does Jehoshaphat still go? He goes because of the kinship relationship, which Ahab has properly honoured, that being Chr's other change to the beginning of the episode.

Another important theme for Chr that is found in this episode is the "prophetic warning." We've seen a number of these in speeches that Chr has inserted. Now here's one in his source.

Pay attention to vv. 26-27 – Ahab wanting to return "in peace" (בשלום) and Micaiah's rebuttal. This shows up at the end of this episode as well as in 2 Chr 35.

#### 2 Chronicles 18:28-19:1

##### Jehoshaphat survives the battle

There's a nice little tricky bit here in v. 29, taken directly from 1 Kgs 22:30: התחפש ובוא במלחמה ואתה לבש בגדיך. Literally it seems to say, "Disguise yourself and go into battle, but you wear your own clothes."

The problem is the infinitive absolutes. All the versions have Ahab say "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you wear your own clothes." Because this makes sense given that the next sentence has Ahab disguising himself.

JPS reads the first in the occurrence in 1 Kgs 22 but reads the second for 2 C 18. NRSV reads the second (so, with the versions) for both.

Why, though, would Chr keep this difficult reading? I don't have an answer (yet).

Anyway, Jehoshaphat survives and Ahab dies, as we know. Ahab is the lesson that you can't outrun your fate.

And Jehoshaphat survives because of another one of the few changes Chr makes, inserting this clause into v. 31: Yhwh helps him by inciting (again!) the Aramaeans away from him.

Ties it all up nicely! And emphasizes how those who call on Yhwh are helped by him.

The episode ends with the Chr's own insertion of an ending, 2 C 19:1: Jehoshaphat returns to Jerusalem safely (בשלום), just to put the final contrast with Ahab and fulfil (ironically) Micaiah's oracle.

#### 2 Chronicles 19:2-4

##### Jehoshaphat gets told

Now we'll get a long section that's unparalleled in Kings. Up front is the aftermath of the battle at Ramoth-Gilead.

Vv. 2-4 have the seer Jehu come out to chastise Jehoshaphat for even participating with Ahab at all. Theoretically, this could lead to bad things for Jehoshaphat.

But it doesn't, because Jehoshaphat has been seeking Yhwh. Just to make sure no bad things, he goes out to return the people to Yhwh.

The clue that this is a separate fragment is the repetition at the end of v. 1 and in v. 4 of Jehoshaphat "returning."

### 2 Chronicles 19:5-11

Jehoshaphat does judgy things

Jehoshaphat lives up to his name. He appoints שופטים, "judges," for all the cities of Judah, and gives them instructions.

I think it's important to remember that "judge" is not always a great word to translate the Hebrew, because there's also the connotation of "governor" in the Hebrew.

But here we're leaning hard on the dispensing justice aspect of these guys in the instructions Jehoshaphat gives them.

And of course, because no good king can do anything without them, we've got Levites.

Specifically, while the "judges" go out into Judah, in Jerusalem we have priests, Levites, and elders doing the judging.

And Jehoshaphat makes a division between their supervisors: there's a priest over Yhwh's affairs, and a prince over the king's affairs.

Does this mean that in the Persian period we have "bicephalic leadership" as you'll often read (e.g. with respect to Haggai-Zechariah)? I don't think the evidence is strong in this passage, because both are subordinate to the king.

So if we take that logic further, in Hag-Zech those guys are also subordinate to the king. That king, of course, happens to be Persian.

So the notion of "bicephalic leadership" only holds if you also hold to the myth of the benevolent hands-off Persian king. Which is a myth.

## 2 Chronicles 20:1-22:1a

### 2 Chronicles 20:1-13

#### Threats from across the Jordan

We're getting into standard stuff for Chronicles now. Jehoshaphat, having implemented all kinds of good practices, is now tested by another invasion.

And he responds appropriately, by having the people seek Yhwh, and assembling them in Jerusalem. (Because you can seek Yhwh in the abstract, and in the concrete.) Everyone's there, men, women, and children (see v. 12).

He gets to make a good speech, too. Because he's making his speech in the temple, and not on a mountainside like Abijah did, he gets to hit all the highlights of what the temple is supposed to do.

The speech is carefully structured. It begins with an opening invocation and praise of Yhwh. Then it reminds Yhwh that he gave his people to the land (by dispossessing those who previously lived in it – not a fan of that, myself).

The purpose of living in the land was so the people would build a holy-place for Yhwh, otherwise known as the divine telephone for when there's difficulty.

Now there's difficulty! So they're using the divine telephone and petitioning for help – the speech/prayer ends with the petition.

## 2 Chronicles 20:14-30

### Yhwh's response to Jehoshaphat

After a heart-felt prayer like that, you just know that Chr is going to have a response. And indeed, we get one. But from a Levite, not a "prophet." Functionally the same, though.

Yhwh's spirit has given this Levite some pretty specific battle tactics. Which, of course, Jehoshaphat follows, but not without a further speech to exhort the army.

And then Jehoshaphat defeats the trans-Jordanians WITH MUSIC! This leads to general slaughter, specifically herem: devotion to destruction. Not a concept that shows up a lot in Chronicles, but it does here.

Because at this point they don't need the stuff like David did in order to build and furnish the temple. So it can all be a massive sacrifice to Yhwh.

Jehoshaphat's triumphant entry to Jerusalem is reminiscent of David – not so much the David of Chronicles, but the David of Samuel. Also of the ark.

And then Jehoshaphat gets rest from round about, which is very typical language from both Judges and referring to David in Chronicles.

## 2 Chronicles 20:31-21:1

### End of Jehoshaphat's reign

Here we pick up 1 Kings again, 1 Kgs 22:41. Basically almost everything about Jehoshaphat in Chronicles is inserted between the death of Ahab and the final regnal formula for Jehoshaphat in his source text.

Chr is following the order of his source so closely that he hasn't moved the opening regnal formula (he became king over Judah; he was 35 years old when he became king in Jerusalem) to the actual beginning of Jehoshaphat's story.

His source treats Jehoshaphat's participation with Ahab as an afterthought, which is why the opening and closing regnal formulas are together in 1 Kgs 22.

For some reason Chr doesn't move the opening regnal formula, which shows us something about how he's treating his source at this point: it's a series of blocks that he excises from and occasionally retells.

Earlier in the text Chr was rearranging this type of material so that it made more narrative sense. But now he's just cutting and inserting, not rearranging.

## 2 Chronicles 21:2-10

### Jehoram's beginning

We'd normally expect "Jehoram was X year old when he became king, and he was king for X years in Jerusalem" at this point. But we don't get it until v. 5.

So what we've got in vv. 2-4 is an insertion. And we've skipped from 1 Kgs 22:51 to 2 Kgs 8:17 in Chr's source. (All the Elijah-Elisha material, for those keeping track. They were concerned with the northern kingdom.)

This insertion makes it clear that Jehoram was Jehoshaphat's choice to be king – and nevertheless he kills all his brothers. This is not going to go well.

Vv. 5-10 come pretty much from 2 Kgs 8:17-22, with one small but significant addition.

Chr adds in v. 7 the clarification that Yhwh didn't want to destroy the house of David not for David's sake (as in Kgs), but for the sake of the covenant that he'd made with David.

Yhwh's loyalty is not merely to David but is also to the covenant with David, which includes the promise of an heir to the Davidic line.

From the beginning of Jehoram's reign until the crowning of Joash it is this promise that is under threat. First, here, with the narrowing of the line to Jehoram through Jehoram's murder of his brothers.

## 2 Chronicles 21:11-22:1a

### Jehoram's end

This is an interesting little addition to Chr's source. It makes no sense at all chronologically, but Elijah writes him a letter.

Elijah is dead by this time in Kings. In Chronicles it doesn't matter whether he's alive or dead, because he's left a miktav – maybe better translated as edict?

(That's how I render it when kings issue one. And the format is like a king's edict – “Thus says so-and-so.”)

