Chronicles as Theology

Genealogies and ritual and battles of implausible magnitude: the Chronicler’s contribution to the Old Testament (though probably Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah[[1]](#footnote-1) is the end product of several stages of development rather than one man’s creation) reads strange to modern ears. Yet is comes from a period in postexilic times somewhat like our own. The great acts of God in his people’s history belonged to the past, and she could no longer aspire to power and significance in the secular world. Where was God to be found now? What did it now mean to be the people of God? This is the situation in which Ch has to do theology: how does he go about his task?

## 1. Chronicles’ Theological Method

The theologians of the Bible could express themselves in prophetic oracles or in apostolic letters, in visionary symbolism or in near-philosophical argument; but they most often adopt the form of narrative. Thus in his extended narrative work, Ch follows notable predecessors, who are also among his major sources. But he rewrites their story, as he must if it is to speak to his own situation. How he does so we can see by comparing him with them.

### It is a history of unprecedented sweep

Ch’s narrative extends from Adam to Ezra and Nehemiah, and thus offers a total history from creation to (presumably) the most recent significant events. “History moves from creation to its first climax in David and the temple; it moves again through judgment to its second climax, reached in the interrelated work of rebuilding and of Ezra”[[2]](#footnote-2). In this sweep, it contrasts both with the pentateuch, which was not overtly brought up-to-date beyond Moses’ times, and also with the history books that follow, which at most (that is, if the <Deuteronomic history>[[3]](#footnote-3) approach is right) review the period from the exile, *their* most recent significant event, back to the conquest. Building on these predecessors’ work, Ch takes from Sa-Kg his framework for the history of the monarchy, prefaces it with abbreviated history in the form of genealogies, and completes it with a treatment of the restoration. Ch’s significant contribution, by means of these additions at either end of the history, is to connect the community of his own day with universal history: she is set in the context of a purpose of God which has been at work since creation, and which is in a special way finding fulfillment now in the people of God established in Judah (The approach is taken up later by Josephus, and by Luke, who provides a setting for Jesus in the form of a genealogy going back to Adam and God: Lk 3.23-38). Unlike other great narrative works, however, Ch’s comprehensive history is not dominated by one event, such as the exodus and conquest, fall of Jerusalem, or restoration – though the reign of David comes near to having such a central place.

### It omits sections of Sa-Kg

What an author omits may be as revealing as what he says. Most noticeable when we compare Ch with Sa-Kg is the absence of the whole of the history of the northern kingdom: 1 Kg 15.25-21.29, for instance, which includes the Elijah stories, disappears *in toto.* By omitting them, Ch expresses his conviction that the story of northern Israel has no place in the history of the people of God.

Also conspicuous by their absence in Ch are the <human interest> narratives concerning David and Solomon which play an important role in the story of the kingdom in Sa-Kg. It is not just because he wishes to portray these heroes in the best light that Ch omits events such as the David and Batsheba incident (although he is concerned to highlight <good examples>). His omissions cover a wider area than the kings’ weaknesses, and indeed some stories that reflect ill on them are retained: the account of David’s census appears in a developed form which does nothing to hide the king’s sin (1 Ch 21). It is included because, unlike other material omitted, it relates to Ch’s major theme of the history of the temple. Similarly David’s military victories are not dwelt on, but are summarized in 1 Ch 18, because they provide the reason why David himself cannot build the temple, and also the resources with which Solomon can do so. It is the temple theme which provides the criterion of inclusion or omission.

### It compiles complexes of chapters to give a coherent theological exposition of a particular period

Although he derives so much of his material from antecedent sources, Ch’s creativity turns them into complexes expressive of his own message. Thus in 1 Ch 1-9 he presents us in the genealogical introduction with “a picture of the theocracy *par excellence*, that of David and a few of his more worthy successors”[[4]](#footnote-4). 1 Ch 10-16 expounds the story of the rise of David in a way so different from the parallel narrative (1 Sa 31-2 Sa 6), though utilizing some of its material, that it deserves to be regarded as a new exposition of what might be called <the elevation of David and of the ark>. 1 Ch 17-29 – much of the former part parallel to 2 Samuel, the latter part new in Ch – develops the story of David’s preparations for the temple. In 2 Ch, the accounts of the reigns of Jehoshaphat (17-20) and Hezekiah (29-32) further exemplify this skill of Ch’s.

Again, behind Ezra 1-6 lie diverse sources of varying historical significance. The decree of Cyrus (at least the version in Ezr 6) is authentic enough, but there was actually nothing very distinctive about his treatment of his Jewish subjects (Ezr 1); the roll of returned exiles (Ezr 2, cf. Ne 7) seems not to relate exclusively to a return in 537, which was but the beginning of a lengthy and gradual process; it is an open question whether the laying of the temple foundations (Ezr 3) followed immediately the arrival of the first returning exiles; the first excerpt from the official files (Ezr 4.8-23) relates to a later incident in the reign of Artaxerxes (4.7). Ch orders this material not primarily chronologically but theologically. The return from the exile is the promised new exodus (Ezr 1); the returning multitude is the new people of Israel re-entering upon their rightful inheritance (Ezr 2). But this new exodus is the means to an end, namely the building of a new temple (cf. 1.2-5), as sometimes the building of Solomon’s temple is seen as the climax of the first exodus (Ex 15, Ps 68): so the description of the laying of the new foundations follows immediately (Ezr 3). As the people had been warned after the first exodus about covenants with “the inhabitants of this land”, who would become “adversaries” (Jg 2.2-3)[[5]](#footnote-5), now building work meets opposition from “adversaries” among the “people of the land” who are not allowed to join in the work (Ezr 4.1-5). Apparently because this opposition is regarded as typical of what the Jews had to contend with in the years after the return, as there was continuing conflict after the original settlement, further illustrations of it from later times are now given (Ezr 4.6-23) before Ch brings us back into chronological sequence by means of a resumptive note at the end of the chapter (verse 24). But then the complex ends with the triumphant completion of the temple rebuilding, which comes about, as the building of the first temple had, through the encouragement of prophets (Ezr 5-6).

A scheme that is theological and only partly corresponds to the historical order of events thus emerges: the story of the building of the second temple by the word of the God of Israel and of the Persian kings (6.14), which parallels the *Heilsgeschichte* scheme of Exodus-Kings.

### It replaces stories in Sa-Kg by new ones

Although Ch is generally happy to omit everything that concerns the northern kingdom, on two occasions he finds Kg telling within the context of northern history of incidents which involved both kingdoms. Rather than either rejecting the narrative completely or including it as it stands, he replaces it by a southern equivalent or version.

