

Sunday – April 30, 2017

Preparation

Beginning another week of Daily in the word, we'll conclude the Book of 2 Kings, which ends with a record of king Nebuchadnezzar and the continued apostasy of the nation of Israel, and enter into the Book of 1 Chronicles. However, as we read this week, we come across a glimmer of hope for the nation of Israel. It was such that the Bible says this of this king, "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him." (2 Kings 23:25) The king this verse refers to is king Josiah. The precedent for this verse is found in 2 Kings 23:2-3, "And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant." The difference found in him was that he was wholly given unto the Book of the Lord, and following the commandments found therein. Day by day our reading should serve as a reminder, or reaffirmation, of the importance of God's word in each of our lives. Of the kings we have read, or will read of, since David, only Josiah had a relationship with the Book of the Lord, and his reign was truly reflective of such.

By way of preparation, remember our Preparation from last week, and the discussion on prayer. Remember, "...we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12) Satan is not concerned with us as individuals, but rather with the word of God that is inside us. He will do all he can to hinder, or even destroy, the opportunity for the word of God to take up residence in our hearts and lives. Because "...the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:12-13) If the word of God has the opportunity to change our lives, it will then, in turn, have the opportunity to

change the lives around us. Let us be aware to his tactics as we plan our time in the word each day.

May we be as earnest as Josiah as we prepare to read and learn, and therefore, obey, submitting our hearts and minds to all that we learn and read each day.

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 17-20

OVERVIEW:

Israel carried away; Reign of Hezekiah

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The judgment of Jeroboam's sin in Israel comes today. God has warned through his prophets; God has disciplined through other nations. Now judgment comes. Twenty kings through 200 years have had opportunities to repent and obey the word of the Lord. Psalm 86:5 reminds us: *"For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."* The Lord sent prophets and was ready to forgive, but II Kings 17:14 gives the heart of the matter: *"They would not hear."* The next few verses say that they rejected his statutes and his commandments. Judgment comes because of our will. Proverbs 29:1 says: *"He, that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."*

Chapters 18 through 20 reveal the life of a king unlike any others in the land of Judah because *"he trusted in the Lord God."* Hezekiah accomplished great things in Judah: he destroyed the idolatry; conquered the Philistines; resisted the Assyrians; fortified his city and built great water works. But his real legacy is in chapter 18: he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; he trusted in the Lord God; he departed not from following the Lord; the Lord was with him and he prospered wherever he went.

Hezekiah's life was not without troubles though. His faith and dependence on the Lord was tested severely. His trust in the Lord was specifically challenged and ridiculed publicly by the messengers from Assyria. The messengers spoke scornfully in detail of his religious reforms. Hezekiah's immediate response to trouble was prayer and seeking God's word. The answer returns: *"Be not afraid... I will cause him to fall"* in II Kings 19:6, 7. When a threatening letter came from the king of Assyria, Hezekiah again was immediately in prayer to the Lord. God's answer was: *"I have heard your prayer... the king of Assyria, he shall not come into this city."* The Lord miraculously delivers Hezekiah and the land of Judah.

In chapter 20, Hezekiah's faith is tested through his health. Verse 6 reveals that this time of trial comes during the conflicts with the king of Assyria. The public challenges were compounded with private health issues. Hezekiah's response is consistent; he prayed!

Through the trials and life of Hezekiah we learn about “trusting the Lord.” Some of the Psalms that could have encouraged Hezekiah are:

Psalm 18:3 – As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

Psalm 20:7 –Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Psalm 25:2 - O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

Psalm 32:10 – Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

Psalm 33:21 – For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

Psalm 44:6 – For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.

Psalm 56:11 – In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

Psalm 118:8 – It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

Psalm 143:8 – Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As TEACHER – II Kings 17:27 (Mark 4:1; John 3:2)

As CLEANSER OF THE TEMPLE – II Kings 18:4 (Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15; John 2:15)

As A MAN OF PRAYER – II Kings 19:15 (John 17; Matthew 26:39; Luke 5:16; 22:32)

TODAY'S READING: II KINGS 21-25

OVERVIEW:

Wicked Manasseh and Amon; Last good King Josiah; Four evil kings; Babylonian captivity

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The righteous leadership of Hezekiah was quickly replaced by the overwhelming evil of his son Manasseh. Though we read of his later repentance in II Chronicles 33, Jeremiah 15:4 says that the kingdom will be removed because of the deeds of Manasseh in Jerusalem. The deeds of a leader (husband, father, teacher, pastor) have a far reaching effect for good or bad.

