

Introduction to Chronicles

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MAJOR THEMES: DIVINE RESPONSES

23-28) Divine Responses

The Chronicler completed his doctrine of divine blessing and judgment by addressing the manner in which God would respond to his people. His history demonstrates that God's blessings and judgments take many different and unpredictable forms. By repeating some scenarios, however, the Chronicler pointed to patterns which God followed in the past to create a set of expectations for his post-exilic readers. We will touch on five of these patterns: 24) *Victory and Defeat*, 25) *Increase and Decline of Progeny*, 26) *Prosperity and Poverty*, 27) *Disappointment and Celebration*, and 28) *Health, Long Life, Sickness and Death*.

23) *Victory and Defeat*

Original Israelite Readers:

Victory and defeat appear as patterns of blessing and judgment on many occasions. The Chronicler focused on these themes because his readers faced many military threats. They had returned to Jerusalem, but then political security was tenuous at best. Just as the prophets had announced that return to the land would lead to war (see Isa 11:11-16; 49:14-26; 54:1-3; Jer 30:10-11; Ezk 38-39; Amos 9:11-12), the Chronicler realized that the potential of warfare was great. For this reason, he set much of his discussion of divine judgment and blessing in the arena of warfare. He taught his post-exilic readers how to avoid defeat and to secure the blessing of victory in battle.

The following list indicates where the Chronicler dealt with victories and defeats.

Victories

Transjordanian Tribes (1 Chr 5:10,20-22)

David (1 Chr 11:4-9, 12-14; 14:8-17; 18:1-13;19:1-20:3; 20:4-8)

Abijah (2 Chr 13:2b-21) Asa (2 Chr 14:8-14)

Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:1-30)

Amaziah (2 Chr 25:11-12)

Uzziah (2 Chr 26:6-8)

Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:9-21)

Defeats and Setbacks

Transjordanian Tribes (1 Chr 5:24-26)

Saul (1 Chr 10:1-14)

Rehoboam (2 Chr 12:1-12)

Asa (2 Chr 16:1-6)

Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 18:28-34)

Jehoram (2 Chr 21:12-17)

Joash (2 Chr 24:23-24)

Amaziah (2 Chr 25:20-24)

Ahaz (2 Chr 28:6-8)

On the one hand, military defeat was judgment for sin. The exile of the Transjordanian tribes was due to infidelity (1 Chr 5:24-26). The Philistines defeated Saul because of his great sins (1 Chr 10:1-14). Solomon acknowledged that sin often leads to military ruin (2 Chr 6:24). Rehoboam forsook God and his Law only to find himself threatened by Shishak (2 Chr 12:5-8). Infidelity and murder led to Jehoram's defeat (2 Chr 21:12-17). Disobedience led to Joash's overthrow (2 Chr 24:20-24). Amaziah refused to listen to God and suffered defeat (2 Chr 25:20). Idolatry brought defeat to Ahaz (2 Chr 28:1-8). Although the vast majority of examples indicate that defeat was God's response to the sins of his people, 2 Chr 6:24 suggests that the Chronicler understood that not all defeats were because of sin.

The Chronicler's emphasis on military defeat as divine judgment followed the outlook of Moses and the prophets. Mosaic literature presents defeat as a covenant curse for rebellion against God (see Deut 28:36-37,64; Lev 26:17). The prophets affirmed the same perspective (e.g. Isa 8:5-8; Jer 5:10-17; Hab 1:2-11). The Chronicler applied these theological perspectives to his analysis of Israel's history. The nation often suffered defeats because of rebellion against God.

On the other hand, the Chronicler also pointed to Israel's tremendous victories as a result of fidelity to God. He often stressed the wonder of these events by indicating the enormous sizes of the enemies whom Judah defeated. The Transjordanians took one hundred thousand captive (1 Chr 5:10,20-22). David faced thirty-two thousand chariots and charioteers along with others (1 Chr 19:6-7). Rehoboam was attacked by twelve hundred chariots, eighty thousand horsemen and innumerable troops (2 Chr 12:3). Jeroboam had 800,000 troops against Abijah's 400,000 (2 Chr 13:3). Zerah lost to Asa even though he had a vast army with three hundred chariots (2 Chr 14:9). Jehoshaphat also faced a vast enemy whom God defeated (2 Chr 20:2).

