

Bible Study Lesson Summary, Sept. 20, 2020

Today's lesson includes Days 187-193 on your reading guide.

SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES

Here we start with Solomon. There will be less mention of the northern kingdom. The author of Chronicles doesn't see them as legitimate because they don't worship at the temple in Jerusalem. He believes the temple is the focus of the Jewish life.

2Chr. 1: The First Book of Kings chapter 3 gives us this story of how Solomon got his wisdom. This version doesn't give the cool story of the two mothers and Solomon deciding which one gets the living baby. It just focuses on the House of God he will build. So, wisdom is important, but to this author it is not as important as right worship with the Temple.

2Chr. 2: In vs. 16, Solomon takes a census of all the alien men but doesn't get into trouble because it is to build the temple and not see if he can win a war because he is so great and doesn't need God, like has happened before with David.

2Chr. 3: Vs. 1 tells us that the temple was built on Mount Moriah, the same spot that Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac. This is no small detail to the Jewish nation. They see Mount Moriah as the place that they are connected to God through sacrifice. Without the temple in Jerusalem in this century, the Jewish people have had to switch their identity. It is no longer about sacrifice but prayer and knowledge.

2Chr. 4: In vs. 1, Solomon builds a bronze altar. David had built a wood altar that was plated with bronze but for this sacred temple the altar is all bronze.

2Chr. 5: Now Solomon brings together the Ark of the Covenant and the people. Oddly in vs. 10 "There was nothing in it but the two tablets which Moses put there on Horeb..." This author is not concerned with the manna or the Staff of Aaron. In vs. 13-14 God's glorious presence is a cloud that fills the space and the priests can't even do what they planned.

2Chr. 6: Vs. 1, "Then Solomon said: "The Lord intends to dwell in the dark cloud." The early Church Fathers wrote about this as a sign of the OT. But they said the NT clears away the cloud and we can see the Lord clearly. In the same way Solomon thinks he is the fulfillment of the prophecy to his father but that is just the OT version. Jesus is the NT version. Vs. 22-31 are about God's command, that forgiveness of sin, is the key to all of this.

2Chr. 7: Vs. 1, God's sends fire to consume the sacrifice. That means He accepts it fully. Vs. 12-16 are another reminder of the importance of turning away from sin, or God will not be with them. Jesus' first proclamation is Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand.

2Chr. 8: Vs. 1 lets us know that the temple took twenty years to build. Many basilicas and cathedrals took over a hundred. Vs. 9 mentions that Solomon enslaved the people he had not conquered but not his own people. The Israelites became soldiers. As believers, we are Soldiers of Christ, the Church militant. The rest are slave to sin if they do not accept salvation.

2Chr. 9: The queen of Sheba was impressed with Solomon's wisdom. Kings brought him gold, etc. Only as an infant did Jesus get gold. That wasn't what He wants from us. This chapter ends with Solomon's death and burial and a few remarks about other stories that were in 1Kings.

Solomon is another person who foreshadows Jesus, so this chapter, in which the queen of Sheba learns of Solomon's wisdom, is important to our understanding of who Jesus is. Vs. 13 says: "The gold that Solomon received each year weighed six hundred and sixty-six gold talents..." The question comes up, whether this 666 is the mark of the beast? There are several parts to the possible answer. Gold is not evil, in itself. Six is the number of human limits since they were created at the end of the sixth day. In the book of Revelation, 666 is the mark of the beast or the worst of human nature, as the devil has his way. So this could be the author's way of saying that Solomon is now going to the dark side. It doesn't say how he used that money every year, so it is hard to say.

After the queen of Sheba honors Solomon, we have in vs. 14 "All the kings of Arabia also, and the governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon." Again, Jesus got that at His birth.

2Chr. 10: Rehoboam is King of Judah. He consults the elders but doesn't like their answer, so he consults his young friends in vs. 8. So, in vs. 11, they are tough young men with no experience or wisdom from Proverbs, so they suggest Rehoboam be a tough guy with his people. So, because he was a poor leader the kingdoms become divided.

2Chr. 11: Vs. 1-3, King Rehoboam wants to go to war with the North (Israel) and reunite the kingdom he divided through his arrogance, but the Lord has a prophet tell him to hold back. He listens. Vs. 13-17, Jeroboam sets up his own priesthood in the north and sacrificed at the high places and satyrs and calves he had made. In vs. 21 we see that Rehoboam has learned from his father, Solomon, and has 18 wives and sixty concubines.

2Chr. 12: King Rehoboam was not faithful to God so punishment came from Egypt and their leader Shishak, who made a mess and even looted Jerusalem and the Temple but God held him back from doing worse.

2Chr. 13: Abijah takes over as King of Judah. Jeroboam, son of Nebat, servant of Solomon is King of Israel. He wants to attack the south. Abijah warns him in vs. 3-12 but Jeroboam has no respect for the Lord and attacks and gets beat and eventually dies.

2Chr. 14: Asa takes over for dad in the south and is faithful to God. The Ethiopians attack but get beat by God who likes faithful kings.

2Chr. 15: At the word of Azariah, son of Oded, Asa called for a religious reform for Judah. Vs. 13, "and everyone who would not seek the Lord, the God of Israel, was to be put to death,

whether small or great, whether man or woman.” In vs. 16, even his mother got deposed. Jesus said we must be ready to give up family members to follow Him.

2Chr. 16: After 36 years as king, Asa bought an enemy army with silver and gold from the temple to battle the northern kingdom. In other words, he didn't call upon the Lord and God made his feet rot and he died.

2Chr. 17: Jehoshaphat succeeds Asa and is loyal to the Lord and things go well for him. Vs. 10: “Now the fear of the Lord was upon all the kingdoms of the countries surrounding Judah, so that they did not war against Jehoshaphat.”

