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The Chronicler’s Speeches and Historical Reconstruction

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THE CHRONICLER’S SPEECHES AND
HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Mark A. Throntveit

After all these facts, we may conclude the Introduction to the books of the Chronicle, feeling assured of the result, that the books, in regard to their historical contents, notwithstanding the hortatory-didactic aim of the author in bringing the history before us, have been composed with care and fidelity according to the authorities, and are fully deserving of belief.

C.F. Keil

One might as well try to hear the grass growing as attempt to derive from such a source as this a historical knowledge of the conditions of ancient Israel.

J. Wellhausen

Something of the range of opinion regarding the historical reliability of the Chronicler (Chr) may be seen in the juxtaposition of these quotations from two of his early interpreters. While the debate concerning the historicity of Chronicles continues to rage in our time as well, the place of Chr’s speeches in this regard seems to enjoy some consensus. First expressed by Graf, this consensus holds that, ‘they have been so reworded by Chr that it is no longer possible to find a historical kernel. As such they are unhistorical.’ Towards the end of the nineteenth

3. For an exhaustive treatment of the debate in the last century with reflections on the current state of research, see M.P. Graham, The Utilization of 1 and 2 Chronicles in the Reconstruction of Israelite History in the Nineteenth Century (SBLDS, 116; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).
4. K.H. Graf, Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments: Zwei
century, Driver concluded his analysis of the speeches by stating: 'It would have been interesting to point out how the speeches peculiar to Chr reflect, in almost every case, the interests and point of view of Chr himself; but space has obliged me to confine myself to the linguistic argument.' Of those investigations solely devoted to the speeches, only von Rad's form-critical analysis, which led him to deny their origin to Chr, broke ranks with this emerging consensus, and he, nevertheless, credited Chr with placing these sermons from the 'post-exilic cultic officials' in the mouths of kings and prophets. Noth's investigations solidified the view that Chr was responsible for the speeches themselves, and Plöger established their chronistic placement at strategic points in the narrative. These pioneering works in the area of Chr's speeches have been enhanced by the more recent work of Braun, Newsome, Saebø, Mathias, Throntveit, Duke, and Mason, all in basic agreement regarding the function, use, and historicity of these addresses.

Parallel studies of this rhetorical usage of speeches in classical and ancient Near Eastern literature, as well as the book of Acts, have arrived at similar results, namely the discovery of the common historigraphical procedure of composing speeches and placing them upon the lips of Chr.  

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5. S.R. Driver, 'The Speeches in Chronicles', The Expositor 1 (5th series, 1895), pp. 241-56; the quote is found on p. 255, n. 2.
lips of important personages to express the author’s views.9

Speaking as one concerned to uphold the historical reliability of Chr,10 Japhet’s balanced conclusion regarding the speeches and prayers is all the more illuminating:

Throughout the historical account, these rhetorical passages of the Chronicler’s own creation are put in the mouths of prophets and kings. They tie in with the historical background and flow of the narrative but are not integral to the description. Added speeches and prayers therefore provide a clear and unequivocal expression of the writer’s views.11

It is the task of this essay to look more closely at Chr’s royal speech, prophetic speech, priestly speech, and the speech of others12 in light of this consensus position regarding their value for historical reconstruction. It will be shown that the consensus position is entirely justified and that Chr does indeed function as theologian—not historian—in these addresses.

Royal Speech in Chronicles

Mason has isolated fifteen royal addresses in the books of Chronicles that do not appear in the synoptic material of Samuel–Kings.13 There is some consensus that these addresses constitute the material that needs to be examined in discussions of Chr’s royal speech, with the possible


12. The categories are those used in Mason’s recent monograph, Preaching the Tradition.

### Relative Placement of the Non-Synoptic Speeches in Chronicles

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single exception of David’s final address (1 Chron. 29.1-5), which seems to be redactional. The remaining fourteen addresses are divided among the kings as follows: David, six speeches (1 Chron. 13.2-3; 15.2, 12-13; 22.6-16; 22.17-19; 28.2-10; 28.20-21); Abijah, one speech (2 Chron. 13.4-12); Asa, one speech (14.7); Jehoshaphat, two speeches (19.6-7, 9-11; 20.20); Hezekiah, three speeches (29.5-11, 31; 30.6-9; 32.7-8); and Josiah, one speech (35.3-6).

Saebø has suggested that a primary function of the speeches which has not received the attention it deserves, is to invest the speakers with authority. Judging by the distribution of these speeches one would have to agree. It is immediately apparent that only Chr’s favorites deliver royal addresses, and if that king is presented in both a favorable and an unfavorable light, his speech will take place during the pious portion of his reign.