For the most part, the Chronicler noted the tremendous advantage of Israel's enemies to demonstrate that victory came not by human power but by divine intervention. From the Chronicler's perspective, victory in battle demonstrated that "the battle is God's" (1 Chr 5:22). By contrast, the Chronicler once mentioned that infidelity led to Israel's defeat despite her superior numbers (2 Chr 24:24).

On many occasions, the Chronicler linked victory in battle with other major themes in his book. First, victory is often associated with prayer. In his dedicatory prayer, Solomon asked God to respond to prayers offered in times of battle (2 Chr 6:24-25,28-31,34-35). Solomon's desire is fulfilled a number of times in Chronicles. The Transjordanian tribes receive victory because of their prayers (1 Chr 5:20). Prayer delivered Rehoboam from total defeat (2 Chr 12:1-12). Abijah and his men were delivered in battle because of prayer (2 Chr 13:14). Asa was victorious because he cried out to God (2 Chr 14:11). Jehoshaphat prayed in two different battles with positive results (2 Chr 18:31;20:6-12). Hezekiah and Isaiah found deliverance for Jerusalem through prayer (2 Chr 32:20).

The Chronicler's purpose for repeating the connection between prayer and military victory is not difficult to discern. By drawing attention to the ways prayer delivered God's people in the past, the Chronicler instructed the post-exilic community on the necessity of prayer in their own day. When warfare threatened, the people of God were to pray.

Moreover, the Chronicler described the cessation of war as the gift of "peace" (1 Chr 4:40; 22:9,18; 23:25; 2 Chr 14:6,7; 15:15; 20:30), "rest" (1 Chr 19:19; 22:9; 2 Chr 14:1,5,6; 20:30; 34:28), and "quiet" (1 Chr 22:9; 2 Chr 23:21). The repetition of these positive motifs enabled the Chronicler to set positive goals before his post-exilic readers. They lived in a time of great insecurity. Nevertheless, through examples of God granting peace, rest and quiet to his people from time to time, the Chronicler depicted what his readers could expect to receive in their day as they were faithful to God and experienced victory from him.

Contemporary Christian Readers:

The New Testament extends the Chronicler's concept of victory and defeat into the inauguration, continuation, and consummation of Christ's Kingdom. The inauguration marked the beginning of great victory. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, death was "swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor 15:54). Satan fell from his position of authority (Lk 10:18), and was bound that the Kingdom might progress victoriously (Mk 3:27; Rev 20:2). In his earthly ministry, Christ disarmed and made a mockery of the powers opposing God (Col 2:15).

Following the leadership of the Divine Warrior, Christians are to engage in battles that the Kingdom may advance. The war is not against "flesh and blood" but "against the powers of this dark world" and "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph 6:12). Believers are to fight the good fight (1 Tim 1:18; 6:12) by putting on the full armor of God and the armor of light (Rom 13:12; Eph 6:11). The weapons of the Christian soldier are not the weak weapons of this world. Rather the weapons of the Christian are filled with "divine power" (1 Cor 10:4). The principal empowerment of the believer is prayer (Eph 6:18). Far from being a privilege of communication with God whereby we merely petition God for blessings, prayer is our access to the Divine Warrior himself. The prayers of believers are the powerful tools that God has issued to dismantle the forces of evil. As a result, Christians attain the victory through Christ (1 Cor 15:57) and become "more than conquerors" (Rom 8:37). For everyone "born of God overcomes the world" (1 Jn 5:4).

"Fighting" and "victory" are central metaphors in John's description of the consummation. Occasionally, spiritual warfare appears bleak and uncertain for the Christian, but John's apocalyptic vision reassures every Christian that God will win the battle. Christ will return to earth to bring final defeat to all of his enemies (Rev 19:11-21; 20:7-10).

24) *Building and Destruction*

Original Israelite Readers:

The Chronicler also juxtaposed successful building projects and destruction as demonstrations of divine blessing and judgment. In the ancient Near East it was common for royal inscriptions to indicate divine blessings toward kings by recounting the king's successful construction efforts. City walls, roadways, fortifications, palaces, and temples were considered proof that a king was in the favor of his god. In much the same way, the

Chronicler indicated his evaluation of kings at particular moments by noting their building projects.

Building projects do not play a major role in the opening genealogies. The Chronicler only pointed to successful efforts of Ephraimites (1 Chr 7:24) and Benjamites (1 Chr 8:12). These references note the blessings of God on particular families, but they do not function very importantly in these chapters.