Josiah, the last good king, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. He had chosen to do right and restore the temple before the book of the law was found. The knowledge from the Word of God would not have been uncovered, if Josiah had not already chosen to do right! II Peter 1: 4-7 shows us that virtue (choosing to do right) is added to our life before knowledge. If we have not decided to follow what the Lord says, what need is there to accumulate any more knowledge?

With the new knowledge from the books of the Law, Josiah humbles himself before the Lord, makes a covenant to the Lord in presence of all the people and begins to cleanse the temple and the land. He removes the idols and the high places of worship in Jerusalem. Interestingly, he carries the items of sin across the brook Kidron, destroys them and scatters the ashes on old graves. The Lord Jesus Christ crossed the very same brook Kidron (Cedron) on the way to the cross and the grave (John 18:1).

Josiah continues the cleansing and goes to Bethel to destroy the golden calf set up by Jeroboam. The idol worship that plagued the children of Israel throughout the entire time of the kingdom is finally destroyed by the one who was prophesied by name. II Kings 18:25 tells us that there was no king like Josiah that turned to the Lord with all of his heart. Not until Josiah, did any king go up and destroy that one idol.

None of the final four kings follow in the footsteps of Josiah; all are weak evil kings, controlled by other foreign kings. Because of the evil of Manasseh, the Lord will not spare Judah. The leaders, the people and the treasures that should

have been dedicated to the Lord, are carried away to serve in captivity.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As PROCLAIMER OF THE WORD – II Kings 26:2 (Luke 4:16)

As ONE PROMISED BY NAME – I Kings 13:2 & II Kings 22:1 (Matthew 1:21-23; Luke 2:21)

As THE PASSOVER – II Kings 23:21 (I Corinthians 5:7; John 1:29; I Peter 1:19)

As INNOCENT BLOOD OF JERUSALEM – II Kings 24:4 (Matthew 27:4; Acts 13:28)

TODAY'S READING: I CHRONICLES 1-3

OVERVIEW:

Jesus' lineage through Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel (Jacob), Judah, and David.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

At first glance, it appears that the Book of I Chronicles is simply a repeat of I and II Samuel, and that II Chronicles is a repeat of I and II Kings, but there are some significant differences.

Whereas Samuel and Kings emphasize the HISTORICAL side of things, Chronicles emphasizes the SPIRITUAL. Whereas Samuel and Kings are seen from the HUMAN standpoint, Chronicles is seen from the DIVINE standpoint. Whereas Samuel and Kings are presented from the viewpoint of the PROPHETS, Chronicles is presented from the viewpoint of the PRIESTS. Whereas Samuel and Kings show MAN RULING, Chronicles shows GOD OVERRULING.

Chronicles primarily concentrates on the reign of David and his successors, and on the temple and its worship. It includes information not previously covered concerning the priests, the Levites, the musicians, singers, and doorkeepers. It goes into detail concerning transporting the Ark to Jerusalem, and the preparation for the building of the Temple. The northern kingdom is of little significance in Chronicles. In fact, the northern tribes are only mentioned in their dealings with David's reign.

I Chronicles opens with the longest genealogical history in the entire Bible. It continues on for nine solid chapters. Needless to say, the next several days' readings will not qualify for "The Most Heart-Warming and Life-Changing Devotional Passage of the 365 Days of Pursuit"! However, always remember Proverbs 30:5, "*Every word of God is pure,*" and every word is there for a reason! These chapters are in our Bible to provide us the historical basis of our faith. As Bruce Wilkinson said, "The opening chapters of I Chronicles form the skeletal framework of the entire Old Testament. They bind the Old Testament together into a unified whole, showing that it is in fact history and not merely legend or myth. From Adam to Abraham, Boaz to Benjamin, the generations are all there in their proper order to show the outworking of God's plan and purposes through the years and in the lives of men and women of faith." What these chapters teach us, if nothing else, is that God has a plan: A plan for the earth, the universe, Israel, and your life!