Examination of the royal speeches with regard to matters of form and content leads to other useful observations. The initial form-critical classifications of Braun and the present author (edict, oration, and rationale) now appear to be much too rigid. Mason has grouped nine of the fourteen instances of royal speech under the more general heading of ‘Encouragement for a Task’, which includes ‘a call to a specific enterprise, a reason for undertaking it and/or grounds of encouragement which make the task a hopeful one’. David’s last five speeches found in 1 Chronicles dominate here and set the pattern for future instances among his heirs. The task that is encouraged is the preparation for Solomon’s building of the temple—a primary concern in Chr’s

14. For the redactional character of all of 1 Chron. 29.1-19 see R. Mosis, Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Chronistischen Geschichtswerkes (FTS, 92; Freiburg: Herder, 1973), pp. 105-107; and my partial support in Throntveit, When Kings Speak, pp. 89-96.
portrayal of David. The remaining five addresses are more difficult to assign. Ploeger has suggested that the speeches of Abijah and Hezekiah (2 Chron. 13.4-12 and 30.6-9) are Umkehrreden, 'calls to return' addressed to the northern kingdom. Jehoshaphat's brief speech in 2 Chron. 20.20 appears to be an exhortation, as does Josiah's (35.3-6). David's initial address is seen as an 'overture' by Mason.

In terms of content, three themes are represented. Cultic considerations predominate in all of David's addresses, Josiah's address to the Levites, and two of Hezekiah's speeches (2 Chron. 29.5-11, 31 and 30.6-9). Hezekiah's other address (32.7-8), the speeches of Abijah and Asa, and Jehoshaphat's second address (20.20) are mainly concerned with the theme of faithfulness in war. Only Jehoshaphat's other speech (19.6-7, 9-11) falls outside these two thematic areas, and it is concerned with judicial reform.

Several inferences may be drawn from this information. It was mentioned above that the Davidic addresses were uniformly cast as encouragements for a task and that they had to do with David's encouragement of Solomon in the building of the temple. On other grounds there seems to be a broad consensus that David and Solomon are to be seen as linked together in Chr's conception as 'einen zusammenhängenden Akt'.

The unity of purpose revealed in these speeches serves to further this understanding and argues for their employment by Chr as part of his theological agenda.

Two pairs of speeches suggest other possibilities of a structural nature. The Umkehrreden of Abijah and Hezekiah provide an inclusio around the period of the divided monarchy, thereby establishing the three major divisions of Chr's presentation: the united monarchy of David and Solomon, the divided monarchy following the death of Solomon.

22. The virtual quotation of Isa. 7.9 in this address by a king who lived nearly 100 years before Isaiah would seem to argue for Chr's invention of this (and other?) speech(es).
24. Through the Books of Chronicles.
27. See the Tradition, pp. and "The Sc
difficult to return’, speech in 2 Kings (35.3-6).

Hezekiah’s concern to the death of Abijah and the accession of his son. On other speeches concerned.

The Chronicler’s Speeches

Solomon, and the resumption of the united monarchy with Hezekiah. 24

We will see in the next section that Jehoshaphat’s exhortation (2 Chron. 14.20), strategically placed in the center of the divided monarchy, serves as an interpretive key to all of Chr’s instances of prophetic address. David’s initial speech (1 Chron. 13.2-3), with its concern for the disposition of the ark, forms an inclusio around all of Chr’s royal addresses, when taken in conjunction with Josiah’s similar concern for the ark (2 Chron. 35.3-6). Since Chr tells us that the ark had been placed in the temple during Solomon’s reign (2 Chron. 5.4-7) and there is no mention of its subsequent removal, Josiah’s command to ‘Put the holy ark in the temple’, is difficult. A common suggestion, translating הַמַּעֲרֻבָּה as ‘leave the ark in the temple’, would resolve this matter with reference to David’s second address (1 Chron. 15.15-16). Regardless of one’s decision in this matter, concern for the ark as a levitical duty has been altered. Whereas David had established the levitical practice of carrying the ark in the first two royal addresses, Josiah emphasizes the levitical duty of service and ministry, now that the carrying of the ark is no longer necessary. 25

This leaves the unusual address of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 19.6-7, 9-11) unaccounted for in terms of structural or theological placement. The juridical reforms of Jehoshaphat pose serious historical problems. Though dismissed by Wellhausen as based upon the fortuitous nature of the king’s name (‘Yahweh is judge’), 26 others have seen at least a core of historical material in Chr’s report. 27 Against this, however, is the judicious suspicion of Mason:

...some very characteristic Chronicler words and phraseology, and the interesting bringing together of high priest and governor in what might be termed the ecclesiastical court, may well reflect efforts in the post-


25. See S.J. De Vries, ‘Moses and David as Cult Founders in Chronicles’, JBL 107 (1988), p. 639, for the suggestion that the anachronistic command regarding the ark fulfills the ideal first expressed in David’s initial speeches.


27. See the bibliography and discussion provided by Mason, Preaching the Tradition, pp. 272-73, n. 82; and especially G. Knoppers, ‘Jehoshaphat’s Judiciary and “The Scroll of YHWH’s Torah”’, JBL 113 (1994), pp. 59-80.
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exilic period to translate pre-exilic procedures of the monarchical period into the new situation of a later time.  

