

# 1 CHRONICLES - A TEACHER'S GUIDE

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## THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

### What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
  - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. Who do you think wrote 1 & 2 Chronicles? (1 Chronicles 29:29; Compare 2 Chronicles 32:32; 33:18-20) Do these books have a significantly different perspective than 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings? Do 1 & 2 Chronicles look like a “biased” report? Why should there be so much repetition? How do you explain the differences? Is there any value in these small differences? What about the Gospels? How did Luke get the information for writing his book? (Luke 1:1-4) Does God “inspire” people to “compile” books to put in Scripture?

“The Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 15a) attributes Chronicles to Ezra.” (*New Bible Dictionary*)

“Originally entitled ‘the words [or events] of the days’ (*divre hayyamim*, Hebrews), meaning ‘journals’ (1 Chronicles 27:24), and compiled as a single book, 1 and 2 Chronicles were separated by the translators of the Septuagint c. 180 B.C. [Probably because they were too long to fit on one scroll] and named “things omitted” (*paraleipomena*, Gk.), to indicate that they contain things omitted from the Books of Samuel and Kings. Although the author and date are not stated, the Talmudic tradition that the Chronicles were penned by Ezra may be correct. Nevertheless, it is customary to speak of the author simply as “the chronicler.” Written from a priestly perspective, the main emphasis centers on the temple in Jerusalem, the Levitical priesthood, and the theocratic lineage of David. The genealogies and narrative of 1 Chronicles span the period from Adam to the end of the life of David. Second Chronicles recounts the downfall of the Davidic dynasty from Solomon to the Exile. Chronicles mentions the northern kingdom (Israel) only incidentally and contains the most complete statistical lists found in the entire Bible. The final verses of Chronicles (2 Chronicles 36:22, 23) are repeated in Ezra 1:1–3. The style, substance, and thrust of the Chronicles are carried on through Ezra and Nehemiah. Many believe Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah had the same author. If not, the latter two still serve as a fitting sequel. Chronicles follows the people of God into Exile; Ezra and Nehemiah follow them out of Exile and prepare Israel for the coming of the Messiah.

“Internal evidence indicates that the Chronicles were probably composed sometime in the fifth century B.C. A postexilic date is underscored by the mention of the six generations following Zerubbabel (1 Chronicles 3:17–21) and of the Persian coins, “darics” (1 Chronicles 29:7).” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

“First and Second Chronicles are largely a retelling of events recorded in the books of *Samuel* and *Kings*, but from a different point of view. Two main purposes govern the account of the history of the Israelite monarchy in the books of *Chronicles*:

- 1) To show that in spite of the disasters that had fallen upon the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, God was still keeping his promises to the nation and was working out his plan for his people through those who were living in Judah. As a basis for this assurance, the writer looked

to the great achievements of David and Solomon, to the reforms of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, and to the people who remained faithful to God.

2) To describe the origin of the worship of God in the Temple at Jerusalem and especially the organization of the priests and Levites, by which the worship was carried out. David is presented as the real founder of the Temple and its ritual, even though it is Solomon who builds the temple.” (GNB)

“The Books of Chronicles record in some detail the lengthy span from the reign of Saul to the return from the Exile. Unlike the exact science of history today, wherein factual accuracy and impartiality of judgment are the standards for estimating what is of permanent worth, ancient biblical history, with rare exceptions, was less concerned with reporting in precise detail all the facts of a situation than with explaining the meaning of those facts. Such history was primarily interpretative and, in the Old Testament, its purpose was to disclose the action of the living God in the affairs of men. For this reason we speak of it as “sacred history”; **its writer’s first concern was to bring out the divine or supernatural dimension in history.**

“This is apparent when we examine the primary objective of the Chronicler in compiling his work. In view of the situation which confronted the Jewish people at this time (the end of the fifth century B.C.), the Chronicler realized that Israel’s political greatness was a thing of the past. It would be a people under God, or nothing. Yet Israel’s past held the key to her future. The Chronicler proposed to establish and defend the legitimate claims of the Davidic monarchy in Israel’s history, and to underscore the place of Jerusalem and its divinely established temple worship as the center of religious life for the Jewish community of his day. If Judaism was to survive and prosper, it would have to heed the lessons of the past and devoutly serve Yahweh in the place where he had chosen to dwell, the temple of Jerusalem. From the Chronicler’s point of view, David’s reign was the ideal to which all subsequent rule in Judah must aspire.” (New American Bible-RC)

In Hebrew Bibles, 1 and 2 Chronicles, together as one book are the last book in the Old Testament. They were a part of the *Hagiographa*, or Holy Writings, known later as the third division of the Old Testament. (See Luke 24:44 where this section of the Old Testament is referred to as the *Psalms* because it begins with that book) In our Bibles it is placed between the four books of *Kingdoms* (1&2 Samuel and 1&2 Kings) and the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*.

