

JULY 12

Today isn't just July 12. You'll be starting Romans. That in itself is a good excuse to treat yourself to something. At the beginning of August you'll be ending 2 Chronicles and Romans, almost on the same day, and you'll be off to other adventures, reading different books and off for another culinary treat.

1 Chronicles 12:19-14:17

Ezra will begin to show, like no other writer, why David was a man after God's own heart and why the people and leaders of Israel should make David their model of devotion to God.

1 Chronicles 12:19-40

Vs. 19-22 Boy, did these guys come at the right time. Remember what David found when he got back to Ziklag? Notice that this story points to God's provision and to the united Israel. Toward the end of his reign I doubt that King Saul was popular, and different tribes could see that the kingdom was failing. It says these men deserted. What is significant is that the people of Manasseh made a choice for David before the death of Saul and before the ensuing civil war.

Vs. 23-40 Notice who these people were, where they were from and when and where they joined David. These men joined David during the seven years he was king of Judah at Hebron during the civil war with Saul's followers. There is a note in 2 Samuel 3:1 that David grew stronger and stronger. This explains how that happened.

V. 32 is interesting. These men were not only good fighters; they knew what Israel needed and did it. This would be a lesson to those returning to Israel after the exile. This should be a lesson to us also, to know the times and live accordingly. (Romans 13:11-14)

1 Chronicles 13

This is a retelling of the story of David bringing the ark to Jerusalem. Remember Ezra is giving the returned nation a view of how God formed Israel under David, to give the returning people pride in their calling by God. Having the presence of God in Jerusalem, and being near God's presence was David's passion. We read about this in almost all of his psalms. But David failed on his first attempt to bring the ark into the city. If even a great leader like David failed on his first attempt, the returned exiles shouldn't lose heart trying to reestablish the worship of the people in the rebuilt temple. When we read Ezra and Hosea, we'll see they had plenty of challenges getting the temple and the worship back in order; in fact, the people gave up.

What Ezra is showing the returned nation is what made David a man after God's own heart. We'll see this clearer in 1 Chronicles than anywhere else. Ezra will not mention David's faults because they are recorded elsewhere, but he will clearly show why David was given such honor by God and why the leaders and people should make David the model of their leadership and devotion to God. The Lord has this written here for us too.

Vs. 1-4 Now David was leading the united Israel. It is interesting that David brought all the commanders and leaders into this decision. Notice that no one was asking God anything here. This all must have seemed like a "no brainer." Of course, God would want this. What could go wrong?

Vs. 5-8 The celebration here was going to add to the intensity of the lesson David and the people were about to receive.

Vs. 9-14 David was disappointed for a lot of reasons. He had assumed on God, that doing anything would make Him happy. As you read The Psalms you understand that David really wanted God's presence with him in Jerusalem. That was a very sincere desire and passion. But ignorant passion, like what Moses showed at 40, isn't always honored by God. That ought to say

something to us working in the harvest. We need to do things His way. Knowing Him and the Word is absolutely vital.

Notice that God immediately and visibly blessed Obed-edom and the ark only stayed there for *three months*.

1 Chronicles 14

God established David so that he had peace with his neighbors and rest from his enemies. Notice that the seeking of the ark and seeking God's presence and favor was sought by David before he sought the security of the nation with its neighbors. The message to the returning exiles was clear, that David sought the Lord's favor first, before and above his own security. This should be a model for the reestablished nation. And it's good advice for us as disciples.

Vs. 1-2 After living in caves and tents for so long, Hiram sends in the Extreme Makeover, Royal House, edition. David is finally settled. In the next chapter we'll see that this had an effect on David. He probably sat some nights looking at the security and the fine house he had and it not only made him thank God, but it moved his heart to want to do something for God.

Vs. 3-7 In Deuteronomy 17:16-20, God says that Israel's king was not to multiply wives. I think that one of the reasons they did it was to have heirs to the throne. The point here is that David also had rest and security in his personal life.

Vs. 8-12 Significant in this section is that David sought the Lord through the Urim and Thummim. God not only answered and led David, but He led David to victory. Notice that the Philistines left their idols. This might be similar to how the Israelites deserted the ark 100 years earlier. It was ironic that each man had to carry his god into battle, like a mascot or a hood ornament. David burned their idols. Some would have been of stone, but some would have been wood, coated with gold or silver. They all ended up trashed.

Vs. 13-17 The Philistines had been the main threat to Israel over the preceding 100 years. Now this threat was removed and David had rest from immediate danger. Notice again that David asked of the Lord. That's not a bad habit to develop. God answered with very specific information. This would be a test of David's faith, having to believe and exercise obedience and faith. That never hurts either.

