

Ch. 13, 14 – 1-2 Chronicles:

“Love Covers a Multitude of Sins” (1 Peter 4:8; → Proverbs 10:12; James 5:20)

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United Kingdom

- 1 -Saul (1030-1020 B.C.), of the tribe of Benjamin, resided in Gibeon
- 2 ++**David** (1010-970), of the tribe of Judah, takes Jerusalem (1000 B.C.)
- 3 +-**Solomon** (970-931), construction of the Temple (1 Kings 6)

2 Chronicles

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Divided Kingdom (2 Chronicles 10–36); (1 Kings 12–2 Kings 17 + 18:9-12)

Judah (southern), Davidic dynasty
2 +good; 6 +–; 12 –bad

Israel (northern), five? dynasties
19 kings, –all bad

Prophets

(**P** = polygamous; **S** = single)

- P1.** –Rehoboam (931-913 BC) –**Jeroboam I** (931-910 BC)
2 Chr. 10:1–12:17 // 1 Kings 12:1-33; 14:21-22, 25-38
- P2.** –Abijah (913-911) –Nadab (910-909)
2 Chr. 13:1-22 // 1 Kings 15:1-8
3. +-**Asa** (911-870) –Baasha (909-886)
2 Chr. 14:1–16:14 // 1 Kings 15:9-24
4. +-**Jehoshaphat** (870-848) –Elah (886-885) and Zimri (885) 7 days
17:1–21:10 // 1 K. 15:24b; 22:1-36; 41-50a –Omri (885-874)
- P5.** –Jehoram (848-841) –Ahab (874-853) Elijah
21:1b-20 // 1 K. 22:50b; 2 K. 8:16-24 –Ahaziah (853-852)
6. –Ahaziah (841), death by order of Jehu –Jehoram (852-841) Elisha
2 Chr. 22:1-9 // 2 Kings 8:25–10:14 –Jehu (841-814)
- [7. –**Athaliah** (841-835), **usurper, only queen**]
2 Chr. 22:10–23:21 // 2 Kings 11:1-20
- P8.** +-**Joash/Jehoash** (835-796) + priest Jehoiada –Jehoahaz (814-798)
2 Chr. 24:1-27 // 2 Kings 11:21–12:21
9. +-**Amaziah** (796-781) –Joash (798-783)
2 Chr. 25:1-28 // 2 Kings 14:2-13, 15-20
10. +-**Azariah/Uzziah** (781-740) Isaiah –Jeroboam II (783-743) Amos, Hosea
2 Chr. 26:1-23 // 2 Kings 15:1-7 –Zechariah (743), 6 months
11. +-**Jotham** (740-736) Micah –Shallum (743), 1 month
2 Chr. 27:1-9 // 2 Kings 15:33-38 –Menahem (743-738)
12. –Ahaz (736-716); son/s, 2 K 16:3/2 C.28:3 –Pekahiah (738-737)
2 Chr. 28:1-27 // 2 Kings 16:1-20 –Pekah (737-732)
13. ++**Hezekiah** (716-687); Sennacherib (701) –Hoshea (732-724)
29:1–32:33 // 2 K. 18:1-6, 13-37; 19:14-19,
35-37; 20:1-3, 12-21; 21:1, wife; **Fall of Samaria (722/21 BC)**
+ Is. 36:1-22; 37:14-20, 36-38; 38:1-3; 39:8
14. –**Manasseh** (687-642); son, 2 Chr. 33:6
2 Chr. 33:1-20 // 2 Kings 21:1-10, 17-18
15. –Amon (642-640)
2 Chr. 33:21-25 // 2 Kings 21:19-24
- P16** ++**Josiah** (640-609); wives, 2 K. 23:31, 36 Zephaniah, Jeremiah
1 Chr. 34:1–35:27 // 2 King 22:1–23:30 + 1 Ezdras 1:1-33
- S?17** –Jehoahaz (609) 3 months
1 Chr. 36:1-4 // 2 Kings 23:30-35 + 1 Ezdras 1:34-38
- 18 –Jehoiakim (609-597)
1 Chr. 36:5-8 // 2 Kings 23:36–24:7 + 1 Ezdras 1:39-42
- P19** –Jehoiachin (598-597); wives, 2 Kings 24:14
1 Chr. 36:9-10 // 2 Kings 24:8-17 + 1 Ezdras 1:43-46a
- 20 –Zedekiah (597-587/86) **Fall of Jerusalem (587/86)**
1 Chr. 36:11-21 // 2 Kings 24:18–25:21 + + Esdras 1:46b-58

“History writing is invariably an ideological act” and, as David Pleins explains,¹ this fact is clearer in Chronicles than in any other part of the Bible (cf. the parallel texts in Samuel-Kings in the Deuteronomist History, → **Joshua**; → **John** with the three “synoptic” Gospels in the New Testament). The title itself of Chronicles in the Septuagint (LXX, *paraleipomenon*), “the omitted things”, tells us that the reader will find much that does not appear in Samuel-Kings, since Chronicles emphasizes