Knoppers, in his recent, exhaustive investigation of Jehoshaphat’s reforms, warns against simplistic assumptions on both sides. Chr mirrors neither ‘history’ nor his own contemporary situation as he draws on both past tradition and present reality to forge a new entity: a depiction of Jehoshaphat’s reforms that ‘ultimately reflects what he believes justice should be’. The situation is indeed as complex as Knoppers maintains. Nevertheless, this address remains the best example of possible historical information as recorded in the royal addresses.

Brief mention might also be made regarding Chr’s royal prayers. These, too, are best explained in terms of Chr’s overall structure and intent to highlight important aspects of the narrative. David’s prayers (1 Chron. 17.16-27//2 Sam. 7.17-29, though greatly altered, and 29.10-19, though with some redactional elements) effectively frame David’s participation in the process of planning for the building of the temple.

As such, they enhance Chr’s picture of David as supremely concerned with the establishment of the cult in conjunction with David’s addresses. The prayers of Asa (2 Chron. 14.10 [E V V 11]) and Jehoshaphat (20.5-12) are prayers before battle that hearken back to Solomon’s programmatic prayer at the dedication of the temple (2 Chron. 6.12-40; especially vv. 34-35) taken over from 1 Kgs 8.22-53. Hezekiah’s prayer (2 Chron. 30.18-19) is of an intercessory nature but also recalls petitions from Solomon’s prayer (especially 6.20). As such, they are rhetorical instances of Chr’s repeated demonstration of answered prayer (2 Chron. 13; 18.31; 25.5-13; 32.20-22).

Prophetic Speech in Chronicles

Only five prophetic addresses in Chronicles have corresponding parallels in Samuel-Kings: those of Nathan (1 Chron. 17//2 Sam. 7), Gad (1 Chron. 3.10-15), Zechariah (1 Chron. 13//2 Sam. 11.11-17), Baasha (1 Kings 16.11-14) and Jeroboam II’s sons (1 Kings 14.21-24). The prophetic addresses in Chronicles have a different purpose than those in Samuel-Kings.

31. Plöger, ‘Reden und Gebete’, p. 60. The placement of the first prayer also effectively divides David’s concern with the ark in his first two speeches from his concern with the temple in his subsequent addresses.
32. As so comments, Ch 21.12-15.  
33. While prevalent scholar...
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Those instances of prophetic address that have no parallel in Samuel-Kings, however, are much more interesting for our concerns: Shemaiah (2 Chron. 12.5-8), Azariah (15.1-7), Hanani (16.7-9), Jehu ben Hanani (19.2-3), Eliezer (20.37), Elijah's letter to Jehoram (21.12-15), Zechariah (24.20), an anonymous 'man of God' (25.7-8), an anonymous 'prophet' (25.15-16), and Oded (28.9-11). All these prophetic addresses are replete with the characteristic linguistic and stylistic hallmarks of Chr and, as will be discussed below, serve to infuse the narratives in which they occur with Chr's own theological evaluation of the particular king in question in terms of the theology of retribution.

Not only are the addresses unknown to us from other sources, the speakers themselves are also unique. Three possible exceptions to this statement require comment at this point. First, Elijah's letter (2 Chron. 21.12-15) presents difficulties of chronology and geography. With regard to chronology, one would assume from the implicit chronology found in 2 Kings that Elijah could not have been present, having been taken to heaven (ch. 2) before the reign of Jehoram (ch. 3). There is no suggestion in the text that Elijah wrote the letter prior to his departure or that it was sent from heaven. This argument, of course, renders moot the geographical question of whether Elijah, whose ministry consisted of defending Yahweh against the incursion of Ba'al in Ahab’s court, carried out an ancillary calling in the south. Virtually all recent commentators have questioned the historicity of Elijah’s epistolary encounter.

Second, a Jehu ben Hanani was active in the north during the reign of Baasha (1 Kgs 16.1, 7). This northern location as well as the fact that his prophetic activity took place some fifty years prior to the time of the Jehu ben Hanani mentioned in Chronicles would seem to argue against the common identity of these two individuals. It is also impossible to ascertain whether the father of the Jehu in Chronicles, Hanani, is in fact the prophetic figure found in 2 Chron. 16.7-10. However, as some harmonizing attempts have suggested, cf. Rudolph's list and comments, Chronikbücher (HAT, 21; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1955), p. 267.
Third, Shemaiah is known to us from his first address (2 Chron. 11.3-4//1 Kgs 12.23-24) and thus, while his later addresses are not paralleled in Kings, he and Elijah are the only prophets who give addresses that are at least not unknown to Chr’s audience regardless of the historicity of their messages.

Four of these prophetic addresses are examined as part of von Rad’s so-called ‘levitical sermons’. In his article von Rad sought to identify a new literaryGattung in Chronicles with the following characteristics:

The first part sets out clearly and precisely the conditions on which God is prepared to give his help—i.e. the doctrine. The second part looks back into history, showing that God’s nearness is not to be taken for granted, and that there are whole periods of history in which he was far removed—i.e. the application. The third part is a call to faith with the promise of reward—i.e. the exhortation.

