

2 Kings/
1 Chronicles
Week 1

1 Chronicles
9-29



DAVID
the Mastermind

2 Chronicles
1-9

EXILE



SOLOMON
the Builder

(rose colored glasses)



THE
CHRONICLER

Monday: 2 Kings 20-25

Tuesday: 2 Kings 26-1 Chronicles 4

Wednesday: 1 Chronicles 4-6

Thursday: 1 Chronicles 7-9

Friday: 1 Chronicles 10-14

Introduction

This week we review the stories we have been reading since day one of our adventure through the Bible. 1 Chronicles begins with Adam and, through extensive genealogies, connects Adam to David.

The majority of 1 Chronicles focuses on the reign of David. Next week 2 Chronicles will tell the story of Solomon and the kingdom of Judah. Much of the background material listed today will apply to next week as well. That's because 1 & 2 Chronicles was originally one book.

In order to understand 1 & 2 Chronicles it is important to know when it was written and why it was written. On first read through you will notice that it covers the same period of history that Samuel and Kings covers, but with a very different flavor. That is because of its time and purpose. Chronicles was written to the people of Judah *after* they had been in exile in Babylon and Persia and had returned to rebuild the destroyed city of Jerusalem. At this point the kingdom of Israel and the ten tribes that comprised its population were ancient history. The city of Jerusalem has been lying in a pile of rubble for 70+ years, and the people of Judah have known nothing but oppression and exile for their entire lives. How would you feel in that situation? How would you feel about God, about the significance of your people, of your place in the world? It is safe to say that the people probably felt pretty lost, alone, small, and insignificant. The Chronicles was designed to

give the nation a boost of spirit and hope. It does not focus on all of the nations “dirty laundry” like Samuel and Kings does. Instead, it focuses in on the power and majesty of David’s reign (leaving out the whole Bathsheba incident) and the centrality of the temple in the true worship of God. The book was designed to encourage the returned exiles to recapture the love of God and thrive in the land that He promised to their ancestors.

Theological lenses

I am about to dump some theology on you that I hope will expand your understanding of the church as a whole and, hopefully, your insight into Chronicles as well. Throughout history people have had differing perspective on the nature of God; some emphasizing this aspect of God, some emphasizing another aspect. For example, in our current Christian culture, there are two major “theological lenses” that people wear. On the one hand you have people who are “Bible-Centered” in their theology. These people are more rationally oriented and believe that all the secrets of the mysteries of God are to be found through a proper interpretation of the Bible. All experience must be filtered through and judged by the Word. Thinking wins over feelings. On the other hand there are people who are more “Spirit-Centered” in their approach and believe that the same Spirit that inspired the writers of Scripture is alive and well in us today and we can have immediate access to Him in a spiritually dynamic way. They believe in the Bible, but they hold to their communication with the Spirit of God as equally as valid a means of revelation as scripture. Feeling/experience wins over thinking.

Now, the truth is that both emphases are correct, yet are incomplete on their own. It’s much like

the tension between truth and love that we have discussed so much. You must have both. The Word of God is the authoritative revelation in our lives, yet that does not mean that the Spirit doesn't directly intervene and communicate with us. Typically, people are drawn to one emphasis or the other. Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are more "Spirit-Centered." When you hear people say they went to a "Spirit-Filled" church, this is what they are talking about. Baptists, Christian Church, Evangelical Free, and the like, are more "Bible-Centered" in their emphasis. People from this camp judge a church's value on whether they "preached the Word" or not. Of course, there are many other nuances and emphases that exist, but these are two major ones that are present.

Why do I bring this up? Glad you asked. Theological lenses have influenced people from the dawn of time. The Old Testament is no different. One of the major reasons that Chronicles and Samuel/Kings are so different is because of the lenses they wear. The two predominant lenses of the Old Testament are the "Law-Centered" on the one hand and the "Temple-Centered" on the other. The scholars have fancy labels for these views. They call the "Law-Centered" the Deuteronomistic Theology because it emphasizes the message of [Deuteronomy 30](#) as the centerpiece of truth; obey and live, disobey and die. They call the "Temple-Centered" the Priestly or the Cultus Theology because it emphasizes the ritual acts of sacrifice and the role of the priest in the proper worship of God. Both are true, both are needed, both are incomplete in and of themselves.

