



Wednesday Bible Education
Biblical Theology
Lesson 14: 1 Chronicles

REVIEW

Questions from last week's lesson:

1. What is in the book of 2 Kings?
2. How does 2 Kings help us today?

Answers:

1. 2 Kings tells of several familiar events, such as Elijah being carried to heaven in a chariot of fire and Elisha getting a double portion of Elijah's spirit. 2 Kings tells of the children making fun of Elisha's bald head and two bears killing the 42 children and the raising of the Shunammite's son to life, as well as the healing of Namaan the leper.

2 Kings records the ends of both the northern and southern kingdoms. Samaria fell to the Assyrians and the northern kingdom of Israel was carried away. Judah experiences a brief revival, Josiah finds the book of the law, but Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians and Judah is exiled to Babylon.

Book Summary: 2 Kings concludes the story of the death of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, demonstrating the judgment of sin and the hopelessness of kings, priests, prophets, wisdom, law, and the temple to save them from death. The only hope is in God who raises the dead.

2. Understanding 2 Kings helps us see clearly that God punishes sin. He is longsuffering to be sure, but he will not leave sin unpunished. It helps lead us to repentance of our own sins, where we have refused God's word or gone after idols in our own hearts.

Understanding 2 Kings helps us see that God is over all, in control of all, and works all according to his own plan. This gives us great assurance that God has kept and will keep his promises. His promises are sure because he governs all events to bring about his own purposes.

Understanding 2 Kings gives us a picture of those who lived by faith in difficult and trying circumstances. We see the faith of Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Josiah, etc. living during times of decline and deterioration. As they looked around them, circumstances did not seem to be moving toward the hoped for fulfillment of God's promises. We can certainly relate when we see such times of rebellion and hardening against God.

Understanding 2 Kings teaches us the only true hope. The best Israel could manage was not enough. They need the greater David, greater Solomon, greater temple, greater prophet, and greater priest, which is Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

What is in the book of 1 Chronicles? A whole bunch of names in lists of genealogies is what most people think of first. The book tells of King David, his mighty men, and the return of the Ark of the Covenant.

The authorship of the book is unknown. The date of the writing is uncertain, though likely written sometime during or after the return from Babylonian exile.

Book Summary

1 Chronicles is a reminder of God's purpose from Adam to David for his kingdom and his people of Israel as a guide to returning exiles in re-establishing Israel in the land, rebuilding the temple, and the importance of obeying God.

Lesson Objective

This lesson covers the book of 1 Chronicles. The lesson considers the structure and content of the book, along with major themes and practical applications to modern readers. We will consider what 1 Chronicles reveals about Christ and his kingdom as it fits into the Bible's main story.

OBSERVATION

1 Chronicles is the eighth book of history in the Old Testament. In the Tanak, the original Hebrew Old Testament, 1 and 2 Chronicles were together as one long book and was placed at the end of the collection, making it the last book of the Old Testament. The book is historical narrative with theological reflection. It does not continue the history from a previous book. Genesis through 2 Kings in our English Old Testaments are basically chronological. 1 Chronicles moves quickly from Adam to David and is a selective retelling of Israel's history through David's reign. Most of the book corresponds with the time and events in 2 Samuel, but it is not merely repetitive, as it has over 50% new material that is not covered by other books.

1 Chronicles starts with a genealogy focused on the line of promise and especially the lineage of David. Chapter 10 forms a transition as it recounts the death of Saul. From that point on, the book focuses on David. Chapter 11 begins with the people anointing David as king and David's capturing of Zion (Jerusalem) from the Jebusites. 1 Chronicles does record the Davidic Covenant (17:1-15), and Nathan is the only prophet mentioned.

A good portion of the book covers David's preparations for building the temple. Chapter 22 tells of the gathering of materials. Chapter 23 tells of the appointing of the Levites. The priests are appointed in Chapter 24 and the singers in Chapter 25. Chapter 26 tells of the appointing of the gatekeepers and officials. Chapters 28-29 recount the laying out of the temple building plans. The book ends with the anointing of Solomon and the death of David.

A brief outline of 1 Chronicles:

1. Chapters 1-9 The Genealogies of the Twelve Tribes of Israel
2. Chapters 10-29 The Reign of David as King of Israel

INTERPRETATION

What does 1 Chronicles teach?

Reminder for Returning Exiles

1 Chronicles was written after, or during, the return to Jerusalem from Babylonian exile. It was written to remind the Jews of God's promises and purposes for the land, nation, line of David, the temple, and the true worship of God. The book emphasizes that none these have been abolished or nullified by the captivity in Babylon.

The book has a much more positive tone than 1 and 2 Kings. It doesn't record the tragic low points for David, such his adultery with Bathsheba, murdering Uriah, or the rebellion led by Absalom. It does tell of certain failures, such as David's failure with the Ark (1 Chronicles 13:1-14). This incident highlights the necessity of following God's words (1 Chronicles 15:1-2), and that God's holiness demands holiness in those who approach him. David and the people did ultimately succeed in bringing the Ark to Jerusalem.

The Sovereignty of God

God's sovereignty over individuals and nations is clearly seen in 1 Chronicles. Two incidents especially show God's sovereignty—the death of Saul (1 Chronicles 10:4, 13-14) and the victory of David (1 Chronicles 11:4-5, 9, 13-14).

Further, God is shown to be the center of all things and the reason all things exist. Consider the following passages: 1 Chronicles 16:8-36; 17:16-24; & 29:10-13. The failures of Israel did not diminish God's glory nor his kingdom purposes for his people, the nation of Israel.

Throne, Covenant, and Temple

1 Chronicles is often thought to be a replay of 1 Kings, but this is clearly not the case when you read the book. 1 Chronicles focuses on David's throne, God's covenant with David, and the temple that would be built by Solomon. 1 and 2 Kings focus on the failures that led to the exile, while 1 Chronicles focuses on the needs of the people after the return. Would the kingdom come? Will God restore a king to David and build a new temple in Zion, or has he cast off his people for good?

The Messiah and His Kingdom

1 Chronicles contributes to the expectation of the Messiah and his kingdom through the retracing of the genealogy of Israel and reminding the Jews of God's covenant promises to David and the nation. The Davidic covenant renews the hope in a coming Son of David, the Messiah, and his receiving the sure mercies of David and the everlasting kingdom.

APPLICATION

How does 1 Chronicles help us as modern readers?

Understanding 1 Chronicles should humble us as we read the genealogies. Name after name, representing life after life speed past us. Some of them we know of and some we know nothing of. Men come and go, yet God continues his purpose and rules over all. God is central and we are not. It's not all about me or you, it's about him and the accomplishment of his will.

Understanding 1 Chronicles reminds us of God's unstoppable ability to fulfill his own plans. God is not thwarted by man, nor is he limited by man's limitations.

Understanding 1 Chronicles prompts us to glory in Jesus Christ. We trace God's working all the way back to Adam and see his purpose for Jesus to come into the world through the reign of David.

CONCLUSION

1 Chronicles takes the people of Israel back to the anointing of God's chosen king and God's sovereign governance to bring him to the throne. Though David and that kingdom were gone, God's promise, his covenant, remained. He would bring forth the true Son of David to fulfill his covenant. The people were not to look for another David and another temple, but the true David and true Temple.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This series is a study in biblical theology going book by book through the entire Bible. Each lesson typically covers one book of the Bible, though occasionally covers more than one book when the books are short. This PDF is provided for personal study, small group study, or use in a church class. Unless otherwise noted, all lessons have been prepared by Jeff Short, the pastor of Harmony Baptist Church.

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