Although the record of David and Solomon's ideal reigns focuses on temple construction, it also mentions the construction of their palaces. David was forbidden to build a temple, but the Chronicler maintained his honor by noting that he built a palace for himself (1 Chr 14:1). Similarly, he also pointed out that Solomon had a splendid palace (2 Chr 2:1,3; 7:11; 8:1). In line with the expectations of people in his day, the Chronicler indicated that David and Solomon were kings whose blessing from God was evident in their successful palace construction efforts.

In addition to their palaces, the Chronicler also noted that David and Solomon fortified their nation against enemies. David rebuilt and strengthened Jerusalem (1 Chr 11:8). Solomon built a number of villages and established an elaborate system of defensive cities (2 Chr 8:2-6).

Throughout the Divided and Reunited Kingdom, construction projects served as part of the Chronicler's portrayal of divine blessing and judgment. Put simply, successful construction projects indicated God's approval of a king. Rehoboam (2 Chr 11:5-11), Asa (2 Chr 14:6,7; 16:6), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:12), Uzziah (2 Chr 26:2,6,9,10), Jotham (2 Chr 27:3-4) and Manasseh (2 Chr 33:14) built up defensive fortifications of various sorts. In their contexts, these records clearly indicate that the completion of these projects was the result of divine blessing. They demonstrated that God had blessed his people at that particular time.

One example of fortification is problematic. During the Sennacherib invasion, Hezekiah prepared for the approaching Assyrian army by building defenses for Jerusalem (2 Chr 32:5,29). Although the Chronicler did not explicitly condemn the king's actions, Isaiah the prophet spoke of Hezekiah's actions as a lack of trust in God (see commentary on 2 Chr 32). The chief difference between Hezekiah's actions and other fortification projects was that Hezekiah turned to human ingenuity in response to a threat. Other fortifications in Chronicles took place after battles had been won (2 Chr 16:6; 26:6) or as a result of faithfulness to God in some other matter (2 Chr 11:5-11; 14:6,7; 16:6; 17:12; 26:2,6,9,10; 27:3-4; 33:14).

The Chronicler's outlook on building and fortification projects fit well with the needs of his post-exilic readers. Those who returned to the ruins of Jerusalem concentrated on building the temple. Ezra and Nehemiah were involved in the refortification of Jerusalem. The Chronicler instructed his readers on the proper outlook on these matters. Rebuilding

Jerusalem and other sites was important, but these projects must not be motivated by reliance on human strength. Instead, success in fortifications and other building projects will come only as God's blesses his people for fidelity and trust. If the post-exilic community focused on faithfulness to God, then he would give them success in their construction efforts.

Contemporary Christian Readers:

The post-exilic building and fortification projects anticipate the spiritual building of the Kingdom of God. Architectural imagery is pervasive throughout the New Testament as Christ the king announces the ultimate building program when he claims, "I will build my church" (Mt 16:18). The inauguration of the Kingdom also coincided with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (70 A.D.).

The continuation of the Kingdom is characterized by the building up of the people of God into his Kingdom (Jude 20). Paul exhorts the people of God to "excel in the gifts that build up the church" (1 Cor 14:12). Christian fellowship finds its purpose in the building up of one another (1 Thes 5:11). The expansion of the Kingdom is accomplished through missionary efforts to lay a "foundation" as "expert" builders (1 Cor 3:10).

As "God is the builder of everything" (Heb 3:4), the glory of the Kingdom's consummation will result from the efforts of the Divine builder (Heb 3:4). While the enemies of God will ultimately suffer destruction (2 Thes 1:9; 2 Pet 2:1), the people of God will enter the great City "whose architect and builder is God" (Heb 11:10).

25) *Increase and Decline of Progeny*

Original Israelite Readers:

Another way in which the Chronicler illustrated God's response to Israel was through the increase and decline of progeny. The Chronicler's focus on this theme stemmed from older Biblical traditions. Moses had made it clear that many children were the blessing of God for fidelity to the covenant (see Exod 32:13; Deut 30:2-6,9-10). Similar beliefs were expressed elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g. Job 5:25; Ps 127:3; Isa 48:19).