There are two reasons why it is important for us to know this. First, it helps us with the task at hand in understanding the emphases of Chronicles. Samuel and Kings were written from the Deuteronomistic

or “Law-Centered” perspective. That is why those books are not afraid to speak of the sins of David and Solomon and the subsequent consequences of those sins. Remember, one of the running themes was that outward sacrifice was not the point; it was an inward love of God and obedience to His law that mattered. Chronicles was written from the “Temple-Centered” perspective. Notice how the stories of David are much more sanitary. He is painted as a very noble leader whose main focus was preparing the way for his son to build the temple. The temple is the central figure in these two books as well as the role that the priests played in it. The Chronicler is trying to reconnect the returning exiles to the importance of the temple in the proper worship of God. The kingdom of Israel isn’t even mentioned because they cut themselves off from the temple, thus they were no longer true followers of God.

The second reason it is important to know these two emphases is because of the role it plays in the New Testament. When Jesus was on the scene there were two major camps of Jewish religious leaders. The Pharisees were “Law-Centered” and would have looked more toward Samuel and Kings as their guiding lights. The Sadducees were “Temple-Centered” and would have resonated more with the Chronicles. How did Jesus deal with these two differing factions? He didn’t. His lenses were much bigger than either of those. Jesus saw the kingdom of God as being fully embodied in himself and he came to rescue the lost and heal the sick. It is important for us to be aware of the lenses people wear. We need to meet them in their perspective, learn from them, and then guide them into a broader perspective of the Kingdom of God.

Monday: A Momentary Covering

2 Kings 22:8-20

How did Josiah respond when he heard the words written in the Law?

What promise did God make to Josiah through the words of the prophetess Huldah? Why? (vv. 19-20)

2 Kings 23:25-30

How is Josiah described in v. 25?

How effective was Josiah's reformation at diverting God's wrath on Judah?

How did Josiah's life end?

Food for thought:

The story of Josiah further propels the head-spinning tale started by Hezekiah. Hezekiah reformed the nation and got rid of all the idols in Judah. Then his son did a complete 180 and plunged the nation into the depths of idolatry and paganism. Then, two generations later, we meet Josiah, who jerks us back the other direction and brings about a deeper cleansing than even Hezekiah had accomplished. What a roller coaster this has been!

There are a few reasons why Josiah was such a good king:

- 1. He did the best he could with the knowledge he had.** Notice in 22:9 that Shaphan reported to Josiah that the officials had paid the workers to repair the Temple. At this point in Josiah's understanding of God, the Temple was the symbol of God's relationship with the nation. When the Temple fell into disrepair it was evidence that the nation had fallen into a bad relationship with God. This disrepair happened because the priests had been hoarding the money and not using it to pay the workers to perform the proper maintenance on the building. Josiah desired to rectify the ruined relationship that Judah had with God that was the result of his father and grandfather's actions. Yet, being the heir of two generations of pagan leaders, he didn't know what God required. So, he started repairing the Temple...he knew at least that much.
- 2. He was receptive to truth.** As the workers and priests were physically cleaning out the storerooms they came across the scroll that

recorded the Law of Moses. Apparently the previous leaders had thrown it into the back room, discarding it as yesterday's news. It is hard to imagine, but the king of Jerusalem had never heard the Word of God read before in his life. When he heard it, he instantly submitted himself to it as the authoritative word of God.

- 3. He responded to God and sought a dialogue with Him.** For the first time in Josiah's religious experience, God became real. No longer was God an abstract concept that was lost in the external forms of empty religious ceremonies that had been blended with Canaanite customs. Through exposure to the pure Word of God, Josiah realized that God was a living reality; a personality with whom conversation could be engaged. Where did he go to have a conversation? Did he go to the high priest? Did he go to the wealthy power-brokers of the city? Did he even go to Jeremiah (who was preaching at this time)? No. He went to a woman. Huldah was the wife of the man who watched over the temple wardrobe. Perhaps Huldah was one of those unassuming people who had a steady walk with God, who was not ashamed of her faith, and remained consistent to the truth even when everyone around her ridiculed her for being so "backward" and not "accepting" enough of the Canaanite practices that were now side by side with the Temple worship. Perhaps Josiah joined in his aversion to this woman's bold faith...until today. When God revealed His truth to Josiah through His Word, where did he turn? He went to Huldah.