“In some Hebrew manuscripts from Spain it appears as the first book among the Writings, where its worship emphases provide a fitting introduction to the following book of Psalms. Its now standard position at the end of the canon follows the practice of the Jewish community in Babylon. In the Septuagint and associated translations (e.g., Vulgate, Ethiopic), the order is Kings, Chronicles, 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras (= Ezra-Nehemiah).” (Anchor Bible Dictionary)

1 and 2 Chronicles are something of a review of portions of Samuel and Kings. Look at 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and compare Ezra 1:1-3. Look at all the books referred to in Chronicles. Many scholars feel that Ezra was the one who “compiled” these two books after the exile in Babylon about 425 BC. Ezra was probably the first person to put together something similar

to our Old Testament. He also started the group known as the scribes. It appears that he wrote 1 and 2 Chronicles based on records of events that occurred hundreds of years before he lived. In the early Hebrew manuscripts 1 and 2 Chronicles were a single book. Originally the two books of Chronicles formed, with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, a single historical work, uniform in style and basic ideas. The Greek title for these two books, *Paraleipomena*, means “what’s left” or “things omitted, or passed over” (in Samuel and Kings). These four books were not separated until many years later. How do we explain the differences between the record here in Chronicles and the accounts in Samuel and Kings? Notice that the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles are all most entirely genealogy. It begins with Adam and brings us up to the times of Saul and David. But the genealogies primarily deal with the people who were immediate ancestors and contemporaries of Saul, David and Solomon and the Levitical priesthood.

If the books of Chronicles were written hundreds of years later, are they a reliable account of what happened? Where did Ezra (assuming he is the author) get his information? Did he have access to all the records of the kings of both Israel and Judah? Were these records completely reliable? How did God’s inspiration work in this process of apparent compilation? Did God reveal to Ezra which portions of these historical records were accurate and correct and should be included in the sacred record? How did Luke write his gospel? (See Luke 1:1-4) Do we need multiple accounts of the same events? Compare again the gospels.

2. What is the purpose of all the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1-9? Who kept track of all these names of the earlier generations when they became scattered all over the world?

To the Hebrew people in every age, genealogy has been very important. Those who returned to Jerusalem after the exile were expected to prove their lineage before being accepted as a part of the group. This was particularly true of those claiming to be a part of the royal line or of the priesthood. (See Ezra 2:59-63) Thus the Chronicler wanted to show that there was one continuous line of descent from Adam and thus imply that God was guiding them even at this point in their troubled history. Much, but not all, of the information quoted here is taken from earlier documents, especially the Pentateuch. The Chronicler clearly had access to many books that we no longer have available to us, and we can assume that additional information came from those sources.

3. What is the meaning of “in Peleg’s time the earth was divided”? (1 Chronicles 1:19; Genesis 10:25)

1 Chronicles 1:19:

<sup>19</sup> Eber had two sons: Peleg (which means “Divided,” for it was during his lifetime that the people of the earth were divided into different language groups) and Joktan. (*TLB*)

<sup>19</sup> Eber had two sons. One son was named Peleg, because the people on the earth were divided into different languages during his life. Peleg’s brother was named Joktan. (*NCV*)

<sup>19</sup> Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg—“division”—for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups and dispersed. His brother’s name was Joktan. (*NLT*)

<sup>19</sup> Eber named his first son Peleg, because in his time the earth was divided into tribal regions. Eber's second son was Joktan, (*CEV*)

It is interesting to note that the name Eber mentioned in this verse is thought to be the source of the name Hebrew.

“The division of the earth in Genesis 10:25,32 is most likely related to the events of Genesis 11:1–9. It does not refer to the splitting apart of the continents, but to the dispersion of peoples at the Tower of Babel. The fact that Peleg's ancestors are not mentioned as being alive at this time (Noah, Shem, etc.) implies that they had long since died. This is another indication that there are gaps in the genealogy of Genesis 11. In 11:16–19 there is a considerable shortening of the life span from Eber to Peleg (from 464 to 239 years), which also suggests a time gap and that Eber may have been a distant ancestor of Peleg.” (*King James Version Study Bible*)

“As to the meaning of the “division of the earth” during the life of Peleg, this may be related to any of the proposed explanations of the name. If Peleg is meant to reflect the West Semitic root, “to divide,” then the division may simply refer to that between the descendants of Peleg and those of his brother Joktan. If Peleg is suggestive of the Akkadian word for “canal,” the division may refer to that between civilized canal builders and nomadic peoples. If Peleg is a geographic name in North Mesopotamia, then the division may suggest the events of Genesis 11:1–9.” (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*)

It should be obvious from these varied explanations that no clear understanding of the meaning of this name is agreed upon. Each of the possibilities is interesting to think about.

4. **It is clear that Saul committed suicide. (1 Samuel 31:3,4; 1 Chronicles 10:3,4) How could the Bible writer say, “thus God slew Saul?” (1 Chronicles 10:13,14) Do you think this same writer if he were to describe the death of Judas Iscariot would say, “thus God slew Judas?” Could this statement throw any light on all the other statements about God killing people—for example, Er and Onan (Genesis 38:6-10; 1 Chronicles 2:3), Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-11), or Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? (Numbers 16:23-35)**

What were the factors that led to the death of Saul? At the very end of his life, he fell on his sword and died. But considering what the young Amalekite man in 2 Chronicles 1:1-10 said, it is possible that even after falling on his sword he was not completely dead and that young man finished the job! But what led to this end? Saul had been mortally wounded by the Philistines. So it would be correct also to say that he was killed by the Philistines. But we know more. If Saul had been faithful to the Lord all of his life and had been following the guidance of God in all that he did, no Philistine could have touched him or his sons. (See 1 Samuel 13:13,14) Saul, himself, states that God (Yahweh) had abandoned him and would not answer him! (1 Samuel 28:6,15 14:31-46) Saul had won many battles against the Philistines in the past. If God had been on his side, he could have won this battle without even fighting. So it is ultimately true that Saul died because God abandoned him. Of course, God only abandoned him because Saul abandoned God. So Saul was responsible for his own death. Nowhere

does the Bible say that Satan killed Saul but again we know that Saul was led away into all of his problems by the temptations of Satan. Often it is true that more than one factor is involved in causing something to happen. It is like a three-legged stool. Which leg holds up the stool? They all do. So it is true that God killed Saul, but Saul was the primary one responsible, and Satan certainly played his part.