In line with these traditions, the Chronicler noted that a number of tribes experienced significant increases of progeny. The tribe of Simeon is exalted by its large numbers (1 Chr 4:38). Similarly, Isaachar received the blessing of many children (1 Chr 7:4). The Benjamites also found this blessing (1 Chr 8:39; 9:7-9) as did David (1 Chr

14:3-7). Rehoboam was blessed in this way after responding appropriately to the prophetic word (2 Chr 11:18-23). Abijah had many children during his years of fidelity (2 Chr 13:20-21). Jehoiada's progeny received attention in the Chronicler's record (2 Chr 24:3).

By contrast, God judged Saul by killing both him and "his house" (1 Chr 10:14). The Chronicler pointed to divine judgment against Jehoram by noting that his children died (2 Chr 21:14,16-17).

These passages demonstrate that the Chronicler sought to motivate his post-exilic readers by pointing to the blessing of a large progeny and the judgment of a decrease progeny. As the prophet Zechariah indicated, the hope of restoration after exile included large numbers of children in Jerusalem (Zech 8:5). The Chronicler held forth this ideal as well. Despite these hopes, the population of the post-exilic community remained relatively small. Chronicles explained that the failure of this hope was due to infidelity and that its fulfillment depended on the faithful response of the post-exilic community.

Contemporary Christian Readers:

The Old Testament's concern with physical progeny is developed in a number of directions in the New Testament. On the one hand, concern for children as the expected heirs of the covenant promises is evident in a number of New Testament passages (see Acts 2:39; 16:31; 1 Cor 7:14). Beyond this, however, the Chronicler's emphasis on large numbers within Israel develops into the New Testament theme of multiplication through the proclamation of the gospel. In his first coming, Christ brought many to salvation (Mt 4:23-25). The Church continues today to add to the numbers of the church. At Christ's return the Chronicler's emphasis on the blessing of large numbers will find its final fulfillment. In the end, myriads of men and women will stand before God in the salvation of Christ (Rev 7:9).

26) *Prosperity and Poverty*

Original Israelite Readers:

The Chronicler also illustrated the dynamics of divine judgment and blessing in Israel's experience of poverty and prosperity. The returnees had suffered economic hardships when they returned (e.g. Hag 1:6). These difficult conditions hardly compared with the portraits of Israel's glorious restoration found in the prophets (e.g. Isa 60:1-22; 65:17-25). In response to these conditions, the Chronicler pointed to the steps necessary

for avoiding economic deprivation and receiving the divine gifts of prosperity, wealth, and riches.

On the one hand, the Chronicler was convinced that post-exilic Israel's poverty resulted from serious violations of her covenant with God. This belief stemmed from Mosaic covenantal structures (Deut 11:13-15). On a number of occasions, the Chronicler presented this negative assessment. For example, Zechariah made it plain to Joash that he "will not prosper" (2 Chr 24:20) because of disobedience. Similarly, Rehoboam suffered economic losses from his royal treasuries (2 Chr 12:9). Along these same lines, the last kings suffered economically because of repeated rebellion against God (2 Chr 36:3,7,10). These incidents explained the difficult economic conditions of post-exilic Israel as the result of infidelity. They also warned against continuing in disobedience.

On the other hand, prosperity was a gift from God for fidelity. Consequently, the Chronicler focused especially on the wealth and riches of the ideal United Kingdom. David gained great riches through his warfare (1 Chr 18:7-8; 29:3-5). He also died with wealth and honor (1 Chr 29:28). Solomon, however, exceeded the wealth of his father. From the beginning of his reign Solomon prospered (1 Chr 29:23). God promised him even greater wealth in response to his request for wisdom to rule Israel (2 Chr 1:11,12). In fact, the Chronicler described Solomon's riches as greater than any other king who ever lived (2 Chr 9:22). The reigns of David and Solomon served as models for the post-exilic community. As a result, their reigns appear as times of great prosperity.

Similarly, the Chronicler highlighted the wealth and riches of certain kings during the Divided and Reunited Kingdom to teach his readers the way to prosperity. He noted the wealth gained in times of fidelity during the reigns of Asa (2 Chr 14:7), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:5; 18:1) and Hezekiah (2 Chr 31:21,27,29; 32:29). By this means, the Chronicler encouraged his readers to pursue righteousness in order to receive the gift of prosperity in their day.

Contemporary Christian Readers:

The Kingdom of God marked the onset of a new era of spiritual riches (Eph 1:3). Christ inaugurated his kingdom by offering the gift of eternal life and the full measure of joy (Jn 17:13; Rom 10:13). To all who entered the kingdom of God, Christ promised an increasing abundance of blessing (Mt 13:12).