4. **He acted on truth with no hesitation.** Once Josiah knew that he had missed the mark and that the nation was wallowing in the pig-sty of sin, he went right to work to set the record straight. He purged Israel of its idolatry and reconsecrated the Temple to become the vehicle for proper worship that it was intended to be.
5. **He had a whole-hearted faith.** The recurring theme of Josiah, which is a recurring theme of the Old Testament, was that he served the Lord with all his heart, all his soul, and all his strength. Josiah realized that God doesn't care about the buildings or the politics or the externals. He cares about a heart that is totally sold out for Him. When the heart is totally surrendered, then the action will naturally flow, with no hesitation and no fear.

Today we need to examine our hearts and ask if we are like Josiah. Are we acting on the information we currently have about God? Are we willing to be open to learn the truth and see if there are errors in our thinking that are evident in the Word of God? Are we willing to act on those things when they are brought to our attention, no matter what the social/political ramifications may be?

A final note about Josiah: He made a difference in his immediate sphere. His righteousness held God's wrath at bay for a moment. Yet, it was not enough to stave off the coming destruction that was brought about by Manasseh. In many ways we are living in the wake of Manasseh in our own culture. Our society has bowed the knee to more Baals than we care to mention. It may be too late to pull the nation out of the fire. Yet, that doesn't mean we don't

do what is right in our own sphere. Just as Josiah placed an umbrella of protection around his sphere, so too, may we act as a preservative to our sphere of influence. We can be the salt and light that can shine to our sphere of influence. Ultimately, that is all anyone can do. Let's try to be like Josiah this week and leave the big-picture worries to God!

Tuesday: Save a Piece of Dough

2 Kings 24:8-14

How was Jehoiachin defeated by Nebuchadnezzar?

2 Kings 25:27-30

What happened to Jehoiachin at the end of his life?

Food for thought:

Before we plunge into 1 Chronicles, let' spend one more day looking at the final section of 2 Kings.

Try to imagine being an 18-year old king of a city, and, after only three months on the throne, staring into the eyes of the world's greatest emperor who is standing outside your door. This was the situation of Jehoiachin when Nebuchadnezzar, the emperor of Babylon, came to conquer Judah. In that desperate situation Jehoiachin did the smartest thing he could have possibly done. He surrendered. He, his mother, and all of his prominent citizens, voluntarily submitted themselves to the conquering hand of the Babylonians and allowed themselves to be taken back to Babylon and placed in detention camps. As a result of this surrender, they survived.

As we read the last paragraph of 2 Kings we see that Jehoiachin not only survived, he actually thrived in Babylon. He was allowed to become part of the royal court of Babylon and enjoy the perks that come with that position for the rest of his life. Even further, his descendants enjoyed this same high social status in Babylon.

So, why are we spending a day of our devotional looking at the pampered fate of Jehoiachin? Is it because he is an example of godliness that we can follow? Is he a shining beacon of standing courageously for God in the face of all odds? No. The truth is that, as far as we can tell from scripture, Jehoiachin was a weenie. He started off his reign doing evil. Then, at the first sign of invasion, he willingly handed over the keys to the kingdom in order to save his own skin. Finally, when he was offered a seat in the palace of a pagan king,

which would have undoubtedly required religious compromise, he took the position without a problem. He wasn't really a good guy.

So, that enhances the question. Why look at this man? Today, we are not looking at the life of a man, we are looking at the sovereign hand of God at work in the world in spite of the lack of integrity of one man. God spared Jehoiachin because God had a promise to keep. God had promised that there would always be a man on the throne that would come from the line of David. Had Jehoiachin died, then the promise to David would have died with him. In this story there lays a deeply profound, yet infinitely difficult truth to understand. God's plan will always prevail, and sometimes His actions may seem, in the short term, to defy our concept of justice.

When we get to the prophets in our reading in a couple of months, we will come across a man named Jeremiah. He was the godly, God-appointed preacher of truth that was ministering in Jerusalem at the time of Jehoiachin. It is an interesting study to contrast the lives of these two men. Jehoiachin did everything "wrong" and he lived a pampered life in the royal palace of Babylon. Jeremiah did everything "right" and he lived a life of oppression and was eventually dragged to Egypt by a horde of bandits and ended his life in obscurity and apparent defeat.

Where is the justice in that? Where is God in that?

There are two important lessons to discuss from this study:

1. **God's blessing cannot always be measured by external circumstances.** Jesus told us that God causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and that the rain falls on both groups

as well. In other words, “life happens” and it is not always a direct result of spiritual activity, good or bad. The judgment of a man’s value and the measure of his worth is not achieved through the evaluation of his external circumstances, but through the quality of his relationship with God.

