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Faith After Exile: Liturgy, Empire, and Prophetic Historiography in Chronicles

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Reading the books of Chronicles, we are confronted right away with questions about the meaning and practice of history and prophecy. The Chronicler obviously understands himself to be writing history in some sense. With his first word, "Adam," he signals his ambition to tell the world's story from the "beginning," from the creation of the first man to the "end," his own time in the late sixth or early fifth century b.c., possibly within a generation of the decree of King Cyrus of Persia that concludes his work.

The original Hebrew title, *dibrē hayyāmīm*—"The Book of the Events [literally, "the words"] of the Days," suggests Chronicles' provenance as historical writing. So does its fairly straightforward chronological approach.[1] And Chronicles contains many of the trappings we have come to expect in historical work. "Now the records are ancient," he tells us,[2] and he makes use of a rich variety of these records—royal court annals, official correspondence, genealogies, diplomatic proceedings, legislation, liturgical practices, speeches, songs, homilies, poetry, and prophecies.

Jewish tradition received the work as history. The editors of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, grouped Chronicles as the last of the historical writings, following the books of Kings. The Septuagint title, *Paraleipomena*, indicates the editors' apparent belief that it contained mostly supplemental "things omitted or left behind" in those earlier historical accounts.

But again the reader notices that there is more than history at work here. Chronicles strains the categories and definitions of traditional historiography, secular or biblical. First, there is the matter of tone. It simply does not read like history. It reads more like a series of homilies than a historical narrative. Second, there is the question of why the Chronicler includes so much material "omitted" from other biblical sources, while excluding so much material that other biblical

1 The basic outline of Chronicles looks like this: The Chronicler begins with a long list of the family of nations and ancestors of Israel (1 Chron. 1:1–9), picking up Israel's story during the last days of its ill-fated first king (1 Chron. 10). The narrative pivots on the reigns of the great King David (1 Chron. 11–29), and his son and successor, Solomon (2 Chron. 1–9). The break-up of the monarchy in the years after Solomon and the reigns of the post-Solomonic kings are detailed next (2 Chron. 10–36:16). Finally, the Chronicler in short order concludes by depicting the sack of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple, the exile of the people and, with King Cyrus of Persia's decree, the beginnings of their restoration to Israel (2 Chron. 36:17–23).

2 1 Chron. 4:22.

writers felt essential to Israel's national story. Clearly, the Chronicler is an author with a distinct point of view, operating with a specific set of concerns and deliberate principles of editorial selection.

There is evidence to suggest that the Chronicler was self-consciously writing a homiletic and theological commentary on Israel's history to serve as the summary entry in the Hebrew canon. And it is important to note that in some of the earliest canons, Chronicles was grouped not among the historical books like Kings, but as the last of the *ketuvim*, or "writings," and thus the final book of the canon.[3]

If Chronicles demands to be understood in some sense as history, we must acknowledge that it is history told in a "prophetic" key. There are more than a dozen original prophetic speeches in Chronicles that are found nowhere else in the canon. Prophets, seers, and divine emissaries play a prominent role in his recasting of Israel's history—warning kings, delivering God's covenant Word, and significantly, "prophesying" in the context of the Temple liturgy.

Scholars have shown how the prophetic discourses in Chronicles reflect fundamental theological concerns of the author.[4] But to my mind, this dimension of the work raises a further question: to what extent did the Chronicler understand his own writing of Israel's history to be a prophetic and even liturgical act—receiving the Word of God, interpreting and applying it, and delivering it to God's people in their concrete historical moment? To what extent is the Chronicler himself "prophesying" in the context of the Temple liturgy?

To really follow this train of thought would involve us inevitably in the complex of questions about the nature of divine inspiration and inerrancy in Scripture: How does human language became a vehicle for divine speech? Where does the human leave off and the divine begin? Unfortunately, we will have to leave this line of inquiry for a later time. But I am still interested in the broader questions of the relationship between history and prophecy in Chronicles and the relationship between the Chronicles' historical testimony and the divine Word in which the work, as sacred Scripture, participates.

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3 That was apparently Chronicles' position in the Bible as Jesus read it. This is suggested from his sweeping depiction of the history of martyrdom—"from the foundation of the world … from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah"—that is, from the first martyr in the Bible's first book, Genesis, to the last martyr in the Bible's last book, Chronicles. See Luke 11:50–51; compare Gen. 4:8–16; 2 Chron. 24::20–21. See Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary*, Hermenia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2006), 2, n. 15.

4 See William M. Schniedewind, "Prophets and Prophecy in Chronicles," in *The Chronicler as Historian*, eds. M. Patrick Graham, Kenneth G. Hoglund, and Steven L. McKenzie, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 238 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 204–224; Pancratius Beentjes, "Prophets in the Book of Chronicles," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character, and Anonymous Artist*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor, Oudtestamentische Studiën 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 45–53.

Unlike his rough contemporary, Ezra the Scribe, the Chronicler never claims that "the hand of the LORD his God"[5] is upon him. Yet there is about his work a prophetic and liturgical feel; we get the impression that what we have before us is a kind of "Temple prophecy."[6] Gerhard von Rad's classic essay on the work's narrative structure and literary form,[7] unexpectedly moves us in the direction of this kind of characterization. Von Rad believed that Chronicles was organized as a series of "Levitical sermons" placed in the mouths of kings, prophets, seers, and messengers. But while von Rad did not think it important that many of these "sermons" were presented as divinely inspired utterances,[8] I think that is precisely the point.

Later Jewish tradition would hold that prophecy ceased in Israel following the destruction of Solomon's Temple and after the ministries of the "latter prophets," Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who prophesied during the exile and the early years of the restoration.[9] Chronicles seems to be in contact with these latter prophets, especially Zechariah. However I am not trying to make any claims for the Chronicler as a "prophet" in the classical biblical sense. In raising the question about the relation of his work to biblical notions of prophecy I am framing the issues I want to discuss in this article—about how the Chronicler goes about his task of writing Israel's history. What is the story the Chronicler tells, how does he tell it, and for what ends?

My contention is that Chronicles can best be understood as a work of *prophetic historiography* characterized by the author's profound assimilation and interpretation of the covenantal and liturgical worldview of the Hebrew Bible. The Chronicler aims to do far more than retell Israel's national story. He wants his readers to understand that this story is not finished; it is ongoing. God's divine purposes are still unfolding in the lives of his people—despite the catastrophe of the exile and the hesitant and anticlimactic beginnings of the restoration. The Chronicler's homiletic intent is to recall to the people God's original intentions for Israel and for creation, and to help align their hearts more faithfully with that divine plan. A prayer of David preserved by the Chronicler could serve as a summary of his authorial purposes in this book:

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5 See Ezra 7:6, 28; Neh. 2:8.

6 In his *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), Joseph Blenkinsopp uses this term to describe, not the Chronicler's overall work, but the treatment of prophets and prophecy in Chronicles. I think it is an apt characterization of the work as a whole. Schniedewind, "Prophets and Prophecy," 211.

7 Gerhard von Rad, "The Levitical Sermon in 1 and 2 Chronicles (1934)," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw–Hill, 1966), 267–280.

8 Von Rad, "Levitical Sermon," 277.

9 Schniedewind, "Prophets and Prophecy," 206.

> O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep for ever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of thy people, and direct their hearts toward thee. (1 Chron. 29:18)

In this article I want to explore this work of prophetic historiography. I will begin by looking at the "worldview" we find in Chronicles—what does the Chronicler believe about history, how does he come to those beliefs, and how do his beliefs guide his selection of materials to include and exclude and his work? Second, I will look at the literary tools and narrative methods he employs for interpreting his sources and telling his story. The bulk of the article will focus on a close reading of how the Chronicler relates the central moments of his narrative—the establishment of the Davidic kingdom. I will concentrate on three pillars of this establishment—David's founding of Jerusalem as his religious and political capital; the Davidic covenant; and the origins of the Temple. I will conclude with a consideration of purposes of the Chronicler's prophetic historiography. Finally, I will suggest some of the reasons that I believe Chronicles opens fresh interpretive perspectives for our understanding of such key New Testament themes as the Church, the Kingdom, and the liturgy.

"A Chronicle of All Divine History"

Contrary to the implications of its Septuagint title, Chronicles is far from a gathering of fragments or things left over. It is a coherent and compelling theology of history. Peter Ackroyd is certainly correct in describing the Chronicler as "the first theologian of the canon."[10] There is ample evidence that the Chronicler is working with a stable and accepted canon of Scriptures. His first words are drawn from the first pages of the Bible, while his final words are a quotation from the first words of Ezra, a work roughly contemporary to his. And he draws extensively from materials in every major division of the Hebrew Bible—the Pentateuch and the writings of the former prophets, definitely, but also from the prophets and the psalms.

But Chronicles is more than a kind of "rewritten Bible," as some scholars have surmised, and he is doing more than biblical interpretation. The Chronicler's prophetic historiography is guided by a prayerful and profound biblical worldview—based on an understanding of what he believes the Scriptures reveal about the ways and means of God and his purposes for Israel and the world. The Chronicler's narrative is pervaded by a sense of what St. Paul and later Christian tradition would call the *oikonomia*, the divine economy through which God works out his saving purposes. For the Chronicler history has a *telos*—a definite direction and goal toward which it is driving, a goal established before the foundation of the world through the intention of God.

10 Peter R. Ackroyd, *The Chronicler in His Age*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 101 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 285; compare 280.

This recognition about Chronicles was made early in the Christian interpretive tradition. St. Jerome called it "a chronicle of all divine history."[11] For the Chronicler, human history is divine history, which is to say that in human events we see signs of divine purpose; history is salvation history. History in Chronicles is a kind of dialogic and filial encounter between the Creator and his creation, and especially his chosen "firstborn," the children of Israel.