See Handout entitled ***“Is God a Murderer or a Destroyer?”***

5. Who was it that actually made David’s kingdom strong? (1 Chronicles 11:9,10)

If God had not worked with David and his army of warriors they could not have accomplished much of anything. Remember what happened to Saul. It was the cooperative efforts of David and his men, their dependence on God, and God’s direction and guidance and protection that made it possible for them to win battles. Thus it can be said that both God and David’s fighting men made his kingdom strong.

6. Notice the position of Uriah the Hittite. (1 Chronicles 11:41 Compare 2 Samuel 23:39) If God treated David so generously after what he did to one of his best friends and supporters, do we have any need to have Someone intercede with Him—either the Father or the Son—on our behalf? (2 Chronicles 7:17,18; 1 Kings 11:4,6; John 16:25-27)

David escaped from Saul and ran for his life. For years he hid here and there throughout the land and even in other countries to escape from Saul. During this time other people gradually joined him. At first, most of those others were criminals or enemies of King Saul. They formed a small group of desperate and skilled soldiers that fought for their lives on a regular basis. We do not know when Uriah joined this group. By the time David became king in Hebron, many of these men were very respectable leaders in the tribe. Uriah was not a Jew, but he was married to the grand-daughter of a very respected counselor. Some of these “mighty warriors” risked their lives repeatedly to defend their group and their leader David. Despite all of this David was willing to sacrifice one of his long term friends and defenders in order to try to get himself out of the serious problem he had created by committing adultery with Bathsheba and getting her pregnant.

Considering the way God treated David, even after this dastardly act, none of us should feel that our case is hopeless. If David is going to be in the kingdom (Hebrews 11:32) then God will certainly do everything He can to save each of us.

7. Why was there so much joy and celebration when David became king? (1 Chronicles 12:38-40)

Since he was a youth David had been recognized as a great fighter and military man. (1 Samuel 18:7,8; 21:11; 29:5) In fact, this is one of the reasons that Saul was jealous of him. David was young and apparently good looking and he seemed to be blessed with a great deal of charisma. More than this, he had a great relationship with God. Compared with the angry, jealous, depressed, and sullen mood of Saul, David must have seemed like a breath of fresh air. Even after Saul’s death, a protracted war continued between David and Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son. Ish-bosheth was no leader. David was. It was clear in the eyes of the people that

God was blessing David as he become stronger and stronger while Ish-bosheth became weaker and weaker.

In light of all of this and certainly other factors that we do not know about, the people were delighted after the death of Ish-bosheth to turn to David, hoping for a wise, spiritual, effective leader that would signal the end of the civil war that had dragged on for so long.

8. Note David's comments about why Uzzah died. "David was angry because the Lord's wrath had broken out against Uzzah." (1 Chronicles 13:10-12) In what sense could it be said that God was "angry" with Uzzah? Did David learn anything from the Uzzah experience? (1 Chronicles 15:2)

It is very important to read the entire history of the story of David and Uzzah. (See 2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 13:1-14 and 15:1-16:7) There are several factors that we must keep clearly in mind: 1) Uzzah, his father Abinadab, and his brother Ahio were members of the tribe of Levi and should have know better than to put the ark on a cart in the first place. 2) Neither David nor any of the priests apparently took time to consult God about the movement of the ark. This was a major event in the spiritual history of Israel. Shouldn't God have been consulted? 3) Clear instruction had been given on how to move the ark. See Numbers 3:27-32; 4:1-20; 7:9, and Deuteronomy 10:8. 4) The ark had been stored in the house of Abinadab, Uzzah's father, for some time. Shouldn't they have known every detail about how to care for it and move it? Is it possible that their attitude toward the ark had become casual after such a length of time? Was Uzzah "showing off" in a way that might suggest that his family were obvious superior to others because they were in charge of the ark and God had been blessing them?

In light of all of this and no doubt for other reasons as well, God felt that the lack of respect that had been shown to the ark must be dealt with. David was about to establish the ark in Jerusalem and thus make Jerusalem the recognized spiritual home for the worship of Yahweh forever! Such an event must be planned and carried out with the greatest reverence and respect. Instead, it was in a festive mood, more like the arrival of a military group coming home after conquering an enemy, that David planned to bring up the ark to Jerusalem.

On this occasion God is trying to get a group of people to become a spiritual community. Would it be appropriate to "cut out" anyone who was a "rotten apple" to prevent them from spoiling the whole "barrel"? This does not necessarily mean that Uzzah was a terrible sinner. It may simply mean that he represented opposition to God's cause, and as such, had to be dealt with to demonstrate something important in the larger context of the great controversy.

In this light, it seems that God did just such a thing on several different occasions. Read the following comments about two different situations:

"Though God had granted the prayer of Moses in sparing Israel from destruction, their apostasy was to be signally punished. The lawlessness and insubordination into which Aaron had permitted them to fall, if not speedily crushed, would run riot in wickedness, and would involve the nation in irretrievable ruin. By terrible severity the evil must be put away....In the name of 'the Lord God of Israel,' Moses now commanded those upon his right hand, who had kept themselves clear of idolatry, to gird on their swords and slay all who persisted in rebellion. 'And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.' [Exodus 32:27,28] Without

regard to position, kindred, or friendship, **the ringleaders in wickedness were cut off; but all who repented and humbled themselves were spared.**

“Those who performed this terrible work of judgment were acting by divine authority, executing the sentence of the King of heaven....

