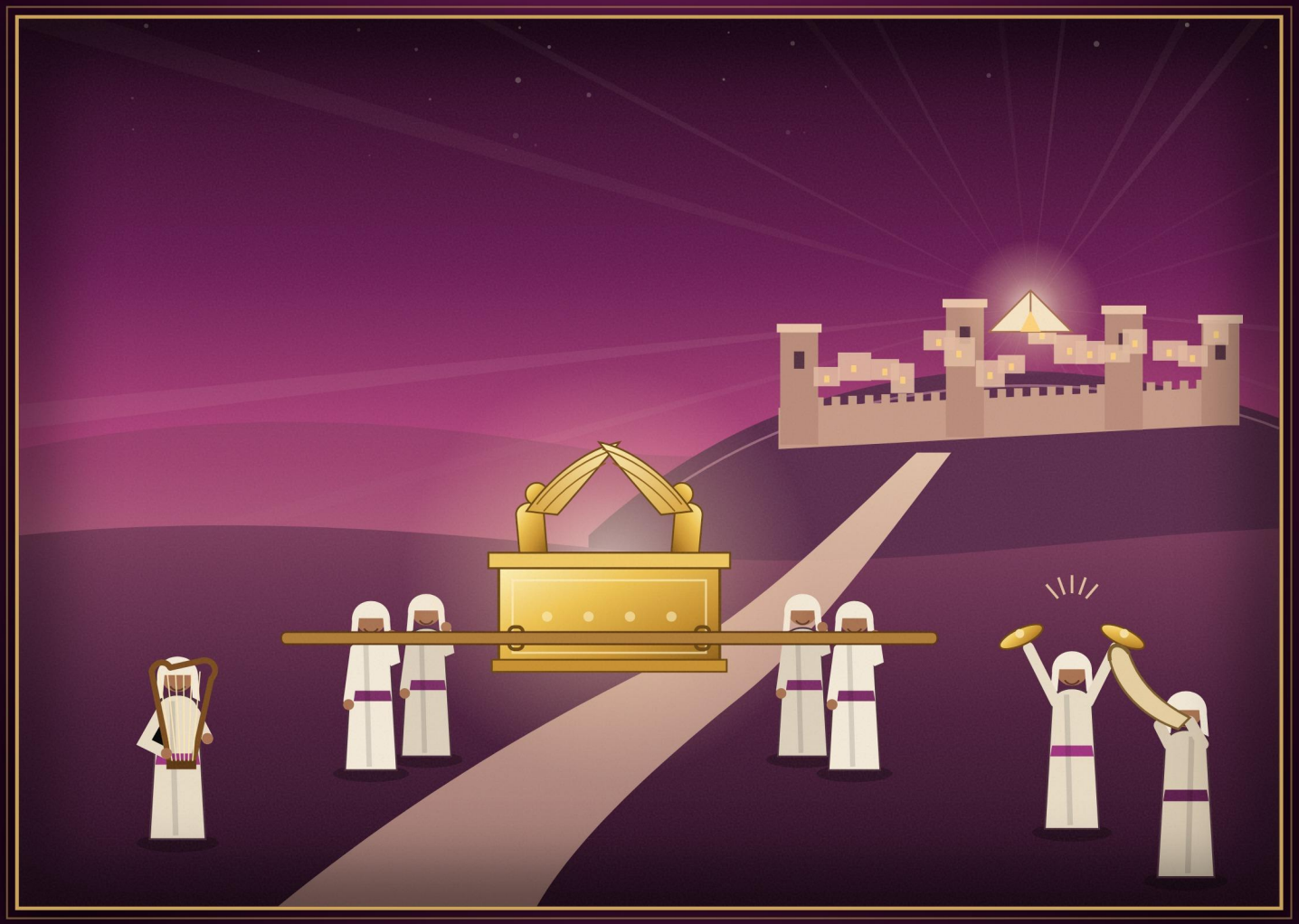
1 CHRONICLES

BIBLE STUDY

A Verse-by-Verse Study



The family lines of God's people, the ark brought home with singing, God's covenant with David, and a king who prepared for the house of God

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1 Chronicles Bible Study

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1 Chronicles Bible Study: A Verse-by-Verse Study

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Study

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this study direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

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Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to work through this verse-by-verse study of the book of 1 Chronicles. My purpose in writing this study guide is the same as it was for my study of Revelation: to bring you closer to our Creator and to give you a way to grow in your Christian walk.

First Chronicles is a book many people skip. It opens with nine chapters of names, and when the story finally starts, much of it sounds like Samuel told again. But this book was written for a people who had lost almost everything. Their city had been burned, their temple torn down, and their families carried off to Babylon. Now a small group had come home, and they were asking two questions: Who are we? Does God still keep His word? First Chronicles answers them. It ties them back to Adam, Abraham and David, and it shows them a God who never dropped His promise to David's house. I do not claim to be an authority on the Bible or on 1 Chronicles. I am simply someone like you who wants to grow closer to God and understand His Word. Before you read any part of this book, or any part of Scripture, I ask that you pray, asking God:

- For the Holy Spirit to be present, to help open your eyes and your heart (Psalm 119:18, 119:105)
- For discernment and knowledge (Psalm 119:66, James 1:5)

2 Timothy 2:15 (SLB)

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker not needing to be ashamed, cutting straight the word of truth."

The Bible is God's Word to us (2 Timothy 3:16), given for training in righteousness. If we cannot understand what it says, we cannot apply it to our lives or help build God's kingdom.

So how do we go about understanding God's Word?

The first rule is context. You may have heard the saying "Context is King," but what does that mean? Every word, sentence, and passage helps explain the ones around it. Before we read any passage, we should ask a few simple questions: Who wrote it? Who was it written to? What came right before it? Knowing the answers gives us a clearer picture of what God is saying, both in general and to each of us personally.

Context matters a great deal in 1 Chronicles. The events it tells happened around 1000 B.C., but the book was written more than five hundred years later, after the exile in Babylon. The writer is telling the story of David to people who had no king, a small rebuilt temple and a land ruled by Persia. If we forget who the first readers were, the long lists look like dry records and the choices of what to tell and what to leave out look strange. If we remember them, every name becomes a reminder that God knew their families, and every chapter about the ark and the temple becomes a call to put the worship of God back at the center of their lives.

Exegesis, Eisegesis, and Hermeneutics

People typically interpret the Bible using one of two methods, Exegesis or Eisegesis. Both are explained below, along with a third word, Hermeneutics. Sometimes people use both methods to "make their case" for the interpretation they want. These definitions are based on www.merriam-webster.com, with my own notes added.

Exegesis means explaining a text, especially a passage of Scripture. Exegesis is reading and interpreting the full text of a passage, and drawing out what it is actually saying.

Eisegesis means reading your own ideas into a text. This happens when we try to find something in the text that really isn't there. It can lead to many errors, especially when we bring assumptions to a passage that aren't actually in it. This method can be used to justify a behavior, position, or belief that goes against what the text originally meant.

Hermeneutics is the study of the principles used to interpret a text, such as the Bible. "Hermeneutics" and "Exegesis" are sometimes used to mean the same thing. The difference is that Exegesis is the work of explaining a passage, while Hermeneutics is the set of principles that guides that work. In Biblical Hermeneutics, the Bible should be read literally unless the text itself gives us a different meaning.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (SLB)

"16 Every Scripture ***is*** God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which ***is*** in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work."

This passage tells us plainly that the writers of Scripture were inspired by God. Every passage in the Bible came from God and was written down by man. These are not fairy tales or made-up stories. They are God's own breath, given to us so we can be equipped and ready to do good work.

Because every word was inspired and breathed by God, I believe we must let God's Word interpret itself. We must study the Bible using Exegesis, drawing out what the text says, guided by sound Biblical Hermeneutics.

We should study God's Word using the Golden Rule of Interpretation, as Dr. David L. Cooper stated it:

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

(http://www.biblicalresearch.info/page55.html)

I read the Bible as it is written. First Chronicles is history, and this study takes it at its word: the people in its lists were real people, David was a real king, and God really did make a covenant with

him that his throne would be established forever. Chronicles is not a second-rate copy of Samuel and Kings. It is its own book, inspired by God, telling the same history from a different angle for a different time. The New Testament opens the same way Chronicles does, with a family list that runs through Abraham and David (Matthew 1:1-17). A note on the name of God: in the SLB, when you see "LORD" in capital letters, it stands for God's personal name, Yahweh (often written YHWH), which He made known to Moses (Exodus 3:14-15). When you see "Lord" in regular letters, it translates a word that means master. When you see "God," it usually translates Elohim, the general Hebrew word for God.

This study uses the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB) unless I note otherwise. To better understand the original Hebrew, I also used The Interlinear Bible (Jay P. Green Sr., ISBN 1-56563-977-4).

How This Study Is Laid Out

Each chapter of this study follows the same pattern as my study of Revelation:

- Scripture: the full text of the chapter, broken into sections, so you can read it straight through first.
- Preview: a short look at what the chapter covers.
- Study: the chapter again, verse by verse, with my notes on what each verse says and what it means for us.
- Summary: the main points of the chapter in a few lines.
- People and Places: in chapters that bring in many new names, a short list explaining the people, places, and terms.
- Study Questions: questions for personal study or a small group, from simple fact questions to questions about how we live. Some of them are personal. In a group, no one should ever have to answer one aloud, and what is shared in the group stays there.

Much of 1 Chronicles is lists: the family lines of chapters 1 to 9, David's mighty men and supporters (chapters 11 and 12), and the orders of Levites, priests, singers, gatekeepers and officers (chapters 23 to 27). In those chapters I group the verses into larger sections and say what the list is, why God put it there, and what it teaches us, rather than commenting on every name.

Using This Study With a Group

This study works for one person or for a group. First Chronicles has 29 chapters, so here are two ways a group can pace it:

- One chapter a week: twenty-nine weeks, or about seven months. If you like, add a first meeting to read the Introduction and the Background together.
- A faster pace of about twenty weeks: take the family lists in three meetings (chapters 1 to 3, 4 to 6, and 7 to 9), take chapters 23 and 24 together and chapters 25 to 27 together, and take the rest one at a time.

For each meeting, I suggest reading the Scripture out loud together first, straight through, before anyone comments. In the list chapters you may want to read only the first and last verses of each

section aloud. Then walk through the Study section, stopping where the group has questions, and finish with the Study Questions and prayer. The first questions in each list can be answered from the text. The later ones are more personal, and no one should feel pressed to answer them aloud.

Some parts of 1 Chronicles are hard to read. King Saul takes his own life on the battlefield (10:4-5). Uzzah reaches out to steady the ark and God strikes him dead (13:9-10), and even David was angry and afraid. Chapter 20 tells how David put the people of Rabbah to forced labor, in words some translations make sound like torture (20:3). In chapter 21 David's census brings a plague that kills seventy thousand men. I do not skip these passages, and I try to explain them honestly in their context. If you lead a group, read those sections ahead of time and be ready to listen. Some people in your group may have lost someone to suicide, or may be struggling themselves. If someone shares something that puts them or another person in danger, help them get help right away.

I look forward to walking with you through the book of 1 Chronicles. If you'd like to share feedback, please email me at andrew@trinfinityenterprises.com.

May God bless you and your time studying and getting to know Him better.

Overview of 1 Chronicles

First Chronicles is the thirteenth book of the Bible in our English order. It comes after 2 Kings and before 2 Chronicles. In the Hebrew Bible, 1 and 2 Chronicles were one book, and it stood last of all, at the very end of the Old Testament. Its Hebrew title means the words of the days, which we might put as the events of the times. When the Old Testament was put into Greek, the book was split in two and called by a name meaning the things left out, because it gives details that Samuel and Kings do not. Our title, Chronicles, goes back to Jerome, who called it a chronicle of the whole of sacred history.

That placement may explain something Jesus said. He spoke of the blood of the righteous "from the blood of Abel the righteous to the blood of Zechariah" (Matthew 23:35). Abel's death is in Genesis, the first book, and Zechariah's death is told in 2 Chronicles 24:20-22. Many Bible teachers believe Jesus was speaking of the whole Old Testament, from the first book to the last, as the Hebrew Bible was ordered in His day.

In Israel's history, 1 Chronicles covers more ground than any other book. Its family lists run from Adam to the people who came back from Babylon. Its story covers just one reign, David's, from the death of Saul about 1010 B.C. to David's death about 970 B.C. Second Chronicles then tells of Solomon and the kings of Judah down to the exile and Cyrus' decree to go home.

The theme of 1 Chronicles is that God's promises to His people, and above all His covenant with David, still stand. A covenant is a binding agreement, a promise sealed with an oath. In chapter 17 God promises David a son whose throne will last forever:

1 Chronicles 17:14 (SLB)

"And I will set him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."

Alongside that theme runs a second one: the worship of God belongs at the center of the life of His people. Half of the book is about the ark, the temple, the priests, the Levites and the singers. David's great desire was to build a house for God, and he spent his last years getting everything ready for it. The refrain of the book is the song the Levites sang: "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love is forever" (16:34).

First Chronicles has 29 chapters and 942 verses. Here is its structure:

Part One: The Family Lines of God's People (chapters 1 to 9)

- Chapter 1: From Adam to the Sons of Abraham
- Chapter 2: The Sons of Israel and the Line of Judah
- Chapter 3: The Family of David
- Chapter 4: More Clans of Judah and the Tribe of Simeon
- Chapter 5: The Tribes East of the Jordan

- Chapter 6: The Tribe of Levi
- Chapter 7: The Northern Tribes
- Chapter 8: The Tribe of Benjamin and the Family of Saul
- Chapter 9: Those Who Returned to Jerusalem

Part Two: David Becomes King (chapters 10 to 12)

- Chapter 10: The Death of Saul
- Chapter 11: David Made King and His Mighty Men
- Chapter 12: The Men Who Came to David

Part Three: The Ark Comes to Jerusalem (chapters 13 to 16)

- Chapter 13: The Ark and the Death of Uzzah
- Chapter 14: David's House and His Victories over the Philistines
- Chapter 15: The Ark Brought to Jerusalem
- Chapter 16: David's Psalm of Thanks

Part Four: God's Covenant and David's Wars (chapters 17 to 20)

- Chapter 17: God's Covenant with David
- Chapter 18: David's Victories
- Chapter 19: War with Ammon and Syria
- Chapter 20: Rabbah Taken and the Giants Defeated

Part Five: David Prepares for the Temple (chapters 21 to 29)

- Chapter 21: David's Census and the Threshing Floor of Ornan
- Chapter 22: David Prepares for the Temple
- Chapter 23: The Levites and Their Work
- Chapter 24: The Divisions of the Priests
- Chapter 25: The Temple Singers
- Chapter 26: Gatekeepers, Treasurers and Officials
- Chapter 27: Israel's Army and Leaders
- Chapter 28: David's Charge to Solomon and the Temple Plans
- Chapter 29: The Gifts for the Temple and the Death of David

Where this book points to Christ: The family lines of 1 Chronicles trace the very line the New Testament follows to Jesus. Matthew opens with "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1), and Luke traces Jesus back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38), just as Chronicles begins with Adam. Both pass through Judah, Perez, Boaz, Jesse and David, and Matthew goes on through Solomon, the kings, Jeconiah, Shealtiel and Zerubbabel (1 Chronicles 3; Matthew 1:6-13). The covenant of chapter 17 is fulfilled in Jesus. The angel told Mary that God

would give her Son "the throne of David His father" and that "of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). Hebrews takes God's words about David's son, "I will be to Him a Father, and He will be to Me a Son," and applies them to Christ (Hebrews 1:5; 1 Chronicles 17:13). I believe that promise will be fully seen when Jesus returns and reigns on David's throne over a restored Israel and the whole earth. The temple David prepared for, built on the threshing floor of Ornan where God stopped His judgment (21:18-30; 2 Chronicles 3:1), is a picture of the place where God meets sinners on the ground of a sacrifice, which Christ gave once for all.

Background of the Book

Author: The book does not name its writer. Jewish tradition holds that Ezra the priest and scribe wrote Chronicles, and the SLB introduction follows that tradition. There are good reasons for it. The last verses of 2 Chronicles (36:22-23) are nearly the same as the first verses of Ezra (Ezra 1:1-3), as though one book picks up where the other leaves off. Chronicles and Ezra also share the same deep interest in the temple, the priests and Levites, the law of Moses, and family records. Many scholars today speak only of "the Chronicler," an unnamed writer or group of writers, and some place the book later, in the 300s B.C. I take the Jewish tradition as the most likely answer, while saying plainly that Scripture does not name him.

Who it was written to: The Jews who had come back to Judah from exile in Babylon, and their children. The exile was the time when God sent His people out of their land to Babylon as judgment for their sin; Jerusalem and its temple fell in 586 B.C. In 538 B.C. Cyrus king of Persia let them go home. They rebuilt the temple by 516 B.C., but they were a small and poor community in a little province of the Persian empire, with no king of their own.

Sources: The writer tells us he used older records. He speaks of "the book of the kings of Israel and Judah" (9:1), and he closes with the words of "Samuel the seer," "Nathan the prophet," and "Gad the seer" (29:29). A seer is another name for a prophet, one who sees what God shows him. Much of 1 Chronicles 10 to 21 follows 2 Samuel closely, sometimes word for word, and the writer also had family records, temple records and lists of officers. The Holy Spirit guided him in what he chose and how he told it.

When it was written: After the return from exile. The family of David in 3:17-24 runs several generations past Zerubbabel, who led the first return in 538 B.C. The SLB introduction gives about 450 to 430 B.C., in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and most conservative scholars place it somewhere between about 450 and 400 B.C.

When the events happened: The family lists cover all of history from Adam to the return (chapters 1 to 9). The story itself runs from Saul's death about 1010 B.C. to David's death about 970 B.C. David reigned seven and a half years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem (3:4; 29:27).

Why Chronicles retells Samuel and Kings: The first readers already had Samuel and Kings. Those books explained why Israel went into exile: the kings and people turned from God. Chronicles asks a different question: now that we are back, what is God still doing with us? So it keeps its eyes on three things: the line of David, through whom God's promise would come; the temple, where God put His name; and the worship of God by priests, Levites and singers. That is why it leaves out much of David's family trouble, like his sin with Bathsheba and Absalom's revolt, and spends whole chapters on the ark and the Levites. The writer is not hiding David's sins. His readers knew them, and he includes David's sinful census in chapter 21 in full. He is choosing what his readers most needed to hear.

Differences in numbers: In several places Chronicles gives a different number from Samuel or Kings for the same event. For example, Jashobeam killed three hundred men in 11:11 but eight

hundred in 2 Samuel 23:8, and David took seven thousand horsemen in 18:4 but seventeen hundred in 2 Samuel 8:4. I take the numbers as written in each place, and I believe the original writings were without error. The common explanations are honest ones. Numbers were the easiest thing to miscopy over centuries of hand-copying, since a small mark could change one number into another. Sometimes the two books count different groups, or one gives a total and the other a part. Some scholars also read the Hebrew word for "thousand," eleph, as meaning a clan or military unit in some lists, which would make some of the large armies smaller. I point these out where they come up rather than hide them.

Purpose: To show the returned people who they were and that God's promises still held. The family lists tied them to Abraham and David and to their land. The story of David showed what a king after God's heart looked like, a man who sought the LORD, loved His house and led the people in worship. The book called them to seek God, to worship Him as He commanded, and to keep waiting for the Son of David God had promised.

Chapter 1: From Adam to the Sons of Abraham

Scripture

1:1-23 Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The sons of Japheth ***were*** Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer ***were*** Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan ***were*** Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. The sons of Ham ***were*** Cush and Mizraim, Put and Canaan. And the sons of Cush ***were*** Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca. And the sons of Raamah ***were*** Sheba and Dedan. And Cush fathered Nimrod; he began to be a mighty ***man*** on the earth. And Mizraim fathered ***the*** Ludim and ***the*** Anamim and ***the*** Lehabim and ***the*** Naphtuhim and ***the*** Pathrusim and ***the*** Casluhim, from where ***the*** Philistines came out, and ***the*** Caphtorim. And Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite, and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite, and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite. The sons of Shem ***were*** Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram and Uz and Hul and Gether and Meshech. And Arpachshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. And to Eber were born two sons; the name of the one ***was*** Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and the name of his brother ***was*** Joktan. And Joktan fathered Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah and Obal and Abimael and Sheba and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these ***were*** the sons of Joktan.

1:24-42 Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abram, he ***is*** Abraham. The sons of Abraham ***were*** Isaac and Ishmael. These ***are*** their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam, Mishma and Dumah, Massa, Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These, they ***are*** the sons of Ishmael. And the sons of Keturah, the concubine of Abraham: she bore Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan ***were*** Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Midian ***were*** Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these ***were*** the sons of Keturah. And Abraham fathered Isaac. The sons of Isaac ***were*** Esau and Israel. The sons of Esau ***were*** Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush and Jalam and Korah. The sons of Eliphaz ***were*** Teman and Omar, Zephi and Gatam, Kenaz and Timna and Amalek. The sons of Reuel ***were*** Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. And the sons of Seir ***were*** Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah and Dishon and Ezer and Dishan. And the sons of Lotan ***were*** Hori and Hemam; and the sister of Lotan ***was*** Timna. The sons of Shobal ***were*** Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shephi and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon ***were*** Aiah and Anah. The sons of Anah ***were*** Dishon. And the sons of Dishon ***were*** Hemdan and Eshban and Ithran and Cheran. The sons of Ezer ***were*** Bilhan and Zaavan, Akan. The sons of Dishan ***were*** Uz and Aran.

1:43-54 And these ***are*** the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king reigned over the sons of Israel: Bela the son of Beor; and the name of his city ***was*** Dinhabah. And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah from Bozrah reigned in his place. And Jobab died, and Husham from the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who struck Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place; and the name of his city ***was*** Avith. And Hadad died, and Samlah from Masrekah reigned in his place. And Samlah died, and Shaul from

Rehoboth of the River reigned in his place. And Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. And Baal-hanan died, and Hadad reigned in his place; and the name of his city ***was*** Pai, and the name of his wife ***was*** Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. And Hadad died. And the chiefs of Edom were: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These ***are*** the chiefs of Edom.

Chapter 1 Preview

First Chronicles opens with no story at all, only names. In fifty-four verses it runs from Adam to Abraham, then through Abraham's sons Ishmael and Isaac, and on to Esau and the kings and chiefs of Edom. Almost every name comes from Genesis, mostly from chapters 5, 10, 11, 25 and 36. The writer simply lines them up, one after another, with very few words in between.

Why start this way? The first readers had come home from exile in Babylon. They needed to know where they fit. This chapter tells them that their story did not begin with the exile, or even with Moses. It began with Adam, the first man God made. The God who made the whole human race chose one family out of it, and the rest of the book follows that family down to them. Genealogies, or family lists, can look dry to us, but for them this was the record of their roots in God's promises.

Chapter 1 Study

1:1-4 *Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*

"Adam, Seth, Enosh." The book begins with the first man and goes through ten generations to "Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth." There are no ages here and no stories, just the line from Genesis 5. The writer could assume his readers knew the stories behind each name.

Notice that he starts with Adam, not with Abraham or Jacob. Israel's story is part of the story of the whole human race. Every person who has ever lived comes from Adam, and through Noah's three sons all the nations came. Luke does the same thing with Jesus. He traces Jesus' family line all the way back to "Adam, the son of God" (Luke 3:38). The Savior of Israel is also the Savior of the world.

1:5-23 *The sons of Japheth **were** Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer **were** Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan **were** Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. The sons of Ham **were** Cush and Mizraim, Put and Canaan. And the sons of Cush **were** Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca. And the sons of Raamah **were** Sheba and Dedan. And Cush fathered Nimrod; he began to be a mighty **man** on the earth. And Mizraim fathered **the** Ludim and **the** Anamim and **the** Lehabim and **the** Naphtuhim and **the** Pathrusim and **the** Casluhim, from where **the** Philistines came out, and **the** Caphtorim. And Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite, and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite, and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite. The sons of Shem **were** Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram and Uz and Hul and Gether and Meshech. And Arpachshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. And to Eber were born two sons; the name of the one **was** Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and the name of his brother **was** Joktan. And Joktan fathered Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah and Obal and Abimael and Sheba and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these **were** the sons of Joktan.*

This section follows Genesis 10, often called the Table of Nations. It lists the peoples who came from Noah's three sons. From Japheth came peoples who spread north and west, such as Javan, the Greeks. From Ham came Cush, Mizraim (Egypt), Put and Canaan. Among them was Nimrod, who "began to be a mighty man on the earth" (1:10), and the Canaanite peoples Israel would later meet in the land: the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Hivite and others. From Shem came Elam, Asshur (Assyria), Aram and Eber.

One small note stands out. Peleg was named that because "in his days the earth was divided" (1:19). Many Bible teachers connect this with the scattering of the nations at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). Scripture doesn't explain it further, so I won't build on it.

Why list the nations at all? Because God never forgot them. He chose Israel, but He chose Israel for the sake of the nations. He told Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed in him (Genesis 12:3).

1:24-27 *Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abram, he **is** Abraham.*

Now the writer narrows the focus. The line runs from Shem through Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg and on to Terah, and then the name everything has been building to: "Abram, he is Abraham" (1:27). This is the line of Genesis 11:10-26.

That short phrase reminds us of Genesis 17:5, when God changed Abram's name to Abraham, meaning father of a multitude, as He promised to make him the father of many nations. Ten generations from Adam to Noah, ten from Shem to Abraham. Out of all the nations just listed, God called one man. The returned exiles were Abraham's children. They were small and weak, but they came from the man God chose and promised to bless.

1:28-34 *The sons of Abraham **were** Isaac and Ishmael. These **are** their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam, Mishma and Dumah, Massa, Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These, they **are** the sons of Ishmael. And the sons of Keturah, the concubine of Abraham: she bore Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan **were** Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Midian **were** Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these **were** the sons of Keturah. And Abraham fathered Isaac. The sons of Isaac **were** Esau and Israel.*

"The sons of Abraham were Isaac and Ishmael." Ishmael's twelve sons come first (1:29-31), then the sons Keturah bore to Abraham, including Midian (1:32-33). Then the writer says, "And Abraham fathered Isaac. The sons of Isaac were Esau and Israel" (1:34).

Notice the pattern the writer follows all through these chapters. He lists the side branches first and briefly, then comes back to the main line and stays with it. Ishmael comes before Isaac, and Esau before Israel. The side branches are not forgotten. God blessed Ishmael too (Genesis 17:20). But the promise ran through Isaac and Jacob. The writer also calls Jacob by his God-given name, Israel (Genesis 32:28), the name of the whole nation.

1:35-54 *The sons of Esau **were** Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush and Jalam and Korah. The sons of Eliphaz **were** Teman and Omar, Zephi and Gatam, Kenaz and Timna and Amalek. The sons of Reuel **were** Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. And the sons of Seir **were** Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah and Dishon and Ezer and Dishan. And the sons of Lotan **were** Hori and Hemam; and the sister of Lotan **was** Timna. The sons of Shobal **were** Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shephi and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon **were** Aiah and Anah. The sons of Anah **were** Dishon. And the sons of Dishon **were** Hemdan and Eshban and Ithran and Cheran. The sons of Ezer **were** Bilhan and Zaavan, Akan. The sons of Dishan **were** Uz and Aran. And these **are** the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king reigned over the sons of Israel: Bela the son of Beor; and the name of his city **was** Dinhabah. And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah from Bozrah reigned in his place. And Jobab died, and Husham from the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who struck Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place; and the name of his city **was** Avith. And Hadad died, and Samlah from Masrekah reigned in his place. And Samlah died, and Shaul from Rehoboth of the River reigned in his place. And Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. And Baal-hanan died, and Hadad reigned in his place; and the name of his city **was** Pai, and the name of his wife **was** Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. And Hadad died. And the chiefs of Edom were: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These **are** the chiefs of Edom.*

The rest of the chapter is about Esau, also called Edom, and his descendants, taken from Genesis 36. It lists Esau's sons and grandsons, among them Amalek (1:36), the father of a people who would fight Israel for centuries. It lists the sons of Seir, the people who lived in that land before Esau's family took it over (1:38-42). Then it lists "the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king reigned over the sons of Israel" (1:43), eight of them, and the chiefs of Edom.

Why spend twenty verses on Edom? Edom was Israel's brother nation, and often its bitter enemy. In the writer's own day the Edomites had moved into the south of Judah. Yet God kept their record too. And that line about kings in Edom before Israel had a king is a quiet reminder. Edom had kings first, but Israel's King would last. The kings of Edom each "died," one after another (1:44-51). God's promise to David's house, which this book is building toward, would not die.

Chapter 1 Summary

First Chronicles opens with a list of names that runs from Adam to Noah and his three sons, through the nations that came from Japheth, Ham and Shem, and down the line of Shem to Abraham. It then lists Abraham's sons by Hagar and Keturah, and his son Isaac, whose sons were Esau and Israel. The last part of the chapter gives Esau's family, the people of Seir, the kings of Edom who reigned before Israel had a king, and the chiefs of Edom. The writer follows a steady pattern, listing side branches briefly and then returning to the line of promise. For a people just home from exile, the chapter said that their roots ran back through Abraham to the very beginning, and that the God who made all nations had chosen their family for His purpose.

Chapter 1 Study Questions

1. Where does the family list in 1 Chronicles begin, and why do you think the writer starts there? (1:1-4)

2. Which three sons of Noah are named, and what came from them? (1:4-23)

3. What does the chapter say about Peleg? (1:19)

4. How does the writer remind us that Abram's name was changed? (1:27; Genesis 17:5)

5. In what order does the writer list Abraham's and Isaac's sons, and what pattern do you see? (1:28-34)

6. Why do you think the writer gives so much space to Esau and Edom? (1:35-54)

7. Luke traces Jesus' family back to Adam (Luke 3:38). What does that tell you about who Jesus came to save?

8. The first readers had come home from exile. Why would a list like this have encouraged them?

9. Who are the people in your family's story who passed down faith in God, and what do you know about them?

10. God knew every name on this list. What does it mean to you that God knows your name?

Chapter 2: The Sons of Israel and the Line of Judah

Scripture

2:1-17 These ***are*** the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. The sons of Judah ***were*** Er and Onan and Shelah; three were born to him from the daughter of Shua, the Canaanite ***woman***. And Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the eyes of the LORD, and He put him to death. And Tamar his daughter-in-law bore to him Perez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah ***were*** five. The sons of Perez ***were*** Hezron and Hamul. And the sons of Zerah ***were*** Zimri and Ethan and Heman and Calcol and Dara; all of them ***were*** five. And the sons of Carmi ***were*** Achan, the troubler of Israel, who acted unfaithfully in the devoted thing. And the sons of Ethan ***were*** Azariah. And the sons of Hezron who were born to him: Jerahmeel and Ram and Chelubai. And Ram fathered Amminadab, and Amminadab fathered Nahshon, the leader of the sons of Judah; and Nahshon fathered Salmon, and Salmon fathered Boaz; and Boaz fathered Obed, and Obed fathered Jesse; and Jesse fathered his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimea the third, Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, Ozem the sixth, David the seventh; and their sisters ***were*** Zeruiah and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah ***were*** Abishai and Joab and Asahel, three. And Abigail bore Amasa; and the father of Amasa ***was*** Jether the Ishmaelite.

2:18-41 And Caleb the son of Hezron fathered ***children*** with Azubah, a wife, and with Jerioth; and these ***were*** her sons: Jesher and Shobab and Ardon. And Azubah died, and Caleb took for himself Ephrath, and she bore to him Hur. And Hur fathered Uri, and Uri fathered Bezalel. And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, and he took her, and he ***was*** a son of sixty years; and she bore to him Segub. And Segub fathered Jair, and to him belonged twenty and three cities in the land of Gilead. And Geshur and Syria took Havvoth-jair from them, Kenath and its villages, sixty cities. All these ***were*** the sons of Machir the father of Gilead. And after the death of Hezron in Caleb-ephrathah, and the wife of Hezron ***was*** Abijah, and she bore to him Ashhur the father of Tekoa. And the sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron were: the firstborn Ram, and Bunah and Oren and Ozem, Ahijah. And Jerahmeel had another wife, and her name ***was*** Atarah; she ***was*** the mother of Onam. And the sons of Ram the firstborn of Jerahmeel were Maaz and Jamin and Eker. And the sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. And the sons of Shammai ***were*** Nadab and Abishur. And the name of the wife of Abishur ***was*** Abihail, and she bore to him Ahban and Molid. And the sons of Nadab ***were*** Seled and Appaim; and Seled died without sons. And the sons of Appaim ***were*** Ishi. And the sons of Ishi ***were*** Sheshan. And the sons of Sheshan ***were*** Ahlai. And the sons of Jada the brother of Shammai ***were*** Jether and Jonathan; and Jether died without sons. And the sons of Jonathan ***were*** Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel. And Sheshan had no sons, but daughters; and Sheshan ***had*** a slave, an Egyptian, and his name ***was*** Jarha. And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his slave for a wife, and she bore to him Attai. And Attai fathered Nathan, and Nathan fathered Zabad; and Zabad fathered Ephlal, and Ephlal fathered Obed; and Obed fathered Jehu, and Jehu fathered Azariah; and Azariah fathered Helez, and Helez fathered Eleasah; and Eleasah fathered Sismai, and Sismai fathered Shallum; and Shallum fathered Jekamiah, and Jekamiah fathered Elishama.

2:42-55 And the sons of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel ***were*** Mesha his firstborn; he ***was*** the father of Ziph; and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron. And the sons of Hebron ***were*** Korah and Tappuah and Rekem and Shema. And Shema fathered Raham the father of Jorkeam; and Rekem fathered Shammai. And the son of Shammai ***was*** Maon, and Maon ***was*** the father of Beth-zur. And Ephah the concubine of Caleb bore Haran and Moza and Gazez; and Haran fathered Gazez. And the sons of Jahdai ***were*** Regem and Jotham and Geshan and Pelet and Ephah and Shaaph. The concubine of Caleb, Maacah, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. And she bore Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah and the father of Gibea; and the daughter of Caleb ***was*** Achsah. These were the sons of Caleb the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah: Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim, Salma the father of Bethlehem, Hareph the father of Beth-gader. And Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim had sons: Haroeh, half of the Menuhoth. And the clans of Kiriath-jearim ***were*** the Ithrite and the Puthite and the Shumathite and the Mishraite; from these came out the Zorathite and the Eshtaolite. The sons of Salma ***were*** Bethlehem and ***the*** Netophathite, Atroth-beth-joab, and the half of the Manahathite, the Zorite. And the clans of scribes, the inhabitants of Jabez, ***were*** Tirathites, Shimeathites, Sucathites. They ***are*** the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.

Chapter 2 Preview

Chapter 1 ended with Esau. Chapter 2 turns to his brother Israel and names his twelve sons. Then it goes straight to Judah. Judah was not the firstborn, but Judah is listed first and given the most space of any tribe, nearly three full chapters (2:3 to 4:23). The reason is plain: David came from Judah, and the whole book is moving toward David and the promise God made to his house.

The chapter has three parts. First come the sons of Judah, with two sad notes about sin (Er and Achan). Then the main line from Judah through Perez, Hezron, Ram, Boaz and Jesse to David. Then the other branches of Hezron's family, the families of Caleb and Jerahmeel, with the towns they founded in the land of Judah. This is also the line that Matthew and Luke follow to Jesus.

Chapter 2 Study

2:1-2 *These **are** the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.*

"These are the sons of Israel." The twelve are named: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. These were the fathers of the twelve tribes.

The returned exiles were mostly from Judah, Benjamin and Levi. But the writer begins with all twelve. In his mind God's people were still one people, all of Israel, even though the northern tribes had been scattered by Assyria long before. God had not forgotten any of them, and neither should His people. The prophets say the same thing, that God will one day gather all the tribes again (Ezekiel 37:15-22).

2:3-8 *The sons of Judah **were** Er and Onan and Shelah; three were born to him from the daughter of Shua, the Canaanite **woman**. And Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the eyes of the LORD, and He put him to death. And Tamar his daughter-in-law bore to him Perez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah **were** five. The sons of Perez **were** Hezron and Hamul. And the sons of Zerah **were** Zimri and Ethan and Heman and Calcol and Dara; all of them **were** five. And the sons of Carmi **were** Achan, the troubler of Israel, who acted unfaithfully in the devoted thing. And the sons of Ethan **were** Azariah.*

"The sons of Judah were Er and Onan and Shelah." Right away comes a hard note: "Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the eyes of the LORD, and He put him to death" (2:3). Then Judah's sons Perez and Zerah were born to "Tamar his daughter-in-law" (2:4). The whole sad story is in Genesis 38. Scripture does not tell us what Er's evil was, and I will not guess. It tells us that the LORD is the Judge of all, that He saw what Er did, and that His judgment was just.

Why would the writer mention these things in the line of the kings? Because he is honest. The line of David, and the line of the Messiah, came through sinners and broken families. Messiah means the Anointed One, God's promised King and Savior. Matthew names Tamar in Jesus' family line too (Matthew 1:3). God did not choose this family because it was good. He chose it in grace.

Verse 7 adds another warning. Carmi's son was "Achan, the troubler of Israel, who acted unfaithfully in the devoted thing." Achan kept for himself what God had devoted to Him at Jericho, and it brought defeat on all Israel (Joshua 7). The word "unfaithfully" is a key word in Chronicles. It will come back when Saul dies (10:13) and when the whole nation goes into exile (9:1). Unfaithfulness to God brings trouble, in a family and in a nation.

2:9-17 *And the sons of Hezron who were born to him: Jerahmeel and Ram and Chelubai. And Ram fathered Amminadab, and Amminadab fathered Nahshon, the leader of the sons of Judah; and Nahshon fathered Salmon, and Salmon fathered Boaz; and Boaz fathered Obed, and Obed fathered Jesse; and Jesse fathered his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimea the third, Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, Ozem the sixth, David the seventh; and their sisters **were** Zeruiah and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah **were** Abishai and Joab and Asahel, three. And Abigail bore Amasa; and the father of Amasa **was** Jether the Ishmaelite.*

Now the main line. Hezron's son Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, "the leader of the sons of Judah" (2:10), who led his tribe in the wilderness (Numbers 2:3). Then come Salmon, Boaz, Obed and Jesse. This is the same line that ends the book of Ruth (Ruth 4:18-22). Boaz married Ruth the Moabite, and Matthew names her too (Matthew 1:5).

Jesse had seven sons, and "David the seventh" (2:15). First Samuel 16:10-11 says Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel and David was still out with the sheep, which makes eight. Most Bible teachers believe one of Jesse's sons died young or without children, and so is not counted in this list. Either way, David was the youngest, the one no one expected God to choose.

Verses 16-17 name David's sisters, Zeruiah and Abigail. Their sons, Joab, Abishai, Asahel and Amasa, will be David's army commanders. The family of David was a real family, with nephews who served him, and sometimes troubled him.

This is the heart of the chapter. From Judah, through Perez, to David. Matthew 1:3-6 and Luke 3:31-33 give the very same names on the way to Jesus.

2:18-24 *And Caleb the son of Hezron fathered **children** with Azubah, a wife, and with Jerioth; and these **were** her sons: Jesher and Shobab and Ardon. And Azubah died, and Caleb took for himself Ephrath, and she bore to him Hur. And Hur fathered Uri, and Uri fathered Bezalel. And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, and he took her, and he **was** a son of sixty years; and she bore to him Segub. And Segub fathered Jair, and to him belonged twenty and three cities in the land of Gilead. And Geshur and Syria took Havvoth-jair from them, Kenath and its villages, sixty cities. All these **were** the sons of Machir the father of Gilead. And after the death of Hezron in Caleb-ephrathah, and the wife of Hezron **was** Abijah, and she bore to him Ashhur the father of Tekoa.*

The writer goes back to Hezron's other sons. Caleb (also called Chelubai in 2:9) had a large family. From him came Hur, and from Hur came "Bezalel" (2:20), the skilled craftsman God filled with His Spirit to build the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-5). The tabernacle was the tent where God met with Israel in the wilderness. It is fitting that a book so focused on worship names the man who built Israel's first house of worship.

Verses 21-23 tell how Hezron, at sixty, married a daughter of Machir of Manasseh. Their descendant Jair held twenty-three cities in Gilead, east of the Jordan. The families of Israel were tied together by marriage across tribes.

2:25-41 *And the sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron were: the firstborn Ram, and Bunah and Oren and Ozem, Ahijah. And Jerahmeel had another wife, and her name **was** Atarah; she **was** the mother of Onam. And the sons of Ram the firstborn of Jerahmeel were Maaz and Jamin and Eker. And the sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. And the sons of Shammai **were** Nadab and Abishur. And the name of the wife of Abishur **was** Abihail, and she bore to him Ahban and Molid. And the sons of Nadab **were** Seled and Appaim; and Seled died without sons. And the sons of Appaim **were** Ishi. And the sons of Ishi **were** Sheshan. And the sons of Sheshan **were** Ahlai. And the sons of Jada the brother of Shammai **were** Jether and Jonathan; and Jether died without sons. And the sons of Jonathan **were** Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel. And Sheshan had no sons, but daughters; and Sheshan **had** a slave, an Egyptian, and his name **was** Jarha. And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his slave for a wife, and she bore to him Attai. And Attai fathered Nathan, and Nathan fathered Zabad; and Zabad fathered Ephlal, and Ephlal fathered Obed; and Obed fathered Jehu, and Jehu fathered Azariah; and Azariah fathered Helez, and Helez fathered Eleasah; and Eleasah fathered Sismai, and Sismai fathered Shallum; and Shallum fathered Jekamiah, and Jekamiah fathered Elishama.*

This section gives the family of Jerahmeel, Hezron's firstborn. Most of the names are known only from here. Then comes a little story in verses 34-35: "Sheshan had no sons, but daughters," and he had an Egyptian slave named Jarha. "Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his slave for a wife," and their son Attai began a line of thirteen generations (2:36-41).

Think about that. An Egyptian, a slave, became part of a family of Judah, and his descendants were counted among God's people. Israel itself had been slaves in Egypt. Now God welcomed an Egyptian slave into the family. Grace has always reached past the borders we draw.

2:42-55 *And the sons of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel **were** Mesha his firstborn; he **was** the father of Ziph; and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron. And the sons of Hebron **were** Korah and Tappuah and Rekem and Shema. And Shema fathered Raham the father of Jorkeam; and Rekem fathered Shammai. And the son of Shammai **was** Maon, and Maon **was** the father of Beth-zur. And Ephah the concubine of Caleb bore Haran and Moza and Gazez; and Haran fathered Gazez. And the sons of Jahdai **were** Regem and Jotham and Geshan and Pelet and Ephah and Shaaph. The concubine of Caleb, Maacah, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. And she bore Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah and the father of Gibea; and the daughter of Caleb **was** Achsah. These were the sons of Caleb the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah: Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim, Salma the father of Bethlehem, Hareph the father of Beth-gader. And Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim had sons: Haroeh, half of the Menuhoth. And the clans of Kiriath-jearim **were** the Ithrite and the Puthite and the Shumathite and the Mishraite; from these came out the Zorathite and the Eshtaolite. The sons of Salma **were** Bethlehem and **the** Netophathite, Atroth-beth-joab, and the half of the Manahathite, the Zorite. And the clans of scribes, the inhabitants of Jabez, **were** Tirathites, Shimeathites, Sucathites. They **are** the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.*

The last section returns to Caleb's family. Many of the names here are also the names of towns: Ziph, Hebron, Maon, Beth-zur, Kiriath-jearim, and "Salma the father of Bethlehem" (2:51). In these lists, "father of" a town often means its founder or leader. These were the towns of the hill country of Judah, and many of the returned exiles lived in or near them.

Bethlehem is named here as part of the family of Judah. It was David's hometown, and it would be the birthplace of Jesus (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6). The chapter ends with "the clans of scribes" and the Kenites, related to "the house of Rechab" (2:55). The Kenites were the people of Moses' father-in-law, who joined Israel (Judges 1:16). The Rechabites were later praised for their faithfulness (Jeremiah 35). Once again, people from outside Israel were found among God's people.

Chapter 2 Summary

Chapter 2 names the twelve sons of Israel and then turns to Judah, the tribe of David. It honestly records Er's death for his evil, the birth of Perez and Zerah to Tamar, and Achan, "the troubler of Israel." It traces the main line from Perez through Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed and Jesse to David, the seventh son, and names David's sisters and their sons. It then lists the families of Hezron's other sons, Caleb and Jerahmeel, including Bezalel the tabernacle builder, Sheshan's Egyptian son-in-law Jarha, and the founders of towns like Hebron and Bethlehem. The line of promise ran through sinners and outsiders, all by God's grace, and it led to David and then to Jesus.

People and Places

- Judah: the fourth son of Jacob, father of the tribe of David and of Jesus (Genesis 49:10).

- Tamar: Judah's daughter-in-law, mother of Perez and Zerah (Genesis 38).
- Achan: the man who stole from what was devoted to God at Jericho (Joshua 7).
- Nahshon: leader of Judah in the wilderness (Numbers 2:3).
- Boaz: the husband of Ruth and great-grandfather of David.
- Bezalel: the craftsman who built the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-5).
- Bethlehem: David's hometown and the birthplace of Jesus.

There are things in my own past that I am ashamed of: alcoholism, and sins I will not name here. Chapter 2 lists Judah's family with its shame left in. God's grace runs right through those names. It runs through mine too.

Chapter 2 Study Questions

1. Which tribe does the writer list first and give the most space, and why? (2:3-17)

2. What two sad notes about sin appear near the start of Judah's list? (2:3, 7)

3. Trace the line from Perez to David. Where else in the Bible do you find these names? (2:5-15; Ruth 4:18-22; Matthew 1:3-6)

4. Which son of Jesse was David, and what does 1 Samuel 16:10-11 add? (2:15)

5. Who was Bezalel, and why might the writer include him? (2:20; Exodus 31:1-5)

6. What happened with Sheshan's daughter and Jarha the Egyptian, and what does it show about God? (2:34-35)

7. Why do you think God included sinners like Tamar and Judah in the line of the Messiah?

8. The writer begins with all twelve tribes, though most were scattered. Why does it matter to remember all of God's people?

9. Is there something in your family's past you are ashamed of? What does this chapter say about God's grace toward broken families?

10. God welcomed outsiders like Jarha, Ruth and the Kenites. Who might be an outsider you could welcome into your church or home?

Chapter 3: The Family of David

Scripture

3:1-9 And these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: the firstborn, Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelite ***woman***; second, Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelite ***woman***; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai the king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah his wife. Six were born to him in Hebron; and he reigned there seven years and six months, and thirty and three years he reigned in Jerusalem. And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea and Shobab and Nathan and Solomon, four, by Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel; and Ibhar and Elishama and Eliphelet and Nogah and Nepheg and Japhia and Elishama and Eliada and Eliphelet, nine. All ***were*** the sons of David, besides the sons of concubines; and Tamar ***was*** their sister.

3:10-24 And the son of Solomon ***was*** Rehoboam; Abijah his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, Amon his son, Josiah his son. And the sons of Josiah ***were*** the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. And the sons of Jehoiakim ***were*** Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son. And the sons of Jeconiah the prisoner ***were*** Shealtiel his son, and Malchiram and Pedaiah and Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. And the sons of Pedaiah ***were*** Zerubbabel and Shimei. And the son of Zerubbabel: Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister, and Hashubah and Ohel and Berechiah and Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed, five. And the son of Hananiah: Pelatiah and Jeshaiah; the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shecaniah. And the sons of Shecaniah ***were*** Shemaiah; and the sons of Shemaiah ***were*** Hattush and Igal and Bariah and Neariah and Shaphat, six. And the son of Neariah: Elioenai and Hizkiah and Azrikam, three. And the sons of Elioenai ***were*** Hodaviah and Eliashib and Pelaiah and Akkub and Johanan and Delaiah and Anani, seven.

Chapter 3 Preview

Chapter 2 brought the line of Judah down to David. Chapter 3 gives David's own family. It names the sons born to him in Hebron and in Jerusalem, then follows the line of kings from Solomon to Josiah and his sons, the last kings before Jerusalem fell. Then it does something no other book of the Bible does. It keeps going past the exile and lists David's descendants for several generations after Zerubbabel, who led the first group home from Babylon.

That is the point of the chapter. The kingdom fell, the kings were taken away, but David's family did not die out. God had promised David a house that would last forever (17:14). The returned exiles could look at this list and see that the line of David was still there, waiting for the Son of David God had promised.

Chapter 3 Study

3:1-4 *And these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: the firstborn, Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelite **woman**; second, Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelite **woman**; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai the king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah his wife. Six were born to him in Hebron; and he reigned there seven years and six months, and thirty and three years he reigned in Jerusalem.*

"These were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron." Six sons from six mothers: Amnon, Daniel, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah and Ithream. Daniel is the same son called Chileab in 2 Samuel 3:3. Many people in the Bible had more than one name.

Some of these names bring back painful memories. Amnon wronged his half-sister Tamar, Absalom killed Amnon and then rebelled against his father, and Adonijah tried to take the throne before Solomon (2 Samuel 13-18; 1 Kings 1). Chronicles does not tell those stories, but the names are here, and the readers knew. Having many wives did not bring David peace. It brought rivalry and grief into his home. God had warned that a king should not multiply wives (Deuteronomy 17:17).

Verse 4 gives the length of his reign: "seven years and six months" in Hebron, and "thirty and three years he reigned in Jerusalem."

3:5-9 *And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea and Shobab and Nathan and Solomon, four, by Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel; and Ibhar and Elishama and Eliphelet and Nogah and Nepheg and Japhia and Elishama and Eliada and Eliphelet, nine. All **were** the sons of David, besides the sons of concubines; and Tamar **was** their sister.*

In Jerusalem David had more sons, among them "Shimea and Shobab and Nathan and Solomon, four, by Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel" (3:5). Bath-shua is another form of the name Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:3; 12:24). Chronicles does not tell the story of David's sin with her, but it names her as the mother of Solomon.

