

# **"WALK THRU THE BIBLE: I CHRONICLES."**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden, WA**

**September 29, 2024, 6:00 pm**

## **Text for Sermon:**

**I Chronicles 1:1-4; 2:1-2; 3:1; 4:1; 8:1, 33; 9:1-2, 10; 29:10-19**

## **Introduction to I Chronicles.**

I and II Chronicles are two of the most neglected books in the Bible. All of those dear saints who set out in January to read straight through the Bible in a year, if they make it past Leviticus they usually die in the Sahara Desert of I Chronicles. If the genealogies don't get them then the redundancy after reading I and II Samuel and I and II Kings will.

Many find themselves asking, "I just read this, why do I need to read it again?" It is unfortunate that our English Bibles don't follow the outline of the Hebrew Bible. In the Hebrew Bible, Kings and Chronicles do not stand side by side. In the Hebrew Bible Chronicles is at the very end. Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

The Chronicles cover the same history as the books of II Samuel and 1-II Kings.

I Chronicles mirrors the history of II Samuel which is about David.

II Chronicles mirrors the history of I and II Kings which is about Solomon and the kings.

But they are not the same. Over fifty percent of the material in Chronicles is unique, not found in II Samuel or 1 and II Kings.

Just as the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John each offer a different perspective on the life of Jesus, so the books of Chronicles recount Israel's history with a different perspective and purpose in mind.

I and II Kings gives more attention to Israel, to the northern kings and their apostacy.

I and II Chronicles gives more attention to Judah, to the southern kings and their apostacy.

The books of Kings emphasize the interaction of kings and prophets.

The Chronicles emphasize the interaction of kings and priests.

The two audiences are different. Samuel and Kings were written around 550 BC, in the wake of Jerusalem being sacked by the Babylonians. Chronicles was composed over a hundred years later as many Judeans had returned to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon to rebuild the temple and the city walls.

The Chronicler is retelling the story of Israel to an exiled generation of Israelites. He is showing them that as a small remnant, they are still God's people, and they still have a place in God's redemptive history.

This is why he starts with genealogies and why his genealogy begins with Adam.

### **Genealogies.**

Let's start by considering the benefits and even blessings of reading genealogies, especially if you take the time to read them slowly and look for the gems and nuggets hidden in the names and details.

First, they are a part of God's holy and inspired Word, this is straight from heaven. These names may not mean much to us or be important to us, but they are important to God. As He knows the number of hairs on our heads, so He knows each one of them personally. And that means He knows each one of us personally and that each one of us is important to God. He knows each of our family histories. He can trace us directly back to Noah and back to Adam.

Genealogies are a record of the seed of woman who will and is crushing the head of the serpent. They are the history of God's war against Satan. Genealogies trace the lineage of the final true seed, Jesus Christ.

The genealogies help us focus on where history is headed — the son of David, seated on the throne of the universe. Genealogies are not random, wandering collections of paternity records, they represent the carefully crafted lens through which we observe God's plan of redemption.

Finally, the repeated refrain, "And he died" reminds us we are finite and flesh and this fragile life we live is very short, but a whisp of smoke and then we are gone, as we will soon be.

A note about Biblical genealogies. "Son of" doesn't always mean literal "son of," it can mean a descendent and "father of" can mean an ancestor. They are not necessarily immediate biological descent.

Who are all these people? This is the family tree of the family of faith, the people of God. These people are real. They are a part of us, the one army of the living God, one church, one faith, one Lord. This is us, we are them, they are us.

I Chronicles 1-3 Roots depth

I Chronicles 4-7 Branches breadth

I Chronicles 8-9 Fruit

## **I Chronicles 1-3 Roots**

### ***A. The world before Israel (1:1–51)***

There are ten listings. First ten ancestors, from Adam to Noah, are mentioned (1Chr 1:1-4). This is followed by seventy peoples from Noah. Then come the names of another ten ancestors, from Shem to Abraham (1Chr 1:24-27). Then again seventy nations that come from Abraham.

Israel was a descendent of a divinely chosen people with special privileges and responsibilities. They were not like other peoples/nations. They were beneficiaries of God's favor and blessings.

### ***B. The sons of Israel (2:1–2)***

These verses list the twelve sons of Jacob in random order. In the rest of this chapter the descendants of Judah are mentioned. Judah's genealogy is mentioned first because of the kingship that is associated with this tribe.

### ***C. Judah – the tribe of King David (2:3–4:23)***

Chapter 3 is entirely dedicated to the family of David and lists the descendants of David from Solomon to Zedekiah, that is, as long as the kingdom existed. It concludes with a list of the descendants of David who lived during and after the exile. God preserves the royal line.

## **I Chronicles 4-7 Branches**

In these chapters the names of other descendants of Judah than the descendants mentioned in I Chronicles 2 are given.

Chapter 6 gives special focus to the priests and Levites:

1. the line of the high priests (verses 3-15,49-53),
2. the three generations of Levi (verses 16-30),
3. the singers (verses 31-48) and

4. the cities where the Levites could live (verses 54-81).

## **I Chronicles 8-9      Fruit**

Chapter 8 is entirely dedicated to the descendants of Benjamin, especially a special descendant, Saul, who is the bridge to the history of his predecessor David.

Chapter 9 we have some genealogies, but the emphasis is more on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the city God has chosen as His city, as it is after the exile. The highlights are the royal tribe of Judah, the priestly tribe of Levi and the royal city of Jerusalem and its temple. Worship is central to Israel and their future and success. Never military might or political prowess.

The chronicler focuses especially on the history of Judah and Levi through whom God would fulfill His promises and purposes for a king and a priesthood.

