

JULY 6

1 Chronicles 2:18-4:4

Admittedly, I tend to read some of this with half an eye, but there are some things to note. Keep in mind that the reason this information is important is that after the exile, there was a need to reestablish the nation in the land. They needed to orient the people toward Israel's purpose, give the history and significance of people and places, and they needed to know who was a true-blue Jew. The genealogies were very important. For example, if a person couldn't prove their connection to Levi, they couldn't serve in the temple. If someone couldn't prove his lineage back to Aaron, he couldn't be a priest.

1 Chronicles 2:18-55

Yesterday in 2:9, Ezra began to mention Hezron. The line of David and the Messiah ran through his son Ram. Now Ezra is going back to other sons of Hezron who also had importance. What you find here are a lot of names that became towns and villages.

Vs. 18-50 In all of these descendants from Caleb (not the fellow spy with Joshua), probably the most important is Hur in v. 19. The line of Hur will be picked up in vs. 50-51. There are some other names and places mentioned here like Tekoa and Ephrathah and Gilead. I'm sure this must have had more significance to the Jews than to us.

Vs. 50-55 Kiriath-jearim became home to the ark of the covenant for a while and Bethlehem became a well-known place too. You have also heard the name Ephrathah before. Micah 5:2 *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

V. 55 Now these are some interesting names, all associated with the tribe of Judah, specifically the line of the sons of Hur.

This is the first time you see the name of Jabez. Here it is the town named after the guy we will meet in chapter 4. Notice that this town became the home to clans of scribes. Now, if you ask me, it was no accident that the scribes who made copies of the Bible settled in a town governed by a man like Jabez. Godliness attracts godliness. Then you have a summary of these clans of scribes who are called Kenites who come from the house of Rechab. The Rechabites will also figure to be important, especially in Jeremiah 35:1-19, where God makes an eternal promise to them. Godliness attracts godliness. I'll have more to say about Jabez tomorrow.

1 Chronicles 3

In this list of sons of David the intended goal seems to be getting to v. 19. Zerubbabel was the first governor of Israel after they returned from Babylon. This establishes Zerubbabel as a continuation of the Davidic line. The other names continue the line of David to the 400 silent years, but the point is made that the line of David is clearly able to be established, even after the exile.

Vs. 1-4 These are David's sons, born to him as king of Judah during the civil war with Saul's family and the northern tribes. In a sense, this civil war would set the precedent of the northern tribes being separated from Judah when God caused the split later as a result of Solomon's disobedience.

I am still somewhat partial to Abigail; and, for what it's worth, I think he should have just settled with her and been happy. But what do I know? I do like the name of their son.

Vs. 5-8 Notice how many kids David had with Bathsheba (Bath-shua). What is really interesting is that God was partial to Bathsheba. Both Joseph and Mary were descended from David. Joseph,

Jesus' "legal" father, was descended to David through Solomon. Mary gave Jesus His blood line to David through Nathan, one of Bathsheba's other sons. That will become significant later since God seems to say later that Solomon's line will not extend to the Messiah. Notice too that if this order was birth order, and it usually was, Solomon was the youngest of her four sons. God is the one who made the choice of Solomon.

The other sons were either from an unnamed wife or they were prominent sons born of David's concubines.

Vs. 10-15 This list of Solomon's descendants goes to the Babylonian exile. We've read about these kings.

Vs. 16-24 Now Ezra's purpose was to show that the descendants of David's line of kings extended into and through the exile. None of these men was ever a king, but Zerubbabel was the first governor of Judah after Cyrus of Persia (Iran) sent the exiles home.

1 Chronicles 4:1-4

So, now the author is taking a look at the lineage of all of Israel, beginning with Judah, possibly with an emphasis on entering the land after Egypt. Again the mention of Bethlehem is important because in Ezra's thinking, all roads led to David. That's OK with me; because for us, Bethlehem means the birth place of our Lord.

Acts 24

This is another formal hearing regarding the "innocence" of Christianity in the Roman world. This would have been interesting news for Theophilus and the other readers of Acts. I was reading Matthew 23:36 this morning; and when Jesus said these words, He was speaking of events exactly like this one.

Vs. 1-9 This Tertullus was a trained lawyer and had a Roman name and pedigree to win favor with Felix. All three of his points were designed to make Paul look like he was in violation of Roman laws. Paul instigated riots; he led an unapproved non-Jewish religion, and he had profaned the temple, which was under Roman protection.

Vs. 10-21 Paul's defense not only has the backing of the Roman tribune who sent him to Caesarea, but the fact that Paul was found on the last, seventh, day of the cleansing, proved that he had done nothing to make a disturbance. This is why God allowed Paul to be caught on the last day.