Two of her sons matter a great deal for the New Testament. Matthew traces Jesus' line through Solomon, the line of the kings, to Joseph (Matthew 1:6-16). Luke traces it through Nathan (Luke 3:31). Many Bible teachers believe Matthew gives Joseph's line, which gave Jesus His legal right to David's throne, and Luke gives Mary's line, which made Him David's son by blood. Either way, both lines go back to David and Bathsheba. God took a marriage that began in sin and, after David's repentance, used it in His plan of salvation.

Verse 9 adds that David also had sons by concubines, wives of lower rank, and a daughter, "Tamar was their sister."

3:10-16 *And the son of Solomon **was** Rehoboam; Abijah his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, Amon his son, Josiah his son. And the sons of Josiah **were** the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. And the sons of Jehoiakim **were** Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son.*

Now the kings of Judah, father to son: Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah (also called Uzziah), Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon and Josiah. Queen Athaliah, who seized the throne for six years (2 Kings 11), is left out. She was not of David's line.

For nearly four hundred years, from about 970 to 586 B.C., a son of David sat on the throne in Jerusalem. Some were godly, like Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. Some were very wicked, like Ahaz and Manasseh. But God kept the line going through good kings and bad. His promise did not depend on how well David's sons behaved. It depended on Him.

Verses 15-16 name Josiah's sons and grandson. Three of Josiah's sons reigned (Shallum, also called Jehoahaz, then Jehoiakim and Zedekiah), and Jehoiakim's son Jeconiah reigned for three months before Babylon took him away (2 Kings 24:8-15).

3:17-24 *And the sons of Jeconiah the prisoner **were** Shealtiel his son, and Malchiram and Pedaiah and Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. And the sons of Pedaiah **were** Zerubbabel and Shimei. And the son of Zerubbabel: Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister, and Hashubah and Ohel and Berechiah and Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed, five. And the son of Hananiah: Pelatiah and Jeshaiah; the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shecaniah. And the sons of Shecaniah **were** Shemaiah; and the sons of Shemaiah **were** Hattush and Igal and Bariah and Neariah and Shaphat, six. And the son of Neariah: Elioenai and Hizkiah and Azrikam, three. And the sons of Elioenai **were** Hodaviah and Eliashib and Pelaiah and Akkub and Johanan and Delaiah and Anani, seven.*

"The sons of Jeconiah the prisoner were Shealtiel his son" (3:17). Jeconiah was carried off to Babylon in 597 B.C. and spent thirty-seven years in prison there before he was released (2 Kings 25:27-30). God had said through Jeremiah that none of his offspring would prosper sitting on the throne of David (Jeremiah 22:30). Yet his line went on. Matthew names Jeconiah, Shealtiel and Zerubbabel in the line of Joseph (Matthew 1:12). God kept the family alive in exile, even when no king of it reigned.

Zerubbabel is here called a son of Pedaiah (3:19), while Ezra and Haggai call him "the son of Shealtiel" (Ezra 3:2; Haggai 1:1). The usual explanation is that Shealtiel died without a son and his brother Pedaiah raised up a son in his name, as the law allowed (Deuteronomy 25:5-6), or that "son" means grandson in one of the lists. Scripture does not tell us which. Zerubbabel led the first return and rebuilt the temple (Ezra 3-6), and God called him His signet ring (Haggai 2:23).

The list then goes on for several generations after Zerubbabel, down to the seven sons of Elioenai (3:24). These were men the first readers may have known. The royal family was living among

them, without a crown, but not without a promise. About five hundred years after Zerubbabel, from this same family, Jesus was born.

Chapter 3 Summary

Chapter 3 lists David's family. Six sons were born to him in Hebron, where he reigned seven and a half years, and more were born in Jerusalem, where he reigned thirty-three years, including four sons by Bath-shua (Bathsheba), among them Nathan and Solomon. The chapter then follows the kings of Judah from Solomon to Josiah and his sons, and the line of Jeconiah, the king taken prisoner to Babylon. It continues past the exile with Shealtiel, Pedaiah, Zerubbabel and several more generations. God kept David's family alive through good kings and bad, through the fall of Jerusalem and the exile, so that His promise to David could be fulfilled in Jesus, the Son of David.

People and Places

- Hebron: the city in Judah where David first reigned, over Judah alone.
- Bath-shua: another form of Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon.
- Nathan: a son of David through whom Luke traces Jesus' line (not the same man as Nathan the prophet).
- Jeconiah: also called Jehoiachin and Coniah, the king taken to Babylon in 597 B.C.
- Zerubbabel: the descendant of David who led the first return from exile and rebuilt the temple.

Chapter 3 Study Questions

1. How many sons were born to David in Hebron, and how long did he reign there and in Jerusalem? (3:1-4)

2. Who was Bath-shua, and which of her sons are named? (3:5; 2 Samuel 12:24)

3. Which two sons of David do Matthew and Luke follow in Jesus' family line? (3:5; Matthew 1:6; Luke 3:31)

4. List some of the good and bad kings in 3:10-14. What does this list show about God's faithfulness?

5. What does the chapter call Jeconiah, and what happened to him? (3:17; 2 Kings 24:15)

6. Who was Zerubbabel, and why would his name have mattered to the first readers? (3:19; Ezra 3:2)

7. Why do you think the writer kept listing David's family after the exile, when there was no king? (3:19-24)

8. David's many wives brought trouble into his home. What does that teach about following God's design for marriage?

9. God kept His promise through both faithful and wicked kings. How does that give you hope when the people around you fail?

10. The royal family lived for centuries with a promise but no crown. What promise of God are you waiting on, and how can you keep trusting Him while you wait?

Chapter 4: More Clans of Judah and the Tribe of Simeon

Scripture

4:1-23 The sons of Judah ***were*** Perez, Hezron, and Carmi and Hur and Shobal. And Reaiah the son of Shobal fathered Jahath, and Jahath fathered Ahumai and Lahad. These ***were*** the clans of the Zorathite. And these ***were of*** the father of Etam: Jezreel and Ishma and Idbash; and the name of their sister ***was*** Hazzelelponi; and Penuel ***was*** the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These ***were*** the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, the father of Bethlehem. And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. And Naarah bore to him Ahuzzam and Hepher and Temeni and Haahashtari. These ***were*** the sons of Naarah. And the sons of Helah ***were*** Zereth and Zohar and Ethnan. And Koz fathered Anub and Zobebah, and the clans of Aharhel the son of Harum. And Jabez was honored more than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I gave birth in pain." And Jabez called to the God of Israel, saying, "If You will indeed bless me, and increase my border, and Your hand will be with me, and You will keep ***me*** from harm so as not to pain me—" And God brought what he had asked. And Chelub the brother of Shuhah fathered Mehir; he ***was*** the father of Eshton. And Eshton fathered Beth-rapha and Paseah and Tehinnah the father of Ir-nahash. These ***were*** the men of Recah. And the sons of Kenaz ***were*** Othniel and Seraiah; and the sons of Othniel ***were*** Hathath. And Meonothai fathered Ophrah; and Seraiah fathered Joab the father of Ge-harashim, for they were craftsmen. And the sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh ***were*** Iru, Elah, and Naam; and the sons of Elah, and Kenaz. And the sons of Jehallelel ***were*** Ziph and Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel. And the son of Ezrah: Jether and Mered and Epher and Jalon. And she conceived Miriam and Shammai and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. And his wife, the Judahite, bore Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. And these ***are*** the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took. And the sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, ***were*** the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maacathite. And the sons of Shimon ***were*** Amnon and Rinnah, Ben-hanan and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi ***were*** Zoheth and Ben-zoheth. The sons of Shelah the son of Judah ***were*** Er the father of Lecah, and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the clans of the house of the work of the fine linen, of the house of Ashbea; and Jokim, and the men of Cozeba, and Joash and Saraph, who ruled over Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And the words ***are*** ancient. They ***were*** the potters and the inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah; with the king in his work they dwelt there.

4:24-43 The sons of Simeon ***were*** Nemuel and Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Shaul; Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. And the sons of Mishma ***were*** Hammuel his son, Zaccur his son, Shimei his son. And Shimei ***had*** sixteen sons and six daughters; and his brothers ***had*** not many sons, and all their clan did not multiply as much as the sons of Judah. And they dwelt in Beersheba and Moladah and Hazar-shual and in Bilhah and in Ezem and in Tolad and in Bethuel and in Hormah and in Ziklag and in Beth-marcaboth and in Hazar-susim and in Beth-biri and in Shaaraim. These ***were*** their cities until David reigned. And their villages ***were*** Etam and Ain, Rimmon and Tochen and Ashan, five cities, and all their villages that ***were*** around these cities as far as Baal. These ***were*** their dwelling places, and their genealogical enrollment ***belonged*** to them: and Meshobab and Jamlech and Joshah the son of Amaziah, and Joel and Jehu the son of

Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, and Elioenai and Jaakobah and Jeshohaiah and Asaiah and Adiel and Jesimiel and Benaiah, and Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah. These who came by names ***were*** leaders in their clans; and the house of their fathers spread out abundantly. And they went to the entrance of Gedor, as far as the east of the valley, to seek pasture for their flock. And they found pasture, rich and good, and the land ***was*** wide on both sides, and quiet and at ease; for those dwelling there before ***were*** from Ham. And these who were written by names came in the days of Hezekiah the king of Judah, and they struck their tents and the Meunites who were found there, and they devoted them to destruction until this day, and they dwelt in their place, for pasture for their flock ***was*** there. And from them, from the sons of Simeon, five hundred men went to the mountain of Seir; and Pelatiah and Neariah and Rephaiah and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi, ***were*** at their head. And they struck the remnant of the escaped ***ones*** of Amalek, and they have dwelt there until this day.

Chapter 4 Preview

Chapter 4 finishes the families of Judah and then turns to Simeon, the tribe whose land lay inside Judah's in the far south. Most of the chapter is names, clans and towns. But right in the middle of the list, the writer stops for two verses to tell us about a man named Jabez, who was honored more than his brothers and who prayed, and God answered him.

The chapter also shows the everyday life of God's people: craftsmen, linen workers, potters who worked for the king, and shepherds looking for good pasture for their flocks. God's record of His people includes the ordinary work they did. And it ends with Simeon's families pushing out to new land in the days of King Hezekiah.

Chapter 4 Study

4:1-8 *The sons of Judah **were** Perez, Hezron, and Carmi and Hur and Shobal. And Reaiah the son of Shobal fathered Jahath, and Jahath fathered Ahumai and Lahad. These **were** the clans of the Zorathite. And these **were of** the father of Etam: Jezreel and Ishma and Idbash; and the name of their sister **was** Hazzelelponi; and Penuel **was** the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These **were** the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, the father of Bethlehem. And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. And Naarah bore to him Ahuzzam and Hepher and Temeni and Haahashtari. These **were** the sons of Naarah. And the sons of Helah **were** Zereth and Zohar and Ethnan. And Koz fathered Anub and Zobebah, and the clans of Aharhel the son of Harum.*

These verses go back over some of the families of Judah from chapter 2 and add new branches: the clans of the Zorathites (4:2), the sons of Hur, "the firstborn of Ephrathah, the father of Bethlehem" (4:4), and the family of Ashhur, "the father of Tekoa" (4:5). As we saw in chapter 2, "father of" a town usually means the man who founded it or led it.

We do not know most of these people beyond their names. Scripture doesn't tell us their stories. But God knew them, and their names were kept. In a list like this, the writer is showing the returned people that their towns and clans had roots that went back centuries.

4:9-10 *And Jabez was honored more than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I gave birth in pain." And Jabez called to the God of Israel, saying, "If You will indeed bless me, and increase my border, and Your hand will be with me, and You will keep* ***me*** *from harm so as not to pain me—" And God brought what he had asked.*

Then the list stops. "And Jabez was honored more than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I gave birth in pain." In Hebrew the name Jabez sounds like the word for pain. Every time someone called his name, it was a reminder of his hard beginning. In those days a name was thought to say something about a person's life.

Jabez did not accept that his pain would define him. He took it to God. "Jabez called to the God of Israel." He asked four things. "If You will indeed bless me." He asked for God's blessing, the good that only God can give. "And increase my border." He asked for more land, which for a man of Judah meant more room for his family to live and work in the land God had given. "And Your hand will be with me." He asked for God's presence and power. "And You will keep me from harm so as not to pain me." The man named Pain asked God to keep him from pain. His prayer is not finished in the Hebrew. It ends as if he simply stopped and left it with God.

"And God brought what he had asked." That is all we are told. Jabez was honored, he prayed, and God answered.

What can we learn from him? First, he prayed to "the God of Israel," the God of the covenant, not some other god. Second, he was honest. He asked for blessing, for room, for God's hand and for protection, and he did not pretend he didn't need them. Third, he asked God to keep him from harm, which many teachers understand as harm that comes from evil as well as from hardship. Fourth, he trusted God with the answer. God is glad when His children ask Him for help (Philippians 4:6; Matthew 7:7-11).

A word of warning. Some years ago this short prayer was made popular as a formula: pray these words every day and God will enlarge your life. That is not what the text teaches. The writer does not tell us to repeat Jabez's words. He tells us that Jabez was honored, that he called on God, and that God answered him. The prayer was not a magic phrase. It was a man going to God in faith. Scripture also tells us that we can ask wrongly, for our own pleasures (James 4:3), and that God hears what we ask "according to His will" (1 John 5:14). God may answer a prayer like this with a yes, as He did for Jabez, or He may give something better than what we asked. Paul asked three times for his thorn to be removed, and God said His grace was enough (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

So pray like Jabez. Bring God your real needs, ask for His blessing and His hand on your life, and leave the answer with Him. But do not treat his words as a key that unlocks blessing. The blessing is in God, not in the words.

4:11-23 *And Chelub the brother of Shuhah fathered Mehir; he **was** the father of Eshton. And Eshton fathered Beth-rapha and Paseah and Tehinnah the father of Ir-nahash. These **were** the men of Recah. And the sons of Kenaz **were** Othniel and Seraiah; and the sons of Othniel **were** Hathath. And Meonothai fathered Ophrah; and Seraiah fathered Joab the father of Ge-harashim, for they were craftsmen. And the sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh **were** Iru, Elah, and Naam; and the sons of Elah, and Kenaz. And the sons of Jehallelel **were** Ziph and Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel. And the son of Ezrah: Jether and Mered and Epher and Jalon. And she conceived Miriam and Shammai and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. And his wife, the Judahite, bore Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. And these **are** the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took. And the sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, **were** the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maacathite. And the sons of Shimon **were** Amnon and Rinnah, Ben-hanan and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi **were** Zoheth and Ben-zoheth. The sons of Shelah the son of Judah **were** Er the father of Lecah, and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the clans of the house of the work of the fine linen, of the house of Ashbea; and Jokim, and the men of Cozeba, and Joash and Saraph, who ruled over Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And the words **are** ancient. They **were** the potters and the inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah; with the king in his work they dwelt there.*

The list picks up again with more clans of Judah. Some are named for their trades. Joab was "the father of Ge-harashim, for they were craftsmen" (4:14). The name means the valley of craftsmen. There were "the clans of the house of the work of the fine linen" (4:21), and the potters who lived at Netaim and Gederah: "with the king in his work they dwelt there" (4:23). These were families who did skilled work for the king.

Two other notes stand out. Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the faithful spy who followed the LORD fully (Numbers 14:24), is named (4:15). And a man named Mered married "Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh" (4:18). An Egyptian princess became part of a family of Judah. Her name means daughter of the LORD, perhaps a name she took when she joined His people. Verse 22 adds, "And the words are ancient." The writer is telling us his records were old, passed down for many generations.

God's people are not only kings and priests. They are potters and weavers, builders and farmers. Paul tells us that whatever we do, we should work at it from the heart, as for the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

4:24-33 *The sons of Simeon **were** Nemuel and Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Shaul; Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. And the sons of Mishma **were** Hammuel his son, Zaccur his son, Shimei his son. And Shimei **had** sixteen sons and six daughters; and his brothers **had** not many sons, and all their clan did not multiply as much as the sons of Judah. And they dwelt in Beersheba and Moladah and Hazar-shual and in Bilhah and in Ezem and in Tolad and in Bethuel and in Hormah and in Ziklag and in Beth-marcaboth and in Hazar-susim and in Beth-biri and in Shaaraim. These **were** their cities until David reigned. And their villages **were** Etam and Ain, Rimmon and Tochen and Ashan, five cities, and all their villages that **were** around these cities as far as Baal. These **were** their dwelling places, and their genealogical enrollment **belonged** to them:*

Now the tribe of Simeon. Its families are listed, and then a note: "all their clan did not multiply as much as the sons of Judah" (4:27). Simeon was a small tribe. Jacob had said, at the end of his life, that Simeon would be scattered in Israel (Genesis 49:5-7), because of what Simeon and Levi did at Shechem (Genesis 34). Simeon received towns within Judah's land (Joshua 19:1-9), and in time it blended into Judah.

The towns are listed: Beersheba, Moladah, Hormah, Ziklag and others. "These were their cities until David reigned" (4:31). Ziklag was the town where David lived while he hid from Saul (1 Samuel 27:6). The list ends with "their genealogical enrollment" (4:33), the record of their family lines.

4:34-43 *and Meshobab and Jamlech and Joshah the son of Amaziah, and Joel and Jehu the son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, and Elioenai and Jaakobah and Jeshohaiah and Asaiah and Adiel and Jesimiel and Benaiah, and Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah. These who came by names **were** leaders in their clans; and the house of their fathers spread out abundantly. And they went to the entrance of Gedor, as far as the east of the valley, to seek pasture for their flock. And they found pasture, rich and good, and the land **was** wide on both sides, and quiet and at ease; for those dwelling there before **were** from Ham. And these who were written by names came in the days of Hezekiah the king of Judah, and they struck their tents and the Meunites who were found there, and they devoted them to destruction until this day, and they dwelt in their place, for pasture for their flock **was** there. And from them, from the sons of Simeon, five hundred men went to the mountain of Seir; and Pelatiah and Neariah and Rephaiah and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi, **were** at their head. And they struck the remnant of the escaped **ones** of Amalek, and they have dwelt there until this day.*

The last section names the leaders of Simeon who moved out to find more land. They went toward Gedor "to seek pasture for their flock," and "they found pasture, rich and good, and the land was wide on both sides, and quiet and at ease" (4:39-40). This happened "in the days of Hezekiah the king of Judah" (4:41), about 715 to 686 B.C. They struck the people living there, the Meunites, and settled in their place. Five hundred others went to the mountain of Seir and "struck the remnant of the escaped ones of Amalek" (4:43).

The Amalekites had attacked Israel in the wilderness, and God had said He would blot out their memory (Exodus 17:14; Deuteronomy 25:17-19). Saul failed to finish the job (1 Samuel 15).

Centuries later, a small group of Simeonites did. God's word does not fail, even when it takes a long time.

"They have dwelt there until this day" (4:43). For the first readers, these were real places that families still remembered.

Chapter 4 Summary

Chapter 4 finishes the families of Judah. It lists clans and founders of towns, craftsmen, linen workers and the king's potters, and an Egyptian princess named Bithiah who married into Judah. In the middle of the list stands Jabez, named for his mother's pain, who was honored more than his brothers. He called on the God of Israel to bless him, enlarge his border, keep His hand on him and keep him from harm, and God granted what he asked. His prayer is an example of faith, not a formula. The chapter then lists the tribe of Simeon, a small tribe whose towns lay in Judah's land, and tells how some of its families found good pasture and struck the last of the Amalekites in the days of Hezekiah.

People and Places

- Jabez: a man of Judah, honored more than his brothers, whose prayer God answered.
- Caleb the son of Jephunneh: the faithful spy who received Hebron (Numbers 14:24; Joshua 14).
- Bithiah: a daughter of Pharaoh who married Mered of Judah.
- Simeon: the second son of Jacob, whose small tribe lived within Judah's land.
- Ziklag: the town where David lived while he fled from Saul.
- Amalek: the people who attacked Israel in the wilderness.

Chapter 4 Study Questions

1. Why did Jabez's mother give him that name? (4:9)

2. What four things did Jabez ask of God? (4:10)

3. How did God answer him? (4:10)

4. What kinds of work are mentioned in 4:14, 21 and 23, and what does that tell you about God's view of ordinary work?

5. Who was Bithiah, and what does her place in this list show? (4:18)

6. Why was the tribe of Simeon small, and where did it live? (4:27-31; Genesis 49:5-7)

7. What did the Simeonites find in the days of Hezekiah, and what did they do to the remnant of Amalek? (4:39-43)

8. Why is it a mistake to treat Jabez's prayer as a formula? What does 1 John 5:14 add?

9. Jabez did not let his painful start define him. Is there a hard beginning or a painful label in your life that you need to bring to God?

10. What do you need to ask God for honestly this week, and how can you trust Him with the answer?

Chapter 5: The Tribes East of the Jordan

Scripture

5:1-10 And the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—for he ***was*** the firstborn, and when he profaned the beds of his father his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel, and not to be enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright; for Judah prevailed among his brothers, and from him ***came*** a leader, and the birthright ***belonged*** to Joseph— the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel ***were*** Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. The sons of Joel ***were*** Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria carried into exile; he ***was*** a leader of the Reubenites. And his brothers, by his clans, in the enrollment of their generations, ***were***: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel; he ***was*** dwelling in Aroer, and as far as Nebo and Baal-meon. And to the east he dwelt as far as the entrance of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, for their livestock had multiplied in the land of Gilead. And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagrites, and they fell by their hand; and they dwelt in their tents over all the face of the east of Gilead.

5:11-26 And the sons of Gad dwelt opposite them in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah: Joel ***was*** the chief, and Shapham the second, and Janai and Shaphat in Bashan. And their brothers of the house of their fathers ***were*** Michael and Meshullam and Sheba and Jorai and Jacan and Zia and Eber, seven. These ***were*** the sons of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, ***was*** chief of the house of their fathers. And they dwelt in Gilead, in Bashan, and in its villages, and in all the pasture lands of Sharon, as far as their limits. All of them were enrolled in the genealogy in the days of Jotham the king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the king of Israel. The sons of Reuben and ***the*** Gadites and the half of the tribe of Manasseh, from the sons of strength, men carrying shield and sword, and bending the bow, and trained in war, ***were*** forty and four thousand and seven hundred and sixty, going out ***to*** war. And they made war with the Hagrites and Jetur and Naphish and Nodab. And they were helped against them, and the Hagrites were given into their hand, and all who ***were*** with them; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He was entreated by them, because they trusted in Him. And they took captive their livestock: their camels, fifty thousand; and flock, two hundred and fifty thousand; and donkeys, two thousand; and souls of man, a hundred thousand. For many slain fell, for the battle ***was*** from God. And they dwelt in their place until the exile. And the sons of the half of the tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land; from Bashan to Baal-hermon and Senir and the mountain of Hermon, they multiplied. And these ***were*** the chiefs of the house of their fathers: even Epher and Ishi and Eliel and Azriel and Jeremiah and Hodaviah and Jahdiel, men mighty of strength, men of names, chiefs of the house of their fathers. And they acted unfaithfully against the God of their fathers, and they played the prostitute after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed from before them. And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul the king of Assyria and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria, and he carried them into exile, the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half of the tribe of Manasseh, and he brought them to Halah and Habor and Hara and the river of Gozan, until this day.

Chapter 5 Preview

Chapter 5 covers the two and a half tribes that settled east of the Jordan River: Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. Moses had given them that land, the rich grazing country of Gilead and Bashan, before Israel crossed the river (Numbers 32). The chapter opens by explaining why Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, did not get the rights of the firstborn, and why Judah's line came to rule.

The chapter tells two stories about these tribes. In the first, they cried out to God in battle and He gave them victory, "because they trusted in Him" (5:20). In the second, they were unfaithful to God and went after the gods of the land, and God sent the king of Assyria to carry them into exile (5:25-26). The same tribes, two very different endings. That was a lesson the returned exiles needed to hear.

Chapter 5 Study

5:1-3 *And the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—for he **was** the firstborn, and when he profaned the beds of his father his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel, and not to be enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright; for Judah prevailed among his brothers, and from him **came** a leader, and the birthright **belonged** to Joseph— the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel **were** Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.*

"The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel." Before the writer lists them, he explains something. Reuben was the firstborn, "and when he profaned the beds of his father his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph" (5:1). Reuben slept with his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22), and Jacob took the birthright from him (Genesis 49:3-4). The birthright was the firstborn son's right to a double share of the inheritance and to lead the family. Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, each became a tribe, so Joseph received the double share (Genesis 48:5).

Then comes a key line: "for Judah prevailed among his brothers, and from him came a leader" (5:2). The double portion went to Joseph, but the leadership went to Judah. Jacob had said the scepter would not depart from Judah (Genesis 49:10). That leader was David, and in the end, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ (Revelation 5:5). Sin cost Reuben his place, and God's choice gave it to Judah.

5:4-10 *The sons of Joel **were** Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria carried into exile; he **was** a leader of the Reubenites. And his brothers, by his clans, in the enrollment of their generations, **were**: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel; he **was** dwelling in Aroer, and as far as Nebo and Baal-meon. And to the east he dwelt as far as the entrance of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, for their livestock had multiplied in the land of Gilead. And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagrites, and they fell by their hand; and they dwelt in their tents over all the face of the east of Gilead.*

Reuben's family is traced through Joel down to "Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria carried into exile" (5:6). Tiglath-pileser III ruled Assyria from about 745 to 727 B.C. and took many people from the northern and eastern tribes away about 733 B.C. (2 Kings 15:29).

The tribe lived from Aroer up to Nebo and Baal-meon, and its flocks spread east toward the desert "for their livestock had multiplied in the land of Gilead" (5:9). In Saul's day they fought the Hagrites, a desert people, and took their land (5:10). Reuben was a tribe of herdsmen, living on the edge of the wilderness.

5:11-17 *And the sons of Gad dwelt opposite them in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah: Joel **was** the chief, and Shapham the second, and Janai and Shaphat in Bashan. And their brothers of the house of their fathers **were** Michael and Meshullam and Sheba and Jorai and Jacan and Zia and Eber, seven. These **were** the sons of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, **was** chief of the house of their fathers. And they dwelt in Gilead, in Bashan, and in its villages, and in all the pasture lands of Sharon, as far as their limits. All of them were enrolled in the genealogy in the days of Jotham the king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the king of Israel.*

The tribe of Gad lived north of Reuben, in Bashan and Gilead. Its leaders and families are named. Verse 17 says that they "were enrolled in the genealogy in the days of Jotham the king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the king of Israel." Jeroboam II reigned in the north about 793 to 753 B.C. and Jotham in Judah about 750 to 732 B.C., so these family records were written down before Assyria came.

This tells us something about where the writer got his lists. He used real records that had been kept for centuries. God's people took care to remember who belonged to them.

5:18-22 *The sons of Reuben and **the** Gadites and the half of the tribe of Manasseh, from the sons of strength, men carrying shield and sword, and bending the bow, and trained in war, **were** forty and four thousand and seven hundred and sixty, going out **to** war. And they made war with the Hagrites and Jetur and Naphish and Nodab. And they were helped against them, and the Hagrites were given into their hand, and all who **were** with them; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He was entreated by them, because they trusted in Him. And they took captive their livestock: their camels, fifty thousand; and flock, two hundred and fifty thousand; and donkeys, two thousand; and souls of man, a hundred thousand. For many slain fell, for the battle **was** from God. And they dwelt in their place until the exile.*

The three eastern tribes had "forty and four thousand and seven hundred and sixty" fighting men (5:18). They went to war against the Hagrites and their allies. And here is what made the difference: "they cried out to God in the battle, and He was entreated by them, because they trusted in Him" (5:20). To be entreated means God listened to their plea and answered it.

They were trained soldiers with shields and swords and bows. But the writer does not credit their skill. He credits their faith. "For the battle was from God" (5:22). They took large numbers of livestock and captives, and they lived in that land "until the exile."

The same is true for us. We should do the work in front of us and do it well, but we fight our battles by calling on God and trusting Him. Do you pray only after everything else has failed, or do you cry out to Him in the middle of the fight?

5:23-26 *And the sons of the half of the tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land; from Bashan to Baal-hermon and Senir and the mountain of Hermon, they multiplied. And these **were** the chiefs of the house of their fathers: even Epher and Ishi and Eliel and Azriel and Jeremiah and Hodaviah and Jahdiel, men mighty of strength, men of names, chiefs of the house of their fathers. And they acted unfaithfully against the God of their fathers, and they played the prostitute after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed from before them. And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul the king of Assyria and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria, and he carried them into exile, the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half of the tribe of Manasseh, and he brought them to Halah and Habor and Hara and the river of Gozan, until this day.*

The half tribe of Manasseh lived farther north, from Bashan to Mount Hermon, and "they multiplied" (5:23). Their chiefs were "men mighty of strength, men of names" (5:24). They had size, strength and famous leaders.

"And they acted unfaithfully against the God of their fathers, and they played the prostitute after the gods of the peoples of the land" (5:25). The Bible often calls idol worship spiritual adultery, because God's people belonged to Him as a wife belongs to her husband. These tribes went after the very gods of the peoples God had destroyed before them.

So "the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul the king of Assyria and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria" (5:26). Pul was another name for Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 15:19). God used a pagan king to carry out His judgment. The tribes were taken to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river Gozan, "until this day."

Here is the lesson. In verse 20 these tribes trusted God and won. In verse 25 they were unfaithful and lost everything. Their strength did not save them. The first readers had just come back from their own exile, for the same sin (9:1). The chapter warns them, and us, that strength and success are no protection if our hearts turn from God.

Chapter 5 Summary

Chapter 5 lists the tribes east of the Jordan. It explains that Reuben, though firstborn, lost his birthright for his sin, so the double share went to Joseph's sons and the leadership went to Judah, from whom came a leader. Reuben's family is traced down to Beerah, whom Tiglath-pileser took into exile, and Gad's family is listed from records made in the days of Jotham and Jeroboam. The three eastern tribes once cried out to God in battle against the Hagrites, and He answered them because they trusted in Him. Later, they were unfaithful and went after the gods of the land, so God stirred up the king of Assyria to carry them into exile. Trust brought victory, and unfaithfulness brought exile.

Chapter 5 Study Questions

1. Why did Reuben lose his birthright, and who received it? (5:1; Genesis 35:22)

2. What does 5:2 say about Judah, and who was the leader that came from Judah?

3. Who carried Beerah into exile, and about when? (5:6)

4. When were the families of Gad enrolled in the genealogy? (5:17)

5. Why did God help the eastern tribes against the Hagrites? (5:20)

6. What did the half tribe of Manasseh do, and how did God respond? (5:25-26)

7. Compare 5:20 with 5:25. What made the difference between victory and exile?

8. The writer credits the victory to faith, not skill (5:20-22). How do you balance hard work and trust in God in your own life?

9. Reuben's sin cost him his place in the family. What does that warn us about the long-term cost of sin?

10. Is there anything in your life that is pulling your heart away from God, the way the gods of the land pulled these tribes? What would it take to turn back to Him?

Chapter 6: The Tribe of Levi

Scripture

6:1-15 The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel. And the sons of Amram: Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. And the sons of Aaron: Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Eleazar fathered Phinehas; Phinehas fathered Abishua; and Abishua fathered Bukki, and Bukki fathered Uzzi; and Uzzi fathered Zerahiah, and Zerahiah fathered Meraioth; Meraioth fathered Amariah, and Amariah fathered Ahitub; and Ahitub fathered Zadok, and Zadok fathered Ahimaaz; and Ahimaaz fathered Azariah, and Azariah fathered Johanan; and Johanan fathered Azariah—he ***is the one*** who served as priest in the house which Solomon built in Jerusalem. And Azariah fathered Amariah, and Amariah fathered Ahitub; and Ahitub fathered Zadok, and Zadok fathered Shallum; and Shallum fathered Hilkiah, and Hilkiah fathered Azariah; and Azariah fathered Seraiah, and Seraiah fathered Jehozadak; and Jehozadak went ***away*** when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

6:16-30 The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. And these ***are*** the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei. And the sons of Kohath: Amram and Izhar and Hebron and Uzziel. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. And these ***are*** the clans of the Levite according to their fathers. Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeatherai his son. The sons of Kohath: Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son, Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziah his son, and Shaul his son. And the sons of Elkanah: Amasai and Ahimoth. ***As for*** Elkanah —the sons of Elkanah: Zophai his son, and Nahath his son, Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. And the sons of Samuel: the firstborn, and ***the*** second, Abijah. The sons of Merari: Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.

6:31-48 And these ***are those*** whom David appointed over the direction of song ***in*** the house of the LORD, from the resting of the ark. And they were serving before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting with song, until Solomon built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem; and they stood according to their custom over their service. And these ***are*** those who stood, and their sons. From the sons of the Kohathite: Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. And his brother Asaph, who stood at his right: Asaph the son of Berechiah, the son of Shimea, the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchijah, the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, the son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi. And the sons of Merari their brothers ***were*** on the left: Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shemer, the son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi. And their brothers the Levites ***were*** given for all the service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

6:49-60 And Aaron and his sons ***were*** making ***offerings*** smoke on the altar of the burnt offering and on the altar of the incense, for all the work of the holy of holies, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. And these ***are*** the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son, Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son. And these ***are*** their dwelling places according to their encampments within their territory: to the sons of Aaron, to the clan of the Kohathite, for the lot was theirs; and they gave to them Hebron in the land of Judah and its pasture lands around it. And the field of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. And to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of refuge: Hebron, and Libnah and its pasture lands, and Jattir, and Eshtemoa and its pasture lands, and Hilez and its pasture lands, Debir and its pasture lands, and Ashan and its pasture lands, and Beth-shemesh and its pasture lands. And from the tribe of Benjamin: Geba and its pasture lands, and Alemeth and its pasture lands, and Anathoth and its pasture lands. All their cities ***were*** thirteen cities by their clans.

6:61-81 And to the sons of Kohath who were left from the clan of the tribe, from the half of the tribe, the half of Manasseh, by the lot, ***were*** ten cities. And to the sons of Gershom by their clans, from the tribe of Issachar, and from the tribe of Asher, and from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, ***were*** thirteen cities. To the sons of Merari by their clans, from the tribe of Reuben, and from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun, by the lot, ***were*** twelve cities. And the sons of Israel gave to the Levites the cities and their pasture lands. And they gave by the lot, from the tribe of the sons of Judah, and from the tribe of the sons of Simeon, and from the tribe of the sons of Benjamin, these cities which they called by names. And ***some*** of the clans of the sons of Kohath—the cities of their territory were from the tribe of Ephraim. And they gave to them the cities of refuge: Shechem and its pasture lands in the hill country of Ephraim, and Gezer and its pasture lands, and Jokmeam and its pasture lands, and Beth-horon and its pasture lands, and Aijalon and its pasture lands, and Gath-rimmon and its pasture lands; and from the half of the tribe of Manasseh: Aner and its pasture lands, and Bileam and its pasture lands, for the clan of the sons of Kohath who were left. To the sons of Gershom, from the clan of the half of the tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan and its pasture lands, and Ashtaroth and its pasture lands; and from the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh and its pasture lands, Daberath and its pasture lands, and Ramoth and its pasture lands, and Anem and its pasture lands; and from the tribe of Asher: Mashal and its pasture lands, and Abdon and its pasture lands, and Hukok and its pasture lands, and Rehob and its pasture lands; and from the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee and its pasture lands, and Hammon and its pasture lands, and Kiriathaim and its pasture lands. To the sons of Merari who were left, from the tribe of Zebulun: Rimmono and its pasture lands, Tabor and its pasture lands; and from beyond the Jordan ***at*** Jericho, on the east of the Jordan, from the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness and its pasture lands, and Jahaz and its pasture lands, and Kedemoth and its pasture lands, and Mephaath and its pasture lands; and from the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead and its pasture lands, and Mahanaim and its pasture lands, and Heshbon and its pasture lands, and Jazer and its pasture lands.

Chapter 6 Preview

Chapter 6 is the longest list chapter in the book, and it is about the tribe of Levi. Only Judah gets more space. That tells us what the writer cared about. Judah gave Israel its kings. Levi gave Israel its priests and the servants of God's house. The book holds the two together: the king and the temple, David's throne and the worship of God.

The chapter has four parts. It traces the line of the high priests from Aaron to Jehozadak, who went into exile. It lists the three Levite clans, Gershom, Kohath and Merari. It names the singers David appointed, Heman, Asaph and Ethan, with their family lines back to Levi. And it lists the towns given to the Levites throughout Israel. For the returned people, this chapter showed that the priests and Levites serving in the rebuilt temple had a true line going back to Aaron and Levi.

Chapter 6 Study

6:1-15 *The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel. And the sons of Amram: Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. And the sons of Aaron: Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Eleazar fathered Phinehas; Phinehas fathered Abishua; and Abishua fathered Bukki, and Bukki fathered Uzzi; and Uzzi fathered Zerahiah, and Zerahiah fathered Meraioth; Meraioth fathered Amariah, and Amariah fathered Ahitub; and Ahitub fathered Zadok, and Zadok fathered Ahimaaz; and Ahimaaz fathered Azariah, and Azariah fathered Johanan; and Johanan fathered Azariah—he* ***is the one*** *who served as priest in the house which Solomon built in Jerusalem. And Azariah fathered Amariah, and Amariah fathered Ahitub; and Ahitub fathered Zadok, and Zadok fathered Shallum; and Shallum fathered Hilkiah, and Hilkiah fathered Azariah; and Azariah fathered Seraiah, and Seraiah fathered Jehozadak; and Jehozadak went* ***away*** *when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.*

"The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari." Levi was the third son of Jacob. His tribe was set apart to serve God, first at the tabernacle and later at the temple (Numbers 3:5-13). A Levite was any man of this tribe. A priest was a Levite from the family of Aaron, Moses' brother. Only the priests could offer sacrifices at the altar and go into the holy place.

Verse 3 names Amram's children: "Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam." Then Aaron's sons. Nadab and Abihu are named, though they died for offering strange fire before the LORD (Leviticus 10:1-2). The line of high priests goes through Eleazar and his son Phinehas, who was zealous for God (Numbers 25:10-13), down through Zadok, the priest in David's day (6:8), to Azariah, "who served as priest in the house which Solomon built in Jerusalem" (6:10), and on to Hilkiah, who found the book of the law in Josiah's day (2 Kings 22:8).

The list ends with sorrow: "Jehozadak went away when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar" (6:15). Notice who sent them. Not Nebuchadnezzar, but the LORD. Jehozadak's son Jeshua was the high priest who came back with Zerubbabel and helped rebuild the temple (Ezra 3:2). The line of priests, like the line of kings, survived the exile.

6:16-30 *The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. And these **are** the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei. And the sons of Kohath: Amram and Izhar and Hebron and Uzziel. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. And these **are** the clans of the Levite according to their fathers. Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeatherai his son. The sons of Kohath: Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son, Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziah his son, and Shaul his son. And the sons of Elkanah: Amasai and Ahimoth. **As for** Elkanah—the sons of Elkanah: Zophai his son, and Nahath his son, Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. And the sons of Samuel: the firstborn, and **the** second, Abijah. The sons of Merari: Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.*

This section lists the three clans of Levi again, now with their sons. Gershom's line runs through Libni and Jahath (6:20-21). Kohath's line runs through Amminadab (also called Izhar), Korah and Elkanah (6:22-28). Merari's line runs through Mahli (6:29-30).

One name stands out: "the sons of Samuel" (6:28). Samuel the prophet is listed as a descendant of Kohath. First Samuel 1:1 calls his father an Ephrathite, which means he lived in the hill country of Ephraim, not that he was from that tribe. As a Levite, Samuel could serve at the tabernacle from boyhood (1 Samuel 2:18). Korah is here too (6:22), the man who rebelled against Moses (Numbers 16). Yet his sons did not die with him (Numbers 26:11), and their descendants became singers and gatekeepers. Several psalms carry the title of the sons of Korah (such as Psalms 42, 44-49 and 84). God can redeem a family's story.

6:31-48 *And these **are those** whom David appointed over the direction of song **in** the house of the LORD, from the resting of the ark. And they were serving before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting with song, until Solomon built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem; and they stood according to their custom over their service. And these **are** those who stood, and their sons. From the sons of the Kohathite: Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. And his brother Asaph, who stood at his right: Asaph the son of Berechiah, the son of Shimea, the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchijah, the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, the son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi. And the sons of Merari their brothers **were** on the left: Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shemer, the son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi. And their brothers the Levites **were** given for all the service of the tabernacle of the house of God.*

"These are those whom David appointed over the direction of song in the house of the LORD, from the resting of the ark" (6:31). When David brought the ark to Jerusalem (chapters 15-16), he set Levites to lead the singing before it. They served "with song" at the tent until Solomon built the temple (6:32).

Three leaders are named, each with his family line back to Levi. Heman, from Kohath, stood in the middle. He was the grandson of Samuel (6:33). Asaph, from Gershom, stood at his right (6:39). Ethan, from Merari, stood at his left (6:44). Twelve psalms carry Asaph's name (Psalms 50 and 73-83), Psalm 88 carries Heman's, and Psalm 89 carries Ethan's.

Why trace the singers' families so carefully? Because worship mattered. The men who led God's people in song had to be the ones God had called. And the song itself mattered. These men gave us part of our Bible. When we sing God's praise today, we are joining a choir David organized three thousand years ago.

6:49-60 *And Aaron and his sons **were** making **offerings** smoke on the altar of the burnt offering and on the altar of the incense, for all the work of the holy of holies, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. And these **are** the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son, Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son. And these **are** their dwelling places according to their encampments within their territory: to the sons of Aaron, to the clan of the Kohathite, for the lot was theirs; and they gave to them Hebron in the land of Judah and its pasture lands around it. And the field of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. And to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of refuge: Hebron, and Libnah and its pasture lands, and Jattir, and Eshtemoa and its pasture lands, and Hilez and its pasture lands, Debir and its pasture lands, and Ashan and its pasture lands, and Beth-shemesh and its pasture lands. And from the tribe of Benjamin: Geba and its pasture lands, and Alemeth and its pasture lands, and Anathoth and its pasture lands. All their cities **were** thirteen cities by their clans.*

"And Aaron and his sons were making offerings smoke on the altar of the burnt offering and on the altar of the incense, for all the work of the holy of holies, and to make atonement for Israel" (6:49). Here is the work of the priests. The burnt offering was a sacrifice burned whole on the altar. The holy of holies was the inner room of the tabernacle, where the ark stood. Atonement means covering sin and bringing people back to God through a sacrifice. All of it was done "according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded."

The line of Aaron is given again, from Eleazar to Ahimaaz (6:50-53). Then the writer begins the list of Levite towns. The priests received thirteen cities in Judah and Benjamin, including Hebron and Anathoth (6:54-60). Anathoth would later be the hometown of the prophet Jeremiah, a priest (Jeremiah 1:1).

The priests offered sacrifices day after day, but those sacrifices could never take away sins for good. Hebrews tells us that Jesus, our great High Priest, offered Himself once for all, and by that one offering He has perfected forever those who are being made holy (Hebrews 10:11-14). The work of Aaron's sons pointed ahead to Him.

6:61-81 *And to the sons of Kohath who were left from the clan of the tribe, from the half of the tribe, the half of Manasseh, by the lot,* ***were*** *ten cities. And to the sons of Gershom by their clans, from the tribe of Issachar, and from the tribe of Asher, and from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan,* ***were*** *thirteen cities. To the sons of Merari by their clans, from the tribe of Reuben, and from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun, by the lot,* ***were*** *twelve cities. And the sons of Israel gave to the Levites the cities and their pasture lands. And they gave by the lot, from the tribe of the sons of Judah, and from the tribe of the sons of Simeon, and from the tribe of the sons of Benjamin, these cities which they called by names. And* ***some*** *of the clans of the sons of Kohath—the cities of their territory were from the tribe of Ephraim. And they gave to them the cities of refuge: Shechem and its pasture lands in the hill country of Ephraim, and Gezer and its pasture lands, and Jokmeam and its pasture lands, and Beth-horon and its pasture lands, and Aijalon and its pasture lands, and Gath-rimmon and its pasture lands; and from the half of the tribe of Manasseh: Aner and its pasture lands, and Bileam and its pasture lands, for the clan of the sons of Kohath who were left. To the sons of Gershom, from the clan of the half of the tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan and its pasture lands, and Ashtaroth and its pasture lands; and from the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh and its pasture lands, Daberath and its pasture lands, and Ramoth and its pasture lands, and Anem and its pasture lands; and from the tribe of Asher: Mashal and its pasture lands, and Abdon and its pasture lands, and Hukok and its pasture lands, and Rehob and its pasture lands; and from the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee and its pasture lands, and Hammon and its pasture lands, and Kiriathaim and its pasture lands. To the sons of Merari who were left, from the tribe of Zebulun: Rimmono and its pasture lands, Tabor and its pasture lands; and from beyond the Jordan* ***at*** *Jericho, on the east of the Jordan, from the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness and its pasture lands, and Jahaz and its pasture lands, and Kedemoth and its pasture lands, and Mephaath and its pasture lands; and from the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead and its pasture lands, and Mahanaim and its pasture lands, and Heshbon and its pasture lands, and Jazer and its pasture lands.*

The rest of the chapter lists the Levite towns given by lot from the other tribes. The Kohathites received towns in Ephraim and Manasseh, including Shechem, a city of refuge (6:67). The Gershonites received towns in the north, in Manasseh in Bashan, Issachar, Asher and Naphtali, including Golan and Kedesh in Galilee. The Merarites received towns in Zebulun, Reuben and Gad, including Bezer and Ramoth in Gilead. The same list appears in Joshua 21.

A city of refuge was a town where someone who had killed a person by accident could flee and be safe until his case was judged (Numbers 35:9-15). Six of them were Levite towns.

Why were the Levites scattered all over Israel instead of living in one place? Because God wanted His servants among all His people. They taught the law (Deuteronomy 33:10; 2 Chronicles 17:8-9), and they were a living reminder in every tribe that Israel belonged to God. The Levites received no land of their own, because the LORD was their inheritance (Numbers 18:20). Peter says believers today are "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). We too are scattered among the people around us, so that they can see and hear about God.

Chapter 6 Summary

Chapter 6 lists the tribe of Levi. It traces the high priests from Aaron through Eleazar, Phinehas and Zadok down to Jehozadak, whom the LORD sent into exile by Nebuchadnezzar. It lists the three Levite clans, Gershom, Kohath and Merari, including the family of Samuel. It names the singers David appointed to lead worship before the ark: Heman, the grandson of Samuel, with Asaph at his right and Ethan at his left, each traced back to Levi. It describes the work of Aaron's sons at the altars to make atonement for Israel. And it lists the towns given to the priests and Levites throughout the tribes, including the cities of refuge. The chapter shows that the worship of God was at the center of Israel's life, and that those who served in the rebuilt temple stood in a true line from Levi and Aaron.

People and Places

- Levi: the third son of Jacob, father of the tribe set apart to serve God.
- Aaron: Moses' brother, the first high priest; only his descendants could be priests.
- Zadok: the priest in the days of David and Solomon.
- Heman, Asaph and Ethan: the three leaders of the singers David appointed.
- Cities of refuge: towns where someone who killed by accident could find safety until judged.

Chapter 6 Study Questions

1. What is the difference between a Levite and a priest? (6:1-3, 49)

2. Who sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile, according to 6:15?

3. Which famous prophet appears in the line of Kohath? (6:28, 33)

4. Who were the three leaders of the singers, and where did each stand? (6:31-44)

5. What were the priests doing at the altars, according to 6:49?

6. Why do you think the Levites were given towns all over Israel instead of one region? (6:54-81)

7. How do the daily sacrifices of the priests point to what Jesus did once for all? (6:49; Hebrews 10:11-14)

8. The sons of Korah came from a rebel, but became worship leaders. What does that say about God and our family history?

9. The singers' families were traced carefully because worship mattered. How seriously do you take worship, both on Sunday and during the week?

10. Peter calls believers a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). Where has God placed you, like a Levite in a town, to show others what He is like?

Chapter 7: The Northern Tribes

Scripture

7:1-19 And of the sons of Issachar: Tola and Puah, Jashub and Shimron, four. And the sons of Tola: Uzzi and Rephaiah and Jeriel and Jahmai and Ibsam and Shemuel, heads of the house of their fathers, of Tola, mighty ***men*** of valor according to their generations; their number in the days of David ***was*** twenty-two thousand and six hundred. And the sons of Uzzi: Izrahiah. And the sons of Izrahiah: Michael and Obadiah and Joel, Isshiah, five; all of them heads. And with them, according to their generations, according to the house of their fathers, ***were*** troops of the army for war, thirty-six thousand, for they had many wives and sons. And their brothers among all the clans of Issachar, mighty ***men*** of valor, ***were*** eighty-seven thousand, their enrollment by genealogy for all. Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Jediael, three. And the sons of Bela: Ezbon and Uzzi and Uzziel and Jerimoth and Iri, five, heads of ***the*** house of fathers, mighty ***men*** of valor; and their enrollment by genealogy ***was*** twenty-two thousand and thirty-four. And the sons of Becher: Zemirah and Joash and Eliezer and Elioenai and Omri and Jeremoth and Abijah and Anathoth and Alemeth. All these ***were*** the sons of Becher. And their enrollment by genealogy according to their generations, heads of the house of their fathers, mighty ***men*** of valor, ***was*** twenty thousand and two hundred. And the sons of Jediael: Bilhan. And the sons of Bilhan: Jeush and Benjamin and Ehud and Chenaanah and Zethan and Tarshish and Ahishahar. All these ***were*** the sons of Jediael, according to the heads of the fathers, mighty ***men*** of valor, seventeen thousand and two hundred, going out ***in*** the army for the battle. And Shuppim and Huppim ***were*** the sons of Ir; Hushim, the sons of Aher. The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel and Guni and Jezer and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah. The sons of Manasseh: Asriel, whom his concubine the Aramean bore; she bore Machir the father of Gilead. And Machir took a wife for Huppim and for Shuppim, and the name of his sister ***was*** Maacah; and the name of the second ***was*** Zelophehad; and Zelophehad had daughters. And Maacah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother ***was*** Sheresh; and his sons ***were*** Ulam and Rakem. And the sons of Ulam: Bedan. These ***were*** the sons of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. And his sister Hammolecheth bore Ishhod and Abiezer and Mahlah. And the sons of Shemida were Ahian and Shechem and Likhi and Aniam.