Thus the addresses are ‘sermons’ with the quotation of or allusion to a text, followed by an application and an exhortation. But von Rad’s rather negative appraisal of Chr (‘But he really is quite the last person whom we should credit with the creation of anything, let alone a new literary form!’) forces him to look to Deuteronomic circles and the traditions of the levitical priests for the Sitz im Leben of these addresses. Von Rad’s views, however, while initially embraced, have

sages, in an attempt to explain irregularities in the presentation of biblical prophets, coined the axiom “every prophet whose patronym is recorded—both he and his father were prophets” (Leviticus Rabbah 6.7). “Hanani” is of course the father of “Jehu”, a prophet appearing in Israel in the time of Baasha (1 Kgs 16.1, 7), and according to Chronicles also active under Jehoshaphat (II Chron. 19.2; 20.34). Although this principle is articulated only in rabbinic literature, the very appearance of the prophet “Hanani” in the time of Asa may be regarded as its earliest intimation; of course the historicity of “Hanani” is then strongly suspect. Japhet, I & II Chronicles, p. 734.

34. 2 Chron. 15.2-7; 16.7-9; 19.6ff.; 25.7ff. Also discussed are 1 Chron. 28.2-10; 2 Chron. 20.15-17; 20.20; 29.5-11; 30.6-9; 32.7-8a. Von Rad, ‘Levitical Sermon’, pp. 267-80.

37. As seen in the commentaries of J.M. Myers, II Chronicles (AB, 13; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965); P.R. Ackroyd, I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, (TBC; London: SCM, 1973); and R.J. Coggins, The First and Second Books of the Chronicles, (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), among others. H.G.M. Williamson goes so far as to say that Chr’s ‘work as a whole thus takes on

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recently come under serious criticism, and it has been shown that these addresses are neither ‘levitical’ nor ‘sermons’.\(^38\)

Westermann, on the basis of his form-critical comparison of these addresses with earlier prophetic speech, has expanded von Rad’s insights to defend the position that these southern prophets who appear in Chronicles were not inventions of Chr, ‘but that they were also present all through the whole history of the kingship in the Southern Kingdom’.\(^39\) This evidence would provide some support, on the basis of Chr’s speeches, for those wishing to argue for the presence of southern prophets in the monarchical period, a presence omitted by Dtr, though Westermann proceeds to state that ‘it is clear that the real interest of the Chronicler in including the prophetic speeches was to give divine authority to his interpretation of history’.

A further objection to von Rad’s work concerns the scope of his investigations. Some of these ‘levitical sermons’ are made by kings, some are rather to be classified as prayers, and other instances of prophetic address are not taken into account. Investigation of the ten non-synoptic prophetic addresses found in Chronicles as a body suggests that they all share a common function: validation of the theme of retributive justice. J.D. Newsome has convincingly argued that four of these addresses have been added by Chr to the narrative of his source in Kings with just this purpose in mind.\(^40\)

First, 2 Chron. 12.2-12 faithfully reproduces 1 Kgs 14.25-28 with the addition of vv. 2b-9a, which provides Chr’s interpretation of Shishak’s invasion in a dialogue between Shemaiah the prophet and Rehoboam and the princes of Judah. Both the disaster of the Egyptian invasion and God’s deliverance of Judah following Rehoboam’s repentance are attributed to God’s retributive justice.

Second, 2 Chron. 16.7-10 consists of a prophetic address from the parenetic purpose of a “Levitical sermon”, warning and encouraging his contemporaries to a responsive faith which may again call down the mercy of their God: \textit{I and 2 Chronicles} (NCB; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982) p. 33.


Hanani that seeks to explain Asa’s illness (1 Kgs 15.23b) as a result of his alliance with Ben-Hadad of Syria and cruel treatment of the prophet; again Chr’s source is silent about the cause of Asa’s illness. If we accept Rudolph’s proposal that we read, ‘the army of the king of Israel (with the Lucianic recension of LXX, instead of ‘Syria’) will escape...’, then Chr has also totally transformed Dtr’s account of Israelite victory into one of defeat in the interests of his doctrine of retributive justice.

Third, Jehu ben Hanani’s address in 2 Chron. 19.1-3 gives the appearance of restoring the character of one of Chr’s favorites, Jehoshaphat, who had entered into alliance with Ahab, but who had also destroyed the Asherahs and set his heart to seek God. As noticed by the commentaries, these three verses totally recast the previous Micaiah ben Imlah narrative (1 Kgs 22.1-40//2 Chron. 18) that had ended with the fulfillment of the prophetic word in the death of Ahab. Chr omits this reference to prophetic fulfillment and adds Jehu ben Hanani’s address, couched in terms of retributive justice, to emphasize the necessity of avoiding foreign alliances.