We are getting a little peek into Chr's archival mind-set. When you find something in an archive, it's relevant, whether the author is alive or dead. It's a living text that can be used in conjunction with other texts.

We end with further jeopardy to the Davidic promise: the Philistines and Arabs come and take away all Jehoram's sons and wives except the youngest son.

Taking all the wives ensures no more sons. But a king can get more wives, presumably, so how to deal with that?

Jehoram is afflicted with a disease of his “innards” – which is usually taken to mean “bowels.” But when we consider that in the Davidic promise in 2 Sam 7:12, David is promised “your seed that goes out from your innards”...

...(even though that's not how it reads in 1 Chr 17), I think what we have is a way of saying that Jehoram will not have more sons. Instead he kind of gives birth to his own innards. Eww.

This bit is then kind of awkwardly stitched into the framework from 2 Kgs 8. Point is, he's bad, he dies badly, and isn't buried properly. And there's only one possible successor.

## 2 Chronicles 22:1b-23:11

### 2 Chronicles 22:1b-6

#### Ahaziah becomes king

As with some other places at the ending/beginning of kings' stories, I think the versification is off here. Jehoram's story ends with 1a, which tells how his son was put in his place.

Usually we have "and his son X became king in his place," but in 1a we had the inhabitants of Jerusalem putting Ahaziah in Jehoram's place, because, as we are reminded, he's the only one left.

Ahaziah's story begins with 1b: "And Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king of Judah," followed by the usual notice of his age, his length of reign and his mother's name.

Couple of things to notice here – 1. He reigns for only one year; 2. His mother Athaliah is a descendant of Omri of Israel. But he's not judged for who his mother is – he's judged for following her advice.

This all follows 2 Kgs 8:26-29, but with one insertion by Chr – Ahaziah also has advisors from Ahab's family besides his mother, and it's their advice he follows that leads to participating in battle with Jehoram son of Ahab.

So while Kgs places the blame for Ahaziah's "wickedness" squarely on his mother's shoulders, Chr spreads it out more broadly, and places the agency with Ahaziah. Kind of refreshing that it's not the woman's fault.

### 2 Chronicles 22:7-9

#### Death of Ahaziah

Vv. 7-9 is Chr's summary, rewriting, and comment on Jehu's revolt: it wasn't an accident that Ahaziah got caught up in it, it was "from God."

Jehu also killed Ahaziah's chief ministers in his rampage, including what are probably meant to be his nephews – the MT says his brothers, but remember they've already been killed.

Unlike in 2 Kgs 9, Ahaziah doesn't get shot during an escape and die in Megiddo. No, instead he hides himself in Samaria – the very seat of the Omrides.

Jehu's men seek him and he's found (that seeking-finding motif, again), and is executed in front of Jehu. He gets a decent burial because he's Jehoshaphat's grandson.

But now THERE'S NO-ONE LEFT from the Davidic line! Ahaziah's brothers were already dead, now his nephews are dead, his other officials are dead, and he's dead.

Will Yhwh's covenant with David endure?

### 2 Chronicles 22:10-12

#### Athaliah seizes power

This comes pretty much from 2 Kgs 11:1-3, with one major insertion. Yes, Athaliah's nasty – she kills all the babies.

Then our brave heroine Jehoshabeath rescues Ahaziah's infant son Joash and gets him over to the temple of Yhwh where he hides for six years.

But for Chr this poses a problem. How could Ahaziah's sister Jehoshabeath have access to the temple? She's obviously not from a priestly/levitical family.

In 2 Kgs the temple is part of the palace complex – it's really a kind of personal family shrine for the Davidic royal family. As such, no problem for the king's sister to get her nephew into it.

But in the time of Chr there's no palace complex and the temple is stand-alone. So Chr solves the problem by making Jehoshabeath the wife of the high priest Jehoiada.

The last half of v. 11 is Chr's insertion, full of his usual tortured syntax. It does the job, though. It provides a conduit for getting Joash into the temple.

I think this insertion also explains how Athaliah didn't notice that Joash was gone. I think we've got a nod to the motif of the baby-swap. See e.g. Herodotus on the birth of Cyrus.

If Jehoshabeath is married, then presumably she might have also had a baby. And she could swap her own baby for Joash. Yup, that's pretty grim.

The bit in Hdt. 1.112.2 where the cowherd's wife says, "I also have given birth, but I have given birth to a dead one" (τέτοκα γὰρ καὶ ἐγώ, τέτοκα δὲ τεθνεός) is just a bit too neat. Like the baby's already dead, no need to do any murdering.

Anyway, we've got ourselves a house full of death and all the hopes for the Davidic line are on one little baby boy.

## 2 Chronicles 23:1-11

### Joash's coronation

This long account (2 Chronicles 23:1-21) runs parallel to 2 Kgs 11:4-20. It's the second longest piece out of Kings (after 2 Chronicles 18), but unlike the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, it's not that close.

There are a lot of minor differences and a few larger insertions and deletions. It's more like a retelling than a simple copy-and-paste. It's actually longer and wordier than the account in 2 Kgs 11.

And one of those minor changes is in the third word. In 2 Kgs 11:4 it reads "And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and ..." But here we have "And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself and ..."

That act of strengthening himself – קָרַח in the hitpael – is one of Chr's favourite words and is otherwise only applied to kings.

So Jehoiada is being set up here as a king-figure. Later on in Joash's story he'll also be a father figure.

Chr has Jehoiada set this all up as a military-levitical operation. Because we have the Levites stationed as the small king's bodyguards.

The Levites are given the key protective role for the Davidic house, just as they've already been given the key protective role for the temple as its gatekeepers.

It's due to them that Joash gets anointed and crowned! Jehoiada and the priests just have the easy part.

## 2 Chronicles 23:12-25:4

### 2 Chronicles 23:12-21

#### Athaliah's death and the aftermath

We're continuing to parallel 2 Kgs 11, in some places a bit loosely, and with a couple of insertions.

Chr adds to the description of the king's coronation being accompanied by blasting trumpets by including the musicians with their instruments leading the praise. (In v. 13)

Chr adds musicians (who are Levites, remember) to every mention of trumpets (which are played by priests, remember). And it's always the Levites who lead the general praise of the congregation in Chronicles.

The other major insertion is in vv. 18-19, which specifically names Jehoiada as the originator of the restoration of the Yhwh temple arrangements (2 Kgs 11:18 says simply "the priest").

And then he sets it all up according to the torah of Moses, noting especially that gatekeepers are stationed (Levites!) to prevent impurity from entering the temple.

Since Jehoshaphat we're continuing to see these occasional mentions of the torah or torah of Moses.

So now we have a precarious continuation of the Davidic house – which shows Yhwh is upholding the covenant.

By the way that's why Jehoiada makes a covenant between him, the people, and the king, where 2 Kgs 11 has Jehoiada making a covenant between Yhwh, the people, and the king. For Chr Yhwh had never abrogated the covenant.

## 2 Chronicles 24:1-16

### Joash's early reign, while Jehoiada was alive

This bit runs parallel to 2 Kgs 12:1-17, but very, very loosely. The two texts tell roughly the same story, but this is not the case of Chr simply plonking the 2 Kgs 12 text into his archive and making a few adjustments.

It's actually quite odd, because usually Chr either follows his sources reasonably closely and makes the needed changes, or he just writes his own stuff.

I need to do some more work on this passage because from the perspective of the archival compilation it is quite different from Chr's usual techniques. The closest match is 2 Chr 2 where Chr retells the story of Solomon's dealings with Hiram.

What's also notable is that this is the only place I can think of where the Levites seem to get criticized – they don't hurry to fulfil Joash's command to gather silver to restore the temple.

I think that should be a clue that Joash's command is illegitimate. But how? I think it's that he tells them to go out into the cities of Judah to make the collection.

What has to happen is that people come from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. Once they do that, it's all good.

So it's a case of the Levites not following the king's command, for which he criticizes them. But they were right all along – of course!