Thus the story of Jeroboam’s apostasy is replaced by an account Rehoboam’s reign which seems designed to present the former king as the antitype of the latter. Each section of the version in 1 Kg 12.25-14.20 has an equivalent (usually much briefer) in 2 Ch 11.5-23:

*Defensive measures:*

12.25 Jeroboam fortifies cities 11.5-12 Rehoboam fortifies many cities

*Religious policy:*

12.26-33 Jeroboam seeks strength through 11.13-17 Rehoboam finds strength through

his religious policy: Jeroboam’s religious policy:

26-27 fears loss of people 16-17a gains people

28-30 founds sinful cult 17b gains right cult

31-33 ignores priests and Levites 13-15 gains priests and Levites

*Consequences:*

13.1-32 Trouble for Jeroboam 11.18-21 Blessing for Rehoboam

*Succession:*

13.33-14.20 Jeroboam’s son Abijah prevented 11.22-23 Rehoboam’s son Abijah prepared for

from succeeding succeeding.

(Kg refers to Rehoboam’s successor as Abijam; perhaps this was his personal name, Abijah his throne name. Nevertheless it is surely significant that Ch prefers the latter, which offers such a nice parallel).

The second passage for which Ch seems to substitute a story told from a southern viewpoint is 2 Kg 3. Whether or not 2 Ch 20 refers to the same incident (and whether or not Ch thought it did), the story parallels the one in Kg. It belongs to a similar historical context and involves the same main protagonists (though not the Israelite king), but it has its setting in the history of the south rather than the north, it involves a southern rather than a northern prophet, and it ends in unqualified victory for Juda rather than retreat for Israel.

A different motive underlies the replacement of the last paragraph of Kg by an alternative. 2 Kg 25.27-30 relates the release in exile of King Jehoiachin; an event which hints that God has not finished with the people to whom he committed himself in David. But for Ch, it is Cyrus’ victory rather than Jehoiachin’s release which heralds the restoration (2 Ch 36.22-23).

### It provides a rewritten version of stories in Sa-Kg

Often Ch includes a new version of incidents in Sa-Kg, whose differences reflect his characteristic concerns and therefore may often be the result of his own rewriting. But as other times the differences make no significant theological point (or even work against Ch’s purpose), suggesting that sometimes at least his version comes from some pre-existent source other than Sa-Kg.

Among such alternative accounts are his narratives of David’s census (1 Ch 21), of Solomon’s prayer at Gibeon (2 Ch 1), and of the reigns of Ahaz (2 Ch 28) and Joash (2 Ch 23.24). An outline of part of the latter is set out below, with the parallel in Kings and some notes of the differences:

2 Kg 2 Ch

11.21-12.1 introduction 24.1 introduction

12.2 Joash does right 24.2 during Jehoiada’s lifetime

12.3 but leaves the high places -

-- 24.3 Joash’s family

-- 24.4 introduction to reform

12.4-5 money for repairs to be collected by 24.5a money to be collected by Levites with priests

priests from offerings by visiting people

12.6-8 priests fail to make repairs 24.5b-7 Levites fail to collect money

12.9a Jehoiada sets a chest for the offerings 24.8 they set the chest outside the temple

12.9b priests put in the money 24.9-10 proclamation; people put in money

12.10 chest emptied as necessary 24.11 being brought in by Levites

12.11-12 money given to workmen 24.12-13 and work done

12.13-16 no money for vessels 24.14a vessels made later

-- 24.14b-22 Joash’s apostasy

12.17-18 Hazael’s campaign 24.23-24 is judgment on Joash

12.19-21 summary and death 24.5-27 differences of detail

Some of these differences reflect Ch’s known interests. Thus he introduces the Levites, and shows how exact justice works out in the king’s reign by omitting the qualification of Joash’s commendation in Kg (2 Kg 12:3) – instead he describes him as wholehearted in the earlier part of his reign (2 Ch 24.2), and thus being blessed (verse 3), but falling away later (verses 14b-22). This apostasy explains the trouble that comes about through Hazael (verses 23-24), which is unexplained in Kg. In the account of the apostasy Ch’s characteristic motifs appear – the wrath of God coming on human guilt, a prophet seeking to win men back, God’s spirit coming on someone, warnings about transgression and forsaking God; and the details of Hazel’s campaign are mostly omitted in order to expatiate on the incident’s significance – as later, on a larger scale, the details of the fall of Jerusalem are omitted in order to develop its meaning (compare 2 Ch 36 with 2 Kg 23.30-25.26).

On the other hand, it is difficult to find signs of Ch’s *Tendenz* in the detailed differences in his closing summary (verses 25-27); and although the introduction of the Levites is in keeping with his interests, it is striking that the incident brings discredit on them (verses 5-7). It seems likely that he is using an alternative source (a midrash in fact[[6]](#footnote-6) - verse 27) rather than freely rewriting himself, for what easer in the latter case than to leave the priests’ failure as in Kg and then bring in the Levites to resolve the problem?

Nevertheless, it remains true that the choice of version and the structuring of the chapter reflect Ch’s activity. It may be feasible to harmonize the two accounts – for instance Ch may be right in assuming that the altar by which the offerings chest was set (2 Kg 12.9) was actually the altar of burnt offerings, at the temple entrance (cf. 2 Ch 24.8); but to concentrate on doing so may cause one to miss what each independent narrative is saying.

### It makes smaller modifications to stories which appear substantially as in Sa-Kg

Sometimes it seems that a passage in his source is fundamentally acceptable to Ch, but regarded as worth changing in one or two particulars. Thus the promise to David (2 Sa 7) appears in a similar form (1 Ch 17) but is altered in accordance with the Chronicler’s interest and practices elsewhere in his work, so that <the ark> becomes <the ark of the covenant> (1 Ch 17.1), the possibility of chastisement is omitted (verse 13), and David’s kingdom becomes God’s kingdom (verse 14, though contrast verse 11). There are other less significant differences between the two versions of the incident: <Yahweh> becomes <God>, and vice versa, <the king> becomes <David> (verses 1-2), <loins> becomes <sons> (verse 11)[[7]](#footnote-7) and so on.

Again, Solomon’s prayer at the temple dedication in Ch’s version (2 Ch 5.2-6.42, cf. 1 Kg 8:1-53) stresses the Levites and music (2 Ch 5), and <Zion theology> rather than <exodus theology> (6.11, 40-42). Ch omits Solomon’s act of blessing (1 Kg 8:54-61), although he earlier includes David’s parallel act (1 Ch 16.2). Textual criticism suggest that the nonappearance of 2 Ch 6.5b-6a and 13 in Kg is accidental[[8]](#footnote-8) while many other minor differences between Ch and Sa-Kg may be the chance result of Ch’s use of a different version of the Sa-Kg text from ours[[9]](#footnote-9).

### It inserts sections into the Sa-Kg framework

Although he omits so much from the story of the monarchy, Ch’s account is not very different in length from that of Sa-Kg; he adds almost as much as he omits. In place of the stories about David’s personal life there appears much more information about his activities in connection with Israel’s worship, in the form of narrative (1 Ch 15-16, 28-29) and of lists in connection with cultic arrangements (23-27). Ch later dwells at length on the cultic activities of Hezekiah (2 Ch 29-31) and Josiah (35).