7:20-40 And the sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eleadah his son, and Tahath his son, and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead. And the men of Gath who were born in the land killed them, because they went down to take their livestock. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brothers came to comfort him. And he went in to his wife, and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it was in calamity in his house. And his daughter ***was*** Sheerah, and she built Beth-horon the lower and the upper, and Uzzen-sheerah. And Rephah ***was*** his son, and Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan his son, Ladan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, Nun his son, Joshua his son. And their possession and their dwelling places ***were*** Bethel and its towns, and to the east Naaran, and to the west Gezer and its towns, and Shechem and its towns, as far as Ayyah and its towns; and alongside the sons of Manasseh: Beth-shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these dwelt the sons of Joseph the son of

Israel. The sons of Asher: Imnah and Ishvah and Ishvi and Beriah, and Serah their sister. And the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel; he ***was*** the father of Birzaith. And Heber fathered Japhlet and Shomer and Hotham, and Shua their sister. And the sons of Japhlet: Pasach and Bimhal and Ashvath. These ***were*** the sons of Japhlet. And the sons of Shemer: Ahi and Rohgah, and Hubbah and Aram. And the son of Helem his brother: Zophah and Imna and Shelesh and Amal. The sons of Zophah: Suah and Harnepher and Shual and Beri and Imrah, Bezer and Hod and Shamma and Shilshah and Ithran and Beera. And the sons of Jether: Jephunneh and Pispa and Ara. And the sons of Ulla: Arah and Hanniel and Rizia. All these ***were*** the sons of Asher, heads of the house of the fathers, chosen, mighty ***men*** of valor, heads of the leaders. And their enrollment by genealogy in the army for the battle—their number ***was*** twenty-six thousand men.

Chapter 7 Preview

Chapter 7 moves quickly through six tribes that lived mostly in the north: Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh west of the Jordan, Ephraim and Asher. Many of these lists count the fighting men, the "mighty men of valor," from army records kept in David's day and later. The lists are shorter than Judah's or Levi's, because these tribes were carried off by Assyria in 722 B.C. and their records were harder to keep.

Two tribes are missing altogether, Dan and Zebulun. Scripture doesn't tell us why. What we do have are a few human touches inside the lists: Zelophehad's daughters, a father's grief over sons killed in a raid, a daughter who built towns, and the family line of Joshua, the man who led Israel into the land. The writer wanted his readers to know that the northern tribes were part of Israel too.

Chapter 7 Study

7:1-5 *And of the sons of Issachar: Tola and Puah, Jashub and Shimron, four. And the sons of Tola: Uzzi and Rephaiah and Jeriel and Jahmai and Ibsam and Shemuel, heads of the house of their fathers, of Tola, mighty* ***men*** *of valor according to their generations; their number in the days of David* ***was*** *twenty-two thousand and six hundred. And the sons of Uzzi: Izrahiah. And the sons of Izrahiah: Michael and Obadiah and Joel, Isshiah, five; all of them heads. And with them, according to their generations, according to the house of their fathers,* ***were*** *troops of the army for war, thirty-six thousand, for they had many wives and sons. And their brothers among all the clans of Issachar, mighty* ***men*** *of valor,* ***were*** *eighty-seven thousand, their enrollment by genealogy for all.*

"The sons of Issachar: Tola and Puah, Jashub and Shimron, four." Their families were counted as "mighty men of valor," and "their number in the days of David was twenty-two thousand and six hundred" (7:2). The whole tribe had eighty-seven thousand fighting men (7:5).

Issachar was a large tribe in the fertile valley of Jezreel. Verse 4 says they had many soldiers "for they had many wives and sons." A growing family meant a growing tribe. These numbers likely come from David's census (21:1-6; 27:23-24), which shows the writer was working from real army records.

7:6-12 *Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Jediael, three. And the sons of Bela: Ezbon and Uzzi and Uzziel and Jerimoth and Iri, five, heads of **the** house of fathers, mighty **men** of valor; and their enrollment by genealogy **was** twenty-two thousand and thirty-four. And the sons of Becher: Zemirah and Joash and Eliezer and Elioenai and Omri and Jeremoth and Abijah and Anathoth and Alemeth. All these **were** the sons of Becher. And their enrollment by genealogy according to their generations, heads of the house of their fathers, mighty **men** of valor, **was** twenty thousand and two hundred. And the sons of Jediael: Bilhan. And the sons of Bilhan: Jeush and Benjamin and Ehud and Chenaanah and Zethan and Tarshish and Ahishahar. All these **were** the sons of Jediael, according to the heads of the fathers, mighty **men** of valor, seventeen thousand and two hundred, going out **in** the army for the battle. And Shuppim and Huppim **were** the sons of Ir; Hushim, the sons of Aher.*

"Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Jediael, three." The families of Benjamin are listed with their fighting men, about twenty-two thousand, twenty thousand and seventeen thousand from the three clans. Benjamin gets a much longer list in chapter 8, because it was the tribe of Saul and the tribe that stood with Judah.

The names in this list do not match the other lists of Benjamin's sons exactly (Genesis 46:21; Numbers 26:38-41; 1 Chronicles 8:1-5). Family lists in the Bible can name sons, grandsons or clans, and can use different names for the same person. The writer is giving us the records he had.

7:13 *The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel and Guni and Jezer and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.*

"The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel and Guni and Jezer and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah." Just one verse for a whole tribe. Bilhah was Rachel's servant, the mother of Dan and Naphtali (Genesis 30:3-8). Naphtali lived in Galilee, and Isaiah promised that this very land, which was humbled first, would see a great light (Isaiah 9:1-2). Matthew says that light came when Jesus began His ministry there (Matthew 4:13-16). The tribe with the shortest list saw the Light of the world first.

7:14-19 *The sons of Manasseh: Asriel, whom his concubine the Aramean bore; she bore Machir the father of Gilead. And Machir took a wife for Huppim and for Shuppim, and the name of his sister **was** Maacah; and the name of the second **was** Zelophehad; and Zelophehad had daughters. And Maacah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother **was** Sheresh; and his sons **were** Ulam and Rakem. And the sons of Ulam: Bedan. These **were** the sons of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. And his sister Hammolecheth bore Ishhod and Abiezer and Mahlah. And the sons of Shemida were Ahian and Shechem and Likhi and Aniam.*

This section gives the half of Manasseh that lived west of the Jordan. Manasseh's son Machir was "the father of Gilead" (7:14). Then comes a name many readers will remember: "Zelophehad had daughters" (7:15). Zelophehad had no sons, and his five daughters came to Moses and asked for their father's inheritance. God said they were right (Numbers 27:1-7). Their names, Mahlah and the others, appear more than once in Scripture.

Verse 18 also names a woman, Hammolecheth, and her sons, among them Abiezer, the clan of Gideon (Judges 6:11). The lists remember women as well as men, and they remember them by name.

7:20-29 *And the sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eleadah his son, and Tahath his son, and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead. And the men of Gath who were born in the land killed them, because they went down to take their livestock. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brothers came to comfort him. And he went in to his wife, and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it was in calamity in his house. And his daughter **was** Sheerah, and she built Beth-horon the lower and the upper, and Uzzen-sheerah. And Rephah **was** his son, and Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan his son, Ladan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, Nun his son, Joshua his son. And their possession and their dwelling places **were** Bethel and its towns, and to the east Naaran, and to the west Gezer and its towns, and Shechem and its towns, as far as Ayyah and its towns; and alongside the sons of Manasseh: Beth-shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these dwelt the sons of Joseph the son of Israel.*

The family of Ephraim, Joseph's younger son, comes next, and with it a sad story. Some of Ephraim's sons went down to take livestock from the men of Gath, "and the men of Gath who were born in the land killed them" (7:21). "And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brothers came to comfort him" (7:22). Later he had another son and named him Beriah, "because it was in calamity in his house" (7:23).

Even in a family list, God records a father's grief. Our sorrow is not hidden from Him (Psalm 56:8). And Ephraim's daughter Sheerah "built Beth-horon the lower and the upper, and Uzzen-sheerah" (7:24). A woman who built cities! The line goes on through Elishama, a leader in the wilderness (Numbers 1:10), to "Nun his son, Joshua his son" (7:27). Joshua led Israel into the land God promised. His name means the LORD saves, and in its shorter Hebrew form it is the same name as Jesus.

The towns of Joseph's sons are listed, from Bethel to Shechem and Gezer, and Beth-shean, Taanach, Megiddo and Dor (7:28-29).

7:30-40 *The sons of Asher: Imnah and Ishvah and Ishvi and Beriah, and Serah their sister. And the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel; he **was** the father of Birzaith. And Heber fathered Japhlet and Shomer and Hotham, and Shua their sister. And the sons of Japhlet: Pasach and Bimhal and Ashvath. These **were** the sons of Japhlet. And the sons of Shemer: Ahi and Rohgah, and Hubbah and Aram. And the son of Helem his brother: Zophah and Imna and Shelesh and Amal. The sons of Zophah: Suah and Harnepher and Shual and Beri and Imrah, Bezer and Hod and Shamma and Shilshah and Ithran and Beera. And the sons of Jether: Jephunneh and Pispa and Ara. And the sons of Ulla: Arah and Hanniel and Rizia. All these **were** the sons of Asher, heads of the house of the fathers, chosen, mighty **men** of valor, heads of the leaders. And their enrollment by genealogy in the army for the battle—their number **was** twenty-six thousand men.*

The last tribe is Asher, who lived along the coast in the northwest. The family is traced through Beriah and Heber, with a sister named Serah (7:30). "All these were the sons of Asher, heads of the house of the fathers, chosen, mighty men of valor, heads of the leaders" (7:40). They had twenty-six thousand men for battle.

Asher appears again in the New Testament. When Jesus was presented at the temple, an old prophetess named Anna, "of the tribe of Asher," gave thanks and spoke of Him to all who were waiting for redemption (Luke 2:36-38). Centuries after Assyria scattered the north, a daughter of Asher was there to welcome the Messiah. The tribes were scattered, but not lost to God.

Chapter 7 Summary

Chapter 7 lists six northern tribes. Issachar had many fighting men, counted in the days of David. Benjamin's families and soldiers are listed briefly, before the longer list in chapter 8. Naphtali gets just one verse. The western half of Manasseh is traced through Machir, with Zelophehad's daughters and the clan of Abiezer. Ephraim's family records a raid in which some of his sons were killed, his long mourning, the birth of Beriah, his daughter Sheerah who built towns, and the line that led to Joshua the son of Nun. Asher's family closes the chapter with its chosen men of valor. Dan and Zebulun are not listed. Though these tribes were carried away by Assyria, God kept their names, and Scripture shows they were not forgotten.

Chapter 7 Study Questions

1. Which six tribes are listed in this chapter, and which two are missing?

2. When were the fighting men of Issachar counted? (7:2)

3. Who were Zelophehad's daughters, and why are they remembered? (7:15; Numbers 27:1-7)

4. What happened to some of Ephraim's sons, and how did Ephraim respond? (7:21-23)

5. What did Sheerah do? (7:24)

6. Whose family line ends this chapter's list of Ephraim, and why is that important? (7:27)

7. How does Anna in Luke 2:36-38 show that God had not forgotten the tribe of Asher?

8. God recorded Ephraim's grief in a family list. How does it help you to know that God sees your sorrow? (Psalm 56:8)

9. This chapter remembers women like Zelophehad's daughters, Hammolecheth and Sheerah. What does that say about how God values every person in His family?

10. Naphtali, with the shortest list, was the first to see Jesus' light. Do you ever feel small or overlooked? What does this chapter say to you?

Chapter 8: The Tribe of Benjamin and the Family of Saul

Scripture

8:1-28 And Benjamin fathered Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, and Aharah the third, Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. And Bela had sons: Addar and Gera and Abihud, and Abishua and Naaman and Ahoah, and Gera and Shephuphan and Huram. And these ***are*** the sons of Ehud— these are the heads of fathers of the inhabitants of Geba, and they carried them into exile to Manahath— and Naaman and Ahijah and Gera—he carried them into exile—and he fathered Uzza and Ahihud. And Shaharaim fathered ***sons*** in the country of Moab after he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara ***were*** his wives. And he fathered from Hodesh his wife: Jobab and Zibia and Mesha and Malcam, and Jeuz and Sachia and Mirmah. These ***were*** his sons, heads of fathers. And from Hushim he fathered Abitub and Elpaal. And the sons of Elpaal: Eber and Misham and Shemed—he built Ono and Lod and its towns— and Beriah and Shema—they ***were*** the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Aijalon; they put to flight the inhabitants of Gath— and Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth, and Zebadiah and Arad and Eder, and Michael and Ishpah and Joha, the sons of Beriah. And Zebadiah and Meshullam and Hizki and Heber, and Ishmerai and Izliah and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal. And Jakim and Zichri and Zabdi, and Elienai and Zillethai and Eliel, and Adaiah and Beraiah and Shimrath, the sons of Shimei. And Ishpan and Eber and Eliel, and Abdon and Zichri and Hanan, and Hananiah and Elam and Anthothijah, and Iphdeiah and Penuel, the sons of Shashak. And Shamsherai and Shehariah and Athaliah, and Jaareshiah and Elijah and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham. These ***were*** heads of fathers according to their generations, heads; these dwelt in Jerusalem.

8:29-40 And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, and the name of his wife ***was*** Maacah; and his son, the firstborn, Abdon, and Zur and Kish and Baal and Nadab, and Gedor and Ahio and Zecher. And Mikloth fathered Shimeah. And they also dwelt opposite their brothers in Jerusalem, with their brothers. And Ner fathered Kish, and Kish fathered Saul, and Saul fathered Jonathan and Malchi-shua and Abinadab and Eshbaal. And the son of Jonathan ***was*** Merib-baal; and Merib-baal fathered Micah. And the sons of Micah: Pithon and Melech and Tarea and Ahaz. And Ahaz fathered Jehoaddah, and Jehoaddah fathered Alemeth and Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri fathered Moza. And Moza fathered Binea; Raphah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. And Azel had six sons, and these ***are*** their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael and Sheariah and Obadiah and Hanan. All these ***were*** the sons of Azel. And the sons of Eshek his brother: Ulam his firstborn, Jeush the second, and Eliphelet the third. And the sons of Ulam were men mighty of valor, bending the bow, and having many sons and sons' sons, one hundred and fifty. All these ***were*** of the sons of Benjamin.

Chapter 8 Preview

Chapter 7 gave a short list of Benjamin. Chapter 8 gives a long one. Benjamin was the smallest tribe, but it mattered. It was the tribe of Israel's first king, Saul. Its land lay between Judah and the north, and Jerusalem sat on its border. When the kingdom split after Solomon, Benjamin stayed with Judah, and many of its families came back from Babylon with Judah.

The chapter lists Benjamin's families, where they lived and the towns they built, and then the family of Saul, down through Jonathan's son for about a dozen generations. Saul's reign failed, as chapter 10 will show, but his family was still part of God's people. The list also sets the stage for the story that begins in chapter 10.

Chapter 8 Study

8:1-28 *And Benjamin fathered Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, and Aharah the third, Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. And Bela had sons: Addar and Gera and Abihud, and Abishua and Naaman and Ahoah, and Gera and Shephuphan and Huram. And these **are** the sons of Ehud— these are the heads of fathers of the inhabitants of Geba, and they carried them into exile to Manahath— and Naaman and Ahijah and Gera—he carried them into exile—and he fathered Uzza and Ahihud. And Shaharaim fathered **sons** in the country of Moab after he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara **were** his wives. And he fathered from Hodesh his wife: Jobab and Zibia and Mesha and Malcam, and Jeuz and Sachia and Mirmah. These **were** his sons, heads of fathers. And from Hushim he fathered Abitub and Elpaal. And the sons of Elpaal: Eber and Misham and Shemed—he built Ono and Lod and its towns— and Beriah and Shema—they **were** the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Aijalon; they put to flight the inhabitants of Gath— and Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth, and Zebadiah and Arad and Eder, and Michael and Ishpah and Joha, the sons of Beriah. And Zebadiah and Meshullam and Hizki and Heber, and Ishmerai and Izliah and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal. And Jakim and Zichri and Zabdi, and Elienai and Zillethai and Eliel, and Adaiah and Beraiah and Shimrath, the sons of Shimei. And Ishpan and Eber and Eliel, and Abdon and Zichri and Hanan, and Hananiah and Elam and Anthothijah, and Iphdeiah and Penuel, the sons of Shashak. And Shamsherai and Shehariah and Athaliah, and Jaareshiah and Elijah and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham. These **were** heads of fathers according to their generations, heads; these dwelt in Jerusalem.*

"And Benjamin fathered Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, and Aharah the third" (8:1). The list goes on through Bela's sons, the family of Ehud, and many other clans of Benjamin. Ehud may be the left-handed judge who saved Israel from Moab (Judges 3:15), though the name was common.

Some of these families moved. Some were carried "into exile to Manahath" (8:6), a move within the land. A man named Shaharaim had children "in the country of Moab" (8:8), reminding us of Ruth's family, who also went to Moab (Ruth 1:1). Elpaal's son Shemed "built Ono and Lod and its towns" (8:12). Lod is the town later called Lydda, where Peter healed Aeneas (Acts 9:32-35). Beriah and Shema were leaders in Aijalon, "they put to flight the inhabitants of Gath" (8:13).

The section ends: "These were heads of fathers according to their generations, heads; these dwelt in Jerusalem" (8:28). These were the families who lived in or near the capital. The first readers were rebuilding Jerusalem, and here were the families of Benjamin who had lived there before them.

Long lists like this can test our patience. But think about what it meant to a man of Benjamin standing in the ruins of Jerusalem. He could find his own family's name and know that his people had been there, and that God had brought them back.

8:29-40 *And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, and the name of his wife **was** Maacah; and his son, the firstborn, Abdon, and Zur and Kish and Baal and Nadab, and Gedor and Ahio and Zecher. And Mikloth fathered Shimeah. And they also dwelt opposite their brothers in Jerusalem, with their brothers. And Ner fathered Kish, and Kish fathered Saul, and Saul fathered Jonathan and Malchi-shua and Abinadab and Eshbaal. And the son of Jonathan **was** Merib-baal; and Merib-baal fathered Micah. And the sons of Micah: Pithon and Melech and Tarea and Ahaz. And Ahaz fathered Jehoaddah, and Jehoaddah fathered Alemeth and Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri fathered Moza. And Moza fathered Binea; Raphah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. And Azel had six sons, and these **are** their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael and Sheariah and Obadiah and Hanan. All these **were** the sons of Azel. And the sons of Eshek his brother: Ulam his firstborn, Jeush the second, and Eliphelet the third. And the sons of Ulam were men mighty of valor, bending the bow, and having many sons and sons' sons, one hundred and fifty. All these **were** of the sons of Benjamin.*

Now the family of Saul. It begins with "the father of Gibeon," whose wife was Maacah (8:29). His sons included Kish and Ner. Ner's son Kish was the father of Saul (8:33). Saul's sons were Jonathan, Malchi-shua, Abinadab and Eshbaal.

Two names here may look strange. Eshbaal is the son called Ish-bosheth in 2 Samuel 2:8. Jonathan's son "Merib-baal" (8:34) is the one called Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 4:4 and 9:6. In Saul's day the word baal, which means lord or master, could still be used of the LORD. Later, when Baal became the name of a hated false god, scribes in Samuel replaced it with bosheth, which means shame. Chronicles kept the older form of the names.

Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son, lame in both feet, whom David brought to his own table for Jonathan's sake (2 Samuel 9). Here we see that his family went on: Micah, Ahaz, Jehoaddah, and on through Azel and Eshek to the sons of Ulam, who were "men mighty of valor, bending the bow, and having many sons and sons' sons, one hundred and fifty" (8:40).

Think about that. Saul's dynasty ended at Gilboa. But David's kindness to Jonathan's son kept Saul's line alive, and it grew to a large family of fighting men. God judged Saul, but He did not wipe out his family. The chapter ends, "All these were of the sons of Benjamin." The apostle Paul was also of the tribe of Benjamin, and he too bore the name Saul, like his tribe's first king (Philippians 3:5; Acts 13:9, 21).

Chapter 8 Summary

Chapter 8 lists the families of Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son: Bela, the family of Ehud, those who moved within the land and to Moab, those who built Ono and Lod, and those who drove out the people of Gath. Many of them lived in Jerusalem. The chapter then traces the family of Saul from the father of Gibeon through Kish to Saul and his sons, and on through Jonathan's son Merib-baal (Mephibosheth) for about a dozen generations to the sons of Ulam, mighty archers with many

descendants. Though Saul's kingdom failed, God kept his family alive, partly through David's kindness to Jonathan's son.

Chapter 8 Study Questions

1. Why was the tribe of Benjamin important, even though it was small?

2. What did Shemed build, and what happened in Lod in the New Testament? (8:12; Acts 9:32-35)

3. Where did the heads of fathers named in 8:1-28 live? (8:28)

4. Who were Saul's four sons? (8:33)

5. What other names do Eshbaal and Merib-baal have in 2 Samuel, and why are they different? (8:33-34)

6. How did David's kindness to Mephibosheth help keep Saul's family alive? (8:34-40; 2 Samuel 9)

7. Which famous New Testament believer came from the tribe of Benjamin? (Philippians 3:5)

8. Saul's kingdom ended, but his family went on. What does that show about God's mercy even in judgment?

9. David showed kindness to the family of a man who had tried to kill him. Is there someone you could show kindness to for the sake of someone else?

10. A man of Benjamin could find his family's name in this list. Where do you find your sense of belonging to God's people?

Chapter 9: Those Who Returned to Jerusalem

Scripture

9:1-16 And all Israel were enrolled by genealogy; and look, they ***are*** written in the book of the kings of Israel. And Judah was carried into exile to Babylon for their unfaithfulness. And the first inhabitants who ***were*** in their possession in their cities ***were*** Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the temple servants. And in Jerusalem dwelt some of the sons of Judah, and some of the sons of Benjamin, and some of the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh: Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the sons of Perez the son of Judah. And of the Shilonite: Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons. And of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel, and their brothers, six hundred and ninety. And of the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah, and Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah; and their brothers according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty-six. All these men ***were*** heads of fathers according to the house of their fathers. And of the priests: Jedaiah and Jehoiarib and Jachin, and Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the leader of the house of God; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer; and their brothers, heads of the house of their fathers, one thousand and seven hundred and sixty, mighty ***men*** of valor ***for*** the work of the service of the house of God. And of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; and Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and Mattaniah the son of Mica, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph; and Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun; and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who dwelt in the villages of the Netophathite.

9:17-34 And the gatekeepers: Shallum and Akkub and Talmon and Ahiman and their brother Shallum ***was*** the chief. And until now, in the gate of the king eastward, they ***are*** the gatekeepers for the camps of the sons of Levi. And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brothers of the house of his father, the Korahites, ***were*** over the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent; and their fathers ***were*** over the camp of the LORD, keepers of the entrance. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar was leader over them formerly; the LORD ***was*** with him. Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah ***was*** gatekeeper of the entrance of the tent of meeting. All of them who were chosen to be gatekeepers at the thresholds ***were*** two hundred and twelve. They ***were*** in their villages, their enrollment by genealogy. David and Samuel the seer appointed them in their faithfulness. And they and their sons ***were*** over the gates of the house of the LORD, of the house of the tent, for guard duties. On four sides were the gatekeepers: east, west, north, and south. And their brothers in their villages ***were*** to come for the seven days, from time to time, with these. For in faithfulness ***were*** they, the four mighty ones of the gatekeepers; they ***were*** the Levites. And they were over the chambers and over the treasuries of the house of God. And they spent the night around the house of God, for the guard duty ***was*** on them; and they ***were*** over the key, and ***opened*** morning by morning. And some of them ***were*** over the articles of the service, for by number they brought them in, and by number they took

them out. And some of them ***were*** appointed over the articles, and over all the articles of the holy place, and over the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the frankincense and the spices. And some of the sons of the priests ***were*** mixers of the mixture of the spices. And Mattithiah, of the Levites—he ***was*** the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite—***was*** in faithfulness over the work of the flat cakes. And some of the sons of the Kohathite, some of their brothers, ***were*** over the bread of the arrangement, to prepare ***it*** Sabbath by Sabbath. And these ***were*** the singers, heads of fathers of the Levites, in the chambers, exempt, for by day and night ***it was*** on them in the work. These ***were*** the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their generations, heads; these dwelt in Jerusalem.

9:35-44 And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, Jeiel, and the name of his wife ***was*** Maacah; and his son, the firstborn, Abdon, and Zur and Kish and Baal and Ner and Nadab, and Gedor and Ahio and Zechariah and Mikloth. And Mikloth fathered Shimeam. And they also dwelt opposite their brothers in Jerusalem, with their brothers. And Ner fathered Kish, and Kish fathered Saul, and Saul fathered Jonathan and Malchi-shua and Abinadab and Eshbaal. And the son of Jonathan ***was*** Merib-baal; and Merib-baal fathered Micah. And the sons of Micah: Pithon and Melech and Tahrea. And Ahaz fathered Jarah, and Jarah fathered Alemeth and Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri fathered Moza; and Moza fathered Binea; and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. And Azel had six sons, and these ***are*** their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael and Sheariah and Obadiah and Hanan. These ***were*** the sons of Azel.

Chapter 9 Preview

Chapter 9 brings the family lists to the writer's own day. It opens with one of the most important verses in the first part of the book: all Israel was enrolled by genealogy, and Judah was carried into exile to Babylon "for their unfaithfulness" (9:1). Then it lists the people who came back and settled in Jerusalem: the families of Judah and Benjamin, the priests, the Levites and the gatekeepers. Nehemiah 11 has a similar list.

Most of the chapter is about the gatekeepers and the other Levites who cared for God's house: guarding the doors, keeping the keys, counting the holy articles, mixing the spices, baking the bread and singing day and night. Then the chapter repeats the family of Saul from chapter 8, as a bridge into the story of Saul's death in chapter 10. The lists end where the readers stood, in Jerusalem, back home and serving God in His house.

Chapter 9 Study

9:1-2 *And all Israel were enrolled by genealogy; and look, they **are** written in the book of the kings of Israel. And Judah was carried into exile to Babylon for their unfaithfulness. And the first inhabitants who **were** in their possession in their cities **were** Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the temple servants.*

"And all Israel were enrolled by genealogy; and look, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. And Judah" (9:1). The writer tells us where his lists came from: official records.

Then he gives the reason for the exile in one plain line: "Judah was carried into exile to Babylon for their unfaithfulness." Not because Babylon was strong, and not because God was weak. Because they had been unfaithful to Him. The word means to break faith, to betray a trust. Judah had broken faith with God by worshiping idols and ignoring His prophets (2 Chronicles 36:14-16).

Verse 2 says, "the first inhabitants who were in their possession in their cities" were Israel, the priests, the Levites and "the temple servants." The temple servants were helpers who did the heavy work of the temple, perhaps descended from the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:27) and others (Ezra 8:20). These were the first to resettle after the exile. God's judgment was real, but it was not the end.

9:3-9 *And in Jerusalem dwelt some of the sons of Judah, and some of the sons of Benjamin, and some of the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh: Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the sons of Perez the son of Judah. And of the Shilonite: Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons. And of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel, and their brothers, six hundred and ninety. And of the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah, and Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah; and their brothers according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty-six. All these men **were** heads of fathers according to the house of their fathers.*

"And in Jerusalem dwelt some of the sons of Judah, and some of the sons of Benjamin, and some of the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh" (9:3). Notice that Ephraim and Manasseh, northern tribes, are mentioned. Some from the north had joined Judah over the years (2 Chronicles 11:16; 30:11), and their descendants came back too. The returned people were not only Judah. They were Israel.

The families of Judah are listed by its three branches, Perez, Shelah (the Shilonite) and Zerah, 690 in all (9:4-6). Then Benjamin's families, 956 (9:7-9). These were "heads of fathers," family leaders.

9:10-13 *And of the priests: Jedaiah and Jehoiarib and Jachin, and Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the leader of the house of God; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer; and their brothers, heads of the house of their fathers, one thousand and seven hundred and sixty, mighty **men** of valor **for** the work of the service of the house of God.*

Next come the priests. Their leaders are named, including "Azariah the son of Hilkiah," of the line of Zadok, "the leader of the house of God" (9:11). The priests numbered 1,760, "mighty men of valor for the work of the service of the house of God" (9:13).

I like that phrase. They were called mighty men of valor, the same words used for soldiers in chapter 7. But their battle was the daily work of God's house. Serving God faithfully in the ordinary tasks of worship takes strength and courage too.

9:14-16 *And of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; and Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and Mattaniah the son of Mica, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph; and Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun; and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who dwelt in the villages of the Netophathite.*

The Levites are named, from the families of Merari, Asaph and Jeduthun. Jeduthun was another name for Ethan the singer (6:44; 15:17; 16:41). So the singers' families from David's day were still serving after the exile. Some lived "in the villages of the Netophathite" (9:16), near Bethlehem, and came in to serve.

9:17-27 *And the gatekeepers: Shallum and Akkub and Talmon and Ahiman and their brother Shallum* ***was*** *the chief. And until now, in the gate of the king eastward, they* ***are*** *the gatekeepers for the camps of the sons of Levi. And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brothers of the house of his father, the Korahites,* ***were*** *over the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent; and their fathers* ***were*** *over the camp of the LORD, keepers of the entrance. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar was leader over them formerly; the LORD* ***was*** *with him. Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah* ***was*** *gatekeeper of the entrance of the tent of meeting. All of them who were chosen to be gatekeepers at the thresholds* ***were*** *two hundred and twelve. They* ***were*** *in their villages, their enrollment by genealogy. David and Samuel the seer appointed them in their faithfulness. And they and their sons* ***were*** *over the gates of the house of the LORD, of the house of the tent, for guard duties. On four sides were the gatekeepers: east, west, north, and south. And their brothers in their villages* ***were*** *to come for the seven days, from time to time, with these. For in faithfulness* ***were*** *they, the four mighty ones of the gatekeepers; they* ***were*** *the Levites. And they were over the chambers and over the treasuries of the house of God. And they spent the night around the house of God, for the guard duty* ***was*** *on them; and they* ***were*** *over the key, and* ***opened*** *morning by morning.*

Most of the rest of the chapter is about the gatekeepers. "And the gatekeepers: Shallum and Akkub and Talmon and Ahiman and their brother Shallum was the chief" (9:17). They guarded "the gate of the king eastward" (9:18). The writer looks back to the wilderness, when the Korahites were "keepers of the entrance" of the tent, with Phinehas over them, and "the LORD was with him" (9:19-20).

Who set this up? "David and Samuel the seer appointed them in their faithfulness" (9:22). There were 212 of them, living in the villages and taking turns. They stood on all four sides (9:24). They "spent the night around the house of God," and they were "over the key, and opened morning by morning" (9:27).

Think about the gatekeeper's job. Every night someone stood guard. Every morning someone opened the doors. It was not glamorous work. No one wrote psalms about the man with the key. But the writer says they served "in faithfulness" (9:22, 26). One of the sons of Korah wrote that he would rather stand at the threshold of the house of his God than dwell in the tents of wickedness (Psalm 84:10). God sees the doorkeepers, and He counts their faithfulness.

9:28-34 *And some of them **were** over the articles of the service, for by number they brought them in, and by number they took them out. And some of them **were** appointed over the articles, and over all the articles of the holy place, and over the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the frankincense and the spices. And some of the sons of the priests **were** mixers of the mixture of the spices. And Mattithiah, of the Levites—he **was** the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite—**was** in faithfulness over the work of the flat cakes. And some of the sons of the Kohathite, some of their brothers, **were** over the bread of the arrangement, to prepare **it** Sabbath by Sabbath. And these **were** the singers, heads of fathers of the Levites, in the chambers, exempt, for by day and night **it was** on them in the work. These **were** the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their generations, heads; these dwelt in Jerusalem.*

Other Levites had other jobs. Some cared for "the articles of the service, for by number they brought them in, and by number they took them out" (9:28). Every cup and bowl was counted. Some were over the fine flour, wine, oil, frankincense and spices (9:29). Some of the priests mixed the spices for the holy incense (9:30). Mattithiah baked the flat cakes (9:31). The Kohathites prepared "the bread of the arrangement," the twelve loaves set before the LORD in the holy place, "Sabbath by Sabbath" (9:32; Leviticus 24:5-9). The Sabbath was the seventh day, the day of rest God gave Israel.

And the singers were free from other duties, "for by day and night it was on them in the work" (9:33). Worship went on around the clock.

This was the life the returned people were rebuilding: a house of God, ordered and cared for, with praise rising day and night. Every task, from counting cups to baking bread, was part of worship. Paul tells us that whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

9:35-44 *And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, Jeiel, and the name of his wife **was** Maacah; and his son, the firstborn, Abdon, and Zur and Kish and Baal and Ner and Nadab, and Gedor and Ahio and Zechariah and Mikloth. And Mikloth fathered Shimeam. And they also dwelt opposite their brothers in Jerusalem, with their brothers. And Ner fathered Kish, and Kish fathered Saul, and Saul fathered Jonathan and Malchi-shua and Abinadab and Eshbaal. And the son of Jonathan **was** Merib-baal; and Merib-baal fathered Micah. And the sons of Micah: Pithon and Melech and Tahrea. And Ahaz fathered Jarah, and Jarah fathered Alemeth and Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri fathered Moza; and Moza fathered Binea; and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. And Azel had six sons, and these **are** their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael and Sheariah and Obadiah and Hanan. These **were** the sons of Azel.*

The chapter closes by repeating the family of Saul from 8:29-38, with small differences in spelling. Why say it twice? Because the writer is turning a corner. The lists are finished, and the story is about to begin. The next chapter opens with Saul's last battle. This list reminds us who Saul was and where he came from, and the list of Saul's descendants here ends with "the sons of Azel" (9:44).

In chapter 8, the family of Saul was one part of the tribe of Benjamin. Here it is the doorway into the history of the kings. The story of 1 Chronicles really starts with the end of one king and the rise of another.

Chapter 9 Summary

Chapter 9 says that all Israel was recorded in the book of the kings, and that Judah was carried into exile to Babylon for their unfaithfulness. It then lists those who came back and lived in Jerusalem: families of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh, the priests, the Levites and the temple servants. Most of the chapter describes the gatekeepers whom David and Samuel had appointed, who guarded the four sides of God's house, kept the key and opened the doors each morning, and the other Levites who cared for the holy articles, the spices, the flat cakes and the bread set before the LORD each Sabbath, while the singers served day and night. The chapter closes by repeating the family of Saul, as a bridge into the story of his death. The family lists end with God's people back home, serving faithfully in His house.

People and Places

- Temple servants: helpers who did the heavy work of the temple (Ezra 8:20).
- Gatekeepers: Levites who guarded the doors of God's house and kept its keys.
- Jeduthun: another name for Ethan, one of David's three song leaders.
- Bread of the arrangement: the twelve loaves set before the LORD in the holy place each Sabbath (Leviticus 24:5-9).

Chapter 9 Study Questions

1. Why, according to 9:1, was Judah carried into exile?

2. Which groups were the first to resettle in their cities? (9:2)

3. Which tribes had families living in Jerusalem? (9:3)

4. What were the priests called in 9:13, and why do you think that phrase is used?

5. Who appointed the gatekeepers, and what did they do each night and morning? (9:22-27)

6. List some of the other jobs the Levites did in God's house. (9:28-33)

7. Why do you think the writer repeats Saul's family here? (9:35-44)

8. The gatekeepers served "in faithfulness" (9:22). What ordinary task has God given you that you can do faithfully for Him?

9. Judah went into exile for unfaithfulness, but God brought them back. What does that tell you about God's discipline and His mercy?

10. Worship went on day and night in God's house. How could you make worship a bigger part of your everyday life?

Chapter 10: The Death of Saul

Scripture

10:1-14 And the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and they fell slain on the mountain of Gilboa. And the Philistines pursued closely after Saul and after his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. And the battle was heavy on Saul, and the archers with the bow found him, and he was in anguish because of the archers. And Saul said to the bearer of his weapons, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and deal wantonly with me." And the bearer of his weapons was not willing, for he was very afraid. And Saul took the sword and fell on it. And the bearer of his weapons saw that Saul had died, and he also fell on the sword and died. And Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house; together they died. And every man of Israel who ***was*** in the valley saw that they had fled, and that Saul and his sons had died; and they abandoned their cities and fled, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. And it came about on the next day ***that*** the Philistines came to strip the slain, and they found Saul and his sons fallen on the mountain of Gilboa. And they stripped him, and took his head and his weapons, and sent into the land of the Philistines all around, to bring the news to their idols and to the people. And they put his weapons ***in*** the house of their gods, and his skull they fastened ***in*** the house of Dagon. And all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, and every man of valor arose, and they took the corpse of Saul and the corpses of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days. And Saul died for his unfaithfulness in which he was unfaithful against the LORD, concerning the word of the LORD which he did not keep, and also for asking of a medium, to inquire ***of it***, and he did not inquire of the LORD; and He put him to death, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

Chapter 10 Preview

After nine chapters of names, the story begins, and it begins with a death. The Philistines defeat Israel on Mount Gilboa. Saul's sons are killed, Saul is badly wounded, and he takes his own life. The Philistines strip his body and hang his head in the temple of their god. The men of Jabesh-gilead bring his body home and bury it.

First Samuel 31 tells the same battle in almost the same words. But Chronicles does not tell us about Saul's whole reign. It goes straight to his end, and then it stops to explain why it happened: Saul was unfaithful to the LORD, he did not keep His word, and he went to a medium instead of seeking God. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David. This short chapter is the hinge of the book. One king falls because he did not seek God, and a man after God's own heart takes his place.

Chapter 10 Study

10:1-3 *And the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and they fell slain on the mountain of Gilboa. And the Philistines pursued closely after Saul and after his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. And the battle was heavy on Saul, and the archers with the bow found him, and he was in anguish because of the archers.*

"And the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and they fell slain on the mountain of Gilboa" (10:1). The Philistines were a sea people who lived on the southern coast and were Israel's great enemy in the days of Saul and David. Mount Gilboa is a ridge on the edge of the Jezreel Valley in the north.

The Philistines "struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua" (10:2), Saul's sons. Jonathan, David's dearest friend, died fighting beside his father. Then the battle turned against Saul himself, and the archers found him and wounded him.

The writer gives us no background. He doesn't tell us how Saul became king, or about his early victories, or his long hunt for David. For the first readers, who knew 1 Samuel well, this was enough. Saul's story is told here only by its end. Sometimes the way a life ends tells us what it was really built on.

10:4-7 *And Saul said to the bearer of his weapons, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and deal wantonly with me." And the bearer of his weapons was not willing, for he was very afraid. And Saul took the sword and fell on it. And the bearer of his weapons saw that Saul had died, and he also fell on the sword and died. And Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house; together they died. And every man of Israel who* ***was*** *in the valley saw that they had fled, and that Saul and his sons had died; and they abandoned their cities and fled, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.*

Wounded and afraid of what the Philistines would do to him, Saul asked his armor bearer to kill him, "lest these uncircumcised come and deal wantonly with me" (10:4). The armor bearer was afraid and would not do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. His armor bearer did the same.

This is a hard verse to read, and some of you may know the pain of losing someone this way. Let me say a few things plainly. The Bible records what Saul did. It does not praise it. It shows a man at the end of a long road of turning away from God, alone, afraid, and without hope. The writer's own explanation comes in verses 13-14, and it is about Saul's unfaithfulness over many years, not about this one moment. Scripture doesn't give us a full answer to every question about those who take their own lives, and I won't pretend to. What I do know is that God is merciful and that He alone judges the heart. If you or someone you love is struggling with thoughts of ending your life, please talk to someone today, a pastor, a friend, a doctor or a crisis line. You are not alone, and there is help and hope in Christ.

Second Samuel 1 tells of an Amalekite who later claimed that he had killed Saul. Most Bible teachers believe the Amalekite was lying to win David's favor, since 1 Samuel 31 and this chapter both say Saul fell on his own sword.

Verse 6 says Saul "died, and his three sons, and all his house; together they died." Saul's son Eshbaal (Ish-bosheth) lived on and reigned for two years (2 Samuel 2:8-10), so "all his house" here means Saul's household with him in the battle, and the end of his house as a ruling family. The men of Israel in the valley saw it, abandoned their cities and fled, and the Philistines moved in (10:7). One king's unfaithfulness brought ruin on a whole people.

10:8-12 *And it came about on the next day **that** the Philistines came to strip the slain, and they found Saul and his sons fallen on the mountain of Gilboa. And they stripped him, and took his head and his weapons, and sent into the land of the Philistines all around, to bring the news to their idols and to the people. And they put his weapons **in** the house of their gods, and his skull they fastened **in** the house of Dagon. And all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, and every man of valor arose, and they took the corpse of Saul and the corpses of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.*

"And it came about on the next day that the Philistines came to strip the slain" (10:8). They found Saul and his sons. They stripped his body, cut off his head, and sent the news around their land "to bring the news to their idols and to the people" (10:9). They put his weapons in the house of their gods and "his skull they fastened in the house of Dagon" (10:10). Dagon was the chief god of the Philistines. Years before, the ark of God had been carried into Dagon's temple, and Dagon had fallen on his face before it (1 Samuel 5:1-5). Now the Philistines thought Dagon had won.

But there is a bright spot. "And all Jabesh-gilead heard" (10:11). Early in his reign, Saul had rescued the town of Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11). The men of Jabesh never forgot it. "Every man of valor arose," took the bodies of Saul and his sons, and brought them home. "They buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days" (10:12).

That is loyalty and gratitude. Saul had failed in many ways, but these men remembered the good he had done for them, and they honored him in death. David later blessed them for it (2 Samuel 2:5-6). How do we speak of leaders who have failed? We can be honest about their sins and still remember any good they did.

10:13-14 *And Saul died for his unfaithfulness in which he was unfaithful against the LORD, concerning the word of the LORD which he did not keep, and also for asking of a medium, to inquire **of it**, and he did not inquire of the LORD; and He put him to death, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.*

Now the writer tells us why it happened. Saul "died for his unfaithfulness in which he was unfaithful against the LORD" (10:13). Unfaithfulness is the word we saw in 2:7 for Achan, in 5:25 for the eastern tribes, and in 9:1 for Judah. It means breaking faith with God, betraying the trust of the covenant.

The writer names two ways Saul was unfaithful. First, "concerning the word of the LORD which he did not keep." Saul offered a sacrifice he had no right to offer (1 Samuel 13:8-14), and he disobeyed God's command about Amalek (1 Samuel 15). Samuel told him that to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). Second, Saul went "for asking of a medium, to inquire of it" (10:13). A medium was someone who claimed to speak with the dead. God's law forbade it (Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:10-12), and Saul himself had driven the mediums out of the land. But on the night before the battle, he went to one at Endor (1 Samuel 28).

"And he did not inquire of the LORD" (10:14). First Samuel 28:6 says Saul did ask the LORD, and the LORD did not answer him. So what does the writer mean? I believe he means that Saul never truly sought God. He asked once, in a panic, when it was already late. When he heard nothing, he did not humble himself and wait. He went to a medium. To seek God, in Chronicles, means to turn to Him with your whole heart and keep at it. Saul never did.

"And He put him to death, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse." The Philistines fired the arrows, and Saul fell on his own sword, but the writer says it was the LORD who put him to death. God was in control of the whole thing. This is the writer's word about Saul's whole reign, a verdict only God could give. It does not mean that every hard or early death is a punishment, and we should never say that about someone we have lost. The kingdom did not belong to Saul. It belonged to God, and He gave it to David.

Here is the key to the whole book. Seeking the LORD is the big question in Chronicles. Kings who seek Him are blessed. Kings who don't, fall. The first readers needed to hear that. So do we. Where do you go when you are afraid and God seems silent?

Chapter 10 Summary

The Philistines defeated Israel on Mount Gilboa and killed Saul's sons, Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua. Saul was wounded by archers, and when his armor bearer would not kill him, he fell on his own sword, and his armor bearer did the same. The men of Israel fled, and the Philistines took their cities. The next day the Philistines stripped Saul's body, sent the news to their idols and people, and fastened his skull in the house of Dagon. The brave men of Jabesh-gilead took the bodies of Saul and his sons, buried them under the oak at Jabesh, and fasted seven days. The writer explains that Saul died for his unfaithfulness to the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD and consulted a medium instead of seeking the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David.

People and Places

- Mount Gilboa: a ridge in the north of Israel, at the edge of the Jezreel Valley, where Saul died.
- Jonathan: Saul's son and David's closest friend, killed at Gilboa.
- Dagon: the chief god of the Philistines.
- Jabesh-gilead: a town east of the Jordan that Saul had rescued early in his reign (1 Samuel 11).

- Medium: a person who claims to speak with the dead, forbidden by God's law (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Chapter 10 Study Questions

1. Where did the battle take place, and which of Saul's sons were killed? (10:1-2)

2. What did Saul ask his armor bearer to do, and why? (10:4)

3. What did the Philistines do with Saul's body and weapons? (10:9-10)

4. What did the men of Jabesh-gilead do, and why might they have done it? (10:11-12; 1 Samuel 11)

5. What two reasons does the writer give for Saul's death? (10:13-14)

6. Who does the writer say put Saul to death and gave the kingdom to David? (10:14)

7. How does the word "unfaithfulness" tie this chapter to Achan (2:7) and the exile (9:1)?

8. The men of Jabesh-gilead honored Saul despite his failures. How can we be honest about a leader's sins and still be grateful for the good they did?

9. Saul went to a medium when God seemed silent. Where are you tempted to turn when you don't get an answer from God right away?

10. What would it look like for you to truly seek the LORD with your whole heart this week, and not only when you are in trouble?

Chapter 11: David Made King and His Mighty Men

Scripture

11:1-9 And all Israel gathered together to David at Hebron, saying, "Look, we ***are*** your bone and your flesh. Even yesterday, even the day before, even when Saul was king, you ***were*** the one who led out and the one who brought in Israel; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and you shall be leader over My people Israel.'" And all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David as king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Samuel. And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem—it ***is*** Jebus—and there ***were*** the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here." And David captured the stronghold of Zion; it ***is*** the city of David. And David said, "Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall become chief and commander." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and he became chief. And David dwelt in the fortress; therefore they called it the city of David. And he built the city all around, from the Millo and to the surrounding ***area***; and Joab restored the rest of the city. And David went on, going and becoming great, and the LORD of armies ***was*** with him.

11:10-25 And these ***were*** the chiefs of the mighty men who ***belonged*** to David, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel. And this ***is*** the number of the mighty men who ***belonged*** to David: Jashobeam the son of Hachmoni, the chief of the officers; he wielded his spear against three hundred slain at one time. And after him ***was*** Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite; he ***was*** among the three mighty men. He was with David at Pas-dammim, and the Philistines were gathered there for battle; and there was a portion of the field full of barley, and the people fled from before the Philistines. And they took their stand in the midst of the portion and delivered it, and struck down the Philistines; and the LORD saved ***with*** a great deliverance. And three of the thirty chiefs went down to the rock to David, to the cave of Adullam, while the camp of the Philistines ***was*** encamped in the valley of Rephaim. And David ***was*** then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines ***was*** then at Bethlehem. And David craved, and said, "Who will give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem, which ***is*** at the gate?" And the three broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water from the well of Bethlehem, which ***was*** at the gate, and they carried ***it*** and brought ***it*** to David; and David was not willing to drink it, and he poured it out to the LORD. And he said, "Far be it from me, from my God, to do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men with their lives? For with their lives they brought it." And he was not willing to drink it. These ***things*** the three mighty men did. And Abishai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three; and he wielded his spear against three hundred slain, and he had a name among the three. More than the three, by two, he was honored, and he became a commander for them; but to the three he did not come. Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ***was*** the son of a valiant man, great of deeds, from Kabzeel; he struck down the two Ariel of Moab; and he went down and struck down the lion in the midst of the pit on the day of the snow. And he struck down the Egyptian man, a man of stature, approximately 7.5 feet (five cubits) ***tall***; and in the hand of the Egyptian ***was*** a spear like a weavers' beam; and he went down to him with a staff, and he snatched the spear from the hand

of the Egyptian and killed him with his own spear. These ***things*** Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and he had a name among the three mighty men. Look, he was honored more than the thirty, but to the three he did not come. And David appointed him over his bodyguard.

11:26-47 And the mighty men of the forces ***were***: Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo from Bethlehem, Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hurai from the wadis of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shagee the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sachar the Hararite, Eliphal the son of Ur, Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, the bearer of the weapons of Joab the son of Zeruiah, Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a chief of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, Hanan the son of Maacah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite, Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, Jediael the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai and Joshaviah the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, Eliel and Obed and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

Chapter 11 Preview

Chapter 10 ended with the LORD turning the kingdom over to David. Chapter 11 shows it happening. All Israel comes to David at Hebron, reminds him of what the LORD had promised, and anoints him king. Then David and the people take Jerusalem from the Jebusites, and it becomes the city of David. "The LORD of armies was with him" (11:9).

The rest of the chapter lists David's mighty men, the heroes who stood with him. Some of their deeds are told in a sentence or two: one man killed three hundred with his spear, a few men held a barley field against the Philistines, three men broke through enemy lines to bring David a drink of water from Bethlehem, and Benaiah killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day. Second Samuel 5 and 23 tell much of the same. Chronicles puts this list right at the start of David's reign to show that all Israel, and its best fighters, stood behind God's chosen king.

Chapter 11 Study

11:1-3 *And all Israel gathered together to David at Hebron, saying, "Look, we **are** your bone and your flesh. Even yesterday, even the day before, even when Saul was king, you **were** the one who led out and the one who brought in Israel; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and you shall be leader over My people Israel.'" And all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David as king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Samuel.*

"And all Israel gathered together to David at Hebron" (11:1). Chronicles skips the seven and a half years David ruled only Judah from Hebron, and the war with Saul's son Ish-bosheth (2 Samuel 2-4). The writer wants us to see one thing: all Israel came to David together.