We see this even in the deceptively routine, even seemingly mundane genealogies that introduce the Chronicler's work. These genealogies, which run for nine full chapters, root the Chronicler's narrative in the creation of the world and reflect the author's familial and covenantal metaphysic. Drawing on the "book of generations" found in Genesis 5–7, and the listing of the "families of the sons of Noah" in Genesis 10, these opening genealogies connect Israel to the origins of the human family. As in Genesis, the seventy or seventy-two sons of Noah that the Chronicler lists are meant to symbolize all the nations of the world and to illustrate their filial relationship to a common father, Adam.[12]

Chronicles is biblical history as family history; it is the story of the family of humanity. And at the center of the family of nations is the tribal family of Israel. As Ralph Klein observes:

> This is a history of all days, a universal history, beginning with Adam and extending to Israel. … [1 Chronicles 1] implies the diversity *and* the unity of the world and it suggests that Israel understood its role within the family of nations and as a witness to all humanity.[13]

The Chronicler's prophetic word seeks to remind the people of who they are and where they came from. They are not just another defeated people, moving from captivity in Babylon to subjugation in their homeland under Cyrus. They are the children of God, the people with whom he has made his covenant, his firstborn among the peoples of the world, a holy and priestly people chosen to bring about his divine purposes for creation.[14]

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11 St. Jerome, *Prologue to The Books of Samuel and Kings*, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 2nd. Series, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 490; compare Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 1.

12 Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 273; Marshall D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies: With Special Reference to the Setting of the Genealogies of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1969), 232.

13 Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 81.

14 See Deut. 7:6–7; 10:15; 14:2.

"One Flesh and One Bone": Covenant and Kinship

This brings us to a pivotal feature of the Chronicler's prophetic historiography—his sense of the covenant and the covenantal structure of the divine economy. Of crucial significance for interpreting Chronicles is the biblical notion that God's covenant establishes sacred kinship, setting Israel and God in a familial relationship.[15] This relationship is not metaphorical or a sort of legal fiction. The covenant creates a real consanguity, a "blood" bond, making Israel of "one flesh and bone" with God—a nuptial-covenantal image we hear in the Chronicler.[16] At the heart of the covenant is the divine Word, an oath sworn by God himself. The Chronicler will speak of the covenant as a Word commanded for a thousand years, that is, as a divine oath that can never be broken.[17] The identity of God himself is defined by his keeping of his covenant oath.[18]

The sequence of biblical covenants is central to the Chronicler's understanding of the divine economy. This can be traced from the early pages of his work. Beginning with Adam and the covenant of creation, his genealogy follows the path of God's covenant through Noah, Abraham, Israel, and, finally and cumulatively, to David, with whom God makes a "covenant of salt," that is, a new and everlasting covenant.[19]

His work focuses on David and the kingdom and Temple liturgy established by the Davidic covenant. The making of this covenant is the climax of the Chronicler's history, with the covenant presented as the fulfillment of God's purposes for creation. The Davidic covenant is a *novum*, something unprecedented and radically new. But in the Chronicler's presentation there is a profound unity in salvation history reflected in the continuity of God's covenants. This is another way of saying that, for the Chronicler, the Davidic covenant is the fulfillment of God's purposes in all the covenants that came before, especially the covenants with Moses and Israel at Sinai and the foundational covenant, the covenant with Abraham.

The Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants illuminate the Chronicler's understanding of salvation history. Indeed, as we will see, these covenants provide a kind of typological substructure for the history that unfolds in the Chronicler's work. The *telos* of history for the Chronicler is the fulfillment of God's three-fold promises to Abraham—to make Abraham's descendants a great nation, to give him a great

15 See generally, Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship By Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven: Yale University, 2009); Scott Hahn, "Covenant in the Old and New Testaments: Some Current Research (1994–2004)," *Currents in Biblical Research* 3:2 (2005): 263–292.

16 1 Chron. 11:1; see also Exod. 24:6.

17 1 Chron. 16:15.

18 2 Chron. 6:14.

19 2 Chron. 13:5; 21:7.

name, and to make him the source of blessing for all the nations of the world.[20] And the Chronicler's ideal of Israel is drawn implicitly from the mandate given to Moses and Israel at Sinai—to be a God's "firstborn son" and "my own treasured possession among all the nations … a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."[21]

In Chronicles, David's kingdom fulfills the "covenant with the people of Israel when they came out Egypt"[22]and the law of the kingdom is the Torah given at Mount Sinai, "the book of the covenant."[23] Further, as we will see, the Chronicler depicts David as a new Moses figure and describes the Kingdom of David and Solomon in terms that make clear the Kingdom's dependence on the covenant institutions established at Sinai—the "Ark of the Covenant of God," the central role of the Law and the Levitical priesthood, and the liturgical assembly, the *qāhāl*.

Yet, in contrast to the other historical works in the canon, where Sinai and the Torah are dominant, the Chronicler seems to insist on the priority of the Abrahamic covenant. This again reflects a sound interpretation of the canonical record, where the Abrahamic covenant is foundational and Israel's liberation from Egypt and exodus to Sinai is brought about because "God remembered his covenant with Abraham."[24] But the Chronicler may also feel that at this stage in Israel's history, after the ordeal of the exile, the people need to return to their roots, to understand that long before the Exodus and Sinai there was Eden and Moriah, the site of Abraham's binding of Isaac..

The Chronicler wants his readers to see the inner unity of salvation history—running from Adam to Abraham, to the covenant with Abraham's descendants at Sinai, and finally to the kingdom at Zion of David and his son, Solomon, in which salvation history reaches its zenith.[25] The Kingdom of David is the fulfillment of Israel's mission to be a kingdom of priests—but again for the sake of God's original covenant purposes with Abraham—to bring blessings to the all the nations of the world through Abraham's "seed."

The Chronicler's God is a God of the covenant, and the economy of salvation is for the sake of this covenant. When David brings the Ark of the Covenant to finally rest in Jerusalem, the great historical psalm he composes for the occasion includes these lines:

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20 Gen. 12:1–3; 15:7–21; 17:1–8; 22:16–18.

21 Exod. 4:4; 19:5–6.

22 2 Chron. 5:10; 6:11.

23 2 Chron. 34:30.

24 Exod. 2:24; 6:5.

25 "The real foundation of God's relationship with his people is rooted … in the Abrahamic covenant, and this itself in the context of the primeval history. God's purpose for his people begins in creation, not at the Exodus. … The list of names [in the Chronicler's genealogies], so easily read as a mere catalogue, is in fact an assurance of the ultimate origin of the relationship. 'Adam, Seth, Enoch'—that is where Israel, the true Israel begins." Ackroyd, *Chronicler in his Age*, 265.

> He is mindful of his covenant forever ... the covenant which he made with Abraham … an everlasting covenant to Israel. (1 Chron. 16:15–17)[26]

The Typological Interpretation of History

The Chronicler's history, as we have suggested, represents a deep reading of the canon of Israel's scriptures. As many scholars have noted, the Hebrew canon is filled with examples of "inner-biblical" exegesis. Later texts rewrite, comment upon, revise, or interpret earlier ones; new situations and people are understood and characterized by analogy to earlier texts. However, as Martin Selman has said, what goes on in the pages of Chronicles is "unparalleled in the Old Testament in terms of both scope and thoroughness. … Chronicles stands apart in its attempt to interpret the Old Testament from beginning to end."[27]

The large measure of what scholars call the Chronicler's *Vorlage*, or source material, is drawn from the biblical books of Samuel and Kings. But in his rewriting and reinterpreting of his *Vorlage*, his work is shot through with scriptural references and allusions, in addition to direct quotations and citations. Like any good historian, the Chronicler provides a record of past figures, places, and events; but his accounting is written in such a way that these figures, places, and events often appear as *types*—signs, patterns, and precursors—intended to show his readers not only the past but their present reality from God's perspective. For instance, David is sketched as both a new Adam and a new Moses; the Temple is a new creation and a new Tabernacle and altar.

Acknowledging this intensely inner-biblical and typological narrative technique is not at all to deny the historical reliability of the Chronicler's account. Rather, I am suggesting that reporting history "as it happened" is not the Chronicler's sole interest. What happened is crucial for the Chronicler. But only because in the *what* of history he sees revealed the patterns of divine intention and intervention—the *why* of history. The *why* of history is the reason for the Chronicler's prophetic historiographical work.

The way the Chronicler comes to understand, interpret, and explain the *why* of salvation history is through *typology*. Chronicles is an intensely typological work. Indeed, Chronicles gives us a typological interpretation of history. Typology for the Chronicler is a way to shed light on the unity of God's plan in history, and to show the meaning of people, places, and events in light of God's covenant promises and redemptive acts.

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26 Compare Ps. 105:8–10.

27 Martin J. Selman, *1 Chronicles: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 10a (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 42.

G. W. Trompf has suggested that the typological patterns of "recurrence" found in Chronicles and elsewhere in the Bible, are related to the use of these Scriptures in the rhythms of Israel's cult and worship.[28] Indeed, the Chronicler's extensive use of typology adds to the homiletic feel of his work. What we find in the Chronicler fits the definition of what Michael Fishbane has termed "aggadic historiography," a theological and homiletic rereading of Israel's "received historical *traditum* ["tradition"]," often utilizing various forms of typology. As Fishbane notes, biblical typology is far more than a literary device.

> Typological exegesis … celebrates new historical events in so far as they can be correlated with older ones. By this means it also reveals *unexpected unity in historical experience and providential continuity* in its new patterns and shapes. Accordingly, the perception of typologies is not solely an exegetical activity, it is, at the same time, a religious activity of the first magnitude. … Typological exegesis is … a disclosure of the plenitude and mysterious workings of divine activity in history.[29]

For the Chronicler, the typological key to "the plenitude and mysterious workings of divine activity in history" is the Kingdom of David. Chronicles could be called the book of David. It is the world's family history written in a Davidic key, beginning in the deceptively simple genealogical lists which are actually careful compositions that progressively narrow the world's family tree into a single branch—the line of the family of David.

For the remainder of this article we will concentrate on the Chronicler's description of the rise of the Davidic kingdom, in which we see reflected both his covenantal worldview and his reliance on typology to illuminate the unity of the divine plan and the dynamic movements of history toward its fulfillment.