Finally, 2 Chron. 20.35-37 is Chr’s complete reworking of the brief narrative concerning Jehoshaphat’s naval expedition to Ophir (1 Kgs 22.44, 48-50). In Kings, Ahaziah proposes that Jehoshaphat join him in an expedition after the ships to be used in the venture have been destroyed in the harbor, a proposal that Jehoshaphat refuses. Chr alters (or restores!) the order of events so that Jehoshaphat initiates the alliance, and the ships are destroyed at sea after the prophetic address of Eliezer (lacking in Kings). This drastic reworking of the text would be stronger evidence for Newsome’s contention that Chr has, at times, inserted prophetic addresses to voice his theology of retributive justice, were it not for the fact that the Kings account makes practically no sense as it stands. We must assume that Chr has restored the proper order of alliance followed by disaster. This concession, however, leaves unresolved the questions of who initiated the alliance and whether Jehoshaphat succumbed. Furthermore, Chr has still inserted a prophetic address that clearly provides his own theological evaluation of the

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41. Rudolph, Chronikbücher, p. 248.
proceedings. Newsome summarizes his findings with the following brief description:

The point here is that, for the Chronicler, prophets provide a voice with which to proclaim the retributive justice of God. Because on these occasions they appear in those situations where the Chronicler’s known source did not have them, the suspicion is aroused that they have been introduced into the story, not for purposes of historical accuracy, but for the purposes of theological emphasis. Newsome’s suspicion seems well founded. I have argued elsewhere that Chr’s non-synoptic prophetic addresses all proclaim a consistent message: blessing and reward for those (especially those kings) who ‘seek God’ (וּלְמֹרַד, וּלְפָכָם) and ‘humble themselves’ (וַיהִיא), judgment and disaster for those who do not (in addition to negative formulations of וּלְמֹרַד, וּלְפָכָם, and their antonyms, וְלָבֹא, וְלָבֹא ['abandon, forsake'] and וְלָבֹא, 'be unfaithful, rebellious') serve as the linguistic carriers of Chr’s portrayal).

The placement of these addresses also argues for their theological function in the narrative. Of the ten non-synoptic prophetic addresses, nine occur in the period of the divided monarchy. As we have already seen, this is the period that Chr has framed with two of his royal addresses, the Umkehrreden of Abijah (2 Chron. 13.4-12) and Hezekiah (30.6-9). In Chr’s periodization of history this middle period of the divided monarchy, flanked by the united monarchy of David and Solomon and the re-united monarchy of Hezekiah, is a critical moment for Judah. The north had fallen due to the unfaithfulness of its kings, as Chr’s biblical sources repeatedly assert. The only hope for the south lay

43. For a closely reasoned attempt to maximize the historiographical significance of this and similar passages where Chr rewrites stories from his source, see Japhet, I & II Chronicles, p. 803.
45. Throntveit, When Kings Speak, pp. 127-29. I have since been convinced that Jahaziel’s address (2 Chron. 20.14-17) is properly a priestly speech, though with decided prophetic overtones. See the discussion below under ‘Priestly Speech in Chronicles’, and Mason, Preaching the Tradition, pp. 134-35.
46. For a discussion of Chr’s retributive justice and a cataloging of these terms, see Dillard, 2 Chronicles, pp. 76-81.
47. Azariah, 2 Chron. 15.1-7; Hanani, 16.7-9; Jehu, 19.2-3; Eliezer, 20.37; Elijah’s epistle, 21.12-15; Zechariah, 24.20; ‘a man of God’, 25.8; ‘a prophet’, 25.15-16; and Oded, 28.9-11.
in the faithful leadership of its rulers. As Jehoshaphat, Chr's paradigmatic king for this period, had dramatically proclaimed in a royal address in the center of this period, 'Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord your God and you will be established; believe his prophets (and you will succeed)!'
48 The call to faith was to belief in God and his appointed messengers the prophets. Since all but one of those messengers have been placed in this period of crisis, the suggestion arises that they have been so situated for theological impact as voices for Chr's own agenda rather than for historical precision.
49

The same may be said for the one prophetic address appearing before the period of the divided monarchy, that of Shemaiah (2 Chron. 12.5-8). That Shemaiah's address serves Chr's theme of retributive justice is clear and widely acknowledged.50 Of interest here, are the reasons for its particular location in the narrative at the time of the schism and as the first of Chr's prophetic addresses. At least two aspects of this passage set it apart from the other prophetic addresses. First, it is couched in the form of a dialogue, which is rare in Chronicles in general but especially unusual in the non-synoptic material.51 More significantly, though, it is a two-staged encounter between the prophet and Rehoboam and the princes of Judah. In the first stage (vv. 5-6) Shemaiah tersely explains that Shishak's triumph was due to Rehoboam's sin, 'Thus says the Lord: You abandoned me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishak.' In response, Rehoboam and the leaders humbled themselves and said, 'The Lord is in the right.' The second stage (vv. 7-8) presents Yahweh's assurance of 'some deliverance' (in response to their repentance) and a warning.

