

# PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“Chronicles?” my friend asked, “Write a commentary on Chronicles? That is the last book I would spend years studying.” An understandable reaction since Chronicles is probably the most ignored text in Scripture. Chronicles has been called the “Cinderella” of the Bible (Kleinig, “Research,” 43). It begins with nine chapters of genealogies, covers the same historical ground as 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings, and is filled with details about ancient rituals surrounding a temple that no longer exists.

However, Chronicles is filled with excitement – God’s promise to David, his gracious presence in the temple, and the faith-response of his people. David and Solomon are the new Moses and Joshua. The Temple follows the Exodus/Conquest just as David/Solomon followed Moses/Joshua. God establishes a people, cares for them, tests them and, if necessary, punishes them. Chronicles describes the worship of God’s people and the hope that worship engenders. It assures Israel of God’s presence and the “messianic” hope of the Davidic kingdom. The Chronicler’s themes are significant: worship, grace, providence, hope, divine testing, faith, prayer, divine retribution.

“Why are you writing a commentary on Chronicles?” another friend questioned. “You are trained in historical and systematic theology. What gives you a passion for Chronicles?”

I studied under Raymond Dillard at Westminster Theological Seminary. He instilled in me an appreciation of Chronicles as biblical theology. The Chronicler bridged the gap between his generation and the canon of the OT available to him. He had the Pentateuch, Samuel–Kings, some of the prophets, and some of the Psalms in front of him (as well as noncanonical resources). He attempted to make sense of God’s past work in Israel in his post-exilic situation. As an interpreter of Scripture, he applied the mean-

ing of God's promises to his own context. As a narrative theologian, he retold the history of Israel through the eyes of God's dynastic promise to David and his redemptive promise to Solomon (temple). He restored hope to his discouraged postexilic community. The Chronicler models narrative theology.

While paying attention to the historical and literary dimensions of the Chronicler's text, I will often concentrate on theological exegesis. I am a theologian reading a theologian. I intend to probe the story of God in Chronicles in order to more fully appreciate the meaning of God's story in our contemporary setting.

I recognize that I am not a specialist in Old Testament studies. I will defer many questions to the specialists (e.g., what is "late biblical Hebrew" and questions of textual transmission). The reader should not use my commentary in isolation from the more substantial works that engage the minutiae of exegetical detail (e.g., Williamson, Braun, Dillard, and Japhet).

Many have helped in the process of writing this commentary, including the staff and editors of College Press and the OT commentary series. But first and foremost is my graduate assistant Keith Stanglin. He has done the grunt work of bibliographical research, read the manuscript with me, and provided helpful suggestions.

Other students worked through Chronicles with me as we discussed the manuscript: David Black, Tommy Drinnen, Steve Dye, Paul Glover, Jeremy Hopkins, Daniel Joliff, Robert Lee, Shawn Moore, Justin Tedesco, Chris Thompson, Bobby Valentine, and Ivan Voser. I profited from their comments and suggestions.

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The librarians and staff at Harding University Graduate School of Religion were extremely helpful as I adopted their holdings. I piled interlibrary loan and purchase requests on their already full plates. I am continuously amazed at how rarely I must look elsewhere as HUGSR's library provides access to a wealth of material.

Mostly, however, I am grateful for my family. They have endured long hours away from me as I have completed this task. Barbara,

Ashley, Joshua, and Rachel are my emotional support and I find my greatest fulfillment in knowing that they love me.

May reading the Chronicler's story enable you to make the story of God your own story so that you may live in hope, faithfulness and assurance.

John Mark Hicks

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**Dedicated to the students, staff, administration,  
and faculty of Harding University Graduate School  
of Religion from whom I have learned much  
and through whom I have experienced the  
Chronicler's message of divine faithfulness.**