V. 17 Notice that the Lord brought the fear of David upon the nations.

Of course this is all good information for the returning exiles. For us in the harvest, all of this is here for our instruction.

Romans 1:1-17

Wow, we are beginning Romans! There is so much here regarding discipleship and living for Christ that you'll be gleaning from this book each year for the rest of your life. You'll make plenty of your own observations, so I'll just make a few.

Paul wrote this letter from Corinth, during the three months he was in Greece mentioned in Acts 20:3. Phoebe, mentioned in Romans 16:1, was a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, the eastern harbor of Corinth. Part of the purpose of this letter, toward the end, is to introduce her. In fact, her trip to Rome might have been what got Paul thinking that if he wrote a letter to the churches there, she could take it and he could save on postage.

V. 1 Always notice how Paul introduces himself. Particularly here in Romans, it has something to do with his entire focus in the letter.

Vs. 1-7 Notice how often you find something that refers to being called by God. Notice the promise in these verses and how Paul mentions David. Notice how the mission is woven through all of this. Notice how the Spirit is writing this, so that it could apply to you too. We are called to Christ to serve Him in the harvest.

Vs. 8-15 Notice that their faith was known and visible. How do you think it was seen? We have no record of any church planting activity in Rome. It is likely that some of those people saved in Jerusalem on Pentecost were from Rome. All roads led to Rome and many Christians walked them.

V. 9 Jesus told the Samaritan woman that those who worshiped the Father would worship Him in spirit and in truth. So what does it mean for a person to serve God in "spirit?"

V. 13 We'll hear more about the reasons for this delay in visiting Rome in chapter 15. Notice that Paul naturally assumed he would be fruitful in the gospel when he came to Rome. Shouldn't we also assume the gospel will bear fruit?

V. 15 Paul said that he was eager to preach in Rome. Later Paul will say that he didn't want to preach where Christ had already been proclaimed. Paul's desire to preach in Rome and to strengthen the church indicates, possibly, that the church began by spontaneous generation, neighbor to neighbor, but that no one had formally built the church and preached in Rome. If that's the case, the city still would have been fresh turf for evangelism, and therefore, fair game for Paul.

Vs. 16-17 Maybe a lack of fruit is because Christians lack this sense of conviction, confidence and calling. This is why a disciple is left on earth, to follow Christ into the harvest and to bear much fruit. The gospel is still powerful, but saying that is not the same as believing it. The way you get this confidence in the gospel is not by reading Paul; it is by reading Jesus. Reading the entire Bible is very important every year, but particularly the words and life of Jesus give you the confidence of bearing your cross daily. Watching Jesus shows you what it means to abide in Christ and follow His lead.

Notice here too that Paul says *to the Jew first and also to the Greek*. This shows that one of the purposes of this letter will be to strengthen the unity of these mixed house churches in Rome. This church was very Jewish and very Gentile. Greek in this context refers to everyone who was not a Jew, not specifically Greeks. And too, the church was in Italy. I wonder if they had pizza at their fellowship dinners.

For us as disciples, we need to internalize for ourselves the first six verses, follow Christ into the harvest, and in confidence of the gospel's power, not be ashamed.

Psalm 9:13-20

We have read of Abraham waiting. We have read of Moses living in obscurity for 40 years as a shepherd. We've seen David anointed and victorious and still have to run for his life for 10 years. We've seen Paul chased from town to town, beaten and lied against and then imprisoned for 4-5 years. Yet, as we'll see in Romans 8, God uses all of this for good, for His purpose. And in our suffering and waiting, He teaches us humility and seeking so that we'll be fruitful for Him in the harvest.

Vs. 13-14 Not only did God consistently save David, but David consistently let everyone know of God's love and His deliverance.

Vs. 15-16 David could read in the Scriptures that God had done this, but shortly after David became king of the entire nation, everyone began coming after Israel. David needed God's help against the neighboring nations.

Vs. 17-18 Israel was *the needy*. Under David they had a man who could lead them to victory, because David knew what it meant to come to God in humility, crying out for His help.

Vs. 19-20 This is David asking God to show *the nations* His glory. We saw what happened to Assyria, when they mocked God and His people.

V. 20 Go back and read 1 Chronicles 14:17 from today. That's kind of interesting isn't it?

Proverbs 19:4-5

It seems that v. 5 is the commentary on v. 4. Verse 4 is full of lying. Verse 5 says that even in relationships like these, there will be justice.