A very basic overview of the first nine chapters of I Chronicles is as follows:

- The genealogy from Adam to Abraham (1:1-27)
- The genealogy from Abraham to Israel (1:28-54)
- The genealogy of the Descendants of Israel (Chpt. 2-8)
 - Judah (2:1-4:23)
 - Simeon (4:24-43)
 - Reuben, Gad, half the tribe of Manasseh East of Jordan (Chpt. 5)
 - Levi (Chpt. 6)
 - Issachar (7:1-5)
 - Benjamin (7:6-12)
 - Naphtali (7:13)
 - Half tribe of Manasseh West of Jordan (7:14-19)
 - Ephraim (7:20-29)
 - Asher (7:30-40)
 - Benjamin (Chpt. 8)
- Those Who Returned From Captivity (9:1-34)
- The Genealogy of Saul (9:35-44)

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In the FIRST ADAM – I Chron. 1:1 (Christ is the LAST or SECOND ADAM. We have eternal life because the last Adam was a quickening – i.e. “life-giving” spirit – I Cor. 15:45,47).

Through the genealogy of DAVID – I Chron. 3:1-24 (Christ, the Son of God was also called the Son of David – Matt. 1:1; Luke 3:23-38; Rom. 1:3)

TODAY'S READING: I CHRONICLES 4-6

OVERVIEW:

The descendants of Solomon, Judah, Simeon, Reuben, Gad, Manasseh and Levi; Temple singers and keepers appointed; the descendants of Aaron; the cities of the Levites.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As you read through what seems to be an unending genealogy today, rejoice in the underlying message: God doesn't view mankind as simply a mass of humanity; He is interested in each individual, and knows us all by name! God takes the time in these chapters to make sure that the name of every single priest and Levite, along with the family and tribe to which he belonged, was specifically registered.

Of particular note in chapter 4 is this man Jabez. Jabez has been popularized in the 21st century through the book, "The Prayer of Jabez," and deservedly so! Verse nine of chapter four says that he *"was more honorable than his brethren,"* and one of the reasons is, no doubt, not only the fact THAT he prayed, but HOW he prayed. He had a beautiful fourfold request recorded in verse 10:

- 1) *"Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed,"*
- 2) *"and enlarge my coast,"*
- 3) *"and that thine hand might be with me,"*
- 4) *"and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!"*

Verse 10 concludes with, "And God granted him that which he requested." Verse 10 is not held up as a model for prayer, but its content is well worth praying about! It is obvious that Jabez was a man who lived in pursuit of God, and he was rewarded. May God strengthen us to follow his example as we continue the Daily in the Word.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In the CITIES OF REFUGE – I Chron. 6:57, 67, 69 (To find protection from the avenger of blood, a person had to flee to a city of refuge. Likewise, God provided His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ as our Refuge from His judgment against sin – John 3:14-18; 10:24-30; Gal. 2:16; 3:1-14; Heb. 10:1-18; I John 2:2; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 6:18)

TODAY'S READING: I CHRONICLES 7-9

OVERVIEW:

A continuation of Israel's descendants: Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, half-tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan, Ephraim, Asher, Benjamin; those who returned from captivity; the genealogy of Saul.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The genealogy continues today, bringing us through the remainder of the descendants of Israel: Issachar (7:1-5), Benjamin (7:6-12), Naphtali (7:13), the half-tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan (7:14-19), Ephraim (7:20-29), Asher (7:30-40), Benjamin (Chapt. 8). Chapter 9 then gives us the record of those who returned from captivity (9:1-34), and then, the descendants of Saul (9:35-44).

A particular phrase that is mentioned twice in chapter 7 is well worth noting: Chapter 7 and verse 11 talks about the number of the "... *soldiers FIT to go out FOR WAR AND BATTLE;*" and chapter 7 and verse 40 talks about the number of the "*mighty men of valour... that were APT to the WAR AND TO BATTLE.*" The New Testament is very specific in letting us know that as believers in Jesus Christ, we are soldiers (II Tim. 2:3) who are engaged in an incredible war (II Tim. 2:4; II Cor. 10:3).