Two final notes: 1 – Jehoiada gets wives for Joash and Joash has children. Jehoiada is acting in the way the father usually does, and Joash's children ensure that the Davidic house will indeed continue.

And 2 – Jehoiada is given a death and burial notice, sort of like kings, in fact, most like David's at the end of 1 Chronicles. His age of 130 places him in the realm of ancient heroes. He is like a king but not, like Moses, but not.

#### 2 Chronicles 24:17-24

##### Joash's later reign

This is pretty much all Chr's work, using language from all kinds of places in Kgs to describe how Joash goes astray.

Of course we get a prophet who comes to warn the people – and this one is a priest-prophet, Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, thus in a way Joash's brother.

He states the obvious: "You are not prospering because you have abandoned Yhwh and he has abandoned you."

But unlike in the previous cases where someone like Asa or Jehoshaphat listened to such a voice, in this case Joash doesn't, and murders him instead.

The punishment immediately follows: the Aramaeans with a tiny force kill the leading officers of the army and cart away the king's stuff.

And just to make sure we get it, Chr makes the clear connection for us – the small Aramaean army defeated the larger Judahite one because they had abandoned Yhwh.

This latter bit is a retelling of 2 Kgs 12:18-19, where Joash bought off the Aramaeans.

#### 2 Chronicles 24:25-27

##### Joash's death

This is a rewriting of 2 Kgs 12:20-22. In Chronicles, because usually it follows Kgs, the notice "the rest of the acts of X" usually opens the death notice.

Here it's removed from that context and placed just before the notice "his son Amaziah became king in his place."

It's because Chr is trying to make concrete the link between Joash's death and the death of the priest-prophet Zechariah.

Note that Joash isn't buried in the tombs of the kings, in contrast to 2 Kgs 12, where he is. I think this is because he abandoned the almost-filial loyalty he owed Jehoiada, who was buried with the kings.

By murdering Jehoiada's son, Joash also forfeited his right to be buried with the fathers because one of the fathers buried there was Jehoiada.

The book where his deeds are written is also weird: "the commentary on the book of kings" (מדרש ספר (המלכים)). He doesn't even get recorded in the annals, just in the commentary!

So while Joash represents the restoration of the Davidic kingship when it was most endangered, his own actions merit him being removed from both the tomb and the annals of the kings.

2 Chronicles 25:1-4

Amaziah's accession

We're back to normal operating procedure for Chr. This comes from 2 Kgs 14:2-6, with the excision of Amaziah not removing the high places etc.

We can see why Chr likes the rest of it though – here we have a king explicitly following Moses' commandment.

The commandment itself is kind of immaterial, but it's Amaziah not executing the sons of the conspirators who killed his father.

Now, in Kgs it's called "the book of the torah of Moses" but here it's called "the torah in the book of Moses." Is this a distinction without a difference? Or is it a crucial distinction?

So in 1-2 Chronicles the term torat-yhwh appears 8 times and torat-moshe appears twice. Torat-moshe is not described as a sefer in either instance. There are only 2 instances of sefer-torat-yhwh & 2 of sefer-moshe.

I do think it's a crucial distinction. Torat-moshe is a formulation in Kings (4 times), but Chr prefers torat-yhwh. So Moses wrote a book that had torah, but the torah is the torah of Yhwh, not of Moses.

That is a distinction worth making.

## 2 Chronicles 25:5-26:23

### 2 Chronicles 25:5-16

Amaziah does strange things

This is Chr's own invention. First Amaziah does a military census, finds he has 300 000 troops, but that's not enough, so he hires another 100 000 from Israel.

We've been down this path before. DON'T HIRE MERCENARIES BECAUSE YHWH IS YOUR WARRIOR! Anyway, that's pretty much what the anonymous "man of God" tells Amaziah.

Amaziah, quite reasonably in my view, says but I've already spent the money to hire them! Man of God says Yhwh can replace that. Well, ok then.

Amaziah actually listens to the man of God, so he sends the Israelites away. But they go away mad. Anyway, Amaziah goes and wins a big victory over the Edomites at the Valley of Salt.

However, back home ... those Israelite mercenaries make raids and kill people and take stuff. So Amaziah gets punished for even hiring them in the first place.

Now Amaziah does something spectacularly stupid. He sets up the Edomite gods for himself and worships them. This is stupid for precisely the reason that the prophet who comes to warn him says:

Why on earth would you worship the gods of a people whom you've defeated? Obviously these aren't very good gods, or they would have protected their people.

But this time, instead of listening to the prophet, Amaziah tells him to shut up. I think this is reasonable, considering the last time Amaziah listened to a prophet he ended up with angry Israelite mercenaries.

But, as the prophet says, it's all from God. God's planned to destroy Amaziah, so that's why Amaziah is acting in this bizarre way.

Chr is riffing on a verse from 2 Kgs 14 that says Amaziah defeated the Edomites and took the Valley of Salt. Since Chr's already decided that Amaziah's going bad, he's got to set it up, which is what he's doing in these insertions.

## 2 Chronicles 25:17-24

Amaziah continues doing strange things.

We're back to our source, following 2 Kgs 14:8-14 pretty closely. One significant insertion, though.

Amaziah wants to make an alliance with Joash of Israel. Joash says, rather metaphorically, why would you think you can ask for this when I'm so much more powerful than you?

And here's Chr's insertion: Amaziah didn't listen to Joash because Yhwh was punishing him for worshipping the Edomite gods.

Because Joash beats up Amaziah pretty badly and even breaks down the wall of Jerusalem.

Obviously Chr's trying to explain how this could have happened to a king that starts off his reign by following the torah of Yhwh.

Important to note that Yhwh's warning doesn't always come from a man of God or a prophet (like before), but can even come from another king.

#### 2 Chronicles 25:25-26:2

##### Amaziah's death

Continuing on with 2 Kgs 14:17-22. The chapter division in Chronicles doesn't make much sense, because the "and they made Uzziah king instead of his father Amaziah" comes in 26:1

And 26:2 goes with 26:1, while the formula "Uzziah was 16 years old" comes in 26:3, which is the usual marker for the start of a new reign.

Anyway, Chr makes another significant addition here: to Kgs' account of a conspiracy against Amaziah, Chr adds a reason:

From the time Amaziah turned away from Yhwh the conspirators started acting. Because there would have to be a reason for the conspiracy!

So in Amaziah's case, Chr began with the end result – death by assassination – and worked backwards to fill out the account in order to explain the ending.

Now that I think about it, that's really Chr's modus operandi throughout. Of course sometimes he changes the end result (viz. David, Solomon) to fit with his message.

#### 2 Chronicles 26:3-15

##### Uzziah's early reign

Vv. 3-4 are from 2 Kgs 15:2-3. Chr leaves off the notice about the high places etc. still being there.

Then Chr inserts a long fragment detailing all Uzziah's successes "when he sought God." He's a new David, defeating the Philistines and Arabs and Edomites, receiving tribute from the Ammonites, etc.

And he's a builder and a "soil-lover" (v. 10), so he builds things and puts lots of agricultural workers and installations in place.

AND he's got a big army, fully recorded by named officials. AND he's got lots of equipment for the army, AND "(military) devices, the devising of devisers" on top of the wall-towers. Catapults and arrow-shots.

This has gotten various scholars all worked up, because of trying to link this description up with the known war machines of the ANE. Probably I'll need to look into that a bit further before I can make any informed statements.

AND he's famous like Solomon! He's just a fantastic king.

## 2 Chronicles 26:16-23

### Uzziah's downfall

The last few verses of this section are a paraphrase of 2 Kgs 15:5-7: Uzziah has מצרע until the day of his death and his son Jotham has the running of the kingdom because Uzziah's in isolation.

Whatever מצרע might be, we're all agreed it's not "leprosy." It's some kind of skin inflammation. Whatever it is, it's understood as being struck by Yhwh.