“It was necessary that this sin should be punished, as a testimony to surrounding nations of God’s displeasure against idolatry....

“Love no less than justice demanded that for this sin judgment should be inflicted. God is the guardian as well as the sovereign of His people. He cuts off those who are determined upon rebellion, that **they may not lead others to ruin.** In sparing the life of Cain, God had demonstrated to the universe what would be **the result of permitting sin to go unpunished.** The influence exerted upon his descendants by his life and teaching led to the state of corruption that demanded the destruction of the whole world by a flood....

“So with the apostasy at Sinai. Unless punishment had been speedily visited upon transgression, the same results would again have been seen. The earth would have become as corrupt as in the days of Noah. Had these transgressors been spared, evils would have followed, greater than resulted from sparing the life of Cain. **It was the mercy of God that thousands should suffer, to prevent the necessity of visiting judgments upon millions. In order to save the many, He must punish the few.** Furthermore, as the people had cast off their allegiance to God, they had forfeited the divine protection, and, deprived of their defense, the whole nation was exposed to the power of their enemies.” *Patriarchs and Prophets* 324,325 (1890); *Review and Herald*, February 11, 1909; contrast *4 Spirit of Prophecy* 195; Compare *Patriarchs and Prophets* 706; *Conflict and Courage* 176

“David and his people had assembled to perform a sacred work, and they had engaged in it with glad and willing hearts; but the Lord could not accept the service, because it was not performed in accordance with His directions. The Philistines, who had not a knowledge of God’s law, had placed the ark upon a cart when they returned it to Israel, and the Lord accepted the effort which they made. But the Israelites had in their hands a plain statement of the will of God in all these matters, and their neglect of these instructions was dishonoring to God. Upon Uzzah rested the greater guilt of presumption. Transgression of God’s law had lessened his sense of its sacredness, and with unconfessed sins upon him he had, in face of the divine prohibition, presumed to touch the symbol of God’s presence. God can accept no partial obedience, no lax way of treating His commandments. **By the judgment upon Uzzah He designed to impress upon all Israel the importance of giving strict heed to His requirements. Thus the death of that one man, by leading the people to repentance, might prevent the necessity of inflicting judgments upon thousands.**” *Patriarchs and Prophets* 705,706; *Conflict and Courage* 176

See also handout #48 entitled: **2 Samuel - A Teacher’s Guide** - question #5 and handout #26a entitled: **Major Questions from Exodus** - question #8.

9. Why do you think the Philistines started carrying their “gods” into battle? (1 Chronicles 14:8-12; compare 2 Chronicles 13:8; 1 Samuel 4:1-11; 2 Chronicles 28:22,23)

In the ancient near east it was generally felt that when one nation conquered another nation it was because their “god” or “gods” were stronger than the “god” or “gods” of the defeated nation. This was why Yahweh was so despised after He apparently allowed His people to remain in Egyptian slavery for so many years. It also explains why the plagues of Egypt were necessary. Yahweh needed to demonstrate that He was the “real God”.

Exodus 9:14-17: "This time I will punish not only your officials and your people, but I will punish you as well, **so that you may know that there is no one like me in all the world.** If I had raised my hand to strike you and your people with disease, you would have been completely destroyed. But **to show you my power I have let you live so that my fame might spread over the whole world.** Yet you are still arrogant and refuse to let my people go." (GNB) Compare NIV and TLB

Exodus 12:12: "On that night I will go through the land of Egypt, killing every first-born male, both human and animal, and **punishing all the gods of Egypt.** I am the LORD." (GNB) Compare NIV and TLB

In light of this, when armies went out to battle it was considered very important to have their “gods” go with them. This is, no doubt, why Eli’s sons Hophni and Phinehas decided to take the ark down into battle against the Philistines. They were hoping that the presence of the ark would “force” Yahweh to fight for them. (See 1 Samuel 4:1-11)

We don’t know who started this custom first, but it was obviously widely practiced.

10. How do you explain God’s statement to David about Solomon as recorded in 1 Chronicles 17:13 (NIV)? “I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor (Saul).” Did God actually stop loving Saul? Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 (GNB) “They will perish because they did not welcome and love the truth so as to be saved.” Is this what happened to Saul? Compare Romans 1:18-32. Didn’t Solomon do things that were just as evil as what Saul did? Compare this with the statement “I have loved Jacob and his descendants, and have hated Esau and his descendants.” (Malachi 1:2,3, GNB) Do these statements suggest that God only loves His good children? Or does He love His bad children as well? Or is it that when they reach the place where He cannot tolerate their behavior anymore, or He gets tired of working with them, then He becomes angry and punishes them? Or do they reach a place where there is nothing more He *can* do, so He weeps as He lets them go? (Hosea 11:1-8) Why did John call himself the “beloved?” (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7,20) Were the others not beloved, or was John just being very proud?