David, the New Moses

What Jon Levenson has observed about the Davidic ode, Psalm 78, is true for the Chronicler's work: "It sees David's divinely commissioned reign as the consummation of Israel's *Heilsgeschichte* [salvation history], the very *telos* [fulfillment] of their national experience."[30] The Kingdom established by David at Zion, "the city of David," and the Temple built by David's son, Solomon, are understood to be the

28 G. W. Trompf, "Notions of Historical Recurrence in Classical Hebrew Historiography," in *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament*, ed. J. A. Emerton, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 30 (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 213–229; also G. E. Wright, "Cult and History: A Study of a Current Problem in Old Testament Interpretation," *Interpretation* 16 (1962): 3–20.

29 Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University, 1985), 352.

30 Jon D. Levenson, "The Davidic Covenant and Its Modern Interpreters," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979): 205–219, at 218.

pinnacle of God's plan for creation. For the Chronicler, all human history since Adam has been straining towards its fulfillment in this man of God, David, who with his son after him, will reign upon "the throne of the Kingdom of the LORD over Israel,"[31] which is the Kingdom of God on earth, a liturgical empire through which the blessings of God are to be bestowed upon all the nations of the earth in fulfillment of God's covenant plans since creation.

Typology is at work from the moment the Chronicler introduces David in his narrative. The covenant meeting of David at Hebron is cast in Mosaic terms. The people refer to an oracle in which God declares to David: "You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over my people Israel." The use of "my people" evokes the Exodus and the Sinai covenant.[32] The shepherd image, which the Chronicler carries over from his sources, looks back to Moses, the archetypal leader of Israel, who was a shepherd in the image of God who is called "the shepherd of Israel."[33]

This shepherd image will recur in the great covenant and dynastic oracle delivered in 1 Chronicles 17, where again David is identified with God in a way that no other biblical figure is related to God. As Young Chae has observed: "[N]o specific king in Israel is described in shepherd imagery as YHWH's royal representative, with the exception of David before he assumed the throne. … The Old Testament tends to reserve shepherd imagery for YHWH and, significantly, extends its use only for YHWH's Davidic appointee."[34]

The Chronicler's retention of this image may then be an effort to associate David's kingdom with these prophetic hopes, especially those of Ezekiel, who foretold the reestablishment of David as *king*, *shepherd*, and *prince*, by an *everlasting covenant* of *peace* and the placement of his *dwelling* and *sanctuary* among the people forever—all core elements emphasized in the Chronicler's Davidic portrait.[35]

Throughout, the Chronicler presents David as a new Moses and the Davidic kingdom as the full realization of the *qāhāl*, the liturgical assembly of Israel as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in the years after the Exodus. As Dale Allison has noted, while David and Moses are the two dominant figures in the Hebrew Bible, the typological association of the two is not found elsewhere in Scripture and is rare in extrabiblical writings. This suggests that the Chronicler attaches considerable significance to his typological portrait.

31 1 Chron. 28:5.

32 1 Chron. 11:2; compare Exod. 3:7; 6:7.

33 For Moses as shepherd: Exod. 3:1; Ps. 77:20; Isa. 63:11. For God as shepherd of Israel: Gen. 49:24; Ps. 80:1.

34 Young S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd: Studies in the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and in the Gospel of Matthew*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 216 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006). Compare Ps. 78:71; Mic. 5:2–4.

35 Ezek. 34:1–28. See also Jer. 3:15; 23:1–4; Zec. 11:4–17.

In addition to the Mosaic shepherd imagery, we might note that in general David, like Moses, is presented as a warrior and cult founder, and as a man who speaks with the words and authority of God. The Chronicler describes both David and Moses as "man of God"[36] and "servant of God."[37] The Ark of the Covenant, so important to Moses, is critical as well to David. As Moses interceded for the sins of the people, David intercedes to stop the plague caused by his ill-fated census, in a scene is redolent of the angel of death from the Passover in Exodus. And as sin kept Moses from entering the promised land, sin prevents David from realizing the fulfillment of his dream of building the Temple. And as Moses was given a pattern (*tabnît*) for the Tabernacle, David too is given a *tabnît*, not only for the Temple, but for the liturgical order of worship in the Temple.[38]

Some commentators see in all this the Chronicler's belief that Moses and Sinai have been eclipsed and replaced by David and Zion. But the evidence does not support any such supercessionist conclusions; to the contrary, the Chronicler portrays a strong continuity between the Mosaic and Davidic covenants. For the Chronicler, Sinai leads to Zion by way of Moriah, a statement that will become more intelligible as we proceed. David emerges in the Chronicler's portrait as the "prophet like me from among … your brethren" that Moses had promised.[39] As the new Moses, David completes the mission of his forerunner. He leads the final conquest of the land, establishing the capital of his liturgical empire at Jerusalem and laying the foundations for the dwelling of God.

Zion, the Qāhāl, and the Kingdom

Jerusalem is central to the Chronicler's work. The Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Jebus), are introduced very early in the genealogy,[40] and the lines of both David and Levi are there rooted in Jerusalem.[41] Some scholars see a deliberate telescoping in the genealogies to present a *mappa mundi*, a map of the world that makes Israel the center of the nations, and Jerusalem the center of the world.[42] As the genealogy concludes with a listing of the first exiles to return to Jerusalem,[43]

36 1 Chron. 23:14; 2 Chron. 8:14; 30:16.

37 1 Chron. 6:49; 17:4, 7; 2 Chron. 24:9.

38 1 Chron. 28:11–19; compare Exod. 29:9, 40.

39 See Deut. 18:15–19.

40 1 Chron. 1:14; 11:4.

41 1 Chron. 3:4; 6:10, 32.

42 John W. Wright, "Remapping Yehud: The Borders of Yehud and the Genealogies of Chronicles," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, eds. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 67–90, at 74.

43 See 2 Chron. 5:2; 1 Chron. 9:3, 34, 38.

the entire work ends with Cyrus summoning God's people to come home to Jerusalem.[44]

Jerusalem, also identified as "the city of David, which is Zion," is presented as the true capital of "the Kingdom of the LORD."[45] By some estimates, nearly one-quarter of all the references to Jerusalem in the entire Hebrew Bible occur in the Chronicler. Isacc Kalimi has noted: "Jerusalem is depicted by the Chronicler … as an absolutely theocratic city, 'the city of God/the Lord' in the full sense of the word, more than in any other biblical work."[46]

The Chronicler understands Jerusalem in terms of God's promise to Moses—that upon entering the Promised Land he would establish a central sanctuary as a place where his holy name would dwell with his chosen people. For the Chronicler, Jerusalem and the Temple built there fulfill this promise, found in Deuteronomy 12. Echoes, allusions, and quotions of this promise are heard throughout Chronicles—the cutting off of enemies and the establishment of peace,[47] burnt offerings in the house where the Lord's name dwells,[48] eating before the Lord.[49] Thus God will tell Solomon, "I have chosen Jerusalem that my name may be there and I have chosen David."[50]

In the Mosaic literature, God's dwelling among his people is integrally related to the Ark of the Covenant. Thus, after the conquest of Jerusalem, David moves methodically to restore the Ark to the people. David's deep concern for the Ark, documented by earlier biblical historians, is greatly amplified by the Chronicler, who refers to the Ark by names not found elsewhere in the tradition, such as "footstool of our God" and "the holy Ark."[51]In evoking the Ark, the Chronicler again summons the historical memory of the Exodus and the people's entry into the land. The Ark becomes the gathering point of God's holy people.

It is striking that, beginning with David's convocation of Israel to embark on the mission of returning the Ark,[52] the Chronicler repeatedly refers to the liturgical assembly of all Israel as the *qāhāl*. Like the Ark and Jerusalem, the *qāhāl* designates something essential for the Chronicler. Indeed, while the term is found forty-eight

44 2 Chron. 36:28.

45 1 Chron. 28:5.

46 Isaac Kalimi, "Jerusalem—The Divine City: The Representation of Jerusalem in Chronicles Compared with Earlier and Later Jewish Compositions," in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, eds. M. Patrick Graham, Steven L. McKenzie and Gary N. Knoppers, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 371 (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 189–205, at 191.

47 Deut. 12:29; 1 Chron. 17:8.

48 Deut. 12: 5, 11; 2 Chron. 2:4; 6:10.

49 Deut. 12:7, 18; 1 Chron. 29:22.

50 2 Chron. 6:6.

51 1 Chron. 28:2; 2 Chron. 35:3.

52 1 Chron. 13:2, 4.

times in the Pentateuch, it is used thirty-seven times by the Chronicler.[53] And again, in its use we see a deep inner-biblical relation with Moses and the Exodus and Sinai tradition. This term (almost always translated *ekklēsia* in the Septuagint) first arises canonically in the accounts of the Exodus. The first appearance of *qāhāl* in the canon, in fact, is found on the night of the Exodus, in the divine instructions for how the "whole assembly" (*kôl qāhāl*) is to prepare for the journey.[54]

The Chronicler will use that same expression, *kôl qāhāl* at pivotal moments in the history of David,[55] and in general *qāhāl* designates the ideal "form" of Israel for the Chronicler. Israel is fundamentally a *qāhāl*, a kingdom of priests, a liturgical empire. Israel is not primarily a national entity organized for military, political, or economic purposes; all those ordinary rationales for governments are to be ordered in Israel to the singular overriding reason of giving worship to God. This is what Israel exists for—to be the *qāhāl;* and as the *qāhāl*, Israel's fulfills its mission as God's first-born among the nations. As *qāhāl*, Israel is a people gathered in the presence of God before the Ark, which, at a climactic moment in the Chronicler's narrative, will be installed by Solomon in the Temple.[56] The *qāhāl* is a people of sacrifice and praise.