So Chr starts with that and works backwards. What did Uzziah do to warrant this kind of punishment? Since it's a condition of impurity, he must have done something to make the temple impure.

That's the story we get – and it's then explained as being a result of him strengthening himself. Normally that's a good thing for a Davidic king, but not if it makes you arrogant and taking on actions that aren't yours to take.

He takes on the duty of a priest, to offer incense in the temple. Even David didn't dare do that. And Uzziah is warned, but he does it anyway.

In Chr's world, everything can be explained, if you only have the key to its explanation. If that's not a utopian vision, I don't know what is.

## 2 Chronicles 27:1-29:14

### 2 Chronicles 27:1-9

#### Boring Jotham

Vv. 1-3a are modified slightly from 2 Kgs 15:33-35. Jotham does everything right that Uzziah did. He doesn't go into the temple of Yhwh like Uzziah did.

It's interesting that Chr uses הֵיכַל here (hekal – palace/temple) rather than בַּיִת (bayit – house). I think, but I have to look at this a bit further, hekal refers to the whole complex, while bayit refers to the sanctuary building.

If this is the case, the Jotham doesn't just not go into the sanctuary, he avoids the whole temple complex. That may or may not be a good thing. The people are still doing bad things.

Chr inserts a long piece here about all of Jotham's building, fighting, and tribute-receiving activities; these are indeed just as Uzziah did.

Concluding with Jotham strengthening himself – but not to the point of arrogance, because no bad things happen after that.

We pick up 2 Kgs 15:36-38 at the end of the account of Jotham, with the omission of Yhwh stirring up the Aramaeans. Because Jotham hasn't done anything to merit that.

## 2 Chronicles 28:1-4

### Ahaz, who is not boring.

We're going to spend a bit of time on Ahaz because he is the absolute low point of the Davidic dynasty according to Chr. (Not Manasseh, as in Kings.)

If David's house was at its most endangered after Jehoram was killed and before Joash was crowned, Yhwh's house is at its most endangered during Ahaz's reign.

The introduction here is pretty much right out of 2 Kgs 16:2-4, with one insertion by Chr that specifies how Ahaz exceeded the kings of Israel in doing what was incorrect in Yhwh's eyes:

He made metal images of the Ba'als and burned incense (to them?) in the Valley of Ben-Himmon.

I think this has to be specified for Chr because what he takes from Kgs – sacrificing his sons, burning incense at the high places – is still potentially Yahwistic.

That is, reading Kings, while Ahaz is engaging in incorrect cultic practice, it can still be read as being incorrect Yahwistic cultic practice.

Chr's addition makes it clear that Ahaz is, like his great-grandfather Amaziah, worshiping other deities than Yhwh.

## 2 Chronicles 28:5-15

Ahaz just gets worse and worse

Now it gets explicit. For Ahaz's crime, Yhwh hands him over to the Aramaeans, and a large portion of the population is exiled to Damascus. Oooh – foreshadowing of exile.

And even more grief for Ahaz: the Israelites also kill (actually, murder/slaughter) a large portion of his army. Reason: they had abandoned Yhwh – “abandon” being one of Chr's favourite words.

The Israelites also bring a lot of people into exile in Samaria. So there's a double exile here, along with the deaths of three of Ahaz's key supporters.

Of course, now we get a prophet to explain what's going on. But Oded prophesies not to Judah, but to the Israelite army on its way back to Samaria:

Return the captives, because while you defeated Judah (Ahaz) as an instrument of Yhwh's will, it's not Yhwh's will that the Judahites be in exile in Samaria.

And the Israelites listen to Oded! Not only do they return the captives, they feed and clothe them before sending them home.

There's all kinds of allegorical levels here, all kinds of foreshadowing. But the fact that the prophet Oded doesn't go to Ahaz seems to signal that Yhwh's given up on him.

## 2 Chronicles 28:16-27

Ahaz spirals ever deeper

Now Chr is kind of riffing on 2 Kgs 16:7-18. That is, in Kgs Ahaz gets the Assyrians to defeat the Aramaeans by buying them off. Then he has the stone altar in the temple replaced by a fancy new one like the one he saw in Damascus.

In Kgs there's no sense that Ahaz is doing anything except upgrading the worship facilities – although the author of Kgs doesn't think it's right. Then we get the death notice.

But in Chronicles the act of appealing to Assyria is because of the very deep trouble Ahaz is in – all of the achievements of Uzziah and Jotham are undone.

Unlike in Kgs, the king of Assyria does NOT help Ahaz out, even though Ahaz empties the entire cultic and royal treasury to buy him off.

Then Chr takes the story of the altar in Damascus and makes Ahaz do what Amaziah had done with the Edomite gods – Ahaz worships the gods of Damascus.

Worse than that, he also CLOSES THE DOORS OF THE TEMPLE OF YHWH. This is the absolute worst thing ever. This is worse than anything Manasseh did in Kings.

So portions of the population have been exiled, and the temple of Yhwh is closed. How will Judah recover?

Final note: Chr changes the death notice so that Ahaz is NOT buried in the tombs of his fathers.

## 2 Chronicles 29:1-14

### Hezekiah's accession

Hezekiah is the version of his name in Kings, meaning "Yhwh has strengthened"; in Chronicles it's usually Jehezekiah, which means "May Yhwh strengthen." Either way, it's one of Chr's favourite roots: קָזַח.

It's a commonplace that in Chronicles the post-Solomonic hero is Hezekiah, while in Kings it's Josiah. Chr draws on Hezekiah's name for his characterization of this king.

After the opening regnal notice in vv. 1-2, which comes from 2 Kgs 18:1b-3, Chr wanders off into his own story-telling. From 2 Chronicles 29:3-31:21 it's pretty much all Chr. It's the longest Chr composition in 2 Chronicles.

Hezekiah's very first act – in the first month of the first year of his reign – is to open the doors of the temple and strengthen them.

He brings the priests and Levites out and commands them to re-sanctify the temple. He gives a little recap of the past events – their fathers had committed sacrilege (מַעַל) which had led to the exile of many people.

Now he's decided to return to the covenant in the hopes that Yhwh will too.

Who responds? The Levites, of course! A whole bunch of them, named, from all the major Levitical families, both the gate-keeper types and the singer types.

## 2 Chronicles 29:15-30:20

### 2 Chronicles 29:15-19

#### Purifying the temple

This bit goes with the last bit in that it shows how the priests and Levites respond to Hezekiah's call to re-sanctify the temple.

First thing they do is sanctify themselves. Now, how they do this without a sanctified temple is an interesting question, but not one Chr seems able to answer.

(It's the question that Zech 3 answers in a different context – with Joshua the high priest being sanctified in heaven before being able to dedicate the rebuilt temple.)

Then the priests go in and take out all the impurities from the sanctuary into the courtyard of the temple, and from there the Levites take them to the Wadi Kidron.

Note the levels of purity here – only the priests can enter the sanctuary, so they have to go in and do that part. But presumably if they leave the temple complex there's going to be impurity flying around all over the place.

So the priests stay within the compound and the Levites are the ones who take the impure things out of the temple complex and then out of the city.

Note also when this all starts: the first day of the first month, i.e. New Year's Day. Looking at the chronology, it seems that Hezekiah was made king on that day with this as his very first action.

Hezekiah is really that extra special.

Anyway, it takes two periods of eight days – the first seems to be the courtyards and the second seems to be the sanctuary itself.

Then they go back to report to Hezekiah: all done! (With all the details, of course.)

Those keeping track at home may have noticed that they don't finish until the 16th day of the first month. That's going to be a problem, because Pesach is supposed to begin on the 14th day, and Unleavened Bread on the 15th.

But Chr's got a plan – stay tuned!

## 2 Chronicles 29:20-30

### Hezekiah's "sin-offering"

Now that the temple's been re-sanctified, it's time for Hezekiah and all the people to remediate the sin of "the kingdom, the sanctuary, and Judah."