See handout #46 - **DAVID: A MAN AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART?**

This passage is part of the promise made to David that his “dynasty” will last forever. We know that that promise was ultimately fulfilled through Jesus Christ, but to speak such a promise to a humble human being seems almost beyond belief. This, of course is a continuation of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:5,13-21; 17:3-14; 22:15-18; 26:2-5,24; 28:4,10-16; 35:9-12; 48:4)

“Nathan announces the dynastic promises associated with the Davidic covenant. The covenant with David is also celebrated in Psalms 89 and 132. God promised that David’s descendants would become a dynasty ruling always over Israel. Individual kings were subject to severe chastisement (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalms 89:30–32), but the line of David would never be permanently rejected from the throne (2 Samuel 7:15, 16; 2 Chronicles 6:16; Psalms 89:33–37; 132:11, 12). This covenant was a basis for hope that Israel could be fully restored. The New Testament reveals that the promises to David were fulfilled in Christ. Christ kept the conditions of the covenant perfectly (Hebrews 4:15); He serves as the Mediator of the covenant of grace (Acts 2:25–36; Hebrews 9:15); and He promised to return as conquering King (Matthew 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27; Luke 21:25–28).” (*New Geneva Study Bible*)

God can only work with those who are willing to work with Him. David was certainly no “saint”. But God saw something in David that He felt was something that He could build on and He chose his family to be the ancestors of Jesus Christ. No doubt David already knew that God had chosen the tribe of Judah as the tribe from whom the future kings of Israel and later Judah were to come. But David was the lastborn of his father. By the normal laws of inheritance David didn’t have a chance. But David was anointed to be the king of Israel!

Saul was the kind of person the people wanted for a king. He seemed to be strong and powerful, and almost a giant in size. Everyone looked up to him. But Saul didn’t have the Spirit of God in him. God offered him every opportunity, but Saul repeatedly turned away from God and refused to wait for God’s guidance.

As we have already shown up above, Saul rejected God and not the other way around. God cannot bless people who refuse His blessings. How was God supposed to work with people who spend their time consulting witches and mediums? The statement made to David was a recognition that his family would be closer to God and His ideal than the family of Saul had been.

11. **1 Chronicles 21:1 (NIV) says, “Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.” 2 Samuel 24:1 (NIV) says, “Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, ‘Go and count Israel and Judah.’” Is there any way in which these two statements could be compatible? Do we have to reject one in order to accept the other? Can you think of parallel passages elsewhere? (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12,13; Luke 4:1,2) Could both 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1 be right? What about the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart (Exodus 9:34-10:1), or “thus God slew Saul?” (see above #4) In most cases who actually causes us to sin? (James 1:13-15) Why do you think David was numbering Israel? We need to look through the eyes of someone at that time to understand how they would understand this passage. Naomi said, “Almighty God has made my life bitter” (Ruth 1:20, *GNB*), but she obviously loved God and led Ruth to do the same. Job said, “The Lord gave and now he has taken away. May his name be praised,” (Job 1:21, *GNB*) but look more carefully at Job 1 & 2 to see who did the taking away. “Job did not sin by blaming God.” (Job 1:22, *GNB*) How should we explain passages that state “God**

## **did this or that” when elsewhere we have confirmation that actually Satan or someone else did it?**

Once again we are looking at situations that are like that three-legged stool we mentioned above. In each of these situations God took an active role—He did something. He may not have been the one directly responsible for the trouble or death, but He was involved.

“In 1 Chronicles 21:1 the action of David is said to have been incited by Satan, but in 2 Samuel 24:1 it says that God incited David. Actually both statements are true. Satan was the destructive agent stirring up David’s heart in pride to assess the military strength of his kingdom, rather than to continue to maintain simple trust in God. God here is said to have caused the action in the sense of permitting Satan to put David to the test (cf. Job 1:2)....

“Men’s actions which the Bible calls ‘sin’ are complex in their causes and results. This may be seen in this verse taken together with its parallel. David’s sin in numbering Israel was in some sense the product not only of his own fallen nature (1 Chronicles 21:8,17) but also of the scheming of the Evil One, here called by the title which means “Adversary.” Satan is anxious to oppose the people of Israel by any means, because they are the channel through which God will redeem creation and display His own glory. The attempts of Satan to oppose God’s plans, however, are futile, because in the infinite wisdom and mystery of God’s will, although God in no way can be called the cause of sin (Exodus 4:21; Lamentations 3:28; Romans 8:28; James 1:2,12,13), every event, however “good” or “bad,” ultimately serves His purposes.” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

“Taking a census was not a wrong thing to do *per se*. God Himself had previously ordered Moses to make two censuses (cf. Numbers 1:2, 3; 26:2). However, in this case Satan (cf. 1 Chronicles 21:1) seized upon the growing pride of David’s heart (1 Chronicles 21:2,3) to incite him into taking a census, so the king might have a ground of boasting (cf. Daniel 4:30). God, the controller of all things, allowed the deed to be done so as to bring David to a place of humility and reality (1 Chronicles 21:10). God and Satan are often involved in the same event, but for different causes (cf. Job)—God so that the believer might be instructed and grow, but Satan, to discredit the believer and therefore, God Himself.” (*King James Version Study Bible*)

“The apparent contradiction can be resolved by recognizing that though Satan is the author of all evil, he cannot exercise his evil intentions apart from the permission of God. Moreover, God could use him to accomplish His own purposes of judgment (1 Kings 22:19–23) or discipline (as here with David).” (*Nelson Study Bible*)

“The antecedent of ‘He’ [in 2 Samuel 24:1] is the Lord (cf. 1 Samuel 26:19). According to 1 Chronicles 21:1, however, it was Satan who moved David. At issue here is the mystery of the presence and practice of evil. The Scripture is clear that God is not the author of evil (James 1:13–15), but it also teaches that the wicked acts of men and of Satan do not fall outside God’s sovereign determination (Exodus 4:21; 1 Samuel 2:25; 1 Kin. 22:20–23; Job 1:12; Ezekiel 14:9; Acts 4:27, 28). Satan is a creature, absolutely subordinate to the sovereignty of God. Satan’s activities and desires cannot create a space that is free from God’s control or that escapes God’s purposes....