More typical of the filling out of the story of the southern kingdom, however, is a series of illustrations of, and exhortations to, reliance and faithfulness, which are concerned more with war – though there is a place reserved for worship here too: holy war is now a worship activity (e.g. 2 Ch 20.18-22). Ch’s additions to the story of Asa (2 Ch 14-16) exemplify these themes:

14.1-5 introduction (parallel to 1 Kg 15.8-12 but distinctive).

14.6-7 building works, illustrating strength and prosperity (cf. 17; 26.1-15; 27.3-6; also the lists in 1 Ch 12; 27).

14.8-15 trust in God leads to a famous victory against all odds (cf. 13; 20).

15.1-15 prophetic challenge to new obedience (cf. 25.5-11).

15.16-16.6 removal of Maacah; invasion by Baasha (parallel to 1Kg 15.13-22 but distinctive).

16.7-10 prophetic judgment on sin as the cause of the invasion (cf. 12.5-8, 19.1-3, 24.15-22, 25.14-16, 28.5-15).

16.11-14 summary, death (parallel to 1 Kg 15.23-24, but distinctive).

## 2 Chronicles’ Theological Assumptions

Two particular presuppositions of Ch need to be taken up: his understanding of history and of eschatology.

### That you understand the present by understanding the past

Some such approach as this is implicit in the fact that he writes history at all. Or is it? And does he?

The role of the historian, as we understand it, begins with an open-minded search for truth about the past. His ideal is objectivity, and although he does not delude himself about being presuppositionless, he does seek to be open and honest as he faces evidence. Endeavoring to make sense of the past for its own sake, he is not looking for <right answers> to support a predetermined position, nor is he concerned with relevance or with ethical blame.

There his task begins, and there some would reckon it ends. Many historians, however, go on from their research to draw lessons, to make moral judgments. Although the principles upon which this may be done – like the principles of Biblical interpretation – seem hazy, we do assume that history has significance for us as well as meaning in itself; indeed an intuition that a certain period may have meaning for us seems not infrequently to have been a motive for studying it. We insist, however, that, if the historian goes on to draw lessons, if his real concern is to speak to today, his sermon must be based on the historian’s equivalent to historical-critical exegesis of his text – <significance for us> must be based on <meaning in itself>. It is easy to fail here, of course: the <Dam Busters> achievement, which has a prominent place in popular historical understanding of World War II, has been described as in fact “virtually devoid of military significance” and its fame as “a demonstration of the extent to which people will prefer over the truth a simple fable in which stereotypes can be recognized and prejudices confirmed”[[10]](#footnote-10). Our ideal, however, is agreed: existential lessons must be based on objective research. Further, the writing up of such research is also a task which aims at objectivity – as far as possible to describe events as they actually happened.

Critical history, then, might be defined as (a) a treatment of the past, (b) objectively researched, (c) factually presented, and (d) possibly existentially applied. How does Ch compare with this ideal?

One must begin with the last element in the above definition, for Ch’s overriding concern is to speak to the community of his own day. His work in fact exemplifies Bernard Lonergan’s definition of precritical history[[11]](#footnote-11): “it is *artistic:* it selects, orders, describes; it would awaken the reader’s interest and sustain it; it would persuade and convince. Again, it is *ethical:* it not only narrates but also apportions praise and blame: It is *explanatory:* it accounts for existing institutions by telling of their origins and development and by contrasting them with alternative institutions found in other lands. It is *apologetic,* correcting false or tendentious accounts of the people’s past, and refuting the calumnies of neighbouring peoples. Finally, it is *prophetic:* to hindsight about the past there is joined foresight on the future and there are added the recommendations of a man of wide reading and modest wisdom”.

Lonergan’s definition indicates how precritical history combines a central existential concern (d) with a real appeal to the past (a). It is, in fact, not characteristic of the precritical use of the past to be based on invention[[12]](#footnote-12). So, Ch is not just writing a historical novel or a piece of fanciful propaganda, a history of what ought to have happened or a sermon which uses images and traditions from the past but lacks interest in actual events. The fact that he gives explanation in historical terms, his frequent references to sources, and the accumulating evidence of the historical value of material he connects with these sources[[13]](#footnote-13), together imply that he *is* concerned with actual events of the past.

Nevertheless, one may grant that Ch, like other precritical historians, does not seek an objective and balanced understanding of the past for its own sake (b); he does not come at the past with the selfdenying openmindedness of the modern historical scholar concerned to understand it purely in its own terms. When he examines the past, he knows what he is looking for; he uses it as a source for facts which will illustrate or support the lesson which (on other grounds than the merely historical) he wishes to bring.

And furthermore, his presentation is concerned not so much to describe events as they actually happened (c), in all their radical distinctiveness, as to express the oneness of his faith with that of the past and to communicate as vividly as possible with his own day. Thus he describes as Levites those who would have been Levites in his day (e.g. 2 Ch 23), like an artist dressing the figures of history in the costumes of his own time[[14]](#footnote-14) – though the historical difficulties of connecting David with the organization of the Levites may have been exaggerated. Similarly Ch’s impossibly vast figures for offerings (1 Ch 22.14; 29.4,7) and armies (e.g. 2 Ch 17.14-18) probably have a historical origin, though they may have become misunderstood at some stage in the development of material; but they now incorporate an allowance for inflation, military (the Persian era is an age of great armies) as well as financial (cf. the *Living Bible’s* translation of <denarius> in Mt 20.2 as 20 dollars!) unless they are merely a symbolic expression of the magnitude of the occasion or the achievement[[15]](#footnote-15). Another way in which Ch’s presentation is unhistorical to our way of thinking is that he puts on the lips of leaders such as Abijah (2 Ch 13) exhortations which express in fact only what Ch himself would have said if he had been there.

This however is a practice Ch shares with D (see n. 3). In fact the difference between these two writers’ historiographical method has been exaggerated. Although Ch’s interest in the theological or existential significance of history is more explicit than D’s, both works are more factual, less interpretative, the nearer they are to their own day: Ch is less concerned with the historical detail and more with the interpretation of the fall of Jerusalem than Kg is, but for the period of Ezra and Nehemiah Ch has more straight description and less comment. Again, Ch is less interested in chronology than D: he sometimes ignores chronological order (e.g. in Ezr 4), leaves unexplained gaps (e.g. Ezr 7.1) or includes chronological data for reasons which are theological (2 Ch 36.21) or liturgical (Ezr 3.1, 6) or parenetic (2 Ch 29.3, 17; 34.3)[[16]](#footnote-16); but Kg can be <dischronologized> too[[17]](#footnote-17).

