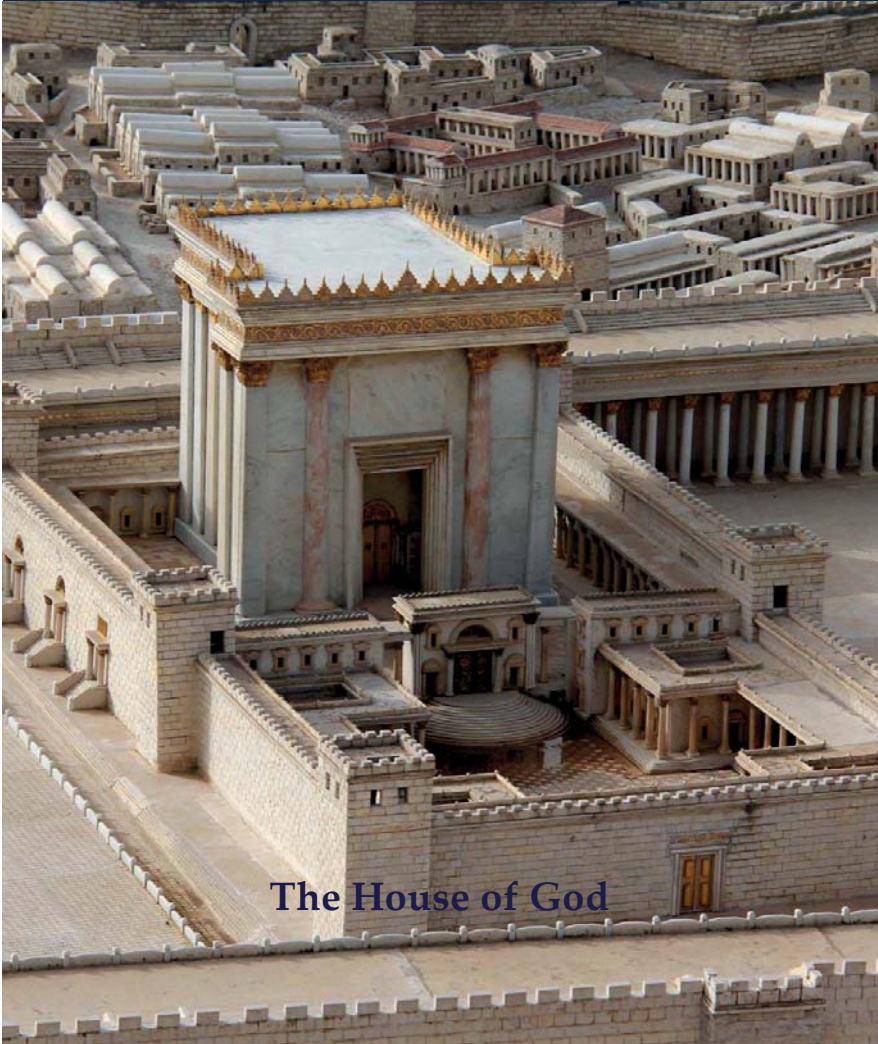


1 Chronicles Explained & Applied 13

Ger de Koning



The House of God

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Abbreviations of the Names of the Books of the Bible

Old Testament

Gen	Genesis
Exo	Exodus
Lev	Leviticus
Num	Numbers
Deu	Deuteronomy
2Ko	2 Korinthiërs
Jos	Joshua
Jdg	Judges
Rth	Ruth
1Sam	First Samuel
2Sam	Second Samuel
1Kgs	First Kings
2Kgs	Second Kings
1Chr	First Chronicles
2Chr	Second Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh	Nehemiah
Est	Esther
Job	Job
Psa	Psalms
Pro	Proverbs
Ecc	Ecclesiastes
Song	Song of Songs
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Lam	Lamentations
Eze	Ezekiel
Dan	Daniël
Hos	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Oba	Obadiah
Jona	Jonah
Mic	Micah
Nah	Nahum
Hab	Habakkuk
Zep	Zephaniah
Hag	Haggai
Zec	Zechariah
Mal	Malachi