Which they do, similar to what's in Lev 16, except because there's lots of sin there's seven of every offering. And there's no mention of any goats going out to Azazel. Instead, they're all sacrificed.

This makes me think that Lev 16 as we have it is pretty darn late, because I think Chr would have sent goats out like he had the Levities take the impure things out to the Wadi Kidron if he'd had that option.

Back to the sacrificing. During this whole event, while the priests are dashing blood around, the Levites are playing music -

along with the trumpeting priests; I keep saying how much I love these guys, but they never get to play without the Levites being along for the ride.

The whole assembly is prostrating themselves, but joyfully and with lots of praise. This is interesting because in images from the Persian period no-one looks particularly joyful to be prostrating themselves before the Persian king.

I should add that I'm normally not a fan of comparing Yhwh with the Persian king (lots of reasons, too many for right now) but we don't have iconography of people prostrating themselves to Persian gods as far as I know. Fire altars have people approaching but not prostrating.

[2 Chronicles 29:31-36](#)

Levites are amazing!

After the sin-offerings have been finished, then there's sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving (aka whole-offerings).

But because the assembly has brought so many animals there aren't enough sanctified priests to do all the sacrificing.

So – and in this limited instance – the Levites help the priests. The little comment here “because the Levites were more ‘upright of heart’ (i.e., diligent) in sanctifying themselves than the priests” ...

... is the only time Chr really denigrates priests. I've written on this recently, so go ahead and read my fuller comments here (it's open-access):

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110707014-016>

Anyway, everybody's happy at what they've been able to pull off with so little time to organize it.

[2 Chronicles 30:1-9](#)

Now on to Passover

Remember that the whole sanctification of the temple thing took the first 16 days of the first month. And I said this was going to be a problem because Passover and Unleavened Bread are supposed to take place in the first month.

Now, you know and I know that Moses has got you covered – see Num 9:1-14 – at least for Passover.

But Chr doesn't seem to know that, or at least the warrant for delaying both Passover and Unleavened Bread comes from Hezekiah's consultation with the assembly.

The justification is that the priests were not sufficiently sanctified, nor had the people gathered in Jerusalem. That's not what Num 9 says – it's about corpse impurity and/or travel.

Which way does the influence run? Or, more likely, there's a tradition about inability to celebrate the festivals that both are drawing on. (Probably more evidence that H is really late.)

The other important thing going on here is that Hezekiah's inviting all the members of the northern tribes (Israel) who have escaped the exile of the Assyrians.

While Chr doesn't narrate the fall of Samaria, remember that in 1 Chr 5 he told us about the exile of the northern tribes. Hezekiah is trying to re-incorporate those tribes.

The message goes out as letters, not as an edict – it's an invitation, not a command. We've got Chr's standard theology here: if they return to Yhwh, Yhwh will return to them. Come do Passover in Jerusalem!

The exile of many of their kin is due to them straying from Yhwh all these years. But Yhwh will welcome them back if they repent.

2 Chronicles 30:10-20

Unleavened Bread? Passover?

Hezekiah's messengers don't get a really warm welcome in Ephraim and Manasseh. But folks from Asher, Manasseh (maybe the trans-Jordanian one?) and Zebulun do come to Jerusalem.

So the invitation was to do Passover, but what they actually gather to do is Unleavened Bread? No, they start with Passover on the 14th day of the second month. The two festivals are still separate.

But before that, they do a little gratuitous altar removing. Remember that it was the temple complex that was purified in the first month. Now in the second month they take the altars out of the rest of Jerusalem.

Not clear if these are Yahwistic altars or not. Probably doesn't matter from Chr's perspective.

Back to Passover. We get an interesting little notice that the priests and Levites "were humiliated" (נבלמו), which is ... odd. The LXX has ἐνετραπίσσαν, and ἐντρέπω always translates נבנע elsewhere in Chronicles.

I'm going to suggest the LXX reading is better, because "humbled themselves" is one of Chr's favourite words. In this instance it means the priests and Levites – like the rest of the assembly – humbled themselves before Yhwh.

The behaviour of the priests and Levites is in accordance with the torat-Moshe. But the behaviour of everyone else is not – they haven't sanctified themselves: "they ate the Pesach not as it is written."

But that's ok. Hezekiah prays for them – surely these eager people's error can be made right (lit. may the good Yhwh purge on behalf of (יכפר בעד) of anyone who sets their mind to seek Yhwh), and Yhwh agrees.

I think @lianemfeldman and @JoelBaden 's point that it's the sanctuary that is being contaminated and needs to be purged is an important corrective to the understanding of כפר, but -

Yhwh's agreement – he “healed (וירפא) the people” – seems to suggest that the people themselves have been physically damaged by their impure incursion into the ritual space of the Pesach.

That is, the Pesach itself is a sanctuary, and as we saw with Uzziah, improper incursion leads to physical damage. Unlike Uzziah, the people here are healed. Is there some anticipation of personal atonement here in the use of כפר?

Because, unlike every other instance of כפר בעד in the HB, the subject is Yhwh. Yhwh is doing the purging.

So this is an unusual Passover: not held at the right time, and not by appropriately-purified celebrants. But it's all fine, great even.

## 2 Chronicles 30:21-32:16

### 2 Chronicles 30:21-27

#### Unleavened Bread, for real this time

After Pesach, the people celebrate Unleavened Bread for seven days. There's a lot of music from the Levites.

And here's an interesting bit – the festival includes sacrificing offerings of well-being and doing something described as מתודים. This is the hitpa'el of ידה, and is always rendered as “confess” – except here in v. 22.

In this one instance it's usually rendered as “praise.” Probably because it goes with the shelem offering. But what happens if we take the “confess” meaning seriously?

I don't know the answer to this question, but I think it's worth pursuing.

Because all of a sudden Unleavened Bread becomes something beyond a festival where you eat unleavened bread for seven days and have some kind of fancy do on the first and last days (Lev 23 on that last bit).

The people decide to do it for an additional seven days! And the implication seems to be that every day had sacrifices (and music).

And – there had never been a time of greater joy in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon!

I really don't know what's going on here in terms of history of ritual, and in some ways I'm not terribly interested in that, because Chronicles isn't strictly descriptive OR prescriptive, but is a thought-experiment.

In terms of this book, this whole chapter is meant to show how amazing Hezekiah was and how incredible this whole re-opening of the temple was.

## 2 Chronicles 31:1-8

### Hezekiah sets up stuff for regular times

We pick up 2 Kgs 18:4 kind of, slightly; well, really only one phrase. It's the only use of 2 Kgs between the opening of Hezekiah's reign and Sennacherib's invasion.

Now that the temple's been purified, and Jerusalem's been purified, everyone goes out to Judah, and then beyond to Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, to remove the masseboth, asherim, high places and altars.

Nice movement outward from the centre of everything to the edges of Yhwh's territory. Then everyone goes home.

Hezekiah then kind of re-establishes the jobs of the priests and Levites, and then hands over his own property for the regular, sabbath, and festival offerings (he really is a second David).

Then he asks for everyone else to provide for the priests and Levites. It's beyond anything that's happened before, because this is the first time we've had provisions supplied on a regular basis for the temple personnel.

It takes five months for the supplies to fill up, but that's not a bad thing: it's a measure of just how much stuff is being brought in. What will become of it all?

2 Chronicles 31:9-21

So much stuff

There's so much stuff that Hezekiah and his chief priest (the first time that title's been used) Azariah have to figure out what to do with it all.

So Hezekiah has them organize storerooms in the temple. Remember that back when David and Solomon had planned and built storerooms it was for the temple's stuff.

Now we've got storage for the personnel's stuff.

And where you've got inventory, you need bureaucrats. So we get them too, a nice long list of them.

And then when you've got inventory and bureaucrats, you need a list of recipients. That's what comes next – priests and Levites being enrolled by genealogies.

And then you need the mechanism for getting the stuff out to the recipients. So that's described too.