“Second Samuel reports how David brought trouble on the nation but successfully interceded on its behalf. In Chronicles the point of the story is to tell how God led David to discover the holy site for the temple.” (*New Geneva Study Bible*)

“Leaders, *be careful* not to overvalue the importance of numbers.” (*Spirit-Filled Life Study Bible*)

“To number Israel: The census of David in this chapter is also recorded in 2 Samuel 24, but there it states that it was because God was angry with Israel (the reason for this is unclear) that He moved David to take the census. The account of the census has been problematic because God does not cause anyone to sin (James 1:13) and because it is not apparent why such a census was wrong. (Numbers 1:2, 3; 26:2-4) The first problem is clarified by comparing 2 Samuel 24:1 with 1 Chronicles 21:1. God did not directly incite David to do something for which He would then turn around and judge him (v. 14); rather, He allowed **Satan** to influence David to do what David probably already had in his heart to do. (James 1:14, 15)

“This is similar to the times when the Lord allowed Satan to trouble Job (Job 1:12; 2:6) or when He permitted an evil spirit to torment Saul. (1 Samuel 16:14) This is one of only three Old Testament references where Satan (literally, “Adversary”) is mentioned by name (see also Job 1:2; Zechariah 3:1). The absence of the definite article (the) before ‘Satan’ in 1 Chronicles 21:1 indicates that the title, which emphasized his role in inciting rebellion against God, had already become a proper name.

“Although we are not told why the numbering was evil (v. 7), it was perhaps either an indication that David was trusting more in his military strength than in God’s power (see Psalms 20:7) or a violation of God’s instruction to Moses on how to conduct a census (see Exodus 30:11-16). The first would be a sin of motive and the second, a sin of method.” (*Spirit-Filled Life Study Bible*)

Unfortunately, political, military, and even spiritual leaders often focus on numbers! How often do modern churches measure their success by “numbers?” In this story David seems bent on counting his potential military force to decide if he should go on with more wars. Shouldn’t David have realized that neither he, nor his army were capable of winning any battles? Did David really think that he could somehow conquer his rivals without God’s help if he had enough soldiers? It is interesting to note what other commentators have said about these two apparently contradictory passages.

12. Why did the census totals for the fighting men come out different in 2 Samuel 24:9 and 1 Chronicles 21:5? There are other apparently different numbers in these books. Does this mean that the “Chronicler” wasn’t very careful about numbers? Shouldn’t the Bible writers be consistent in reporting such details?

“The Books of Chronicles were accused by an earlier generation of Bible scholars of being nothing but historical fiction. Where Chronicles parallels material found elsewhere in the Bible, the author was accused of attempting to glorify the past through exaggerated numbers and other changes in his sources. This led to a very skeptical attitude toward those sections where no parallels or extra biblical data existed. The tendency was to assume inaccuracy or

fabrication. On the other hand, further investigations in textual criticism and historical evidence have caused most to modify their opinions. Some opponents of biblical inerrancy, however, while recognizing the general accuracy of Chronicles, continue to regard the numbers in the books as unreliable and often exaggerated. Even one evangelical writer claims that there are seven or eight cases in which the number in Chronicles is ten times greater than that of a parallel passage in another book. In defense of the numbers, one conservative Old Testament scholar has shown that there are 629 occurrences of numbers in 1 and 2 Chronicles. Of these, 213 have parallels elsewhere in the Bible. Of these 213 numbers, 194 are the same as those found elsewhere in the Bible. Only nineteen are different and two of these may be regarded as one, since they are simply the same variant numbers found twice (2 Chronicles 2:2, 18). Chronicles is higher in only ten of the remaining 18 cases:

<i>Number in Chronicles</i>		<i>Number in Parallel Passage</i>
7,000 in 1 Chronicles 18:4	vs.	700 in 2 Samuel 8:4
7,000 in 1 Chronicles 19:18	vs.	700 in 2 Samuel 10:18
1,100,000 in 1 Chronicles 21:5	vs.	800,000 in 2 Samuel 24:9
600 in 1 Chronicles 21:25	vs.	50 in 2 Samuel 24:24
3,600 in 2 Chronicles 2:2, 18	vs.	3,300 in 1 Kings 5:16
20,000 baths in 2 Chronicles 2:10	vs.	20 kors in 1 Kings 5:11
35 in 2 Chronicles 3:15	vs.	18 in 1 Kings 7:15
3,000 in 2 Chronicles 4:5	vs.	2,000 in 1 Kings 7:26
450 in 2 Chronicles 8:18	vs.	420 in 1 Kings 9:28
42 in 2 Chronicles 22:2	vs.	22 in 2 Kings 8:26

“In only four of these is the number ten times greater or more. In six places Chronicles is lower:

300 in 1 Chronicles 11:11	vs.	800 in 2 Samuel 23:8
470,000 in 1 Chronicles 21:5	vs.	500,000 in 2 Samuel 24:9
3 in 1 Chronicles 21:12	vs.	7 in 2 Samuel 24:13
250 in 2 Chronicles 8:10	vs.	550 in 1 Kings 9:23
4,000 in 2 Chronicles 9:25	vs.	40,000 in 1 Kings 4:26
8 in 2 Chronicles 36:9	vs.	18 in 2 Kings 24:8