The enduring blessing that Christ inaugurated for the believer is the gift of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:13). The Spirit is given as a "deposit" of our future inheritance in glory (Eph 2:13). Although Christians may experience an enormous lack of physical prosperity

and blessing, the great blessing of the Holy Spirit enables them to further the work of the Kingdom (1 Cor 7:7; 12:1-11; Eph 4:7-13). Like Paul, Christians should not be surprised to find themselves deprived and persecuted (1 Thes 2:9; 1 Pet 4:12).

Even so, the riches which are not guaranteed during the continuation of the Kingdom will be given in full at its consummation. When Christ returns believers will inherit the earth (Mt 5:5) and enjoy the riches of the New Heavens and New Earth (1 Tim 6:19; Eph 1:18).

27) *Disappointment and Celebration*

Original Israelite Readers:

The Chronicler drew attention to God's responses to Israel by highlighting the themes of disappointment and celebration. According to prophetic hopes, the restoration of the kingdom was to be a joyous event (Isa 60:1-22; 65:17-25). In reality, however, there were moments of celebration (Ezra 3:10-13; 6:16;), but more often the restored community suffered (e.g. Ezra 3:12; 4:1-24; Neh 1:4; 8:10-11). The Chronicler addressed this situation by identifying the causes of these disappointments and by pointing to the way of joy.

Incidents of disappointment appear in two ways in Chronicles. First, the Chronicler pointed to scenes of disappointment simply by noting incidents that would ordinarily lead to sorrow and grief (e.g. 2 Chr 20:35-37; 36:15-19). The emotional weight of these events was so obvious that no comment on emotions was necessary. Second, the Chronicler pointed explicitly to the sadness and disappointment of some events (e.g. 1 Chr 10:10-14; 2 Chr 33:12-14; 35:25). In each of the cases, the cause of disappointment is made plain. God's people had rebelled against him.

As important as these disappointing events may have been, it is evident that the Chronicler focused more on celebrative events. Joyous celebration played an especially prominent role in the idealized reigns of David and Solomon. Each of the major portions of David's reigns ended with celebration including festive eating (1 Chr 12:40; 16:3; 29:22). Celebrations extend for lengthy portions of David's reign (1 Chr 12:38-40; 15:25-16:43; 29:6-25). In much the same way, the central event of Solomon's life, the construction and dedication of the temple, ended in celebration in which the whole nation rejoiced in unison (2 Chr 5:2-7:10).

The record of the Divided and Reunited Kingdom does not give as much attention to joyous celebration. Nevertheless, portions of five reigns stand out because they illustrate how certain actions brought celebration to the people of God. During Asa's reforms, the people

rejoiced as they renewed covenant with God (2 Chr 15:10-15). The restoration of Joash to his rightful place as king and the covenant renewal that followed led to great celebration (2 Chr 23:21). Hezekiah restored the temple with the result of joy (2 Chr 29:36). The celebration of his Passover was so great that the festival had to be extended for a week (2 Chr 30:23-31:1). Joy also resulted from the enormous contributions the people made to the temple services in Hezekiah's day (2 Chr 31:8). Finally, Josiah's Passover observance also brought rejoicing to the nation (2 Chr 35:1-19).

Once again, the Chronicler's motivations for highlighting these events is not difficult to discern. Covenant renewal, the reestablishment of the Davidic throne, and the restoration of national unity around the temple were among his highest ideals. He hoped to motivate his post-exilic readers to pursue these goals by displaying joys that resulted when they were attained in the past.

Contemporary Christian Readers:

The New Testament also sets joyous celebration before Christians to motivate them to faithful living. The angels answered that the inauguration of the Kingdom brought "great joy" (Lk 2:10). Celebration belongs to everyone who welcomes Jesus and his Kingdom.

At least two major threats come against Christian joy as the Kingdom continues. First, rebellion against God's Law and failure to trust Christ may cause severe disappointment. Jesus explained that the completion of joy is contingent upon obedience and remaining faithful (Jn 15:9-11). Furthermore, Paul warned that turning from the gospel, even in the midst of trial, would inevitably bring disappointment (Gal 4:15). Second, the trials of this age also threaten to bring disappointment instead of celebration.. Jesus foretold that Christians will endure many trials, but he also promised that grief will eventually transform into joy (Jn 16:20).