- *David as the founder of Israel’s public worship,*
- *Solomon as the builder of the Temple, and*
- *the leadership of the Levites and the priests.*

However, modern readers, who are not so concerned with the details of ancient Jewish worship, are more impressed with the way Chronicles *omits* David's scandals (his adultery with Bathsheba) and those of Solomon (with his 700 wives and 300 concubines; see the Pentateuch's Elohist source). Such comparisons underscore the fact that to write history is not to simply “narrate (everything) that happened,” but to *select*, among a thousand things, less than one percent in accord with certain criteria: the interests and intention of the historian (his ideology/theology), the availability of sources, etc.

Chronicles appears to have been written by a Levite (male), an official of the Temple in Jerusalem. Consequently, he interprets history starting from his concept of a God who shares his commitment to worship in this Temple. Recently the majority of biblicists deny that the same author wrote → **Ezra** and **Nehemiah**.² Chronicles probably was written in stages with the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9 added at the final stage. Although many prefer a final date around 400-350 BC, at the end of the Persian period,³ others conclude that Chronicles was finished around 300, at the beginning of the Greek period.⁴

Beginning with Adam (1 Chr. 1:1; → Genesis 1–5), Chronicles continues to the end of the exile, with Cyrus' decree in 538 BC (2 Chr. 36:22-23) and thus appears to cover the same period as the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History (especially 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings). However, Chronicles emphasizes primarily *David and Solomon* as founders of *worship* in the *Temple*, under the leadership of the *Levites and priests* (1 Chr. 10–29, David + 2 Chr. 1–9, Solomon). To get to David, 1 Chronicles 1–9 presents genealogies, and after Solomon, 2 Chr. 10–36 disregards the heretical-schismatic kingdom of the north (with its idolatrous worship in Bethel) in order to focus on the history of the kings of Judah in Jerusalem. It ends with the destruction of the Temple and the hope of restoration suggested by Cyrus' decree, who ordered the reconstruction of the Temple. After David (the founder of public worship) and Solomon (builder of the Temple), on reviewing the history of the Davidic dynasty in the south, Chronicles especially emphasizes five other (“good”) kings who made great reforms in worship: Asa, Jehoshafat, Joash, Hezekiah and Josiah. Even Manasseh, the worst king, who on having the longest reign (55 years) appears to have deconstructed Deuteronomistic theology, ends up repentant and as a reformer of worship (2 Chr. 33:1-20; see 2 Peter 3:9).

After the Exile (587/538 BC), the Temple was reconstructed in Jerusalem (520-515; → Haggai, Zechariah), but Chronicles (400-300) endeavors to motivate *all* Israelites (including those of the

north and those of the exile) to come three times a year to worship Yahweh in the Temple in Jerusalem (→ **Deuteronomy**). The selection of the included elements comes from this focus and from a very specific purpose. Consequently, we ought not interpret the strict selection as an attempt to “censure” the scandals, since the DH (in addition to the numerous cited sources) already existed and had circulated for a century before (also see Psalm 51 with the allusion in the title to David’s adultery with Bathsheba.

Especially since Wellhausen (nineteenth century), who critiqued the new elements not included in Samuel and Kings that Chronicles added, many have questioned or denied the historical value of the additions: “See what Chronicles has made out of David! The founder of the kingdom has become the founder of the temple and public worship, the king and hero at the head of his companions in arms has become the singer and master of ceremonies at the head of a swarm of priests and Levites....It is only the tradition of the older source [Samuel-Kings] that possesses historical value.”⁵ However, twentieth century archeological discoveries sometimes supported the Chronicles additions and convinced the majority of biblicists that Chronicles sporadically had had access to certain reliable sources, which caused greater respect for its contribution to the history of Israel. Roland Boer goes beyond Wellhausen by describing Chronicles as “one of the first men-only utopias....[a] gay ghetto”⁶ that demands a “utopian hermeneutics of camp.”⁷ (Note: By “camp” Boer refers to the typical excesses of parodies in gay and travesti humor, which at times even reflects misogyny; see below, **2. Women** and **3. Sexual minorities**.)

The prophets of 1-2 Kings denounce the oppression of the monarchy; those of Chronicles encourage the kings to reform public worship. Kings focuses on the history of the kings, who determined the destiny of the nation. Therefore, the DH ends with a more pessimistic note, although suggesting a possible restoration of the monarchy (2 Kings 25:27-30). One fundamental contribution of Chronicles for the poor colony of Judah, under the yoke of Persia and Greece, was to instill the hope of an “open future” (Jurgen Moltmann): thanks to God’s compassion, they anticipated a restoration of all the people, united under one king, around a temple, worshipping one God (2 Chr. 36:22-23).⁸ 1 Chronicles criticizes David twice for having shed much blood in his wars and indicates a preference for Solomon’s peaceful reign (22:8-9; 28:3), a fact that suggests how fundamental is peace in the hope that Chronicles projects.