The genealogies remind the returning Israelites that are connected with the first human being (Adam) and the fallen human race, they are part of the genealogies of the covenant fathers of the faith, the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) and heirs to the promises made to them (Gen 12), and they are inheritors of a rich history of God redeeming, punishing, and restoring His people for His glory through Moses and possession of the Promised Land.

## **I Chronicles 10-29**

The rest of I Chronicles focuses on David as a king and military leader, and as a worshipper devoted to God. The Davidic covenant emphasizes two institutions, the monarch and the priesthood, both established and preserved by God.

### ***I Chronicles 29:10-19***

David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10–19 summarizes the themes the chronicler wished to communicate: glory to God, gratitude for gifting David's family with leadership of the nation, and the desire that David's descendants continue to devote themselves to God.

**Themes: God is sovereign and central.**

### ***God is sovereign***

We like to live with the illusion we are in control of our lives, in control of our schedules and plans and future. But that bubble is quickly burst when unexpected

troubles come whether accidents, financial problems, sickness, death. Something as small as a microscopic virus can throw our entire lives into upheaval.

The genealogies boldly declare the sovereignty of God. Why Isaac not Ishmael, why Jacob not Esau, why David and not Saul? God is in control. We are not masters of our fate, captains of our souls. God shows Himself again and again as the intruder in history who is sovereign over nations, rulers, kings, and individuals.

**I Chronicles 5:25-26** They broke faith with the God of their fathers, and whored after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. 26 So *the God of Israel stirred up the spirit* of Pul king of Assyria, the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and he took them into exile

**I Chronicles 6:15** Jehozadak went into exile when *the Lord sent* Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

**I Chronicles 10:13-14** Saul ... broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. 14 He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore *the Lord put him to death* and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

**I Chronicles 14:10** David inquired of God, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?" And the Lord said to him, "Go up, and *I will give them into your hand.*"

**I Chronicles 17:8** I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you.

**I Chronicles 29:16, 18** O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name *comes from your hand and is all your own*. ... 18 O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and *direct their hearts toward you*.

God is sovereign over nations and hearts.

**God is central to His people.**

**I Chronicles 22:1** Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the Lord God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

Why Jerusalem? Because that is where the temple was. Why the temple? Because that's where the ark was. Why the ark? Because that's where the presence of God was. Where God is central. God is at the center of His people and He is central to their relationship.

God is the heart of a nation, the heart of a king, the heart of His people. God shows Himself to still be their God and they are still His people even in and after exile.

There are three great prayers in I Chronicles:

I Chronicles 16 when the ark of the covenant is brought back from the Philistines.

I Chronicles 17 after Nathan tells David that Solomon will build the Temple.

I Chronicles 29 when David prays after offerings for the Temple are collected.

Hear the centrality of God in all of these prayers. David lives *coram deo*, in the presence of God. He recognizes God as central in all of life, apart from God we are and have nothing.

He makes God central by his prayers, by his worship, by seeing all God has done and hallowing His name and giving God all the glory, honor and praise due His name.

### **Jesus.**

And all of this foreshadows the Word becoming flesh and dwelling or tabernacling among us. Jesus is the temple, the presence of God. In Jesus God comes nearer to us than He did to Israel.

**Revelation 21:3** I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

The Chronicler focused on Judah to trace out the line of David to whom God promised the *Messiah*. He focused on Levi to identify the priestly lines of Israel to work in the Jerusalem Temple in anticipation of a new temple in a new Jerusalem with a greater *High Priest*.

Remember this as you read the OT, everything is looking forward, pointing forward, anticipating a day of the fulfillment of God's redemptive promises and purposes. God is always moving, always acting, to bring to completion what He has begun. The people and prophets of old longed to see what we see, to know what we know.

The chronicler's hopes are all fulfilled in Jesus who exceeds all the hopes and desires of God's people.

Both the royal and priestly offices are fulfilled in Christ. Jesus was the King of Israel, royal David's son, heir to his throne. Jesus was the great high priest, of the order of Melchizedek.

We also see a pattern in the OT that is followed in the NT for how the kingdom of God comes. God was an active intruder in history and in the history of Israel, and He still is in our history.

Jesus intrudes into history to inaugurate His kingdom on earth, and continues it by the power of the Holy Spirit God continues to be an active, daily, intruder in our history. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we have God's active protection, provision, power and comfort.

The consummation of God's kingdom will be the ultimate intrusion of God into human history that will impact the entire cosmos.

Chronicles begins with a genealogy and ends with a king's great commission to rebuild the Temple. Matthew's Gospel also begins with a genealogy and ends with a Great Commission—not for building the Temple, but the church.

The genealogies in Matthew (and Luke) find what Chronicles was searching for: Jesus, the true King (Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 19:16) and Priest (Heb. 4:14; 5:5–6; 8:1) for God's people.

### **Implications and application.**

Who are the people of God? Who belongs to God? Who is in the family?

These are huge questions, important questions, eternally significant questions.

Who is an heir and who is not? Do you know your identity in Christ and in God's family?

Is Christ your king and your temple? Is Christ the center of your life?

**Galatians 3:27-29** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

**Revelation 7:9** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne

Consider your own spiritual heritage and legacy, where you have come from and where you are going. What have you been given by God's grace and what do you want to pass on and leave behind by God's grace? Ask the Spirit to fill you daily and guide your steps that future generations might be blessed. Make it your earnest prayer that you and all those you love have their names written on that one list that matters more than any other, that through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

**Prayer:** Holy Father give us greater affection for you, inflame our hearts, help us to love you and worship you and serve you. Be enthroned in our hearts as our King and lead us in worship as our great High Priest forever.