

Reading Guide to 1 and 2 Chronicles



A "word cloud" of 1 Chronicles 16 and 2 Chronicles 30

Introduction to 1 and 2 Chronicles

At our May Council Meeting, our congregation officially entered into a season of visioning and renewal. Working with the *Five Goals for the Next Five Years* identified during the Pastoral Search Process, we began to flesh out our hopes and dreams for our congregation. How can we build on the great spiritual strength and vitality that already exists, and meet the spiritual needs of the coming generations? These conversations will occupy our thoughts and dreams and meetings for the next season of our life together.

To help continue our thinking, the Executive Committee and the Christian Education Commission have invited Steve Schweitzer, Academic Dean of Bethany Theological Seminary, to lead our congregation in a weekend retreat on September 9-11. In true Brethren tradition, we will seek God's will for our life together through Bible Study.

Brother Steve's academic research is focused on the Old Testament books of 1 and 2 Chronicles. At first glance, these might not seem the most likely place to begin discussions with a congregation seeking vision for the future. But consider how Steve describes his work:

The Book of Chronicles and the Church: Theology, Continuity, Innovation, and the Kingdom of God.

The book of Chronicles contains an alternative vision of Israel's past, one that promotes innovation while remaining faithful to the people's heritage. While the book of Kings explains why the people ended up in exile ("how we got into this mess"), the book of Chronicles was written after the exile in the midst of significant cultural shifts to provide a way forward for a new opportunity to follow God faithfully ("where do we go from here"). I believe that Chronicles is extremely relevant for the Church as we attempt to imagine what the future can be. In the sessions, we will explore several central themes in the book and think about how Chronicles may help us answer questions about being faithful in the midst of cultural change, being innovative while remaining authentic and consistent with the past, and how the centrality of worship and seeking God provides the core of its message to those who participate in God's Kingdom.

Because Brethren have always understood our discipleship to be grounded on group Bible Study, it is very appropriate and exciting to designate a weekend to studying Scripture together. To help us prepare for our weekend, I have prepared this reading guide to 1 and 2 Chronicles. You may begin whenever it is convenient to you. As you work your way through Chronicles, please keep a couple of points in mind.

- The Chronicler was part historian, part accountant, and part family historian. You will come across many lists along the way. *Do not get bogged down in the lists!* Feel free to skim these sections.
- Passages in red are sections we will take a closer look at when Steve is with us. Pay careful attention to these.
- As you read, keep the following questions in mind:
 - Who is part of the people of God?
 - What does leadership look like? What do righteous kings do?
 - Describe worship in Chronicles. What adjectives do you use? Why are the people praising God? What is appropriate worship?
 - Some of the stories you've heard before, but they're told differently. Based on what you remember, what stories are new? What stories are missing?
 - If there is a chief sin in the book, it is pride. Chronicles seeks after humility. How is this portrayed?

Please mark September 9-11 on your calendar. Our schedule is as follows:

Friday, Sept. 9: 6:30 p.m. Ice Cream Social
7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Chronicles, session 1

Saturday, Sept. 10: 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. Chronicles, session 2
5:45 – 6:30 p.m. Supper
6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Chronicles, session 3
8:30 – 10:00 p.m. *The Theology of Star Wars*
(A bonus session for youth and young adults)

Sunday, Sept. 11: 9:45 a.m. Chronicles, session 4 (Sunday School hour)
11:00 a.m. Worship, with Steve Schweitzer preaching

A Daily Reading Guide to 1 and 2 Chronicles

(Passages in red will be talked about in more detail at the retreat.)

- Day 1: 1 Chronicles 1 – 9. *Genealogies from creation to post-exile (skim!).*
- Day 2: 1 Chronicles 10 – 12. *King Saul's death; King David's rise to power.*
- Day 3: 1 Chronicles 13 – 16:6. *David and the Ark of the Covenant.*
- Day 4: **1 Chronicles 16.** *Worship after the Ark is returned.*
- Day 5: 1 Chronicles 17 – 19. *God's promise; David's battles.*
- Day 6: 1 Chronicles 20 – 22. *David's battles, sin, and temple preparations.*
- Day 7: 1 Chronicles 23 – 27. *Lists of those who served David (skim!).*
- Day 8: **1 Chronicles 28 – 29.** *David's final speeches.*
- Day 9: 2 Chronicles 1 – 5. *Solomon builds the Temple.*
- Day 10: **2 Chronicles 6 – 7.** *Solomon dedicates the Temple.*
- Day 11: 2 Chronicles 8 – 9. *Solomon's activities.*
- Day 12: 2 Chronicles 10 – 12. *King Rehoboam and revolt.*
- Day 13: 2 Chronicles 13 – 16. *Kings Abijah and Asa.*
- Day 14: 2 Chronicles 17 – 19. *King Jehoshaphat and King Ahab.*
- Day 15: **2 Chronicles 20 – 21:3.** *Jehoshaphat's victories.*
- Day 16: 2 Chronicles 21:4 – 23. *Kings Jehoram and Ahaziah.*
- Day 17: 2 Chronicles 24 – 25. *Kings Joash and Amaziah.*
- Day 18: 2 Chronicles 26 – 28. *Kings Uzziah (26:1-26), Jotham, and Ahaz.*
- Day 19: 2 Chronicles 29 – 31. *King Hezekiah's Passover (30:1 - 31:1).*
- Day 20: 2 Chronicles 32 – 33. *Kings Hezekiah and Manasseh (33:1-20).*
- Day 21: 2 Chronicles 34 – 36. *Death of Josiah (35:20-27); exile (36:11-23).*