1. The Poor and Oppressed. Chronicles is another book where the search for technical words for poor and oppression yields few results, but a more appropriate approach is fruitful. At first sight, the book appears to reflect an elitist perspective, since rather than focusing on the suffering of the poor, extravagant descriptions abound of the enormous offering David managed to collect for the construction of the Temple (1 Chr. 29:1-9) and of Solomon’s fabulous wealth (2 Chr. 1:14-17). Incidentally, Solomon had asked God for wisdom, not riches (2 Chr. 1:1-13) and the queen of Sheba was amazed by the astuteness of the king’s answers, but the author of Chronicles appears to be more impressed by the wealth:

The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the foothills (2 Chr. 1:15). All King Solomon’s drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House...were of pure gold; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon (9:20).

However, on reading such descriptions, we ought not imagine that the author or his readers were Solomon's contemporaries and that they enjoyed the riches of his empire, since Chronicles represents rather the perspective of a poor Levite writing when Israel was no longer an empire but a colony under the Persian or Greek empire. The author instead sought to *dignify* or *encourage* his humble contemporaries, helping them to remember that the nation was not always a poor colony but powerful nation that enjoyed the riches of the Solomonic empire.

The concern – almost obsession – of the author and his God with public worship may also give the impression that they had forgotten the teaching of prophets like Samuel that Yahweh prefers mercy and justice, not sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22-23; Am 5:21-24; Hos 6:6). Although the Book of the Covenant had taught that what provokes Yahweh's anger is the oppression of poor immigrants, widows and orphans (Ex. 22:21-24), Chronicles repeats Samuel's scandalous account where an angry Yahweh strikes dead a priest (Uzzah) for having touched the sacred ark that was about to fall off of the cart that was transporting it (2 Sam. 6:6-8 // 1 Chr. 13:9-10).

However, by insisting so much in a community united in authentic worship, Chronicles makes us recognize that *the poor cannot improve their situation with an individualistic approach*. It suggests, rather, a community, worship-centered approach (→ Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37), since each of the three annual feasts in the Temple made a special provision for the poor and oppressed:

- Unleavened bread and Passover (Deut. 16:1-8) focused on the Exodus paradigm (cf. Deut. 26:4-9);
- Weeks/ first fruits (Deut. 16:9-12; 26:1-5; Levites, immigrants, orphans, widows (12-13);
- Tabernacles (Deut. 16:13-17, slaves, Levites, immigrants, orphans, widows).

Furthermore, each sabbatical year was the occasion for the liberation of slaves and – above all – the Jubilee every 50 years involved the cultic celebration of the liberation of slaves, the just (egalitarian) distribution of the land and leaving the land fallow for a season (2 Chr. 36:21; → Leviticus 25). The genealogies served to maintain the just distribution of the ancestral lands (1 Chr. 9:1-12; → Joshua 13–21, the priestly responsibilities point toward David; see 1 Chr. 12:1-40, David's original followers).

However, although Craig Bloomberg insists that today we have to take into account the hermeneutical question and recognize the distinction between the agrarian world of the Hebrew Bible and our global post-modern capitalist world, the principle of egalitarian justice is transcendent.⁹ Alice Laffey points out how Chronicles replaces the old identity around land and the king with a new identity around worship in the Temple, administered by Levites and priests.¹⁰ As the monarchy was instituted to defend the tribes from the aggressions of the Philistines, in the postexilic period the Temple and worship served to create a measure of autonomy in the face of the Persian and Greek empires. The prophets → **Haggai** and **Zechariah 1-8** are even more “worship-centered” than Chronicles, since they insisted that in their period (520-515 BC) the principal cause of poverty was the people's refusal to rebuild the Temple. They promised that the reconstruction would result in prosperity for all. In regard to Latin America, with its long Catholic tradition, Marcella Althaus-Reid warns against the abuses of Mariology, since in all of her supposed appearances and revelations Mary only asks for more temples and more homage but never more schools for the poor.¹¹ 1-2 Chronicles, by presenting a

theology centered on public worship, raises the question of the function of patriarchal houses (“the family”), the monarchy (see Psalm 72), the prophets and the priests and Levites in relation to the poor.