Japhet has convincingly argued that Chr's doctrine of retributive justice consists of both call to repentance and warning, under the general pr...
general principle of ‘no punishment without warning’. In addition to a saturation of Chr’s preferred vocabulary of retribution, all these characteristics of the prophetic addresses appear in this short encounter: retributive justice as the theological explanation for a particular situation (here, both judgment as seen in Shishak’s victory in response to sin, and deliverance, though qualified, in response to repentance) and prophetic warning. Thus, the pericope functions as a paradigmatic introduction to the prophetic addresses that will follow.

That Shemaiah’s paradigmatic address stands at the close of Chr’s depiction of the united monarchy, indeed, during the transitional reign of Rehoboam that will result in the divided monarchy of the following period, should also not be overlooked. The united monarchy, characterized by Chr’s glowing picture of David and Solomon, had required no prophetic messengers of retributive justice. That ideal situation now lay in the past and Rehoboam seems to set the pattern, for both good and ill, of future kings. With Shemaiah’s address Chr sets the tone for his subsequent theological critique.

**Priestly Speech in Chronicles**

Mason has drawn the category of priestly address to our attention by isolating four such pieces in the narrative, all of them unique to Chr’s presentation: Jahaziel (2 Chron. 20.14-17), Zechariah (24.20-22), Azariah (26.17-18), and Azariah, the high priest (31.10). The classification of two of these addresses is problematic, as can be seen in Mason’s references to four priestly addresses (pp. 133, 139), three priestly addresses (p. 134), and two priestly addresses (p. 135), at different times in his discussion. The problem centers on the first two speeches. Though Jahaziel is designated a ‘Levite’ (the only such Levite to have an address in Chronicles, a factor that seriously damages von Rad’s designation of all these speeches as levitical sermons), his speech displays strong prophetic overtones. It is introduced with a prophetic narrative (‘The spirit of the Lord came upon him’, 2 Chron. 20.14) and includes the prophetic messenger formula (‘Thus says the Lord’), 20.15).

Zechariah is not designated a priest; rather, he is said to be delivering an address from his dead father, Jehoiada, the priest. He, too, is
introduced with the prophetic sounding, ‘Then the spirit of God clothed itself with Zechariah’ (2 Chron. 24.20a), and his address includes a variation on the prophetic messenger formula (‘Thus says God’), 24.20b).54

Since Jahaziel is clearly designated a Levite by Chr and delivers an address that only vaguely resembles the prophetic speeches with their overt declarations of Chr’s theology of retributive justice, it seems best to include his speech as one of the priestly addresses. Zechariah, on the other hand, is only designated as Jehoiada’s son. Since his brief speech is clearly of a piece with Chr’s other prophetic addresses, it seems best to group him with the prophets, leaving the speeches of Jahaziel, Azariah, and Azariah the high priest as Chr’s priestly addresses.

It is hazardous to derive general conclusions regarding the value of Chr’s priestly addresses for historical reconstruction when—we have only three such addresses to examine. Perhaps a few brief comments on the individual speeches may be ventured for the sake of completeness.

The battle report in which Jahaziel’s address appears is a contemporary battleground in the scholarly debate regarding the historicity of Chr, as well.55 Three factors arise from the speech itself or its narrative introduction. His unusual genealogy, in which he is designated a Levite and traced back to Asaph, the chief singer in David’s time, links him with the quasi-prophetic temple singers, a common chronistic theme (e.g., 1 Chron. 25.1-8; 2 Chron. 20.18-21).56 This linkage, coupled with the symbolic nature of his unique name, Jahaziel (‘he who sees God’), prompts Japhet to argue for ‘the “literary” nature of his figure’, and his address as ‘a Chronicistic composition’.57 Although the formal category of the address is elusive,58 and so probably composite, the predominance of themes associated with the ‘priestly salvation oracle’,

54. Mason draws attention to these inconsistencies as well, Preaching the Tradition, pp. 134, 139-40.
56. Dillard, 2 Chronicles, p. 158.
57. Japhet, 1 & II Chronicles, p. 793.
God clothed himself with a robe and delivered an oration with his brief speech it seems best of Jahaziel, the value of a contemporary historicity of its narrative itated a Levite links him with his formal cate composite, the nation oracle'.

Thus, while we must remain agnostic concerning the historicity of the address in question, Chr's schematic presentation suggests the historical existence of this form-critical category, which may be of some value in the reconstruction of the context of Israel's liturgical practice.

Azariah's denunciation of Uzziah for burning incense (2 Chron. 26.17-18) is generally regarded as a construction of Chr, who has utilized the priest to present post-exilic arguments for priestly authority, already familiar from the Priestly legislation of the Pentateuch. One's prior views regarding the date and composition of the Pentateuch weigh heavily in one's assessment of this passage, though, as Dillard reminds us, views regarding the Priestly legislation may be irrelevant here, as the presence of such regulations in Chronicles might 'well reflect a reliable tradition regarding an action of Uzziah'. The large number of priests ('eighty priests of the Lord who were men of valor', v. 17), however, remains problematic and somewhat suspicious.