They gave three reasons. First, "we are your bone and your flesh." David was one of them, family. Second, even in Saul's day, "you were the one who led out and the one who brought in Israel" (11:2). David had already led their armies. Third, and most important, God had spoken. "The LORD your God said to you," they reminded him, "You shall shepherd My people Israel, and you shall be leader over My people Israel."

A shepherd. That is the picture God gave for a king. A king was not to use the people but to care for them, feed them, protect them and lead them. David had been a shepherd boy. Now he would shepherd a nation. And one day the Son of David would say, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

"David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David as king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Samuel" (11:3). To anoint means to pour oil on someone's head to set him apart for God's service. Samuel had anointed David privately years before (1 Samuel 16:13). Now the whole nation did. God's word had come true, in God's time.

11:4-9 *And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem—it **is** Jebus—and there **were** the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here." And David captured the stronghold of Zion; it **is** the city of David. And David said, "Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall become chief and commander." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and he became chief. And David dwelt in the fortress; therefore they called it the city of David. And he built the city all around, from the Millo and to the surrounding **area**; and Joab restored the rest of the city. And David went on, going and becoming great, and the LORD of armies **was** with him.*

"And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem; it is Jebus" (11:4). Jerusalem was still held by the Jebusites, a Canaanite people Israel had never driven out (Joshua 15:63). The city sat on a high ridge and was hard to attack. The Jebusites mocked David: "You shall not come in here" (11:5). "And David captured the stronghold of Zion; it is the city of David."

David made an offer: "Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall become chief and commander" (11:6). Joab, David's nephew, went up first and won the post. Second Samuel 5:8 suggests the

attack went up through the water shaft. Joab would be David's army commander for most of his reign, a hard and sometimes ruthless man.

David lived in the fortress, built up the city around the Millo, which was probably a set of stone terraces, and Joab repaired the rest (11:7-8). "And David went on, going and becoming great, and the LORD of armies was with him" (11:9). The LORD of armies is a title that means God commands the armies of heaven and earth. David grew great, but not by his own strength. The LORD was with him.

Jerusalem, also called Zion, became the center of everything that follows. It would be the city of the ark and the temple, the city of David's throne. God would call it the place He chose for His name. The Psalms say God set His King on Zion (Psalm 2:6), and I believe Jesus will one day reign there as the Son of David.

11:10-14 *And these **were** the chiefs of the mighty men who **belonged** to David, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel. And this **is** the number of the mighty men who **belonged** to David: Jashobeam the son of Hachmoni, the chief of the officers; he wielded his spear against three hundred slain at one time. And after him **was** Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite; he **was** among the three mighty men. He was with David at Pas-dammim, and the Philistines were gathered there for battle; and there was a portion of the field full of barley, and the people fled from before the Philistines. And they took their stand in the midst of the portion and delivered it, and struck down the Philistines; and the LORD saved **with** a great deliverance.*

"And these were the chiefs of the mighty men who belonged to David, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel" (11:10). These men helped make David king because they believed God had chosen him.

First was Jashobeam, "the chief of the officers; he wielded his spear against three hundred slain at one time" (11:11). Second Samuel 23:8 gives the number as eight hundred and calls him by another name. This is one of the number differences between Samuel and Chronicles. The most likely explanation is a copying slip in one of the two books, since numbers were easy to miscopy, or that the two books count different fights. Either way, he was a fearsome fighter.

Next was Eleazar the son of Dodo. At Pas-dammim, when the Philistines gathered at a barley field and "the people fled from before the Philistines" (11:13), he and David took their stand in the middle of the field and held it. "And the LORD saved with a great deliverance" (11:14). Everyone else ran. A few stood firm. But notice who gets the credit. The LORD saved.

11:15-19 *And three of the thirty chiefs went down to the rock to David, to the cave of Adullam, while the camp of the Philistines **was** encamped in the valley of Rephaim. And David **was** then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines **was** then at Bethlehem. And David craved, and said, "Who will give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem, which **is** at the gate?" And the three broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water from the well of Bethlehem, which **was** at the gate, and they carried **it** and brought **it** to David; and David was not willing to drink it, and he poured it out to the LORD. And he said, "Far be it from me, from my God, to do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men with their lives? For with their lives they brought it." And he was not willing to drink it. These **things** the three mighty men did.*

Here is one of the most moving stories about David. He was in the stronghold, at the cave of Adullam, and the Philistines held Bethlehem, his hometown. "And David craved, and said, Who will give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem, which is at the gate?" (11:17). It was probably a sigh more than an order, a homesick longing for the water he drank as a boy.

Three of his men heard it. They "broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water from the well of Bethlehem" and brought it back (11:18). What did David do? "David was not willing to drink it, and he poured it out to the LORD." He said, "Shall I drink the blood of these men with their lives? For with their lives they brought it" (11:19).

David understood that this water had cost something. These men had risked their lives for him. It was too precious to drink, so he gave it to God as an offering. Pouring out a drink offering was a way of worship (Genesis 35:14). The best response to love that sacrifices is to give it back to God in worship. When we think about what Jesus gave for us, His own blood, what can we do but pour out our lives to Him?

11:20-25 *And Abishai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three; and he wielded his spear against three hundred slain, and he had a name among the three. More than the three, by two, he was honored, and he became a commander for them; but to the three he did not come. Benaiah the son of Jehoiada **was** the son of a valiant man, great of deeds, from Kabzeel; he struck down the two Ariel of Moab; and he went down and struck down the lion in the midst of the pit on the day of the snow. And he struck down the Egyptian man, a man of stature, approximately 7.5 feet (five cubits) **tall**; and in the hand of the Egyptian **was** a spear like a weavers' beam; and he went down to him with a staff, and he snatched the spear from the hand of the Egyptian and killed him with his own spear. These **things** Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and he had a name among the three mighty men. Look, he was honored more than the thirty, but to the three he did not come. And David appointed him over his bodyguard.*

Abishai, Joab's brother, was "chief of the three," and he too killed three hundred with his spear (11:20). He "was honored" above the others, "but to the three he did not come" (11:21). There were ranks even among heroes.

Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, "great of deeds" (11:22). Three of his deeds are listed. He struck down two champions of Moab. "He went down and struck down the lion in the midst of the pit on the day of the snow." And he killed an Egyptian giant, a man five cubits tall, about seven and a half

feet, with a spear "like a weavers' beam" (11:23). Benaiah went at him with only a staff, snatched the spear from his hand, and killed him with it.

Benaiah went down into a pit with a lion, on a snowy day, when the footing was bad and the lion had every advantage. Some of God's servants are called to do hard things in hard places. David made him captain of his bodyguard (11:25), and later he became Solomon's army commander (1 Kings 2:35).

11:26-47 *And the mighty men of the forces **were**: Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo from Bethlehem, Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hurai from the wadis of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shagee the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sachar the Hararite, Eliphal the son of Ur, Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, the bearer of the weapons of Joab the son of Zeruiah, Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a chief of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, Hanan the son of Maacah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite, Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, Jediael the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai and Joshaviah the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, Eliel and Obed and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.*

The list of "the mighty men of the forces" follows (11:26). Asahel, Joab's brother who died young (2 Samuel 2:18-23), comes first, and Elhanan of Bethlehem. Many of the names are known only from here. Some came from Judah and Benjamin, some from the north, and some from outside Israel: "Zelek the Ammonite" (11:39) and "Ithmah the Moabite" (11:46). Chronicles' list is longer than the list in 2 Samuel 23, adding sixteen names after Uriah (11:41-47), many of them from east of the Jordan.

One name stops us: "Uriah the Hittite" (11:41). Chronicles does not tell the story of David and Bathsheba, but it does not erase Uriah either. He was one of David's mighty men, a loyal soldier whom David wronged terribly (2 Samuel 11). Every reader who knew Samuel would feel that name. Great leaders are still sinners, and God remembers the faithful ones who were wronged.

What does this list teach us? A king does not reign alone. God gave David men who were loyal, brave and willing to lay down their lives. Jesus also called His followers to stand with Him, and He said that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends (John 15:13). He did exactly that for us.

Chapter 11 Summary

All Israel came to David at Hebron, reminding him that he was their own flesh, that he had led them even in Saul's day, and that the LORD had said he would shepherd His people. They made a covenant and anointed him king, as the LORD had said through Samuel. David and all Israel

captured Jerusalem, the stronghold of Zion, from the Jebusites. Joab went up first and became commander, and Jerusalem became the city of David. David grew greater, for the LORD of armies was with him. The chapter then lists David's mighty men: Jashobeam, Eleazar, who held a barley field when the people fled, and the three who broke through the Philistine camp to bring water from Bethlehem, which David poured out to the LORD. Abishai and Benaiah, who killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day and an Egyptian giant, are honored, followed by a long list of heroes from Israel and beyond, including Uriah the Hittite.

People and Places

- Hebron: the city of Judah where David was anointed king over all Israel.
- Jebus: the old name of Jerusalem, held by the Jebusites until David took it.
- Zion: the stronghold of Jerusalem, later the name of the whole city.
- Joab: David's nephew and army commander.
- Benaiah: one of David's mightiest men, captain of his bodyguard.
- Adullam: the cave where David hid from Saul (1 Samuel 22:1).

Chapter 11 Study Questions

1. What three reasons did the people give for making David king? (11:1-2)

2. What picture did God use for the job of a king? (11:2)

3. How did David capture Jerusalem, and who became commander? (11:4-6)

4. Why did David grow greater and greater? (11:9)

5. What did Eleazar do at the barley field, and who gets the credit? (11:13-14)

6. Why would David not drink the water from Bethlehem, and what did he do with it? (11:17-19)

7. Which foreign men are among David's mighty men, and whose name in the list recalls David's great sin? (11:39, 41, 46)

8. Jesus called Himself the good shepherd (John 10:11). How does David as shepherd-king point to Him?

9. David poured out the water as an offering because it had cost his men so much. How should Jesus' sacrifice shape the way you give your life to Him?

10. Eleazar held his ground when others ran. Is there a place in your life where God is asking you to stand firm when others are running?

Chapter 12: The Men Who Came to David

Scripture

12:1-22 And these ***are*** the ones who came to David at Ziklag while he was still kept back from before Saul the son of Kish; and they ***were*** among the mighty men, helpers in the battle, equipped with the bow, using the right ***hand*** and using the left with stones and with arrows on the bow; of the brothers of Saul, from Benjamin. The chief ***was*** Ahiezer, and Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; and Beracah, and Jehu the Anathothite; and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty and over the thirty; and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite; Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite; Elkanah, and Isshiah, and Azarel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites; and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham from Gedor. And from the Gadites there separated themselves to David at the stronghold toward the wilderness mighty men of valor, men of war for battle, arraying shield and spear; and their faces ***were*** the faces of a lion, and ***they were*** like gazelles on the mountains in making haste: Ezer the chief, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, Jeremiah the tenth, Machbannai the eleventh. These ***were*** of the sons of Gad, chiefs of the army; the least ***was*** one for a hundred, and the greatest for a thousand. These ***are*** the ones who crossed over the Jordan in the first month, and it ***was*** overflowing over all its banks; and they put to flight all ***those in*** the valleys, to the east and to the west. And ***some*** of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold to David. And David went out before them, and he answered and said to them, "If you have come to me for peace, to help me, I shall have a heart toward you for unity; but if to betray me to my foes, while ***there is*** no violence in my hands, may the God of our fathers see and rebuke ***it***." And ***the*** Spirit clothed Amasai, the chief of the officers: "***We are*** yours, David, and with you, son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helper; for your God has helped you." And David received them and made them chiefs of the band. And ***some*** from Manasseh fell away to David when he came with the Philistines against Saul for battle; but they did not help them, for by counsel the lords of the Philistines sent him away, saying, "At ***the cost of*** our heads he will fall away to his master Saul." When he went to Ziklag, there fell away to him from Manasseh: Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediael, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zillethai, chiefs of the thousands who ***belonged*** to Manasseh. And they helped David against the band, for they ***were*** all mighty men of valor, and they were commanders in the army. For at ***that*** time, day by day, they came to David to help him, until ***there was*** a great camp, like the camp of God.

12:23-40 And these ***are*** the numbers of the heads of those armed for war ***who*** came to David at Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the mouth of the LORD. The sons of Judah bearing shield and spear ***were*** six thousand eight hundred, armed for war. Of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor for war, seven thousand one hundred. Of the sons of the Levites, four thousand six hundred. And Jehoiada ***was*** the leader of ***the house of*** Aaron, and with him ***were*** three thousand seven hundred; and Zadok, a young man, mighty of valor, and the house of his father, twenty-two commanders. And of the sons of Benjamin, the brothers of Saul, three thousand; and until now the greater part of them ***were*** keeping the charge of the house of Saul.

And of the sons of Ephraim, twenty thousand eight hundred, mighty men of valor, men of names in the house of their fathers. And of the half-tribe of Manasseh, eighteen thousand, who were designated by names to come to make David king. And of the sons of Issachar, knowing understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do: their chiefs ***were*** two hundred, and all their brothers ***were*** at their command. Of Zebulun, those going out to war, arraying battle with all weapons of battle, fifty thousand, and to help with not a heart and a heart. And of Naphtali, a thousand commanders, and with them, with shield and spear, thirty-seven thousand. And of the Danites, arraying battle, twenty-eight thousand six hundred. And of Asher, those going out to war, to array battle, forty thousand. And from beyond the Jordan, of the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, with all weapons of war ***for*** battle, one hundred twenty thousand. All these, men of battle, helpers of the battle line, came with a whole heart to Hebron to make David king over all Israel; and also all the rest of Israel ***were of*** one heart to make David king. And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brothers had prepared for them. And also those near to them, as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing bread on donkeys and on camels and on mules and on oxen, food of flour, fig cakes and raisin clusters, and wine and oil, and oxen and sheep in abundance; for ***there was*** joy in Israel.

Chapter 12 Preview

Chapter 11 listed David's mighty men. Chapter 12 goes back in time and tells who came over to David while he was still an outlaw, running from Saul. They came from Benjamin, Saul's own tribe, from Gad across the Jordan, from Judah and from Manasseh. One of their leaders, filled with the Spirit, spoke for them all: "We are yours, David, and with you, son of Jesse!" (12:18). Day by day the number grew "until there was a great camp, like the camp of God" (12:22).

The second half of the chapter counts the fighting men from every tribe who came to Hebron to make David king over all Israel. They came "with a whole heart" (12:38), and the chapter ends with a three-day feast, "for there was joy in Israel" (12:40). Second Samuel has nothing like this chapter. The writer wants his readers to see that God's chosen king was the choice of all Israel, and that following him was worth the risk.

Chapter 12 Study

12:1-7 *And these **are** the ones who came to David at Ziklag while he was still kept back from before Saul the son of Kish; and they **were** among the mighty men, helpers in the battle, equipped with the bow, using the right **hand** and using the left with stones and with arrows on the bow; of the brothers of Saul, from Benjamin. The chief **was** Ahiezer, and Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; and Beracah, and Jehu the Anathothite; and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty and over the thirty; and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite; Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite; Elkanah, and Isshiah, and Azarel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites; and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham from Gedor.*

"And these are the ones who came to David at Ziklag while he was still kept back from before Saul the son of Kish" (12:1). Ziklag was the Philistine town where David lived while Saul hunted him (1 Samuel 27:6). He was an outlaw then, with no throne and no promise of safety. Yet men came to him.

The first group came from Benjamin, Saul's own tribe and family (12:2). They were archers and slingers who could use "the right hand and using the left with stones and with arrows" (12:2). Left-handed fighters were a Benjamite specialty (Judges 20:16). It cost these men something to leave Saul. They were turning their backs on their own relatives to follow the man God had chosen.

Among them was "Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty and over the thirty" (12:4), and some Korahites (12:6). Faith in God's promise sometimes means breaking with family and tribe. Jesus said that whoever loves father or mother more than Him is not worthy of Him (Matthew 10:37).

12:8-15 *And from the Gadites there separated themselves to David at the stronghold toward the wilderness mighty men of valor, men of war for battle, arraying shield and spear; and their faces **were** the faces of a lion, and **they were** like gazelles on the mountains in making haste: Ezer the chief, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, Jeremiah the tenth, Machbannai the eleventh. These **were** of the sons of Gad, chiefs of the army; the least **was** one for a hundred, and the greatest for a thousand. These **are** the ones who crossed over the Jordan in the first month, and it **was** overflowing over all its banks; and they put to flight all **those in** the valleys, to the east and to the west.*

Next came men of Gad, from east of the Jordan. They "separated themselves to David at the stronghold toward the wilderness" (12:8). They were "mighty men of valor, men of war for battle." The writer paints them: "their faces were the faces of a lion, and they were like gazelles on the mountains in making haste." Brave as lions, swift as gazelles.

Eleven of them are named, from Ezer the chief to Machbannai the eleventh. "The least was one for a hundred, and the greatest for a thousand" (12:14). That may mean the least of them was a match for a hundred men, or that they became commanders over a hundred and a thousand.

They "crossed over the Jordan in the first month," in spring, when "it was overflowing over all its banks" (12:15). They crossed a flooded river to join David. Nothing would keep them from him.

12:16-18 *And **some** of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold to David. And David went out before them, and he answered and said to them, "If you have come to me for peace, to help me, I shall have a heart toward you for unity; but if to betray me to my foes, while **there is** no violence in my hands, may the God of our fathers see and rebuke **it**." And **the** Spirit clothed Amasai, the chief of the officers: "**We are** yours, David, and with you, son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helper; for your God has helped you." And David received them and made them chiefs of the band.*

Then some men of Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold. David was careful. He went out to meet them and said, "If you have come to me for peace, to help me, I shall have a heart toward you for unity; but if to betray me to my foes, while there is no violence in my hands, may the God of our fathers see and rebuke it" (12:17). He had been betrayed before (1 Samuel 23:19). He left the judgment with God.

"And the Spirit clothed Amasai" (12:18). The Spirit of God came on him like a garment, and he answered for them all: "We are yours, David, and with you, son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helper; for your God has helped you." That is the heart of a true follower: complete loyalty, peace, and a recognition that God was with David. "And David received them and made them chiefs of the band."

This is a picture of how we come to Christ, the Son of David. We don't come with conditions. We come and tell Him that we are His. Jesus receives everyone who comes to Him that way (John 6:37).

12:19-22 *And **some** from Manasseh fell away to David when he came with the Philistines against Saul for battle; but they did not help them, for by counsel the lords of the Philistines sent him away, saying, "At **the cost of** our heads he will fall away to his master Saul." When he went to Ziklag, there fell away to him from Manasseh: Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediael, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zillethai, chiefs of the thousands who **belonged** to Manasseh. And they helped David against the band, for they **were** all mighty men of valor, and they were commanders in the army. For at **that** time, day by day, they came to David to help him, until **there was** a great camp, like the camp of God.*

Some men from Manasseh joined David at a delicate time. David had gone with the Philistines toward the battle against Saul, but the Philistine lords sent him away, afraid he would turn on them in the fight (12:19; 1 Samuel 29). As David went back to Ziklag, seven chiefs of Manasseh came over to him (12:20). They helped him "against the band" (12:21), the raiders who had burned Ziklag while he was gone (1 Samuel 30).

"For at that time, day by day, they came to David to help him, until there was a great camp, like the camp of God" (12:22). It started small, a few hundred outlaws in a cave. It grew day by day. God builds His work that way. The church began with a handful of believers in an upper room, and day by day the Lord added to their number (Acts 2:47).

12:23-37 *And these **are** the numbers of the heads of those armed for war **who** came to David at Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the mouth of the LORD. The sons of Judah bearing shield and spear **were** six thousand eight hundred, armed for war. Of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor for war, seven thousand one hundred. Of the sons of the Levites, four thousand six hundred. And Jehoiada **was** the leader of **the house of** Aaron, and with him **were** three thousand seven hundred; and Zadok, a young man, mighty of valor, and the house of his father, twenty-two commanders. And of the sons of Benjamin, the brothers of Saul, three thousand; and until now the greater part of them **were** keeping the charge of the house of Saul. And of the sons of Ephraim, twenty thousand eight hundred, mighty men of valor, men of names in the house of their fathers. And of the half-tribe of Manasseh, eighteen thousand, who were designated by names to come to make David king. And of the sons of Issachar, knowing understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do: their chiefs **were** two hundred, and all their brothers **were** at their command. Of Zebulun, those going out to war, arraying battle with all weapons of battle, fifty thousand, and to help with not a heart and a heart. And of Naphtali, a thousand commanders, and with them, with shield and spear, thirty-seven thousand. And of the Danites, arraying battle, twenty-eight thousand six hundred. And of Asher, those going out to war, to array battle, forty thousand. And from beyond the Jordan, of the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, with all weapons of war **for** battle, one hundred twenty thousand.*

"And these are the numbers of the heads of those armed for war" who came to David at Hebron to make him king, "according to the mouth of the LORD" (12:23). Every tribe is counted: Judah 6,800, Simeon 7,100, the Levites 4,600, plus Jehoiada with 3,700 priests and the young Zadok with twenty-two commanders, Benjamin 3,000 (most of whom were still loyal to Saul's house), Ephraim 20,800, the western half of Manasseh 18,000, Zebulun 50,000, Naphtali 37,000 with a thousand commanders, Dan 28,600, Asher 40,000, and the tribes east of the Jordan 120,000.

These are very large numbers, about 340,000 men in all, and some readers wonder about them. I take them as written. As I mentioned in the Background, some scholars think the Hebrew word for thousand here may mean a military unit, which would make the total smaller. Either way, the point is clear: the whole nation came.

Two tribes get special notes. Issachar sent men "knowing understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do" (12:32). They could read the moment and see that it was time to follow David. We need people like that in the church today, people who know God's Word and can see what it means for the times we live in. And Zebulun came "to help with not a heart and a heart" (12:33). That is, without a divided heart. They were all in.

12:38-40 *All these, men of battle, helpers of the battle line, came with a whole heart to Hebron to make David king over all Israel; and also all the rest of Israel* ***were of*** *one heart to make David king. And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brothers had prepared for them. And also those near to them, as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing bread on donkeys and on camels and on mules and on oxen, food of flour, fig cakes and raisin clusters, and wine and oil, and oxen and sheep in abundance; for* ***there was*** *joy in Israel.*

"All these, men of battle, helpers of the battle line, came with a whole heart to Hebron to make David king over all Israel; and also all the rest of Israel were of one heart to make David king" (12:38). After years of division and war, Israel was finally one.

They stayed with David three days, "eating and drinking." Their neighbors as far north as Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali brought food on donkeys, camels, mules and oxen: flour, fig cakes, raisins, wine, oil, oxen and sheep "in abundance; for there was joy in Israel" (12:40).

What a picture of the kingdom to come. When God's King reigns and His people come to Him with a whole heart, there is feasting and joy. Jesus spoke of many coming from east and west to recline at the table in the kingdom (Matthew 8:11). The returned exiles had no king. This chapter reminded them what it looked like when God's people gathered around His chosen king, and it gave them something to hope for.

Chapter 12 Summary

While David was still an outlaw at Ziklag, mighty men began to join him. Archers and slingers from Benjamin, Saul's own tribe, came first. Fierce Gadites crossed the flooded Jordan to reach him. When men of Benjamin and Judah came, David asked whether they came in peace, and the Spirit clothed Amasai, who answered, "We are yours, David, and with you, son of Jesse!" Chiefs from Manasseh joined him as he returned to Ziklag, and day by day his camp grew until it was like the camp of God. Later, fighting men from every tribe came to Hebron to make David king, including the men of Issachar who understood the times and the men of Zebulun with an undivided heart. All Israel was of one heart, and they feasted with David for three days, for there was joy in Israel.

People and Places

- Ziklag: the Philistine town where David lived while fleeing Saul.
- Amasai: a chief who, clothed by the Spirit, pledged loyalty to David.
- Jehoiada: leader of the priests of Aaron's house who came to Hebron (likely the father of Benaiah, 11:22).
- Zadok: a young priest, later the high priest under David and Solomon.

Chapter 12 Study Questions

1. Where was David when the first men came to him, and why is that important? (12:1)

2. Why was it costly for men of Benjamin to join David? (12:2)

3. How are the Gadites described, and what river did they cross? (12:8, 15)

4. What did David say to the men of Benjamin and Judah, and how did Amasai answer? (12:17-18)

5. How did David's camp grow? (12:22)

6. What was special about the men of Issachar and the men of Zebulun? (12:32-33)

7. Why was there joy in Israel? (12:38-40)

8. Amasai said, "We are yours, David." How is that like the way we come to Jesus, the Son of David?

9. The men of Issachar understood the times and knew what to do. What do you think God's people need to understand about our times?

10. Zebulun came without a divided heart. Is there any part of your heart you are still holding back from following Jesus fully?

Chapter 13: The Ark and the Death of Uzzah

Scripture

13:1-14 And David consulted with the commanders of the thousands and of the hundreds, with every leader. And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If ***it seems*** good to you, and ***if it is*** from the LORD our God, let us spread out, let us send to our brothers who remain in all the lands of Israel, and with them the priests and the Levites in the cities of their pasture lands, that they may gather to us; and let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul." And all the assembly said to do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. And David assembled all Israel, from Shihor of Egypt even to the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kiriath-jearim, which ***belongs*** to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, the LORD, who sits ***on*** the cherubim, where ***the*** name is called. And they made the ark of God ride on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzzah and Ahio ***were*** leading the cart. And David and all Israel ***were*** celebrating before God with all ***their*** strength, and with songs and with lyres and with harps and with tambourines and with cymbals and with trumpets. And they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, and Uzzah stretched out his hand to take hold of the ark, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and He struck him down because he had stretched out his hand on the ark; and he died there before God. And David was angry because the LORD had broken out ***with*** a breaking out against Uzzah; and he called that place Perez-uzza until this day. And David feared God on that day, saying, "How shall I bring the ark of God to me?" And David did not remove the ark to himself to the city of David, and he turned it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of God remained with the household of Obed-edom in his house three months; and the LORD blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that ***belonged*** to him.

Chapter 13 Preview

Now that David is king and Jerusalem is his city, his first concern is the ark of God. The ark of the covenant was a wooden chest covered with gold, made in Moses' day. It held the tablets of the Ten Commandments, and its lid, with two golden cherubim on it, was where God said He would meet with His people (Exodus 25:10-22). For years it had sat almost forgotten in a house in Kiriath-jearim. "We did not seek it in the days of Saul," David says (13:3). He wants to bring it home.

The whole nation agrees, and they set out with a great celebration. But they carry the ark on a new cart instead of the way God commanded. When the oxen stumble, a man named Uzzah reaches out to steady the ark, and God strikes him dead. The music stops. David is angry and afraid, and he leaves the ark at the house of Obed-edom. This is one of the hardest passages in the book. It teaches that God is holy, that zeal is not enough, and that we must worship Him His way. Second Samuel 6:1-11 tells the same event.

Chapter 13 Study

13:1-4 *And David consulted with the commanders of the thousands and of the hundreds, with every leader. And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If **it seems** good to you, and **if it is** from the LORD our God, let us spread out, let us send to our brothers who remain in all the lands of Israel, and with them the priests and the Levites in the cities of their pasture lands, that they may gather to us; and let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul." And all the assembly said to do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.*

"And David consulted with the commanders of the thousands and of the hundreds, with every leader" (13:1). David did not act alone. He spoke to the whole assembly: "If it seems good to you, and if it is from the LORD our God, let us spread out" and gather all Israel, including "the priests and the Levites" (13:2), "and let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul" (13:3).

Notice that word "seek" again. In chapter 10, Saul died because he did not seek the LORD. Here, David's first act as king over all Israel is to seek God by bringing back the ark, the sign of His presence. Saul had neglected it. David put it first.

"And all the assembly said to do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people" (13:4). It was right in their eyes. The trouble that follows comes because they did not ask whether the way they did it was right in God's eyes.

Chronicles puts this event before the story of Hiram and the Philistine wars in chapter 14, while 2 Samuel tells those first. The writer often arranges events by theme rather than strict time order. He wants us to see David's heart for God's presence at the very start of his reign.

13:5-8 *And David assembled all Israel, from Shihor of Egypt even to the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kiriath-jearim, which **belongs** to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, the LORD, who sits **on** the cherubim, where **the** name is called. And they made the ark of God ride on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzzah and Ahio **were** leading the cart. And David and all Israel **were** celebrating before God with all **their** strength, and with songs and with lyres and with harps and with tambourines and with cymbals and with trumpets.*

"And David assembled all Israel, from Shihor of Egypt even to the entrance of Hamath" (13:5), from the far south to the far north. They went to Kiriath-jearim, also called Baalah, "to bring up from there the ark of God, the LORD, who sits on the cherubim, where the name is called" (13:6). The cherubim were heavenly beings, and the golden figures of them on the ark marked it as the earthly throne of the invisible King.

How had the ark ended up there? Many years before, perhaps seventy or more, the Philistines captured it in battle (1 Samuel 4). God struck them with plagues until they sent it back on a new cart pulled by two cows (1 Samuel 6:7-12). It came to Kiriath-jearim and stayed in the house of Abinadab for many years (1 Samuel 7:1-2).

"And they made the ark of God ride on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzzah and Ahio were leading the cart" (13:7). It must have seemed like a fine idea. A new cart was clean and honorable, and it had worked for the Philistines. "And David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their strength, and with songs and with lyres and with harps and with tambourines and with cymbals and with trumpets" (13:8). The joy was real. The music was loud. Their hearts were sincere. But there was one problem. God had not told them to carry the ark on a cart.

13:9-10 *And they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, and Uzzah stretched out his hand to take hold of the ark, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and He struck him down because he had stretched out his hand on the ark; and he died there before God.*

"And they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, and Uzzah stretched out his hand to take hold of the ark, for the oxen stumbled" (13:9). A threshing floor was a flat, hard place where grain was beaten to separate it from the straw. The cart jolted. The ark tipped. Uzzah reached out to keep it from falling.

"And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and He struck him down because he had stretched out his hand on the ark; and he died there before God" (13:10).

This is hard to read. Uzzah seems to have meant well. Why would God strike him dead for trying to help? Let me give the answer the Bible itself gives, carefully.

First, God had been very clear. The ark was to be carried by the Levites of the family of Kohath, on their shoulders, with poles through the rings on its sides (Exodus 25:12-15; Numbers 7:9). And God had warned that the Kohathites "shall not touch the holy thing, and die" (Numbers 4:15). Even the Levites who carried it were not to touch the ark itself. These rules were in the law of Moses, and the priests and Levites should have known them. Uzzah's family had kept the ark in their house for years. If anyone should have known, they should.

Second, the problem started long before Uzzah reached out. The whole plan was wrong. They copied the Philistines instead of obeying God. Once the ark was on a cart pulled by oxen, a stumble was always possible. Uzzah's touch was the moment the wrong way of doing things came to its end.

Third, the ark was not an object that needed human help. It was the throne of the holy God. Uzzah seems to have thought the ark was safer in his hand than on the ground. But the ground God made was not unclean. Sinful hands were. God was teaching all Israel, at the start of a new era, that He is holy and He is not to be handled carelessly.

This is not about God being harsh with someone who made an honest mistake. It is about God's holiness. Uzzah was not the first to learn it. Nadab and Abihu died for offering fire God had not commanded (Leviticus 10:1-3), and the men of Beth-shemesh died for looking into the ark (1 Samuel 6:19). Scripture records these deaths so that we will take God seriously.

How does this point us to Christ? None of us could stand in the presence of a holy God by our own good intentions. But Jesus has opened the way. Hebrews tells us that we now have "confidence for

the entrance into the holy places by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19). We can draw near to God, not because He has become less holy, but because Christ has made us clean. We come His way, through His Son, and that way is open to anyone who comes.

13:11-14 *And David was angry because the LORD had broken out **with** a breaking out against Uzzah; and he called that place Perez-uzza until this day. And David feared God on that day, saying, "How shall I bring the ark of God to me?" And David did not remove the ark to himself to the city of David, and he turned it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of God remained with the household of Obed-edom in his house three months; and the LORD blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that **belonged** to him.*

"And David was angry because the LORD had broken out with a breaking out against Uzzah" (13:11). David named the place Perez-uzza, which means the breaking out against Uzzah. David was hurt and confused. His great day of worship had ended at a grave. Have you ever been angry with God when things went wrong while you were trying to serve Him? David was. The Bible does not hide it.

Then his anger turned to fear. "And David feared God on that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God to me?" (13:12). That was the right question, though he did not yet have the answer. He did not take the ark into Jerusalem. Instead "he turned it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite" (13:13). Obed-edom was a Levite (15:18, 21; 26:4), probably from the Levite town of Gath-rimmon, which is why he is called a Gittite.

"And the ark of God remained with the household of Obed-edom in his house three months; and the LORD blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belonged to him" (13:14). The same ark that brought death to Uzzah brought blessing to Obed-edom. The ark had not changed. God had not changed. The difference was in how they treated His presence. God's holiness is a danger to those who handle Him carelessly and a blessing to those who honor Him. David would learn the lesson and come back for the ark the right way, as chapter 15 will show.

Chapter 13 Summary

David consulted with Israel's leaders and the whole assembly, and they agreed to bring back the ark of God, which had been neglected in Saul's day. David gathered all Israel to Kiriath-jearim, and they set the ark on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, with Uzzah and Ahio leading it, while all Israel celebrated with music. At the threshing floor of Chidon the oxen stumbled, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark, and the LORD struck him down, and he died there before God. God had commanded that the ark be carried on the shoulders of the Levites and never touched. David was angry and then afraid, and he left the ark at the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. For three months the LORD blessed Obed-edom's household because of the ark.

People and Places

- The ark of the covenant: the gold-covered chest that held the tablets of the law, the place where God met with Israel.
- Cherubim: heavenly beings; golden figures of them stood on the lid of the ark.

- Kiriath-jearim: also called Baalah, the town where the ark stayed for many years.
- Uzzah and Ahio: sons or descendants of Abinadab, who led the cart.
- Perez-uzza: the breaking out against Uzzah, the name David gave the place.
- Obed-edom: a Levite in whose house the ark stayed three months.

I have been angry with God when something went wrong while I was trying to serve Him. I felt He let me down. I am sure there was a reason, and a lesson for me to learn. David had to learn the right way to carry the ark. Sometimes the delay is the lesson.

Chapter 13 Study Questions

1. Why did David want to bring back the ark, and what had happened to it in Saul's day? (13:3)

2. How did the people decide whether the plan was right? (13:2, 4)

3. How did they carry the ark, and how had God said it must be carried? (13:7; Numbers 4:15; 7:9)

4. What happened when the oxen stumbled? (13:9-10)

5. How did David react, first with anger and then with fear? (13:11-12)

6. What happened at the house of Obed-edom, and why? (13:14)

7. The people were sincere and joyful, but they did not do it God's way. Why are sincerity and zeal not enough in worship?

8. How does Hebrews 10:19 show us the way to come near to a holy God?

9. Have you ever been angry or confused with God when something went wrong while you were trying to serve Him? What did you do with it?

10. Is there an area of your life where you are doing something for God your own way instead of His way? What would it look like to stop and ask Him?

Chapter 14: David's House and His Victories over the Philistines

Scripture

14:1-17 And Hiram the king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and craftsmen of wall and craftsmen of wood, to build a house for him. And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel. And David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David fathered more sons and daughters. And these ***are*** the names of the children who were his in Jerusalem: Shammua and Shobab, Nathan and Solomon, and Ibhar and Elishua and Elpelet, and Nogah and Nepheg and Japhia, and Elishama and Beeliada and Eliphelet. And the Philistines heard that David had been anointed as king over all Israel, and all the Philistines went up to seek David; and David heard, and he went out before them. And the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? And will You give them into my hand?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up, and I will give them into your hand." And they went up to Baal-perazim, and David struck them down there; and David said, "God has broken out against my enemies by my hand like the breaking out of waters." Therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim. And they abandoned their gods there; and David spoke, and they were burned with fire. And the Philistines yet again made a raid in the valley. And David inquired of God again, and God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; turn around from them, and you shall come to them from in front of the balsam trees. And let it be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike down the camp of the Philistines." And David did just as God had commanded him, and they struck down the camp of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gezer. And the name of David went out into all the lands, and the LORD put the dread of him on all the nations.

Chapter 14 Preview

While the ark waits at the house of Obed-edom, the writer shows us how God was blessing David's reign. Hiram king of Tyre sends cedar and craftsmen to build David a palace. David's family grows. And when the Philistines come up to attack the new king, David asks God what to do, twice, and twice God gives him victory.

The chapter is a contrast to chapter 13. There, David acted without asking how God wanted it done, and it ended at a grave. Here, David inquires of God before each battle and does exactly what God says. And the contrast with Saul is even sharper. Saul "did not inquire of the LORD" (10:14). David did, and "the LORD put the dread of him on all the nations" (14:17). Second Samuel 5:11-25 tells the same events.

Chapter 14 Study

14:1-2 *And Hiram the king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and craftsmen of wall and craftsmen of wood, to build a house for him. And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel.*

"And Hiram the king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and craftsmen of wall and craftsmen of wood, to build a house for him" (14:1). Tyre was a wealthy trading city on the coast north of Israel, in what is now Lebanon. Its cedar was the finest building wood in the ancient world. Hiram wanted good relations with the new power in the hills, and later he would help Solomon build the temple (2 Chronicles 2:3-16).

"And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel" (14:2). David understood two things. First, it was the LORD who made him king. Second, God did it "for the sake of His people." David's kingdom was not for David. It was for Israel.

That is a lesson for anyone God puts in charge, whether a pastor, a parent, a boss or a leader of any kind. God gives authority for the good of the people under it. Jesus said the greatest among us must be the servant of all (Mark 10:43-45).

14:3-7 *And David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David fathered more sons and daughters. And these **are** the names of the children who were his in Jerusalem: Shammua and Shobab, Nathan and Solomon, and Ibhar and Elishua and Elpelet, and Nogah and Nepheg and Japhia, and Elishama and Beeliada and Eliphelet.*

"And David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David fathered more sons and daughters" (14:3). Thirteen sons born in Jerusalem are named, the same list as in 3:5-8, with small spelling differences. Solomon and Nathan are among them (14:4), the two sons through whom Matthew and Luke trace the line to Jesus.

The Bible records David's many wives, but it does not approve of them. God had told Israel's future kings not to multiply wives for themselves, so that their hearts would not turn away (Deuteronomy 17:17). From the beginning, God's design was one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6). David's many marriages brought jealousy, rivalry and violence into his home, as 2 Samuel shows. Solomon went even further, and his wives did turn his heart away (1 Kings 11:1-4).

Even so, God worked through David's family to keep His promise. God does not approve of our sins, but He is not stopped by them.

14:8-12 *And the Philistines heard that David had been anointed as king over all Israel, and all the Philistines went up to seek David; and David heard, and he went out before them. And the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? And will You give them into my hand?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up, and I will give them into your hand." And they went up to Baal-perazim, and David struck them down there; and David said, "God has broken out against my enemies by my hand like the breaking out of waters." Therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim. And they abandoned their gods there; and David spoke, and they were burned with fire.*

"And the Philistines heard that David had been anointed as king over all Israel" (14:8). While David ruled only Judah, the Philistines may have seen him as no threat, even a friend, since he had once lived among them. Now he was king of all Israel, and they came up "to seek David." They raided the valley of Rephaim, just southwest of Jerusalem.

What did David do? "David inquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? And will You give them into my hand?" (14:10). He didn't assume. He asked. "And the LORD said to him, Go up, and I will give them into your hand."

David won at a place he named Baal-perazim, saying, "God has broken out against my enemies by my hand like the breaking out of waters" (14:11). The name means lord of breaking out. Think back to 13:11. There God had broken out against Uzzah. Here God broke out against David's enemies. The same God who broke out in judgment on careless worship broke out in power for an obedient king.

"And they abandoned their gods there; and David spoke, and they were burned with fire" (14:12). Second Samuel 5:21 says David and his men carried the idols away. Chronicles adds that they were burned, just as the law commanded (Deuteronomy 7:5, 25). The Philistines had once carried off the ark of the true God. Now their own gods were left behind on the battlefield and burned.

14:13-17 *And the Philistines yet again made a raid in the valley. And David inquired of God again, and God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; turn around from them, and you shall come to them from in front of the balsam trees. And let it be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike down the camp of the Philistines." And David did just as God had commanded him, and they struck down the camp of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gezer. And the name of David went out into all the lands, and the LORD put the dread of him on all the nations.*

"And the Philistines yet again made a raid in the valley" (14:13). Same enemy, same valley. David could have assumed God's answer would be the same. He did not. "And David inquired of God again" (14:14).

This time God's answer was different. "You shall not go up after them; turn around from them, and you shall come to them from in front of the balsam trees." David was to circle around and wait. "When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike down the camp of the Philistines" (14:15). The sound in the treetops was a sign that God's own army was moving ahead of him.

"And David did just as God had commanded him" (14:16), and he struck down the Philistines from Gibeon to Gezer, driving them out of the hill country. Here is the lesson. Yesterday's guidance is not a formula for today. David asked again, and God's plan changed. We need to keep seeking God, not just once but every time, and then do exactly what He says, and wait for Him to go before us.

"And the name of David went out into all the lands, and the LORD put the dread of him on all the nations" (14:17). David's fame grew, but the writer says it was the LORD who did it.

Chapter 14 Summary

Hiram king of Tyre sent cedar and craftsmen to build David a house, and David knew that the LORD had established him as king and exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel. David took more wives in Jerusalem, and his sons born there are listed, including Nathan and Solomon. When the Philistines heard that David was king over all Israel, they raided the valley of Rephaim. David inquired of God, went up at His word, and defeated them at Baal-perazim, where God broke out against his enemies like waters, and the Philistines' abandoned gods were burned. When the Philistines raided again, David inquired again, and God told him to circle around and wait for the sound of marching in the balsam trees. David obeyed and struck them down from Gibeon to Gezer, and the LORD made David's name known in all the lands.

People and Places

- Hiram: king of Tyre, who sent cedar and builders to David and later helped Solomon.
- Tyre: a rich trading city on the coast north of Israel.
- Valley of Rephaim: a valley just southwest of Jerusalem.
- Baal-perazim: lord of breaking out, where God gave David victory.
- Gibeon to Gezer: from the hills north of Jerusalem down to the edge of the coastal plain.

Chapter 14 Study Questions

1. What did Hiram send to David, and why? (14:1)

2. What two things did David know about his kingdom? (14:2)

3. What does the Bible say about kings having many wives? (14:3; Deuteronomy 17:17)

4. What did David do before the first battle, and what did God answer? (14:10)

5. Why did David name the place Baal-perazim, and how does it echo 13:11? (14:11)

6. How was God's answer different the second time, and what sign did He give? (14:14-15)

7. How is David in this chapter different from Saul in 10:13-14?

8. David knew his kingdom was "for the sake of His people Israel" (14:2). How should that shape the way you use any authority God has given you?

9. David asked God again, even though the situation looked the same. Why is it dangerous to assume God's answer today will be the same as yesterday's?

10. Is there a decision you are facing right now that you need to stop and bring to God before you act?

Chapter 15: The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

Scripture

15:1-15 And he made houses for himself in the city of David, and he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. Then David said, "No ***one is*** to carry the ark of God except the Levites, for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister to Him forever." And David assembled all Israel to Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it. And David gathered the sons of Aaron and the Levites: of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and his brothers, one hundred twenty; of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and his brothers, two hundred twenty; of the sons of Gershom, Joel the chief, and his brothers, one hundred thirty; of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and his brothers, two hundred; of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and his brothers, eighty; of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and his brothers, one hundred twelve. And David called for Zadok and for Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, and he said to them, "You ***are*** the heads of the fathers of the Levites; consecrate yourselves, you and your brothers, and bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to ***the place that*** I have prepared for it. For because at the first ***time*** you ***were*** not ***there***, the LORD our God broke out against us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance." And the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. And the sons of the Levites carried the ark of God, just as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD, on their shoulder with the poles on them.

15:16-29 And David said to the commanders of the Levites to appoint their brothers the singers with instruments of song, harps and lyres and cymbals, sounding aloud, to raise a sound of joy. And the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel, and of his brothers, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brothers, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; and with them their brothers of the second ***rank***: Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Eliphelehu, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, the gatekeepers. And the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, ***were*** to sound aloud with cymbals of bronze; and Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with harps on Alamoth; and Mattithiah, and Eliphelehu, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with lyres on the Sheminith, to lead. And Chenaniah, the commander of the Levites in the lifting up, ***was*** instructing in the lifting up, for he ***was*** skilled. And Berechiah and Elkanah ***were*** gatekeepers for the ark. And Shebaniah, and Joshaphat, and Nethanel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, ***were*** blowing on the trumpets before the ark of God; and Obed-edom and Jehiah ***were*** gatekeepers for the ark. And it was David and the elders of Israel and the commanders of the thousands who went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-edom with joy. And it was, when God helped the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. And David ***was*** wrapped in a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the commander of the lifting up ***of*** the singers; and on David ***was*** an ephod of linen. And all Israel ***was*** bringing up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the ram's horn, and with trumpets,

and with cymbals, sounding aloud with harps and lyres. And it was, ***as*** the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked down through the window and saw King David skipping and celebrating; and she despised him in her heart.

Chapter 15 Preview

Three months after Uzzah died, David tries again to bring the ark to Jerusalem, and this time he does it God's way. He prepares a place and pitches a tent for it. He calls the priests and Levites, tells them to make themselves holy, and has the Levites carry the ark on their shoulders with poles, "just as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD" (15:15). He admits plainly what went wrong the first time: "we did not seek Him according to the ordinance" (15:13).

Then the celebration begins again, now ordered and led by the Levite singers and musicians David appointed. The ark comes into the city of David with shouting, the ram's horn, trumpets, cymbals, harps and lyres, and David dances before it. Only one person is not glad. Michal, Saul's daughter, looks down from a window and despises David in her heart. Second Samuel 6:12-16 tells the same event, but Chronicles gives us far more about the Levites.

Chapter 15 Study

15:1-3 *And he made houses for himself in the city of David, and he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. Then David said, "No **one is** to carry the ark of God except the Levites, for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister to Him forever." And David assembled all Israel to Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it.*

"And he made houses for himself in the city of David, and he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it" (15:1). David built his own house with Hiram's help (14:1), but he did not forget God's house. He got a place ready for the ark.

Then he said, "No one is to carry the ark of God except the Levites, for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister to Him forever" (15:2). David had gone back to the law. Somewhere in those three months, he had asked his question from 13:12, "How shall I bring the ark of God to me?" and he had found the answer in God's Word (Numbers 4:15; Deuteronomy 10:8).

"And David assembled all Israel to Jerusalem" (15:3). Once again the whole nation was invited. David did not give up on bringing God's presence to the center of Israel's life. He gave up on doing it his own way.

15:4-10 *And David gathered the sons of Aaron and the Levites: of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and his brothers, one hundred twenty; of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and his brothers, two hundred twenty; of the sons of Gershom, Joel the chief, and his brothers, one hundred thirty; of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and his brothers, two hundred; of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and his brothers, eighty; of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and his brothers, one hundred twelve.*

David gathered "the sons of Aaron and the Levites" (15:4). Six Levite families are listed with their chiefs and numbers: the sons of Kohath under Uriel, 120; of Merari under Asaiah, 220; of Gershom under Joel, 130; of Elizaphan under Shemaiah, 200; of Hebron under Eliel, 80; and of Uzziel under Amminadab, 112. That is 862 men in all.

Elizaphan, Hebron and Uzziel were all branches of Kohath (Exodus 6:18-22). So four of the six groups came from the Kohathites, the very family God had appointed to carry the holy things (Numbers 4:4-15). David made sure the right men were there. This time no one was going to guess.

15:11-15 *And David called for Zadok and for Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, and he said to them, "You **are** the heads of the fathers of the Levites; consecrate yourselves, you and your brothers, and bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to **the place that** I have prepared for it. For because at the first **time** you **were** not **there**, the LORD our God broke out against us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance." And the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. And the sons of the Levites carried the ark of God, just as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD, on their shoulder with the poles on them.*

David called the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, and the six Levite chiefs (15:11). He said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers of the Levites; consecrate yourselves, you and your brothers, and bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel" (15:12). To consecrate means to set yourself apart as holy for God's service. It involved washing, keeping away from anything that made a person unclean, and preparing the heart (Exodus 19:10-15).

Then David said the key words of the chapter: "For because at the first time you were not there, the LORD our God broke out against us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance" (15:13). An ordinance is a rule God has set. David took the blame on himself and the people. He did not blame Uzzah alone. He said "we." They had sought the ark, but they had not sought God in the way He had told them to.

This is a word for us. It is possible to be very excited about God and still ignore what He has said. Real seeking means going to His Word and doing what it says. Jesus said true worshipers worship the Father "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24). Spirit without truth was the problem in chapter 13.

"And the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves" (15:14), "and the sons of the Levites carried the ark of God, just as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD, on their

shoulder with the poles on them" (15:15). That phrase, "just as Moses had commanded," is the difference between chapter 13 and chapter 15.

15:16-24 *And David said to the commanders of the Levites to appoint their brothers the singers with instruments of song, harps and lyres and cymbals, sounding aloud, to raise a sound of joy. And the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel, and of his brothers, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brothers, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; and with them their brothers of the second* ***rank****: Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Eliphelehu, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, the gatekeepers. And the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan,* ***were*** *to sound aloud with cymbals of bronze; and Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with harps on Alamoth; and Mattithiah, and Eliphelehu, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with lyres on the Sheminith, to lead. And Chenaniah, the commander of the Levites in the lifting up,* ***was*** *instructing in the lifting up, for he* ***was*** *skilled. And Berechiah and Elkanah* ***were*** *gatekeepers for the ark. And Shebaniah, and Joshaphat, and Nethanel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests,* ***were*** *blowing on the trumpets before the ark of God; and Obed-edom and Jehiah* ***were*** *gatekeepers for the ark.*

Next David told the chiefs of the Levites "to appoint their brothers the singers with instruments of song, harps and lyres and cymbals, sounding aloud, to raise a sound of joy" (15:16). Obedience did not mean the joy had to go. It meant the joy would be led by those God appointed.

