

Synthetic Bible Studies

Containing an outline study of every book of the Bible
with suggestions for Sermons, Addresses and
Bible Expositions

By

James M. Gray, D.D.

Fleming H. Revell Company

Copyright © 1906

by

Fleming H. Revell, Westwood, New Jersey

edited for 3BSB by Baptist Bible Believer in the spirit of the Colportage Ministry of a century ago

~ out-of-print and in the public domain ~

LESSON SIXTEEN

I AND II CHRONICLES AND ESTHER

I and II Chronicles

There seems to be no particular necessity to present an outline of the two books of Chronicles, because although they record some facts not found in the Kings, yet to a certain extent they cover the same ground.

In the Jewish arrangement of the Old Testament certain books were grouped together like I and II Samuel, and I and II Kings, and known as one book, instead of two as with us, a fact true of Chronicles which originally went by the name of the "*Diaries*" or "*Journals*," because composed, as it was thought, from the diaries or court records of the different kings.

They are of a date later than the captivity, and although their author is unknown, yet their object seems to have been to show the division of families and possessions before that critical event in order to restore the same after the return. Emphasis, as you will find, is laid on the history of Judah rather than Israel, because of the Messianic expectations in that line.

Certain apparent discrepancies between Chronicles and Kings may be accounted for in at least two ways:

(1) the former omits what the latter gives in sufficient detail and vice versa; and

(2) the former being written much later doubtless than the latter, the names of certain localities, etc., may have undergone a change.

It will have been observed that these books dwell particularly on the more glorious periods of the theocracy, depicting its bright scenes, and treating as briefly as possible those of the opposite character.

For this reason the reigns of David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah and Josiah occupy more space relatively than others; and for this reason also it will be found that these books contain more spiritual nourishment for the downcast and the fearful than perhaps any other of the historical books of the Old Testament.

I look back to testing times in my own Christian life when the HOLY SPIRIT was pleased to use the two books of Chronicles to encourage me in disappointment and guide me in perplexity, with something of that restful delight one finds in recalling the picturesque scenery associated with the first visit to a new land.

No books in the Bible I was using devotionally at that time are more marked than these, and with that recollection in mind, I would call my readers' attention to such nuggets of gold as are found in the following verses:- I Chronicles 4:10; 5:20; 9:13,20; 11:9; 12:32; 14:14,15; 15:13; 19:13; 28:20; II Chronicles 14:11; 15:1-15; 25:9; 31:10; 32:8, 31, and many more.

The Book of Esther

At this point we deviate a little from the arrangement of the books as found in the Bible, in order to defer our treatment of Ezra and Nehemiah until we reach the later or "post" Babylon prophets, to which period those books belong.

The second of the poetical books, excluding Ruth, of which we treated earlier, is Esther, which belongs to the period of the exile, and which tells its own simple and yet thrilling story of GOD's providential care for His people Israel at that time.

It requires little or no analysis or explanation, but a paragraph or two as to its authorship or authenticity may be profitable.

Its authorship is unknown, though variously ascribed to Ezra, Nehemiah and Mordecai, with the preponderance of opinion, I believe, in favor of the last named. It bears evidence also of being taken from the records of the Persian king of that period, Ahasuerus, a fact which does not necessarily militate against its inspiration and authority since the writer or compiler may have had as direct guidance in the selection of the materials from that source as if they were immediately revealed from Heaven.

As others have pointed out, its historical character is undoubted, since, "besides many internal evidences, its authenticity is proved by the strong testimony of the feast of Purim, the celebration of which can be traced up to the events described in the book."

The history of the Jewish nation and the Christian church in all the centuries confirms its claim,

as does also the purpose of the book itself, which is to show the superintending care of GOD over His chosen people at a very critical period in their history.

~ end of Lesson 16 ~