Both works are precritical history; the difference between them is one of degree rather than of kind. It may be compared with that between the synoptics and John: this is not a matter of <theological fancy>; for the synoptists are theologians too, while recent literary and archaeological study has tended to indicate that John is interested in the Jesus of history. D’s narrative is closer than Ch’s to national, political history, but this is because the message which D brings to the people of his day involves explaining the exile in these terms, whereas the situation of the postexilic cult community requires a different kind of message from Ch. And D has just as real a *Tendenz:* his omission of Hezekiah’s reform, Manasseh’s repentance, Josiah’s early reforms and fatal obstinacy, may stem not from ignorance (*ergo*, Ch invented them!) but from theological choice, a desire to highlight Josiah and the discovery of the lawbook. (A tendency to simplify the complexity of personalities and of historical development generally is a mark of precritical history which appears both in Ch and in D). Hence Ch’s account should not be assumed *a priori* to be historically inferior[[18]](#footnote-18).

But to centre our interest in Ch (or in D) in its significance as a source for Israelite history would be as mistaken as to treat it as a parenetic romance. On the one side, one has to say that Ch’s interest in history is that of the preacher and theologian, and it is as such first of all that he must be approached; on the other, one has to note that as a preacher and theologian he does express and support his message by referring to actual events of the past (not just to stories about events which may or may not have happened). And if *this* is the meaning of the word midrash[[19]](#footnote-19), then such indeed is Ch.

### That there is little future in eschatology

In Ch’s historical presentation, it is distinctively the Davidic past which is determinative for the present. Although Ch often refers to Moses’ law, he alludes little to Moses’ role in Israel’s history. As in Isaiah, Moses’ place is taken by David, who indeed dominates 1 and 2 Ch: the genealogies are “a panegyric” on him[[20]](#footnote-20), twenty chapters describe his reign (10-29), Solomon’s achievement is to fulfill David’s plans (2 Ch 1-9), Judah’s history continues because of the Davidic promise (10-36). 2 Chronicles marks the transitions, however, from the treatment of David to that of the exile and restoration, and there is little mention of David in Ezr-Ne. What happened to David after the exile? Does Ch look forward to a future establishment of the rule of David and of Yahweh?[[21]](#footnote-21)

Such a hope was certainly alive in the exile, and Haggai and Zechariah enthuse over Zerubbabel, the current Davidide, in such terms (e.g. Hg. 2.20-23; Zc 6.12-13). Ch itself recalls that God committed himself to David <for ever> (1 Ch 17.11-14) and traces David’s line down to about 400 (1 Ch 3), while Sanballat attributes royal aspirations to Nehemiah (Ne 6.6-7). Ch’s description of the glory of the past, especially the reign of David, might itself be intended to hint at his hopes for the future, in as far as it highlights the poverty of the present. Now there is no David, and the totality of Yahweh’s dominion (1 Ch 29.11) is hardly a present reality – Judah is in subjection to Persia (Ne 9.36-37) as well as under pressure periodically from the various provincial authorities, from neighbouring peoples, and from the local people, who were perhaps not unnaturally resentful of the spiritual exclusiveness of the retuned exiles (Ezr 4; 5; Ne 1-6). Once the nations’ gold and silver had been brought to Jerusalem (1 Ch 18) and used to beautify Solomon’s vast temple (2 Ch 3-4); now the people are poverty-stricken (Ne 5), the city remains desolate (7.4), and the temple is a feeble shadow of its predecessor (Ezr 3.12). For the prophets, tribute, city and temple have become eschatological motifs (Hg 2.6-9; Ezk 40-48): are they such for Ch too? Does the treatment of David and his successors, with their concentration on cultic rather tan secular affairs, suggest a program for the new David to whom Ch looks forward?

Certainly Nehemiah’s prayer implies a hope for a better future (Ne 9.32). But it is doubtful whether this hope should be labeled eschatological, or messianic. The prominence of David in Ch is indeed notable; but so is Ch’s interest in the ark, in tribal allotments, in holy war, and in prophecy. None of these were literal present realities in Ch’s time, but this does not mean that they must have been part of the people’s future hope. The Davidic monarchy is a sufficiently important part of the tradition inherited by Ch to demand a place in the theology he puts forward; but various pointers indicate that he thinks of it not as a hope for the future but as a past reality which is constitutive of what it means to be Israel now.

Thus Ch does not describe Zerubbabel in Davidic terms (Ezr 3-6), like Haggai and Zechariah; nor, like Kg, does he see the release of Jehoiachin (2 Kg 25.27-30), who was then still the rightful Davidic king, as a hint of hope for the future. He in fact replaces this latter paragraph by one relating how Yahweh takes the Persian Cyrus as his agent in restoring the exiles, and he describes succeeding Persian kings fulfilling similar functions. The exercise of political power is now left to secular authorities; whatever the divine commitment to David may have meant in the past, it no longer means an anointed of Yahweh on the throne of Judah.

Such an awareness has been unequivocally expressed in the exile by Second Isaiah; his expectations did not include an individual Davidic <messiah>. The role of political saviour would be fulfilled by Cyrus, whom he indeed described as Yahweh’s anointed (45.1); thus in Ch Cyrus is the agent of the new temple (2 Ch 36.22-3; Ezr 1).

Other aspects of the role of David, however, are transferred not to Cyrus but to the people as a whole. Israel is Yahweh’s servant (41.8-9); she is to fulfill the servant’s kingly calling (42.1-9)[[22]](#footnote-22). The Davidic covenant and calling are <democratized> - they belong to the whole Davidic people (55.3-5)[[23]](#footnote-23). This latter passage, the only specific mention of David in Is 40-55, is referred to by Ch in the course of rewriting the end of Solomon’s prayer (2 Ch 6.40-2). In the Kg version, Solomon ends by referring both in his prayer and blessing to the fulfillment of God’s promise through Moses, which is the basis of his people’s confidence for the future. Ch replaces this prayer and blessing by an appeal to God which quotes from Ps 132.8-10 (a psalm of David and of Zion), but with the text modified at the end so as to refer to “thy steadfast love for David thy servant”. The work <steadfast love> (*hesed*) here is in the plural (hence JB translates it “thy favours to David”), and in this form the phrase occurs only here and in Is 55.3.

Whether it was directly from Isaiah 40-55 that Ch gained his insights, or whether characteristically[[24]](#footnote-24) he simply picks up phrases from these chapters to express his own insights, he seems to share with Second Isaiah the double interpretative key to understanding the promises about David in the postexilic situation, when there no longer seemed any possibility that a Davidic king would sit on Israel’s throne. The political role of David in restoring the people to their land was fulfilled by his anointed, Cyrus; the covenant and servant status of David now belongs to the community of which he was the first king. Consequently, although Ch speaks of the election of David, this election implies that of the Davidic people; and the concentration on David in 1 and 2 Ch is in no tension with the prominence given to the life of the community in Ezr-Ne – indeed indirectly the same community is central in 1 and 2 Ch too, especially in as far as these two books pay so much attention to the origins of this community’s worship.