Melchizedek and David, the Priest-King

This fundamentally liturgical understanding of Israel is anticipated in the Chronicler's depiction of the joyous procession that marks the return of the Ark.[57] David is portrayed as both Israel's king and its chief priest. He is clad as the Levites are in a fine linen robe and an ephod, garb elsewhere in the Scriptures associated with the vestments of Aaron the High Priest.[58] In another priestly move, David officiates in the sacrificial offering of seven bulls and seven rams. David's portrayal as priest-king is unmistakable. He does things here and elsewhere in Chronicles that only priests are found doing in other books of the Bible, such as making burnt offerings and peace offerings[59] and imparting God's blessing upon the people.[60]

Certainly the Chronicler is here continuing the "new Moses" theme. Moses, too, gathered (*qhl*) the *qāhāl*, pitched the tent for the Ark, officiated over the sacrifices, and blessed the children of Israel.[61] And the installation of the Ark at

53 See William Johnston, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 2 vols., Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 253 (New York: T & T Clark, 1997), 1:168.

54 Exod. 12:6.

55 See 1 Chron. 13:4; 29:10, 20; 2 Chron. 23:3; 30:4, 23.

56 2 Chron. 5.

57 1 Chron. 15:25–16:36.

58 See Exod. 28:4, 31, 34.

59 See Num. 3:6–8, 14–38; 4:47; 6:16–17; 8:14–26.

60 See Num. 6:22–27; Deut. 10:8; 21:5.

61 Num. 20:10; Exod. 33:7; Exod. 24:7–8; Exod. 39:42–3; Deut. 33:1; see Johnston, *1*

Zion, the place chosen by God for his name to dwell, marks the summation of the process begun with Moses' completion of the Tabernacle at Sinai. David's blessing of the people echoes Moses' earlier blessing at the close of Exodus because his establishment of the Ark in Jerusalem marks the final conquest of the land promised to Abraham. David's extraordinary ritual feeding of "all Israel, both women and men,"[62] also associates him not only with the ritual banquets of Moses and the manna in the wilderness, but also with the promise of Deuteronomy 12—that the people would one day eat in the presence of God in the place where God will choose to dwell.[63]

I also think there is a "new Melchizedek" typology at work here, another connection with the Abrahamic covenant. In fact, I believe David's choice of Jerusalem as his capital and his priestly-cultic understanding of his kingship are rooted in the mysterious figure of this King of Salem and priest of God Most High, who brought out bread and wine and blessed Abraham in the name of the maker of heaven and earth.[64] The identification of Melchizedek's Salem and David's Jerusalem is made in the psalms, and some scholars believe the account of Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham played a central role in the traditions of Jerusalem, helping to establish the continuity of the Kingdom of Israel with the covenant promises made to the patriarch.[65] Prior to David's procession with the Ark there is only one biblical precedent for a king performing priestly functions—Melchizedek, who is also the first person to be designated as a "priest" in the canon and, according to later Jewish interpreters such as Philo and Josephus, represents the divine ideal for the priesthood.[66]

The Chronicler is certainly in contact with these traditions and, more significantly, with the powerful tradition in Psalm 110:4 that associates Melchizedek with the divine sonship and perpetual priesthood conferred by divine oath upon the Davidic kings: "The LORD has sworn … You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."[67] There is considerable scholarly consensus that this psalm, attributed to David, was written before Israel's exile and it is likely one of the oldest in the Psalter. It may have originated in the liturgical context of an enthronement

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and 2 Chronicles, 1:190.

62 1 Chron. 16:3.

63 See Deut. 12:7, 18.

64 Gen. 14:18–20.

65 See Pss. 76:2; 110:4. Bruce Vawter, *Genesis: A New Reading* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 198.

66 See Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation*, 3:79, in *The Works of Philo: New Updated Edition*, tran. C. D. Yonge, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 59; Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Bk. 6, Chap. 10, 438, in *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 750.

67 Ps. 110:4

ceremony for a new Davidic king, possibly even the coronation of Solomon.[68] For our purposes, we notice important points of contact between the themes and language of the psalm and the Chronicler's work. For instance, the psalm refers to the universal reign of Zion's king over the nations, the divine deliverance of the king from his enemies, and the apparent filial relation of the Davidic king to God. We notice, too, that the psalm speaks of a "footstool" (*hadom*) for God—a rare word in the Bible used uniquely in Chronicles and the Psalter to describe the Ark.[69]

Reading canonically, I suggest that the Chronicler is evoking these ancient Abrahamic and Davidic traditions. With the Ark established at Zion, the God Most High (*'el 'elyon*), the maker of heaven and earth,[70] sits enthroned above the nations,[71] ruling through his "first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth,"[72] who is priest and king. In addition, the Chronicler appears to be evoking prophetic hopes for a Davidic Messiah. The ideal priest-king of the past foreshadows the one who is to come. Judaism, perhaps even in the time of the Chronicler, read Psalm 110 in messianic terms, and already in the exilic prophecy of Ezekiel, we sense a similar mood. Ezekiel envisioned the restoration of the exiles, the reunification of the divided Kingdom, and the reestablishment of the Temple the under God's "servant David."[73] As Jon Levenson has noted, the Davidic figure in Ezekiel is a priest-king and the restored Israel a kingdom of priests.

> Ezekiel hoped … for a community so fundamentally liturgical and sacral in nature that the Davidid … could only be a liturgical figurehead like the High Priest. … Ezekiel 40–48 hopes not for a restoration of the monarchy, but for a restoration of the monarch, who is now redefined according to his deepest and truest function as the servant of God, or devoted to the divine service, to liturgy.[74]

The Davidic Covenant

As we have said, the centerpiece of Chronicles is the covenant that God makes with David in 1 Chronicles 17. In the context of his narrative, the Davidic covenant is a covenant of grant that rewards David's single-minded dedication to restoring

68 On the textual issues regarding Ps. 110, see Stuhlmueller, *Psalms 2 (Psalms 73–150)* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 130–131.

69 1 Chron. 28:2; compare Ps. 110:2; see also Pss. 99:5; 132:7; Lam. 2:1; Isa. 66:1.

70 Gen. 14:18–22.

71 1 Chron. 13:6.

72 Ps. 89:26–27.

73 Ezek. 37:20–29.

74 Jon D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel* 40–48, Harvard Semitic Monograph 10 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 143.

Israel as a priestly kingdom and desiring to build a house for the Ark.[75] And again, we see that the Chronicler's account, divided into two sections—the prophetic oracle of David[76] and David's prayer of response[77]—is redolent with typology and biblical allusion. The term "house" (*bayit*), referring both to the royal dynasty and the Temple, occurs fourteen times, while the term "servant" (*'ebed*) appears twelve times. The use of *bayit*, while a common term, in this context evokes the covenant drama of the house of Jacob and the house of Israel leading up to their flight from the "house of bondage" in Egypt.

David's prayer in response to Nathan's oracle, with its rhythmic repetitions of the word "servant" also evokes the Exodus. The early chapters of Exodus involve an ironic play on the notion of "service" and "servitude." The cruel bondage of the Israelites under Pharaoh is described with the same root word as the religious worship and ritual service that God desires of them.[78] We have a clash of "services"—slavery to worldly empire versus the liturgical service of the living God. The climactic declaration of Israel's divine primogeniture among the nations is made in terms of the "service" that God desires:

> And you shall say to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord, 'Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, Let my son go that he may serve me.'" (Exod. 4:22)

That the Exodus might not be too far from David's mind is clear from his two references to Israel's "redemption from Egypt" in his response to Nathan's oracle.[79]Indeed, there is a covenant-renewal feel to David's prayer. He prays while seated "before the Lord" (lipnê yhwh), an expression that frequently describes ritual and liturgical prayer, often in the presence of the Ark.[80] With its liturgical rhythms and repetitions, the prayer suggests that David is not only accepting God's covenant for himself, but also that he is renewing on behalf of all Israel the covenant made at Sinai.

> … thy people whom thou didst redeem from Egypt. And thou didst make thy people Israel to be thy people forever; and thou,

75 1 Chron. 17:1–2; see Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90 (1970): 184–204, at185.

76 1 Chron. 17:3–15.

77 1 Chron. 17:16–27.

78 Compare Exod. 1:13-14; 5:18; 14:5, 12 (servitude to the Pharaoh) and Exod. 3:12; 4:22; 7:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3, 24–26. Note also the use of *'ebed* to describe the priestly liturgical service in the Tabernacle (Num. 3:7–8; 4:23; 7:5; 16:9).

79 1 Chron. 17:21.

80 See the section on "before Yahweh" in Ian Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire: Divine Presence in Deuteronomy*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 151(Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 131–197.

> O Lord, didst become their God. And now, O Lord … do as thou hast spoken, and thy name will be established and magnified forever, saying, "The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, is Israel's God," and the house of thy servant David will be established before thee. (1 Chron. 17:21–24)

The echoes of earlier biblical covenantal language here are unmistakable, as they are in Nathan's oracle. Speaking through Nathan, God employs the vocabulary of the Sinaitic covenant, identifying David as his "servant" and a "shepherd," making repeated references to "my people Israel," and calling Israel's king his "son." The covenant with David, the new Moses, is clearly a kind of renewal of the Sinai covenant, an affirmation of God's election of Israel to be his people and to be their God.[81] Israel's election is affirmed as "for ever" (*'ad 'ôlām*), an expression used seven times in the covenant account, as the son of David becomes the focus of God's paternal love for Israel.[82] It is significant, too, that David begins his responsorial prayer with what appears to be a deliberate echo of Moses' response to God's calling at Horeb. As Moses wondered: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" David in amazement asks: "Who am I … that thou hast brought me this far?"[83]

Again however, we are invited here to also consider the importance of the Abrahamic covenant for the Chronicler's understanding of salvation history. In fact, we can note close similarities between the dynastic promises to David and the covenant oaths sworn to Abraham. David, too, is promised a great *name*,[84] and a place, a land in which his people will be "planted."[85] The "house" that God promises to build for David is a family, a line of descendants who would reign forever (*'ad 'ôlām*) over Israel.[86]

At the heart of the covenant with David, as there was at the heart of the covenant with Abraham, is the promise of "offspring" (*zera'*, literally "seed").

> When your days are fulfilled to go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son; I will not take my steadfast love from him as I took it from him who was before you, but I will confirm him in

81 See Exod. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Hos. 1:8–9; Jer. 31:33.

82 Exod. 4:22.

83 Compare Exod. 3:11; 1 Chron. 17:16; 29:14.

84 1 Chron. 17:8.