New Testament

Mt	Gospel of Matthew
Mk	Gospel of Mark
Lk	Gospel of Luke
Jn	Gospel of John
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Rom	Letter to the Romans
1Cor	First Letter to the Corinthians
2Cor	Second Letter to the Corinthians
Gal	Letter to the Galatians
Eph	Letter to the Ephesians
Phil	Letter to the Philippians
Col	Letter to the Colossians
1Thes	First Letter to the Thessalonians
2Thes	Second Letter to the Thessalonians
1Tim	First Letter to Timothy
2Tim	Second Letter to Timothy
Tit	Letter to Titus
Phlm	Letter to Philemon
Heb	Letter of the Hebrews
Jam	Letter of James
1Pet	First Letter of Peter
2Pet	Second Letter of Peter
1Jn	First Letter of John
2Jn	Second Letter of John
3Jn	Third Letter of John
Jude	Letter of Jude
Rev	Revelation

Explanation of general format

PERSONAL PRONOUNS are capitalized when pertaining to Deity.

BRACKETS [] are used in this commentary in the Bible text to indicate words which are not found in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek but implied by it.

SHARP BRACKETS < > are used in this commentary in the Bible text to indicate words possibly not in the original writings.

When **ASTERISKS** * are used in New Testament quotations, it is to mark verbs that are historical presents in the Greek which have been translated with an English past tense in order to conform to modern usage. The translators recognized that in some contexts the present tense seems more unexpected and unjustified to the English reader than a past tense would have been. But Greek authors frequently used the present tense for the sake of heightened vividness, thereby transporting their readers in imagination to the actual scene at the time of occurrence. However, the translators felt that it would be wise to change these historical presents to English past tenses.

ALL CAPS in the New Testament quotations are used in the text to indicate Old Testament quotations or obvious references to Old Testament texts.

The First Book of Chronicles

If we read the first book of Kings and the second book of Kings on the one hand and the first books of Chronicles and the second book of Chronicles on the other hand, we notice the great similarity between the contents of the two books of Kings and the two books of Chronicles. They therefore describe the same historical opinions. Yet there is an important difference. In the two books of Kings and the two books of Chronicles the history is described from a different point of view. They can be compared with each other, just as we compare the four Gospels with each other. Each writes history in his own way, while it is one Spirit who leads the writers. Therefore, there is no contradiction, but harmony. The books complement each other.

Who is used by the Holy Spirit to write these books is not known. Jeremiah has been mentioned as the author of the two books of Kings, while the two books of Chronicles has been understood as having been written by Ezra. However, there is no hard evidence for this.

The books of Chronicles occupy a special place among the historic books of the Old Testament. We can compare this with the special place the Gospel according to John occupies among the Gospels. John goes back to what was "in the beginning" (Jn 1:1), when the eternal Word was with God. The Chronicles also go back to the beginning, but then from the history of man to follow that history along a line of promise and grace.

We find in these books the history of kings who ruled over God's people. The first three kings – Saul, David and Solomon – ruled over all Israel, the twelve tribes. For a short time, Solomon's son, Rehoboam, also ruled over the entire realm of the twelve tribes. But under his government the kingdom is torn into two parts: one part of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, which continue under the name of Judah, and the other part of ten tribes, the other tribes, which continue under the name of Israel or also called Ephraim.

Nineteen kings ruled over each of the two realms until they both ceased to exist. After the nineteenth king of Israel, Hoshea, this realm was con-

quered by the king of Assyria and the inhabitants were scattered. After the nineteenth king of Judah, Zedekiah, this realm was taken away into exile by the king of Babylon.

Of the kings who have ruled over Judah, some are relatively good, others exceptionally bad; some start well and finish bad; others start bad and finish good. But they all fall short of the glory of God and of God's ideal of what a king should be. Only the Lord Jesus answers perfectly to it. God calls him 'My King'. The kings of the ten tribes are without exception bad.

The history described in both books mentioned in Chronicles, runs from Adam until the year 538 BC, roughly 3,500 year. Both books of Chronicles are written, or at least completed, after the return from exile. This is shown by the fact that the exile of Judah and Jerusalem is mentioned by Nebuchadnezzar as a historical fact in the first book of Chronicles (1Chr 6:15).