“To these should be added 1 Chronicles 19:18, where 40,000 foot soldiers compares to 40,000 horsemen in 2 Samuel 10:18; and 2 Chronicles 9:16, in which 300 shekels [One silver shekel equaled approximately 8.26 g. in Babylon and ½ oz. in Canaan] is evidently regarded as equivalent to three minas [A weight equal to about 50 common shekels each] in 1 Kings 10:17. These differences are hardly sufficient evidence to charge the chronicler with a tendency to exaggerate. Furthermore, in five of these cases of differences, it is reasonably clear that different items are actually being numbered (1 Chronicles 21:5; 21:25; 2 Chronicles 2:2, 18; 2:10; 8:10). In one case a number has been rounded (1 Chronicles 21:5). In one case a different unit of measure is used (2 Chronicles 9:16). This leaves eleven cases in which an inconsistency in transmission is likely. In only five of these is it likely that the transmission oversight was made in Chronicles (1 Chronicles 11:11; 2 Chronicles 3:15; 4:5; 22:2; 36:9). In

2 Chronicles 8:18 the transmission inadvertency could be either in Chronicles or in Kings. The conclusion of this is that the numbers in Chronicles are remarkably trustworthy—certainly no less so than those in the rest of the Bible. **Finally, regarding transcriptional difficulties, it should be noted that numbers are always difficult to copy. Although current Hebrew Bibles spell out numbers, thus decreasing chances of error, numbers were originally written in symbols. Such symbols often involved only dots above a letter or small slashes. These could be smudged or otherwise obscured in old manuscripts, thus leading to a few cases of numerical difficulties.**” (*Believer’s Study Bible*)

Do these differences in numbers challenge our understanding of inspiration? They shouldn’t. There are many ways in which such differences could have arisen as noted above. Our salvation never depends on getting the “numbers” right!

13. How and why would the Lord “repent of the evil” (RSV) of destroying Israel and Jerusalem? (1 Chronicles 21:14,15) Since the main cause of the “plague” was the sins of the people in Jerusalem, why did God spare that city?

A careful reading of the stories in Samuel and Chronicles seems to indicate that it was primarily David who was responsible for this evil. But the people weren’t far behind their king in pride!

“Intercourse with heathen peoples led to a desire to follow their national customs and kindled ambition for worldly greatness. As the people of Jehovah, Israel was to be honored; but as pride and self-confidence increased, the Israelites were not content with this pre-eminence. They cared rather for their standing among other nations. This spirit could not fail to invite temptation. With a view to extending his conquests among foreign nations, David determined to increase his army by requiring military service from all who were of proper age. To effect this, it became necessary to take a census of the population. It was pride and ambition that prompted this action of the king. The numbering of the people would show the contrast between the weakness of the kingdom when David ascended the throne and its strength and prosperity under his rule. This would tend still further to foster the already too great self-confidence of both king and people. The Scripture says, ‘Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.’ The prosperity of Israel under David had been due to the blessing of God rather than to the ability of her king or the strength of her armies. But the increasing of the military resources of the kingdom would give the impression to surrounding nations that Israel’s trust was in her armies, and not in the power of Jehovah.

“Though the people of Israel were proud of their national greatness, they did not look with favor upon David’s plan for so greatly extending the military service. The proposed enrollment caused much dissatisfaction; consequently it was thought necessary to employ the military officers in place of the priests and magistrates, who had formerly taken the census. The object of the undertaking was directly contrary to the principles of a theocracy. Even Joab remonstrated, unscrupulous as he had heretofore shown himself. He said, ‘The Lord make His people a hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord’s servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? Nevertheless the king’s word prevailed against Joab’....

“The taking of the census had caused disaffection among the people; yet they had themselves cherished the same sins that prompted David's action. As the Lord through Absalom's sin visited judgment upon David, so through David's error He punished the sins of Israel.” *Patriarchs and Prophets* p. 746-748 (1890)

God, of course, knew each person's heart. He knew that David had sinned in desiring this census. He also knew that David, despite his sins, was the most spiritual leader that Israel or Judah would ever have as king. Thus, God chose a punishment that showed the evil of the course of action without destroying those who were closest to Him.

14. How do you explain 1 Chronicles 21:30, “David...was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord?” Was this the response that God wanted as a result of His punishment of David and the people of Israel?

The sword here represents the plague that had fallen on Israel. David was afraid that if he immediately proceeded to Gibeon to sacrifice at the site where the tent built by Moses was kept in those days he might himself be afflicted by the plague.

But David, having seen the angel of the Lord in this place, took that as a sign that God's presence would in the future meet with them at this new site in Jerusalem. It later became the site for the building of Solomon's temple, and Herod's temple.

15. What did all those Levites actually do each day? Notice their duties. (1 Chronicles 23:2-5)

1 Chronicles 23:25-31: <sup>25</sup> David said, “The LORD God of Israel has given peace to his people, and he himself will live in Jerusalem for ever. <sup>26</sup> So there is no longer any need for the Levites to carry the Tent of the LORD's presence and all the equipment used in worship.” <sup>27</sup> On the basis of David's final instructions all Levites were registered for service when they reached the age of twenty, <sup>28</sup> and were assigned the following duties: to help the priests descended from Aaron with the temple worship, to take care of its courtyards and its rooms, and to keep undefiled everything that is sacred; <sup>29</sup> to be responsible for the bread offered to God, the flour used in offerings, the wafers made without yeast, the baked offerings, and the flour mixed with olive oil; to weigh and measure the temple offerings; <sup>30</sup> and to praise and glorify the LORD every morning and every evening <sup>31</sup> and whenever offerings to the LORD are burnt on the Sabbath, the New Moon Festival, and other festivals. Rules were made specifying the number of Levites assigned to do this work each time. The Levites were assigned the duty of worshiping the LORD for all time. They were given the responsibility of taking care of the Tent of the LORD's presence and the Temple, and of assisting their relatives, the priests descended from Aaron, in the temple worship.” (GNB)