2Chr. 18: King Jehoshaphat makes friends with King Ahab, king of Israel. They want to attack Ramoth-gilead. 400 prophets say yes, and Micaiah says no. They go and King Ahab is killed.

2Chr. 19: King Jehoshaphat is rebuked and so he gets back on track and served the Lord faithfully.

2Chr. 20: Kingdoms threaten Judah from the south, so Jehoshaphat prays with the people and the Lord has the enemy armies fight each other and the threat is eliminated. Jesus says that a kingdom divided against itself will fall. These neighbors are considered the divided kingdom of Satan.

2Chr. 21: Next in line is Jehoram for king of Judea. In vs. 5-7 we see that he killed his brothers and was evil like the kings of Israel. Elijah told him the Lord would stir up his enemies and give him a bowel disease. It happened and he died from the bowel disease after two years and they didn't even have a funeral pyre for him, no glory for a bad guy.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Prv. 17: Too bad they didn't have cars back then. Each of these verses would make a great bumper-sticker. Maybe they had them on chariots because they wouldn't work on horses or donkeys. By the way, there was a mosaic welcome mat in the ruins at Pompeii that said Beware of Dog. It was in Latin of course, “Cave Canem.” So, they posted good sayings where they could.

Prv. 18: Pick your favorite for a bumper-sticker. Vs. 18 is interesting: “The lot puts an end to disputes, and is decisive in a controversy between the might.” Currently most people do Rock, Paper, Scissors.

Prv. 19: Vs. 18 is good: “Chastise your son, for in this there is hope; but do not desire his death.” For then there is no hope of him helping you in your retirement.

Prv. 20:1-15: Vs. 9 is a key: “Who can say, “I have made my heart clean, I am cleansed of my sin.”” Reading through these proverbs thoughtfully can help a person write up their own examination of conscience. These wise sayings can fine-tune our attitudes rather than the basics we usually use like “I haven’t killed anyone so I must be okay.

ST. PAUL’S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

Rom. 5: Vs. 1-11 are about suffering for the kingdom, for that is what faith, hope and love draws us toward. Vs. 12-14 is about Adam losing the kingdom. Vs. 15 on is about Jesus restoring us to the kingdom but even more, for the “gift is not like the transgression.” It is greater. Adam lost the kingdom for us all. Jesus restores the possibility of the kingdom for all. I hope you are noticing a lot of references to kingdom in Paul. This is how they thought. Without that context, we miss a lot. Realize that a kingdom is not just something that has a king. It is a particular structure that life is based on. Family is basic to it.

Rom. 6: Vs. 1-11 is understood in my kingdom imagery also. Of course, we must stop sinning, for a prince or a princess should not sin. That would be a treasonous action against the king, by whom we have our status as a member of the royal family. So, in order to be royalty in the kingdom in heaven, we must die like Christ, but then we will rise to be royalty like Him. But He gets to be the king. Royalty must not be slaves (to sin). That is what vs. 12-23 is about.

Rom. 7: Vs. 1-6 is summarized in vs. 6 which says: “But now we are released from the law, dead to what held us captive, so that we may serve in the newness of the spirit and not under the obsolete letter.” In other words, expectations for royalty are way higher than the law. Luckily so it the reward. The rest of the chapter can wrap around vs. 15-17: “What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I concur that the law is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” In my words, royalty hates sin, especially if it is their own. That doesn’t mean they have been perfected in this world and don’t sin. That takes a lot of training.

Rom. 8: Remember that Paul has just talked about how “I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate” (Rom.7:15). His spirit wants to follow Christ, but his flesh doesn’t always cooperate. His flesh needs more discipline, but this works best through a focus on the spirit. This idea is

continued in this chapter. He wants the Romans (and us) to focus on the spirit and not on the flesh. He knows that perfecting the flesh is not possible for him or us. But we need to be working on perfecting the spirit, which is what Jesus is trying to do. Vs. 14: "For those who are led by the spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, Abba, "Father!"

Then in vs. 18 he starts explaining that creation was made subject to futility. There is no inheritance there. But through the spirit we can receive glorified bodies that won't be subject to death. In vs. 28 he says that followers are predestined. In other words, God knew what was coming, as in his promise in Gen. 3:15. So nothing can separate us from God for Jesus is for us. By the way that does not mean we are safe, for we can still chose to separate ourselves from God. But that is our choice. God will not force us or choose for us.

Rom. 9: He starts with praying that he could take the place of the Israelites who have not believed. Then he talks in vs. 18-29 of the people who chose against God and how God wills or predestines this. He uses the example of a potter, who sets expectations for the pieces he will save. The rest are trashed. If we don't meet those set expectations, we are in trouble. Vs. 30-33 is the emphasis on faith. Some of the Israelites still think they can be saved by the following the law. God as potter has set up higher expectations. They must have faith. Vs. 33 is a quote from Is.28:16. "Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion that will make people stumble and a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him shall not be put to shame." In other words, God is raising the bar.

Rom. 10: Here we get a comparison between the OT (Moses) and the NT. The OT gave the law. Vs. 5; "The one who does these things will live by them." You will survive to get to the Holy Land. Vs. 9; "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." You will go to heaven. That is the higher reward from reaching the higher bar. Vs. 21: "All day long I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contentious people." God keeps trying to help us over the bar.

Rom. 11: Paul starts by letting the people of Israel know that God has not disowned them. But they must be like Paul and believe. Then starting in vs. 11 he shows that this salvation comes from the Jews, even the ones who messed up because they opened the door to Jesus, the gift of salvation. Vs. 17 starts his warning against boasting, for it all comes from Jesus the vine. Vs. 30 starts his explanation that God's mercy to the Jews is the start of God's mercy to the Gentiles.