The three leaders were Heman, Asaph and Ethan, the same men whose family lines we saw in 6:31-47. They sounded the bronze cymbals (15:19). Others played harps "on Alamoth" and lyres "on the Sheminith" (15:20-21). These are musical terms whose exact meanings are lost. Many think Alamoth means a high pitch, for young women's voices, and Sheminith a lower one, perhaps an octave. Both words appear in the titles of psalms (Psalm 46; Psalm 6; 12).

"And Chenaniah, the commander of the Levites in the lifting up, was instructing in the lifting up, for he was skilled" (15:22). The phrase "lifting up" may mean leading the music, or it may mean directing the carrying of the ark. Either way, a skilled man was put in charge. God values skill offered to Him. Gatekeepers were set for the ark (15:23), and seven priests blew trumpets before it (15:24), as in Numbers 10:8.

Obed-edom appears again (15:18, 21, 24). The man in whose house the ark had stayed now served as a gatekeeper and musician. He had seen God's blessing up close, and he wanted to stay near His presence.

15:25-28 *And it was David and the elders of Israel and the commanders of the thousands who went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-edom with joy. And it was, when God helped the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. And David* ***was*** *wrapped in a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the commander of the lifting up* ***of*** *the singers; and on David* ***was*** *an ephod of linen. And all Israel* ***was*** *bringing up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the ram's horn, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with harps and lyres.*

"And it was David and the elders of Israel and the commanders of the thousands who went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-edom with joy" (15:25). The joy was back.

"And it was, when God helped the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams" (15:26). Notice the words "God helped." When they did it His way, He helped them. Second Samuel 6:13 says that when the carriers had gone six steps, David sacrificed an ox and a fatling. The two accounts may describe offerings at the start and along the way. They thanked God for every step.

David was "wrapped in a robe of fine linen" with "an ephod of linen" (15:27). An ephod was a linen garment like a vest or apron worn by priests in their service. David dressed like the Levites. The king set aside his royal robes to worship with the worshipers. "And all Israel was bringing up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the ram's horn, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with harps and lyres" (15:28).

15:29 *And it was,* ***as*** *the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked down through the window and saw King David skipping and celebrating; and she despised him in her heart.*

"And it was, as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked down through the window and saw King David skipping and celebrating; and she despised him in her heart."

In the middle of all this joy, one person looked down. Michal was David's first wife, Saul's daughter. Notice that the writer calls her "the daughter of Saul," not the wife of David. She shared her father's attitude. Saul had not cared about the ark (13:3), and neither did she. She saw only a king acting, to her mind, without dignity.

Second Samuel 6:20-23 tells the rest of the story. Chronicles gives just this one verse. It is enough. The same event can fill one heart with joy and another with scorn. It depends on whether we care about God's presence or about how we look.

Have you ever held back in worship because you were worried about what someone else would think? David didn't. He cared more about honoring God than about protecting his image. Michal stayed at the window. David was in the procession.

Chapter 15 Summary

David prepared a place for the ark and pitched a tent for it, and he declared that only the Levites could carry it, because the LORD had chosen them. He gathered all Israel and the priests and Levites, and told the Levite chiefs to consecrate themselves, admitting that the LORD had broken out against them the first time because they did not seek Him according to His ordinance. The Levites carried the ark on their shoulders with poles, just as Moses had commanded. David had the Levites appoint singers and musicians, led by Heman, Asaph and Ethan, with Chenaniah directing, gatekeepers for the ark, and priests blowing trumpets. When God helped the Levites, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. David, dressed in fine linen and a linen ephod, and all Israel brought up the ark with shouting and music. Michal the daughter of Saul looked down from a window, saw David skipping and celebrating, and despised him in her heart.

People and Places

- Zadok and Abiathar: the two priests in David's day.
- Heman, Asaph and Ethan: the leaders of the Levite singers.
- Chenaniah: the skilled Levite who led the singing or the carrying.
- Ephod: a linen garment worn by priests in their service.
- Michal: Saul's daughter and David's first wife.

Chapter 15 Study Questions

1. What did David prepare for the ark before bringing it up? (15:1)

2. Who did David say must carry the ark, and why? (15:2)

3. What reason did David give for the death of Uzzah? (15:13)

4. How did the Levites carry the ark this time? (15:15)

5. Who were the three leaders of the singers, and what instruments did they use? (15:17-19)

6. What did the people do when God helped the Levites? (15:26)

7. What did David wear, and what did Michal think when she saw him? (15:27-29)

8. David said "we did not seek Him according to the ordinance" (15:13). How can we make sure our worship and service follow God's Word and not just our own ideas?

9. Obedience did not take away the joy in this chapter. How have you found that obeying God brings joy rather than taking it away?

10. Michal cared more about dignity than about God's presence. Is there anything that holds you back from worshiping God with your whole heart?

Chapter 16: David's Psalm of Thanks

Scripture

16:1-22 And they brought the ark of God and set it in the midst of the tent which David had pitched for it; and they brought near burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. And David finished offering up the burnt offering and the peace offerings, and he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. And he distributed to every man of Israel, both man and woman, to each a loaf of bread and a date cake and a raisin cake. And he appointed some of the Levites before the ark of the LORD ***as*** ministers, both to make remembrance and to give thanks and to praise the LORD God of Israel: Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, with instruments of harps and with lyres; and Asaph ***was*** sounding aloud with the cymbals; and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests ***were*** with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God. On that day, then David first appointed to give thanks to the LORD by the hand of Asaph and his brothers: "Give thanks to the LORD; call on His name; make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him; sing praises to Him; speak of all His wonders. Glory in the name of His holiness; let the heart of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually. Remember His wonders which He has done, His portents, and the judgments of His mouth, O seed of Israel His servant, sons of Jacob, His chosen ones! He ***is*** the LORD our God; His judgments ***are*** in all the earth. Remember His covenant forever, the word ***which*** He commanded for a thousand generations, which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac; and He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel ***as*** an everlasting covenant, saying, 'To you I will give the land of Canaan, the portion of your inheritance,' when you were men of number, as few, and sojourners in it. And they went about from nation to nation, and from a kingdom to another people. He did not permit any man to oppress them, and He rebuked kings on their account: 'Do not touch My anointed ones, and to My prophets do no harm.'

16:23-43 Sing to the LORD, all the earth; bear the good news of His salvation from day to day. Recount His glory among the nations, His wonders among all the peoples. For great ***is*** the LORD, and to be praised exceedingly; and He ***is*** to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples ***are*** worthless idols, and the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty ***are*** before Him; strength and joy ***are*** in His place. Ascribe to the LORD, O families of peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name; lift up an offering and come before Him; bow down to the LORD in the adornment of holiness. Tremble before Him, all the earth; also the world is established; it shall not be shaken. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; and let them say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns.' Let the sea thunder, and its fullness; let the field exult, and all that ***is*** in it. Then the trees of the forest shall shout for joy before the LORD, for He comes to judge the earth. Give thanks to the LORD, for ***He is*** good; for His steadfast love ***is*** forever. And say, 'Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us and deliver us from the nations, to give thanks to the name of Your holiness, to glory in Your praise.' Blessed ***be*** the LORD God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting." And all the people said, "Amen," and praised the LORD. And he left there, before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, Asaph and his brothers, to minister before the ark continually, according to the matter of each day on its day; and Obed-

edom and their brothers, sixty-eight; and Obed-edom the son of Jeduthun and Hosah ***were*** for gatekeepers; and Zadok the priest and his brothers the priests before the tabernacle of the LORD at the high place which ***was*** at Gibeon, to offer up burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the burnt offering continually, morning and evening, and according to all that is written in the law of the LORD which He commanded Israel; and with them Heman and Jeduthun and the rest of those chosen, who were designated by names, to give thanks to the LORD, for His steadfast love ***is*** forever; and with them, Heman and Jeduthun, ***were*** trumpets and cymbals for those sounding aloud, and the instruments of the song of God; and the sons of Jeduthun ***were*** for the gate. And all the people went, each to his house; and David turned to bless his house.

Chapter 16 Preview

The ark is finally home. It is set in the tent David pitched for it in Jerusalem, and David offers burnt offerings and peace offerings, blesses the people in the name of the LORD, and gives every man and woman a gift of food. Then he appoints Levites to serve before the ark continually, "to make remembrance and to give thanks and to praise the LORD God of Israel" (16:4).

At the center of the chapter is the song David gave Asaph and his brothers to sing that day (16:8-36). It is made of parts we also find in the book of Psalms: Psalm 105:1-15, Psalm 96 and Psalm 106:1, 47-48. It calls God's people to give thanks, to remember His covenant with Abraham, to tell the nations of His glory, and to cry out to Him to gather them from among the nations. The chapter closes with David's plan for daily worship in two places: before the ark in Jerusalem and at the tabernacle at Gibeon. For the first readers, just gathered back from the nations themselves, this song was their song too.

Chapter 16 Study

16:1-3 *And they brought the ark of God and set it in the midst of the tent which David had pitched for it; and they brought near burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. And David finished offering up the burnt offering and the peace offerings, and he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. And he distributed to every man of Israel, both man and woman, to each a loaf of bread and a date cake and a raisin cake.*

"And they brought the ark of God and set it in the midst of the tent which David had pitched for it" (16:1). Then they offered "burnt offerings and peace offerings before God." A burnt offering was burned whole on the altar, a gift wholly given to God, often for atonement and dedication (Leviticus 1). A peace offering was a fellowship meal. Part was burned for God, and the rest was eaten by the worshipers in His presence (Leviticus 3; 7:11-15). Both were fitting that day: the people gave themselves to God, and then they ate together before Him.

David "blessed the people in the name of the LORD" (16:2) and gave every person, "both man and woman," a loaf of bread, a date cake and a raisin cake (16:3). The king fed the people. No one went home empty. Worship in God's presence ended in blessing and in sharing. That is still true. When God's people gather to worship, they should go home blessed and cared for, not only taught.

16:4-7 *And he appointed some of the Levites before the ark of the LORD **as** ministers, both to make remembrance and to give thanks and to praise the LORD God of Israel: Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, with instruments of harps and with lyres; and Asaph **was** sounding aloud with the cymbals; and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests **were** with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God. On that day, then David first appointed to give thanks to the LORD by the hand of Asaph and his brothers:*

David appointed some of the Levites "before the ark of the LORD as ministers, both to make remembrance and to give thanks and to praise the LORD God of Israel" (16:4). Those three verbs describe what worship is: remembering what God has done, thanking Him for it, and praising Him for who He is.

Asaph was the chief, with others playing harps and lyres, and Asaph himself "sounding aloud with the cymbals" (16:5). Two priests blew trumpets "continually before the ark of the covenant of God" (16:6). Then, "on that day," David "first appointed to give thanks to the LORD by the hand of Asaph and his brothers" (16:7). This was the beginning of the regular ministry of song that went on through the days of the temple and that the returned exiles were restoring in their own day (Ezra 3:10-11).

16:8-14 *"Give thanks to the LORD; call on His name; make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him; sing praises to Him; speak of all His wonders. Glory in the name of His holiness; let the heart of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually. Remember His wonders which He has done, His portents, and the judgments of His mouth, O seed of Israel His servant, sons of Jacob, His chosen ones! He **is** the LORD our God; His judgments **are** in all the earth.*

The song begins: "Give thanks to the LORD; call on His name; make known His deeds among the peoples" (16:8). These verses match Psalm 105:1-7.

Hebrew poetry does not rhyme sounds. It rhymes thoughts. A line says something, and the next line says it again in other words, or adds to it, or gives its opposite. We call this parallelism. Look at verse 11: "Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually." The second line repeats and deepens the first.

The song is full of commands: give thanks, call, make known, sing, speak, glory, rejoice, seek, remember. "Let the heart of those who seek the LORD rejoice" (16:10). Here is that word again, seek. Saul did not seek the LORD (10:14). David had learned to seek Him "according to the ordinance" (15:13). Now he calls all Israel to seek His face continually.

"Remember His wonders which He has done" (16:12). Who is to remember? "O seed of Israel His servant, sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!" (16:13). God's people are called to remember what He has done. Forgetting is the first step toward unfaithfulness. "He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth" (16:14). He is Israel's God, but He rules the whole world.

16:15-22 *Remember His covenant forever, the word **which** He commanded for a thousand generations, which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac; and He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel **as** an everlasting covenant, saying, 'To you I will give the land of Canaan, the portion of your inheritance,' when you were men of number, as few, and sojourners in it. And they went about from nation to nation, and from a kingdom to another people. He did not permit any man to oppress them, and He rebuked kings on their account: 'Do not touch My anointed ones, and to My prophets do no harm.'*

"Remember His covenant forever, the word which He commanded for a thousand generations" (16:15). Psalm 105:8 says God "has remembered His covenant forever." Chronicles calls the people to remember it too. God never forgets His promise. His people must not forget it either.

Which covenant? The one "He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac," which He confirmed to Jacob "as an everlasting covenant" (16:16-17). And what did it promise? "To you I will give the land of Canaan, the portion of your inheritance" (16:18). God promised the land to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 12:7; 15:18; 17:8). He called it everlasting. I believe God still means it, and that He will keep it with the nation of Israel as He has said (Romans 11:28-29).

For the returned exiles, those words must have hit hard. They were back in that very land. They were few, as the patriarchs had been: "men of number, as few, and sojourners in it" (16:19), wandering "from nation to nation" (16:20). But God had protected Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "He did not permit any man to oppress them, and He rebuked kings on their account" (16:21), as with Pharaoh and Abimelech (Genesis 12:17; 20:3). God said, "Do not touch My anointed ones, and to My prophets do no harm" (16:22).

That verse is sometimes used to say that no one may question a pastor or church leader. That is not what it means. In context, the anointed ones are the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whom God set apart and protected. God is warning the kings of the nations not to harm His chosen people. Leaders today should be honored, but they are still to be tested by the Word of God (Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1).

16:23-27 *Sing to the LORD, all the earth; bear the good news of His salvation from day to day. Recount His glory among the nations, His wonders among all the peoples. For great **is** the LORD, and to be praised exceedingly; and He **is** to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples **are** worthless idols, and the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty **are** before Him; strength and joy **are** in His place.*

"Sing to the LORD, all the earth; bear the good news of His salvation from day to day" (16:23). This part matches Psalm 96. The song turns outward, to the nations. "Recount His glory among the nations, His wonders among all the peoples" (16:24).

Why should the nations hear? "For great is the LORD, and to be praised exceedingly; and He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, and the LORD made the heavens" (16:25-26). The Philistines had just left their gods on the battlefield to be burned (14:12). Idols are made. The LORD is the Maker.

"Bear the good news of His salvation" is gospel language. Israel was always meant to tell the nations about the true God. Jesus sent His followers to do the same, to make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19). Every time we share the good news of Jesus, we are singing David's song.

16:28-33 *Ascribe to the LORD, O families of peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name; lift up an offering and come before Him; bow down to the LORD in the adornment of holiness. Tremble before Him, all the earth; also the world is established; it shall not be shaken. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; and let them say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns.' Let the sea thunder, and its fullness; let the field exult, and all that **is** in it. Then the trees of the forest shall shout for joy before the LORD, for He comes to judge the earth.*

"Ascribe to the LORD, O families of peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength" (16:28). We cannot add to God's glory. To give Him glory means to recognize it and say it aloud. "Bow down to the LORD in the adornment of holiness" (16:29). Then all creation joins in: "Tremble before Him, all the earth" (16:30). "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; and let them say among the nations" that "The LORD reigns" (16:31). The sea thunders, the fields exult, and "the trees of the forest shall shout for joy before the LORD, for He comes to judge the earth" (16:33).

Why would creation rejoice that God comes to judge? Because His judgment will set right everything that is wrong. The earth itself groans under sin (Romans 8:19-22). When the Judge comes, it will be set free. I believe this looks ahead to the return of Jesus Christ, when He comes visibly to the earth to judge and to reign (Revelation 19:11-16; 20:4-6). The whole creation is waiting for that day.

16:34-36 *Give thanks to the LORD, for **He is** good; for His steadfast love **is** forever. And say, 'Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us and deliver us from the nations, to give thanks to the name of Your holiness, to glory in Your praise.' Blessed **be** the LORD God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting." And all the people said, "Amen," and praised the LORD.*

"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love is forever" (16:34). This line, from Psalm 106:1, is the refrain of Chronicles. It is sung again at the temple's dedication (2 Chronicles 5:13; 7:3), in battle (2 Chronicles 20:21), and by the returned exiles when they laid the new temple's foundation (Ezra 3:11). The Hebrew word for steadfast love is hesed, God's loyal, covenant love that never lets go.

The people were told to say this: "Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us and deliver us from the nations, to give thanks to the name of Your holiness, to glory in Your praise" (16:35). In David's day, Israel was gathered in its land. Why would they pray to be gathered from the nations? Perhaps because some Israelites still lived among foreign peoples, or because David looked ahead to times of scattering, as God had warned (Deuteronomy 30:1-5). But for the first readers of Chronicles, this was exactly their prayer. They had been scattered among the nations, and God had begun to gather them. The prophets say He will one day gather all Israel back to their land (Ezekiel 36:24; Jeremiah 23:3-8).

"Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting" (16:36). "And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD." Amen means so be it, it is true. The song ended with the whole people agreeing with God.

16:37-43 *And he left there, before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, Asaph and his brothers, to minister before the ark continually, according to the matter of each day on its day; and Obed-edom and their brothers, sixty-eight; and Obed-edom the son of Jeduthun and Hosah **were** for gatekeepers; and Zadok the priest and his brothers the priests before the tabernacle of the LORD at the high place which **was** at Gibeon, to offer up burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the burnt offering continually, morning and evening, and according to all that is written in the law of the LORD which He commanded Israel; and with them Heman and Jeduthun and the rest of those chosen, who were designated by names, to give thanks to the LORD, for His steadfast love **is** forever; and with them, Heman and Jeduthun, **were** trumpets and cymbals for those sounding aloud, and the instruments of the song of God; and the sons of Jeduthun **were** for the gate. And all the people went, each to his house; and David turned to bless his house.*

David then set up the daily worship. Asaph and his brothers stayed "before the ark of the covenant of the LORD" in Jerusalem, "to minister before the ark continually, according to the matter of each day on its day" (16:37). Obed-edom and others served as gatekeepers (16:38).

But the tabernacle, Moses' tent, and the bronze altar were not in Jerusalem. They were at Gibeon, a few miles northwest. So David left "Zadok the priest and his brothers the priests before the tabernacle of the LORD at the high place which was at Gibeon" (16:39), "to offer up burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the burnt offering continually, morning and evening, and according to all that is written in the law of the LORD" (16:40). A high place was a hilltop or raised place of worship. Many high places in Israel were used for idols, but this one held the true tabernacle of the LORD. Heman and Jeduthun led the singing there, "to give thanks to the LORD, for His steadfast love is forever" (16:41-42).

So for a time there were two centers of worship: the ark with its songs in Jerusalem, and the altar with its sacrifices at Gibeon. They would come together when Solomon built the temple (2 Chronicles 5:2-7). David did not throw out the old to bring in the new. He kept both, according to God's law, until God's plan was complete.

"And all the people went, each to his house; and David turned to bless his house" (16:43). After blessing the nation, David went home to bless his family. A leader's first congregation is his own household.

Chapter 16 Summary

The ark was set in the tent David pitched for it, and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, blessed the people in the name of the LORD, and gave every man and woman bread, a date cake and a raisin cake. He appointed Levites under Asaph to remember, give thanks and praise the LORD before the ark, with harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets. On that day he gave them a song of thanks, made of parts of Psalms 105, 96 and 106. It calls God's people to give thanks, seek the LORD and remember His everlasting covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give

them the land of Canaan, and how He protected them when they were few. It calls all the earth to sing of His salvation, to see that the gods of the nations are worthless idols, and to rejoice because the LORD comes to judge the earth. It ends with thanks for His steadfast love, a prayer to be gathered from the nations, and the people's Amen. David then left Asaph to minister before the ark in Jerusalem and Zadok, Heman and Jeduthun at the tabernacle at Gibeon, offering burnt offerings morning and evening, and he went home to bless his house.

People and Places

- Asaph: the chief of the Levite singers before the ark in Jerusalem.
- Zadok: the priest who served at the tabernacle at Gibeon.
- Gibeon: a town about six miles northwest of Jerusalem, where the tabernacle and altar stood.
- High place: a raised place of worship; the one at Gibeon held the LORD's tabernacle.
- Hesed: steadfast love, God's loyal covenant love.

Chapter 16 Study Questions

1. What offerings did David bring, and what did he give the people? (16:1-3)

2. What three things were the Levites appointed to do before the ark? (16:4)

3. Which psalms does David's song match? (16:8-36; Psalms 105, 96, 106)

4. What covenant does the song call the people to remember, and what did it promise? (16:15-18)

5. What does "Do not touch My anointed ones" mean in its context? (16:19-22)

6. Why does all creation rejoice when the LORD comes to judge the earth? (16:31-33)

7. What line is the refrain of Chronicles, and what does hesed mean? (16:34, 41)

8. Why would the prayer of 16:35 have meant so much to the returned exiles? What does it say about God's future for Israel?

9. The song is full of calls to remember what God has done. What has God done in your life that you need to remember and thank Him for this week?

10. David blessed the nation, then went home to bless his own house (16:43). How can you bring what you receive in worship home to your family?

Chapter 17: God's Covenant with David

Scripture

17:1-15 And it was, when David dwelt in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "Look, I am dwelling in a house of cedars, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD ***is*** under curtains." And Nathan said to David, "All that ***is*** in your heart, do, for God ***is*** with you." And it was, in that night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, "Go, and you shall say to David My servant, 'Thus says the LORD, "You shall not build Me the house to dwell in. For I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel until this day, and I have been from tent to tent and from tabernacle ***to tabernacle***. Wherever I have walked about in all Israel, did I speak a word with one of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedars?'"' And now, thus you shall say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of armies, "I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be leader over My people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a name like the name of the great ones who ***are*** on the earth. And I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and I will plant it, and it shall dwell in its place and shall not be disturbed again; and the sons of injustice shall not again wear it out as at the first, and from the days that I commanded judges over My people Israel. And I will subdue all your enemies. And I have declared to you that the LORD will build a house for you. And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled to go with your fathers, that I will raise up your seed after you, who shall be from your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to Me a son; and My steadfast love I will not remove from him, as I removed ***it*** from him who was before you. And I will set him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."'" According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

17:16-27 And King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, "Who ***am*** I, O LORD God, and what ***is*** my house, that You have brought me this far? And this was small in Your eyes, O God; and You have spoken concerning the house of Your servant for ***a time*** far off, and You have regarded me according to the order of the man of the ascent, O LORD God. What more can David add to You for the glory of Your servant? And You know Your servant. O LORD, for the sake of Your servant and according to Your heart You have done all this greatness, to make known all the great things. O LORD, ***there is*** none like You, and ***there is*** no God except You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who ***is*** like Your people Israel, one nation on the earth, whom God went to ransom for Himself ***as*** a people, to make for You a name ***by*** great and awesome ***deeds***, by driving out nations from before Your people whom You ransomed from Egypt? And You made Your people Israel Your own people forever; and You, O LORD, became their God. And now, O LORD, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, let it be confirmed forever, and do as You have spoken. And let it be confirmed, and let Your name be great forever, saying, 'The LORD of armies ***is*** the God of Israel, God to Israel'; and the house of David Your servant ***is*** established before You. For You, O my God, have uncovered the ear of Your servant, to build a house for him; therefore Your servant has found ***courage*** to pray before You. And now, O LORD, You are God, and You have spoken this good thing concerning Your

servant. And now You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, to be forever before You; for You, O LORD, have blessed, and ***it is*** blessed forever."

Chapter 17 Preview

This is the heart of 1 Chronicles. The ark is in Jerusalem, and David is living in a fine house of cedar. It bothers him that the ark of God sits under curtains while he lives in comfort, and he wants to build God a house, a temple. Nathan the prophet tells him to go ahead. But that night God sends Nathan back with a different word. David will not build God a house. God will build David a house.

The house God promises is a family line of kings. God promises David a son who will build the temple and whose throne will be established forever. This promise is called the Davidic covenant. A covenant is a binding promise sealed by God's own word. Second Samuel 7 tells the same promise, and every later prophet builds on it. The chapter ends with David sitting before the LORD in humble wonder: "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far?" (17:16). For the first readers, who had no king at all, this chapter was the reason to keep hoping. For us, it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of David.

Chapter 17 Study

17:1-2 *And it was, when David dwelt in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "Look, I am dwelling in a house of cedars, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD **is** under curtains." And Nathan said to David, "All that **is** in your heart, do, for God **is** with you."*

"And it was, when David dwelt in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Look, I am dwelling in a house of cedars, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under curtains" (17:1). Cedar was the finest building wood of the day, brought from Lebanon by Hiram's men (14:1). David lived in comfort, and the ark of God sat in a tent. That bothered him. His desire came from a good heart. He wanted God honored above himself.

Nathan appears here for the first time in Chronicles. A prophet was a man God called to speak His words to the people and to the king. Nathan answered right away, "All that is in your heart, do, for God is with you" (17:2). It sounded like good advice. David was a godly man with a good idea. But Nathan spoke before he had heard from God. Even good men can give their own opinion when they should wait on the LORD.

17:3-6 *And it was, in that night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, "Go, and you shall say to David My servant, 'Thus says the LORD, "You shall not build Me the house to dwell in. For I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel until this day, and I have been from tent to tent and from tabernacle **to tabernacle**. Wherever I have walked about in all Israel, did I speak a word with one of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedars?'"'*

"And it was, in that night, that the word of God came to Nathan" (17:3). God corrected His prophet before morning. And notice what God calls David: "My servant" (17:4). God was not angry with

David. He honored the desire of his heart. But He had a different plan. "You shall not build Me the house to dwell in."

God reminded David that He had never asked for a house. Since the day He brought Israel up from Egypt, "I have been from tent to tent and from tabernacle to tabernacle" (17:5). The tabernacle was the tent of worship God had Moses build in the wilderness, made to move with the people. In all those years God never asked any of Israel's leaders, "Why have you not built Me a house of cedars?" (17:6).

God does not need us to build Him anything. Solomon himself would say that the heavens cannot contain God, much less a house built by men (1 Kings 8:27). Before God would receive a house from David, He wanted David to understand that everything good comes from God to us, not from us to God. David will give us one more reason in 22:8: he had been a man of war and had shed much blood, and the temple would be built by a man of peace.

17:7-8 *And now, thus you shall say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of armies, "I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be leader over My people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a name like the name of the great ones who **are** on the earth.*

Now God turned to what He had done for David. "I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be leader over My people Israel" (17:7). David was the youngest son of Jesse, out with the sheep, so overlooked that his father did not even call him in when Samuel came (1 Samuel 16:11). God took him from there.

"And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you" (17:8). Every victory David won was God's doing. Then came the first promise: "I will make for you a name like the name of the great ones who are on the earth." This echoes what God promised Abraham, that He would make his name great (Genesis 12:2). The covenant with David builds on the covenant with Abraham. Three thousand years later, David's name is still known around the world. God kept His word.

17:9-10 *And I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and I will plant it, and it shall dwell in its place and shall not be disturbed again; and the sons of injustice shall not again wear it out as at the first, and from the days that I commanded judges over My people Israel. And I will subdue all your enemies. And I have declared to you that the LORD will build a house for you.*

Next God promised His people a secure home. "And I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and I will plant it, and it shall dwell in its place and shall not be disturbed again" (17:9). To plant a people is to settle them so they put down roots and stay.

Was that fulfilled in David's day? Partly. Israel had rest under David and Solomon. But later Israel was carried off, first by Assyria and then by Babylon. The first readers of Chronicles were the children of that exile. So the words "shall not be disturbed again" still looked ahead for them, and they still look ahead today. The prophets promised that God would plant Israel in their land and

they would never be plucked up again (Amos 9:15). I believe this points to the day when Christ returns and Israel dwells safely in the land under the rule of the Son of David (Ezekiel 37:24-25).

Then comes the turning point of the chapter: "And I have declared to you that the LORD will build a house for you" (17:10). David wanted to build God a house. God says, No, I will build you a house. The Hebrew word for house, bayit, can mean a building, a household, or a dynasty, a family line of kings. David would not build a house of cedar for God. God would build a house of kings for David.

17:11-12 *And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled to go with your fathers, that I will raise up your seed after you, who shall be from your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever.*

"And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled to go with your fathers, that I will raise up your seed after you, who shall be from your sons; and I will establish his kingdom" (17:11). Seed means offspring, a descendant. This would be one of David's own sons.

"He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever" (17:12). The first fulfillment is Solomon. He was born to David after this, became king after him, and built the temple. David names him in 22:9-10, and Solomon said so himself when the temple was dedicated (2 Chronicles 6:10).

But look at the word "forever." Solomon's kingdom did not last forever. After his death the kingdom split in two, about 930 B.C. His temple was burned by Babylon in 586 B.C. The last king of David's line in Jerusalem, Zedekiah, was taken away in chains. When Chronicles was written, no son of David had sat on a throne for well over a hundred years. Did God's promise fail? No. The promise was bigger than Solomon. It reached to a Son of David who would reign forever.

17:13-14 *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to Me a son; and My steadfast love I will not remove from him, as I removed* ***it*** *from him who was before you. And I will set him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."'"*

"I will be to him a father, and he shall be to Me a son" (17:13). God would treat the son of David as His own son, with a father's love and a father's care. "And My steadfast love I will not remove from him, as I removed it from him who was before you." Steadfast love is hesed, God's loyal covenant love. God took the kingdom from Saul and gave it to another family. He promised never to do that to David's family. Kings in David's line could be disciplined for their sin, but the line itself would never be cast off. The covenant rests on God's promise, not on the kings' faithfulness.

Second Samuel 7:14 adds a line about God correcting this son when he sins. Chronicles leaves it out. Why? The writer is not hiding Solomon's sins. He is keeping his eyes on the promise itself and on the Son in whom it would be fully kept. The writer of Hebrews quotes this verse to show that Jesus is greater than the angels: "I will be to Him a Father, and He will be to Me a Son" (Hebrews 1:5). In Solomon it was true as an adopted relationship. In Jesus it is true in the fullest sense. He is the eternal Son of God, who also became the son of David by birth (Romans 1:3).

Now look at verse 14, the key verse of the book: "And I will set him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever." Second Samuel 7:16 says "your

house and your kingdom," speaking to David. Chronicles says "My house" and "My kingdom." The kingdom belongs to God. David's son only sits on it for Him. Chronicles will say later that Solomon sat "on the throne of the LORD as king" (29:23). The throne of David is the LORD's throne on earth.

17:15 *According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.*

"According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David" (17:15). Nathan, who had spoken too quickly the night before, now spoke exactly what God told him. A good prophet, and a good teacher, is willing to admit he was wrong and then say exactly what God said.

How is this promise kept? When the angel Gabriel came to Mary, he said of her Son, "the Lord God will give Him the throne of David His father, and He will reign over the house of Jacob to the ages, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). Gabriel was speaking the very words of this covenant: the throne, the house, the kingdom, the forever. On the day of Pentecost Peter said God had sworn to David that He would raise up the Christ "to sit upon his throne" (Acts 2:30), and that He did it by raising Jesus from the dead. That is how David's throne can be established forever. Its King cannot die again.

So the promise has begun to be fulfilled. Jesus is the Son of David. He rose and is seated at the right hand of the Father. But has He yet taken the throne of David over the house of Jacob, as Gabriel said? Here Bible teachers differ. I believe the throne of David is a real throne, over a real Israel, in a real Jerusalem, and that Jesus will sit on it when He returns in glory (Matthew 25:31) and reigns for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4-6), with Israel restored and gathered in her land. God has not cast off His people, "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). Other Bible teachers, often called amillennial, believe Christ is reigning on David's throne now from heaven and that the promise is being fulfilled spiritually in the church and will be completed in the new heavens and new earth. They love the Lord and take this promise seriously too. But I believe Gabriel's words to Mary will be fulfilled as plainly as his words about her Son's birth were.

17:16-17 *And King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, "Who **am** I, O LORD God, and what **is** my house, that You have brought me this far? And this was small in Your eyes, O God; and You have spoken concerning the house of Your servant for **a time** far off, and You have regarded me according to the order of the man of the ascent, O LORD God.*

"And King David went in and sat before the LORD" (17:16). He likely went into the tent where the ark was, and sat in quiet, humble worship. Then he prayed: "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far?"

David did not begin by thanking God for what he deserved. His first words were "Who am I?" He was amazed at grace. God had already brought him from the sheepfold to the throne. "And this was small in Your eyes, O God" (17:17). As if all that were not enough, God had now spoken about David's house "for a time far off," far into the future.

Then David added, "You have regarded me according to the order of the man of the ascent, O LORD God." This phrase is hard, and good teachers take it in different ways. Some think David meant, You have treated me as if I were a man of high rank, lifting me up. Others take it to mean that God had shown him the line of men going up into the future, the generations to come from him. Either way, David knew he had been given something far bigger than himself.

17:18-19 *What more can David add to You for the glory of Your servant? And You know Your servant. O LORD, for the sake of Your servant and according to Your heart You have done all this greatness, to make known all the great things.*

"What more can David add to You for the glory of Your servant? And You know Your servant" (17:18). David ran out of words. What do you say when God has given you everything? He did not need to explain himself. God already knew his heart, his weakness and his gratitude.

"O LORD, for the sake of Your servant and according to Your heart You have done all this greatness" (17:19). David knew why God had blessed him. It was not because David was great. It came from God's own heart. Grace comes from who God is, not from who we are. That is true for every believer. God saves us by His own purpose and grace, not by our works (2 Timothy 1:9).

17:20-22 *O LORD, **there is** none like You, and **there is** no God except You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who **is** like Your people Israel, one nation on the earth, whom God went to ransom for Himself **as** a people, to make for You a name **by** great and awesome **deeds**, by driving out nations from before Your people whom You ransomed from Egypt? And You made Your people Israel Your own people forever; and You, O LORD, became their God.*

David's thanks turned to praise. "O LORD, there is none like You, and there is no God except You, according to all that we have heard with our ears" (17:20). The more we see of God's grace, the greater He looks to us.

Then David praised God for Israel. "And who is like Your people Israel, one nation on the earth, whom God went to ransom for Himself as a people" (17:21). To ransom is to pay the price to set someone free. God had set Israel free from Egypt and driven out nations before them. David saw his own blessing as part of God's larger work with His people.

"And You made Your people Israel Your own people forever; and You, O LORD, became their God" (17:22). Note the word "forever" again. David believed God's choice of Israel was permanent. So did Paul, centuries later (Romans 11:1-2). For the small community back from Babylon, this was a word to hold on to. They were still God's own people.

17:23-25 *And now, O LORD, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, let it be confirmed forever, and do as You have spoken. And let it be confirmed, and let Your name be great forever, saying, 'The LORD of armies **is** the God of Israel, God to Israel'; and the house of David Your servant **is** established before You. For You, O my God, have uncovered the ear of Your servant, to build a house for him; therefore Your servant has found **courage** to pray before You.*

Now David asked God to do what He had said. "And now, O LORD, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, let it be confirmed forever, and do as You have spoken" (17:23).

Why ask God to do what He has already promised? Because that is what faith does. Prayer is not talking God into something. It is taking hold of what God has promised and asking Him to do it. David's deepest desire was for God's glory: "let Your name be great forever" (17:24). He wanted people everywhere to say, "The LORD of armies is the God of Israel." The great name God promised David (17:8) mattered less to him than God's own name.

"For You, O my God, have uncovered the ear of Your servant, to build a house for him; therefore Your servant has found courage to pray before You" (17:25). To uncover the ear is to tell someone a secret plainly. David would never have dared to ask for a dynasty that lasts forever. God promised it first, so David found the courage to pray for it. God's promises give us boldness to pray.

17:26-27 *And now, O LORD, You are God, and You have spoken this good thing concerning Your servant. And now You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, to be forever before You; for You, O LORD, have blessed, and **it is** blessed forever."*

"And now, O LORD, You are God, and You have spoken this good thing concerning Your servant" (17:26). Everything rests on this. If God has spoken, it is as good as done. David closed with confidence: "for You, O LORD, have blessed, and it is blessed forever" (17:27). In 2 Samuel 7:29 David asks God to bless his house. Here he rests in the fact that God has already blessed it.

David's house has been blessed forever in the Son of David, Jesus Christ. Matthew begins his Gospel with "Jesus Christ, son of David" (Matthew 1:1). The crowds shouted Hosanna to the Son of David when He rode into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:9). And everyone who believes in Him shares in the blessing God promised David. The promise is sure because the King is alive.

Chapter 17 Summary

When David was settled in his house of cedar, he told Nathan he wanted to build a house for the ark of the covenant, and Nathan told him to go ahead. That night God sent Nathan back to say that David would not build the house. God had never asked for one. He reminded David that He had taken him from following the flock to lead Israel, had been with him and cut off his enemies, and would make his name great and plant Israel in a place of rest. Then God declared that He would build David a house. He would raise up one of David's sons, who would build God's house, and God would establish his throne forever. God would be his father, and he would be God's son, and God's

steadfast love would not leave him as it had left Saul. God would set him in His own house and kingdom forever. David sat before the LORD and asked, "Who am I?" He praised God as without equal, thanked Him for ransoming Israel to be His people forever, and asked Him to confirm His word so that His name would be great. The promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of David and Son of God, who will reign on David's throne forever.

People and Places

- Nathan: the prophet who brought God's covenant promise to David.
- Davidic covenant: God's promise to David of a son, a house (dynasty), a kingdom and a throne forever.
- Hesed: steadfast love, God's loyal covenant love.
- Bayit: the Hebrew word for house, which can mean a building, a household or a dynasty.

Chapter 17 Study Questions

1. What did David want to do, and why? (17:1)

2. What did Nathan say at first, and what did God tell him that night? (17:2-6)

3. What had God already done for David, and what did He promise to build for him? (17:7-10)

4. What does "house" mean in verse 4 compared with verse 10?

5. Which parts of the promise were fulfilled in Solomon, and which reach beyond him? (17:11-14; 22:9-10)

6. Chronicles says "My house" and "My kingdom" in verse 14. What does that teach about whose kingdom it is?

7. How do Luke 1:32-33 and Hebrews 1:5 show that this promise is fulfilled in Jesus?

8. David asked God to do what He had already promised (17:23). How can you build your prayers on God's promises?

9. David wanted to do something for God, but God wanted to do something for David first. Are you trying to give God something before you have received what He offers you in Christ?

10. David asked, "Who am I?" (17:16). When you think of how far God has brought you, what is your answer?

Chapter 18: David's Victories

Scripture

18:1-17 And it was after this that David struck down the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Gath and its daughter ***towns*** from the hand of the Philistines. And he struck down Moab, and Moab became servants to David, bearers of tribute. And David struck down Hadadezer king of Zobah toward Hamath, as he went to set up his hand at the river Euphrates. And David captured from him a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen and twenty thousand men on foot; and David hamstrung all the chariotry, and he left of it one hundred chariots. And Syria of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, and David struck down in Syria twenty-two thousand men. And David put ***garrisons*** in Syria of Damascus, and Syria became servants to David, bearers of tribute. And the LORD saved David wherever he went. And David took the shields of gold which were on the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. And from Tibhath and from Cun, cities of Hadadezer, David took very much bronze; with it Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the articles of bronze. And Tou king of Hamath heard that David had struck down all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, and he sent Hadoram his son to King David to ask him of ***his*** welfare and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and struck him down; for Hadadezer was a man of wars ***with*** Tou; and ***with him were*** all ***kinds of*** articles of gold and silver and bronze. Also these King David consecrated to the LORD, with the silver and the gold which he had carried off from all the nations: from Edom and from Moab and from the sons of Ammon and from the Philistines and from Amalek. And Abishai the son of Zeruiah struck down Edom in the Valley of Salt, eighteen thousand. And he put garrisons in Edom, and all Edom became servants to David. And the LORD saved David wherever he went. And David reigned over all Israel, and he was doing justice and righteousness for all his people. And Joab the son of Zeruiah ***was*** over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud ***was*** recorder; and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar ***were*** priests; and Shavsha ***was*** scribe; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ***was*** over the Kerethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David ***were*** the first at the side of the king.

Chapter 18 Preview

In chapter 17 God promised, "I will subdue all your enemies" (17:10). Chapter 18 shows Him doing it. In a few short verses David defeats the Philistines to the west, Moab to the east, the Arameans of Zobah and Damascus to the north, and Edom to the south. Twice the writer tells us the reason: "the LORD saved David wherever he went" (18:6, 13).

The chapter is more than a war report. Chronicles notes that the bronze David took was later used by Solomon for the temple (18:8), and that David gave the gold and silver of the nations to the LORD (18:11). The wars were preparing for the house of God. The chapter ends with a list of David's chief officials and a picture of his rule: he "was doing justice and righteousness for all his people" (18:14). Second Samuel 8 tells the same events.

Chapter 18 Study

18:1-2 *And it was after this that David struck down the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Gath and its daughter **towns** from the hand of the Philistines. And he struck down Moab, and Moab became servants to David, bearers of tribute.*

"And it was after this that David struck down the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Gath and its daughter towns from the hand of the Philistines" (18:1). "After this" ties the wars to the promise. God had just said He would subdue David's enemies, and now He does. Gath was one of the five chief Philistine cities, the hometown of Goliath. Its "daughter towns" were the villages around it.

"And he struck down Moab, and Moab became servants to David, bearers of tribute" (18:2). Tribute was a yearly payment a weaker nation made to a stronger one. Second Samuel 8:2 tells of harsh treatment of Moab's soldiers that Chronicles does not repeat. The writer keeps his eyes on the result: the nations around Israel were brought under David, just as God said.

18:3-6 *And David struck down Hadadezer king of Zobah toward Hamath, as he went to set up his hand at the river Euphrates. And David captured from him a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen and twenty thousand men on foot; and David hamstrung all the chariotry, and he left of it one hundred chariots. And Syria of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, and David struck down in Syria twenty-two thousand men. And David put **garrisons** in Syria of Damascus, and Syria became servants to David, bearers of tribute. And the LORD saved David wherever he went.*

Next David fought "Hadadezer king of Zobah toward Hamath, as he went to set up his hand at the river Euphrates" (18:3). Zobah was an Aramean kingdom north of Damascus. The Arameans, also called Syrians, lived in what is now Syria. To set up his hand at the river means to establish his rule there. God had promised Abraham the land as far as the river Euphrates (Genesis 15:18), and under David Israel's rule reached toward it.

"David captured from him a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen and twenty thousand men on foot" (18:4). Second Samuel 8:4 gives seventeen hundred horsemen and does not mention the thousand chariots. As I said in the Background, numbers were the easiest thing to miscopy over many centuries, and that is the most common explanation here.

David "hamstrung all the chariotry," cutting a tendon in the horses' legs so they could not pull chariots in war, and kept only a hundred chariots. Why not keep them all? God had told Israel's kings not to multiply horses for themselves (Deuteronomy 17:16). David did not want to trust in chariots. As he wrote, "These trust in chariotry and these in horses, and we, we will make mention of the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7).

When the Arameans of Damascus came to help, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them and put garrisons in their land (18:5-6). A garrison was a post of soldiers stationed to hold a territory. "And the LORD saved David wherever he went" (18:6). That is the key. David was a skilled soldier, but the victories were the LORD's.

18:7-8 *And David took the shields of gold which were on the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. And from Tibhath and from Cun, cities of Hadadezer, David took very much bronze; with it Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the articles of bronze.*

"And David took the shields of gold which were on the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem" (18:7). From two of Hadadezer's cities, Tibhath and Cun, David took a great deal of bronze. Then Chronicles adds something 2 Samuel does not: "with it Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the articles of bronze" (18:8). The bronze sea was a huge basin in the temple court where the priests washed (2 Chronicles 4:2-6). The pillars were the two great bronze columns at the temple's front (2 Chronicles 3:15-17).

This is why the writer tells us about the wars. David could not build the temple himself, but every victory gathered materials for it. God was using even the wars to prepare His house. Nothing David did for the Lord was wasted, even what he did not live to see finished.

18:9-11 *And Tou king of Hamath heard that David had struck down all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, and he sent Hadoram his son to King David to ask him of* ***his*** *welfare and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and struck him down; for Hadadezer was a man of wars* ***with*** *Tou; and* ***with him were*** *all* ***kinds of*** *articles of gold and silver and bronze. Also these King David consecrated to the LORD, with the silver and the gold which he had carried off from all the nations: from Edom and from Moab and from the sons of Ammon and from the Philistines and from Amalek.*

"Tou king of Hamath" heard of David's victory over Hadadezer, his old enemy (18:9). Hamath was a kingdom north of Zobah. Tou sent his son Hadoram "to King David to ask him of his welfare and to bless him" (18:10), with gifts of gold, silver and bronze. Tou wanted peace with the new power in the region.

What did David do with all this wealth? "Also these King David consecrated to the LORD, with the silver and the gold which he had carried off from all the nations" (18:11). To consecrate is to set something apart as holy, for God's use. Edom, Moab, Ammon, the Philistines and Amalek all paid, and David gave it to the LORD. He did not keep the treasure of his victories for himself. Later he would give it toward the temple (26:26-27; 29:2-5).

How do we handle the good things God gives us? David's answer was to hold them in an open hand and give them back to God. Paul asks, "what do you have which you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7). Everything we have came from Him.

18:12-13 *And Abishai the son of Zeruiah struck down Edom in the Valley of Salt, eighteen thousand. And he put garrisons in Edom, and all Edom became servants to David. And the LORD saved David wherever he went.*

"And Abishai the son of Zeruiah struck down Edom in the Valley of Salt, eighteen thousand" (18:12). Edom lay south and east of the Dead Sea, and the Valley of Salt was near there. Second Samuel 8:13 gives the credit to David, and the title of Psalm 60 speaks of Joab killing twelve thousand. These fit together: David was the king, and Joab and his brother Abishai were his

commanders in the field. Each account names a different leader, and the different numbers may count different parts of the battle.

"And he put garrisons in Edom, and all Edom became servants to David. And the LORD saved David wherever he went" (18:13). The same line again. The writer wants us to hear it twice.

18:14 *And David reigned over all Israel, and he was doing justice and righteousness for all his people.*

"And David reigned over all Israel, and he was doing justice and righteousness for all his people" (18:14). This is the picture of a good king. Justice means doing what is right for people, giving each one what is due. Righteousness means living by God's standard. David's victories outside were matched by fair rule inside.

This verse looks ahead to David's greater Son. Jeremiah said God would raise up for David a righteous Branch who would reign as king and do justice and righteousness in the land (Jeremiah 23:5). What David did in part, Jesus will do perfectly when He reigns.

18:15-17 *And Joab the son of Zeruiah **was** over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud **was** recorder; and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar **were** priests; and Shavsha **was** scribe; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada **was** over the Kerethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David **were** the first at the side of the king.*

The chapter ends with David's cabinet. Joab was over the army. Jehoshaphat was "recorder" (18:15), the official who kept the royal records and announced the king's decisions. Zadok and Abimelech the son of Abiathar were priests, and Shavsha was "scribe" (18:16), the royal secretary. Second Samuel 8:17 calls these men Ahimelech and Seraiah; names were often spelled in more than one way, and a letter or two could change in copying.

Benaiah was over "the Kerethites and the Pelethites" (18:17), foreign soldiers who served as David's personal guard. And "the sons of David were the first at the side of the king." Second Samuel 8:18 says David's sons were priests. Chronicles explains what that meant: they were chief officials close to the king, not priests serving at the altar, which only the sons of Aaron could do.

Why list the officials? Because a kingdom needs order. God gave David able men, and David put them in their places. The rest of Chronicles will show the same care for order in the worship of God.

Chapter 18 Summary

After God's promise, David struck down the Philistines and took Gath, made Moab pay tribute, and defeated Hadadezer king of Zobah, capturing chariots, horsemen and foot soldiers and hamstringing the chariot horses. When the Arameans of Damascus came to help, he struck them down and put garrisons in their land. He brought the gold shields to Jerusalem and took much bronze, which Solomon later used for the bronze sea, the pillars and the temple's bronze articles. Tou king of Hamath sent his son with gifts, and David consecrated all the silver and gold of the nations to the LORD. Abishai struck down Edom in the Valley of Salt, and Edom became David's

servants. Twice the writer says the LORD saved David wherever he went. David reigned over all Israel with justice and righteousness, with Joab over the army and his officials in their places.

People and Places

- Hadadezer: king of Zobah, an Aramean kingdom north of Damascus.
- Arameans: the people of Aram, also called Syrians.
- Tou: king of Hamath, who sent gifts to David.
- Abishai: Joab's brother, one of David's commanders.
- The Kerethites and the Pelethites: foreign soldiers who served as David's bodyguard.
- The bronze sea: the great basin in the temple court, made from bronze David took in war.

Chapter 18 Study Questions

1. What did God promise in 17:10, and how does chapter 18 show Him keeping it?

2. Which nations did David defeat in this chapter? (18:1-13)

3. Why did David hamstring the chariot horses and keep only a hundred chariots? (18:4; Deuteronomy 17:16)

4. What was the bronze from Hadadezer's cities later used for? (18:8)

5. What did David do with the silver and gold from the nations? (18:11)

6. What line does the writer repeat twice, and why does it matter? (18:6, 13)

7. What does it mean that David was "doing justice and righteousness for all his people"? (18:14)

8. How does 18:14 point ahead to the reign of Jesus? (Jeremiah 23:5)

9. David gave the treasure of his victories to God. What has God given you that you can hold in an open hand and give back to Him?

10. David's work gathered materials for a temple he never built. Is there work you are doing for God that you may not see finished? How does this chapter encourage you?