Apparently they were divided into groups and were assigned different duties connected with the temple. Each one of them probably served no more than one month a year. The rest of the time they were allowed to live with their families in their assigned places throughout the land and care for their flocks and fields. Many of them were musicians and provided the temple music. (See 1 Chronicles 25)

16. Why was David choosing “prophets?” Doesn't God choose prophets? What was the relation between these “prophets” and the harp-players? (1 Chronicles 25:1)

<sup>1</sup> David and the army commanders appointed the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun to serve as **prophets** with lyres, harps, and cymbals.” (*God’s Word*)

<sup>1</sup> King David and the leaders of the Levites chose the following Levite clans to lead the services of worship: Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. They were **to proclaim God’s messages**, accompanied by the music of harps and cymbals.” (*GNB*)

In the Old Testament, the temple musicians, who were responsible for leading out in portions of the service of worship were often called “seers” the word commonly used for “prophet” as well. A prophet (a word derived from Greek) means “one who speaks for” someone else, in this case, for God Himself. Musicians were regarded as people who helped to lead out in the worship of God and thus served as a kind of “prophets” for God.

“Asaph: A Levite, son of Berechiah, one of the leaders of David’s choir. 1 Chron. 6:39. Psalms 50 and 73-83 are attributed to him; and he was in after times celebrated as a seer as well as a musical composer. 2 Chron. 29:30; Neh. 12:46. (B.C. 1050.)” (*Smith’s Bible Dictionary*)

“The ordinary Hebrew word for prophet is *nabî*’, derived from a verb signifying “to bubble forth” like a fountain; hence the word means one *who announces* or *pours forth* the declarations of God.” (*Smith’s Bible Dictionary*)

“A prophet first received instruction from the Lord and then conveyed it to the people. These 2 aspects of the prophet’s work were reflected in the names by which prophets were known in O.T. times: seer (*chozeh* or *ro’eh*) and prophet (*nabî*’) The title of seer was more common in the earlier period of Hebrew history (1 Samuel 9:9). The term used more frequently in the O.T. was *nabî*’, “prophet,” which designated him as God’s spokesman. As a “seer” the prophet discerned God’s will, and as “prophet” he conveyed it to others.” (*SDA Bible Dictionary*)

17. Look at David’s magnificent prayer (1 Chronicles 29:10-19) as he handed over the government and the materials for the temple to Solomon his son. Do these words sound familiar? Why do many of our modern translations not have the doxology at the end of the Lord’s prayer in Matthew 6:9-13? (Compare Luke 11:2-4)

Many modern translations do not have the doxology at the end of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 or Luke 11:2-4. This certainly does not mean that they are trying to change the Bible! In the oldest manuscripts the “doxology” at the end of the prayer is missing. Thus, it is most likely that Matthew and Luke reported the prayer as Jesus spoke it without the doxology. But it wasn’t long before people began to use the prayer for public meetings etc. and a doxology was very appropriate at the end. We do not know where the doxology that is included in some versions of the Bible came from, but we can see that the custom of using a doxology at the end of a public prayer is most Biblical from this prayer by David in 1 Chronicles 29:10-19.

18. Look at 1 Chronicles 29:17 (RSV)—“in the uprightness of my heart I have given these gifts to you”. How could David make such a statement in front of all the people of Israel after what he

did to Uriah and Bathsheba and with Solomon standing next to him? David repeatedly mentions doing things with the (whole) heart. (1 Chronicles 29:9,17,18,19; compare Psalms 51:10) Had David finally learned what God really wants? Notice how much different the end of David's life was compared to the end of Saul's.

David is not claiming here that he had never sinned. David is simply stating how he felt about Yahweh and about the future temple to be built with the gifts that he is giving. While David did some terrible things in his life, when he turned back to God he did so with complete repentance and sorrow for his former sins. (See Psalms 51) At this point in his life there was nothing that he wanted to hold back in his service for Yahweh. As we have seen previously, Saul, by contrast, spent his last night consulting a medium who brought up for him an evil spirit impersonating the prophet Samuel.

19. Why wasn't David allowed to build the temple? (1 Chronicles 22:8; 28:3)

1 Chronicles 22:8: "But the LORD told me that I had killed too many people and fought too many wars. And so, because of all the bloodshed I have caused, he would not let me build a temple for him." (GNB)

1 Chronicles 28:1-3: <sup>1</sup> King David commanded all the officials of Israel to assemble in Jerusalem. So all the officials of the tribes, the officials who administered the work of the kingdom, the leaders of the clans, the supervisors of the property and livestock that belonged to the king and his sons—indeed all the palace officials, leading soldiers, and important men—gathered in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> David stood before them and addressed them: "My friends, listen to me. I wanted to build a permanent home for the Covenant Box, the footstool of the Lord our God. I have made preparations for building a temple to honour him, <sup>3</sup> but he has forbidden me to do it, because I am a soldier and have shed too much blood." (GNB)

David had been a man of war. Much of his life had been spent in fighting and bloodshed. While often God apparently helped him in doing this, He wanted to make it clear that bloodshed and war were not His plan for the children of Israel. Solomon, a man of peace was to be the builder of the temple.

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