

Route 66

1 Chronicles: Inspiring Stories

Part 13 - July 19, 2009

A “chronicle” is a narrative account in chronological order. 1st and 2nd Chronicles is a chronological narrative (*story*) of the rise and fall of the Jewish empire – from the death of their *first* King (Saul) to the exile of their *final* king (Zedekiah).

It covers the same ground as 2nd Samuel and 1st & 2nd Kings, but with a *twist*. Unlike these *historical* books, Chronicles focuses on the *spiritual* testimony of the Jewish nation.

Therefore:

- A. The *personal* sins of the leaders are left out, unless they impact the *spiritual* wellbeing of the nation.
- B. The illegitimate *Northern* Kingdom is entirely ignored! Instead, *all* attention is on the line of David in Judah.
- C. And a *huge* emphasis is placed on the temple (and worship) as a barometer of the nation’s relationship with God.



And Chronicles was written with this twist for specific reason. We left off in Babylon with the final deportation of the Jews, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (586 B.C.). Now, we jump ahead *fifty* years. The Persians have conquered the Babylonians (539 B.C.) and their king is willing to allow the Jews to go back home.

So, Chronicles is written as “pep talk” to a *new* generation, in a nation struggling to reorient herself as the people of God. And it’s filled with inspirational stories of God’s directing, empowering, and ongoing work through His chosen nation, as well as dreadful warnings to not repeat the sins of the past. And now, just like then ...

- Worship will be a barometer of spiritual wellbeing.



And it all begins with NINE chapters of genealogies! Okay, not a great hook ... to *us*, but to *them* – a whole different story. **Domestically**, a man’s privileges, obligations, and land distributions were determined by his lineage. **Politically**, the genealogy verified the legitimacy of the leaders, like their current ruling governor, Zerubbabel, who was from the royal line of David. And **religiously**, the priests and various temple workers were identified by their blood connection to Levi.

And let's give the guy credit; this 2000-name genealogy is the most comprehensive in all scripture! He takes it to a degree where no man has gone before ... literally:

Adam was the father of Seth, and his descendants were Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah, who had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. - 1 Chronicles 1:1-4 NIV

By tracing their descendants to *Adam*, the writer makes it clear they've been part of the plan since day one ... again, *literally*. And by reestablishing the dynasty of David, it's clear that the Messiah (promised to "Adam", "Noah", "Shem", Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, tribe of Judah, and House of David) was still on course!

And then he finishes by listing the first captives to return!

Now the first to resettle on their own property in their own towns were some Israelites, priests, Levites and temple servants. - 1 Chronicles 9:2 NIV

He wants them to see that they not only had a rich history with the Lord, but they have a bright future (with the House of David *and* the Levitical priesthood very much intact)! His point? Past sins don't disqualify us from God's plans.

And then he jumps into the stories.



Mount Gilboa

He begins on Mount Gilboa; and he tells how a wounded Saul fell on his own sword in battle for fear of being captured by the enemy Philistines. And he sums up Saul rather neatly: "Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord ... So the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse." - 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 NIV



Jewish Center of Hebron

Then it's onto Hebron where the elders of Israel came (seven years later), to anoint David as king. They said to David:

God has promised that you would rule our country and take care of us like a shepherd. - 1 Chronicles 11:2b CEV



Jerusalem's Old City Wall

He reminds them how David went to the stronghold of the Jebusites that is, Jerusalem, and conquered it.

And David became more and more powerful, because the Lord Almighty was with him. - 1 Chronicles 11:9 NIV

And then he lists some of the exploits of David's "mighty men": Jashobeam [juh-SHOH-bih-am] raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter! (11:11) Benaiah [bee-NIGH-uh] went down into a pit on a *snowy* day and killed a lion! And, he killed a 7.5' Egyptian! (11:22-23)



The Cave of Adullam

Once, when they were hiding here, in the cave of Adullam [uh-DUHL-uhm] surrounded by the Philistines, three of the mighty men snuck into Bethlehem (where the enemy garrison was), in order to surprise David with some water drawn from his favorite well! “Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.” - 1 Chronicles 11:19b NIV



Tel Sera (a.k.a. Ziklag)

Then he tells of the warriors who joined the ranks of David at Ziklag while King Saul was still alive.

Day after day men came to help David, until he had a great army, like the army of God. - 1 Chronicles 12:22 NIV



Hebron's Old City District

Then he lists the *volunteers* who came to Hebron, armed for battle ... guess how many. 337,100!