Due to the historical contexts and distinct contents, the Exodus paradigm is important in Ezra-Nehemiah but is almost absent in 1-2 Chronicles (also see 1 Chr. 17:20-22; 2 Chr. 20:17). Although technical vocabulary for the poor does not appear in Chronicles (cf. Nehemiah 5), some texts refer to oppression. Above all, Chronicles textually preserves the explanation of the Deuteronomistic History for the division of the kingdom: it makes it clear how the forced labor that Solomon used for the construction of the Temple (2 Chr. 2:1-2) and the threat of his son Rehoboam to make the work harder, according to bad counsel from some of his younger advisors, caused the separation from the north (2 Chronicles 10 // 1 Kings 12):

My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it;
my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.
(2 Chr. 10:14b; see 2:1-2; cf. Samuel's prophecy in 1 Sam. 8:17)

As Sara Japhet points out, the answer from Rehoboam and his young advisors reflects the same arrogance of Pharaoh in the Exodus (Ex. 5:7-8) and is “tyranny unmasked”.¹² In addition to the arrogance, the answer suggested by the young advisors, but not repeated by Rehoboam, speaks of his “finger”, probably a vulgar reference to the penis:

My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. (2 Chr. 10:10b // 1 Kings 12:10)¹³

Although he was one of the good kings, Asa also was guilty of oppression: he jailed the seer Hanani for his prophecy and also oppressed (*ratsats*) the people (2 Chr. 16:10). A psalm of David remembers how Yahweh defended the patriarchs from oppression:

[God] allowed no one to oppress them (*‘ashaq*);
[God] rebuked kings [of Canaan] on their account.
(1 Chr. 16:21//Psalm 105:14; see 1 Chr. 18:14, justice; 2 Chr. 6:22, injustice to neighbor.)

2. Women. Thanks to the numerous **genealogies** (1 Chr. 1–9), 1 Chronicles names more women than any other book of the Bible (44; cf. Genesis, with 32 women named, also primarily in the genealogies.)¹⁴ Furthermore, 1 Chronicles refers to 15 women without naming them (cf. Genesis, with 46) and 13 of the named are not mentioned in other texts. However, 1-2 Chronicles does not include any story about any woman who is not in the DH and **omits** seven narratives:¹⁵

- Michal's saving intervention, who rescued *David* from Saul (1 Samuel 19);
- Abigail's initiative that avoided *David* shedding Nabal's blood (1 Samuel 25);
- *David's* adultery with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11);
- rape of Tamar, *David's* daughter, by her half-brother Amnon (2 Samuel 13);
- rape of *David's* concubines by Absalom (2 Sam. 16:22);
- presence of Abishag with *David* at the end of his life (1 Kings 1:1-4);
- *Solomon's* decision in the dispute between two prostitutes (1 Kings 3:16-18);

Alice Laffey explains these omissions by suggesting that the interest of Chronicles is to present David as a hero for the post-exilic community: “Should the nation’s hero need to be delivered by women? Would he seduce another man’s wife? Would he allow the rape of his daughter and the rape of his concubines to go unpunished?” Also see the discreet suppression of David’s impotence and his son’s superior wisdom.¹⁶ (Concerning the feminine perspective in the temple’s construction and decoration, cf → **Exodus 25–40** and the Tabernacle).

2.1 Women in the narratives, 1 Chronicles 10–2 Chronicles 36. Although the DH and Chronicles differ greatly in their focus, they are quite similar when dealing with women. (For the prophetess Huldah see 2 Kings 22:14-20; cf. 2 Chr. 34:11-28.) The Chronicler does not refer to Solomon’s 700 wives, 300 concubines and his idolatry (cf. 1 Kings 11), but neither does he permit Solomon’s Egyptian wife to live in David’s holy house (2 Chr. 8:11). Other additions include:

- King Rehoboam’s wives receive more attention in Chronicles than in Kings. This king had 18 wives and 60 concubines; “Rehoboam loved Maacah...more than all his other wives and concubines” (2 Chr. 11:18-21);
- The priest Eleazar had only daughters, who married their cousins (1 Chr. 23:22);
- The singer Heman had three daughters (1 Chr. 25:5);
- Rehoboam (// Solomon) had multiple wives, was unfaithful in the end (2 Chr. 11:18-23);
- Priest Jehoiada promotes bigamy for King Joash, does not cause idolatry (2 Chr. 24:1-3);
- The women and daughters of the priests kept themselves holy (Hezekiah’s Passover), 2 Chr. 31:18);
- Singing women lament Josiah’s death (2 Chr. 35:25; women in Temple worship).

2.2 Queen mothers in the Davidic Dynasty. Since Chronicles ignores the schismatic northern kingdom and follows only the history of the Davidic-Solomonic dynasty in Jerusalem, many important women in → **1-2 Kings** disappear (such as Jezebel with her eunuchs). Nonetheless, of the 20 kings of Judah, Chronicles preserves the names of 11 of the queen mothers. Chronicles overlooks especially the mothers of the last seven kings (beginning with Manasseh, all of them bad with the exception of Josiah), all named in 2 Kings. Of the 11 queen mothers that Chronicles names, not all are good. The good King Asa had to remove his mother Maacah from her position because she had made an image of Asherah (2 Chr. 15:16; cf. 1 Kings 15:13). Athaliah promoted the iniquity of her son (2 Chr. 22:3).

