

JULY 17

1 Chronicles 24:1-26:11

When the question is asked about David being a man after God's own heart, it gets kind of muddled by the catastrophe of his acts with Bathsheba and Uriah, and the fallout within his family and among his friends. Ezra knew this was all recorded in 2 Samuel. Here, Ezra is showing the David who recovered from these losses and served God with all he was until he died. What we see here is the deep heart of passion of David, visible in the spiritual leadership he took in Israel. This is what showed David was a man after God's own heart. Thank you, Ezra.

These chapters are easy to "organize," thanks to the editors who made the chapter divisions.

1 Chronicles 24

Vs. 1-6 This is the organization of the two chief families of the priests. Notice in v. 3 that David himself took the leadership to organize the priests. Notice also in v. 4 that Ithamar had fewer people. This was thanks to King Saul and Doeg slaughtering all the priests and their families at Nob in 1 Samuel 22:18. This was also because of God's judgment on Eli and his sons back in 1 Samuel 2-4.

Vs. 7-21 David organized the priests into 24 divisions, meaning they would only serve about two weeks a year. Notice the division of Abijah in v. 10. In the future, ending the 400 silent years that came after Malachi, we will meet someone famous in Luke 1:5 who belongs to this division.

Vs. 20-31 These Levites were to help the priests in the temple service and were selected by lots and paired with the different divisions.

Did you know David did all of this?

1 Chronicles 25

Vs. 1-8 David, a singer and musician himself, exercised spiritual leadership in organizing the singers. Notice in v. 1 that David and the chiefs of his servants did this selection. In the German, it says it was the army commanders. It gives the idea that the singers may also have accompanied the army into battle. Jehoshaphat brought the singers into battle with him.

V. 5 Notice that this guy, Heman, was blessed by God to perform his service. This was the first family gospel band.

V. 6 Notice that three of these guys were directly answerable to David.

V. 7 Also, there was training and schooling for singing and playing.

Vs. 9-31 Again there were 24 divisions of singers to match the 24 divisions of priests.

1 Chronicles 26:1-11

We don't see David's name until v. 27 (tomorrow) as the responsible party in organizing these "gatekeepers." Now it isn't exactly clear what they did, but it seems that they also helped in the worship and music. It is possible that the gatekeepers organized groups of pilgrims who were arriving for the feasts. They would have led these people in cleansing, worship and singing. In Nehemiah the gatekeepers were also singers, and they were associated with the worship. You wouldn't want a singer to guard the gate. You'd want a soldier. These guys must have met people and used their gifts in worship to bring these people to a place of spiritual and physical readiness. Just a suggestion.

V. 4 Notice the name of Obed-edom. His was the family that hosted the ark of the covenant after David's first attempt to bring it to Jerusalem failed. Obed-edom's house was blessed, but in 2 Samuel 6:11 we never heard how he was blessed. Now Ezra tells us. Look at vs. 4-8. Not only

did God bless his land and crops, but his family also grew from sons to grandsons; and they were all blessed by God for the service of worship in Jerusalem.

We haven't finished finding out how much David organized, but Ezra's point is clear. A leader makes it his personal passion to lead the people in worship. He himself worships, but he also takes the responsibility to make sure things are well organized and prepared for the people of God. This would be Ezra's message to those who returned from exile and thought they were leaders of the people.

As disciples who make disciples, our service to others is to prepare them in following Christ and making disciples. They say that leadership and passion are "caught" not taught. Love and passion have to be in us, for it to be passed on to others. And we need to be intentional in leading others to be disciples who love Christ and make disciples, who make disciples.

Romans 4:1-12

Up to this point, Paul has done some heavy duty theology and has really messed with the thinking of the Jews. Now it's time for an illustration: Abraham.

Vs. 1-5 In the ESV there is a note that *gained by* can be rendered as "about." I think "about" is accurate. Paul is saying something like, "For example, let's take a look at Abraham." This point about Abraham is clear. Abraham became righteous by faith, not by works or religion.

Vs. 6-8 Righteousness by faith and grace was also a part of David's experience. David was regarded as an inspired prophet. Here he says that forgiveness and righteousness are possible without the law. But more than that, David was spared from death for the crimes he committed by God's mercy. According to the law, David should have died. Apart from the law there was a way that God could righteously forgive David.

Vs. 9-12 This part of the argument is fairly easy to understand. I'll bet this had the same effect on Paul's readers as it did on Paul himself when he first discovered this. What a great argument and truth. If you look at this section in Genesis 15:1-18, it is pretty stunning to think that Abe had this kind of faith, especially when you remember that he had to wait 25 years to see the promise, in the form of Isaac.

Paul is still making a distinction between Jews and Gentiles, but he ties them together by saying that both are saved by the faith of Abraham.

Psalms 13

Back at the beginning of the year when we first read this psalm, we hadn't read about David running for a decade from Saul. David was definitely in the "pits" when he wrote this. Those were long years of living in the hills and on the run.

Vs. 1-2 How many times does *how long* appear, and what is the subject of each question? Verse 2 is a verse you wish you never had to identify with, but in following Christ as a disciple, it is a certainty. It is hard to live day after day, taking counsel in your soul, not hearing from the Lord, seeing no clear leading or deliverance. Day after day, realizing that the Lord is keeping you safe, but you're always carrying a weight of sorrow. It is a kind of "weight" training that every disciple must go through.

Vs. 3-4 As David cries out, notice *lest* and note the different fears David had.

Vs. 5-6 David trusted in God's *steadfast love* even when he didn't "feel" that love. His heart would rejoice in spite of his emotions. David, as usual, promises to sing the praises of God.

Interestingly, we just read 1 Chronicles 16:41, which is toward the end of David's life with those years of despair and running long behind him. He commands the singers to constantly be reminding the people in worship, to *give thanks to the Lord, for His steadfast love endures*

forever. The "weight" training left its mark on David's faith. Those long years of struggling taught David the love of God.

Proverbs 19:15-16

V. 15 might just sound like a general life principle, but next to v. 16 it takes on an added meaning. Are the commandments just the moral laws or do the commandments open the door to the redemptive purpose of God and what's happening on this planet? It seems to me that to drift through life as a believer gets you into trouble too.

After Paul talks about the armor of God in Ephesians 6, he goes on to say to keep alert with all perseverance. I was reading this morning Jesus saying that, *For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.* (Mark 8:35) Notice that Jesus also says you have to be willing to lose your life for the gospel's sake. For our sake, we tend to separate Jesus from the gospel: the savior from the salvation of men. We love the good buddy Jesus and we love to sing about Him. But Jesus is still in the business of saving people, and spreading His gospel is really loving Him. *His ways* in v. 16 would include the command to go and preach the gospel. Disciples are disciples in the harvest.