Ch thus represents one response to a central theological problem of the postexilic period: where are the presence and activity of God to be found? Apparently not in Israel’s political, national history, as they had been previously, and as the exilic and restoration prophets had often implied they would be again. Perhaps then in a future fulfillment of these prophecies, in a day known to God when he will break into the history from which he seems to have abdicated and bring in his kingdom? This approach takes seriously a fundamental aspect of Biblical faith in that it centres its hope on the future; but it does so in such a way as to threaten to rob the present of theological significance. We have been disappointed already in our hopes of Zerubbabel, Ch perhaps thought. He is no more satisfied with speculative, leap-of-hope solutions to the problems of the nation than Job and Qoheleth are to those of the individual. Rather, as well as being democratized, the Davidic covenant is seen as not a future hope but a present reality. Although Ch looks to a better future, his hope is not an eschatological one; his is a realized eschatology.

Ch, then, sees the fulfillment of God’s promises through the prophets in the present inner history and experience of God’s people, in God’s presence in her religious life. Jeremiah’s declaration that the exile would last a man’s lifetime (25.11-12; 29.10) is taken literally and regarded as fulfilled (2 Ch 36.21); it would be ungrateful to regard the exile as continuing and the prophesied period as much longer (so Dn 9.2, 24). The eternal kingship of God is realized now in worship, not expected in history. It is in this conviction that “a provincial cultic community tolerated by the Persian Empire…portrays history from Adam onwards as taking place all for her own sake!” [[25]](#footnote-25). Not that the people’s experience of “the realization of the theocracy on the soil of Israel”[[26]](#footnote-26) was so real, so total that there was nothing left to hope for in the future[[27]](#footnote-27). Ch’s eyes are not blind to the problems and failures of the postexilic community. But he does not want these to discourage the people about the possibilities of living with God now, or to encourage them to forfeit what they have got (cf. Ezr 9.8-9, 14). “Even now there is hope for Israel” (10.2). Thus the challenge to them is to be like Hezekiah, Josiah, Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, men who followed in David’s footsteps (cf. Ne 10; 12.44-13.3).

## 3 Chronicles’ Theological Emphases

What then is the content of Ch’s challenge to the community of faith of his day? If the restored community is not to go the way of its pre-exilic predecessor under the pressures of the postexilic period, it must give itself to faithful worship, purity, and trusting obedience.

### Worship

Ch shares the belief that the divine commitment to David is to be fulfilled in the life of the community (cf. Is 55.3-5). But he reinterprets it. Second Isaiah does not actually indicate how he expects the promise to be fulfilled, but the general drift of his message, along with his omission of any reference to the temple, would not lead one to expect him to look for its fulfillment primarily in the cultic sphere. This, however, is where it is seen by Ch (perhaps he is more directly the spiritual son of the Zion tradition), and this is the context which 2 Ch 6 gives to its allusion to Is 55.3. Israel is in this period a worshipping community, and it is in the community’s worship, ordered as it was by David, that this divine commitment to David and the eternal kingship of Yahweh are experienced as present reality. Here is the focal point of the expression of the relationship between Yahweh and his people.

Thus Ch is interested in the *temple*, dwelling on its planning (1 Ch 21-29), its building (2 Ch 2-7), its several reforms (e.g. 2 Ch 29-31), its rebuilding (Ezr 1-6). The stories of David, Solomon, many of the later kingly heroes, and the return from the exile, centre on their significance for the temple; achievements and adventures in secular life are omitted. The temple is the life centre of God’s people, “the hub of the Lord’s kingdom on earth” (Myers I, 1xviii). This being the case, how worship is conducted there matters; the *ritual laws* have to be taken very seriously, and Ch makes a point of noting that they were kept – for instance, he modifies the account of the temple dedication (2 Ch 7.7-10) to make it clear that the Day of Atonement was observed. He is not afraid to appeal to the law as the community’s religious statue-book, whose letter matters, although he grants that right motives and attitudes may make up for literal incorrectness (2 Ch 30.18-19).

He stresses the role of the *ministry:* the prophets may be mentioned here, for in Ch they characteristically preach about right worship and actually operate within the cult (they are forthtellers, rather than the foretellers of developing apocalyptic). Ch emphasizes the priests’ distinctive privilege of offering sacrifices, sometimes changing passages which might imply that others did so (e.g. 1 Ch 16.1) – and yet not doing this consistently (cf. verse 2!). He gives more prominence to the Levites, however, who fulfill many other key roles in worship which are not to be neglected and entitle them to honour. They begin as the rightful bearers of the ark (1 Ch 13-17) – perhaps it is for their sake that the ark is given such prominence in Ch; then they become leaders of music and singing, which is their raison d’etre according to 1 Ch 16.4-7. Ch stresses the not of *joy* and *praise* in worship, which contrasts with P’s concern (in the exile?) with sin and atonement. The praise of God is the very heart of what it means to be the people of God. Wellhausen ridiculed Ch’s transformation of the Sa-Kg picture of David the national hero into the patron of the cult, but von Rad asks “whether a theology that saw Israel’s existence so strongly conditioned by praise could have strayed so very far from the proper road”[[28]](#footnote-28). Along with the response of praise goes the response of *giving*, both for the sacrifices and for the building of the temple. As with other aspects of ritual, however, Ch keeps the matter in perspective: even the most magnificent offering could add nothing to God (1 Ch 29.10-16). Ch also speaks of worship other than that offered in the temple, both the *prayer* of individuals such as Nehemiah and *worship on the battlefield* (2 Ch 13.14, 20.21-22) – worship affects life and is, in fact, the key to victory in a quite material sense.

There is no postexilic history; men had ceased to look upon international affairs as the sphere of the activity of the hand of God. And even when Ch came to retell pre-exilic history, it is natural for him to treat it fro the angle which now seems interesting and relevant, as the story of the worship of the Israelite *qahal.* Ch needs to be understood, then, in the light of a comparison not just with Sa-Kg, but with the Psalms and P; it is a history (in as far as this word is appropriate) of Israel’s religion.

### Ch is concerned to safeguard the holiness of the people of God. This affects his attitude to Judah, to northern Israel, and to foreigners.