- 2. God’s eternal plan is always in action, and it is always good.** Even though it doesn’t seem fair that Jehoiachin was spared, it had to happen in order to preserve the covenant with David and pave a way for Jesus to come. The Messiah had to be from the direct line of David in order to fulfill the prophecies and the covenant, and ultimately, save the world. God’s desire, from the moment He created us, was to have a loving relationship with His creation. He is working His plan, and we cannot understand it. All we can do is rest assured, that no matter how good or bad the momentary circumstances may be, God loves us and is working out His good plan in the world.

Wednesday: Why so Many Names?

When you open the pages of 1 Chronicles you will probably be overwhelmed by the sea of names. Ugh! Another genealogy. We've been through a patch of deep grass like this once before on our Journey through the Old Testament when we read Moses' book of Genesis and Numbers. As with any book of the Bible, it is important to always place yourself in the context of the original author when trying to understand the text. Remember, there is no wasted space in Scripture. It's not like somebody said, "you know, I think this book is a little thin, I think I'll throw in a list of names so that I can meet my word quota." (I must admit, I've done something like that on a few term papers, but it doesn't happen in scripture).

When Moses wrote Genesis and Numbers, the people of Israel had just crossed the Red Sea and emerged from the darkness of slavery. They had just received the law and their society was being radically reconfigured. Moses knew that it was important to remind the nation of their spiritual heritage in order to give them a sense of connection to the cosmic plan of God at work in the world. In 1 Chronicles a similar thing is happening. The nation of Israel has just emerged from another period of darkness, having been devastated by the Babylonians and held prisoner in that foreign land for 70 years. They had been allowed to return to Jerusalem, to rebuild the city, and rebuild the temple, but not allowed to reestablish a king. In light of this peculiar political situation the nation was asking two basic questions, "Who are we?" and "Where is God in all this?"

The Chronicler's hopes for his own age and his message for later ages include... [the concept

of] continuity. This is brought out by the name-lists of his first nine chapters, binding the people of God together across the generations, and at a deeper level by his constant interest in unchanging principles. He would want to tell us that there is no reason why (making allowances for changed circumstances) the same principles should not apply to the life of God's people now as then.¹

The following excerpt from the Word in Life Study Bible has a nice perspective on this seemingly endless list of names.

The genealogies of Abraham's sons, Ishmael and Isaac, are far more than just a collection of names or an extended family tree. They tell the story of God's work and purposes from generation to generation. As such, these genealogies have much to teach us today about how we look at our heritage. They remind us to ...

◆ **Look back with gratitude.** Genealogies show us our roots. As the Israelites looked back on their past, they had much for which to praise God. He had chosen them as His people, brought them out of slavery in Egypt, given them a land, and established a kingdom. Through it all, He had remained faithful to His promises to such leaders as Abraham, Moses, and David.

◆ **Look around at our connections.** First Chronicles reminds the reader of the kinship between Edomites and Israelites – a fact that has important implications to this day. In a world where ethnicity so often seems to divide, Scripture encourages us to look also at what

we have in common.



Look ahead with faith. The past is often an indication of the future. Because Israel's past showed God's faithfulness to the people's forebears, it gave a basis for trusting God to fulfill His Word among their descendants. Likewise, we today can count on God to honor what He has told us.

Following God is more than just an immediate, momentary experience. Certainly it involves what we do in the here and now. But our spirituality is also part of the tapestry of history – a history that God oversees and in which He participates. In 1 Chr. 1-8 we see His work in the history of one family. How has God been involved in the people from whom you are descended?²

Thursday: Gate Keepers

1 Chronicles 9:17-34

Who were the gate keepers?

What was the gatekeeper's responsibility?

Food for thought:

As we read through today's assigned chapters, it may have been tempting to allow your eyes to go into skim mode and gloss over the surface of all those names. Admit it, you probably did it.

As tedious as these lists may be, it does offer us an opportunity to see a basic Bible study principle stand out. One tool for getting at the core meaning and purpose for a passage of scripture or a book in the Bible is to observe things that are emphasized in some way. In today's chapters many, many generations of people and occupations of people and historical events are passed over with a simple name in a list, but then, right in the middle of the lists there are several verses dedicated to a fairly intricate description of one particular type of person; the gate keeper.