They came to Hebron fully determined to make David king over all Israel. - 1 Chronicles 12:38b NIV



Kiriath Jearim

Now, after David captured Jerusalem and made it his capitol, he and his military officers and decide to bring the Nation's most sacred object – the Ark of the Covenant – into Jerusalem. The Ark was at Abinadab's house in Kiriath Jearim [KIHR-ih-ath JEE-uh-rim], on the hill (2 Sam 6:3-4).

They moved the ark of God ... on a new cart, with Uzzah and Ahio guiding it. - 1 Chronicles 13:7 NIV

2nd Samuel (6:3-4) says that Ahio walked before the cart. So, Uzzah was probably beside it, while David and 30,000 Israelites (2 Sam 6:1) celebrated along the way. However ...

... Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark. So he died there before God. - 1 Chronicles 13:9b-10 NIV

And that really threw a damper on things. So instead of bringing it into Jerusalem they stored it at the house of a Levite. But why did God strike poor Uzzah dead?! Uzzah was what you would call: “the final straw”.

Although David routinely inquired of the Lord concerning *battles*, here it says that he conferred with his military officers regarding this holiest of holy objects. And God had given specific instructions as to how to move it:

[The priest] is to go in and take down the shielding curtain and cover the ark of the Testimony with it. Then they are to cover this with hides of sea cows, spread a cloth of solid blue over that and put the poles in place. ... [then] the Kohathites are to come to do the carrying. **But they must not touch the holy things or they will die.** - Numbers 4:5-6;15a NIV

Where do we even begin?! There's no "shielding curtain", no "cloth of solid blue", and certainly no "sea cows"! They didn't "put the poles in place", so the "Kohathites" could "come to do the carrying" on their shoulders!

Poor Uzzah wasn't even a Kohathite! You know, the Lord allows us many freedoms and various forms of expressing our worship, but faith must be lived within the boundaries He sets. When God gets specific, you don't want to "call His bluff"! Just as God keeps His promises, He also fulfills His forewarnings.

They violated God's written Word and they trivialized His direct command, thereby making common, that which was holy.

Now, from Uzzah's perspective, the ox stumbles, the Ark tips, he reaches out, and WHOOP, he's in Heaven, going, "What happened?!" And Jesus is there, and he says, "First, give me a hug!"

God, *because* He's a loving, can't allow confusion regarding the truth of His holiness and authority and justice. He's not arbitrary. There are deep moral truths behind His Laws, and there are very real consequences for violating them.

This passage is SO RICH! Where did they get the idea for using the cart? From the pagan Philistines! When the Philistines captured the Ark, a plague broke everywhere they took it, so they sent it back home, *on a cart*, and it was taken to Abinadab's house for safekeeping. So why didn't God strike the Philistines dead for touching it? Because they didn't know any better; they didn't have His Word! He's more lenient on those with less knowledge. They treated it as respectfully as they knew how.

So, David's parade was postponed for three months, until he could figure out why the Lord had acted as He had.

[David] said to them ... It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the Lord our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way. - *1 Chronicles 15:12a;13*

And the Levites carried the ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the Lord. - *1 Chronicles 15:15 NIV*

And David removed his royal garments and danced in humility before the Lord and his people. And he wrote a Psalm of thanks, and he made a pledge to build the Lord a temple in Jerusalem. But God tells David (through Nathan the prophet) that He wants it built by a man of peace, not a man who has shed so much blood.

And so, Solomon is chosen. He's about 17th in line for the throne, but the other 16 sons must be a little too much like dad!

Remember when Moses wasn't allowed to take the people into the Promised Land (because he represented the Law)? Now, David isn't allowed to build the temple (because he represents human might and power).

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty. -
Zechariah 4:6 NIV

That was the problem when Jesus came; they were expecting someone like David to come in military might and power. They missed the significance of why he wasn't allowed to build the temple!

For [Jesus] himself is our peace ... - *Ephesians 2:14-15 NIV*



Mount Moriah

After few more bloody battles, David *and* the people anger God by violating yet another command (apparently by enrolling teenagers into military service). God punishes Israel with a 72-hour plague. And when God stops the angel of death at a threshing floor on the top of Mount Moriah, he instructs David to build an altar there.

The man who owns it offers to *give* it to David along with oxen for the burnt offerings, but David insists on paying *full* price.

- An offering isn't an *offering* if it doesn't cost something.

And after he builds the altar, David realizes that he has found the perfect spot to build the temple. And he spends the rest of his days gathering supplies and workers for the son of peace.