All of this is Hezekiah's work. The whole section is summarized by saying that Hezekiah did what was good, correct, and faithful, and he prospered because he sought God.

2 Chronicles 32:1-8

Here comes Sennacherib

Chr's got a problem. As we've seen so far, invasions come about as a result of not seeking Yhwh. We've just been told that Hezekiah sought Yhwh.

On the other hand, Chr's now got a great chance to show how a faithful king is rewarded for being faithful.

So Sennacherib's invasion is therefore not the result of Hezekiah's unfaithfulness, but a test of Hezekiah's faithfulness. It serves a similar function to David's census.

It's a neat theological trick, really. Bad things happen to bad people (or at least to people who have done bad things), but bad things also happen to good people in order to test them. It's the book of Job.

Anyway, Sennacherib. 2 Chronicles 32:1-24 runs parallel to 2 Kgs 18:13-19:19, but uses very little directly from Kgs. If you had to boil down 2 Kgs 18-19 into a concise, coherent story, it would look a lot like 2 C 32.

But in vv. 2-8 we get Chr's own composition, in which Hezekiah does all the prudent things one should do when facing a siege: ensures water supply (which is just a footnote in 2 Kgs 20:20), rebuilds the walls, gathers weapons.

And then, after all that, he tells everyone, don't be afraid, because Yhwh is with us.

This is interesting, because if Yhwh is with them, why did Hezekiah do all the preparations? Because God helps those who help themselves.

2 Chronicles 32:9-16

Sennacherib's slaves come to town

Sennacherib's slaves, by which we mean any of his staff, have a pretty good grasp of theology, as one might expect.

They speak to Jerusalem, although we're not given the dramatic wall-shouting that 2 Kgs has.

Instead, they lay out a coherent argument: Thesis: Hezekiah is deceiving you by saying that Yhwh will save you. Evidence: 1. Hezekiah has destroyed Yhwh's high places in Judah. Thus Yhwh will not favour you.

2. Even if Yhwh does favour you, so what? The Assyrians have destroyed the lands of many peoples, therefore those peoples' gods did not favour them. How would Yhwh be different?

3. The Assyrians are themselves undertaking a proper cultic practice: they are "devoting to destruction" (herem) the peoples that they conquer.

Conclusion: Hezekiah is deceiving you, don't let him.

## 2 Chronicles 32:17-33:25

### 2 Chronicles 32:17-23

#### Letters from Sennacherib

On the surface, this is kind of weird. Because what we get after Sennacherib's staff make their arguments is Sennacherib sending letters with the same argument.

Note that only a summary of the letter is given. This is consistent with Achaemenid scribal practice, in which a letter, once folded up, had a short rubric written on the outside. It's this rubric that's being read.

So it's not that the letter is short. The letter contains the speech we just heard. Think of this short summary as being the heading of a memo or email.

It's these letters that get read in "Yehudish" (i.e., the language of Yehudah) to the people on the walls.

So I think what Chr is depicting is that first Sennacherib's staff came to talk to Hezekiah and his officials, and then they went out of the meeting and read the same message to the people in public.

It's Chr trying to make sense of what's going on in 2 Kgs 18, where it seems Hezekiah's meeting with the Rabshakeh takes place in public, which is obviously not how these things happen. 2 Kgs 19 also has letters from Sennacherib.

After this, Chr concisely ties up the whole episode. Hezekiah and Isaiah pray, Yhwh destroys Sennacherib's army, and Sennacherib returns home in disgrace where he's assassinated in his own god's temple.

That latter bit is good because remember that Sennacherib said he was honouring his god by doing herem to all the peoples he'd conquered. So take that, Sennacherib!

All of this serves to make the point that Chr reiterates at the end: Yhwh was their salvation, he gave them rest from their enemies, and the peoples of the world honoured Hezekiah (with tribute).

In other words, Hezekiah passed the test.

## 2 Chronicles 32:24-33

### Hezekiah's illness and the end of his reign

V. 24a is from 2 Kgs 20:1a, and v. 24b is a summary and interpretation of 2 Kgs 20:1b-11. Hezekiah gets very sick, and he prays to Yhwh to heal him, which Yhwh does and gives him an omen.

Then Chr interprets Hezekiah's actions in 2 Kgs 20:12-19 as not showing the proper response to Yhwh's actions. In other words, the illness was another test, and although Hezekiah responded properly to the test ...

... he didn't thank Yhwh appropriately after Yhwh had healed him. The "arrogance" that he shows here is probably interpreted from 2 Kgs 20:12-19.

The visit from the Babylonian officials described in 2 Kgs 20:12-19 is then picked up in the summary of Hezekiah's reign, in v. 31.

All of vv. 27-33 is the closing of Hezekiah's story. And here it's made explicit: God had abandoned him (after his illness) in order to test him to know his mind.

So, you see, when bad things happen to good people it's in order to test them. Just because bad things are happening it doesn't mean you've done bad things. This does tend to make things a bit confusing.

### 2 Chronicles 33:1-10

#### Manasseh does bad things

We've rejoined 2 Kgs more closely with the death formula of Hezekiah at the end of ch. 32. This bit now is using 2 Kgs 21:1-10, pretty closely. Remember that in Kgs Manasseh is the worst of all the worst kings.

He does all of the bad cultic things we expect of a negatively-evaluated king. However, he doesn't close the temple the way Ahaz did. So in Chr's eyes he's already better than Ahaz.

Chr truncates the prophetic warning that we've got in 2 Kgs 21 and simply says that Yhwh spoke to Manasseh and the people, but they didn't listen.

Remember that in Chronicles there's always a warning. Does Manasseh listen to his?

### 2 Chronicles 33:11-20

#### Manasseh repents

Now we've come to the single biggest thematic change that Chr has made in creating his archive. Manasseh now becomes a repentant sinner.

The Assyrian king (unnamed) has his army capture Manasseh and bring him to Babylon. Nothing happens to anyone else. And historically this makes no sense – Babylon?

But of course Manasseh is here a stand-in for the Judahites and Jerusalem. He is all of them. He is taken away in a nose-ring (for this particular torture, check out pretty much any Assyrian battle bas-relief).

He is taken to Babylon because that's where Judahites will be taken to.

And then ... he prays to Yhwh, he humbles himself (one of Chr's favourite words), he does just what Solomon's prayer in 2 Chr 6:36-39 says, and guess what, Yhwh hears him and returns him to Jerusalem.

And unlike his father Hezekiah, he is appropriately grateful and makes the appropriate cultic changes. Vv. 11-17 are Chr's insertion in the place of the oracle against him in Kgs.

Then we rejoin 2 Kgs 21:17-18 with 2 C 33:18-20 amending its source as appropriate. He does get a weird burial, though, in his house-garden rather than the tomb of his ancestors.

Manasseh's prayer has an afterlife – it's the "Prayer of Manasseh" that you'll find in the Septuagint. Obviously somebody thought that we needed to have his prayer, so they wrote it. In Greek.

2 Chronicles 33:21-25

Amon

Not much to say here. We're following 2 Kgs 21:19-24 pretty closely. Amon's bad, he dies badly, so there.

Except that he doesn't have a notice of the rest of his affairs being written in book X. Only that's weird because 2 Kgs 21:25-26 does have that. But in the wrong place.

This is one of the bits that makes people think that Chr was working with a book of Kings in an earlier redaction. After Hezekiah there are a lot of these sorts of differences between Chronicles and Kings.

While I think that's possible, I don't know what difference it makes for Chronicles. It's also possible to see the changes in the patterns of the text post-Hezekiah (no queen mother names, for instance) as reflecting ...

... Chr's view that after Hezekiah everything went to hell. After Hezekiah it's just a long inevitable road to the exile. The high point couldn't be sustained.

## 2 Chronicles 34:1-35:6

### 2 Chronicles 34:1-7

#### Josiah's early reign

This kind of parallels 2 Kgs 22:1-2 for the first couple of verses (vv. 1-2), then there's an insertion by Chr (vv. 3-4), and then kind of parallels 2 Kgs 23:6, 16, 19-20.