85 1 Chron. 17:9; 28:9.

86 1 Chron. 17:11–12; 28:4.

> my house and in my Kingdom forever and his throne shall be established forever. (1 Chron. 17: 11–14)[87]

In David's prayer celebrating the return of the Ark, he had addressed the people as "offspring [*zera'*] of Abraham."[88] In Nathan's dynastic oracle, God's promise to Abraham's seed is fastened forever to this promise to David's seed. Thus, the Davidic covenant—the final covenant of the Hebrew Bible—and the Kingdom it establishes, is deeply rooted in the fundamental biblical covenant with Abraham.[89]

The Testing of God's Son

The Davidic covenant for the Chronicler is ordered to the establishment of the Temple and the liturgy. In the narrative, Nathan's oracle and David's response are followed immediately by David's preparations for the building of the Temple and Solomon's accession to the throne. The warfare in 1 Chronicles 18–20 is depicted as David's bringing about the "rest" promised by God as a precondition for building God's house; again, the promises of Deuteronomy 12 seem central to his understanding of these wars. Even the spoils of war are dedicated to the Temple.[90]

But, at a moment in his narrative when the world could be said to be almost in a state of "sabbath" rest, the Chronicler disrupts his readers' expectations—depicting a catastrophic pestilence in Israel brought on because of an ill-advised military census ordered by David. We see in this another example of the Chronicler's typological interpretation of history. His canonical source in 2 Samuel also records David's illicit census, but without any of the cosmic drama found in the Chronicler. Indeed, in 2 Samuel, the story is inserted with little comment as an addendum following David's final speeches to the people and prior to the long account of his final days.[91]

The Chronicler, by contrast, positions the census and plague at a pivotal moment in David's reign and casts it as a turning point in salvation history. The entire episode in 1 Chronicles 21 is a unique literary construct of the Chronicler, and is layered with allusions to earlier Old Testament history. It is one of the most visually drawn and intensely dramatic in all the canon. The Chronicler depicts the census event as a covenant "testing," similar to the testings of Abraham and

87 Gen. 12:7; 15:5, 18; 17:7–10; 22:17–18.

88 1 Chron. 16:13.

89 "Through his anointed king, Yahweh exercised his dominion over the nations of the earth, communicating his blessing to them through his people of Israel. … What Yahweh had first promised to Abraham, and reaffirmed to succeeding patriarchs, had been brought to marvelous fruition with the emergence of the Israelite state under David." R. E. Clements, *Abraham and David: Genesis XV and Its Meaning for Israelite Tradition* (Naperville, IL: A. R. Allenson, 1967), 59.

90 See 1 Chron. 18:8, 10–11.

91 See 2 Sam. 24:1–25; see H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 142.

the children of Israel in the wilderness. This explains the underlying imagery of the Exodus and the *aqedah*, the "binding" of Isaac. That David viewed this as a supreme test is indicated by his great final prayer in Chronicles, where he seems to refer to this episode: "I know, my God, that thou tries (*bḥn*) the heart." The word that David uses here, *bḥn*, is related semantically and conceptually to *nsh*, the biblical term used elsewhere to describe God's testing of his covenant family.[92] God "tested" (*nsh*) Abraham in asking for the sacrifice of his only son, and again sought to "prove" (*nsh*) his firstborn Israel in the wilderness.[93]

The Chronicler is describing just such a test, although he does not use the word. Our clues to his intent are not only the inner-biblical allusions in the text but also the appearance of the figure of Satan. Satan is not mentioned in the Chronicler's source and this is one of only three places in the Hebrew canon where the proper name "Satan" is used; the Chronicler is obviously drawing from these other rare portraits in composing his drama. In Job and Zechariah, *Śāṭān* is a supernatural figure, under the control of God, but granted a quasi-legal authority to "accuse" or to test the bonds of the covenant and the faithfulness of the believer.[94] The Targum, the Aramaic paraphrase of the Scriptures, gives us an accurate interpretation of what the Chronicler intends, envisioning a scene similar to that in Job—with God permitting Israel's temptation as he permitted Job's: "The Lord raised up Satan against Israel, and he incited David to number Israel."[95]

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with taking a military census, which is what David calls for, a numbering of "men who drew the sword."[96] There are other censuses taken in Chronicles,[97] and the Mosaic Law sets out the requirements for the kind of census that David is apparently taking here—although the Law does warn of a deadly penalty if the proper procedures are not followed.[98] An allusion

92 Birgir Gerhardsson has noted that *nsh* is "normally used within the covenant relationship—interpreted in the widest sense to cover all covenants between God and his worshippers whether the latter are a nation, tribe, family, or … individual (patriarch or king). In these contexts the word seems to imply primarily a testing of the partner in the covenant to see whether he is keeping his side of the agreement." *The Testing of God's Son (Matt. 4: 1–11 & par.): An Analysis of an Early Christian Midrash*, Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 2 (Lund: Gleerup, 1966), 26–27.

93 Gillis Gerleman, "*nsh*, to test," in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 3 vols., eds. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (Peabody, MA: Henrickson, 1997): 2:741–742. For *nsh*, see Gen. 22:1; Exod. 16:4; 20:20; Deut. 8:2, 16. For *bḥn*, see Pss. 26:2; 17:3; 66:10; 81:7; Job 23:10; 34:36; Jer. 12:3; 20:12; Ezek. 21:13; Zech. 13:9; *bḥn* and *nsh* are used as parallels in Pss. 26:2; 95:9.

94 Zech. 3:1. See generally, Peggy L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: Śāṭān in the Hebrew Bible*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 43 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988).

95 Targum Chronicles 21:1. Text in *The Targums of Ruth and Chronicles*, trans. with introd. and notes by J. Stanley McIvor, The Aramaic Bible, vol. 19 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994); see also Job 2:3, where God is "incited" by Satan.

96 (1 Chron. 21:5).

97 See 1 Chron. 11:1; 23:3; 2 Chron. 2:17; 17:13–19; 25:5; 26:11–13.

98 Exod. 30:11–16.

to the Law may be intended here, as the penalty prescribed by Moses, a "plague" (*negep*) is similar to the "pestilence" (*maggēpâ*) visited upon the people for David's census.[99]

However, God's displeasure would seem to stem less from David's failure to pay the half-shekel tax required by the Law than from a deeper violation of the spirit of the covenant. We hear this in the warning of Joab, David's military chief—"May the Lord add to his people a hundred times as many as they are."[100] This is an obvious reference to God's covenant promise to multiply Abraham's descendants so greatly that they could not be numbered. This reading is confirmed by a later reference to David's census, in which it is said that "wrath came upon Israel" because "the Lord had promised to make Israel as many as the stars of heaven."[101] The point is that even though the Lord had given him victory over Israel's enemies,[102] David still does not trust totally in God's covenant promises; his failure of the census test proves that—he still wants to "know the number" of battle-ready men available to him.[103]

As in the cases of Abraham and Israel under Moses, God permits a testing of David and his fledgling kingdom. But why? The answer is related to the deep biblical theme of primogeniture. The covenant, as we have noted, establishes a father-son kinship between God and Israel.[104] The Davidic covenant for the first time establishes a direct filial tie between God and his chosen ruler for Israel. This suggests a previously unimaginable intimacy between God and his chosen king, who can call God *'ābî*, "my Father."[105] The king, then, must truly be a man after the heart of God. And for that he requires a divine pedagogy that includes testing the strength of his faith. As Birgir Gerhardsson notes:

> The covenant relationship was seen in terms of the father-son relationship, and so it became natural to regard temptation as the paternal act of discipline and a part of the son's upbringing. The development in this direction began early. … The verb *nsh* is sometimes placed in parallelism with *bḥn* "to test by trial," or *ṣrp*, "to test by fire," purge," and found with verbs like *ysr*, *ḥwkyḥ*, and *'nh*, "to mortify," "to discipline," "to bring up." … Since the covenant relationship is defined in family terms these aspects

99 Compare Exod. 30:12; 1 Chron. 21: 17, 22.

100 1 Chron. 21:3.

101 1 Chron. 27:23–24; compare Gen. 15:5; 22:17; see also Gen. 13:16.

102 1 Chron. 18:6, 13.

103 1 Chron. 21:2.

104 See generally, F. Charles Fensham, "Father and Son as Terminology for Treaty and Covenant," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, ed. Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1971), 121–135, at 128–133.

105 Ps. 89:27.

> are naturally taken up into the picture. In the Book of Proverbs there are many sayings from the ancient patriarchal pedagogic about the hard discipline which a man has to impose on his son.[106]

Through the temptation of the census, the son of God, Israel, and Israel's king are being trained and disciplined in God's fatherly ways. Moses had described Israel's testing in the wilderness in such terms: "Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines (*ysr*) his son, the LORD your God disciplines (*ysr*) you."[107] In his typological writing of his account, the Chronicler clearly has the wilderness years in view, in addition to the testing of Abraham. David's sin, like Israel's in the wilderness, threatens God's firstborn with extinction. God sends "the angel of the LORD destroying"[108]— the same expression used to describe the angel of death sent to destroy the Egyptians' firstborn in Exodus;[109] the inescapable and deadly irony is that the angel who once destroyed Israel's enemy is now being sent to destroy Israel.

The Chronicler draws his dramatic picture with allusions to two episodes from the late wilderness era. The first allusion is to the blessing of Israel by Balaam, who had been hired by the Moabite king to curse Israel. In Numbers 22, God places an angel as an "adversary" (*śṭn*) to stand up against (*'md*) Balaam and block his way, just as he sends *Śāṭān* against (*'md*) David and Israel.[110] Balaam's eyes are opened to see an angel with a drawn sword in his hand, as David's eyes are opened to see the destroying angel, also with a drawn sword in his hand.[111] Balaam falls on his face at the sight, as David and the elders do.[112]And as Balaam confesses, "I have sinned," David also uses these exact words.[113] The Chronicler also draws from an episode in Joshua.[114] Joshua, like David, lifts up his eyes to see a man standing against (*'md*) him with a drawn sword in his hand.[115] Joshua too falls on his face when the "man" identifies himself as the commander of the Lord's army and tells him that he is standing on holy ground.