If God were making a list today of the number of New Testament soldiers and mighty men and women of valour who are "fit" and "apt to the war and to battle," would the number include your name? Ephesians 6:10-17 lets us know that the number includes only those who "STAND" in the victory Christ has already won, having on "THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD". Are you "FIT" and "APT" for the "WAR" we call the Christian life?

Chapter 9 and verse 2 says, "*Now the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions in their cities were, the Israelites, the priests, Levites, and the Nethinims.*" The "Nethinims" were very simply the "Temple servants." Their job was to do whatever needed to be done. Because of their love for the Lord, they didn't need the limelight; they were willing to work behind the scenes so that the work of the Lord could go forward. Verse 28 says of the Levites, "*and certain of them had the charge of the ministering vessels, that they should bring them in and out by tale (or, count).*" Again, from an earthly standpoint, it doesn't seem like any big thing. Others, according to verse 29 and 30 "*were appointed to*

oversee the vessels and all the instruments of the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices. And some of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices.” Again, from the mind of a natural man, these responsibilities are hardly worth mentioning. But to God, each individual fulfilling their role and completing their personal assignment was well worth mentioning, because God knew that every individual was key for what He intended for the service of the Tabernacle.

The New Testament teaches us that all of us have been given a different SHAPE (an acronym for Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experiences) by God, so that we can fulfill our MINISTRY in the CHURCH, and our MISSION in the WORLD. Regardless of how insignificant we may think our value to His Kingdom may be, He views our responsibility as a sacred trust, and vital to His will and work in and through the Body of Christ! Play your position! Fulfill your role! Be faithful! You are as vital to the Body of Christ in our local church, as any member of your body is to you!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In JERUSALEM (which means, “Foundation of peace”) – I Chron. 9:3 – (Christ is the only foundation of peace upon which man can stand before God – I Cor. 3:11; John 14:27; II Cor. 5:18; Eph. 2:14)

Saturday – May 6, 2017

Reflection

This week's reading brought us to the end of 2 Kings, and into the beginning of 1 Chronicles. We could probably agree that going through the Book of 2 Kings, reading of the evil that each of these kings committed before the LORD, became rather sickening. It really goes to show that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) With the many chances God allowed for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah to get their heart right, yet refusing the opportunity, He proved that He is truly more gracious and merciful than any of us can ever describe. Isn't it sad that God is oftentimes pictured as "unkind", or "unloving" through the calamities that take place in our world today? Yet, if people would only heed to the words of God, and understand history as truly HIS story, then they would be able to see just how incredible He truly is. By way of Reflection, we should continuously "stand in awe of him" (Psalm 33:8).

It would so do us well, as we reflect, not only the passages we've read this week, but also on the times God has been merciful and gracious to us individually, to spend time in thanksgiving to God for being God as He is described in our Bible. Of course, we are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 that "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." In pondering this verse, do we ever take the time to just thank God for Who He is, and what He has done? In reading through the scriptures and understanding the wickedness of man, are we provoked to cry out to God with a thankful heart for the love He has shown to us. For, like these kingdoms of which we are reading, "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

That being said, let men like king Hezekiah and Josiah serve as provocation for us to be lights in this dark world. These kings could have easily succumbed to the pressures of the kingdoms before them in serving other gods, however, through the grace of the God, they were able to do right in the sight of the Lord, therefore shining as lights to a dark world around them. Their prescription for success was simple: obedience. As mentioned in one of our earlier devotionals, if our lives are humbled, in full submission to the word of God, obedience is the supernatural result that will allow our lives to shine as light in a dark, dark world. Let today be a day of examination, reflecting on God's goodness, and furthermore, our obedience to the grace He has shown in each of our lives.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

2 Kings 18:19 “And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?”

2 Kings 22:19 “Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD.”

1 Chronicles 2:15 “Ozem the sixth, David the seventh:”

1 Chronicles 5:26 “And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.”

1 Chronicles 9:28-30 “And certain of them had the charge of the ministering vessels, that they should bring them in and out by tale. Some of them also were appointed to oversee the vessels, and all the instruments of the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices. And some of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices.”