2.3 The Prophetess Hulda (2 Kings 22:14-22 // 2 Chr. 34:22-28). When the high priest Hilkiah and the secretary Shaphan took to King Josiah the scroll of a book that Hilkiah had discovered in the Temple (→ **Deuteronomy**), the king commanded them to consult *Yahweh*. Without hesitation the authorities left to consult *Huldah*, the prophetess of the Temple, “wife of Shallum”, keeper of the wardrobe, who lived nearby. Since the Hebrew Bible includes few references to female prophets, it is notable that, in the face of such a crisis, the authorities consulted a woman and that Kings and Chronicles (almost identically) present this as something completely normal. We might wonder if it is intentional that three of the four prophetesses named in the Hebrew Bible are presented with a negative dimension:

- Miriam criticizes Moses and Yahweh punishes her with leprosy (→ Numbers 12);
- *Deborah*, the only woman judge and the only prophetess without faults (→ Judges 4-5);
- Noadiah allies herself with Nehemiah's enemies (→ Neh. 6:14);
- Huldah promises the pious Josiah that he will die “in peace”, but he dies in the battle of Carchemish (2 Kings 23:29-30 // 2 Chr. 35:20-27).

On the other hand, as shown by Claudia Camp, the scroll discovered in the Temple could have been fraudulent, until the prophetess Huldah

authorizes what will become the core of Scripture for Judaism and Christianity. Her validation of a text thus stands as the first recognizable act in the long process of canon formation. Huldah authenticates a document as being God’s word, thereby affording it the sanctity required for establishing a text as authoritative, or canonical.¹⁷

Walter Brueggemann emphasizes that the narration teaches how the scroll of Deuteronomy prevails over the *Temple* (represented by the high priest Hilkiah) and over the *monarchy* (Josiah).¹⁸ But when Brueggemann adds that the law also prevails over *prophecy*, he appears to ignore the implications of the text that Claudia Camp points out in regards to the original and decisive role of the prophetess Huldah. Brueggemann recognizes that the prophetess Huldah is allied to the Torah, since like Deuteronomy, Huldah rejects idolatry and insists in exclusive worship of Yahweh: “Thus Torah and prophecy are companions and allies.”¹⁹ (See Deut. 13; 18:14-22).

Today we have the irony that many feminist biblicists question the traditional canon of the Scriptures (books largely written and canonized by men), which constitutes a great heresy, according to many men. But if the Bible itself presents a dialectical relationship between Law/Scripture and prophecy, and if it was a woman who initiated the process of canonization, how can we reject the possibility of reconsidering the historical process of canonization in the traditional patriarchal cultures (even accepting modern prophecies)?²⁰ One difference between the parallel accounts concerning Huldah is that 2 Chr. 34:14 refers to the discovered scroll as the law of Yahweh “given through Moses” and probably was understood to be the entire Pentateuch (cf. Deuteronomy in 2 Kings 22).²¹ But if this is so, Chronicles presents a second step in the historic canonization process, which increases even more the authority of the prophetess: Huldah establishes the canonical status of the entire Pentateuch, not just of a primitive version of Deuteronomy!

3. Sexual Minorities (++Hezekiah, inclusive Passover without legalism)²²

3.1 The Levites: Temple musical chorus, cooks and servants? As noted above, Roland Boer describes Chronicles as “one of the first men-only utopias...[a] gay ghetto.”²³ While 1-2 Kings presents a dialectic between the pro and anti monarchical positions, Chronicles contains a similar dialectic, between the texts in favor of the equality of the Levites and the others that present the priests, the sons of Aaron, as a superior order to the Levites. Moses and Aaron were sons of Levite fathers (Ex. 2:1; 4:14; 6:16-27) and the Levites defended the purity of the Yahwist faith when Israel committed idolatry with the gold calf (Ex. 32:25-29). They assisted in the

construction of the tabernacle (Ex. 38:21) and in its transport and protection (Num. 1:47-54; 2:17). However, in → **Numbers** the narratives of the priestly source attribute grave sins to certain Levites and insist in limiting the priesthood to the sons of Aaron (the revolt of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Numbers 16–17; the idolatry of Baal of Peor, Numbers 25). When Solomon constructed the Temple, the Levite tabernacle bearers were left unemployed, but many continued to serve in the high places outside of Jerusalem. With the centralization of worship in Jerusalem and the elimination of the rituals to Yahweh in other “high places” (→ Deuteronomy, Hezekiah, Josiah), again many Levites became unemployed.