The same may be said for the high priest Azaraiah's address (2 Chron. 31.10). He is not mentioned in the list of high priests recorded by Chr (1 Chron. 5.29-40 [EVV 6.3-15]), and matters of chronology would seem to eliminate the possibility that this is the same Azaraiah that denounced Uzziah some forty years before. Japhet proposes the interesting solution that the unique appellative, 'of the house of Zadok', recalled a similar reference to 'Azariah(u) the son of Zadok...the priest' of Solomon's time (1 Kgs 4.2), which she suggests may argue for the literary—rather than historical—character of this figure. If she is right in this assessment, we may have yet another instance of Chr's attempt to portray Hezekiah as a new David and Solomon, who instituted the re-united monarchy on the basis of his illustrious forebears.

It is perhaps not too hazardous to notice, as a closing remark, that each of these three priestly addresses deals with an aspect of priestly

59. Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles, p. 297.
61. 1 & II Chronicles, p. 966.
62. See Throntveit, 'Hezekiah' for additional instances of Chr's utilization of this theme.
duty. Jahaziel’s salvation oracle is the appropriate priestly response to Josiah’s national lament. The concern of Azariah and the eighty priests regarding the usurpation of priestly prerogative by Uzziah is also understandable from a priestly perspective, as is Azariah’s announcement of God’s blessing as a result of the people’s willingness to support the temple.

The Speech of Others in Chronicles

Four other non-synoptic speeches in the books of Chronicles have been isolated by Mason: the address of the army officer, Amasai (1 Chron. 12.19 [EVV 18]); the Ephraimite leaders’ support of Oded’s prophecy (2 Chron. 28.12-13); the injunction of Neco, the Egyptian king, to Josiah (35.21); and Cyrus’s decree, which comes at the very end of the book (36.23). A glance at the accompanying chart of Chr’s non-synoptic speeches suggests that each of these addresses occurs at a crucial juncture in the narrative. Thus, these speeches take on an importance that belies their number.

The address of Amasai (1 Chron. 12.19 [EVV 18]) enjoys pride of place in this regard. Its position as the first of Chr’s non-synoptic speeches invites us to look for programmatic insights into Chr’s presentation, and we are not disappointed. Though very similar to that of Zechariah (‘the spirit of God clothed Zechariah’ [2 Chron. 24.20a]; elsewhere, only in Judg. 6.34), the narrative introduction functions here, as well, to invest another, otherwise unknown, non-prophetic figure with prophetic status. The message itself is a brief poetic blessing upon David and those who rally to his cause with an explicit theological statement that it is God who helps David. Ackroyd has insightfully suggested that the real significance of Amasai’s address is found in its repudiation of the people’s response to Jeroboam’s call for rebellion against David and his house (2 Chron. 10.16). This suggestion, by linking Amasai’s address to the disaster of the schism, seems to strengthen the programmatic nature of the speech and justifies Mason’s conclusion that:

63. Preaching the Tradition, pp. 133-44. ‘Non-synoptic’ in this context refers to having no parallel in Samuel-Kings. The Cyrus Edict, of course, is paralleled in the opening verses of Ezra.

64. I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, p. 55. See also Williamson, I and 2 Chronicles, p. 108.
It acts as a summons to all true ‘Israelites’ to align themselves with the well-being of the Davidic line by showing that active support which places them within the divine purpose. Equally significantly, it associates ‘peace’ with David, that peace which will later characterise his continuing line and the temple. All God’s purposes for peace, prosperity and success centre on David. Amasai is the herald of this theology which is to be at the heart of the Chronicler’s interpretation of history.

While we cannot use this address for purposes of historical reconstruction, its theological and programmatic function in Chr’s presentation, by dint of its strategic placement as well as its content, is evident.

The positive response of the Ephraimite leaders (2 Chron. 28.12-13) to Oded’s prophetic address (28.9-11), the last of Chr’s prophetic addresses, also appears at a strategic juncture in the narrative. Williamson has convincingly demonstrated that the entire chapter is best seen as a reworking of the account of Ahaz in 2 Kings 16 and effectively reverses the relationship that obtained between Israel and Judah at the time of the schism (2 Chron. 13). Thus, the section concerned with the divided monarchy ends as it had begun, with rebellion and apostasy. This time, though, it is the south, rather than the north, that has abandoned the ideals of David, as epitomized in the actions of Ahaz, which duplicate the sins of the north chronicled in Abijah’s address (13.4-12).

These two rhetorical passages—the prophecy of Oded and the supportive comments of the Ephraimite leaders, which function as a veritable confession of sin—constitute the centerpiece of Chr’s presentation. In the past, these positive portrayals of northerners have usually been dismissed as contrary to Chr’s so-called ‘anti-Samaritan polemic’. But seen in conjunction with the presentation in 2 Chronicles 13, especially in light of the emphasis on the captives being ‘brothers’ (vv. 5, 11 [in Oded’s address], and 15), it becomes apparent that Chr uses these speeches to make the point that all Israel, north and south, is and has been the people of God.