More than literary artistry is work in the Chronicler's use of these allusions. The episodes in both Joshua and Numbers take place when Israel is encamped across

106 Gerhardsson, *Testing of God's Son*, 32; see also James A. Sanders, *Suffering as Divine Discipline in the Old Testament and Post-Biblical Judaism* (Rochester, NY: Colgate Rochester, 1955).

107 Deut. 8:5.

108 1 Chron. 21:12.

109 See Exod. 12:13, 23.

110 Compare Num. 22:22, 31; 1 Chron. 21:1, 15, 16;

111 Compare Num. 22:23, 29, 31; 1 Chron. 21:16.

112 Compare Num. 22:31; 1 Chron. 21:16.

113 Compare Num. 22:34; 1 Chron. 21:7, 17.

114 Josh. 5:13–15.

115 Compare Josh. 5:13; 1 Chron. 21:16, 20.

the Jordan from Jericho—that is, on the threshold of the Promised Land.[116] As the fragmentary story in Joshua ends with him recognizing that he is in a holy "place" (*māqôm*), Balaam's encounter with the angel in Numbers 22 leads to his erecting altars and offering sacrifices in Numbers 23. And in addition to prophesying a king for Israel, Balaam refers to the very covenant promise that David is guilty of forgetting in 1 Chronicles 21—"Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the fourth part of Israel?"[117] Here in Chronicles, what these earlier stories anticipated is being fulfilled. Joshua's conquest of the land has been completed by David, and David's encounter with the sword-bearing angel will now lead to the revealing of the definitive holy place (*māqôm*) and altar.[118]

At the Threshing Floor of Moriah

The meaning of this place, this altar, and the sacrifices that David will offer depends on still another inner-biblical typology that is played out on the threshing floor of a certain Ornan, a Jebusite, or resident of Jerusalem. The Chronicler places Jerusalem, and this mysterious threshing floor, a cultic site, at the center of the cosmos—at the intersection of heaven and earth. The angel who is to destroy Jerusalem is depicted as standing by the threshing floor and standing between earth and heaven.[119] At this crossroads the fate of the covenant people is to be decided, not to mention the future of the nations. As the Chronicler describes the threat to Israel with images from the killing of the firstborn in Exodus, he describes their deliverance from the destroying angel by analogy to Abraham's offering of his firstborn in the *aqedah* in Genesis 22.

The scenes have marked similarities. Both David and Abraham are said to "lift up their eyes to see" visions of divine import. In Chronicles, the angel stands between heaven and earth, his sword unsheathed and raised above Jerusalem, as Abraham put forth his hand and raised his knife above Isaac. By divine command, the hands of both the killer angel and Abraham are stayed. In place of both the firstborn people of Israel and the beloved firstborn Isaac burnt offerings are made instead. Both stories end with an apparent allusion to the Temple: David recognizes that this is to be the site of the house of God and Israel's altar of burnt offering; Abraham names the site "the LORD will see" because, as he had hoped, God had seen to it to provide the lamb for the sacrifice instead of Isaac. Thus the account in Genesis concludes with an apparent anticipation of the Temple: "Thus it is said to this day, 'On the Mount of the LORD he shall be seen.'"[120]

116 Compare Num. 22:1; Josh. 5:13.

117 Num. 23:10.

118 1 Chron. 21:22, 25.

119 1 Chron. 21:15–16.

120 Gen. 22:14.

The Chronicler sees the establishment of the Temple as the fulfillment of the Abraham story. The Mount of the LORD, elsewhere identified with Sinai,[121] is now identified with Zion, Jerusalem.[122] The Chronicler's typological understanding is explained more fully later, when he reports that Solomon began to build the Temple "on Mount Moriah where the LORD had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite."[123] Moriah, which according to popular etymology means "the vision of the LORD" (*môriyyâ*) is only mentioned in one other place in Scripture—as the site of the binding of Isaac. And nowhere else in Scripture is it recorded that the Temple was built on the place where Abraham offered Isaac.[124]

David's cry of recognition, "Here shall be the house of the LORD!"[125] is the summation of a careful literary effort by the Chronicler. With an intricate series of allusions to every stage of Israel's history of worship—from the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac at Moriah, to the Tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness, to Joshua's conquest of the land and the period of the Judges—the Chronicler illustrates the continuity of the Temple with God's purposes and suggests that his saving plan has reached its pinnacle. We find this interpretation in the Targum. Moriah is there described as the site where "all the generations worship before the Lord"—not only Abraham, Isaac, and David, but also Jacob, whose vision of the heavenly temple is said to have occurred there as well.[126]

The Chronicler wants his readers to see the Temple in profound continuity with this foundational moment in salvation history—when God swore an oath to Abraham to bless all the nations through his seed. In Chronicles, the holy place (*māqôm*) where God provided the sacrifice that spared Abraham's firstborn and triggered the swearing of his oath of blessing, has now become the holy ground where sacrifice will be offered to spare the lives of the children of Abraham. As God accepted the burnt offerings of Abraham in this place, on this same site, God dwelling in his Temple will accept the praise and offerings of his people and grant them his mercy.

In recasting the census episode as a covenant test, the Chronicler reveals Israel's God to be a God of surprises, able to bring about his purposes even in

121 Exod. 4:27; Num. 10:33.

122 Compare Pss. 24:3; 48:1; 99:9; Isa. 2:3; 13:4; 18:7; 30:29.

123 2 Chron. 3:1.

124 As Levenson points out, in both Genesis 22 and 1 Chronicles 21 "there is a play on [the word] Moriah and the verb *rā'â*, 'to see,' and its derivative nouns *mar'â* and *mare'ê*, meaning 'sight, spectacle, vision.' The visionary experiences of Abraham and of David here serve as authorization for the inauguration of the Temple on Mount Zion/Moriah. The theophany authenticates the sanctuary." Jon Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1985), 94–95.

125 1 Chron. 22:1.

126 See Targum 2 Chron. 3:1; compare Gen. 28:16–17.

the midst of apparent disaster. The covenant test leads to repentance and in that repentance we see the origins of the Temple liturgy. The liturgy of the Temple will be a liturgy of reconciliation and atonement, of making a substitutionary offering for sin. But it will also be a liturgy of joyous thanksgiving, for Israel realizes that it is saved by the faithfulness of God to his covenant oath to Abraham. The divine oath, sworn in recognition of Abraham's fidelity in his covenant test, is what spared Israel in this moment of David's infidelity. We find this interpretation in the Targum of 1 Chronicles 21:

> When he [God] was destroying it [Jerusalem], he observed the ashes of the binding of Isaac which were at the base of the altar, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham which he had set up with him on the mountain of worship; [he observed] the sanctuary-house which was above, where the souls of the righteous are, and the image of Jacob which was engraved on the throne of glory, and he repented in himself of the evil which he had planned.[127]

We notice too that David is portrayed in this episode as both a repentant sinner seeking forgiveness and as a royal High Priest interceding on behalf of his people with petitionary prayer, burnt offerings, and peace offerings. The intersection of these two portraits is highly significant for the Chronicler's theology of liturgy and his understanding of kingship. Through this incident, God teaches his covenant son, the king, an essential lesson about what it means to be the shepherd of God's people. A true shepherd, David comes to learn, must intercede for and even be willing to lay down his life for his flock. Text criticism has helped us to reconstruct the crucial text in David's conversion:

> It is I, the shepherd, who did wrong. But these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be against me and against my father's house; but let not the plague be upon thy people. (1 Chron. 21:17)[128]

The shepherd offers his own life for his sheep, recognizing that the people are not his own but God's. This is a dramatic turning point in Chronicles. The king performs public penance so that all can see the subordination of the earthly realm to the heavenly, the kingship to the priesthood, the leader of armies to the Lord of

127 Targum 1 Chron. 21:15.

128 The Revised Standard Version and most English translations render the first sentence: "It is I who have sinned and done very wickedly." But based on the manuscript evidence, "It is I, the shepherd, who did wrong," is preferred. See the discussions in Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 384; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 147–148; Selman, *1 Chronicles*, 208.

hosts. His public repentance, accompanied by sacrifice, triggers the mercy of God, who commands the angel to sheath his sword. We have here in 1 Chronicles 21 a choice specimen of right political theology. David becomes a kind of paradigm for the postexilic people, who must reclaim their vocation as a kingdom of priests and a light to the nations. For this covenant people, David becomes a model for their private prayer and the moral standards to which they must hold themselves and their leaders.[129]

The Chronicler's account of the founding of the Temple site ends with a final allusion to the Sinai tradition. The Temple, as we will see in detail, is conceived by Chronicles as a new creation, or better, as the goal of God's original creation. This is emphasized here in David's priestly offering upon the altar. David's confession leads to the command that he build an altar. In a scene deliberately crafted to evoke the first sacrifices in the Tabernacle in the wilderness, David the king is again shown in the image of a priest. He calls upon the Lord and offers burnt offerings and peace offerings, the same offerings made by Moses and Aaron in the Tabernacle. And as fire descended from heaven and consumed the offerings on the altar of the Tabernacle, so too David's offering is accepted by "fire from heaven."[130] As this divine fire looks back to the Tabernacle in the wilderness, it looks ahead to the dedication of the Temple, in which King Solomon's priestly offerings will also be consumed by fire from heaven.[131]

The Chronicler's Theocratic Vision

We see in this scene the full development of the Chronicler's covenantal and liturgical worldview and his typological interpretation of history. History for the Chronicler is moving inexorably toward the Kingdom of God expressed in the Davidic kingdom and the Temple, the dwelling of God on earth. At Moriah, God reveals the meaning of history—the blessing of the nations through the liturgy of his firstborn, the royal and priestly people whom he has made a light to the world.

David's last public act in Chronicles is to lead the entire assembly (*kol qāhāl*)[132] in an extravagant liturgy of sacrifice, offering a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, along with accompanying drink offerings. Dramatically, "the *kol qāhāl* blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and bowed and prostrated themselves to the LORD *and to the king*."[133] This is an extraordinary and unprecedented identification of the king with God. David had begun his final

129 Gary N. Knoppers, "Images of David in Early Judaism: David as Repentant Sinner in Chronicles," *Biblica* 76 (1995): 449–470, at 469.