Both books of Chronicles form a whole. The first book describes the history of David. In the second book we find the history of David's posterity. Many of these histories can also be found in the first book of Samuel and the second book of Samuel and the first book of Kings and the second book of Kings. These four books can also be viewed as a whole.

Nevertheless, there is an important difference between the series of these four books and the books of Chronicles. The books of Samuel and Kings focus on the history of Israel and its kings, with the emphasis on the responsibility of man. In the books of Chronicles the emphasis will be more on the history of Judah and his kings with the accent on the grace of God.

After man has totally failed in his responsibility in the books of Kings, we see in the books of Chronicles the God of grace Himself working to write history again from the beginning. It is the history of God's people that the Holy Spirit places in the spotlight. It has been said that the history in the books of Chronicles that it describes history as God loves to remember it. Therefore only those mistakes are mentioned which must be known to understand the teaching of His grace. The books of Chronicles show us the kingship according to the grace of God and not according to its responsible character as in books of Kings.

The first book of Chronicles for example is silent about the suffering and the rejection of David, which is described in the books of Samuel, but we

see David directly as king in his glory. The books of Kings mainly give the history of the northern tribes realm. The sins of the royal house of David are meticulously mentioned in it, so that the reader may know the reasons for the decay and the tearing. Prophets come to the fore there, because the people have cut themselves off from the service of the priests and Levites, which is connected to the temple in Jerusalem. It is God's provision that He provides for their spiritual needs through these prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha.

The first book of Chronicles and the second book of Chronicles, written after the return of a remnant from the Babylonian exile to the land of Israel, seem to have been written more for this remnant. For it is a great encouragement for the returning handful of Judeans who read in these books to be reminded of God's former gracious actions with His people. The books of Chronicles seem to be written more for the remnant, while the books of Kings seem to be written more for the whole people.

Also the genealogies we find in the first book of Chronicles, have their use. They are important because only the seed of Abraham is entitled to the promised land. The purpose of these genealogies is to prove origin. Happy he who has kept his genealogies and appreciates the inheritance of the LORD. It is a proof of their faith.

Furthermore, the genealogies are a means to prevent mixing with the surrounding peoples. They also serve to determine the succession of the Aaronite priesthood. For example, we read in the book of Ezra that a person who wants to serve as a priest must be able to prove from the genealogies that he indeed comes from a priestly family and is thus entitled to the priesthood (Ezra 2:62-63; cf. Neh 7:64-65).

Above all, it is possible to determine from these genealogies Who as Messiah is entitled to kingship. This shows the importance of the genealogy in Matthew 1. This clearly shows that the Lord Jesus has the legitimate right to the throne of David. This genealogy can be seen as a continuation of the registers given to us in 1 Chronicles 1-9.

For us who belong to the church of the living God, such genealogies are not important. We do not need to prove our origin. When we think of our origins, it is enough to know that we originate from a sinful Adam. There-

fore we are subject to the judgment of God. We have realized this and have been made able to believe in the work of the Lord Jesus that has been necessary to make us a new generation. Through faith in Him we are born again and belong to the family of God (Jn 1:12).

Belonging to that family is not based on natural descent, but on our new birth, through which we share the nature of God (2Pet 1:4). For us, terrestrial registers are not important. Names can be removed from such registers. We may know that our names are written down in the heavens (Lk 10:20; Heb 12:23). No names can be removed from these registers.

The main theme of the books of Chronicles is the temple. In these books the 'house of God' is often mentioned, while that name does not occur once in the books of Kings. That might plead for the priest-scribe Ezra to be the author of Chronicles. Temple and priest belong inextricably together. The book of Ezra is also closely linked to Chronicles. We can see that in the last verses of 2 Chronicles, which form the opening verses of the book Ezra (2Chr 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2). Much attention is paid to the temple service, which was established by David and has fallen into decay, but is restored at the end of 2 Chronicles under Hezekiah and Josiah.

The actual importance of the books Chronicles for us is related to the main theme, the temple. As in the Old Testament the temple is called the dwelling place or house of God, so in the New Testament the church is called the dwelling place or house of God (Eph 2:21-22; 1Tim 3:15). Often we will make the 'translation' of what is described in Chronicles to our time.