Chr uses 2 Kgs 22:1-2 pretty closely – perhaps exactly, if his version of Kgs was different than MT. Like the other post-Hezekiah kings, the name of Josiah's mother that's present in Kgs is absent in Chronicles.

V. 3 has Josiah starting to "seek" Yhwh in his 8th year, i.e. when he's 15-16. Then vv. 4-7 have him beginning to purify Judah and Jerusalem in his 12th year, i.e. when he's 20 – an adult.

This is Chr's own composition, although he uses some of the language from 2 Kgs 23.

The effect is that he began to act correctly before the discovery of the torah-scroll during the restoration of the temple.

This is a wholesale re-ordering of events from 2 Kgs. By doing this re-ordering, Chr makes it clear that it's not the discovery of the torah-scroll that prompted Josiah.

However, the re-ordering also means that Josiah's first act is not to restore / repair / purify & reopen the temple. Remember that was Hezekiah's first action.

Josiah is not Chr's hero – Hezekiah is. And Judah's had the torah texts since the time of Jehoshaphat. Josiah should have restored the temple as his first act as an adult king. So he's good, but not wonderful.

## 2 Chronicles 34:8-14

### Repairing the temple

It took Josiah six years to purify the land and the temple (according to v. 8). But he didn't start on the temple until doing the land. Wrong order.

Vv. 8-12a roughly follow 2 Kgs 22:3-7, but with a lot more wordiness. The whole episode kind of parallels 2 C 24, when Joash rebuilt the temple.

There are, of course, more Levites than in 2 Kgs 22, as well as the participation of the whole people in making donations. And there's music – music to accompany the rebuilding!

Vv. 12b-14 are Chr's own contribution, with Levites galore.

And the actual finding of the torah-scroll is narrated, rather than just being introduced in Hilqiah's speech as it is in 2 Kgs 22.

It's called "The Book of the Instruction of Yhwh By the Hand of Moses." It's a sefer, so a book or text. It's torat-yhwh, so Yhwh's instruction. It's by the hand of Moses, i.e., through Moses, not necessarily written by Moses but promulgated by him.

We could go through all the mentions of torat-Yhwh in Chronicles, but it's not clear to me that this is (proto-)Deuteronomy as it is in 2 Kgs. It's also not necessarily (proto-)Pentateuch.

That's because I don't think Chr has a "canon." He's got a lot of different texts, and what he's referring to is instruction associated with Moses. I mean, it could be Leviticus.

One of the things Chr has been doing with respect to his texts is conflating or reconciling them. We usually talk about Chr combining both P and D.

### 2 Chronicles 34:15-28

The torat-yhwh comes to Josiah

This bit uses 2 Kgs 22:8-20 fairly closely. Chr has taken the story from Kgs and incorporated it into his story of Josiah – the only bit that he really uses to any extent.

Anyway, you probably remember what happens: Josiah's official Shaphan brings him an update on the temple work and then hands over the book from Hilqiah. Shaphan reads it, Josiah gets upset and wants prophetic advice.

Chr would have kept this bit because, like Jehoshaphat, this is one of the only times a king seeks out a prophet, without the prophet coming to him.

So off they all go to see Huldah the prophet. Now one of Chr's changes to Huldah's oracle makes it a bit more specific: instead of 2 Kgs 22:16 "I am bringing ... all the words of the book" –

He has her say of Yhwh "I am bringing ... all the execrations written in the book." Execrations (or curses, if you like) is language from Deut 29, so maybe the book is Deuteronomy? But I do think it's broader than Deut.

Chr would also have liked this text because it has Huldah tell Josiah that "because you have humbled yourself..." Remember that "humble oneself" is one of Chr's favourite words.

So we've got ourselves a prophetic warning, even though it's not clear that Josiah has done anything wrong at this point (which is often when prophetic warnings come.)

Sometimes prophetic warnings are pre-emptive, and it must be the case in this instance.

### 2 Chronicles 34:29-33

Josiah acts on the prophetic warning

Vv. 29-31 come from 2 Kgs 23:1-3, the follow-up to Huldah's oracle. There are a few changes Chr makes: priests and Levites instead of priests and prophets, for instance.

Josiah reads the book found in the temple – this time called "The Book of the Covenant," taken right from 2 Kgs 23:2.

But, I mean, this could be what we biblical scholars call the Covenant Code, because “The Book of the Covenant” is in Exod 24. Just a reminder that what Chr understands can be different from what his source understood.

Then vv. 32-33 are Chr’s, and have some more cultic purification. Using the word תעבות, “abominations” is a clue that we’re looking at priestly language (it appears in Deut, but is very prominent in Ezek).

It’s a summary of the long piece of 2 Kgs 23 that has Josiah doing his big purification bit. Chr doesn’t include all of that. He moves right from reading the book to the Passover.

## 2 Chronicles 35:1-6

### Josiah’s Passover, the beginning

Josiah’s Passover is a whole three verses in 2 Kgs 23:21-23. What Chr does is insert the description of the Passover in place of 2 Kgs 23:21 and before 2 Kgs 23:22-23.

That is, because 2 Kgs 23:22-23 said that no Passover had been celebrated before like the one Josiah celebrated in his 18th regnal year, Chr thought it was strange that this unique Passover wasn’t described.

So he describes it. It’s done at the right time, 14th day of the first month.

Josiah begins with a long speech to the Levites, telling them they don’t need carry the ark around any more – not that they have been doing that for a while!

That’s really weird, and I think it’s because Chr is composing this out of bits and pieces of his own earlier text.

But another weird thing is that in this address to the Levites he has Josiah commanding them to slaughter the Pesach. That’s ... what priests are supposed to do? What’s going on?

We’re starting to see that maybe it wasn’t a compliment that no Passover had been celebrated like the one Josiah celebrated.

## 2 Chronicles 36:7-36:10

### 2 Chronicles 35:7-19

#### Josiah's Passover – the rest of it

After his speech to the Levites, Josiah and his officials contribute sheep, lambs, and kids (baby goats) for the Pesach. And cattle, although that's not really a Pesach thing? But Hezekiah had contributed cattle, so Josiah does too.

I think Hezekiah's cattle etc. was for Unleavened Bread, or to be consistent with Num 9. (These two Pesach passages in Chron do a lot of conflating of Exod, Lev, Num & Deut on Pesach.)

Any way you look at it, Hezekiah contributed more stuff than Josiah does, so that's not what makes this Passover unique.

In the sacrifice itself, the priests are at their positions and the Levites are there "according to the commandment of the king" (v. 10). Hmm. Not according to David or Moses, then.

The priests do the sacrificing, but the Levites do the flaying. Remember that the Levites had taken this on as a special case in 29:34 at the reopening of the temple by Hezekiah. Hmm, again.

Now for all of you Pentateuch people, in v. 13 we have the famous conflation of the roasting and boiling statutes in Exod 12 and Deut 16. Mushy pesach-meal, anyone?

I think it's pertinent that the Levites' musical service is explicitly described as warranted by David and his musicians. Their acting as priests, not so much.

Also important to note that it's not described as being a Pesach celebrated "with great joy" as per Chr's usual descriptions of rituals that he approves of.

So it's a strange Passover – the likes of which had not been done since the time of Samuel, the end of the chaotic period of the judges. I don't think it's presented as a well-done Passover.

## 2 Chronicles 35:20-36:1

### Josiah's death

You aren't a scholar of Chronicles unless you've written about the death of Josiah. Everyone does it; it's often the gateway drug. My particular contribution was in a 2006 CBQ article <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43727580>

Why does everyone do this? I think there's a number of reasons, but the main one is that Chr's version of Josiah's death is the one that people actually remember, not the version in 2 Kgs.

(Other reasons include a need to accommodate the Deuteronomistic valorization of him; an image of Josiah as tragic hero; plus a whole range of text-critical arguments, also 1 Esdras.)