130 1 Chron. 21:26; compare Lev. 9:22–24.

131 2 Chron. 7:1.

132 1 Chron. 29:1, 10, 20.

133 1 Chron. 29:20. Emphasis added.

prayer with the affirmation: "All that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord."[134]

This is the heart of the Chronicler's theocratic vision—that the Kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon is the Kingdom of God on earth. Chronicles, in fact, is the only place in the Hebrew canon where the expression "Kingdom of God" (*Melek Yhwh*) appears:

> Ought you not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt? … And now think you to withstand the Kingdom of the Lord [*Melek Yhwh*] in the hand of the sons of David? (2 Chron. 13:5, 8).

God's kingdom is "in the hands of" David's sons, a grant that is forever (*'ad 'ôlām*) by means of a "covenant of salt" (*bĕrît melaḥ*).[135] This latter image has sacrificial and offertory overtones. Salt was added to sacrifices as a sign of permanence and appears to have been an important element in ritual meals celebrated to seal covenants.[136] To say the Kingdom given to David was given by a *bĕrît melaḥ* is to say that the Kingdom is to forever, guaranteed by the oath of God.[137]

With the exception of Chronicles, the Book of Daniel, and select psalms, the notion of the Kingdom of God is rare in the canon. While God is sometimes described explicitly as king, his kingdom or rule is assumed but rarely referred to.[138] By contrast, in Chronicles, there are a remarkable sixteen references to God's kingdom or his reign—all in relation to the Davidic kingdom.[139] Martin Selman suggests that the idea of the Kingdom is rooted in the Sinai covenant, where the word "kingdom" first appears in the canon.[140] This further emphasizes the intimate connection between the Davidic kingdom and Israel's vocation as a "kingdom of priests." As Selman observes:

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134 1 Chron. 29:11.

135 2 Chron. 13:5, 8.

136 Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; Ezek. 6:9; 7:22; 43:24.

137 Compare 1 Chron. 17:12, 14.

138 God as king: Exod. 15:18; Isa. 6:5; Pss. 47:3; 99:2. God's kingdom or rule: Pss. 22:28; 45:6; 103:19; 145:11–13; Dan. 2:44; 4:3, 31; 6:26; 7:14, 18, 27.

139 Selman points out that the Chronicler deploys this concept always in relation to the Davidic kingdom and almost always at critical junctures in his narrative. See Martin J. Selman, "The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament," *Tyndale Bulletin* 40:2 (1989): 161–183, at 167. God "turned the kingdom over to David" in deposing Saul (1 Chron. 10:14). David's celebration of the Ark's return includes the prayerful exclamation, "The Lord reigns" (1 Chron. 16:31). The promise of the Kingdom is central to the covenant with David (1 Chron. 17:11, 14) and the Temple (2 Chron. 7:18). The Kingdom is the reason for the promise to David and his descendants (2 Chron. 9:8; 13:5, 8).

140 Selman, "Kingdom of God," 181–182.

> It is likely that the later associations of the Kingdom of Yahweh with Zion, the Davidic line, and the son of man, are part of the means by which this ideal [Israel as a kingdom of priests] was being restored, or rather, properly instituted. Indeed, one of the major reasons why the Kingdom of God was spoken of so cautiously in much of the Old Testament may be precisely because of Israel's failure to measure up to its ideals.

The Davidic kingdom for the Chronicler is the ideal kingdom of priests; it is sacramental, making manifest the Kingdom of God. We see this in David's understanding of the dynasty promised to him in the covenant. For David, the dynastic promise means that God "has chosen Solomon, my son, to sit upon the throne of the Kingdom of the LORD over Israel."[141] In David's hymn-like prayer at Solomon's coronation, he associates the Kingdom with God's purposes in the creation of the world

> Blessed art thou, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.
> Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power,
> and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty;
> For all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine;
> thine is the Kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted above all.
> (1 Chron. 29:10–11).

The Chronicler roots his theocratic vision of the divine economy in creation. The God of Israel is the God of creation and the Lord of history. That explains perhaps a curious feature of David's response to Nathan's covenant oracle. In his prayer, David employs a very rare form of divine address—"O LORD God" (*YHWH 'elōhīm*).[142] The Chronicler's source in 2 Samuel, by contrast, uses *'adōnāy YHWH* ("O Lord God").[143] The divine title, *YHWH 'elōhīm*, originates, canonically speaking, in the creation narrative, where it is used about twenty times.[144] The only other use of the title in the Pentateuch comes in the confrontation between Moses and

141 1 Chron. 28:5; compare 1 Chron. 29:23; 2 Chron. 9:8.

142 1 Chron. 17:16–17,

143 As Japhet has noted, the Chronicler often makes calculated substitutions and changes in the forms of address for God that he finds in his source material. See the discussion in Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, 2nd rev. ed., Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des Antiken Judentums 9 (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 20–23; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 337–338.

144 *YHWH 'elōhīm* is "exceedingly rare in the rest of the Bible," according to Nahum Sarna, who adds: "Admittedly … the remarkable concentration of the combination of these divine names in this narrative [Gen. 2:4–3:24] and their virtual absence hereafter have not been satisfactorily explained." Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation and Commentary* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 17.

Pharaoh.[145] And the title, *YHWH 'elōhīm*, is only found in six other places—five of them in Chronicles, and all of them related to the Davidic covenant or the Temple.[146] This is intriguing if not altogether explicable.

The title is used twice in the Chronicler's source for David's prayer.[147] But the Chronicler does not use the title in the places that his source does. Instead he uses *YHWH 'elōhīm* to form a kind of *inclusio* in the introduction of David's prayer:

> Who am I, *YHWH 'elōhīm* …
> you are showing me a law for the uplifting of humankind,
> *YHWH 'elōhīm*.
> (1 Chron. 17:16, 17)

I suggest that the Chronicler, perhaps inspired by his source, sees *YHWH 'elōhīm* as a way of expressing the special connection between God's purposes in the Davidic covenant and the divine purposes in creation. This may also help explain the meaning of the mysterious passage that I translated above as "you are showing me a law for the uplifting of humankind" (*ûrĕ'îtanî kĕtôr hā'ādām hammă'lâ*). The Hebrew is obscure both in Chronicles and in his source.[148] In light of the creation allusion in the title *YHWH 'elōhīm*, and the Exodus imagery elsewhere in David's prayer, I think the exegete and interpreter must try to "hear" the likely allusions to creation and the Exodus in the references in this obscure phrase to the Law (*kĕtôr*, literally,

145 Exod. 9:30; elsewhere *YHWH 'elōhīm* appears only infrequently as part of longer titles, such as "the LORD God of Israel." See Josh. 7:13, 19, 20; 10:40, 42; 13:14, 33; 1 Sam. 14:41; 1 Kings 8:23, 25; 16:13; Neh. 1:5; Ps. 59:5.

146 1 Chron. 22:1, 19; 26:18; 29:1; 2 Chron. 1:9; 6:41, 42; 32:16.

147 2 Sam. 7:22, 25.

148 Compare 2 Sam. 7:19. Various translations have been proposed based on various proposed emendations of the text. Among the proposals:

"You regard me as man of distinction." (Jewish Publication Society *Tanakh*);

"Thou … hast shown me future generations, O LORD God!" (Revised Standard Version);

"You have looked on me as henceforth the most notable of men, O LORD God." (New American Bible);

"Thou … hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God." (King James Version);

"You have let me look upon the generation of humankind to come." (Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 371, 383).

"And you have caused me, someone of human stature, to see into the future." (Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29" A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible [New York: Doubleday, 2004], 678.);

"And thou are regarding me according to the upbringing [or uplifting] tôrah of mankind, O Lord God." (Walter C. Kaiser, "The Blessing of David: The Charter for Humanity," in *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies Prepared in Honor of Oswald Thompson Allis*, ed. John H. Skilton [Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974]: 298–318, at 315).

"a law") and to humanity (*hā'ādām*, "the man"); a more literal reading also serves better to capture the overall sense of wonder felt in David's prayer. Whatever murkiness there may be in the text, it is clear is that David is marveling at this covenant and its implications for the human race. The sense of the text is well explained by Willis Beecher:

> What is this "*torah* of mankind?" … The most natural understanding is that David recognizes in the promise just made to him a renewal of the ancient promise of blessing for mankind … a renewal of the promise made of old that all the nations should be blessed in Abraham and his seed.[149]

"Let Them Say among the Nations, 'The Lord Reigns!'"

The Chronicler indeed presents us with a utopia, as some of the most provocative of recent scholarship has suggested.[150] It is not an ideal political economy or military superpower, but a liturgical empire, a worldwide kingdom ordered to a cosmic liturgy, to offering sacrifice and praise to the living God. The liturgy of the Temple is the means by which the children of Abraham are to bestow God's blessings upon the families of the world.

Chronicles is a fiercely nationalist document. It tells the tale of a proud people. But we cannot forget that it is also a work that reflects a broadly internationalist, even cosmic outlook. From the initial genealogies Israel's gaze is being directed outward, *ad gente*, to the nations. Israel is asked to understand itself in light of the world's beginnings and in light of is prophetic mission to be "a light to the nations."[151] In his later depiction of Solomon's Temple, built on the site of Moriah, the Chronicler stresses the "universalism" inherent in the Abrahamic covenant. The Temple for the Chronicler is indeed what the prophets said it would be—"a house of prayer for all peoples."[152]

And the Chronicler seems to share with the prophets a belief in the liturgical consummation of history, an eschatological vision of the nations streaming to Zion to worship Israel's God. I cannot pursue these points of universalism here, except to note that this liturgical consummation is anticipated in the long priestly psalm of remembrance, thanksgiving, and praise, composed by the priest-king David to celebrate the restoration of the Ark.

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149 Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1975 [1905]), 238.