The Bible itself indicates that this is permitted. With regard to the history of Israel in the wilderness we read: "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1Cor 10:11). On this basis we can therefore expect that through both books of Chronicles we can learn a lot about the church and our behavior in it.

In Hebrew, the title of Chronicles is 'words of the days', which means 'events of the time'. In the Hebrew Bible, the books of Chronicles are at the very end (cf. Mt 23:35). These things say something about the span of Chronicles. Chronicles begin with the origination of mankind and extend beyond the period of exile to eight generations before the Messiah. Then

the thread of the genealogies is taken up again at the beginning of the New Testament with the genealogy of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 1 (Mt 1:1-17). Chronicles begins with the first Adam; the genealogy of Matthew 1 ends with Christ, the last Adam.

The Holy Spirit begins in Chronicles with the history of mankind, to focus in the midst of mankind attention on that one people of Israel and among that people to focus on Judah and finally to focus on the family of David and in that family on the one man David. This one man is chosen by God.

The authority of the books of Chronicles as Word of God is confirmed by the Lord Jesus. He refers to some events from these books. Thus He refers to the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon (Mt 12:42; 2Chr 9:1-12) and to the murder of Zechariah (Mt 23:35; 2Chr 24:20-21). Further a verse from 1 Chronicles is quoted in Hebrews 1 (1Chr 17:13; Heb 1:5).

The book 1 Chronicles can be subdivided as follows:

- a. 1 Chronicles 1-9 The people of God
- b. 1 Chronicles 10-12 The anointed of God
- c. 1 Chronicles 13-16 The ark of God
- d. 1 Chronicles 17-29 The house of God

1 Chronicles 1

Introduction

Before we look at the content of this chapter, let us first make some general remarks about the first part of the book, 1 Chronicles 1-9. This first part consists mainly of names. These are chapters that are almost never read. Yet they are part of the whole Word of God and therefore it is useful to read them with attention. The following also applies in these chapters: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2Tim 3:16-17).

As a stimulus for reading these genealogies I would like to quote something from a comment on 1 Chronicles that has encouraged me: 'Reading the Chronicles takes some perseverance. The introduction to the genealogies at the beginning of this Bible book can easily reduce our interest. But whoever possesses a little energy and enter into this 'treasure room' with prayer will come out again with a hymn of praise.' (H. Rossier, 'The Scroll of the Book', the books of Chronicles I.)

The names mentioned are of great value, because they often contain a message in their meaning (Heb 7:1-2). Here is a gold mine for the zealous researcher. Using a search program and dictionaries of biblical names, many lessons can be learned here. With a few exceptions, this comment leaves the research for the meaning of the names to the reader.

Just one more general remark about the genealogies we encounter here, and elsewhere in the Bible. Paul warns Timothy not to pay "attention to myths and endless genealogies" (1Tim 1:4). It will be clear that Paul does not mean the genealogies we encounter in the Bible, for they belong to the inspired Word of God (2Tim 3:16).

The genealogies that Paul mentions in his first letter to Timothy and against which he warns are lists of data originating from the human spirit. They do not come from the Spirit of God. The word 'genealogy' means 'a doctrine about origin'. What the Jews are concerned with are theories about

the origins of angels and the families they are supposed to have. This has nothing to do with the Bible, but with being busy mystical (Col 2:18).

To conclude this general introduction to 1 Chronicles 1-9 a few tips for self-study of these chapters:

1. Read through a chapter or part of a chapter every day.
2. Write down at least one characteristic of a name of which you know something. (For easy retrieval also note the verse.)
3. Sometimes there is just a peculiarity mentioned between the names. Write it down in your own words. As far as I have noticed any details, I will point this out, without saying that there are no more.
4. Write down a verse from each chapter or a name that appeals to you.

Every name that comes after Adam is just another manifestation of this first Adam. In some of his descendants we also see that faith reveals itself. Where there is faith, there must be new life, a new nature, that is to say, the Divine nature. Where faith reveals itself, God is glorified.