V. 14 Paul affirmed that Christianity was the fulfillment of Judaism and that Paul was only following the law by acknowledging Jesus.

V. 18 As for profaning the temple, the eyewitnesses (liars) weren't there and they didn't have any witnesses, or Gentiles in custody, to prove Paul had brought them into the temple.

Vs. 22-23 Felix understood that Christianity was the fulfilling of the Jewish religion, the question being if Jesus was the Messiah. The promise here of Lysias (the guy who wrote the letter and sent Paul to Caesarea) coming and setting the matter to rest would seem to work out for Paul.

Paul was placed under house arrest. So, being in the palace, he didn't have it too bad and he was protected.

Vs. 24-27 Felix and his wife both listened to Paul, but were never moved to conversion. This reminds me of what it says about Herod listening to John the Baptist gladly, but still killing him. There is a perverse delight in learning about God and His judgment. You feel challenged and guilty and somehow cleansed. And you can still be lost and do what you like. I think this is what Jesus meant when He warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of Herod: the joy of listening and soothing your conscience without conversion or true faith.

It is said that Paul came from a wealthy family and therefore Felix's desire to be bribed. If Paul's family still held to the law, there was no way they'd pay for Paul and there is no way Paul would help himself.

Probably like today, an official leaving office could grant pardons. But there is no pardon for Paul because the ones who were really good to Felix were the Jews.

All of this looks like a victory for Paul's enemies. Paul was not guilty; but the hate and influence of the Jews, coupled with a corrupt politician like Felix, kept Paul under house arrest for two years, inactive and ineffectual. Or did they win? And was Paul really inactive and ineffectual? Paul had quite a bit of freedom and had visitors when he wished. Caesarea had a thriving Christian community and a major seaport. All the Christians traveling by sea from Italy, Greece or Turkey to Israel would have to land at Caesarea. Philip was there and it's possible that Cornelius was still there. It would have been a great place to do ministry and to make disciples and to teach. I'm thinking that groups of people could have met with Paul for Bible studies.

Really, Paul could have been like a one-man Bible institute. Looking past the "imprisonment" part of this assignment, Paul was now teaching and equipping, and being taken care of and being protected. He was exactly where God wanted him to be.

As disciples, we need to have a very high view of God's sovereignty. If we see ourselves as victims, we become bitter and ineffectual. If we are humbly following God, we are always where He wants us in the harvest. God can't lose or be frustrated.

Psalm 4

I have to admit. I've never noticed how these psalms reflect what Paul must have been going through in Acts. Read this imagining what Paul must have been thinking being in jail, having his accusers "victorious," thinking that at least Paul was locked up and there would be no real justice as long as Felix would do them favors.

V. 1 This is David's plea to God to hear his cry and show him mercy.

Vs. 2-3 This is almost like David warning his enemies to stop and remember that God loves David.

Vs. 4-5 Doesn't this verse sound like Paul's words in Ephesians 4:26, *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger*. I'll bet this is where Paul got this.

It is suggested that this psalm was also written after the situation with Absalom's rebellion. If that is the case, we could understand the *be angry but do not sin* part. Ahithophel (Bathsheba's grandfather) was bitter and sinned and didn't trust the Lord at the end of his life.

V. 6 Notice the irony in this verse. Who would show David good? The Lord. How? Just by looking at David, making His face to shine on him. That was all David needed and it is probably this thought and thoughts like this after David recovered from his fall, that gave him a passion to build the temple and to have God's presence near him. And, doesn't this verse sound like a good thought for a song?

V. 7 Again an ironic contrast. They had the well-dressed table, but David was living on the run. Yet, David had the joy.

V. 8 I think this is the kind of training the Lord gives us in the harvest, following Him, abiding in Christ, making disciples, but always living with a degree of stress and fatigue and uncertainty. He teaches us how to rest in Him, finding peace that we are in His heart and that His face is shining on us.

Proverbs 18:16-18

This is an interesting bouquet of verses considering we have Paul being falsely imprisoned and held there by corruption.

V. 18 allows the decision to become the Lord's, assuming *the lot* isn't fixed. But then again, if we are following Christ in this dark time of harvest and if God is sovereign, can He really be frustrated by the corruption and designs of men? In Christ, we see and live a different life. 1 Corinthians 2:15, *The spiritual person judges (understands) all things, but is himself to be judged (understood) by no one*.

Ironically, Paul would be brought before great men, including Nero, because of where he was serving Christ.