His concentration on *Judah* in the history of the divided monarchy stems from and expresses his conviction that Judah alone is the true people of God – indeed Ch would not acknowledge the term <divided monarchy> but would regard it as a contradiction in terms! It is Judah that God chose (1 Ch 28.4), it is in her that God’s rule is exercised, God’s presence known. It is in Judah alone that <the God of the Fathers> (Ch’s characteristic title for God) is worshipped (e.g. 2 Ch 11.16); by opposing her, northern Israel opposes the God of her own past history (13.12, 18), and she must rather return to him (19.4). It was Judah that kept the Davidic line, the further object of God’s elective choice (1 Ch 28.4). It is David’s kingdom which can be identified with that of Yahweh: Ch fairly consistently alters Sa-Kg’s references to the former so as to describe the kingdom as Yahweh’s, and he makes the point quite explicit in Jeroboam’s challenge to Abijah: Yahweh’s kingdom is in the hand of the sons of David (2 Ch 13.8). Although Ch presupposes the Mosaic covenant, the basis of the people’s relationship with God, he stresses David more than Moses – perhaps because the latter remained the common property of north and south, whereas the Davidic inheritance, which the north had once shared (cf. 1 Ch 11-2 Ch 10) but then spurned, was the distinctive possession of Judah.

Further, Judah alone has <the holy city> (Ne 11.1 – another expression derived from Second Isaiah? Cf. Is 48.2, 52.1). Jerusalem is an important theme in every part of Ch – indeed Michaeli (33-5) makes it the key motif of the work. In this city Judah alone has the true temple with its sole valid ministry and worship (cf. 2 Ch 13.9-11). It was Judah alone who went through the exile and was re-established in the land by Yahweh’s agent and Yahweh’s word (Ezr 1: 4.4; note the lists of returned exiles in Ezr 2, 1 Ch 9 – and the prominence of Judah in other lists in 1 Ch 1-9). Judah, in fact, is the true Israel; and to make the pint clear, the southern people is quite often described by this name to which historically she has no right but which Ch feels theologically belongs to her. She is the chosen people; and yet her special position does not exempt her from a response of faithfulness, but rather indeed lays upon her the obligation of continuing repentance (cf. the social and religious reforms in Ne). She too must take the God of her fathers seriously (2 Ch 14.4; 21.10; Ezr 10.11).

Although in a state of rebellion, *northern Israel* is not beyond Yahweh’s sphere of control. He uses her as his agent of chastisement (2 Ch 28.5, 9); but more than this (as 2 Ch 28 itself indicates), he remains concerned for Israel herself, “for the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11.29). Ch expresses his concern for all twelve tribes by including them in the genealogies, which thus “give a picture of the complete kingdom of God” (Johnson 57), the fact that these lists of the tribes nevertheless concentrate on Judah reflects Israel’s resistance rather than God’s ultimate purpose. David involves the northerners, “our brethren”, in bringing up the ark (1 Ch 13), and even after their apostasy Abijah addresses them as “Israel” (2 Ch 13.4). The great reforming kings of the south seek to bring the northern people back to God too (Asa 15.8-9, Jehoshaphat 19.4, Hezekiah 30.1, Josiah 34.6-7). But this can only come about through repentance and the acknowledgement of David and Jerusalem (cf. 11.13-17; 13.4-12). Granted this, any northerner who has thus “separated himself from the pollutions of the peoples of the land” and associated himself with those who went through the exile may join in the worship of Jerusalem (Ezr 6.21 – contrast verse 16) – and, given the significance of this worship, nothing greater could be said – even as once men had had the opportunity to appropriate the significance of the exodus and join the exodus people (Js 24)[[29]](#footnote-29). In such a responsive <remnant> (cf. 2 Ch 34.9) God’s purpose of election continues (cf. Ro 9.11; 11.5).

Without such a response, however (and in assessing this the indications are that Judah was inclined to err if anything on the side of caution), northern Israel does not exist; her story need not be told, and she has no place in fighting the battles of the people of God (2 Ch 25.5-8) or in building the house of God (Ezr 4-6).

*Foreigners* can also be used by God. They serve among David’s mighty men (1 Ch 11), Solomon’s temple-builders (2 Ch 2), and the temple musicians (1 Ch 6). God can use Neco to speak to the king of Judah (2 Ch 35.21-22), Nebuchadnezzar to chastise his people (36.17), Cyrus to restore them (Ezr 1.1-4), Darius to help and protect them (5.3-6.15), Artaxerxes to reform them (7)[[30]](#footnote-30). The genealogies (1 Ch 1) include other nations, as Genesis 1-11 does.

But outsiders must not be allowed to contaminate Israel (cf. Ne 13.1-3). The stock must be kept pure if the race, and its religion, is not to disappear; hence the concern with genealogies in Ezra and Nehemiah. Because the race is holy and the <peoples of the lands> unclean (Ezr 9.2, 11-12) intermarriage is wrong (verse 14) and mixed marriages must be broken up (chapter 10, cf. Ne 13.23-27). Ch is too concerned with the preservation of the people to share the concept of the world prophets. And yet it may not be justifiable to infer that his concern for purity would be a deterrent rather than an attraction to individuals who might join the Jewish faith, or that he would oppose the acceptance of proselytes into the people of God – as the drawing of a contrast between Ch and Ruth might imply.

### Trusting obedience

Both the homilies and the character sketches in Ch drive home lessons about everyday attitudes to life. The reader himself is indirectly urged to seek God, to rely on God, to fear God, to walk in God’s ways, and not to forsake God, to seek the Baals, to be unfaithful; for the former is the way of place, rest, strength, confidence, the latter the way of trouble (e.g. 1 Ch 22.12-13; 2 Ch 15-16). Ch’s message here is very similar to that of Proverbs.

His review of past history provides abundant examples of how the *might* of God (rather than human strength) decides battles. One man with God is a majority (cf. 2 Ch 13; 25.5-12) – indeed the one doesn’t necessarily even have to fight (20.20-24)! Conversely, a majority without God will fail (24.24). The might of God makes trust the appropriate attitude to him. But what was the significance of so much talk of warfare to Ch? He is hardly thinking that Judah might take on Persia, whose rule he regards as the gift of God’s love (Ezr 9.9), but nor does it seem likely that he is thinking of <spiritual warfare>; perhaps rather he has in mind Judah’s continuing need of protection from her unfriendly neighbours (cf. Ne 1-6). The might of God guarantees her victory[[31]](#footnote-31).

Again, history shows repeatedly how God’s *justice* (acknowledged for instance in 2 Ch 12.6; Ne 9.33) has worked out in men’s lives. A very frequent reason for Ch’s additions is his desire to make clear that trouble comes to men not by chance but as the result of disobedience. It is in fact odd that the belief that obedience and prosperity, transgression and trouble are inextricably interconnected is especially associated with D, since it is Ch who is much more thorough in tracing the working of this principle in history. It is he who explains Manasseh’s long reign (he repented, 2 Ch 33.10-17) and Josiah’s early death (he ignored God’s warning, 35.21-22). Again, it is because he hesitates to speak of the wrath of God except as punishment for human sin that he attributes the tempting of David to Satan rather than to Satan’s master, and only introduces God’s wrath then there is something for God to be wrathful about (1 Ch 21.1, 7). On the other hand, there are troubles that Ch does not explain (e.g. 2 Ch 25.13; 27.7-9[[32]](#footnote-32); 32), and this gives one further reason to doubt whether on other occasions he is simply inventing – why didn’t he invent again?