Thus, the Levites were considered poor and are mentioned along with widows, orphans and immigrants. Deuteronomy favors the Levites (33:8-11), uses the phrase “Levite priests”, and perhaps does not want to distinguish between Levites and priests (Deut. 17:9, 18; 18:1; 24:8; 27:9; but cf. 18:3-5, 6-8). Chronicles, especially David, also appears to favor the Levites, although some texts (probably of a later writing) insist in the superiority of the priests who were sons of Aaron²⁴ (cf. 2 Kings 25:18-21a, three Levite bearers plus five eunuch counselors). Such tensions and diversity in the Bible confirm Walter Brueggemann's conclusion: “History in Israel is a very particular linguistic practice which is a vehicle for a specific conversation about social power and social possibility.”²⁵ Since many Levites served as unmarried shamans in the worship outside Jerusalem (→ Judges 17), or as assistants to the priests, sons of Aaron, in commonly feminine roles, probably many were sexual minorities of some type.²⁶ Even their function as guardians of the sanctuary can suggest a sexual minority status (see the long tradition of sexual minorities in the Vatican's Swiss Guard and the British Royal Family guard):

- 1 Chr. 6:31ss, 15:6ss, especially singers and musicians (see Psalms, “To the choir director”);
- 1 Chr. 9:22, 26:8-11, gatekeepers;
- 1 Chr. 23:28, the cleansing of holy things;
- 1 Chr. 23:29-32, three domestic functions;
- 1 Chr. 9:28ss, bakers (contrary to Numbers 4 and 18);
- 2 Chr. 17:7ss, taught the law to all of Israel (under Jehoshaphat ; Deut. 6);
- 2 Chr. 20:14ss, 35:15, prophesied;
- 2 Chr. 35:18, priests and Levites in the Passover;
- 2 Chr. 36:17-19, youths killed in the sanctuary.

Excursus – Poor Uzzah and the Levites (2 Samuel 6:1-23 // 1 Chr. 13:1-14; 15:1–16:6)

1. We should not suppose that the laws of the Pentateuch concerning the transport of the ark already existed. The narrative about the capture of the ark in 1 Samuel 4 does not indicate the manner of transporting it. Furthermore, if David and Levites had known about the laws “of Moses” concerning the transport of the ark, it is difficult to believe that they would not have followed them.

2. The transport of the ark in a new cart was the idea of the Philistines (an example of their advanced technology; consider their monopoly of iron; → **Judges**). They sent off the ark to Israel in a cart pulled by two cows (1 Samuel 6).

3. When David decided to bring the ark to Jerusalem, he first imitated the Philistines: he put the ark in a new cart pulled by oxen which stumbled. When Uzzah extended his hand to steady the ark, he fell dead, provoking much fear and a change of plans. The text does not indicate any prior knowledge of the laws of the Pentateuch concerning the transport of the ark (2 Sam. 6:1-8 // 1 Chr. 13:9-14; but cf. 1 Chronicles 15).
4. In biblical times (prescientific) people did not understand heart attacks and other internal causes of sudden death, and so the tendency was to attribute any disaster to Yahweh's "anger" and then try to establish a hypothesis to avoid such disasters in similar circumstances (1 Chr. 21:1, an adversary/Satan and the census // Yahweh's anger, 2 Sam. 24:1; → Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira).
5. Upon reflecting on the disaster and trying to determine the cause, the people decided it would be safer for the Levites to transport the ark with two poles, a good example of "appropriate technology" for countries without paved roads. When they carried it this way, all went well and the ark entered Jerusalem without more problems (2 Sam. 6:13 // 1 Chr. 15:2, 13-15).
6. This mode of transporting the ark became the official way of doing so and was thus written into law and became part of the Pentateuch as a duty of the Levites (Ex. 25:12-14; 37:3-4).
7. When Solomon built the Temple as a permanent place of worship, the ark was placed in it and there was no more need to transport it. The Levites were left without work.
8. Later, when the high places were eliminated and worship was centralized in Jerusalem, in accord with the requirements of → **Deuteronomy**, again many Levites were left without employment, since the majority were officials of worship in those high places. So another motive arose to include them, with widows, orphans and immigrants, as people who should receive special economic aid.
9. The dialectic in the Bible between the texts that favor the Levites (sons of Levi) and those that favor the priests (sons of Aaron) results from a long conflictive history between the two groups ("unions or associations") that work in public worship. Deuteronomy and Chronicles, almost always, contain texts that support the rights of the Levites. The priestly source ("P") of the Pentateuch and Ezekiel favor the priests, sons of Aaron. Generally the Levites were in a weak and inferior position; twice they were left with no work and consequently were objects of benevolence in many laws.