The version in 2 Kgs 23 is basic: Josiah went out to meet Neco at Megiddo and Neco killed him on sight. Chr's got a whole story, including a prophetic warning (from Neco!), disguises, accidental shooting, etc.

In terms of composition, the story itself is clearly based on the death of Ahab in 2 Chronicles 18, both in general pattern and in specific vocabulary. That should give us pause. This is not a good death.

What we have, I think, is a tradition that Josiah was a righteous king who died at the hands of Neco. Hence the laments for him that Chr notes at the end of the account.

It's what Ehud Ben Zvi calls an unalterable fact, like Solomon being the temple builder even though he wasn't the dynastic founder. (Note that Manasseh's hideous sinfulness wasn't an unalterable fact.)

When Chr encounters one of these uncomfortable unalterable facts he has to find a reason and use it as an explanation. So on first reckoning, by not heeding the prophetic warning, Josiah's doomed.

But we've also had hints in the previous narrative that Josiah's actually not all that great – his Passover, for instance, was kind of weird.

It's all a test, and ultimately he fails. So while Chr says he's lamented to his own day, is that really a commendation? Or is Chr saying you're all misguided?

35:26-36:1 is a smoothing out of the closing regnal formula in 2 Kgs 23:28-30. That is, Chr takes the notice of Josiah's actual death out, puts it before, and then cleans up the formula.

#### 2 Chronicles 36:2-4

Jehoahaz

Not much here. Parallels 2 Kgs 23:31-34.

Another bit where people have seen Chr working with a different version of Kings. He doesn't include the mother's name or the narratorial judgment "he did what was wrong in Yhwh's sight."

Again, does that mean a different version of Kings, or that Chr is treating the post-Hezekiah kings differently?

Important to note that Jehoahaz's death isn't recorded here (even though Kings does) – none of these final four kings have a death notice. Josiah is the last king who does have one.

The last four kings are essentially one unending reign until the emptying out of Jerusalem and Judah.

#### 2 Chronicles 36:5-8

Jehoiakim

Again, not much here. Parallels 2 Kgs 23:35-24:6, but reduced basically to the opening and closing regnal formulae.

And the notice of his removal to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar along with some of the temple instruments / furnishings.

“Vessels” is such a horrible translation of כְּלִים. It can mean so many different things, depending on context – like armour, musical instruments, equipment, furniture, and indeed vessels.

But everyone gets hung up on “temple vessels” when it’s not just cups and bowls we’re talking about. It’s all the equipment, large and small, that one needs to run a sacrificial cult.

Anyway, that’s the last we hear of Jehoiakim. Again, no death notice.

2 Chronicles 36:9-10

Jehoiakin

Still not much here. Parallels 2 Kgs 24:8-17, but with no detail AT ALL. Just the opening regnal formula.

No closing regnal formula, just that Nebuchadnezzar made his brother / uncle king. So even briefer than his two predecessors.

Whether Zedekiah is Jehoiakin’s brother or uncle depends on which version your reading and how you work with the genealogical material both in Chronicles and elsewhere.

Personally I don’t much care, and Chr doesn’t either. That’s not the purpose of this archival fragment he’s putting together. It’s enough that they’re all relatives of Josiah; all descendants of David.

## 2 Chronicles 36:11-23, Conclusion

### 2 Chronicles 36:11-16

#### Zedekiah

Remember that Chr's working with a theology of immediate reward and retribution. That means that for him the destruction of the temple (and Jerusalem) can only be due to the actions of the king at the time.

That's Zedekiah. He has to be worse than any of the previous kings, and - unlike Manasseh – unrepentant. He also has to have been warned and had the opportunity to repent.

So in these six verses, which begin by using 2 Kgs 24:18-19a – the opening regnal formula – Chr makes Zedekiah irredeemable.

Zedekiah refuses to humble himself (one of Chr's favourite words) before Jeremiah bringing word from Yhwh.

He rebels against Nebuchadnezzar (that bit's from 2 Kgs 24:20), even though he's sworn an oath to him in God's name. He turns his back on and refuses to return to Yhwh.

But it's not enough for Chr that Zedekiah does these things. In order for the destruction and exile to be justifiable, the people have to participate as well. Remember Manasseh – only he was taken away.

Thus the people commit sacrilege (Chr's favourite word ma'al) and abominations, making the temple impure. Yhwh sends them prophetic warnings too, which they mock.

So with both king and people defiling the temple and refusing to heed prophetic warnings and return to Yhwh, Yhwh's "anger rose up against his people until there was no cure" (v. 16).

All of this is Chr's expansion on 2 Kgs 24:20.

### 2 Chronicles 36:17-21

The destruction of the temple and Jerusalem and the deportation of its people

This is Chr's composition, reducing all of 2 Kgs 25 to these few verses. For Chr there was no exile under Jehoiakim. There's only this one.

Chr doesn't exult in the detail of the destruction the way Kings does. Only the end result matters, given in four verses:

Mass slaughter; looting of the temple furnishings and treasuries and the royal treasuries; burning of the temple; breaking down and burning the wall and fortifications of Jerusalem; deportation of the remaining inhabitants.

The deportation and enslavement lasts until the rise of the Persian kingdom. And since we don't have a closing regnal formula for Zedekiah (and didn't for Jehoiakin before him) or a death notice, this is Zedekiah's reign.

V. 21 is one of the most crucial verses in the entire HB. It's the earliest manifestation we have of two tropes that continue developing through the Hellenistic period and, really, until today.

The first is the trope of the empty land. Unlike Kgs, for Chr, there's no-one left in the land. The land (not just the temple) has had so much impurity build up in it that it has to keep Sabbath (cf. Lev 26) until it's pure again.

The second is the trope of seventy years. Of course this is right out of Jeremiah (25, 29). What Chr does is combine Lev with Jer.

The empty land trope has had devastating effect in the history of European colonialism, particularly of the Americas.

The seventy years trope gave rise to all kinds of eschatological movements, because the ending of Chronicles shows that it was fulfilled once, so it could be fulfilled again.

See, e.g., Daniel (of course), but also the Bar Kochba revolt coming up on 70 years after Titus' victory.

It's all packed in together in this one verse in Chronicles. The afterlife of this verse can't ever be adequately described.

[2 Chronicles 36:22-23](#)

Cyrus' edict

Chr is not interested in life either inside (not possible, because Sabbaths) or outside (Babylon, Egypt) the land during those 70 years. That's irrelevant.

All that's relevant is that Cyrus has provided warrant for the rebuilding of the temple now that the land's purity has been restored.

Cyrus is the new Davidic king. All hail our new Persian overlords!

Of course these two verses are paralleled and continued in Ezra 1:1-6. Tons of arguments about which was its original context. Books have been written on this, seriously.

I think it's original to here, because the book MAKES NO SENSE AT ALL WITHOUT IT! Like why would this book even exist?

There's also tons of arguments about whether Chr is eschatological or non-eschatological, particularly with respect to the Davidic dynasty.

To me this misses the point. David's dynasty isn't needed any more because the temple has a new sponsor, and because the temple has been all laid down by David.

We have the torah of Moses and the commandment of David, and that's all we need. The archive is complete.

That's it!

It's been 47 weeks of commentary over the past 15 months, 50K words. Tomorrow I'll post the final recap thread. Thanks for reading!

Thanks especially to those who've engaged with questions and clarifications. Besides treasure in heaven, you'll also be acknowledged when I get my commentary finished.

Special shout-out to @GaryMckirchy who has been, I think, my most faithful reader.

Commentary writing truly is, I've come to find, a communal activity.

Thinking through the text for the Twitter format has also forced me to sharpen my own questions, difficulties, and explanations. It's been a great discipline as well.

Tomorrow is my first day at @KnoxCollegeCA as Academic Dean and Professor of Hebrew Bible. (Since July 1 is a holiday in Canada, I won't be in the office until July 4.) It will be my next journey. Thanks for coming with me on this one.