Chapter 19: War with Ammon and Syria

Scripture

19:1-19 And it was after this that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his place. And David said, "I will do steadfast love with Hanun the son of Nahash, for his father did steadfast love with me." And David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. And the servants of David came into the land of the sons of Ammon to Hanun to comfort him. And the commanders of the sons of Ammon said to Hanun, "Is David honoring your father in your eyes, because he has sent comforters to you? Is it not in order to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land ***that*** his servants have come to you?" And Hanun took the servants of David and shaved them, and he cut off their garments in the middle, as far as the buttocks, and sent them away. And ***some*** went and told David about the men, and he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said, "Remain at Jericho until your beard grows, and ***then*** you shall return." And the sons of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious with David, and Hanun and the sons of Ammon sent approximately 75,000 pounds (a thousand talents) of silver to hire for themselves chariotry and horsemen from Mesopotamia and from Aram-maacah and from Zobah. And they hired for themselves thirty-two thousand chariots, and the king of Maacah and his people; and they came and encamped before Medeba. And the sons of Ammon were gathered from their cities and came for battle. And David heard, and he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. And the sons of Ammon went out and arrayed battle ***at*** the entrance of the city, and the kings who had come ***were*** by themselves in the field. And Joab saw that the face of the battle was against him, front and back; and he chose from all the chosen ***men*** in Israel and arrayed ***them*** to meet Syria. And the rest of the people he put in the hand of Abishai his brother, and they arrayed ***themselves*** to meet the sons of Ammon. And he said, "If Syria is too strong for me, then you shall be to me for deliverance; and if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will save you. Be strong, and let us show ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God; and the LORD shall do what ***is*** good in His eyes." And Joab and the people who ***were*** with him drew near before Syria for battle, and they fled from before him. And the sons of Ammon saw that Syria had fled, and they also fled from before Abishai his brother and went into the city. And Joab came to Jerusalem. And Syria saw that they had been defeated before Israel, and they sent messengers and brought out Syria which ***was*** beyond the River, and Shophach the commander of the army of Hadadezer ***was*** before them. And it was told to David, and he gathered all Israel and crossed over the Jordan, and he came to them and arrayed ***battle*** against them. And David arrayed battle to meet Syria, and they fought with him. And Syria fled from before Israel, and David killed of Syria seven thousand charioteers and forty thousand men on foot, and he put to death Shophach the commander of the army. And the servants of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated before Israel, and they made peace with David and served him. And Syria was not willing to save the sons of Ammon anymore.

Chapter 19 Preview

This war began with an act of kindness. When the king of Ammon died, David sent men to comfort his son Hanun. But Hanun's advisers told him the men were spies, so Hanun shamed

them and sent them home half shaved and half dressed. Then, knowing David would not let that pass, the Ammonites hired a great army of Arameans to fight for them.

The chapter shows two battles. In the first, Joab and his brother Abishai are caught between two armies, and Joab speaks one of the great lines of faith in the Old Testament: "Be strong, and let us show ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God; and the LORD shall do what is good in His eyes" (19:13). In the second, David himself leads all Israel and breaks the power of Syria. Second Samuel 10 tells the same story.

Chapter 19 Study

19:1-3 *And it was after this that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his place. And David said, "I will do steadfast love with Hanun the son of Nahash, for his father did steadfast love with me." And David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. And the servants of David came into the land of the sons of Ammon to Hanun to comfort him. And the commanders of the sons of Ammon said to Hanun, "Is David honoring your father in your eyes, because he has sent comforters to you? Is it not in order to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land **that** his servants have come to you?"*

"And it was after this that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his place" (19:1). Ammon lay east of the Jordan River, around the city of Rabbah, where Amman, the capital of Jordan, stands today.

David said, "I will do steadfast love with Hanun the son of Nahash, for his father did steadfast love with me" (19:2). Steadfast love here is hesed again, loyal kindness kept up over time. Scripture doesn't tell us what Nahash had done for David. It may have been during the years David ran from Saul, since Nahash was Saul's enemy (1 Samuel 11). Whatever it was, David remembered it and wanted to repay it.

But Hanun's commanders said, "Is David honoring your father in your eyes, because he has sent comforters to you?" (19:3). They told him David's men had come to spy out the land so they could overthrow it. Suspicious people often read evil into kindness. Hanun listened to bad counsel, and it cost his nation dearly.

19:4-5 *And Hanun took the servants of David and shaved them, and he cut off their garments in the middle, as far as the buttocks, and sent them away. And **some** went and told David about the men, and he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said, "Remain at Jericho until your beard grows, and **then** you shall return."*

"And Hanun took the servants of David and shaved them, and he cut off their garments in the middle, as far as the buttocks, and sent them away" (19:4). Second Samuel 10:4 says he shaved off half of each man's beard. In that culture a beard was a mark of manhood and dignity, and to cut it off was a deep insult. To cut their robes short left them exposed. This was not just an insult to the men. It was an insult to David, who sent them.

David cared for his men first. When he heard, "he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said, Remain at Jericho until your beard grows" (19:5). He did not make them walk into Jerusalem in shame. He gave them time to recover their dignity in private. A good leader protects the honor of those who serve under him.

19:6-9 *And the sons of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious with David, and Hanun and the sons of Ammon sent approximately 75,000 pounds (a thousand talents) of silver to hire for themselves chariotry and horsemen from Mesopotamia and from Aram-maacah and from Zobah. And they hired for themselves thirty-two thousand chariots, and the king of Maacah and his people; and they came and encamped before Medeba. And the sons of Ammon were gathered from their cities and came for battle. And David heard, and he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. And the sons of Ammon went out and arrayed battle **at** the entrance of the city, and the kings who had come **were** by themselves in the field.*

"And the sons of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious with David" (19:6). They knew war was coming. So they hired help, a thousand talents of silver, about thirty-seven tons, to buy chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, Aram-maacah and Zobah. They hired "thirty-two thousand chariots, and the king of Maacah and his people" (19:7), who camped at Medeba.

Second Samuel 10:6 counts the hired men differently, as thirty-three thousand soldiers. It is likely that Chronicles is giving the size of the chariot force with its men, and Samuel the soldiers, or that a number was changed in copying. Either way, Ammon had bought an army much bigger than its own.

"And David heard, and he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men" (19:8). The Ammonites lined up at the gate of their city, and the hired kings stood by themselves in the open field (19:9). Israel would have to fight on two sides at once.

19:10-13 *And Joab saw that the face of the battle was against him, front and back; and he chose from all the chosen **men** in Israel and arrayed **them** to meet Syria. And the rest of the people he put in the hand of Abishai his brother, and they arrayed **themselves** to meet the sons of Ammon. And he said, "If Syria is too strong for me, then you shall be to me for deliverance; and if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will save you. Be strong, and let us show ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God; and the LORD shall do what **is** good in His eyes."*

"And Joab saw that the face of the battle was against him, front and back" (19:10). He was trapped between two armies. So he split his forces. He took the best men of Israel to face the Arameans, and he put the rest under his brother Abishai to face the Ammonites (19:11). Then he made a plan: "If Syria is too strong for me, then you shall be to me for deliverance; and if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will save you" (19:12). Each would help the other.

Then Joab spoke words of faith: "Be strong, and let us show ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God; and the LORD shall do what is good in His eyes" (19:13). Joab was not always a godly man. He did some cruel things in his life. But here he said something every believer needs to hear. Do your part with all your strength, and leave the outcome to God.

That is not fatalism. Joab did not sit back and wait. He made a plan, chose his men and fought hard. But he knew the battle belonged to the LORD. Whatever God chose to do would be good. Can you face your hardest battles that way, doing everything you can and trusting God with the result?

19:14-15 *And Joab and the people who **were** with him drew near before Syria for battle, and they fled from before him. And the sons of Ammon saw that Syria had fled, and they also fled from before Abishai his brother and went into the city. And Joab came to Jerusalem.*

"And Joab and the people who were with him drew near before Syria for battle, and they fled from before him" (19:14). The hired army did not stay to fight. When the Ammonites saw the Arameans run, they ran too, back into their city (19:15). "And Joab came to Jerusalem." Men fighting for pay do not fight like men fighting for their home. The battle was over almost before it began. But the war was not finished.

19:16-19 *And Syria saw that they had been defeated before Israel, and they sent messengers and brought out Syria which **was** beyond the River, and Shophach the commander of the army of Hadadezer **was** before them. And it was told to David, and he gathered all Israel and crossed over the Jordan, and he came to them and arrayed **battle** against them. And David arrayed battle to meet Syria, and they fought with him. And Syria fled from before Israel, and David killed of Syria seven thousand charioteers and forty thousand men on foot, and he put to death Shophach the commander of the army. And the servants of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated before Israel, and they made peace with David and served him. And Syria was not willing to save the sons of Ammon anymore.*

The Arameans regrouped. They sent for more troops from "beyond the River" (19:16), that is, beyond the Euphrates, with Shophach, Hadadezer's commander, at their head. This time David himself "gathered all Israel and crossed over the Jordan" (19:17) and led the battle.

"And Syria fled from before Israel, and David killed of Syria seven thousand charioteers and forty thousand men on foot, and he put to death Shophach the commander of the army" (19:18). Second Samuel 10:18 says seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen. Again the numbers differ, and again the most likely reason is copying, or that the two books count different parts of the army.

"And the servants of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated before Israel, and they made peace with David and served him. And Syria was not willing to save the sons of Ammon anymore" (19:19). The alliance broke. Ammon now stood alone, and chapter 20 will finish the war.

What started with Hanun's suspicion ended with his allies gone and his land open to attack. Pride that refuses kindness brings its own ruin. "Before breaking is pride" (Proverbs 16:18).

Chapter 19 Summary

When Nahash king of Ammon died, David sent men to comfort his son Hanun out of loyal kindness. Hanun's commanders told him they were spies, so Hanun shaved David's servants and

cut their garments short and sent them away. David told the men to stay in Jericho until their beards grew. The Ammonites hired thirty-two thousand chariots and the king of Maacah from Syria. Joab, caught between the Ammonites at the city gate and the Arameans in the field, split his army with Abishai, promised mutual help, and said, "Be strong," trusting the LORD to do what was good in His eyes. The Arameans fled, and the Ammonites fled into their city. When Syria gathered again from beyond the Euphrates under Shophach, David led all Israel across the Jordan, defeated them and killed Shophach. Hadadezer's servants made peace with David, and Syria would not help Ammon again.

People and Places

- Nahash: king of Ammon, who had shown David kindness.
- Hanun: his son, who shamed David's messengers.
- Ammon: a nation east of the Jordan; its capital was Rabbah.
- Syria (Aram): the Arameans or Syrians, north and northeast of Israel.
- Medeba: a town east of the Jordan where the hired army camped.
- Shophach: commander of Hadadezer's army.

Chapter 19 Study Questions

1. Why did David send messengers to Hanun? (19:2)

2. What did Hanun's commanders tell him, and what did Hanun do? (19:3-4)

3. How did David care for his humiliated men? (19:5)

4. How did Joab handle being trapped between two armies? (19:10-12)

5. What did Joab say before the battle? (19:13)

6. How did the war end with Syria? (19:18-19)

7. Hanun read evil into kindness. How can suspicion and bad advice lead us to wrong choices?

8. What does it look like to "show ourselves strong" and still leave the outcome to God? (19:13)

9. Is there a battle in your life right now where you need to do your part and trust God with the result?

10. David protected the dignity of his men. Who around you needs that kind of care from you?

Chapter 20: Rabbah Taken and the Giants Defeated

Scripture

20:1-8 And it was, at the time of the return of the year, at the time of the going out of the kings, and Joab led out the force of the army, and he destroyed the land of the sons of Ammon, and he came and besieged Rabbah; and David ***was*** remaining in Jerusalem. And Joab struck Rabbah and overthrew it. And David took the crown of their king from on his head, and he found it ***to be*** the weight of approximately 75 pounds (a talent) of gold, and in it ***was*** a precious stone; and it was on the head of David. And the plunder of the city he brought out, very much. And the people who ***were*** in it he brought out, and he sawed ***them*** with the saw and with sharp instruments of iron and with saws. And thus David did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. And David and all the people returned ***to*** Jerusalem. And it was after this, and a battle arose at Gezer with ***the*** Philistines. Then Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Sippai, ***one*** of those born of the Rephaim, and they were subdued. And there was again a battle with ***the*** Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair struck down Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, and the wood of his spear ***was*** like a beam of weavers. And there was again a battle at Gath, and there was a man of stature, and his digits ***were*** six and six, twenty-four; and he also was born to the Rapha. And he taunted Israel, and Jonathan the son of Shimea, the brother of David, struck him down. These were born to the Rapha in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

Chapter 20 Preview

This short chapter closes the account of David's wars. Joab finishes the war with Ammon by taking its capital, Rabbah, and David puts the Ammonite crown on his own head. Then the writer tells of three battles with the Philistines in which David's men killed giants descended from the Rephaim, among them a brother of Goliath.

Chapter 20 is just as notable for what it leaves out. In 2 Samuel, the siege of Rabbah is the setting for David's sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah (2 Samuel 11-12). Chronicles does not retell it. The first readers knew that story well. The writer's purpose here is to show God giving David rest from his enemies, so that the work of the temple could begin. The giants that once terrified Israel now fall to David's servants.

Chapter 20 Study

20:1 *And it was, at the time of the return of the year, at the time of the going out of the kings, and Joab led out the force of the army, and he destroyed the land of the sons of Ammon, and he came and besieged Rabbah; and David* ***was*** *remaining in Jerusalem. And Joab struck Rabbah and overthrew it.*

"And it was, at the time of the return of the year, at the time of the going out of the kings" (20:1). Spring was the season for war, after the winter rains, when roads were dry and there was food in the fields. Joab led the army, "destroyed the land of the sons of Ammon," and besieged Rabbah. A

siege is when an army surrounds a city and cuts it off until it falls. "And David was remaining in Jerusalem. And Joab struck Rabbah and overthrew it."

That phrase, "David was remaining in Jerusalem," is where 2 Samuel 11 begins the story of Bathsheba. Chronicles moves straight past it. Is the writer covering up David's sin? No. The Background explained that he was choosing what his readers needed for their day, and they already had Samuel. In the next chapter he will tell David's sinful census in full. Chronicles does not pretend David was perfect. It keeps its eyes on God's purpose for David's house and the temple.

20:2 *And David took the crown of their king from on his head, and he found it **to be** the weight of approximately 75 pounds (a talent) of gold, and in it **was** a precious stone; and it was on the head of David. And the plunder of the city he brought out, very much.*

"And David took the crown of their king from on his head, and he found it to be the weight of approximately 75 pounds (a talent) of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was on the head of David" (20:2). A crown that heavy was likely worn only for a short time on special days, or it may have been the crown of the idol Milcom, the god of Ammon, since the Hebrew words for "their king" and Milcom are very close. Either way, David took it as a sign that Ammon was now under him. He brought out "very much" plunder from the city.

20:3 *And the people who **were** in it he brought out, and he sawed **them** with the saw and with sharp instruments of iron and with saws. And thus David did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. And David and all the people returned **to** Jerusalem.*

"And the people who were in it he brought out" (20:3). The SLB follows the Hebrew of Chronicles here, which uses a word that can be read as "sawed." The parallel in 2 Samuel 12:31 uses a word that differs by a single letter and means he set them to work: "he set them to the saw and to the picks of iron and to the axes of iron, and he made them pass through the brick mold."

I take this as forced labor. David put the people of Rabbah to work with saws, iron tools and axes, and to make bricks, the hard labor a conquered city owed its conqueror. Many Bible teachers read it this way, both because of the clear wording in 2 Samuel and because the two Hebrew words look almost the same. Some older translations read it as torture, cutting people with saws. That reading has been held by some, but the parallel passage points to labor, and I believe that is what happened.

Even so, this was the harsh world of ancient war. Forced labor is not something to praise. Scripture records what David did without holding it up as a pattern for us. David did the same to all the cities of the Ammonites. "And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem" (20:3). The war with Ammon was over.

20:4 *And it was after this, and a battle arose at Gezer with **the** Philistines. Then Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Sippai, **one** of those born of the Rephaim, and they were subdued.*

"And it was after this, and a battle arose at Gezer with the Philistines" (20:4). Gezer was a town on the edge of Philistine land. "Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Sippai, one of those born of the

Rephaim, and they were subdued." The Rephaim were a people of great size who lived in Canaan long before Israel came (Deuteronomy 2:10-11, 20-21; 3:11). Some of their descendants lived on among the Philistines, especially in Gath. Sibbecai was one of David's mighty men (11:29), and later the commander for the eighth month (27:11).

20:5 *And there was again a battle with **the** Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair struck down Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, and the wood of his spear **was** like a beam of weavers.*

"And there was again a battle with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair struck down Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, and the wood of his spear was like a beam of weavers" (20:5). A weaver's beam was the heavy wooden bar of a loom. Goliath's spear was described the same way (1 Samuel 17:7). Strength and size ran in that family.

Here we meet a well-known puzzle. Second Samuel 21:19 says that Elhanan "struck down Goliath the Gittite." But 1 Samuel 17 says David killed Goliath. Chronicles helps us. It tells us Elhanan killed "Lahmi the brother of Goliath." Many Bible teachers believe this is the original reading, and that in copying 2 Samuel a few letters were confused. In Hebrew, "Lahmi the brother of" looks much like part of "the Bethlehemite," and the two lines are very close. Others suggest there was more than one giant named Goliath. Either way, Chronicles agrees with 1 Samuel 17: David killed Goliath, and years later one of David's men killed Goliath's brother.

20:6-8 *And there was again a battle at Gath, and there was a man of stature, and his digits **were** six and six, twenty-four; and he also was born to the Rapha. And he taunted Israel, and Jonathan the son of Shimea, the brother of David, struck him down. These were born to the Rapha in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.*

"And there was again a battle at Gath, and there was a man of stature, and his digits were six and six, twenty-four" (20:6). Six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot is a rare condition that still occurs today. This giant "taunted Israel" (20:7), just as Goliath had defied the armies of Israel years before. "Jonathan the son of Shimea, the brother of David, struck him down." Jonathan was David's nephew.

"These were born to the Rapha in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants" (20:8). Notice the order. David faced the first giant alone as a boy. Now his men faced these giants. A good leader raises up others who can fight. David's faith had become their faith.

This is how the account of David's wars ends. The enemies who once made Israel tremble are gone. God has given David rest all around, just as He promised (17:8, 10). And with rest from war, the way is open for what David most wanted: to prepare a house for the LORD.

What giants do you face? They may not carry spears, but they taunt you just the same. The same God who gave David and his men the victory is with His people today. "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31).

Chapter 20 Summary

In the spring, the season when kings went to war, Joab led the army against Ammon and besieged Rabbah while David stayed in Jerusalem, and Joab took the city. David took the Ammonite king's crown, a talent of gold with a precious stone, and set it on his head, and he brought out much plunder. He put the people of Rabbah and the other Ammonite cities to forced labor with saws and iron tools, and returned to Jerusalem. Then in three battles with the Philistines, David's men killed giants born to the Rephaim: Sibbecai killed Sippai at Gezer, Elhanan killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath, and David's nephew Jonathan killed a giant with six fingers and six toes who taunted Israel at Gath. They all fell by the hand of David and his servants.

People and Places

- Rabbah: the capital of Ammon, where Amman, Jordan, stands today.
- The Rephaim: a people of great size who lived in Canaan before Israel; some descendants lived among the Philistines.
- Sibbecai: one of David's mighty men, who killed Sippai.
- Elhanan the son of Jair: the man who killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath.
- Jonathan the son of Shimea: David's nephew, who killed the six-fingered giant.
- Gath: a Philistine city, home of Goliath's family.

Chapter 20 Study Questions

1. When did Joab go out against Rabbah, and where was David? (20:1)

2. What did David take from the king of Ammon? (20:2)

3. How does 2 Samuel 12:31 help us understand 20:3?

4. Who were the Rephaim, and where did their descendants live? (20:4, 8)

5. Who killed Lahmi, and how does 20:5 help explain 2 Samuel 21:19?

6. What was unusual about the giant at Gath, and who killed him? (20:6-7)

7. Why do you think Chronicles leaves out the story of Bathsheba here, but tells the census in chapter 21?

8. The giants fell "by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants" (20:8). How did David's faith pass to the men around him?

9. What "giant" is taunting you right now? What would it look like to face it trusting God?

10. Who in your life is learning faith by watching you?

Chapter 21: David's Census and the Threshing Floor of Ornan

Scripture

21:1-17 And Satan stood up against Israel, and he incited David to count Israel. And David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, "Go, count Israel from Beersheba and to Dan, and bring ***it*** to me, so that I may know their number." And Joab said, "May the LORD add to His people a hundred times as ***many as*** they ***are***! Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord's for servants? Why does my lord seek this? Why should it become guilt for Israel?" And the word of the king prevailed over Joab, and Joab went out and went about in all Israel, and he came ***to*** Jerusalem. And Joab gave the number of the muster of the people to David. And all Israel was a thousand thousands and a hundred thousand men drawing a sword, and Judah ***was*** four hundred seventy thousand men drawing a sword. And Levi and Benjamin he did not enroll in their midst, for the word of the king was abhorrent to Joab. And it was evil in the eyes of God concerning this matter, and He struck Israel. And David said to God, "I have sinned exceedingly in that I have done this thing. And now, please cause the iniquity of Your servant to pass away, for I have acted exceedingly foolishly." And the LORD spoke to Gad, the seer of David, saying, "Go, and you shall speak to David, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: Three ***things*** I am holding out over you; choose for yourself one of them, and I will do ***it*** to you.'" And Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Take for yourself either three years ***of*** famine, or three months ***of*** being swept away before your adversaries, with the sword of your enemies overtaking ***you***, or three days ***of*** the sword of the LORD, and pestilence in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying in all the territory of Israel.' And now, consider what word I shall bring back to Him who sent me." And David said to Gad, "***It is*** great distress to me. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His compassions ***are*** very great; and into the hand of man let me not fall." And the LORD put a pestilence on Israel, and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; and as ***he was*** destroying, the LORD saw and relented concerning the calamity, and He said to the angel who was destroying, "Enough! Now let your hand drop." And the angel of the LORD ***was*** standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between the earth and the heavens, and his sword drawn in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem. And David fell, and the elders, covered in sackcloth, on their faces. And David said to God, "***Was it*** not I ***who*** said to count the people? And I am he who has sinned and has surely done evil; and these, the sheep, what have they done? O LORD my God, please let Your hand be on me and on the house of my father, and not on Your people for a plague."

21:18-30 And the angel of the LORD said to Gad to say to David that David should go up to set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David went up by the word of Gad, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD. And Ornan turned and saw the angel, and his four sons with him ***were*** hiding themselves. And Ornan ***was*** threshing wheat. And David came to Ornan, and Ornan looked and saw David, and he went out from the threshing floor and bowed down to David ***with his*** face to the ground. And David said to Ornan, "Give me the place of the threshing floor, so that I may build on it an altar to the LORD. For ***the*** full price give it to me, so

that the plague may be restrained from upon the people." And Ornan said to David, "Take ***it*** for yourself, and let my lord the king do what ***is*** good in his eyes. See, I give the oxen for burnt offerings, and the threshing sledges for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give everything." And King David said to Ornan, "No, for I will certainly buy ***it*** for ***the*** full price; for I will not take what ***is*** yours for the LORD, and offer up a burnt offering for nothing." And David gave to Ornan for the place approximately 15 pounds (six hundred shekels) of gold by weight. And David built there an altar to the LORD, and he offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and he called to the LORD, and He answered him with fire from the heavens on the altar of the burnt offering. And the LORD spoke to the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath. At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and he sacrificed there. And the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering ***were*** at that time in the high place at Gibeon. And David was not able to go before it to seek God, for he was terrified because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Chapter 21 Preview

After all the victories of chapters 18 to 20, David falls. Satan stirs him up to count the fighting men of Israel. Joab warns him that it will bring guilt on the nation, but David insists. God is displeased, and He sends the prophet Gad to offer David three choices of judgment. David chooses to fall into the hand of the LORD, and a plague kills seventy thousand men. When the angel of the LORD stretches out his sword over Jerusalem, God says, "Enough!" and the angel stops by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

This is one of the hardest chapters in the book, and one of the most important. David confesses his sin and asks that the punishment fall on him rather than on the people. He buys Ornan's threshing floor at full price, builds an altar, and God answers with fire from heaven. That spot becomes the place of the temple (22:1; 2 Chronicles 3:1). A chapter that begins with a king's sin ends with a sacrifice that turns away God's judgment, on the very hill where God would meet His people for centuries. Second Samuel 24 tells the same event.

Chapter 21 Study

21:1 *And Satan stood up against Israel, and he incited David to count Israel.*

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and he incited David to count Israel" (21:1). The name Satan means adversary, one who opposes. He is the enemy of God and of God's people, the one who accused Job (Job 1:6-12) and who tempted Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). Here he stirs David up to take a census, a count of the people.

Second Samuel 24:1 tells the same event this way: "the anger of the LORD again burned against Israel, and He incited David against them." So who moved David, the LORD or Satan? Both books are true. Satan was the one who tempted David, wanting to harm Israel. But Satan can do nothing without God's permission, as the book of Job shows (Job 1:12). God allowed Satan to tempt David, and He used it to bring judgment on Israel's sin, which Samuel says had already stirred His anger.

God is not the author of sin. Scripture says "He Himself tempts no one" (James 1:13). David chose what he did, and he will own it as his own sin (21:8, 17). Samuel tells us who was sovereign over the event. Chronicles tells us who did the tempting.

This should sober us. The enemy is real, and he often attacks right after great victories, when we feel strong. Peter tells us to be watchful, because the devil prowls around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

21:2-4 *And David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, "Go, count Israel from Beersheba and to Dan, and bring **it** to me, so that I may know their number." And Joab said, "May the LORD add to His people a hundred times as **many as** they **are**! Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord's for servants? Why does my lord seek this? Why should it become guilt for Israel?" And the word of the king prevailed over Joab, and Joab went out and went about in all Israel, and he came **to** Jerusalem.*

David said to Joab and the leaders, "Go, count Israel from Beersheba and to Dan, and bring it to me, so that I may know their number" (21:2). From Beersheba in the far south to Dan in the far north meant the whole land.

Why was a count wrong? God Himself had commanded censuses before (Numbers 1; 26). The problem was in David's heart. "So that I may know their number." David wanted to measure his strength in fighting men, to trust in the size of his army instead of in the LORD who had just given him every victory. It was pride. The Law also said that when Israel was counted, each man was to pay a ransom so that no plague would come on them (Exodus 30:12), and some teachers think this was neglected too.

Even Joab saw the danger. "May the LORD add to His people a hundred times as many as they are!" he said. "Why does my lord seek this? Why should it become guilt for Israel?" (21:3). Joab was not a man known for tender conscience. When a man like Joab tells you you're doing wrong, you should listen. "And the word of the king prevailed over Joab" (21:4). David overruled him.

21:5-6 *And Joab gave the number of the muster of the people to David. And all Israel was a thousand thousands and a hundred thousand men drawing a sword, and Judah **was** four hundred seventy thousand men drawing a sword. And Levi and Benjamin he did not enroll in their midst, for the word of the king was abhorrent to Joab.*

Joab gave David the count. "All Israel was a thousand thousands and a hundred thousand men drawing a sword, and Judah was four hundred seventy thousand men drawing a sword" (21:5). That is 1,100,000 for Israel and 470,000 for Judah. Second Samuel 24:9 gives 800,000 and 500,000.

Why the difference? Several honest answers have been given. The two books may count different groups. Chronicles may include the standing army of 288,000 listed in chapter 27, which Samuel leaves out, and the numbers for Judah may be counted with or without certain groups. Numbers were also easy to miscopy. Some scholars read the Hebrew word for "thousand" as a unit or clan, which would make the totals smaller. I take the numbers as written and do not claim to know exactly how they fit.

"And Levi and Benjamin he did not enroll in their midst, for the word of the king was abhorrent to Joab" (21:6). Abhorrent means disgusting, hateful. Joab left out Levi, the tribe that served God and was never counted for war (Numbers 1:47-49), and Benjamin, perhaps because the tabernacle was at Gibeon in Benjamin, or because the plague came before he finished. Chronicles says later that Joab "began to count, and he did not finish" (27:24).

21:7-8 *And it was evil in the eyes of God concerning this matter, and He struck Israel. And David said to God, "I have sinned exceedingly in that I have done this thing. And now, please cause the iniquity of Your servant to pass away, for I have acted exceedingly foolishly."*

"And it was evil in the eyes of God concerning this matter, and He struck Israel" (21:7). Something happened that showed David God was displeased, and the full judgment would follow.

David's conscience woke up. "I have sinned exceedingly in that I have done this thing. And now, please cause the iniquity of Your servant to pass away, for I have acted exceedingly foolishly" (21:8). Iniquity is sin, the crooked and wrong thing done. David did not make excuses. He did not blame Satan, or Joab, or the pressures of being king. "I have sinned." That is why David was called a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22). Not that he never sinned, but that when he sinned, he came back and confessed it. Can you say those words to God as plainly?

21:9-13 *And the LORD spoke to Gad, the seer of David, saying, "Go, and you shall speak to David, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: Three **things** I am holding out over you; choose for yourself one of them, and I will do **it** to you.'" And Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Take for yourself either three years **of** famine, or three months **of** being swept away before your adversaries, with the sword of your enemies overtaking **you**, or three days **of** the sword of the LORD, and pestilence in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying in all the territory of Israel.' And now, consider what word I shall bring back to Him who sent me." And David said to Gad, "**It is** great distress to me. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His compassions **are** very great; and into the hand of man let me not fall."*

"And the LORD spoke to Gad, the seer of David" (21:9). A seer is a prophet, one who sees what God shows him. Gad had been with David since his days in hiding (1 Samuel 22:5). Now he brought hard news. Forgiveness does not always remove the consequences of sin. David had led the nation into sin, and judgment would come. But God let David choose its form: "either three years of famine, or three months of being swept away before your adversaries, with the sword of your enemies overtaking you, or three days of the sword of the LORD, and pestilence in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying in all the territory of Israel" (21:12). Pestilence is a deadly disease that spreads through a people, a plague.

Second Samuel 24:13 says seven years of famine. Chronicles says three, which fits the pattern of three years, three months and three days. The Greek translation of 2 Samuel also reads three, so most teachers think the number seven came in through copying.

David answered, "It is great distress to me. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His compassions are very great; and into the hand of man let me not fall" (21:13). That is a wise answer. David knew he deserved judgment. But he knew that even in judgment, God is more

merciful than men. He would rather be in God's hands than at the mercy of his enemies. When we have sinned, the safest place to run is to God.

21:14-15 *And the LORD put a pestilence on Israel, and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; and as **he was** destroying, the LORD saw and relented concerning the calamity, and He said to the angel who was destroying, "Enough! Now let your hand drop." And the angel of the LORD **was** standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.*

"And the LORD put a pestilence on Israel, and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men" (21:14). David had wanted to know the size of his army. Now it was seventy thousand smaller. This is hard to read, and we should not hurry past it. Why did so many die for the king's sin?

Second Samuel 24:1 tells us that God's anger had already burned against Israel. The nation had its own sin, and the census brought judgment on king and people together. A leader's sin always affects those he leads. That is a sobering truth for every parent, pastor and leader. But Scripture does not say the people were innocent, and it never says God was unjust. Scripture doesn't tell us all of God's reasons, and we do not need to know them all to trust that the Judge of all the earth does right (Genesis 18:25).

Then mercy. "And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; and as he was destroying, the LORD saw and relented concerning the calamity, and He said to the angel who was destroying, Enough! Now let your hand drop" (21:15). To relent means God turned from bringing the full judgment. God did not change His character. He showed it. He is a God who is slow to anger and quick to show mercy. The plague stopped short of the city. "And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite." A threshing floor was a flat, hard place, usually on a hilltop where the wind blew, where grain was beaten and tossed so the wind carried the straw away. Ornan was one of the Jebusites who had lived in Jerusalem before David took it. Second Samuel calls him Araunah, another form of the same name.

21:16-17 *And David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between the earth and the heavens, and his sword drawn in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem. And David fell, and the elders, covered in sackcloth, on their faces. And David said to God, "**Was it** not I **who** said to count the people? And I am he who has sinned and has surely done evil; and these, the sheep, what have they done? O LORD my God, please let Your hand be on me and on the house of my father, and not on Your people for a plague."*

"And David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between the earth and the heavens, and his sword drawn in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem" (21:16). Chronicles gives this terrible picture that Samuel does not. David and the elders, "covered in sackcloth," fell on their faces. Sackcloth was rough cloth made of goat hair, worn as a sign of grief and repentance.

Then David prayed: "Was it not I who said to count the people? And I am he who has sinned and has surely done evil; and these, the sheep, what have they done? O LORD my God, please let Your hand be on me and on the house of my father, and not on Your people for a plague" (21:17). Here

David is a true shepherd. He calls the people "the sheep," and he asks that the blow fall on him instead.

David could not take the people's punishment. He was a sinner himself. But his prayer points us to the Good Shepherd who could. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). What David asked for, Jesus did. He took the judgment on Himself so that His people would go free.

21:18-21 *And the angel of the LORD said to Gad to say to David that David should go up to set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David went up by the word of Gad, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD. And Ornan turned and saw the angel, and his four sons with him **were** hiding themselves. And Ornan **was** threshing wheat. And David came to Ornan, and Ornan looked and saw David, and he went out from the threshing floor and bowed down to David **with his** face to the ground.*

"And the angel of the LORD said to Gad to say to David that David should go up to set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (21:18). God Himself chose the place where the judgment would end. "And David went up by the word of Gad, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD" (21:19). This time David obeyed right away.

Ornan was threshing wheat, and he too "turned and saw the angel, and his four sons with him were hiding themselves" (21:20). When he saw the king coming, he went out "and bowed down to David with his face to the ground" (21:21). It must have been a frightening day on that hill.

21:22-25 *And David said to Ornan, "Give me the place of the threshing floor, so that I may build on it an altar to the LORD. For **the** full price give it to me, so that the plague may be restrained from upon the people." And Ornan said to David, "Take **it** for yourself, and let my lord the king do what **is** good in his eyes. See, I give the oxen for burnt offerings, and the threshing sledges for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give everything." And King David said to Ornan, "No, for I will certainly buy **it** for **the** full price; for I will not take what **is** yours for the LORD, and offer up a burnt offering for nothing." And David gave to Ornan for the place approximately 15 pounds (six hundred shekels) of gold by weight.*

David said, "Give me the place of the threshing floor, so that I may build on it an altar to the LORD. For the full price give it to me, so that the plague may be restrained from upon the people" (21:22).

Ornan offered it all as a gift: "See, I give the oxen for burnt offerings, and the threshing sledges for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give everything" (21:23). A burnt offering was an animal burned whole on the altar, given completely to God, for atonement and surrender. Atonement means the covering of sin so that the sinner can be made right with God. A grain offering was a gift of flour or grain. Threshing sledges were heavy wooden boards dragged over the grain, and they would make good firewood.

But David said, "No, for I will certainly buy it for the full price; for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, and offer up a burnt offering for nothing" (21:24). Worship that costs us nothing is worth little. David would not give God someone else's sacrifice. This does not mean we can buy

God's favor. We cannot. But real love gives, and gives what costs. What does your worship cost you?

"And David gave to Ornan for the place approximately 15 pounds (six hundred shekels) of gold by weight" (21:25). Second Samuel 24:24 says David bought "the threshing floor and the oxen for silver," fifty shekels. Most teachers understand that the fifty shekels of silver paid for the threshing floor and the oxen, while the six hundred shekels of gold paid for "the place," the whole hilltop around it, where the temple would later stand.

21:26-27 *And David built there an altar to the LORD, and he offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and he called to the LORD, and He answered him with fire from the heavens on the altar of the burnt offering. And the LORD spoke to the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath.*

"And David built there an altar to the LORD, and he offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and he called to the LORD, and He answered him with fire from the heavens on the altar of the burnt offering" (21:26). A peace offering was a sacrifice shared in a meal, a sign of fellowship restored with God. The fire from heaven showed that God had accepted the sacrifice. God had done this before, when the tabernacle was first used (Leviticus 9:24), and He would do it again when Solomon dedicated the temple (2 Chronicles 7:1) and for Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:38).

"And the LORD spoke to the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath" (21:27). The judgment ended because a sacrifice was offered on God's altar, in God's place, in God's way. That is the gospel in picture form. The sword of God's justice was put away, not because the sin was small, but because a sacrifice was made.

21:28-30 *At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and he sacrificed there. And the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering* ***were*** *at that time in the high place at Gibeon. And David was not able to go before it to seek God, for he was terrified because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.*

"At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and he sacrificed there" (21:28). David kept worshiping on that spot. Why there, and not at the official altar? The writer explains: "the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon" (21:29). A high place was a raised place of worship; this one held the true tabernacle (16:39). But David "was not able to go before it to seek God, for he was terrified because of the sword of the angel of the LORD" (21:30).

God had now shown David a new place. The next verse, 22:1, tells us what David understood: this hill would be the site of the house of the LORD. Second Chronicles 3:1 confirms it. Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah, "where He had appeared to David his father," on "the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite."

Mount Moriah is where, about a thousand years before, God told Abraham to offer Isaac, and then provided a ram in his place (Genesis 22:2, 13-14). On that ridge Abraham learned that God will provide the sacrifice. On that same ridge David saw the sword put away when the sacrifice was made. There the temple altar would burn for centuries. And just outside the walls of that same city, about a thousand years after David, God provided the final sacrifice. Jesus "suffered outside the gate" (Hebrews 13:12) so that He might make His people holy by His own blood. David's altar stopped one plague for a time. The cross of Christ took away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Chapter 21 Summary

Satan stood up against Israel and incited David to count the people. Joab warned that it would bring guilt on Israel, but the king's word prevailed. Joab counted 1,100,000 swordsmen in Israel and 470,000 in Judah, leaving out Levi and Benjamin because the order disgusted him. God was displeased and struck Israel, and David confessed that he had sinned and acted very foolishly. Through Gad the seer, the LORD offered three years of famine, three months of defeat, or three days of pestilence. David chose to fall into the hand of the LORD, whose compassions are very great, and seventy thousand men died. When the angel was about to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD relented and said, "Enough!" David saw the angel with his sword stretched out over the city, fell on his face with the elders in sackcloth, and asked that God's hand fall on him and his father's house and not on the sheep. At Gad's word he went to the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, refused to offer a sacrifice that cost him nothing, and paid six hundred shekels of gold for the place. He built an altar and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and God answered with fire from heaven, and the angel put away his sword. Because the tabernacle at Gibeon was out of reach while the angel's sword stood, David sacrificed there, on the hill that would become the site of the temple.

People and Places

- Satan: the adversary, the enemy of God and His people.
- Gad: the seer, or prophet, who served David.
- Ornan the Jebusite: the owner of the threshing floor; 2 Samuel calls him Araunah.
- Threshing floor: a flat, hard place, often on a hilltop, where grain was beaten and separated from the straw.
- Sackcloth: rough goat-hair cloth worn in grief and repentance.
- Mount Moriah: the hill of Ornan's threshing floor, where Solomon built the temple (2 Chronicles 3:1).
- Gibeon: the town where the tabernacle and the bronze altar stood at this time.

Chapter 21 Study Questions

1. Who incited David to count Israel, and how does 2 Samuel 24:1 tell it? (21:1)

2. What did Joab say to David, and why? (21:3)

3. What did David say when he realized his sin? (21:8)

4. What three choices did Gad bring, and which did David choose and why? (21:11-13)

5. What did David see, and what did he ask God to do? (21:16-17)

6. Why would David not take Ornan's gift? (21:24)

7. How did God show that He accepted David's sacrifice, and what became of that place? (21:26; 22:1; 2 Chronicles 3:1)

8. How does David's prayer in 21:17 point to Jesus, the Good Shepherd? (John 10:11)

9. Satan often attacks after great victories. Where might you be trusting your own strength instead of God right now?

10. David said, "I have sinned." Is there something you need to confess to God plainly, without excuses, this week?

Chapter 22: David Prepares for the Temple

Scripture

22:1-19 And David said, "This is the house of the LORD God, and this ***is*** the altar for burnt offering for Israel." And David said to gather the sojourners who ***were*** in the land of Israel, and he appointed stonecutters to cut hewn stones to build the house of God. And iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates and for the clamps David prepared, and bronze in abundance without weight, and cedar timbers without number, for the Sidonians and the Tyrians had brought cedar timbers in abundance to David. And David said, "Solomon my son ***is*** a youth and tender, and the house to build for the LORD ***is*** to be made exceedingly great, for a name and for beauty to all the lands. Please let me prepare for it." And David prepared in abundance before his death. And he called for Solomon his son and commanded him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel. And David said to Solomon, "My son, as for me, it was in my heart to build a house for the name of the LORD my God. And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed blood in abundance, and you have made great wars. You shall not build a house for My name, for you have shed much blood on the earth before Me. Look, a son ***is*** to be born to you; he will be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around; for Solomon will be his name, and peace and quietness I will give to Israel in his days. He will build a house for My name, and he will be to Me a son, and I ***will be*** to him a father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' Now, my son, may the LORD be with you, and you will prosper, and you will build the house of the LORD your God, as He spoke concerning you. Only may the LORD give you insight and understanding, and may He give you charge over Israel, and to keep the law of the LORD your God. Then you will prosper, if you take care to do the statutes and the judgments which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and be courageous; do not fear, and do not be dismayed. And look, in my affliction I have prepared for the house of the LORD approximately 7.5 million pounds (one hundred thousand talents) of gold, and approximately 75 million pounds (a thousand thousands of talents) of silver; and for the bronze and for the iron there is no weight, for it is in abundance; and timbers and stones I have prepared, and to them you will add. And with you in abundance ***are*** doers of work: stonecutters and craftsmen of stone and wood, and every skillful ***one*** in every work. Of the gold, of the silver, and of the bronze and of the iron there is no number. Arise and act, and may the LORD be with you." And David commanded all the officials of Israel to help Solomon his son: "***Is*** not the LORD your God with you? And He has given you rest all around, for He has given into my hand the inhabitants of the land, and the land has been subdued before the LORD and before His people. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; and arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy articles of God into the house that will be built for the name of the LORD."

Chapter 22 Preview

On the hill where God stopped the plague, David says, "This is the house of the LORD God" (22:1). He now knows where the temple will stand. God had told him he could not build it, but nothing

stopped him from getting everything ready. So David gathers stonecutters, iron, bronze and cedar beyond counting, and he sets aside a huge treasure of gold and silver.

Then he calls in Solomon and gives him a charge. He tells his son why God would not let him build the house, what God has promised about Solomon, and what Solomon must do: seek wisdom, keep God's law, be strong and courageous, and build. Last, David commands the leaders of Israel to help. This chapter shows us a father passing his life's dream to his son, and a man who served God's plan even in the part he would not see finished.

Chapter 22 Study

22:1 *And David said, "This is the house of the LORD God, and this **is** the altar for burnt offering for Israel."*

"And David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar for burnt offering for Israel" (22:1). This verse belongs with the end of chapter 21. God had answered David with fire on Ornan's threshing floor. Now David understood. This was the place God had chosen.

Moses had told Israel that God would choose a place "to put His name there" (Deuteronomy 12:5), and for more than four hundred years Israel had waited to know where. Now God had shown it. The place of the temple was not chosen by a committee or by David's taste. It was the place where God's judgment was turned away by a sacrifice. Second Chronicles 3:1 confirms that Solomon built the temple there, on Mount Moriah.

22:2-5 *And David said to gather the sojourners who **were** in the land of Israel, and he appointed stonecutters to cut hewn stones to build the house of God. And iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates and for the clamps David prepared, and bronze in abundance without weight, and cedar timbers without number, for the Sidonians and the Tyrians had brought cedar timbers in abundance to David. And David said, "Solomon my son **is** a youth and tender, and the house to build for the LORD **is** to be made exceedingly great, for a name and for beauty to all the lands. Please let me prepare for it." And David prepared in abundance before his death.*

David began at once. He gathered "the sojourners who were in the land of Israel" (22:2) and set them to cut stone. Sojourners were foreigners living among Israel, people whose families had not been driven out at the conquest. Solomon later used them as laborers for the temple (2 Chronicles 2:17-18).

David gathered "iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates and for the clamps" (22:3), and "bronze in abundance without weight," more than could be weighed. He had "cedar timbers without number" (22:4) from the Sidonians and Tyrians, the people of the coast north of Israel, in what is now Lebanon.

Why so much? "Solomon my son is a youth and tender, and the house to build for the LORD is to be made exceedingly great, for a name and for beauty to all the lands" (22:5). Solomon was young and untried. The house had to be magnificent, because it would show the nations what kind of

God Israel served. "Please let me prepare for it." David could not build, but he could prepare, "and David prepared in abundance before his death."

Have you ever been told no by God about something you wanted to do for Him? David did not sulk. He found the part he could do and gave it everything he had.

22:6-10 *And he called for Solomon his son and commanded him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel. And David said to Solomon, "My son, as for me, it was in my heart to build a house for the name of the LORD my God. And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed blood in abundance, and you have made great wars. You shall not build a house for My name, for you have shed much blood on the earth before Me. Look, a son **is** to be born to you; he will be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around; for Solomon will be his name, and peace and quietness I will give to Israel in his days. He will build a house for My name, and he will be to Me a son, and I **will be** to him a father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.'*

David "called for Solomon his son and commanded him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel" (22:6). He began with his own story: "My son, as for me, it was in my heart to build a house for the name of the LORD my God" (22:7).

Then David told Solomon something Chronicles has not told us before. God had said, "You have shed blood in abundance, and you have made great wars. You shall not build a house for My name, for you have shed much blood on the earth before Me" (22:8). David's wars were not sinful in themselves. God had sent him to fight them and had given him the victory (18:6, 13). But the temple was to be a house of rest and peace, and the man who built it should be a man of peace.

"Look, a son is to be born to you; he will be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around; for Solomon will be his name, and peace and quietness I will give to Israel in his days" (22:9). The name Solomon, Shelomoh in Hebrew, sounds like shalom, the Hebrew word for peace. God named him before he was born.

"He will build a house for My name, and he will be to Me a son, and I will be to him a father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever" (22:10). These are the words of the covenant in chapter 17, now applied to Solomon by name. Solomon was the first fulfillment. The greater fulfillment is in the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, of whose kingdom and peace there will be no end (Isaiah 9:6-7).

22:11-13 *Now, my son, may the LORD be with you, and you will prosper, and you will build the house of the LORD your God, as He spoke concerning you. Only may the LORD give you insight and understanding, and may He give you charge over Israel, and to keep the law of the LORD your God. Then you will prosper, if you take care to do the statutes and the judgments which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and be courageous; do not fear, and do not be dismayed.*

David then blessed his son: "Now, my son, may the LORD be with you, and you will prosper, and you will build the house of the LORD your God, as He spoke concerning you" (22:11).

What did Solomon most need? Not gold. David had gold. "Only may the LORD give you insight and understanding, and may He give you charge over Israel, and to keep the law of the LORD your God" (22:12). Solomon would later ask God for exactly this, a wise and understanding heart, and God gave it (2 Chronicles 1:10-12). A father's prayer for his son was answered.

"Then you will prosper, if you take care to do the statutes and the judgments which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel" (22:13). Statutes and judgments are the commands and rulings of the Law. The promise of the covenant was sure, but each king's own blessing depended on his walking with God.

"Be strong and be courageous; do not fear, and do not be dismayed." These echo the words Moses and God spoke to Joshua when he took up Moses' work (Deuteronomy 31:7-8; Joshua 1:9). Now David speaks them to Solomon. Solomon was to finish what David began, just as Joshua finished what Moses began. God's work passes from one generation to the next, and the next generation needs courage.

22:14-16 *And look, in my affliction I have prepared for the house of the LORD approximately 7.5 million pounds (one hundred thousand talents) of gold, and approximately 75 million pounds (a thousand thousands of talents) of silver; and for the bronze and for the iron there is no weight, for it is in abundance; and timbers and stones I have prepared, and to them you will add. And with you in abundance **are** doers of work: stonecutters and craftsmen of stone and wood, and every skillful **one** in every work. Of the gold, of the silver, and of the bronze and of the iron there is no number. Arise and act, and may the LORD be with you."*

"And look, in my affliction I have prepared for the house of the LORD" (22:14). In my affliction may mean through all my hard labor and struggles, or in spite of my troubles. David had set aside a hundred thousand talents of gold and a million talents of silver. The SLB gives the modern equal in the verse itself: about 3,750 tons of gold and 37,500 tons of silver. Bronze and iron were beyond weighing. These are huge amounts. I take them as written, while saying plainly that some scholars think they are given in round, royal terms, and that numbers in the copying of Chronicles were sometimes changed. Either way, the point is clear: David gave on a scale no one had seen.

David also had workmen ready, "stonecutters and craftsmen of stone and wood, and every skillful one in every work" (22:15). Everything was in place. "Arise and act, and may the LORD be with you" (22:16). There comes a time when planning is done and it is time to get to work.

22:17-19 *And David commanded all the officials of Israel to help Solomon his son: "**Is** not the LORD your God with you? And He has given you rest all around, for He has given into my hand the inhabitants of the land, and the land has been subdued before the LORD and before His people. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; and arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy articles of God into the house that will be built for the name of the LORD."*

"And David commanded all the officials of Israel to help Solomon his son" (22:17). Solomon would not build alone. David reminded the leaders why they could do it now: "Is not the LORD your God

with you? And He has given you rest all around" (22:18). The wars of chapters 18 to 20 were over. God had subdued the land.

Then the heart of the charge: "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; and arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God" (22:19). A sanctuary is a holy place, set apart for God. Notice the order. First seek the LORD, then build. Seeking God is the key word of Chronicles. Saul did not seek the LORD and died (10:13-14). David sought Him. Now David calls the leaders to seek Him too.

The goal was "to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy articles of God into the house that will be built for the name of the LORD." The ark would finally have a permanent home.

For the first readers, who had rebuilt a smaller temple, this charge came home. They too had been called to arise and build (Ezra 1:3; Haggai 1:8). And for us the call is the same. We are not building a temple of stone, but Paul says the church is God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:21-22), and each of us has a part in building it up. Set your heart to seek the Lord, and then arise and build.