Ch thus portrays God’s justice at work in the short term. He may again be reacting against a tendency of developing apocalyptic to question the activity of any moral purpose working itself out in present history. Retribution is not just an eschatological hope; the sins of the fathers are visited on the fathers themselves. Yahweh confronts each generation quite immediately[[33]](#footnote-33); and this includes the readers themselves, who are thus challenged to continuing faithfulness, or if necessary to repentance, knowing that as they respond to Yahweh, he will respond to them. It is to make clear this challenge now that Ch often modifies the Kg qualified general commendation of certain kings (“he did well… but he did not remove the high places”) so that commendation is associated with the earlier period of his reign, criticism with the later period (which also saw his troubles!) (notably 2 Ch 24). The message is clear: he who persists to the end shall be saved.

History further shows how the *word* of God must be taken seriously. On the one hand, the law makes its demands of the people of God; Ch’s great heroes are involved in fashioning it (David), teaching it (Jehoshaphat, Ezra), obeying it (Hezekiah, Josiah). Ch’s period sees significant developments in the canonical principle[[34]](#footnote-34); the great age of the law is beginning. But alongside the law is the word of prophecy, which it is just as dangerous to ignore (25.16; 36.16). Living in the age in which also the messages of the prophets are being systematized, Ch often reflects their words in the sermons he preaches via the characters in his story[[35]](#footnote-35). Ch pictures prophecy as the means by which God controls the developing course of Israel’s history as a prophetic figure confronts each of the kings and challenges him to faith and obedience. Both the fall of Jerusalem and the restoration came about through the prophetic word (36.11-23), which calls into its service not only the mighty men of Judah (a king, a priest, a Levite) but the mighty men of Israel (28.8-15), of Egypt (35.22), and to fulfill it the mighty men of Babylon (36.15-17) and Persia (Ezr 6.14).

The final word ought however to be of the *grace* of God, whose presence history also evidences[[36]](#footnote-36). Though stressing obedience, Ch also teaches that it is God himself who makes obedience possible (1 Ch 22.12), who draws men’s hearts to himself (29.18). His response to their sin is to seek to lead them to repentance by sending to them his prophets (2 Ch 36.15). He forgives the proud when they humble themselves (32.25-26), though there is no automatic relief (12.7-12), and obstinacy receives its reward (36.12-17). Ch emphasizes the covenant idea (cf. Myers, “Kerygma” 263), with its relating of God’s grace and human response: the ark is consistently the ark of the covenant, Yahweh is the God who keeps covenant and who receives David and later kings into a covenant relationship with him (21.7, 23.16, 29.10, 34.31). “He is good, for his steadfast love endures forever” (e.g. 5.13, 7.3) is a recurrent refrain. Thus in the end of the day Yahweh is not faithful to his people because of their obedience but despite their sin; the exile and restoration are the paradigm example of this pattern of loss and (underserved) restoration, but the principle is seen in operation earlier in the failure of Saul and call of David, and in the disobedience of David himself which leads to the choice of the temple site (cf. Ackroyd 48f). The last word is with the grace of God. He must be obeyed; he can be trusted.

## 4 Chronicles’ Theological Significance

Since the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution the church has gone through its own exile experience. Thus it now lives (in the west anyway) in a tension between its significance according to Scripture (*Gods’* people! *Christ’s* body!) and its everyday experience of pitiful insignificance. And this, as we began this paper by suggesting, was Israel’s situation too for much of the postexilic period. She had a great past and had been promised by the exilic prophets a great future: the suffering servant would know triumph and glory. When experience falls short of expectation, how are the promises to be lived with?

Ch suggests one response to this question: come to terms with being the remnant and make the best of the present by perceiving a presence and activity of God with his people, no longer indeed in spheres that the world counts significant, but in her religious life. The church that struggles on, all but overwhelmed by the forces of secularism, may hear God speaking in Ch’s encouragement to look to your past, to the reality of God’s presence with you, to your worship, to your purity, to the word that’s been real before, and in his call to trust and obey God now, to live in the present.

She will need however also to listen to the complementary response of apocalyptic, whose thrust German theology (Pannenberg, Moltmann) has sought to bring home to us, and which indeed perhaps was God’s word to the faithful German church a few years ago under a different kind of pressure. As well as living in the present God’s people is called to live in hope of the historical consummation of God’s will.

There is in fact no getting away from the tension between these two approaches to finding the word of God for the day of small things. The canon embraces both; God has said yes to both. (One further response embraced by the canon might also be mentioned: for Qoheleth’s honest perplexity at the impossibility of making the faith meaningful any longer, even thought you grant that there is nothing else to replace it with, “rings bells” today too).

It is, however, surely an unhappy <yes>; for it remains true that both Ch and Daniel (and for that matter Qoheleth) are rather on the fringes of O.T. faith. They make it possible in their day for God’s people to survive; but they hardly enabled her to triumph (and the attitudes they express led eventually to the ultimate rejection of the one who fulfilled more than either of them dared hope for). The walls which Zechariah promised would be unnecessary and too restricting (Zc 2.4-5) are built by Nehemiah; they keep the enemy out but they also keep the faith in and the community small. Their building was the second-choice will of God. For in working out his will through human beings God is ever involved in condescension and with the drawbacks of the raw material he does not forsake men in their feeblessness but ever trims his sails to meet their limitations. There is comfort here: if the church wants to say “we are too weak for the radical demands of your ultimate will” then God does not abandon it. But there is also challenge: not to be satisfied with watered down versions of God’s will but to face up to Biblical religion at its most profound, with its demand that accepting God’s grace be combined with accepting the cost of being God’s people. Grace means commitment; commitment means suffering.

This principle comes to clear expression the O.T. in Isaiah 40-55, where is expressed the breadth and length and depth both of God’s love, and of his calling for his people: the servant pours himself out to death for the many. The call of the servant is a call to die. It was too demanding an idea, and it disappears in succeeding parts of the O.T.; the silence on the subject is deafening (not least in Ch). Until one comes who both accepts it for himself and reissues it as the charter of those who follow him. It is a commission that the engrafted branches have not been much better at fulfilling than those who were broken off in their favor (thus the church risks suffering the same fate – cf. Ro 11.20-21). But it remains the challenge to the church in each generation: will you be the church of the suffering servant? The pressures of the <post-Christian era> may encourage her, for survival’s sake, to turn in on herself, to follow Ch’s lead, and if she goes this way God will probably go with her. But the way for her to triumph is boldly to take up the cross (which may consist in these same pressures), to confront the world, to accept crucifixion, believing that the way of death is in fact the way of life, both for herself and for the world she seeks to win.