3.2 Polygamy in the Bible (cf. the monogamy of Adam and Eve, Cain, Noah [raped by his son, Gen. 9:18-29; cf. Lot, 9:30-38], Isaac and Rebecca; see Gen. 2:24; → Mark 12; 1 Corinthians 6). Far from condemning polygamy as a perversion of the original divine purpose of a man married to a woman,²⁷ Chronicles exalts polygamy as evidence of God's blessing for faithful men: "If the Chronicler wished to assert the faithfulness of the man before God, one way to do it was to attribute to him more wives and children. Ephah and Maacah are each identified as Caleb's concubines. Caleb's goodness is emphasized by his numerous wives and their fertility (1 Chron. 2:46, 48-49.)"²⁸ Chronicles does not include the narrative of 1 Kings concerning Solomon's 700 wives and 300 concubines that caused him to turn away from God (1

Kings 11:1-6), but obviously for Chronicles the problem would not be the number of women but their character – idolatrous foreigners.

3.2.1 The Hebrew Bible – Two laws take for granted the approval of polygamy:

→ **Deut. 21:15-17:** Take the case of a man who has two wives, one of whom he loves but not the other; both give him children and the firstborn is the son of the woman he does not love. When the man distributes his inheritance among his sons, he will not give the right of firstborn to the son of the wife he loves, nor will he prefer him in detriment to his real firstborn son; in other words, the son of the wife he does not love. Rather, he will recognize the latter as his firstborn son and will give him a double portion of his possessions. “[s]ince he is the first issue of his virility, the right of the firstborn is his.” (Cf. Deut. 17:17, for kings.)

→ **Lev. 18:18 (cf. 20:21).** The prohibition of taking as a wife the sister of one's wife implies the acceptance of having more than one wife.²⁹ Examples in the Pentateuch and Joshua:

Lamech + Adah and Zillah (Gen. 4:18-24), the first case.

Abraham + Sarah and her slave Hagar (Genesis 12–23) and his wife Keturah (Gen. 25:1-11).

Jacob + Leah and Rachel and two concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah (Gen. 29:16–30:24; 37:2).

Esau + Judith, Basemath (Gen. 26:34-35), Mahalath (28:9), Adah and Oholibamah (36:2-3).

Moses + Zipporah (Ex. 2:21-22; 4:20, 24-26) + a Cushite woman (black, Num. 12:1).

Caleb + two wives (Azubah and Ephratha) + two concubines (Ephah and Maacah): Caleb's kindness and divine blessing on his life (Joshua 14:6-15; 15:13-20 // Judges 1:10-15) are also shown in his two concubines and in their fertility (1 Chr. 2:18-19, 46, 48-49; see also Judah's descendants, 1 Chr. 4:3, 5-7, 17).³⁰

At least five of the twelve judges (two major and three minor) were polygamists:

#5 Gideon + many wives and one concubine (Judges 8:28-32; see Abimelech, Judges 9);

#7 *Jair*, 10:3-5 (no oppression or liberation; “judged”);

#9 *Ibzan* 12:8-10 (no oppression or liberation; “judged”);

#11 *Abdon*, 12:13-15 (no oppression or liberation; “judged”);

#12 Samson, 13:1–16:31 (Philistine oppression, 13:1; the spirit, 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14 (cf. 15:19);

Cf. Elkanah + Hannah and Peninnah (1 Samuel 1; see Samuel, 1 Samuel 1–12).

All three kings (+good and –bad) of the united monarchy were polygamists:

–Saul + Ahinoam (1 Sam. 14:49-50; 1 Chr. 8:33; 9:39) and his concubine Rizpah (2 Sam. 3:6-11; 21:8);

++David + eight wives and 10 concubines, → 2 Sam. 12:7-8: “Nathan said to David, ‘...Thus says [Yahweh], the God of Israel: ...I gave you your master’s house, and *your master’s wives into your bosom...*’” (cf. 12:11 with 16:21-22; Lev. 18:17 prohibits incest with the mother of one's wife);³¹

+Solomon + 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3; cf. 2 Chr. 8:11; Song 6:8).

At least six kings of Judah during the divided kingdom were polygamists, including Josiah, the best (++):

- #1 –Rehoboam (931-913 BC) + 18 wives and 60 concubines (2 Chr. 11:21);
- #2 –Abijah (913-911 BC) + 14 wives (2 Chr. 13:21);
- #5 –Jehoram (848-841) + wives (2 Chr. 21:6,14,17; 22:10, Athaliah + others);
- #8 ++Joash (835-796) + two wives chosen by the priest Jehoiada: “Joash did what was right in the sight of [Yahweh] all the days of the priest Jehoiada. Jehoiada got two wives for him, and he became the father of sons and daughters (2 Chr. 24:2-3; cf. 2 Kings 11:21–12:3);
- #16 ++ **Josiah** (640-609) + wives (2 Kings 23:31, 36);
- #19 –Jehoiachin (598-597) + wives + eunuchs (2 Kings 24:14-15; deportation, 598 BC).