Who were they? What did they do? Why do they get so much ink in this genealogy?

Here again, we see one of the core truths of scripture, and one of our key verses being demonstrated. The Temple was the heart of worship for Israel. It was the physical space that represented the covenantal relationship that the nation had with God. When the Temple worship was healthy, the nation was healthy. When the Temple worship was unhealthy, the nation was in danger. When Nebuchadnezzar defeated Jerusalem, he burned the Temple to the ground. Now, after being allowed to return to Jerusalem, and under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Ezra, the Temple had been rebuilt. With the proper worship of God restored, what was the first thing they did? They established an order of priests to guard the Temple gates, to guard the heart of Israel. They were

stationed to the north, south, east, and west. They never left the gates unguarded.

Proverbs 4:23 says, *“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”*

If someone were to write a chronicle of your spiritual journey, how much ink would the gatekeepers get in your story? Do you have a guard posted 24/7 around the temple of your heart that will not allow temptation and false teaching to infiltrate the holy place and dilute your relationship with God? Do you pay them well and give them a place of honor? Or, are your guards underpaid and asleep on their watch?

While this is a purely allegorical interpretation of this passage in 1 Chronicles, I don't think it is too far of a stretch. Let's never let our guard down. May you have a well-guarded, God-honoring day.

Friday: Listen to the Trees

1 Chronicles 14:8-17

In what conflict was David engaged?

What did David do before he would attack the enemy?

What was to be David's sign that he should attack?

Food for thought:

Recently I had a chance to interact with a business man who started his own business twenty years prior and had built it up to being an international success. As he was talking about his life he mentioned that in the next ten days he was going to be in two different states and a European country. I asked him how that kind of travel impacted his family. With that question the look in his eyes betrayed the fact that a deep chord had been struck. In a strained voice he described how his second wife of one year did not like the situation at all. His only response was, "hey, she got to play in a big city for four days in the nicest hotel...for free. She has to choose...if you want to play, you have to pay." As I watched this man operate for two days it became apparent that there was something attached to his shoulder, whispering in his ear, driving him to make the next deal, at any cost. The eyes of this driven man seemed tired and lost.

In contrast, I had a conversation with another man who has been on a heart-journey over the past few years and has come to a place of turning his career and goals over to the Lord. He wakes up every day and says, "Good morning Lord, what is the plan for today?" With a genuine peace in his eyes, he reports that his family life has never been better, and that, by committing to leave the office at a set time each day and not overwork, he is actually more productive at the office when he is there. He has taken his eyes off of physical goals and has seen the spiritual dynamics at play in every aspect of life. The wonderfully ironic part of the story is that he has had a better year financially than he has ever before experienced.

In the 1980's, Gordon McDonald wrote a book titled,

Ordering Your Private World. One of the most compelling parts of that book is when he discusses the difference between being *driven* and being *led*. When someone is driven it is as if something inside of them, or behind them, is sticking them with a red hot cattle prod, whispering into their ear, "if you do not jump on this opportunity right now, you will be a big, fat failure. You must move now and create your own destiny." While on the other hand, a person who is led has placed her destiny into the hands of God and is always in a spirit of receptivity, keeping her eyes on God and waiting until it is clear that God has said to move ahead. This is the story of the two men we have discussed above; one was driven, one was led.

In today's reading we see an excellent example of what made David a man after God's own heart. Whenever David went into battle, he would always first inquire of the Lord, even when the battle seemed like a no-brainer. In this particular battle against the Philistines, notice how God instructs David. "When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees" then you can go in. It's as if the army of God was marching out before David, and he was simply to follow behind and claim the victory.

It would do us well to remember this basic lesson that is a recurring theme in the Old Testament. The battle belongs to the Lord. Too many times well-meaning Christians experience defeat in battle because they violated this basic principle. They may be battling for a noble cause, but they have not waited on the Lord. Too many times we see a problem and we use our human wisdom and problem-solving skills to rush in and fix it. We do this "in the name of the Lord," but in reality we are doing it in our own strength. While our motives may be right at first glance, our timing may be way off.

This week, let's make sure we take the time to pray and ask God for guidance and wisdom before making decisions. Let's get the driver out from behind us and fall in step with the Shepherd who is in front of us leading us to the place we need to go.

(Footnotes)

¹ Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: *The new Bible commentary*. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) ([1 Ch 1:1](#)). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

² *Word in life study Bible*. 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.) (1 Ch 1:29). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.