Chapter 22 Summary

David declared that Ornan's threshing floor was the place of the house of the LORD and its altar. He gathered foreign workers to cut stone and prepared iron, bronze and cedar in abundance, because Solomon was young and the house had to be exceedingly great for a name to all the lands. He called Solomon and told him that God had not let him build because he had shed much blood in war, but had promised a son who would be a man of rest and peace, named Solomon, who would build God's house and whose throne God would establish forever. He prayed that the LORD would give Solomon insight and understanding to keep His law, told him he would prosper if he obeyed, and charged him to be strong and courageous. He showed him the gold, silver, bronze, iron, timber, stone and workmen he had prepared and told him to arise and act. Then he commanded the leaders of Israel to help Solomon, to set their hearts to seek the LORD, and to build the sanctuary for the ark of the covenant.

People and Places

- Sojourners: foreigners living in the land of Israel.
- Sidonians and Tyrians: the people of Sidon and Tyre on the coast, in what is now Lebanon, who supplied cedar.
- Solomon: David's son, the man of rest whose name sounds like shalom, peace.
- Talent: a large weight, about seventy-five pounds.
- Sanctuary: a holy place set apart for God.

God has not told me no, but He has told me, now is not the time. David could not build the temple, so he gathered everything Solomon would need. When God says not yet, I can still do the part in front of me.

Chapter 22 Study Questions

1. What did David say about the place of Ornan's threshing floor? (22:1)

2. What materials and workers did David prepare, and why so much? (22:2-5)

3. Why did God not let David build the temple? (22:8)

4. What did God promise about Solomon, and what does his name mean? (22:9-10)

5. What did David pray God would give Solomon, and how was it answered? (22:12; 2 Chronicles 1:10-12)

6. Where else do we hear "Be strong and be courageous," and why are those words fitting here? (22:13; Joshua 1:9)

7. What did David tell the leaders to do first, before building? (22:19)

8. How do 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and Ephesians 2:21-22 apply this chapter to the church today?

9. Has God ever said no to something you wanted to do for Him? How can you, like David, find the part you can do?

10. Who is coming after you in faith, a child, a younger believer, or a coworker? How can you prepare them to carry on God's work?

Chapter 23: The Levites and Their Work

Scripture

23:1-23 And David was old and satisfied ***with*** days, and he made Solomon his son king over Israel. And he gathered all the leaders of Israel and the priests and the Levites. And the Levites were counted from the age of thirty years and upward; and their number by their heads, of men, was thirty-eight thousand. Of these, to oversee the work of the house of the LORD ***were*** twenty-four thousand, and officials and judges six thousand, and four thousand gatekeepers, and four thousand praising the LORD with the instruments which I made for praising. And David divided them ***into*** divisions by the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Of the Gershonites: Ladan and Shimei. The sons of Ladan: the chief Jehiel, and Zetham, and Joel, three. The sons of Shimei: Shelomith and Haziel and Haran, three. These ***were*** the heads of the fathers of Ladan. And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These ***were*** the sons of Shimei, four. And Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second; and Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons, and they became a father's house for one enrollment. The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four. The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses. And Aaron was separated to sanctify him ***as*** a holy of holies, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him, and to bless in His name forever. And Moses the man of God: his sons were named among the tribe of the Levites. The sons of Moses: Gershom and Eliezer. The sons of Gershom: Shebuel the chief. And the sons of Eliezer were Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had no other sons, and the sons of Rehabiah were exceedingly many. The sons of Izhar: Shelomith the chief. The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the chief, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. The sons of Uzziel: Micah the chief, and Isshiah the second. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. And Eleazar died, and he had no sons, but only daughters; and the sons of Kish, their brothers, took them. The sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder, and Jeremoth, three.

23:24-32 These ***were*** the sons of Levi by the house of their fathers, the heads of the fathers, by their enrollments, by the number of names, by their heads, doing the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of twenty years and upward. For David said, "The LORD, the God of Israel, has given rest to His people, and He dwells in Jerusalem forever. And also the Levites ***are*** not to carry the tabernacle and all its articles for its service." For by the last words of David they ***were*** the number of the sons of Levi from the age of twenty years and upward. For their office ***was*** at the side of the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, over the courts and over the chambers and over the purification of every holy thing, and the work of the service of the house of God, and for the bread of the arrangement, and for the fine flour for a grain offering, and for the wafers of unleavened bread, and for the griddle, and for the mixed ***dough***, and for every capacity and measure; and to stand morning by morning to give thanks and to praise the LORD, and so at evening; and for every offering up of burnt offerings to the LORD for the Sabbaths, for the new moons, and for the appointed feasts, by number, according to the ordinance concerning them, continually before the LORD. And they kept the charge of the tent of meeting and the charge of the holy place and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brothers, for the service of the house of the LORD.

Chapter 23 Preview

Chapters 23 to 27 are lists. Old and near the end of his life, David makes Solomon king and then organizes everyone who will serve at the temple and in the kingdom: Levites, priests, singers, gatekeepers, treasurers, army commanders and royal officials. These chapters can feel slow to read, but they tell us something important. God cares about how His house is run. Worship needs order, and every person has a place.

Chapter 23 begins with the Levites. The Levites were the tribe of Levi, set apart by God to serve at His sanctuary. Within that tribe, only the family of Aaron were priests, who offered the sacrifices. The other Levites helped them. David counts the Levites, divides them by their three family lines, Gershon, Kohath and Merari, and gives them new work for a new day. The tabernacle no longer needs to be carried from place to place, so the Levites are given new tasks at the house of the LORD.

Chapter 23 Study

23:1-6 *And David was old and satisfied **with** days, and he made Solomon his son king over Israel. And he gathered all the leaders of Israel and the priests and the Levites. And the Levites were counted from the age of thirty years and upward; and their number by their heads, of men, was thirty-eight thousand. Of these, to oversee the work of the house of the LORD **were** twenty-four thousand, and officials and judges six thousand, and four thousand gatekeepers, and four thousand praising the LORD with the instruments which I made for praising. And David divided them **into** divisions by the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.*

"And David was old and satisfied with days, and he made Solomon his son king over Israel" (23:1). Satisfied with days means he had lived a full life. First Kings 1 tells the story behind this verse: David's son Adonijah tried to take the throne, and David acted quickly to have Solomon anointed. Chronicles gives only the result. It will tell of a public anointing in 29:22.

David gathered the leaders, the priests and the Levites, and the Levites "were counted from the age of thirty years and upward; and their number by their heads, of men, was thirty-eight thousand" (23:3). He gave them four kinds of work: twenty-four thousand to oversee the work of the house, six thousand to serve as officials and judges, four thousand as gatekeepers, and four thousand "praising the LORD with the instruments which I made for praising" (23:4-5). David himself made instruments for worship (compare Amos 6:5). Then he divided them by the three sons of Levi (23:6).

Notice that this census was not a sin. David counted men for the service of God, by God's own pattern in the Law (Numbers 4), not to measure his own strength as in chapter 21.

23:7-11 *Of the Gershonites: Ladan and Shimei. The sons of Ladan: the chief Jehiel, and Zetham, and Joel, three. The sons of Shimei: Shelomith and Haziel and Haran, three. These **were** the heads of the fathers of Ladan. And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These **were** the sons of Shimei, four. And Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second; and Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons, and they became a father's house for one enrollment.*

The family of Gershon is listed first, through his sons Ladan and Shimei (23:7). Their sons are named as the heads of the fathers' houses (23:8-10). A father's house was a family group under one head, the basic unit for dividing work. Two brothers, Jeush and Beriah, "did not have many sons, and they became a father's house for one enrollment" (23:11). Small families were joined together so that each group had enough men to do its share. That is a practical touch. God's work was arranged sensibly, so no one was overloaded and no family was left out.

23:12-20 *The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four. The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses. And Aaron was separated to sanctify him **as** a holy of holies, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him, and to bless in His name forever. And Moses the man of God: his sons were named among the tribe of the Levites. The sons of Moses: Gershom and Eliezer. The sons of Gershom: Shebuel the chief. And the sons of Eliezer were Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had no other sons, and the sons of Rehabiah were exceedingly many. The sons of Izhar: Shelomith the chief. The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the chief, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. The sons of Uzziel: Micah the chief, and Isshiah the second.*

Next comes Kohath, with his four sons, Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel (23:12). The sons of Amram were Aaron and Moses (23:13). Here the writer stops to explain the difference between them.

"And Aaron was separated to sanctify him as a holy of holies, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him, and to bless in His name forever" (23:13). Aaron's family alone were the priests. They burned incense, offered sacrifices and blessed the people in God's name (Numbers 6:22-27).

"And Moses the man of God: his sons were named among the tribe of the Levites" (23:14). Moses, the greatest prophet of the Old Testament, did not pass on a priesthood to his sons. Gershom and Eliezer and their children served as Levites (23:15-17). God's calling is not handed out by fame. Moses was content for his sons to serve in a humbler place.

The heads of the other Kohathite families follow: the sons of Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel (23:18-20). One small note in passing: Eliezer had only one son, Rehabiah, but "the sons of Rehabiah were exceedingly many" (23:17). God can grow a large family from a single line.

23:21-23 *The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. And Eleazar died, and he had no sons, but only daughters; and the sons of Kish, their brothers, took them. The sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder, and Jeremoth, three.*

Last comes Merari, through Mahli and Mushi (23:21). "And Eleazar died, and he had no sons, but only daughters; and the sons of Kish, their brothers, took them" (23:22). This Eleazar was a Levite,

not Aaron's son. His daughters married their cousins, the sons of Kish, which kept the family's name and place in Israel, as the Law allowed for daughters who inherited (Numbers 36:6-9). The sons of Mushi end the list (23:23).

23:24-27 *These **were** the sons of Levi by the house of their fathers, the heads of the fathers, by their enrollments, by the number of names, by their heads, doing the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of twenty years and upward. For David said, "The LORD, the God of Israel, has given rest to His people, and He dwells in Jerusalem forever. And also the Levites **are** not to carry the tabernacle and all its articles for its service." For by the last words of David they **were** the number of the sons of Levi from the age of twenty years and upward.*

"These were the sons of Levi by the house of their fathers" (23:24), counted "from the age of twenty years and upward." Verse 3 said thirty. Why the change? David explains: "The LORD, the God of Israel, has given rest to His people, and He dwells in Jerusalem forever. And also the Levites are not to carry the tabernacle and all its articles for its service" (23:25-26). In the wilderness, the hard work of carrying the tabernacle went to men thirty and older (Numbers 4:3), with training from twenty-five (Numbers 8:24). Now that the ark had a resting place, the work changed, and there was much more of it at a great temple. So "by the last words of David" (23:27) the age was lowered to twenty. Most teachers take verse 3 as the first count under the old rule and verse 24 as David's later change.

God's commands about the age of service were practical, and David applied them wisely to a new situation. The aim stayed the same: men fit for the work, serving the LORD.

23:28-32 *For their office **was** at the side of the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, over the courts and over the chambers and over the purification of every holy thing, and the work of the service of the house of God, and for the bread of the arrangement, and for the fine flour for a grain offering, and for the wafers of unleavened bread, and for the griddle, and for the mixed **dough**, and for every capacity and measure; and to stand morning by morning to give thanks and to praise the LORD, and so at evening; and for every offering up of burnt offerings to the LORD for the Sabbaths, for the new moons, and for the appointed feasts, by number, according to the ordinance concerning them, continually before the LORD. And they kept the charge of the tent of meeting and the charge of the holy place and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brothers, for the service of the house of the LORD.*

Now the Levites' new work is described. "Their office was at the side of the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD" (23:28). They were the priests' helpers. They cared for the courts and the side rooms, and they kept the holy things clean. Purification here means keeping the holy objects and places ceremonially clean, fit for God's service.

They prepared "the bread of the arrangement" (23:29), the bread set out in rows on the golden table before the LORD each Sabbath (Leviticus 24:5-9), and the flour, wafers and baked offerings, and they kept every measure true. They stood "morning by morning to give thanks and to praise the LORD, and so at evening" (23:30). They helped with the burnt offerings on "the Sabbaths, for the new moons, and for the appointed feasts" (23:31). The Sabbath was Israel's weekly day of rest,

the new moon marked each month, and the appointed feasts were Israel's yearly festivals like Passover.

"And they kept the charge of the tent of meeting and the charge of the holy place and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brothers" (23:32). A charge is a duty given to someone's care.

Much of this work was ordinary: cleaning, baking, measuring, keeping watch. But it was all "for the service of the house of the LORD." No job in God's house is small. The Levite who swept the court served the same God as the priest at the altar. Paul tells us that in the body of Christ, the parts that seem weaker are necessary (1 Corinthians 12:22). Whatever you do for the Lord, do it from the heart (Colossians 3:23).

And notice the daily rhythm of praise, morning and evening. Before any sacrifice was made, someone was giving thanks. Hebrews calls believers today to offer up "a sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Hebrews 13:15).

Chapter 23 Summary

When David was old, he made Solomon king, and he gathered the leaders, priests and Levites. He counted thirty-eight thousand Levites thirty years and older and set them to oversee the temple work, to serve as officials and judges, to keep the gates and to praise the LORD with instruments. He divided them by the three sons of Levi. The families of Gershon, Kohath and Merari are listed with their heads. Aaron and his sons were set apart as priests to burn incense, minister to the LORD and bless in His name forever, while the sons of Moses were counted among the Levites. Because the LORD had given His people rest and dwelt in Jerusalem, the Levites no longer had to carry the tabernacle, so David counted them from twenty years old. They were to help the priests in the courts and chambers, keep the holy things clean, prepare the bread and grain offerings, praise the LORD morning and evening, and help with the offerings on Sabbaths, new moons and feasts.

People and Places

- Levites: the tribe of Levi, set apart to serve at God's sanctuary.
- Priests: Aaron and his descendants, who offered sacrifices and burned incense.
- Gershon, Kohath and Merari: the three sons of Levi, heads of the three Levite clans.
- Father's house: a family group under one head, the unit used to divide the work.
- The bread of the row: the bread set out before the LORD each Sabbath.

Chapter 23 Study Questions

1. What did David do when he was old and satisfied with days? (23:1)

2. How many Levites were counted, and what four kinds of work were they given? (23:3-5)

3. Why was this census not a sin, when the census of chapter 21 was?

4. What was the difference between Aaron's family and Moses' family? (23:13-14)

5. Why was the age for Levite service lowered to twenty? (23:24-27)

6. What kinds of work did the Levites do at the house of the LORD? (23:28-32)

7. What did the Levites do every morning and evening? (23:30)

8. Moses was content for his sons to serve as ordinary Levites. What does that teach about God's calling and our pride?

9. Much of the Levites' work was ordinary. What ordinary task can you do this week as service to the Lord?

10. How can you build a habit of giving thanks to God morning and evening? (23:30; Hebrews 13:15)

Chapter 24: The Divisions of the Priests

Scripture

24:1-19 And to the sons of Aaron, their divisions: The sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. And Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and they had no sons; and Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests. And David divided them, and Zadok of the sons of Eleazar and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their appointment in their service. And the sons of Eleazar were found more numerous in heads of men than the sons of Ithamar, and they divided them: for the sons of Eleazar, sixteen heads of fathers' houses; and for the sons of Ithamar, eight of their fathers' houses. And they divided them by lots, these with these, for there were officials of holiness and officials of God from the sons of Eleazar and among the sons of Ithamar. And Shemaiah the son of Nethanel the scribe, of the Levites, recorded them before the king and the officials and Zadok the priest and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar and the heads of the fathers of the priests and of the Levites: one father's house taken for Eleazar, and taken, taken for Ithamar. And the first lot went out to Jehoiarib, to Jedaiah the second, to Harim the third, to Seorim the fourth, to Malchijah the fifth, to Mijamin the sixth, to Hakkoz the seventh, to Abijah the eighth, to Jeshua the ninth, to Shecaniah the tenth, to Eliashib ***the*** eleventh, to Jakim ***the*** twelfth, to Huppah ***the*** thirteenth, to Jeshebeab ***the*** fourteenth, to Bilgah ***the*** fifteenth, to Immer ***the*** sixteenth, to Hezir ***the*** seventeenth, to Happizzez ***the*** eighteenth, to Pethahiah ***the*** nineteenth, to Jehezkel the twentieth, to Jachin ***the*** twenty-first, to Gamul ***the*** twenty-second, to Delaiah ***the*** twenty-third, to Maaziah ***the*** twenty-fourth. These ***were*** their appointments for their service, to go into the house of the LORD according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron their father, as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded him.

24:20-31 And of the sons of Levi who remained: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. Of Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, the chief Isshiah. Of the Izharites: Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. And the sons ***of Hebron***: Jeriah ***the first***, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. The sons of Uzziel: Micah; of the sons of Micah, Shamir. The brother of Micah: Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi; the sons of Jaaziah: Beno. The sons of Merari, of Jaaziah: Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibri. Of Mahli: Eleazar, and he had no sons. Of Kish: the sons of Kish, Jerahmeel. And the sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder, and Jerimoth. These ***were*** the sons of the Levites by the house of their fathers. And they also cast lots corresponding to their brothers the sons of Aaron before David the king and Zadok and Ahimelech and the heads of the fathers of the priests and of the Levites; fathers, the chief corresponding to his younger brother.

Chapter 24 Preview

Chapter 23 organized the Levites. Chapter 24 organizes the priests, the sons of Aaron. David and the two chief priests, Zadok and Ahimelech, divide the priestly families into twenty-four divisions, and they cast lots to decide the order in which each division would serve at the temple. The chapter closes with more heads of Levite families, who also cast lots for their duties.

It looks like a list of hard names, and it is. But one of those names reaches all the way into the New Testament. The eighth lot fell to Abijah (24:10). About a thousand years later, a priest "of the division of Abijah" named Zechariah was serving in the temple when the angel Gabriel told him he would have a son, John the Baptist (Luke 1:5). David's plan was still running when God began to send the Savior.

Chapter 24 Study

24:1-6 *And to the sons of Aaron, their divisions: The sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. And Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and they had no sons; and Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests. And David divided them, and Zadok of the sons of Eleazar and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their appointment in their service. And the sons of Eleazar were found more numerous in heads of men than the sons of Ithamar, and they divided them: for the sons of Eleazar, sixteen heads of fathers' houses; and for the sons of Ithamar, eight of their fathers' houses. And they divided them by lots, these with these, for there were officials of holiness and officials of God from the sons of Eleazar and among the sons of Ithamar. And Shemaiah the son of Nethanel the scribe, of the Levites, recorded them before the king and the officials and Zadok the priest and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar and the heads of the fathers of the priests and of the Levites: one father's house taken for Eleazar, and taken, taken for Ithamar.*

"And to the sons of Aaron, their divisions: The sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar" (24:1). A division was a group that took its turn serving.

"And Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and they had no sons" (24:2). The writer says it in one short line. Leviticus 10:1-2 tells what happened: they offered "strange fire" before the LORD, fire He had not commanded, and fire came out from the LORD and consumed them. It was a terrible lesson at the very start of the priesthood that God is holy and must be approached His way, the same lesson Uzzah's death taught in chapter 13. Here the writer only explains why the priesthood came down through the two younger sons, Eleazar and Ithamar.

David divided them with the help of "Zadok of the sons of Eleazar and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar" (24:3). Eleazar's family was larger, so it received sixteen divisions and Ithamar's eight (24:4).

How did they decide the order? "And they divided them by lots, these with these" (24:5). Casting lots was a way of letting God decide, something like drawing names. Proverbs says, "Into the lap the lot is thrown, and from the LORD is its every judgment" (Proverbs 16:33). By using lots, no family could claim the best place, and no one could accuse David or Zadok of favoritism. Both families had men who were "officials of holiness and officials of God," so each was treated fairly.

A Levite scribe, Shemaiah, wrote down the result in front of the king, the officials and the priests (24:6). Everything was done in the open, with witnesses. That is a good pattern for any church or ministry: fair, open and recorded.

24:7-19 *And the first lot went out to Jehoiarib, to Jedaiah the second, to Harim the third, to Seorim the fourth, to Malchijah the fifth, to Mijamin the sixth, to Hakkoz the seventh, to Abijah the eighth, to Jeshua the ninth, to Shecaniah the tenth, to Eliashib* ***the*** *eleventh, to Jakim* ***the*** *twelfth, to Huppah* ***the*** *thirteenth, to Jeshebeab* ***the*** *fourteenth, to Bilgah* ***the*** *fifteenth, to Immer* ***the*** *sixteenth, to Hezir* ***the*** *seventeenth, to Happizzez* ***the*** *eighteenth, to Pethahiah* ***the*** *nineteenth, to Jehezkel the twentieth, to Jachin* ***the*** *twenty-first, to Gamul* ***the*** *twenty-second, to Delaiah* ***the*** *twenty-third, to Maaziah* ***the*** *twenty-fourth. These* ***were*** *their appointments for their service, to go into the house of the LORD according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron their father, as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded him.*

Now the twenty-four lots are listed in order, from Jehoiarib first (24:7) to Maaziah twenty-fourth (24:18). Each division served at the temple for a week at a time, about twice a year, and all of them served together at the great feasts. Many teachers draw this from later Jewish practice and from Luke 1:8-9, where Zechariah served "in the order of his division."

A few of these names come up again. Jedaiah, Harim and Immer (24:7-8, 14) were among the priestly families that came back from Babylon (Ezra 2:36-39). Jehoiarib was also the priestly family of the Maccabees, the Jewish leaders who freed Judea from Greek rule about 165 B.C.; the book of 1 Maccabees, a Jewish history written outside the Bible, says so (1 Maccabees 2:1). And Abijah, the eighth (24:10), was the division of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5).

"These were their appointments for their service, to go into the house of the LORD according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron their father, as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded him" (24:19). David did not invent the priesthood. He organized it according to what God had commanded through Moses and Aaron.

What does this mean for us? Under the new covenant, Jesus is our great High Priest, "a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 7:17). He offered Himself once for all (Hebrews 10:10-12), so no more divisions of priests need to take turns at an altar. And Peter tells all believers that we are "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9), each one able to come to God through Christ and to offer spiritual sacrifices of praise and service. But the lesson of order remains. God's people serve best when everyone knows their place and takes their turn faithfully.

24:20-31 *And of the sons of Levi who remained: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. Of Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, the chief Isshiah. Of the Izharites: Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. And the sons* ***of Hebron****: Jeriah* ***the first****, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. The sons of Uzziel: Micah; of the sons of Micah, Shamir. The brother of Micah: Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi; the sons of Jaaziah: Beno. The sons of Merari, of Jaaziah: Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibri. Of Mahli: Eleazar, and he had no sons. Of Kish: the sons of Kish, Jerahmeel. And the sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder, and Jerimoth. These* ***were*** *the sons of the Levites by the house of their fathers. And they also cast lots corresponding to their brothers the sons of Aaron before David the king and Zadok and Ahimelech and the heads of the fathers of the priests and of the Levites; fathers, the chief corresponding to his younger brother.*

The rest of the Levites are listed by their family heads: the sons of Amram (24:20-21), the Izharites (24:22), the sons of Hebron (24:23), of Uzziel (24:24-25), and of Merari (24:26-30). Most of these names repeat and extend the list in chapter 23, carrying some families down another generation. Verses 26 and 27 add a line through Jaaziah not named in chapter 23.

"And they also cast lots corresponding to their brothers the sons of Aaron" (24:31). The Levites, too, received their duties by lot, before David, Zadok, Ahimelech and the family heads. "Fathers, the chief corresponding to his younger brother." The head of a family and his youngest brother were treated the same way. Rank did not buy a better place.

That is a word for us. In the church there is no first class and coach. James warns us against favoring the rich and important (James 2:1-4). The oldest and the youngest, the leader and the newcomer, all serve the same Lord, and each has a part.

Chapter 24 Summary

The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar; Nadab and Abihu died without sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests. David, with Zadok of Eleazar's line and Ahimelech of Ithamar's, divided the priests into twenty-four divisions, sixteen for Eleazar's larger family and eight for Ithamar's, and they cast lots for the order in front of witnesses while Shemaiah the scribe recorded them. The twenty-four lots are listed from Jehoiarib to Maaziah, with Abijah eighth, and they were to serve in the house of the LORD as He had commanded through Aaron. The remaining heads of Levite families are listed, and they also cast lots, the head of a family the same as his youngest brother.

People and Places

- Nadab and Abihu: Aaron's older sons, who died for offering fire the LORD had not commanded (Leviticus 10:1-2).
- Eleazar and Ithamar: Aaron's younger sons, from whom all the priests came.
- Zadok and Ahimelech: the chief priests of Eleazar's and Ithamar's lines in David's day.
- Lots: a way of letting God decide, like drawing names.

- Abijah: the eighth division, the division of Zechariah, father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5).

Chapter 24 Study Questions

1. Why did the priesthood come down only through Eleazar and Ithamar? (24:1-2; Leviticus 10:1-2)

2. Why did Eleazar's family receive sixteen divisions and Ithamar's eight? (24:4)

3. How was the order of the divisions decided, and why was that fair? (24:5; Proverbs 16:33)

4. Who wrote down the result, and in front of whom? (24:6)

5. Which division was Abijah's, and who in the New Testament served in it? (24:10; Luke 1:5)

6. According to whose command did the priests serve? (24:19)

7. How did the Levites also receive their duties, and how were the chief and the youngest treated? (24:31)

8. Jesus is our High Priest, and all believers are a royal priesthood (Hebrews 7:17; 1 Peter 2:9). What does that mean for how you come to God?

9. Is there any place in your church or group where some people are treated as more important than others? How can you help change that? (James 2:1-4)

10. David's plan was still running a thousand years later when God sent John the Baptist. What faithful work could you do now that might bless people long after you?

Chapter 25: The Temple Singers

Scripture

25:1-8 And David and the commanders of the army separated for service the sons of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals. And the number of them, men of work for their service, was: Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asharelah, the sons of Asaph, under the hand of Asaph, who prophesied under the hands of the king. Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun with the lyre, who prophesied in giving thanks and praising the LORD. Of Heman: the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, Mahazioth. All these ***were*** sons of Heman, the seer of the king, by the words of God, to lift up a horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. All these ***were*** under the hands of their father for the song ***in*** the house of the LORD, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, for the service of the house of God, under the hands of the king, Asaph and Jeduthun and Heman. And their number with their brothers, trained in song to the LORD, all the skilled, was two hundred eighty-eight. And they cast lots ***for*** charge correspondingly, the small as the great, the skilled with the pupil.

25:9-31 And the first lot went out for Asaph, to Joseph; Gedaliah the second, he and his brothers and his sons, twelve; the third, Zaccur, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the fourth, to the Izri, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the fifth, Nethaniah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the sixth, Bukkiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the seventh, Jesharelah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the eighth, Jeshaiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the ninth, Mattaniah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the tenth, Shimei, his sons and his brothers, twelve; ***the*** eleventh, Azarel, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the twelfth, to Hashabiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** thirteenth, Shubael, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** fourteenth, Mattithiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** fifteenth, to Jerimoth, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** sixteenth, to Hananiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** seventeenth, to Joshbekashah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** eighteenth, to Hanani, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** nineteenth, to Mallothi, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** twentieth, to Eliathah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** twenty-first, to Hothir, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** twenty-second, to Giddalti, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** twenty-third, to Mahazioth, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for ***the*** twenty-fourth, to Romamti-ezer, his sons and his brothers, twelve.

Chapter 25 Preview

After the Levites and the priests come the singers. David sets apart the families of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, the three chief musicians we met in chapters 15 and 16, to lead the worship of the house of the LORD with lyres, harps and cymbals. Chronicles says they "prophesied" with their instruments (25:1). Their music was a way of speaking God's truth and giving Him thanks.

The chapter counts 288 trained singers and divides them, like the priests, into twenty-four groups of twelve by casting lots, "the small as the great, the skilled with the pupil" (25:8). It is a picture of worship that is ordered, trained, shared by young and old, and given wholeheartedly to God. Many of the psalms in our Bibles carry the names of these men.

Chapter 25 Study

25:1-7 *And David and the commanders of the army separated for service the sons of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals. And the number of them, men of work for their service, was: Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asharelah, the sons of Asaph, under the hand of Asaph, who prophesied under the hands of the king. Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun with the lyre, who prophesied in giving thanks and praising the LORD. Of Heman: the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, Mahazioth. All these **were** sons of Heman, the seer of the king, by the words of God, to lift up a horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. All these **were** under the hands of their father for the song **in** the house of the LORD, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, for the service of the house of God, under the hands of the king, Asaph and Jeduthun and Heman. And their number with their brothers, trained in song to the LORD, all the skilled, was two hundred eighty-eight.*

"And David and the commanders of the army separated for service the sons of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals" (25:1). Why would army commanders help choose singers? These were the chief leaders of the nation, and David wanted the whole kingdom behind the worship of God. Worship was not a side matter. It was a national priority.

What does it mean that they "prophesied" with music? To prophesy is to speak for God. These musicians did not mainly tell the future. They declared God's truth and praised Him, often in words God gave them. Jeduthun's sons "prophesied in giving thanks and praising the LORD" (25:3). Heman is called "the seer of the king" (25:5). Some of their songs became Scripture. Psalms 50 and 73 to 83 carry Asaph's name, Psalm 88 Heman's, and Psalms 39, 62 and 77 mention Jeduthun. The Holy Spirit used these men to write songs the church still sings and prays.

The sons are named: four of Asaph (25:2), six of Jeduthun (25:3), and fourteen of Heman (25:4). All worked "under the hand" of their fathers, and their fathers "under the hands of the king" (25:2, 6). Each was trained by the one above him.

"And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters" (25:5). The writer counts this as a gift from God, "by the words of God, to lift up a horn." A horn is a picture of strength in the Old Testament, so to lift up a horn means God honored and strengthened Heman's family. Heman's daughters are named among the family of singers, "under the hands of their father for the song in the house of the LORD" (25:6). Women sang in Israel's worship (compare Ezra 2:65).

"And their number with their brothers, trained in song to the LORD, all the skilled, was two hundred eighty-eight" (25:7). These were the trained leaders, twenty-four groups of twelve, out of the four thousand Levites set aside for praise (23:5). Worship leaders were trained. They worked at their craft. Psalm 33:3 tells us to play skillfully. God deserves our best, not our leftovers.

25:8 *And they cast lots **for** charge correspondingly, the small as the great, the skilled with the pupil.*

"And they cast lots for charge correspondingly, the small as the great, the skilled with the pupil" (25:8). The order of service was decided by lot, not by fame or age. The famous musician and the young student were put in the same draw. The skilled were not kept apart from the learners. They served together, so the young could learn from the experienced.

That is a good pattern for the church. Worship is not a show for a few stars. Young and old, skilled and beginner, all have a place. And the best way to train the next generation is to let them serve beside those who have done it for years. Paul told Timothy to pass on what he had learned to faithful men who would teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).

25:9-31 *And the first lot went out for Asaph, to Joseph; Gedaliah the second, he and his brothers and his sons, twelve; the third, Zaccur, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the fourth, to the Izri, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the fifth, Nethaniah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the sixth, Bukkiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the seventh, Jesharelah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the eighth, Jeshaiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the ninth, Mattaniah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the tenth, Shimei, his sons and his brothers, twelve; **the** eleventh, Azarel, his sons and his brothers, twelve; the twelfth, to Hashabiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** thirteenth, Shubael, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** fourteenth, Mattithiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** fifteenth, to Jerimoth, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** sixteenth, to Hananiah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** seventeenth, to Joshbekashah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** eighteenth, to Hanani, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** nineteenth, to Mallothi, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** twentieth, to Eliathah, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** twenty-first, to Hothir, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** twenty-second, to Giddalti, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** twenty-third, to Mahazioth, his sons and his brothers, twelve; for **the** twenty-fourth, to Romamti-ezer, his sons and his brothers, twelve.*

Now the twenty-four lots are listed. "And the first lot went out for Asaph, to Joseph" (25:9). Each lot names a leader, and after each one comes the same line: "his sons and his brothers, twelve." Twenty-four leaders times twelve makes the 288 of verse 7.

Reading through the list, you may notice that the lots mix the families. Asaph's sons, Jeduthun's sons and Heman's sons come up in no set pattern. The lot gave each family its share without favor. You may also notice small spelling differences from verses 2 to 4: Izri for Zeri (25:11), Jesharelah for Asharelah (25:14), Azarel for Uzziel (25:18). Names often had more than one form.

The same line, "his sons and his brothers, twelve," repeats twenty-three times after the first lot. It can feel repetitive to read. But think of what it meant. Every week of the year, a trained choir of

twelve, fathers and sons and brothers together, stood in the house of the LORD to give thanks and praise. Families served God together, generation after generation. When the returned exiles laid the foundation of the new temple, it was "the sons of Asaph" who stood with cymbals to praise the LORD (Ezra 3:10).

Today we don't need a temple choir to come to God. But Paul calls every believer to speak to one another "with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" and to sing to the Lord with the heart (Ephesians 5:19). Worship is still a family matter. Is your home a place where God is praised?

Chapter 25 Summary

David and the leaders set apart the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun to prophesy with lyres, harps and cymbals, giving thanks and praising the LORD. Asaph had four sons, Jeduthun six, and Heman, the king's seer, fourteen sons and three daughters, all serving under their fathers and under the king for the song in the house of the LORD. The trained and skilled singers numbered 288. They cast lots for their order of service, small and great, teacher and pupil alike, and the twenty-four lots are listed, each leader with his sons and brothers, twelve in all.

People and Places

- Asaph: chief musician; Psalms 50 and 73 to 83 bear his name.
- Heman: the king's seer and singer; Psalm 88 bears his name.
- Jeduthun: chief musician, also called Ethan in some places; Psalms 39, 62 and 77 mention him.
- Lyres and harps: stringed instruments used in worship.
- Horn: a picture of strength and honor.

Chapter 25 Study Questions

1. Who were the three families David set apart for the music of the temple? (25:1)

2. What does it mean that they "prophesied" with their instruments? (25:1-3)

3. What did God give Heman, and how is it described? (25:5)

4. How many trained singers were there, and how were they grouped? (25:7, 9-31)

5. How did they decide their order, and who was included in the draw? (25:8)

6. Which psalms bear the names of these men, and what does that tell you about their work?

7. Why do you think David made worship a priority for the whole nation, even involving army commanders? (25:1)

8. The skilled served with the pupil (25:8). Who is someone you could learn from, or someone you could train, in serving God?

9. Fathers, sons and daughters served together in worship. How can your family praise God together?

10. Are you giving God your best in worship, or your leftovers? What would change if you prepared for worship the way these singers did?

Chapter 26: Gatekeepers, Treasurers and Officials

Scripture

26:1-19 For the divisions of the gatekeepers: of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. And Meshelemiah had sons: Zechariah the firstborn, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh. And Obed-edom had sons: Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sachar the fourth, and Nethanel the fifth, Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peullethai the eighth; for God had blessed him. And to Shemaiah his son sons were born, the rulers of the house of their father, for they ***were*** mighty men of valor. The sons of Shemaiah: Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad, his brothers, sons of valor, Elihu and Semachiah. All these ***were*** of the sons of Obed-edom, they and their sons and their brothers, each a man of valor with the strength for the service, sixty-two belonging to Obed-edom. And Meshelemiah had sons and brothers, sons of valor, eighteen. And Hosah, of the sons of Merari, had sons: Shimri the chief (for he was not firstborn, and his father made him chief), Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth. All the sons and brothers of Hosah ***were*** thirteen. To these ***belonged*** the divisions of the gatekeepers, to the heads of the men, charges corresponding to their brothers, to minister in the house of the LORD. And they cast lots, the small as the great, by the house of their fathers, for gate and gate. And the lot fell eastward to Shelemiah. And ***for*** Zechariah his son, a counselor with insight, they cast lots, and his lot came out northward. To Obed-edom southward, and to his sons the house of the storehouses. To Shuppim and to Hosah westward, by the Gate of Shallecheth, on the highway that goes up, watch corresponding to watch. To the east the Levites ***were*** six; to the north, four for the day; to the south, four for the day; and for the storehouses, two ***and*** two. For the Parbar to the west: four for the highway, two for the Parbar. These ***were*** the divisions of the gatekeepers of the sons of the Korahites and of the sons of Merari.

26:20-32 And the Levites: Ahijah ***was*** over the treasuries of the house of God and over the treasuries of the holy things. The sons of Ladan, the sons of the Gershonite belonging to Ladan, the heads of the fathers belonging to Ladan the Gershonite: Jehieli. The sons of Jehieli: Zetham and Joel his brother, ***were*** over the treasuries of the house of the LORD. Of the Amramites, of the Izharites, of the Hebronites, of the Uzzielites: And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, ***was*** leader over the treasuries. And his brothers belonging to Eliezer: Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son. That Shelomoth and his brothers ***were*** over all the treasuries of the holy things which David the king and the heads of the fathers, for the commanders of the thousands and the hundreds and the commanders of the army, had consecrated. From the wars and from the plunder they consecrated ***some*** to strengthen the house of the LORD. And all that Samuel the seer and Saul the son of Kish and Abner the son of Ner and Joab the son of Zeruiah had consecrated, everyone who consecrated ***anything***, ***was*** under the hand of Shelomith and his brothers. Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons ***were*** for the outside work over Israel, as officials and as judges. Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brothers, sons of valor, one thousand seven hundred, ***were*** over the oversight of Israel beyond the Jordan westward, for all the work of the LORD and for the service of the king. Of the Hebronites, Jerijah ***was*** the chief, of the Hebronites according to his generations, by

fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were searched out, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead. And his brothers, sons of valor, ***were*** two thousand seven hundred, heads of the fathers. And David the king appointed them over the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half of the tribe of the Manassites, for every matter of God and matter of the king.

Chapter 26 Preview

This chapter finishes the Levites' work. First come the gatekeepers, the Levites who guarded the doors of the house of the LORD, opened them each morning, and kept out anyone who should not come in. Their families are listed, and they cast lots for which gate each would guard: east, north, south and west.

Then come the treasurers, Levites who kept the treasuries of the house of God, including the gifts dedicated from David's wars and from leaders going back to Samuel. Last are Levites who served away from the temple, as officials and judges across the land on both sides of the Jordan. The chapter shows that service to God reached from the temple doors to the far corners of Israel. Among the gatekeepers we meet an old friend: Obed-edom, the man whose house God blessed when the ark stayed there (13:14). "God had blessed him" (26:5), and here we see how.

Chapter 26 Study

26:1-11 *For the divisions of the gatekeepers: of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. And Meshelemiah had sons: Zechariah the firstborn, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh. And Obed-edom had sons: Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sachar the fourth, and Nethanel the fifth, Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peullethai the eighth; for God had blessed him. And to Shemaiah his son sons were born, the rulers of the house of their father, for they **were** mighty men of valor. The sons of Shemaiah: Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad, his brothers, sons of valor, Elihu and Semachiah. All these **were** of the sons of Obed-edom, they and their sons and their brothers, each a man of valor with the strength for the service, sixty-two belonging to Obed-edom. And Meshelemiah had sons and brothers, sons of valor, eighteen. And Hosah, of the sons of Merari, had sons: Shimri the chief (for he was not firstborn, and his father made him chief), Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth. All the sons and brothers of Hosah **were** thirteen.*

"For the divisions of the gatekeepers" (26:1). A gatekeeper was a guard and doorkeeper at the temple. The work was more than standing by a door. Gatekeepers kept the holy place from being entered by the unclean, watched over the storerooms and treasures, and opened the gates each morning (1 Chronicles 9:22-27). It was a position of trust.

Three families are named. Meshelemiah of the Korahites, a branch of the family of Kohath, had seven sons (26:1-3). He is called one "of the sons of Asaph," which most teachers take as Ebiasaph, a Korahite (9:19), not Asaph the singer.

Then comes Obed-edom, with eight sons: "for God had blessed him" (26:4-5). This is the same man who kept the ark for three months after Uzzah died (13:13-14). Back then the writer said the LORD blessed his house. Now we see what that blessing looked like years later: a large family of "mighty men of valor" (26:6), sixty-two men in all, every one "a man of valor with the strength for the service" (26:8). Obed-edom honored God's presence when others were afraid, and God honored his family for generations.

Meshelemiah's family numbered eighteen (26:9), and Hosah, of the family of Merari, had thirteen (26:10-11). Hosah made his son Shimri chief, "for he was not firstborn, and his father made him chief" (26:10). Perhaps the firstborn had died or was not fit to lead. Scripture doesn't tell us. Leadership went to the one able to carry it.

26:12-19 *To these **belonged** the divisions of the gatekeepers, to the heads of the men, charges corresponding to their brothers, to minister in the house of the LORD. And they cast lots, the small as the great, by the house of their fathers, for gate and gate. And the lot fell eastward to Shelemiah. And **for** Zechariah his son, a counselor with insight, they cast lots, and his lot came out northward. To Obed-edom southward, and to his sons the house of the storehouses. To Shuppim and to Hosah westward, by the Gate of Shallecheth, on the highway that goes up, watch corresponding to watch. To the east the Levites **were** six; to the north, four for the day; to the south, four for the day; and for the storehouses, two **and** two. For the Parbar to the west: four for the highway, two for the Parbar. These **were** the divisions of the gatekeepers of the sons of the Korahites and of the sons of Merari.*

"To these belonged the divisions of the gatekeepers" (26:12). Like the priests and the singers, they cast lots, "the small as the great, by the house of their fathers, for gate and gate" (26:13). Once again, no family could claim the best post by rank.

The east gate, the main entrance facing the rising sun, fell to Shelemiah, another form of Meshelemiah (26:14). The north gate went to his son Zechariah, "a counselor with insight." The south gate and the storehouses went to Obed-edom and his sons (26:15). The west gate, the Gate of Shallecheth on the road that went up, went to Shuppim and Hosah (26:16).

The number of guards at each post is given: six Levites a day on the east, four on the north, four on the south, two and two at the storehouses, and four on the road and two at "the Parbar" on the west (26:17-18). Scripture doesn't explain the word Parbar. It seems to have been a court or open building on the west side of the temple area. In all, twenty-four men stood guard each day.

"These were the divisions of the gatekeepers of the sons of the Korahites and of the sons of Merari" (26:19). The psalm of the sons of Korah says, "I have chosen to stand at the threshold in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10). A doorkeeper's place in God's house was better than a palace among the wicked. Do you see your place of service that way, however humble it is?

26:20-28 *And the Levites: Ahijah **was** over the treasuries of the house of God and over the treasuries of the holy things. The sons of Ladan, the sons of the Gershonite belonging to Ladan, the heads of the fathers belonging to Ladan the Gershonite: Jehieli. The sons of Jehieli: Zetham and Joel his brother, **were** over the treasuries of the house of the LORD. Of the Amramites, of the Izharites, of the Hebronites, of the Uzzielites: And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, **was** leader over the treasuries. And his brothers belonging to Eliezer: Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son. That Shelomoth and his brothers **were** over all the treasuries of the holy things which David the king and the heads of the fathers, for the commanders of the thousands and the hundreds and the commanders of the army, had consecrated. From the wars and from the plunder they consecrated **some** to strengthen the house of the LORD. And all that Samuel the seer and Saul the son of Kish and Abner the son of Ner and Joab the son of Zeruiah had consecrated, everyone who consecrated **anything**, **was** under the hand of Shelomith and his brothers.*

Next come the treasurers. "Ahijah was over the treasuries of the house of God and over the treasuries of the holy things" (26:20). There were two kinds of treasure: the treasury of the house of God, which held gifts and supplies for the daily work, and the treasuries of the holy things, which held what had been dedicated to God.

Gershonite families under Jehieli kept the treasuries of the house of the LORD (26:21-22). Shebuel, a descendant of Moses, was "leader over the treasuries" (26:24). And Shelomith (called Shelomoth in 26:26) and his brothers, of Moses' son Eliezer, were "over all the treasuries of the holy things" (26:25-26).

What were those holy things? Gifts dedicated by David and the army commanders: "From the wars and from the plunder they consecrated some to strengthen the house of the LORD" (26:27). We saw David do this in 18:7-11. The list goes back further. Samuel the seer, Saul, Abner and Joab had dedicated gifts too (26:28). For decades, leaders of Israel had been setting aside treasure for God, and now it was gathered and kept for the temple.

Treasurers had to be men of integrity. Money given to God belongs to God, and those who handle it must be faithful. Paul took great care that the gifts he carried for the poor in Jerusalem were handled honestly, "not only before the Lord but also before men" (2 Corinthians 8:20-21). Churches today should do the same.

26:29-32 *Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons **were** for the outside work over Israel, as officials and as judges. Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brothers, sons of valor, one thousand seven hundred, **were** over the oversight of Israel beyond the Jordan westward, for all the work of the LORD and for the service of the king. Of the Hebronites, Jerijah **was** the chief, of the Hebronites according to his generations, by fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were searched out, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead. And his brothers, sons of valor, **were** two thousand seven hundred, heads of the fathers. And David the king appointed them over the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half of the tribe of the Manassites, for every matter of God and matter of the king.*

Last come Levites who served away from the temple. From the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were given "the outside work over Israel" (26:29), serving as officials and judges. The Levites taught the law and helped judge disputes across the land (Deuteronomy 17:8-9; 2 Chronicles 19:8-11).

From the family of Hebron, Hashabiah and 1,700 men served west of the Jordan, "for all the work of the LORD and for the service of the king" (26:30). In the fortieth year of David's reign, his last year, a search of the records found more able men at Jazer in Gilead (26:31), and 2,700 of Jerijah's family were put over the tribes east of the Jordan, "for every matter of God and matter of the king" (26:32).

Notice the pairing. The work of the LORD and the service of the king went together. In Israel, faith was not kept inside the temple walls. It reached into courts, towns and daily life. The same is true for believers now. We serve God at work, in our neighborhoods and in our homes, as much as on Sunday morning.

Chapter 26 Summary

The gatekeepers came from the Korahites and the Merarites. Meshelemiah had seven sons and eighteen in all; Obed-edom, whom God had blessed, had eight sons and sixty-two strong men in his family; and Hosah had thirteen. They cast lots for the gates, small and great alike: Shelemiah on the east, Zechariah on the north, Obed-edom and his sons on the south with the storehouses, and Shuppim and Hosah on the west, with guards set at each post. Ahijah and Levite families of Gershon and of Moses kept the treasuries of the house of God and of the holy things, the gifts dedicated from David's wars and by Samuel, Saul, Abner and Joab. Other Levites served as officials and judges throughout Israel, Hashabiah's family west of the Jordan and Jerijah's family east of it, for every matter of God and of the king.

People and Places

- Gatekeepers: Levites who guarded the doors and storerooms of the house of the LORD.
- Obed-edom: the Levite who kept the ark (13:14); God blessed him with a large family of gatekeepers.
- Korahites: Levites of the family of Kohath, descended from Korah.

- Parbar: a court or building on the west side of the temple area; the meaning is uncertain.
- Jazer of Gilead: a town east of the Jordan, home of able Hebronite Levites.

Chapter 26 Study Questions

1. What did the gatekeepers do, and why was it a position of trust? (26:1; 9:22-27)

2. Who was Obed-edom, and how had God blessed him? (26:4-8; 13:14)

3. How were the gates assigned? (26:13)

4. What two kinds of treasuries are named, and what did they hold? (26:20, 26-28)

5. Who had dedicated gifts for the house of the LORD over the years? (26:26-28)

6. What did the Levites do who served away from the temple? (26:29-32)

7. What does the pairing "every matter of God and matter of the king" tell you about faith and daily life? (26:32)

8. Why must people who handle money given to God be faithful? (2 Corinthians 8:20-21)

9. Obed-edom honored God when others were afraid, and his family was blessed for years. How might your faithfulness today bless those who come after you?

10. Psalm 84:10 says it is better to be a doorkeeper in God's house. Is there a humble place of service you have been overlooking?

Chapter 27: Israel's Army and Leaders

Scripture

27:1-15 And the sons of Israel according to their number, the heads of the fathers and the commanders of the thousands and the hundreds, and their officials who served the king in every matter of the divisions that came in and went out month by month for all the months of the year: the one division ***was*** twenty-four thousand. Over the first division for the first month ***was*** Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. ***He was*** of the sons of Perez, the chief of all the commanders of the armies for the first month. And over the division of the second month ***was*** Dodai the Ahohite, and his division, and Mikloth the leader; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. The third commander of the army for the third month ***was*** Benaiah the son of Jehoiada the priest, chief; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. This Benaiah ***was*** the mighty man of the thirty and over the thirty; and ***in*** his division ***was*** Ammizabad his son. The fourth for the fourth month ***was*** Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. The fifth for the fifth month ***was*** the commander Shamhuth the Izrahite; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. The sixth for the sixth month ***was*** Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. The seventh for the seventh month ***was*** Helez the Pelonite, of the sons of Ephraim; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. The eighth for the eighth month ***was*** Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zerahites; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. The ninth for the ninth month ***was*** Abiezer the Anathothite, of the Benjaminites; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. The tenth for the tenth month ***was*** Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zerahites; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. ***The*** eleventh for the eleventh month ***was*** Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the sons of Ephraim; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand. The twelfth for the twelfth month ***was*** Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel; and in his division ***were*** twenty-four thousand.

27:16-34 And over the tribes of Israel: for the Reubenites, Eliezer the son of Zichri ***was*** leader; for the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maacah; for Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; for Aaron, Zadok; for Judah, Elihu, of the brothers of David; for Issachar, Omri the son of Michael; for Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; for Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel; for the sons of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; for the half of the tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah; for the half of the Manassites toward Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; for Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner; for Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These ***were*** the commanders of the tribes of Israel. And David did not take their number from the age of twenty years and below, for the LORD had said ***He would*** multiply Israel like the stars of the heavens. Joab the son of Zeruiah began to count, and he did not finish; and there was wrath because of this on Israel, and the number did not go up into the account of the chronicles of King David. And over the treasuries of the king ***was*** Azmaveth the son of Adiel; and over the treasuries in the field, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the towers ***was*** Jonathan the son of Uzziah. And over the doers of the work of the field for the labor of the ground ***was*** Ezri the son of Chelub. And over the vineyards ***was*** Shimei the Ramathite; and over what ***was*** in the vineyards for the treasuries of the wine ***was*** Zabdi the Shiphmite. And over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that ***were*** in the Shephelah ***was*** Baal-

hanan the Gederite; and over the treasuries of the oil ***was*** Joash. And over the cattle that grazed in the Sharon ***was*** Shitrai the Sharonite; and over the cattle in the valleys ***was*** Shaphat the son of Adlai. And over the camels ***was*** Obil the Ishmaelite; and over the female donkeys ***was*** Jehdeiah the Meronothite. And over the flock ***was*** Jaziz the Hagrite. All these ***were*** the officials of the property which ***belonged*** to King David. And Jonathan the uncle of David ***was*** a counselor, an understanding man, and he ***was*** a scribe; and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni ***was*** with the sons of the king. And Ahithophel ***was*** counselor to the king; and Hushai the Archite ***was*** the friend of the king. And after Ahithophel ***was*** Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar; and ***the*** commander of ***the*** army for the king ***was*** Joab.