Cf. the image of God and God's people as marriage (polygamous) in the prophets: → **Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezequiel, 2 Isaiah, Malachi.**

Conclusion: Two of the three patriarchs (Abraham and Jacob), four of the 12 judges, the three kings of the united kingdom (Saul, David and Solomon), and six of the 20 kings of Judah (++Josiah) were polygamists. **Thus, polygamy dominates in the Hebrew Bible, as does celibacy in the New Testament (Jesus, Paul), but “family values” are strikingly absent in the entire Bible.**

3.2.2 Is polygamy prohibited in the New Testament? Among biblicalists there is no consensus in answer to this question. Following are the relevant texts (see commentaries):

- Jesus, divorce (Mark 10:2-12, “one flesh”; // Mat. 19:3-6; → Gen. 2:2); divorce is prohibited, not polygamy or levirate marriage (Mat. 22:23-38 // Mark 23 // Luke 20).
- Acts 15 and *porneia*; see Lev. 18:18?
- Paul, 1 Cor. 7:1-4, justice? But see 7:12, 15, 17, 20, 24; 1 Cor. 6:16, one flesh; Ephesians 5, Church imaged as the Christ's wife; Revelation 21–22, the wife of the Lamb;
- Pastoral letters (Titus and 1 Timothy):³²
 - “[An elder should be] blameless, married (only?) once” (Titus 1:6).
 - “A bishop must be above reproach, married (only?) once” (1 Timothy 3:2).
 - “Let deacons be married (only?) once” (1 Timothy 3:12).

Six possible interpretations of the texts in the pastoral letters:

1. Only married men can be leaders? 1 Tim. 4:3; Jesus, Paul, 1 Cor. 7:32?
2. Prohibition of polygamy? (Chrysostom, Jerome); of concubines? (Augustine)
3. Prohibition of divorced leaders?
4. If widows, can they not remarry? (patristic, Thomas Aquinas, modern Catholicism)
5. Married to the church and celibates?
6. If married, examples of faithfulness (prohibition of adultery, fornication)?

3.3 Eunuchs (→ 1 Sam. 8:15; 1-2 Kings; Esther). King Ahab calls one of his eunuchs to search for the prophet Micaiah (1 Kings 22:9 // 2 Chr. 18:8). In 1 Chr. 28:1 David assembles the eunuchs of his palace to explain his plans for the construction of the Temple (see eunuchs in → **2 Kings** 8:6; 9:32; 18:17; 20:18; 23:11; 24:12, 15; 25:9).

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End Notes

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- ¹ David Pleins 2001:143.
 - ² Pace DHHBE, BJ and Steven Tuell 2001.
 - ³ Klein 2006:16; Tuell 2001:11.
 - ⁴ Sara Japhet 1993:28; Knoppers 2003:116; NBJ Introducción, 453-454.
 - ⁵ Wellhausen, cited in Ralph Klein, ABD I 1992:997.
 - ⁶ Roland Boer 2006:251.
 - ⁷ *Ibid.*, 261-267.
 - ⁸ Williams, 1982:33; Pleins, 2001:144.
 - ⁹ Craig Blomberg 1999:42, nota 17.
 - ¹⁰ Alice Laffey 1998:18.
 - ¹¹ Marcella Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology*, 2000:47-86.
 - ¹² Sara Japhet, 1993:656.
 - ¹³ See Jerome Walsh 1996:164.
 - ¹⁴ Carol Meyers 2001:10; *pace* Roland Boer: "one of the first men-only utopias....[a] gay ghetto," 2006:251.
 - ¹⁵ According to Alice Laffey 1998:118-20.
 - ¹⁶ Laffey, 119.
 - ¹⁷ Claudia Camp 2001 *Women in Scripture* 96.
 - ¹⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, Macon, Georgia: Smyth&Helwys, 2000:548-49.
 - ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 549.
 - ²⁰ See Deirdre Good, WBC 1998:475-81; Dianne Bergant, "Canon", in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, 35-36, ed. Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson, 1996.
 - ²¹ Williamson 402; Japhet 1030.
 - ²² Tuell 211-230.
 - ²³ Roland Boer 2006:251..
 - ²⁴ Steven Tuell 2001:54-64.
 - ²⁵ Cited in Pleins 2001:143.
 - ²⁶ Gary Knoppers 1999:49-72. "Hierodules, Priests or Janitors? The Levites in Chronicles and the History of the Israelite Priesthood". D. Hubbard, "Sacerdotes y Levitas" NDB 1195-1202; Steven Tuell 2001:34-37, 54-64, 190.
 - ²⁷ Pace Ronald du Prez, → Reyes.
 - ²⁸ Alice Laffey 1998:120
 - ²⁹ Pace Ronald du Preez 1993:70-80.
 - ³⁰ Alice Laffey 1998:120; NJB note b at Joshua 14:6.
 - ³¹ See Ronald du Preez 1993:190-192.
 - ³² See Howard Marshall 1999:154-159.