150 See for instance, Steven Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia in Chronicles* (New York: T &T Clark, 2007); Jonathan E. Dyck, *The Theolocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

151 See Isa. 42:6; 49:6.

152 Compare Isa. 56:7; 2 Chron. 5:32–33.

This priestly song of redemption combines passages from three psalms[153] and is a profound work of biblical theology in its own right. David interprets Israel's history as an economy of salvation flowing from the covenant with Abraham to the moment when all the nations and peoples of the world—and indeed all the cosmos, the heavens and the earth—worship of Israel's God: "Let them say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns!'"[154]

Reconstructive Historical Apologetics

The questions that remain involve the Chronicler's intentions and purposes—to what "ends" did he write his prophetic historiography? The consensus, even among the most sensitive scholarly readers, seems to be that the Chronicler did not hold out much hope for the Messiah expected by the prophets and later writers in the period after the exile and the building of the Second Temple.

In moving reasonably among the scholarly extremes, Hugh Williamson has concluded with admirable caution: "Although the term 'messianic' is perhaps too strong, it must be concluded that the Chronicler still cherished the hope that one day the Davidic dynasty would be reestablished over Israel."[155] Selman, who has written one of the best commentaries, concludes:

> The Chronicler's overall aim was to offer an interpretation of the Bible as he knew it. More precisely, his guiding principle was to demonstrate that God's promises revealed in the Davidic covenant were as trustworthy and effective as when they were first given, even though the first readers lived centuries after almost all the events he recorded.[156]

However, Selman, like Williamson, sees "no evidence in Chronicles of a strong messianic hope." Rather than trying to "awaken any explicit hope for the future," he sees the Chronicler stressing "the continuity between the distant past and the present or recent past … that God is still building his house and that he invites his people to go on participating in the task."[157]

I think Chronicles points us beyond even such wise and careful conclusions. I would argue that the Chronicler's trust in God's promises to David is, by its very nature, a species of eschatological hope—hope for a Messiah who would bring about the fulfillment of those promises. To be sure there is no messianic fervor

153 1 Chron. 16:8–22 = Ps. 105:1–15; 1 Chron. 16:23–33 = Ps. 96:1–13; and 1 Chron. 16:34 = Ps. 106:1; 1 Chron. 16:35–36 = Ps. 106:47–48.

154 1 Chron. 16:23–33.

155 Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 134.

156 Selman, *1 Chronicles*, 26.

157 Selman, *1 Chronicles*, 64–65.

evident in the work. Nor do we have any overt theology of political resistance as we find in Maccabees and some of the extrabiblical apocalypses of the period. But it is a mistake to suggest, as many scholars do, that the Chronicler is not interested in the political conditions of the people after the exile or that he has no firm hopes for the future.

It is important to remember that Chronicles is not merely a work of nostalgia, a retrospective reading of Israel's history with the vaguely hortatory purpose of inspiring the postexilic community to rebuild the Temple and restore their religious devotions. The Chronicler believes in the God whose story he narrates in his text, a God who is the Lord of history. What some commentators mistake as political quietism is actually a reflection of the Chronicler's deep faith in God's covenant plan. This lends a certain serenity to his account, for sure. He does not preoccupy himself with the wickedness of the Assyrians or the Babylonians; nor does he despair over the divided kingdom in his account of the monarchy after Solomon. He begins and ends his work with a matter-of-fact diagnosis—the exile was an inevitable result of Israel's "unfaithfulness" to the covenant (*māʿal*), and their refusal to heed the prophets that "the LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them."[158]

We are back to the question we began this article with: In a work in which prophets and prophesy plays such an important role, to what extent does the Chronicler understand himself to be a messenger sent by God to prophesy to the people of his day? As I read it, the many prophetic speeches in Chronicles, in effect, blend together with the narrative to form a single authoritative "Word" spoken to the Chronicler's audience. This dimension of the Chronicler's prophetic historiography has been well explained by Fishbane:

> The Chronicler does not merely use his narrative voice—the authoritative voice of impersonal history—but employs the confrontative, exhortative, and instructive voice of prophetic personae as well. In the course of the historical exposition, moreover, both voices—refracted through the stylistic forms of reported speech and reported events—reinforce each other. The prophetic oratories serve to set the course of the narrative reports and to exemplify them, while the narrative reports reciprocally comment upon these speeches and teach through them. … The continuous oscillation is, in its effect, part of the expository power of the Chronicler. Added to it is his *aggadic* ability to teach *through the traditions*. … This content confronted [the Chronicler's readers] as a ***traditum***, as *the* authoritative version of the ancient ***traditio*** made present as witness and as challenge.

158 1 Chron. 9:1; 2 Chron. 36:15–16.

> No less than his prophetic personae, then, the Chronicler's narrative addressed his generation, in the twilight of classical prophecy, with a "prophetic" voice.[159]

Chronicles is *aggadic*, or homiletic. But more than a long series of historical sermons to the post-exilic community, in Chronicles historical remembrance is transformed into prophetic Word. As prophetic historiography, Chronicles is an act of what the Hebrews called *zakhor*, a remembrance that is liturgical and sacramental, that aims to bring one into vital contact with the events recalled. Again we can ask whether perhaps the Chroniclers saw his work—which may have originated as a series of homilies delivered in the context of the liturgy—as an example of the cultic prophecy established by David as a part of the Temple liturgy.[160] Whatever its precise origins, in Chronicles Israel's history is being appropriated and transformed into Scripture, a pattern found elsewhere in the Bible. As Stefan Rief has said:

> It was not all facts that were to be remembered, but those that specifically documented God's intervention and man's response, since in this way human history could be interpreted as the revelation of God's will. Memory was a central element in ritual and recital, and the festivals manifestly had historical as well as religious and agricultural dimensions. The biblical narrative revolves around the reality of everyday life rather than having its focus on the exclusively spiritual … Thus, Israel's history was incorporated—even transformed—into its Scripture. The whole process was maintained and nurtured by transmission, recitation, and education.[161]

The Chronicler is doing a kind of reconstructive historical apologetics. In recreating the era of David and the rise of the Kingdom he is not only describing the

159 Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 392.

160 1 Chron. 25:1. Rex Mason has suggested that the many of the speeches recorded in Chronicles reflect "the method of preaching and teaching among the Temple community." See Rex Mason, "Some Echoes of the Preaching in the Second Temple Period? Traditional Elements in Zechariah 1–8," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 96:2 (1984), 221–235, at 233; Schniedewind, "Prophets and Prophecy," 212. Rodney Duke concludes that the Chronicler shares a "common hermeneutic" with the authors of the Targum. In both, "Scripture was actualized. The message of the text was contemporary; it spoke to the present; 'revelation' was continuous. … [T]he Chronicler interpreted his tradition both in light of contemporary cultic praxis and according to the need of the present situation." Rodney K. Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 88 (Sheffield: Almond, 1990), 115.

161 Stefan C. Reif, "The Function of History in Early Rabbinic Liturgy," in *Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2006: History and Identity: How Israel's Later Authors Viewed Its Earlier History*, eds. Núria Calduch-Benages and Jan Liesen (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 321–333, at 322.

golden age, the summit of salvation history; he is laying the moral and spiritual groundwork for the restoration of the Kingdom, the rebuilding of the Temple, and the return of the son of David. Donna Runnalls has rightly observed: "The interest of the Chronicler in the eternal Davidic kingship at a time when it no longer existed makes emphatic the idea that the promise awaits fulfillment."[162]

In all of this, I suggest, we have the seeds of an alternative biblical theology of empire, one that intends to instruct Israel on how to live in the new post-exilic environment, how to worship the true God while still living under the domination of a foreign power. As William Schniedewind has noted, the prophetic speeches in Chronicles, while ostensibly speaking to the historical events being recounted, are also addressed homiletically to the Chronicler's audience.[163] Thus, the prophet Shemaiah explains why God permitted Israel's subjugation to Egypt under King Rehoboam in terms that could apply to the entire exilic generation—"so that they may know the difference between serving me and serving the kingdoms of the world."[164]

The Chronicler's prophetic historiography teaches a morality of exile and reflects what E. P. Sanders has called "restoration eschatology."[165] The Chronicler's audience is, in a very real sense, still in exile, even though the people have been freed from Babylon and returned to the land. They have to learn how to keep faith in exile, how to serve God while still in captivity to the kingdoms of the world, awaiting the restoration of the Kingdom of David and the Temple.

The Chronicler's prophetic historiography is thus open to its own fulfillment; the story that the Chronicler tells is not yet complete. This sense of a history awaiting its own fulfillment is what makes Chronicles such fertile ground for New Testament studies. To date, the work has not received the kind of attention from New Testament scholars that it deserves. But I am convinced that careful study of some of the aspects of Chronicles that we have looked at here—the Chronicler's vision of salvation history rooted in creation; his covenantal typology; his treatment of the Kingdom of God as a *qāhāl* and a liturgical empire—can shed great light on Jesus' own teaching about the Kingdom, the Church, and the sacramental liturgy. Indeed, I would suggest that in these and other areas the Chronicler offers us a kind of blueprint that the New Testament Church actualizes.

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162 Donna R. Runnalls, "The King as Temple Builder: A Messianic Typology," in *Spirit Within Structure, Essays in Honor of George Johnston on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. E. J. Furcha (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick), 15–37, at 24–25. See too, William F. Stinespring, "Eschatology in Chronicles," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80 (1961): 209–19, at 211: the Chronicler "was surely thinking eschatologically of the new David and the new Kingdom that would shortly or eventually arise in God's good time."

163 Shniedewind, "Prophets and Prophecy," 222–223.

164 2 Chron. 12:7–8; the translation is Shniedewind's. "Prophets and Prophecy," 222.

165 E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Phildaelphia: Fortress, 1985), 77; see also, N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992), 269–272.

With his liturgical and sacramental appropriation of history, the Chronicler wants to lead his audience to see the "signs of the times," the divine purposes being unfolded in everyday reality. He is preparing his readers, those who have returned to Jerusalem and those still in the Diaspora, to recognize these "signs" and to prepare their hearts to live as a royal and priestly people, the agents through which God will bless all the nations.