The first chapter of the first book of Chronicles goes from Adam to the sons of Jacob, who are mentioned in the next chapter. There they are called "the sons of Israel" (1Chr 2:1-2). This chapter deals with two series of names, which are then further elaborated (1Chr 1:1-4,24-27).

We can imagine reading the names of this genealogy we are at a cemetery. We walk along the graves and see the names of past generations. They are all names of people who were born and died, they loved and suffered, people who have made their way through the world. The names are engraved on these fixed plates, tombstones. If Christ does not come to take us up during our lives, so will our names. "All flesh", including ours, "is like grass" (1Pet 1:24).

Each of these lives has fulfilled a necessary part in the progress of the race and has passed on the torch of human life. Each will also exist on the other side of death, after being revealed before the judgment seat of Christ (2Cor 5:10).

The names of the persons in this chapter, who are individually known to God, can all be found in the book of Genesis (Genesis 5; 10; 11; 25; 36). There are ten listings. First ten ancestors, from Adam to Noah, are men-

tioned (1Chr 1:1-4). This is followed by seventy peoples from Noah. Then come the names of another ten ancestors, now from Shem to Abraham (1Chr 1:24-27). Then again seventy nations that come forth from Abraham. This shows a divine order. The fact that the genealogies start with Adam shows that David's house – because it is about him in the genealogies – is not only important for Israel, but for the whole of humanity.

Verses 1-4 | From Adam to Noah and His Sons

1 Adam, Seth, Enosh, 2 Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, 3 Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, 4 Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

From Adam to Noah the names of ten ancestors are mentioned.

In the genealogy of Noah in verse 4 Shem is mentioned first. But when the generations are listed, the generations of Japheth (verses 5-7) and Cham (verses 8-16) have precedence.

Verses 5-7 | Descendants of Japheth

5 The sons of Japheth [were] Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. 6 The sons of Gomer [were] Ashkenaz, Diphath, and Togarmah. 7 The sons of Javan [were] Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim and Rodanim.

Verses 8-16 | Descendants of Cham

8 The sons of Ham [were] Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. 9 The sons of Cush [were] Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah [were] Sheba and Dedan. 10 Cush became the father of Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth. 11 Mizraim became the father of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, 12 Pathrus, Casluh, from which the Philistines came, and Caphtor. 13 Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, Heth, 14 and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, 15 the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, 16 the Aroadites, the Zemarites and the Hamathites.

Verses 17-23 | Descendants of Sem

17 The sons of Shem [were] Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech. 18 Arpachshad became the father of Shelah and Shelah

became the father of Eber. 19 Two sons were born to Eber, the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. 20 Joktan became the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 21 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 22 Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, 23 Ophir, Havilah and Jobab; all these [were] the sons of Joktan.

In verse 19, to the name Peleg is added that he has this name, because “in his days the earth was divided”. Peleg means ‘divided’. His name refers to the confusion of speech that God causes between people as a judgment of the pride to penetrate into heaven (Gen 11:1-9).

Verses 24-27 | From Shem to Abraham

24 Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, 25 Eber, Peleg, Reu, 26 Serug, Nahor, Terah, 27 Abram, that is Abraham.

From Shem to Abraham we have, just like from Adam to Enoch (verses 1-4), ten ancestors. Shem and Abraham both recall the special relationship God has with His people. Shem is the example of the special connections of the LORD with a special part of mankind, the Shemites. Noah speaks of “the LORD, the God of Shem” (Gen 9:26). In Abraham we see the Divine election (Gen 12:2; 17:7). The reason for the change of name from Abram to Abraham (verse 27) is given in Genesis 17 (Gen 17:5).

Verses 28-33 | Descendants of Abraham

28 The sons of Abraham [were] Isaac and Ishmael. 29 These are their genealogies: the firstborn of Ishmael [was] Nebaioth, then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 30 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, 31 Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah; these [were] the sons of Ishmael. 32 The sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine, [whom] she bore, [were] Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan [were] Sheba and Dedan. 33 The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.

We find in the various listings in this chapter the principle “the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual” (1Cor 15:46). We see that in verse 29. While in verse 28 of Abraham’s sons Isaac and then Ishmael are mentioned first, in the next verse the genealogy of Ishmael is mentioned

first. Also with the sons of Isaac we see that first the genealogy of Esau is mentioned (verses 34-35).