65. Preaching the Tradition, p. 16.
66. ‘The Chronicler’s account of the reign of Ahaz is of considerable strategic importance in his treatment of the history of Judah. It was the period during which the Northern Kingdom went into exile; though the Chronicler is silent on that subject, it paved the way for his portrayal of a reunited Israel under Hezekiah.’ Dillard, 2 Chronicles, p. 219.
67. Israel, pp. 114-18; cf his summary with further comments in 1 and 2 Chronicles, pp. 343-49, as well as that of Dillard, 2 Chronicles, pp. 219-20.
This strategic placement of the speech and the attendant implications of the chapter's relationship to 2 Chronicles 13, of course, only point to the theological significance of the passage and cannot help us with the thorny historical problems that arise from a comparison of Chr's radically different portrayal of the Syro-Ephraimite war with other Old Testament traditions.68

The last two addresses in Chronicles are unusual in that both are ascribed to foreign rulers.69 Depending upon one's understanding of the extent of the work, either one may be seen as the last of Chr's addresses.

The address of Pharaoh Neco (2 Chron. 35.21) occurs in an account for which we have some extra-biblical support.70 Nevertheless, as Japhet rightly concludes, the function of the address is to carry the theological burden of the passage, not the historical.71 The ignoble death in battle of pious Josiah, despite Huldah's prophecy to the contrary (a prophecy that Chr records from Kings), was explained in terms of Chr's doctrine of retributive justice—the result of Josiah's failure to heed God's warning as delivered by Neco.

There is a broad range of scholarly opinion regarding the authenticity and function of the Cyrus Edict (2 Chron. 36.22-23), undoubtedly due to its appearance at the beginning of Ezra. Space considerations prevent discussion of this vexing problem72 beyond the passing mention of two recent interpretations.72

Among those scholars who favor its retention, Japhet has suggested that these verses allow the book to conclude in the way it began, with

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68. For an extended treatment of the conflicting Old Testament interpretations in Isaiah, Hosea, 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles, see M.E.W. Thompson, *Situation and Theology: Old Testament Interpretations of the Syro-Ephraimite War* (Prophets and Historians Series, 1; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982), who concludes his section on 2 Chronicles with the words, 'in fact he "used" the incident for his own theological purpose. Clearly, he wishes us to read the story of Ahaz...in a very different way from those enjoined by earlier historians, theologians and prophets' (p. 102).

69. Though Chr has reproduced the message of Sennacherib to Hezekiah from his source with some modification (2 Chron. 32.10-17//2 Kgs 18.28-35), these two addresses are the only non-synoptic instances.

70. For bibliographic references, see De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 419.

71. *I & II Chronicles*, p. 1056.

72. For strong arguments against authenticity, see Williamson, *Israel*, pp. 7-10. For strong arguments for the authenticity and theological function of this passage, see Riley, *King and Cultus*, pp. 149-56. I remain convinced that Chr ended his account at v. 21.
the citation of an existing source and the inauguration of a new era. She concludes her commentary:

We find here a salient feature of the Chronicler’s historiography, viewing the course of history as moving in extremes of thesis and antithesis, in a constant swing of the historical pendulum. The edict of Cyrus is the beginning of a new era in the history of Israel, pointing with hope and confidence toward the future.73

W. Riley takes a different tack. Seeking to show that Chronicles ‘is, in effect, a representation of the formative monarchical period of Israel’s history as viewed especially through the cultic lens’,74 he sees the rule of Cyrus as terminating the Davidic dynasty. This termination serves the dual purpose of freeing the post-exilic community from the false hope of a Davidic restoration under Persian rule and inviting them to recognize the hope and promise offered in David’s true legacy, the restoration of the temple, as announced by Cyrus.75

Both of these recent attempts to deal with the final form of the text have much to commend them. Yet, the implications for historical reconstruction remain overshadowed by the theological perspective of Chr that governs the very argumentation that they adopt.

Mason concludes his examination of these addresses with the following statement of their purpose:

It is noticeable that the résumé of their themes and their theological contents reads remarkably like a précis of the theology of the Chronicler, i.e. of the Books of Chronicles more or less in the form in which we now have them. This must suggest that the ‘addresses’, and their attribution to those who, the Chronicler tells us, uttered them, serve primarily as a mouth-piece for the Chronicler himself.76

In the final analysis, while Chr’s speeches, both in terms of the theological material they contain as well as their strategic placement in the narrative, are a primary source of information about the thoughts, ideas, and theological perspectives of Chr himself, they are of considerably less value for the important, if extremely difficult, task of historical reconstruction.

73. I & II Chronicles, p. 1077.
74. King and Cultus, p. 36.
75. King and Cultus, pp. 149-55.
76. Preaching the Tradition, p. 143.