

JULY 8

1 Chronicles 5:18-6:81

1 Chronicles 5:18-26

I think the purpose of this grouping is that these were the three tribes on the other side of the Jordan.

Vs. 18-22 Notice that Ezra says that this victory was because they cried out to the Lord. The result was a lot of booty. This must have been after they returned from helping the other tribes take Canaan. They were warned about taking slaves because of the idolatry of the people.

V. 21 says that they took 100,000 men alive. Now the people outside of the land of Canaan were not under the ban, unless God had specifically told the Reubenites to kill all of these people. The reality is that they must have joined with these people. Verse 25 indicates that this is what happened.

Vs. 23-26 Actually, idolatry came into Israel immediately after Joshua. What we have here is 400 years of history summarized until Tiggy took the people into exile. Notice that as of this writing, after Judah's exile in Babylon, these tribes were still in exile.

1 Chronicles 6

After determining the lineage of Judah and David, the next lineage of great importance is that of Levi. After the exile, they had to know who could serve at the temple. It should be noted that after the Babylonian exile, idolatry was never an issue for Israel. The Jews never worshiped on the high places around Jerusalem, but the Samaritans still felt free to do so. Something happened during the exile that the Lord used to cure the Jews.

So, for the sake of staying awake and for Bible study, as you read the paragraphs, decide why Ezra made these groupings. What new themes (singers, dwelling places, etc.) was Ezra taking note of?

Vs. 1-15 Verses 4 and 15 give you the goal of this section. This established the priesthood through Aaron to the exile.

Vs. 16-30 These are the chief men of the other families. Notice that Samuel is listed here.

Vs. 31-48 These are the singers. Notice that this is related to David's organizing of the singers for worship at the temple. This theme of David being the organizer of the worship will be developed in a few chapters. Ezra will underscore that a true leader of Israel leads in the worship and makes sure this is all ordered and maintained.

Vs. 49-53 The priests.

Vs. 54-81 As the Levites were coming back into the land after the Babylonian exile, it was important for Ezra to let everyone know what land and cities had been allotted to them. I'm sure for some people returning, the land looked completely open and you could take what you wanted. Ezra wanted Israel to respect what the Lord had given the Levites.

Acts 26

There are lots of good things in Paul's testimony. I'll mention only a few.

Vs. 1-8 It was important for Paul to establish his early life as a Jew. This not only showed the change that Jesus made, but he would show that his new faith, and Christianity itself, was a fulfillment of Judaism.

Vs. 9-11 Notice the plurals here. There were many people Paul saw put to death. There were many people Paul beat and tried to make blaspheme the name of Jesus. And, Paul went to more than one foreign city.

Vs. 12-18 The Lord knew the right time to intervene. I think that Paul was under conviction, not only feeling bad about his violence toward believers, women in particular; but I think their determination to suffer for Christ began to show Paul the reality behind what they believed.

V. 15-16 Notice that Jesus appeared to Paul. It wasn't just a voice and blinding light. Notice too, that Jesus didn't chide Paul, but rather commanded him to obey.

Vs. 17-18 Notice that these are Jesus' words. Salvation involves going *from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God*. This is good to think over.

Vs. 19-23 Not only does Paul conclude with his obedience, but he lets them know that this testimony he is giving them is part of that mission that Jesus gave him.

V. 24 Good old Festus, showing again how smart he was.

Vs. 25-27 Thanks to Festus, God gave Paul a very natural way to bring the decision to Agrippa. Paul knew that Agrippa was a firm believer in Judaism.

V. 28 Agrippa, I think, was putting Paul off in a lighthearted way, to bleed off some of the intensity.

V. 29 I'll bet Paul got a laugh with the last line.

Vs. 30-32 Agrippa was wrong. There is no mistake here. Paul should have been released long ago, but with Festus being corrupt and trying to win the friendship of the Jews, Rome was the only option. Yet, God had built such a case over these two years that when Paul finally appeared before Nero, he had no choice but to declare Paul and Christianity "not guilty."

As disciples, we are seeing some things in Paul's life that "look" out of control. The stories are there to teach us patience as we strive to work in the harvest, following Christ during times when it seems like little is happening. Abiding in Christ in the harvest means following His lead, even if it means what we're seeing here. Knowing that the Lord always sees us and is always working makes all the difference in the world.

Psalm 6

I can see these words coming from David as he ran from Saul. With all that Paul had been through, he probably could have written this psalm too, but I'd guess that Paul's maturity in Christ kept him from experiencing some of these emotions.

Vs. 1-3 I don't think David was physically sick. I think he was heartsick over the injustice of his situation and the determination of his enemies. I can imagine that David thought the Lord would "cure" this situation quickly, but as one year ran into another I'll bet he dealt with some darkness of soul.

Vs. 4-5 David often promised to praise God publicly before nations and the people. The point here is that he couldn't do that if he were dead. He wanted God to save him.

Vs. 6-7 This sounds like depression to me.

Vs. 8-10 At some point in David's prayer, David strengthened himself in the Lord and realized the Lord heard his prayer. Perhaps he remembered that the Lord had commanded Samuel to anoint him as king when he was twelve. God would keep His promise since His character is not subject to our problems and emotions. He remains true to His Word.

V. 8 The first part of this verse is verbatim to Matthew 7:23, *And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness."* You see this in the Greek, not in the English translations.

Regardless of how we feel about ourselves or our work in the harvest, we are defined by Him, not by our feelings. He leads and we follow, whether we "feel" good or not. Look at Paul's situation above.

Proverbs 18:20-21

I think these verses sort of echo James' words on the tongue. If you control it, it brings you satisfaction. If you let it control you, the tongue brings you ruin. I sure saw a lot of this growing up.