Ultimately, the hope of every Christian is grounded in the consummation of the Kingdom. It will be marked by immeasurable celebration and festivity. Never again will the Christian's joy be lost (Jn 16:22; Heb 12:22; Rev 7:17).

28) *Healing and Long Life / Sickness and Death*

Original Israelite Readers:

Chronicles also draws attention to the experience of sickness, death, healing, and long life as God's responded to his people. Building on long-standing biblical traditions,

the Chronicler noted that sickness and untimely deaths often result from the judgment of God (2 Chr 15:13; 23:7). By contrast, healing from disease and long life stand as signs of God's blessing (1 Chr 29:28; 2 Chr 32:24-26).

The Chronicler also made it clear that death was often the consequence of disobedience. In the midst of Asa's reform, the punishment of death was extended to anyone who did not seek the Lord (2 Chr 15:13). Death also ensued when an act of desecration toward the temple was committed (2 Chr 23:2). Hezekiah experienced the threat of death but the Lord responded graciously to his repentance and faithfulness (2 Chr 32:24-26).

It goes without saying that death was not always God's curse on his people. For this reason, the Chronicler often noted the honor or dishonor afforded kings in their burials. His reports vary in a number of ways. Some kings were highly honored in their burial notices by their close association with David: Solomon (2 Chr 9:31), Rehoboam (2 Chr 12:16), Abijah (2 Chr 14:1), Asa (2 Chr 16:14), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 21:1), Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:33). The burials of other kings were qualified to indicate their dishonor: Jehoram (2 Chr 21:20), Ahaziah (2 Chr 22:9), Joash (2 Chr 24:25), Uzziah (2 Chr 26:23). Still other burial notices are relatively neutral: Amaziah (2 Chr 25:28), Manasseh (2 Chr 33:20), Josiah (2 Chr 35:24).

These final burial notices shed light on the manner in which the Chronicler hoped his readers would respond to the actions of each king. They were not intended as categorical approvals or disapprovals; most kings in each grouping exhibited positive and negative actions. Yet, their burial notices indicated the Chronicler's last word on each king. A dishonorable burial notice drew attention to the king's actions which led to judgment. An honorable burial notice focused on the fidelity that led to that blessing.

Contemporary Christian Readers:

The Kingdom of Christ began with dramatic displays of healing and other physical miracles. The ministries of Christ and his apostles demonstrated that the great Son of David brought with him the blessing for which the Chronicler hoped. Jesus came that we might have life more abundantly (Jhn 10:10). At the same time, the New Testament also testifies that the judgment of God during the inauguration and continuation of the Kingdom sometimes takes the form of physical death (e.g. Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 11:30; 1 Jhn 5:16). Finally, at the consummation of all things believers will enter eternal life and health (Rev 22:1-5). The wicked, however, will undergo eternal death (Rev 21:6-8).

TRANSLATION AND TRANSMISSION

Reliable translations of Chronicles are readily available to English readers. Nevertheless, significant difficulties in translation appear from time to time. For the most part, this commentary follows the New International Version (NIV). When the commentary differs with the NIV, other major English translations (New King James [NKJ], New American Standard [NAS], and New Revised Standard [NRS]) are usually cited to illustrate and support an alternative rendering.

Beyond this, occasionally it is necessary to mention problems that arose in the transmission of ancient versions of Chronicles, Samuel, and Kings. The main witnesses to these books are the traditional Hebrew (Masoretic) text, versions of the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint), Syriac (Peshitta), and Latin (Vulgate) texts. Although this commentary presupposes the infallibility of the Hebrew text which the Chronicler originally penned under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, none of the ancient versions of the book now available perfectly match the original. As a result, the commentary must deal with ancient witnesses in at least three different ways.

First, attention is given to possible corruptions of the ancient texts lying behind our modern translations. On a number of occasions it seems likely that one or more witnesses have suffered from intentional or unintentional changes. These corruptions are mentioned when they have a bearing on interpretation.

Second, recent discoveries at Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls) have provided much insight into the original text of Chronicles. Cave IV at Qumran (4Q) contained a number of fragments of the book of Samuel. Analyses of these fragments strongly suggest that the Chronicler used a version of Samuel that was not identical with the traditional Hebrew text on which our modern translations of Samuel are based. As a result, differences between our English translations of Samuel and Chronicles do not always represent intentional changes by the Chronicler. As we will see, some apparent differences between Samuel and Chronicles in our versions were not present in the Chronicler's original Hebrew texts of Samuel and Chronicles.