Of the sons of Keturah (verse 33), Midian is known as an enemy of Israel. He has regularly asserted himself (Jdg 6:1-6). Midian's five sons are also mentioned (verse 33), which is perhaps an indication of the versatility of his opposition.

Verses 34-42 | Descendants of Esau

34 Abraham became the father of Isaac. The sons of Isaac [were] Esau and Israel. 35 The sons of Esau [were] Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam and Korah. 36 The sons of Eliphaz [were] Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, Kenaz, Timna and Amalek. 37 The sons of Reuel [were] Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. 38 The sons of Seir [were] Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. 39 The sons of Lotan [were] Hori and Homam; and Lotan's sister [was] Timna. 40 The sons of Shobal [were] Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon [were] Aiah and Anah. 41 The son of Anah [was] Dishon. And the sons of Dishon [were] Hamran, Eshban, Ithran and Cheran. 42 The sons of Ezer [were] Bilhan, Zaavan and Jaakan. The sons of Dishan [were] Uz and Aran.

Uz (verse 42) is the name of the place where Job lived (Job 1:1). From this it can be deduced that Job may be an early descendant of Esau (cf. Lam 4:21a). Similarly, it is not unlikely that Eliphaz, the son of Esau, the father of Teman (verses 35-36), is an ancestor of Job's friend Eliphaz, the Temanite (Job 2:11).

Verses 43-50 | Kings of Edom

43 Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king of the sons of Israel reigned. Bela was the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. 44 When Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah became king in his place. 45 When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites became king in his place. 46 When Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the field of Moab, became king in his place; and the name of his city [was] Avith. 47 When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah became king in his place. 48 When Samlah died, Shaul of Rehoboth by the River became king

in his place. 49 When Shaul died, Baal-hanan the son of Achbor became king in his place. 50 When Baal-hanan died, Hadad became king in his place; and the name of his city was Pai, and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

Kings reigned over Edom before a king reigned over Israel (verse 43). This shows that until God's choice of a king in David is revealed, nations go their own way and organize their own reign, independent of God.

From the fact that nowhere in this list of kings is it mentioned that someone becomes king instead of his father, it has been concluded that they were chosen for the kingship. The seated ruler reigned until his death.

Verses 51-54 | Chiefs of Edom

51 Then Hadad died. Now the chiefs of Edom were: chief Timna, chief Aliah, chief Jetheth, 52 chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, 53 chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, 54 chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These [were] the chiefs of Edom.

1 Chronicles 2

Verses 1-2 | The Sons of Israel

1 These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, 2 Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

These verses list the sons of Jacob, here called “Israel”, in a random order. First the six children of Leah are mentioned, then one of Bilhah, then two of Rachel, then another of Bilhah and finally two of Zilpah. About twenty-two times there is a list of the sons of Jacob in the Bible, where the order often changes.

Verses 3-17 | Descendants From Judah to David

3 The sons of Judah [were] Er, Onan and Shelah; [these] three were born to him by Bath-shua the Canaanitess. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, so He put him to death. 4 Tamar his daughter-in-law bore him Perez and Zerah. Judah had five sons in all. 5 The sons of Perez [were] Hezron and Hamul. 6 The sons of Zerah [were] Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Dara; five of them in all. 7 The son of Carmi [was] Achar, the troubler of Israel, who violated the ban. 8 The son of Ethan [was] Azariah. 9 Now the sons of Hezron, who were born to him [were] Jerahmeel, Ram and Chelubai. 10 Ram became the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, leader of the sons of Judah; 11 Nahshon became the father of Salma, Salma became the father of Boaz, 12 Boaz became the father of Obed, and Obed became the father of Jesse; 13 and Jesse became the father of Eliab his firstborn, then Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, 14 Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, 15 Ozem the sixth, David the seventh; 16 and their sisters [were] Zeruiah and Abigail. And the three sons of Zeruiah [were] Abshai, Joab and Asahel. 17 Abigail bore Amasa, and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite.