Chapter 27 Preview

Chapters 23 to 26 organized the service of the house of God. Chapter 27 turns to the service of the king. It lists the twelve army divisions that took turns serving for a month each year, the leaders of the tribes of Israel, the officials who ran the king's farms, vineyards and herds, and the king's closest advisers.

Many of the army commanders are names we already know from David's mighty men in chapter 11. The chapter also includes a brief look back at the census of chapter 21, and a reminder of why it was wrong. Taken together, chapters 23 to 27 show a kingdom in good order, ready to hand on to Solomon. God's people are not a crowd without leaders. They are a body where each part has a place.

Chapter 27 Study

27:1-15 *And the sons of Israel according to their number, the heads of the fathers and the commanders of the thousands and the hundreds, and their officials who served the king in every matter of the divisions that came in and went out month by month for all the months of the year: the one division **was** twenty-four thousand. Over the first division for the first month **was** Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. **He was** of the sons of Perez, the chief of all the commanders of the armies for the first month. And over the division of the second month **was** Dodai the Ahohite, and his division, and Mikloth the leader; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. The third commander of the army for the third month **was** Benaiah the son of Jehoiada the priest, chief; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. This Benaiah **was** the mighty man of the thirty and over the thirty; and **in** his division **was** Ammizabad his son. The fourth for the fourth month **was** Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. The fifth for the fifth month **was** the commander Shamhuth the Izrahite; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. The sixth for the sixth month **was** Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. The seventh for the seventh month **was** Helez the Pelonite, of the sons of Ephraim; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. The eighth for the eighth month **was** Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zerahites; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. The ninth for the ninth month **was** Abiezer the Anathothite, of the Benjaminites; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. The tenth for the tenth month **was** Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zerahites; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. **The** eleventh for the eleventh month **was** Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the sons of Ephraim; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand. The twelfth for the twelfth month **was** Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel; and in his division **were** twenty-four thousand.*

"And the sons of Israel according to their number" (27:1) were organized into twelve divisions, one for each month of the year. Each division "came in and went out month by month," and each had twenty-four thousand men. That made a standing army of 288,000, with only one division on duty at a time. A man served one month a year and spent the rest at home on his land. It was a wise plan. The nation was always defended, and no family was drained.

The twelve commanders are named in order, from the first month to the twelfth (27:2-15). Almost all of them appear among David's mighty men in 11:10-47. Jashobeam, "the chief of the officers" (11:11), led the first month (27:2). Benaiah, "the mighty man of the thirty and over the thirty" (27:6), led the third. Sibbecai, who killed a giant (20:4), led the eighth (27:11). Men who had proved faithful in hard days were given charge over others.

One name stands out. "The fourth for the fourth month was Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him" (27:7). Asahel was killed by Abner early in David's reign (2 Samuel 2:18-23). How could he lead a division? It may be that the divisions were first set up early, and the list keeps Asahel's name with his son who took his place. Or the division may have kept Asahel's name in his honor, with Zebadiah as the commander. Scripture does not say which.

The large numbers are taken as written. As I said in the Background, some scholars read the word for "thousand" as a military unit in lists like this, which would make the divisions smaller.

27:16-22 *And over the tribes of Israel: for the Reubenites, Eliezer the son of Zichri **was** leader; for the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maacah; for Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; for Aaron, Zadok; for Judah, Elihu, of the brothers of David; for Issachar, Omri the son of Michael; for Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; for Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel; for the sons of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; for the half of the tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah; for the half of the Manassites toward Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; for Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner; for Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These **were** the commanders of the tribes of Israel.*

Next come the leaders of the tribes of Israel (27:16-22). These were the civil heads of each tribe, a kind of tribal governor. The list has some surprises. Levi is listed, and so is "Aaron" (27:17), with Zadok as its leader, because the priestly family had its own head. The two halves of Manasseh are listed separately (27:20-21). But Gad and Asher are not named. Scripture doesn't tell us why. The writer may have kept the number at twelve, as the tribe lists often do, by adding Aaron and the two halves of Manasseh and leaving two out.

Two leaders have family links to people we know. "For Judah, Elihu, of the brothers of David" (27:18), probably Eliab, David's oldest brother (1 Samuel 16:6), or another brother. And "for Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner" (27:21). Abner had been Saul's commander and David's enemy for a time. Now Abner's son served as a leader in David's kingdom. Grace had healed old wounds.

27:23-24 *And David did not take their number from the age of twenty years and below, for the LORD had said **He would** multiply Israel like the stars of the heavens. Joab the son of Zeruiah began to count, and he did not finish; and there was wrath because of this on Israel, and the number did not go up into the account of the chronicles of King David.*

Then a short note looks back at the census of chapter 21. "And David did not take their number from the age of twenty years and below, for the LORD had said He would multiply Israel like the stars of the heavens" (27:23). God had promised Abraham descendants as many as the stars (Genesis 15:5; 22:17). To count every one would be like doubting the promise, or trying to measure what God said could not be measured.

"Joab the son of Zeruiah began to count, and he did not finish; and there was wrath because of this on Israel, and the number did not go up into the account of the chronicles of King David" (27:24). The count was never finished, and it was never entered in the official records. God's judgment stopped it. The writer reminds us that even in this orderly kingdom, the king had once sinned by counting, and the nation had paid for it.

27:25-31 *And over the treasuries of the king **was** Azmaveth the son of Adiel; and over the treasuries in the field, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the towers **was** Jonathan the son of Uzziah. And over the doers of the work of the field for the labor of the ground **was** Ezri the son of Chelub. And over the vineyards **was** Shimei the Ramathite; and over what **was** in the vineyards for the treasuries of the wine **was** Zabdi the Shiphmite. And over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that **were** in the Shephelah **was** Baal-hanan the Gederite; and over the treasuries of the oil **was** Joash. And over the cattle that grazed in the Sharon **was** Shitrai the Sharonite; and over the cattle in the valleys **was** Shaphat the son of Adlai. And over the camels **was** Obil the Ishmaelite; and over the female donkeys **was** Jehdeiah the Meronothite. And over the flock **was** Jaziz the Hagrite. All these **were** the officials of the property which **belonged** to King David.*

Now come the managers of the king's property. Azmaveth was over the royal treasuries, and Jonathan over the storehouses in the fields, cities, villages and towers (27:25). Others oversaw the farm workers (27:26), the vineyards and the wine cellars (27:27), the olive and sycamore trees in the Shephelah, the low hills between the coast and the mountains, and the stores of oil (27:28). Others had charge of the cattle in the Sharon, the coastal plain, and in the valleys (27:29), of the camels and donkeys (27:30), and of the flocks (27:31). "All these were the officials of the property which belonged to King David."

Two of these managers were foreigners. Obil the Ishmaelite, from a people of the desert who knew camels well, kept the camels (27:30), and Jaziz the Hagrite, from a people east of the Jordan, kept the flocks (27:31). David put men where their skills fit, whatever their background.

This short list tells us that the king's household was a working farm and ranch, and that it was run with care. God cares about our work as much as our worship. Faithful management of the ordinary things God gives us is part of serving Him (Luke 16:10).

27:32-34 *And Jonathan the uncle of David **was** a counselor, an understanding man, and he **was** a scribe; and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni **was** with the sons of the king. And Ahithophel **was** counselor to the king; and Hushai the Archite **was** the friend of the king. And after Ahithophel **was** Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar; and **the** commander of **the** army for the king **was** Joab.*

The chapter ends with David's inner circle. "And Jonathan the uncle of David was a counselor, an understanding man, and he was a scribe" (27:32). Jehiel was with the king's sons, likely as their teacher. "And Ahithophel was counselor to the king; and Hushai the Archite was the friend of the king" (27:33).

These names carry a story. Ahithophel was the wisest counselor in Israel, but he joined Absalom's revolt against David, and when his advice was rejected, he took his own life (2 Samuel 15:12; 17:23). Hushai was the loyal friend who stayed true to David in that crisis (2 Samuel 15:32-37). Chronicles does not retell the story, but it quietly notes that after Ahithophel came Jehoiada and Abiathar (27:34). Ahithophel's place was filled by others.

What makes a good adviser? Wisdom is not enough. Ahithophel had wisdom, but his loyalty failed. Hushai is remembered simply as "the friend of the king." We do well to choose friends and

counselors who are both wise and faithful, and to be that kind of friend ourselves. "At every time the friend loves" (Proverbs 17:17).

And Jesus calls His disciples friends. "No longer do I call you slaves," He said, but friends (John 15:15). To be the friend of the King is the highest place of all.

"And the commander of the army for the king was Joab" (27:34). The list ends with Joab, still at his post.

Chapter 27 Summary

Israel's army was organized into twelve divisions of twenty-four thousand men, each serving one month a year under a commander, most of them David's mighty men, such as Jashobeam, Benaiah, Asahel and Sibbecai. The leaders of the tribes are listed, including Zadok for Aaron, Elihu of David's brothers for Judah, and Jaasiel the son of Abner for Benjamin. David had not counted those twenty and under, because the LORD had promised to multiply Israel like the stars, and Joab's census was never finished or entered in the records, because wrath came on Israel. Officials were over the king's treasuries, storehouses, fields, vineyards, wine, olive trees, oil, cattle, camels, donkeys and flocks. David's counselors were Jonathan his uncle, Jehiel, Ahithophel, Hushai the king's friend, Jehoiada and Abiathar, and Joab was commander of the army.

People and Places

- Jashobeam and Benaiah: chief mighty men, commanders of the first and third months.
- Asahel: Joab's brother, killed by Abner (2 Samuel 2:23), whose son Zebadiah followed him.
- The Shephelah: the low hills between the coastal plain and the hill country of Judah.
- The Sharon: the coastal plain north of Philistia.
- Ahithophel: David's counselor, who later joined Absalom's revolt.
- Hushai the Archite: the king's loyal friend.

Chapter 27 Study Questions

1. How was Israel's army organized, and why was this a wise plan? (27:1)

2. Where have we met many of the commanders before? (27:2-15; 11:10-47)

3. Which tribal leaders had links to David's family or to his former enemy? (27:18, 21)

4. Why did David not count those twenty and under? (27:23; Genesis 15:5)

5. What happened to Joab's count? (27:24)

6. What kinds of property did the king's officials manage? (27:25-31)

7. What is the difference between Ahithophel and Hushai, and what does that teach about choosing counselors? (27:33)

8. Jesus calls His followers friends (John 15:15). What does it mean to you to be called a friend of the King?

9. Faithful management of ordinary things is part of serving God (Luke 16:10). What has God put in your care that you need to manage more faithfully?

10. Abner's son served in David's kingdom. Is there an old wound or broken relationship where God may be calling you to show grace?

Chapter 28: David's Charge to Solomon and the Temple Plans

Scripture

28:1-10 And David assembled all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes and the commanders of the divisions who served the king, and the commanders of the thousands and the commanders of the hundreds, and the officials of all the property and livestock of the king and of his sons, with the court officials and the mighty men, and every mighty man of valor, to Jerusalem. And David the king rose to his feet and said, "Listen to me, my brothers and my people. As for me, ***it was*** in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of the feet of our God, and I prepared to build. And God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, for you ***are*** a man of wars, and you have shed blood.' And the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. For He chose Judah as leader, and in the house of Judah the house of my father, and among the sons of my father He took pleasure in me to make ***me*** king over all Israel. And from all my sons, for the LORD has given me many sons, He has chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. And He said to me, 'Solomon your son, he will build My house and My courts, for I have chosen him for Myself as a son, and I will be to him a father. And I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is strong to do My commandments and My judgments, as ***at*** this day.' And now, in the eyes of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the ears of our God, keep and seek all the commandments of the LORD your God, so that you may possess the good land and give ***it*** as an inheritance to your sons after you forever. And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and with a willing soul, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every inclination of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; and if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. See now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and act."

28:11-21 And David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch and its houses and its treasure rooms and its upper rooms and its inner chambers and the house of the mercy seat, and the pattern of all that was in the spirit with him, for the courts of the house of the LORD and for all the chambers all around, for the treasuries of the house of God and for the treasuries of the holy things, and for the divisions of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of the service of the house of the LORD; for the gold, by the weight of the gold, for all articles of service and service; for all the articles of the silver by weight, for all articles of service and service; and the weight of the lampstands of gold and their lamps of gold, by the weight of lampstand and lampstand and its lamps; and of the lampstands of silver by weight, of a lampstand and its lamps, according to the service of lampstand and lampstand; and the gold by weight for the tables of the row, for table and table, and silver for the tables of silver; and the forks and the sprinkling bowls and the jugs ***of*** pure gold; and for the bowls of gold by weight for bowl and bowl, and for the bowls of silver by weight for bowl and bowl; and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and for the pattern of the chariot, the cherubim ***of*** gold, for spreading out and covering over the ark of the covenant of the LORD. All ***this was*** in writing from the hand of the LORD on me; He made ***me*** understand all the works of

the pattern. And David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and be courageous, and act; do not fear, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God, ***is*** with you. He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you, until all the work of the service of the house of the LORD is finished. And look, the divisions of the priests and the Levites ***are*** for all the service of the house of God; and with you in all the work ***is*** every willing one with wisdom for every service; and the officials and all the people ***are*** at all your words."

Chapter 28 Preview

David's life is nearly over, and he calls together every leader in Israel for one last great assembly. Standing on his feet, the old king tells them the story of his desire to build God a house, why God said no, and how God chose Solomon to build it. He charges the whole assembly, and then Solomon in front of them, to keep and seek God's commandments.

Then David hands Solomon the plans for the temple: its porch and rooms, its courts and treasuries, the divisions of priests and Levites, and the weight of gold and silver for every lampstand, table and bowl. David says the LORD gave him the pattern in writing and made him understand it all (28:19). He ends with words every believer facing a big task should hear: "Be strong and be courageous, and act; do not fear, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God, is with you" (28:20).

Chapter 28 Study

28:1 *And David assembled all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes and the commanders of the divisions who served the king, and the commanders of the thousands and the commanders of the hundreds, and the officials of all the property and livestock of the king and of his sons, with the court officials and the mighty men, and every mighty man of valor, to Jerusalem.*

"And David assembled all the officials of Israel" (28:1): the leaders of the tribes, the commanders of the divisions, the commanders of thousands and hundreds, the managers of the king's property, the court officials and the mighty men. These are the people listed in chapters 23 to 27. Everyone who would help Solomon was there to hear the charge. A good handover is done in public, so that everyone knows who the new leader is and what he has been asked to do.

28:2-3 *And David the king rose to his feet and said, "Listen to me, my brothers and my people. As for me,* ***it was*** *in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of the feet of our God, and I prepared to build. And God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, for you* ***are*** *a man of wars, and you have shed blood.'*

"And David the king rose to his feet" (28:2). First Kings 1 shows David weak and bedridden near the end. Here he stands. It was a moment that mattered too much to give sitting down. He spoke to them as family: "Listen to me, my brothers and my people."

"As for me, it was in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of the feet of our God, and I prepared to build." The ark was called God's footstool. God's throne is in heaven, and the ark, under the wings of the cherubim, was the place on earth

where His feet rested, so to speak (Psalm 132:7; Isaiah 66:1). A house of rest was a permanent home after centuries of moving.

God had told him, "You shall not build a house for My name, for you are a man of wars, and you have shed blood" (28:3). David did not hide the no God had given him. He told the whole nation. It takes humility for a great leader to say, publicly, that God gave the honor of his dream to someone else.

28:4-7 *And the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. For He chose Judah as leader, and in the house of Judah the house of my father, and among the sons of my father He took pleasure in me to make* ***me*** *king over all Israel. And from all my sons, for the LORD has given me many sons, He has chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. And He said to me, 'Solomon your son, he will build My house and My courts, for I have chosen him for Myself as a son, and I will be to him a father. And I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is strong to do My commandments and My judgments, as* ***at*** *this day.'*

David then told how God had chosen at every step. "The LORD, the God of Israel, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever" (28:4). God chose the tribe of Judah, then the house of Jesse within Judah, then David among Jesse's sons. "He took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel." David knew he was king by God's choice, not by his own effort.

"And from all my sons, for the LORD has given me many sons, He has chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel" (28:5). Notice again: the throne is "the throne of the kingdom of the LORD." It is God's kingdom. The king of Israel sits on it as God's servant. We saw this in 17:14, and we will see it again in 29:23.

God had said, "Solomon your son, he will build My house and My courts, for I have chosen him for Myself as a son, and I will be to him a father" (28:6). "And I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is strong to do My commandments and My judgments, as at this day" (28:7).

That little word "if" matters. Was God's covenant with David conditional after all? The promise of a lasting line and throne rested on God alone (17:11-14), and God kept it all the way to Jesus. But the blessing of each king in his own day depended on whether he obeyed. Solomon would enjoy a firm kingdom if he stayed faithful. Sadly, in his old age he did not, and his kingdom was torn in two after his death (1 Kings 11:9-13). God kept the line. Solomon lost much of the blessing.

28:8 *And now, in the eyes of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the ears of our God, keep and seek all the commandments of the LORD your God, so that you may possess the good land and give* ***it*** *as an inheritance to your sons after you forever.*

Then David turned to the whole assembly. "And now, in the eyes of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the ears of our God, keep and seek all the commandments of the LORD your God, so that you may possess the good land and give it as an inheritance to your sons after you forever" (28:8).

God was listening. David called Him as a witness. And the charge was not only for Solomon. The whole nation was to keep and seek God's commands, for their own sake and for their children's. Possessing the land was tied to obedience, as Moses had said (Deuteronomy 4:1, 40). For the first readers, who had lost the land and come back to it, this verse was a sharp reminder of why they had been sent away and how they could stay.

28:9-10 *And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and with a willing soul, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every inclination of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; and if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. See now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and act."*

Now David spoke to his son directly. "And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and with a willing soul" (28:9). To know God is more than knowing about Him. It is to have a real relationship with Him. David did not want Solomon to inherit only his father's throne. He wanted him to know his father's God.

"For the LORD searches all hearts and understands every inclination of the thoughts." Solomon could fool people, but never God. God sees every motive. "If you seek Him, He will be found by you; and if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever." This is a solemn warning. God is not hiding from anyone who truly seeks Him (Jeremiah 29:13). But a person who turns his back on God, and keeps turning away, will find that God lets him go his chosen way.

What does that mean for a believer? I believe that those who have truly been born again through faith in Christ are kept by God (John 10:28-29). But this verse is a warning to take seriously, not to argue away. David was speaking to a king under the old covenant, about his walk with God and his reign. The warning came true in Solomon's life when his heart turned to other gods (1 Kings 11:4). Whatever we have inherited from godly parents, each of us must seek the Lord for ourselves.

"See now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and act" (28:10). God's choice came with a job.

28:11-13 *And David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch and its houses and its treasure rooms and its upper rooms and its inner chambers and the house of the mercy seat, and the pattern of all that was in the spirit with him, for the courts of the house of the LORD and for all the chambers all around, for the treasuries of the house of God and for the treasuries of the holy things, and for the divisions of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of the service of the house of the LORD;*

"And David gave to Solomon his son the pattern" (28:11). A pattern is a plan or model. It covered the porch, the rooms, the treasure rooms, the upper rooms, the inner chambers, "and the house of the mercy seat." The mercy seat was the gold lid of the ark, where the blood of atonement was spattered once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:14-15). The house of the mercy seat was the Most Holy Place, the inner room of the temple.

The plan also covered "all that was in the spirit with him" (28:12), the courts, the chambers, the treasuries, and even "the divisions of the priests and the Levites" (28:13). The organization in chapters 23 to 26 was part of the plan. Building and worship went together.

28:14-18 *for the gold, by the weight of the gold, for all articles of service and service; for all the articles of the silver by weight, for all articles of service and service; and the weight of the lampstands of gold and their lamps of gold, by the weight of lampstand and lampstand and its lamps; and of the lampstands of silver by weight, of a lampstand and its lamps, according to the service of lampstand and lampstand; and the gold by weight for the tables of the row, for table and table, and silver for the tables of silver; and the forks and the sprinkling bowls and the jugs* ***of*** *pure gold; and for the bowls of gold by weight for bowl and bowl, and for the bowls of silver by weight for bowl and bowl; and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and for the pattern of the chariot, the cherubim* ***of*** *gold, for spreading out and covering over the ark of the covenant of the LORD.*

Then come the details. David gave the weight of gold and silver for "all articles of service" (28:14): the gold and silver lampstands and their lamps (28:15), the tables for "the bread of the arrangement" (28:16; 23:29), the forks, bowls and jugs of pure gold (28:17), and "for the altar of incense refined gold by weight" (28:18).

The last item is the most holy: "for the pattern of the chariot, the cherubim of gold, for spreading out and covering over the ark of the covenant of the LORD." The cherubim over the ark were pictured as God's chariot throne. Ezekiel later saw the cherubim carrying the throne of God (Ezekiel 1; 10). Solomon made two great cherubim of olive wood covered with gold whose wings stretched across the Most Holy Place (2 Chronicles 3:10-13).

Nothing was left to guesswork. Every lamp and bowl had a set weight. That tells us God cares about details in worship. It does not mean God loves gold. It means that what is given to Him should be given carefully and fully.

28:19 *All* ***this was*** *in writing from the hand of the LORD on me; He made* ***me*** *understand all the works of the pattern.*

"All this was in writing from the hand of the LORD on me; He made me understand all the works of the pattern" (28:19). David did not design the temple by his own taste. God gave him the pattern, as He had given Moses the pattern of the tabernacle on the mountain (Exodus 25:9, 40). Scripture doesn't tell us exactly how God put it in writing, whether by direct revelation that David wrote down or by guiding his hand, but David was certain the plan came from God.

Hebrews explains why the pattern mattered. The tabernacle and its priests served "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things," and Moses was told to "make all things according to the pattern which was shown to you on the mountain" (Hebrews 8:5). The earthly sanctuary pointed to a heavenly one. And Christ, our High Priest, has entered heaven itself with His own blood, once for all (Hebrews 9:11-12, 24). The temple David planned was a picture. Jesus is the reality.

28:20-21 *And David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and be courageous, and act; do not fear, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God,* ***is*** *with you. He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you, until all the work of the service of the house of the LORD is finished. And look, the divisions of the priests and the Levites* ***are*** *for all the service of the house of God; and with you in all the work* ***is*** *every willing one with wisdom for every service; and the officials and all the people* ***are*** *at all your words."*

David's last words in this chapter are for Solomon's heart. "Be strong and be courageous, and act; do not fear, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you, until all the work of the service of the house of the LORD is finished" (28:20).

These echo the words God spoke to Joshua (Joshua 1:5-9). David knew the job was too big for a young man. So he pointed Solomon away from his own strength to God's presence. "My God" will be with you. The God who had been faithful to David would be faithful to his son. Hebrews takes the same promise and gives it to every believer: "I will certainly not leave you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

David also reminded him that he would not work alone. The priests and Levites were ready, "every willing one with wisdom for every service" (28:21) would help, and the officials and all the people were at his command. God gives His people both His presence and helpers for the work.

What has God called you to do that feels too big? Be strong and act. He will not let you go until the work is finished.

Chapter 28 Summary

David assembled all the leaders of Israel in Jerusalem and stood to speak. He told them it had been in his heart to build a house of rest for the ark, but God had said he was a man of war and had shed blood. God had chosen Judah, his father's house, and David himself, and from all David's sons He had chosen Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD and build His house. God would establish Solomon's kingdom forever if he was strong to keep His commandments. David charged all Israel to keep and seek God's commandments so they could keep the good land. He charged Solomon to know the God of his father and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing soul, because the LORD searches all hearts; if Solomon sought Him He would be found, but if he forsook Him He would reject him forever. Then David gave Solomon the pattern of the temple, its rooms, courts and treasuries, the divisions of priests and Levites, and the weights of gold and silver for the lampstands, tables, bowls, the altar of incense and the golden cherubim over the ark. He said the LORD had given it all in writing and made him understand it. He told Solomon to be strong and courageous, because God would not leave him or forsake him until the work was done, and that the priests, Levites, skilled workers, officials and people were ready to help.

People and Places

- Footstool of God: a name for the ark, the place on earth where God's presence rested.

- Pattern: the plan of the temple God gave David, as He gave Moses the plan of the tabernacle.
- Mercy seat: the gold lid of the ark, where atoning blood was spattered on the Day of Atonement.
- The house of the mercy seat: the Most Holy Place, the inner room of the temple.
- Cherubim: heavenly beings; golden figures of them covered the ark.

Chapter 28 Study Questions

1. Who did David gather, and why do you think he did it in public? (28:1)

2. What had been in David's heart, and why did God say no? (28:2-3)

3. How did God choose at every step, from Judah to Solomon? (28:4-5)

4. Whose kingdom and throne did Solomon sit on? (28:5)

5. What did David tell Solomon to do in 28:9, and what warning did he give?

6. Where did the pattern for the temple come from? (28:11-19)

7. How does Hebrews 8:5 explain the meaning of the earthly sanctuary?

8. What promise did David give Solomon in 28:20, and how does Hebrews 13:5 give it to us?

9. David wanted Solomon to know "the God of your father," not just his throne. How can you make sure your faith is your own and not only inherited?

10. What task in your life feels too big right now? How would it change things to hear God say, "Be strong and act" (28:10)?

Chapter 29: The Gifts for the Temple and the Death of David

Scripture

29:1-9 And David the king said to all the assembly, "Solomon my son, ***the*** one whom God has chosen, ***is*** a youth and tender, and the work ***is*** great; for the palace ***is*** not for man, but for the LORD God. And with all my power I have prepared for the house of my God the gold for the ***things of*** gold, and the silver for the ***things of*** silver, and the bronze for the ***things of*** bronze, the iron for the ***things of*** iron, and the wood for the ***things of*** wood, onyx stones and settings, stones of antimony and of variegated color, and every precious stone, and alabaster stones in abundance. And moreover, in my delight in the house of my God, I have a treasure of gold and silver; I have given ***it*** for the house of my God, over and above all ***that*** I have prepared for the holy house: approximately 225,000 pounds (three thousand talents) of gold, from the gold of Ophir, and approximately 525,000 pounds (seven thousand talents) of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses; the gold for the ***things of*** gold, and the silver for the ***things of*** silver, and for every work by the hand of craftsmen. And who ***is*** offering willingly to fill his hand today for the LORD?" And the leaders of the fathers and the leaders of the tribes of Israel, and the leaders of the thousands and of the hundreds, and the leaders of the work of the king offered willingly. And they gave for the service of the house of God: gold, approximately 375,000 pounds (five thousand talents) and ten thousand darics; and silver, approximately 750,000 pounds (ten thousand talents); and bronze, approximately 1.35 million pounds (ten thousand and eight thousand talents); and iron, approximately 7.5 million pounds (one hundred thousand talents). And the one with whom stones were found, they gave ***them*** to the treasury of the house of the LORD by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. And the people rejoiced because of their offering willingly, for with a whole heart they offered willingly to the LORD; and also David the king rejoiced ***with*** great joy.

29:10-19 And David blessed the LORD before the eyes of all the assembly, and David said, "Blessed ***are*** You, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, from everlasting and to everlasting. To You, O LORD, ***is*** the greatness and the might and the splendor and the preeminence and the majesty, for all ***that is*** in the heavens and on the earth; to You, O LORD, ***is*** the kingdom, and the One lifting Himself up over all as head. And the riches and the glory ***are*** from before You, and You ***are*** ruling over all; and in Your hand ***are*** power and might, and in Your hand ***it is*** to make great and to strengthen all. And now, our God, we ***are*** giving thanks to You and praising the name of Your splendor. And indeed, who ***am*** I, and who ***are*** my people, that we should retain strength to offer willingly like this? For everything ***is*** from You, and from Your hand we have given to You. For we ***are*** sojourners before You, and resident aliens, like all our fathers; like the shadow ***are*** our days on the earth, and there is no hope. O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build for You a house for the name of Your holiness, it ***is*** from Your hand, and everything ***is*** Yours. And I know, my God, that You ***are*** testing ***the*** heart, and You take pleasure in uprightness. I, in the uprightness of my heart, have offered willingly all these ***things***; and now Your people who are found here I have seen with joy offering willingly to You. O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever for the inclination of the thoughts of the heart of Your people,

and prepare their heart toward You. And to Solomon my son give a whole heart to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies, and Your statutes, and to do everything, and to build the palace which I have prepared."

29:20-30 And David said to all the assembly, "Bless, please, the LORD your God." And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and they bowed low and bowed down to the LORD and to the king. And they sacrificed sacrifices to the LORD and offered up burnt offerings to the LORD on the day after that day: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, and their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. And they ate and drank before the LORD on that day with great joy. And they made Solomon the son of David king a second time, and they anointed ***him*** for the LORD as ruler, and Zadok as priest. And Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in place of David his father, and he prospered; and all Israel listened to him. And all the leaders and the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David, gave a hand under Solomon the king. And the LORD made Solomon exceedingly great in the eyes of all Israel, and He put on him ***the*** majesty of kingship which had not been on any king before him over Israel. And David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the days which he reigned over Israel ***were*** forty years: in Hebron he reigned seven years, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three ***years***. And he died in a good old age, satisfied ***with*** days, riches, and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place. And the matters of David the king, the first and the last, look, they ***are*** written in the words of Samuel the seer, and in the words of Nathan the prophet, and in the words of Gad the seer, with all his kingship and his might, and the times that passed over him and over Israel and over all the kingdoms of the lands.

Chapter 29 Preview

The last chapter of 1 Chronicles is full of joy. David tells the assembly what he has given for the house of God, first from the kingdom and then from his own treasure, and he asks, "who is offering willingly to fill his hand today for the LORD?" (29:5). The leaders respond with huge gifts, and the people rejoice "because of their offering willingly" (29:9).

Then David blesses the LORD in one of the great prayers of the Bible (29:10-19). He praises God's greatness, confesses that everything they gave already belonged to God, admits that our days on earth are like a shadow, and asks God to keep His people's hearts turned toward Him and to give Solomon a whole heart. The assembly worships, Solomon is made king a second time, and the book closes with David's death "in a good old age, satisfied with days, riches, and honor" (29:28). The book that began with Adam ends with a king who prepared for God's house and handed on God's promise.

Chapter 29 Study

29:1-5 *And David the king said to all the assembly, "Solomon my son, **the** one whom God has chosen, **is** a youth and tender, and the work **is** great; for the palace **is** not for man, but for the LORD God. And with all my power I have prepared for the house of my God the gold for the **things of** gold, and the silver for the **things of** silver, and the bronze for the **things of** bronze, the iron for the **things of** iron, and the wood for the **things of** wood, onyx stones and settings, stones of antimony and of variegated color, and every precious stone, and alabaster stones in abundance. And moreover, in my delight in the house of my God, I have a treasure of gold and silver; I have given **it** for the house of my God, over and above all **that** I have prepared for the holy house: approximately 225,000 pounds (three thousand talents) of gold, from the gold of Ophir, and approximately 525,000 pounds (seven thousand talents) of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses; the gold for the **things of** gold, and the silver for the **things of** silver, and for every work by the hand of craftsmen. And who **is** offering willingly to fill his hand today for the LORD?"*

"And David the king said to all the assembly, Solomon my son, the one whom God has chosen, is a youth and tender, and the work is great" (29:1). David repeats what he said in 22:5. Solomon was young, and the job was huge. "For the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God." The Hebrew word for palace here is used for the temple. This would be the house of the true King.

"And with all my power I have prepared for the house of my God" (29:2). David lists gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, onyx and other precious stones, "and alabaster stones in abundance." He had given his whole strength to it.

Then David went further. "In my delight in the house of my God, I have a treasure of gold and silver; I have given it for the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house" (29:3). This was his own personal fortune, separate from the kingdom's treasury. Three thousand talents of gold from Ophir, a land famous for fine gold, and seven thousand talents of silver, "to overlay the walls of the houses" (29:4). David gave not out of duty, but out of delight. He loved the house of God.

Then he turned to the leaders: "And who is offering willingly to fill his hand today for the LORD?" (29:5). To fill the hand was a phrase used for ordaining priests (Exodus 28:41). David was asking who would set himself apart, hand full, to give to God. Notice the order. He gave first, and then he asked others to give. A leader cannot ask others to give what he is not willing to give himself.

29:6-9 *And the leaders of the fathers and the leaders of the tribes of Israel, and the leaders of the thousands and of the hundreds, and the leaders of the work of the king offered willingly. And they gave for the service of the house of God: gold, approximately 375,000 pounds (five thousand talents) and ten thousand darics; and silver, approximately 750,000 pounds (ten thousand talents); and bronze, approximately 1.35 million pounds (ten thousand and eight thousand talents); and iron, approximately 7.5 million pounds (one hundred thousand talents). And the one with whom stones were found, they gave* ***them*** *to the treasury of the house of the LORD by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. And the people rejoiced because of their offering willingly, for with a whole heart they offered willingly to the LORD; and also David the king rejoiced* ***with*** *great joy.*

The leaders "offered willingly" (29:6): the heads of the families, the leaders of the tribes, the commanders, and the officials over the king's work. Their gifts were enormous: five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and a hundred thousand talents of iron (29:7). Those who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the LORD under Jehiel the Gershonite (29:8), one of the treasurers named in 26:21-22.

A daric was a Persian gold coin. It did not exist in David's day. The writer is giving the value in the coin his readers used, the way we might say what an old amount would be worth in dollars today. It is one of the signs that Chronicles was written after the exile, under Persian rule.

"And the people rejoiced because of their offering willingly, for with a whole heart they offered willingly to the LORD; and also David the king rejoiced with great joy" (29:9). The joy came from the giving. Giving to God was not a burden to them. It was a delight. Paul says the same: "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Have you ever found joy in giving? It is one of the surest signs that your heart belongs to the Lord.

29:10 *And David blessed the LORD before the eyes of all the assembly, and David said, "Blessed* ***are*** *You, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, from everlasting and to everlasting.*

Now comes David's prayer. "And David blessed the LORD before the eyes of all the assembly" (29:10). To bless the LORD means to praise Him and speak well of Him. David did it in front of everyone. He wanted the whole assembly to see where his heart was and to join in.

"Blessed are You, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, from everlasting and to everlasting." Israel our father means Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel (Genesis 32:28). David began with who God is: the God of the covenant with the fathers, and the God who has no beginning and no end. Everlasting means without limit of time. Before the first gift was given, God was. After the temple is long gone, God will be. Every good prayer starts with God, not with us.

29:11-12 *To You, O LORD, **is** the greatness and the might and the splendor and the preeminence and the majesty, for all **that is** in the heavens and on the earth; to You, O LORD, **is** the kingdom, and the One lifting Himself up over all as head. And the riches and the glory **are** from before You, and You **are** ruling over all; and in Your hand **are** power and might, and in Your hand **it is** to make great and to strengthen all.*

"To You, O LORD, is the greatness and the might and the splendor and the preeminence and the majesty" (29:11). David piled up words, because no one word was enough. Greatness is His size and worth. Might is His power. Splendor is His beauty and glory. Preeminence is His victory and first place over everything. Majesty is the honor of a king.

Why does it all belong to Him? "For all that is in the heavens and on the earth" is His. "To You, O LORD, is the kingdom, and the One lifting Himself up over all as head." David was the most powerful king Israel ever had, and he stood before the nation and said the kingdom is not mine. It is Yours.

These words echo in the prayer Jesus taught His disciples. The SLB ends the Lord's Prayer with, "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory into the ages" (Matthew 6:13). Whether we pray David's words or the Lord's, the heart is the same. God is King, and every throne on earth is under His.

"And the riches and the glory are from before You, and You are ruling over all" (29:12). Riches and honor come from God. So does strength: "in Your hand it is to make great and to strengthen all." David had been made great, but he knew who made him so. Every leader, every wealthy person, every strong person needs to remember this. What we have, we have been given.

29:13-14 *And now, our God, we **are** giving thanks to You and praising the name of Your splendor. And indeed, who **am** I, and who **are** my people, that we should retain strength to offer willingly like this? For everything **is** from You, and from Your hand we have given to You.*

"And now, our God, we are giving thanks to You and praising the name of Your splendor" (29:13). Praise is about who God is. Thanks is about what He has done. David gave both.

Then he asked a question that echoes his prayer in 17:16: "And indeed, who am I, and who are my people, that we should retain strength to offer willingly like this?" (29:14). After all the gold and silver had been given, David did not feel proud. He felt small. How could we be allowed to give to God like this?

His answer is one of the most important things the Bible says about giving: "For everything is from You, and from Your hand we have given to You." We never give God anything that was not His first. The gold came from the earth He made. The strength to earn it came from Him. Even the desire to give came from Him. When we give, we are only handing back part of what He handed us. Paul asks, "what do you have which you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7). That truth takes away pride from the giver, and it takes away fear too. If it was all His to start with, we can open our hands freely.

29:15 *For we **are** sojourners before You, and resident aliens, like all our fathers; like the shadow **are** our days on the earth, and there is no hope.*

"For we are sojourners before You, and resident aliens, like all our fathers; like the shadow are our days on the earth, and there is no hope" (29:15). A sojourner or resident alien was someone living in a land that was not his own, with no permanent claim on it. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived that way in Canaan (Genesis 23:4). David, king of all Israel, said we are the same. We are passing through.

"Like the shadow are our days on the earth." A shadow stretches and fades as the sun goes down, and then it is gone. James says our life is "a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (James 4:14). "And there is no hope" here means no hope of staying, no lasting place on earth. The Hebrew word can also mean something that stays or abides. David was not saying there is no hope in God. He was saying there is nothing on earth we can hold onto forever.

That is why the gifts mattered. If our days are a shadow, then what we keep for ourselves will slip away. What we give to God lasts. The writer of Hebrews says the believers of old "confessed that they are strangers and sojourners on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13), because they were looking for a better country, a heavenly one. Peter calls us "sojourners and exiles" too (1 Peter 2:11). The first readers of Chronicles, a small people living under Persia in their own land, would have felt these words. So should we.

29:16-17 *O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build for You a house for the name of Your holiness, it **is** from Your hand, and everything **is** Yours. And I know, my God, that You **are** testing **the** heart, and You take pleasure in uprightness. I, in the uprightness of my heart, have offered willingly all these **things**; and now Your people who are found here I have seen with joy offering willingly to You.*

"O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build for You a house for the name of Your holiness, it is from Your hand, and everything is Yours" (29:16). David said it again. He wanted no one to forget it. All this abundance is from Your hand.

Then he spoke about motives. "And I know, my God, that You are testing the heart, and You take pleasure in uprightness" (29:17). God does not weigh the gold. He weighs the heart. Uprightness means honesty, a heart with nothing crooked in it. David could say, "I, in the uprightness of my heart, have offered willingly all these things." His giving was not for show. And he had seen the people do the same: "now Your people who are found here I have seen with joy offering willingly to You."

This is what God wants in our giving. Not a certain amount, but a willing, honest heart. Jesus watched the rich put large gifts into the temple treasury, and then praised a poor widow who gave two small coins, because she gave all she had (Mark 12:41-44). God sees what the gift costs and why it is given.

29:18-19 *O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever for the inclination of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and prepare their heart toward You. And to Solomon my son give a whole heart to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies, and Your statutes, and to do everything, and to build the palace which I have prepared."*

Now David prayed for the future. "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever for the inclination of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and prepare their heart toward You" (29:18). The inclination of the thoughts of the heart means the way the heart leans. David knew the joy of that day might not last. Hearts drift. So he asked God to keep that willing spirit in His people forever, and to set their hearts toward Him.

That is a prayer we all need. We cannot keep our own hearts turned toward God by our own strength. We need Him to do it. Paul prayed the same for the church, that God would establish their hearts blameless in holiness (1 Thessalonians 3:13).

"And to Solomon my son give a whole heart to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies, and Your statutes, and to do everything, and to build the palace which I have prepared" (29:19). Commandments, testimonies and statutes are three words for God's Word, His orders, His witness and His set rules. David's last prayer for his son was not for riches or victory. It was for a whole heart, undivided, wholly given to God. A father can leave his son a kingdom and a fortune, but the best thing he can ask for him is a heart that loves God.

Does it matter that Solomon later turned away? It shows us that even a godly father's prayers do not take away a son's own choices. But it does not make the prayer wrong. God answered much of it. Solomon built the house, and for many years he walked with God. Parents, keep praying for your children's hearts.

29:20-22 *And David said to all the assembly, "Bless, please, the LORD your God." And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and they bowed low and bowed down to the LORD and to the king. And they sacrificed sacrifices to the LORD and offered up burnt offerings to the LORD on the day after that day: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, and their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. And they ate and drank before the LORD on that day with great joy. And they made Solomon the son of David king a second time, and they anointed **him** for the LORD as ruler, and Zadok as priest.*

"And David said to all the assembly, Bless, please, the LORD your God" (29:20). The whole assembly did. They "bowed low and bowed down to the LORD and to the king." They worshiped God and honored the king He had given.

The next day they offered "a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, and their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel" (29:21). A drink offering was wine poured out at the altar with a sacrifice. Many of these were peace offerings, shared in a feast, for "they ate and drank before the LORD on that day with great joy" (29:22).

"And they made Solomon the son of David king a second time." The first time was the hurried anointing during Adonijah's attempt to seize the throne (23:1; 1 Kings 1:32-40). This second time

was a public celebration before the whole nation. "And they anointed him for the LORD as ruler, and Zadok as priest." To anoint is to pour oil on someone's head, setting him apart for God's service. The word Messiah means anointed one. Every anointed king of David's line pointed ahead to the Anointed One, Jesus the Christ.

29:23-25 *And Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in place of David his father, and he prospered; and all Israel listened to him. And all the leaders and the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David, gave a hand under Solomon the king. And the LORD made Solomon exceedingly great in the eyes of all Israel, and He put on him* ***the*** *majesty of kingship which had not been on any king before him over Israel.*

"And Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in place of David his father, and he prospered; and all Israel listened to him" (29:23). The throne of the LORD. Chronicles says it plainly here, as in 17:14 and 28:5. The throne of David was God's throne on earth, and the son of David sat on it for Him.

All the leaders, the mighty men, "and also all the sons of King David, gave a hand under Solomon the king" (29:24). To give a hand under was a pledge of loyalty. Even the brothers who might have competed with him swore allegiance.

"And the LORD made Solomon exceedingly great in the eyes of all Israel" (29:25). God kept His word to David. The son of promise was on the throne.

This verse looks beyond Solomon. The day is coming when another Son of David will sit on that throne, and every knee will bow (Philippians 2:10-11). Jesus will reign on the throne of His father David, as Gabriel told Mary (Luke 1:32-33). Solomon's majesty was great. Christ's will be greater, and it will have no end.

29:26-30 *And David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the days which he reigned over Israel* ***were*** *forty years: in Hebron he reigned seven years, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three* ***years****. And he died in a good old age, satisfied* ***with*** *days, riches, and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place. And the matters of David the king, the first and the last, look, they* ***are*** *written in the words of Samuel the seer, and in the words of Nathan the prophet, and in the words of Gad the seer, with all his kingship and his might, and the times that passed over him and over Israel and over all the kingdoms of the lands.*

The book ends with David's obituary. "And David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel" (29:26). "Son of Jesse" reminds us where he started, the youngest son of a shepherd family in Bethlehem. He reigned forty years: seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem (29:27), from about 1010 to 970 B.C.

"And he died in a good old age, satisfied with days, riches, and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place" (29:28). Satisfied with days means he died full, with his life's work done. Paul said that David "served the purpose of God in his own generation" and then fell asleep (Acts 13:36). That is a good epitaph for any believer.

"And the matters of David the king, the first and the last, look, they are written in the words of Samuel the seer, and in the words of Nathan the prophet, and in the words of Gad the seer" (29:29). The writer points his readers to the older records, the prophetic accounts of David's life, much of which we have in 1 and 2 Samuel. He has told us the parts his readers most needed. The rest was written elsewhere, "with all his kingship and his might, and the times that passed over him and over Israel and over all the kingdoms of the lands" (29:30).

So 1 Chronicles ends where it has been heading all along. David's line is secure. His son is on the throne of the LORD. The plans and gifts for God's house are ready. And the promise God made in chapter 17 is passed on to the next generation, and on through the centuries to Jesus Christ, the Son of David, who lives forever.

Chapter 29 Summary

David told the assembly that Solomon was young and the work great, because the house was for the LORD God. He listed what he had prepared with all his power, and then gave his own treasure of gold from Ophir and refined silver out of his delight in God's house, and he asked who would offer willingly that day. The leaders gave gold, silver, bronze, iron and precious stones, and the people rejoiced because they had given willingly with a whole heart. David blessed the LORD before the assembly. He praised Him as the God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting, to whom belong the greatness, might, splendor, preeminence, majesty and the kingdom; riches and honor come from Him, and He rules over all. He confessed that everything comes from God and they had only given back from His hand, that they were sojourners whose days are like a shadow, and that God tests the heart and delights in uprightness. He prayed that God would keep His people's hearts toward Him forever and give Solomon a whole heart to keep His commands and build the house. The assembly blessed the LORD, offered a thousand bulls, rams and lambs, ate and drank with great joy, and made Solomon king a second time, anointing him as ruler and Zadok as priest. Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD, all Israel obeyed him, and God gave him great majesty. David, who reigned forty years, died in a good old age, satisfied with days, riches and honor, and his acts were written in the records of Samuel, Nathan and Gad.

People and Places

- Ophir: a land famous for fine gold, its location uncertain.
- Daric: a Persian gold coin, used by the writer to give the value in his own day.
- Sojourner: a person living in a land not his own, without a permanent claim to it.
- Drink offering: wine poured out at the altar with a sacrifice.
- Anoint: to pour oil on someone to set him apart for God's service; Messiah means anointed one.

Chapter 29 Study Questions

1. Why did David say the work was great? (29:1)

2. What did David give from his own treasure, and why? (29:3-4)

3. What question did David ask the leaders, and how did they respond? (29:5-9)

4. What did David say belongs to the LORD? (29:11-12)

5. What did David say about where their gifts came from? (29:14, 16)

6. What did David say about our days on the earth? (29:15)

7. What did David ask God to do for the people and for Solomon? (29:18-19)

8. How does 29:11 echo in the prayer Jesus taught? (Matthew 6:13)

9. David said, "from Your hand we have given to You" (29:14). How should that truth change the way you give your money, time and abilities?

10. David "served the purpose of God in his own generation" (Acts 13:36). What purpose of God do you believe He has given you to serve in your generation?

Conclusion

First Chronicles begins with a list of names, "Adam, Seth, Enosh" (1:1), and it ends with a king's death and a son on his throne. In between, the writer took a small, discouraged people who had come home from Babylon and showed them who they were. Their families went back to Adam, to Abraham and to Jacob. Their tribes had land and towns and histories. Their worship had a pattern given by God. And their hope rested on a promise God had made to David, a promise that had not died when the last king of Judah was led away in chains.

As I said at the start of this study, the guiding principle throughout has been to read God's Word plainly, as it is written, and let Scripture explain Scripture. Read that way, 1 Chronicles is not a dull copy of Samuel. It is a book about seeking God. Saul did not seek the LORD, and he died (10:13-14). David sought Him, brought the ark home, learned from Uzzah's death to worship God His way, confessed his sin when he counted the people, and spent his last years preparing for the house of God. His charge to Solomon is the charge of the whole book: "If you seek Him, He will be found by you" (28:9).

At the center of it all stands God's covenant with David. God promised him a son whose throne would last forever: "And I will set him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever" (17:14). Solomon was the first son of that promise, but not the last. The promise passed through the kings of Judah, through the exile, through the small family of Zerubbabel listed in chapter 3, all the way to Bethlehem. The angel told Mary that God would give her Son "the throne of David His father" and that "of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). Jesus died for our sins, rose again, and now sits at the right hand of the Father. I believe He will return and reign on David's throne over a restored Israel and the whole earth, and that God will keep every word He spoke to David.

I hope this study has done what I set out to do: bring you closer to God, help you grow in your walk with Him, and show you that the God of Chronicles still keeps His promises. The threshing floor of Ornan, where the sword was put away because a sacrifice was made, became the place of God's house. Outside the walls of that same city, Jesus gave Himself as the one sacrifice that takes away sin. David said, "For everything is from You, and from Your hand we have given to You" (29:14). That is true of salvation most of all. We bring nothing. God gives everything. The only thing required of us to spend eternity with God is to receive His Son, Jesus, as our Lord and Savior.

If you haven't yet entered into a relationship with Jesus, or if you want to deepen the one you already have with Him, I invite you to pray this prayer with me:

Lord Jesus, You are the Savior of the world, and You forgive all who come to You. I come before You to confess that I have sinned against You. I have rebelled against You and put myself first above You and all others. I want to have a deep, meaningful relationship with You where I can show others by my demeanor and character that You are first in my life. I am asking for Your forgiveness for all my sins. You died for me on the cross so that I could be forgiven and made right with God. Please help me not forget that You gave Your very life for me. I am asking that You take control of

my life and make a new creature out of me and into the person You want me to be. I thank You, Lord, and I love You. Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, tell another believer, ask a pastor about being baptized, and find a church where you can grow and serve, and set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God (1 Chronicles 22:19).

Bibliography

The following source was consulted throughout this study. The commentary reflects my own study and convictions, and any direct quotation from an outside source is identified and cited at the point where it appears.

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