1. The work as a whole, and its author, are henceforth usually referred to simply as Ch. Probably more than one person has had a hand in the books’ development, which may have taken place over a period; see, for instance, P.R. Ackroyd, “History and Theology in the Writings of the Chronicler,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 38 (1967): \*\*, and more briefly in *I & II Chronicles, Ezra Nehemiah* (London: SCM, 1973), pp. 20-24. Chronicles is thus the embodiment of a developing tradition, a tradition which, however, express a generally coherent viewpoint, though not one without its inner tensions – as is clear when one compares different sections of Ezra-Nehemiah with each other and with Chronicles. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. P. R. Ackroyd, *The Age of the Chronicler* (Auckland: Colloquium, 1970), p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This work, and its author, are referred to henceforth as D. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. M. D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies* (Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1969), p. 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. So *RSV,* but note margin. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See Ackroyd, *I & II Chronicles,* in loc. Ackroyd also notes (p. 135) that Ch’s own work may be described as midrash, as does B. S. Childs in his treatment of 2 Ch 32 (*Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* [London: SCM, 1967], pp. 104-11). M. D. Goulder’s *Midrash* and *Lection in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974) offers a thoroughgoing, though outline, treatment of Ch’s method as a whole as midrash (see chapters 2 and 10). At many points this work touches on issues raised in the present paper – for instance, Goulder offers an alternative understanding of Ezra as paralleling just the conquest story in Joshua. On the other hand, Ackroyd in a paper on “The Chronicler as Exegete” (to be published in *StEv* VII) draws attention to the exodus motifs both in the story of the return from the exile and in that of the coming of Ezra himself (I am grateful to Professor Ackroyd for the loan of a copy of this paper and for an offprint of the one mentioned in n. 27 below). On the latter, see also K. Koch, “Ezra and the Origins of Judaism,” *JSS* 19 (1974): \*\*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Unless this latter alteration identifies the offspring referred to as Solomon – so A. Caqot, “Peut-on parler de messianisme dans l’oeuvre du Chroniste?” *Revue de Theologie et de Philosophie* III 16 (1966), 116: certainly this suggestion seems more plausible than G. von Rad’s interpretation of it as a mark of Ch’s continuing messianic expectation – cf. his *O.T. Theology* I (Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1962), 351 (English translation of *Theologie des A.T.* I, Kaiser Verlag, Munich, 1957), 348. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. W. Rudolph, *Chronikbucher* (Handbuch zum A.T. 21, J.C.B. Mohr Tubingen, 1955), 211, 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See e.g. W.E. Lemke, “The Synoptic Problem in the Chronicler’s History”, *HarvTR* 58 (1965), 349-363. Ackroyd also makes this point in the paper referred to in n. 6 above; he comments that insufficient allowance is made for this factor in the two recent major studies of Ch as exegete and theologian by R. Mosis *(Untersuchung zur Theologie des chronistichen Geschichtswerkes,* Freiburger theologische Studien 92, Herder, Freiburg, 1973) and T. Willi *(Die Chronik als Auslengung,* FRLANT 106, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Gottingen, 1972) (not accessible to me). He also notes that Ch would hardly have been aware of the categories into which his work may be divided according to Willi – a point which would apply also to the present paper; and he further suggest that narratives that are omitted may nevertheless be presupposed (cf. also his article “An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile: A Study of 2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38-39”, *ScotJT* 27:3 (1974), pp. 330, 337). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Bruce Page, *Sunday Times Magazine* (London), 28th May, 1972, 5, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Method in Theology* (Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1972), 185. Cf. E. Voegelin’s definition of <paradigmatic history> in *Order and History 1 Israel and Revelation* (Louisiana State University Press, 1956) 121-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Cf. J.H. Plumb, *The Death of the Past* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1973) 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See J.M. Myers, *I* and *II Chronicles.* (Anchor Bible 12-13) Doubleday, New York 1965, passim. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Cf. F. Michaeli, *Les Livres des Chroniques, d’Esdras, et de Nehemie* (Commentaires de l’A.T. 16, Delachaux & Niestle, Neuchatel 1967) 34; M. Noth, *Ueberlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien, I* (Max Niemeyer, Halle 1943) 202 (160). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. For Approaches to the problem of numbers see Myers I, 98f; more generally R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Tyndale Press, London 1970) 631-3, 1163-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Cf. Noth, 199-201 (157-9) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Cf. W.J. Martin, “ <Dischronologised> Narrative in the O.T.,” *Supplements to V.T.* 17, 179-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Cf. J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (Old Testament Library, S.C.M. Press, London 1960 & 1972), chs 7-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Cf. A.C. Welch, *The Work of the Chronicler* (Schweich Lectures 1938, British Academy, London 1939) 54. Ch’s own usage of the word (2 Ch 13.22; 24.27) seems closer to this than to Childs’ definition, p. 107, in terms of the rewriting of a written text. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Johnson 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. So e.g. W.F. Stinespring, “Eschatology in Chronicles,” JBL 80 (1961) 209-19; a. Noordtzij, “Les intentions du Chroniste,” RB 49 (1940) 161-8; R. North, “Theology of the Chronicler,” JBL 82 (1963) 369-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Whatever the original reference of the <first servant song>, the context would suggest that it concerns Israel as the servant; and the fundamental motifs are royal ones even though there are others present which indeed radically reinterpret the role delineated for the kingly figure. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Old Testament Library, S.C.M. Press, London, 1969 – English translation of *Das Buch Jesaja Kap. 40-66*, Alte Testament Deutsch 19, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Gottingen, 1966), *in loc.* [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Cf. G. von Rad, “The Levitical Sermon in *I* and *II* Chronicles,” in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays* (Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh and London 1966 – E.T. of *Gesammelte Studien zum A.T.,* Munich 1958) 269-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Von Rad, *Theology* I, 347 (*Theologie* I, 344). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Rudolph, viii. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. So Rudolph; cf. O. Ploger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (Oxford 1968, E.T. of *Theokratie und Eschatologie,* WMANT 2, Neukirchen 1959) ch. 3. Caquot (*art. cit.* in n. 7), Mosis (*op. cit.* in n. 9), and Ackroyd *(art. cit.* in n. 6) are more moderate; Ackroyd, indeed, warns against a stress on Ch as having a polemical point to make, and sees him rather as a unifier (see “The Theology of the Chronicler,” *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 8:4, 1973, pp. 108-116). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Von Rad 354 *(Theologie I,* 351). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Cf. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (O.T. Library, S.C.M. Press, London 1968) 244. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Cf. Myers, <The Kerygma of the Chronicler,” *Interpretation 20* (1966) 262, 266. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. On the theme of war in Ch see P. Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbuchern* (WMANT 42, Neukirchen 1973): not accessible to me. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ch omits 2 Kg 15.37. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Von Rad 350 *(Theologie* I, 347). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Ackroyd, *Age of Chronicler* 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Cf. von Rad, “Levitical Sermon”; also Welch, ch. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Cf. Rudolph, “Problems of the Books of Chronicles,” *VT* 4 (1954): 405f. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)