In the rest of this chapter the descendants of Judah are mentioned. Judah's genealogy is mentioned first because of the kingship that is associated with this tribe.

On the gravestone of Er we read the characteristic of his life: He “was wicked in the sight of the LORD, so He put him to death” (verse 3). It is a warning to live and walk before God’s face with fear, praying and watching, because every moment there can be said or done by us something that will characterize our lives. What will be read on my gravestone?

Few women are mentioned, but the name of Tamar shows a special grace from God (verse 4). She gives birth to Perez as a result of a lewd act she committed with Judah (Gen 38:14-18,27-30). It is God’s special grace that she is mentioned in the book of Ruth (Rth 4:12) and in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus (Mt 1:3).

Four of Zerah’s five sons, “Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Dara”, are known for their wisdom (verse 6). When the Holy Spirit represents the wisdom of Solomon, he declares Solomon wiser than these four men: “For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol” (1Kgs 4:31). It is rare that such a testimony can be given of four brothers.

It can also be mentioned that a psalm of Ethan and Heman is included in the Holy Scriptures (Psa 88:1; 89:1). They should not be confused with Heman and Ethan, the musicians of David (1Chr 15:19), for they are of the tribe Levi and not of the tribe Judah (cf. 1Chr 6:33-44).

The inscription on the gravestone of Achar, that is Achan reads: “The troubler of Israel, who violated the ban” (verse 7). His sin is described in the book of Joshua (Jos 7:1). We see here to the best families, here Judah, people can belong who are a disgrace to the family.

The names mentioned in verses 9-12 are the direct ancestors of David, to whom the chronicler works in the genealogies (cf. Rth 4:19-22). That does not mean that all names of the ancestors are mentioned from Ram onwards. Three centuries have passed between Ram, the son of Hezron, and Nahshon, the son of Amminadab. Nahshon is “leader of the sons of Judah” in the days of Moses in the wilderness (Num 1:7; 2:3). Nahshon’s son, Salma, marries Rahab, the harlot, after the fall of Jericho (Mt 1:5).

Verse 16 shows that the three men “Abshai, Joab and Asahel”, who we know from David’s army, are the sons of David’s sister and thus his cousins. The same goes for Amasa, who is the son of another sister.

Verses 18-24 | Descendants of Caleb (I)

18 Now Caleb the son of Hezron had sons by Azubah [his] wife, and by Jerioth; and these were her sons: Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. 19 When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath, who bore him Hur. 20 Hur became the father of Uri, and Uri became the father of Bezalel. 21 Afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he was sixty years old; and she bore him Segub. 22 Segub became the father of Jair, who had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. 23 But Geshur and Aram took the towns of Jair from them, with Kenath and its villages, [even] sixty cities. All these were the sons of Machir, the father of Gilead. 24 After the death of Hezron in Caleb-ephrathah, Abijah, Hezron's wife, bore him Ashhur the father of Tekoa.

Bezalel, the son of Uri (verse 20), is known to us from the building of the tabernacle (Exo 31:2-4).

Hezron, from whom Caleb and his descendants came forth, appears to have been a very fruitful man, even in his old age. When he dies, his wife Abia is pregnant and gives birth to another child after his death (verse 24).

Verses 25-41 | Descendants of Jerahmeel

25 Now the sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron [were] Ram the firstborn, then Bunah, Oren, Ozem [and] Ahijah. 26 Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. 27 The sons of Ram, the firstborn of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, Jamin and Eker. 28 The sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. And the sons of Shammai [were] Nadab and Abishur. 29 The name of Abishur's wife [was] Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. 30 The sons of Nadab [were] Seled and Appaim, and Seled died without sons. 31 The son of Appaim [was] Ishi. And the son of Ishi [was] Sheshan. And the son of Sheshan [was] Ahlai. 32 The sons of Jada the brother of Shammai [were] Jether and Jonathan, and Jether died without sons. 33 The sons of Jonathan [were] Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel. 34 Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters. And Sheshan had an Egyptian servant whose name was Jarha. 35 Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant in marriage, and she bore him Attai. 36 Attai became the father of Nathan, and Nathan became the father of Zabad, 37 and Zabad became the father of Ephlal, and Ephlal

became the father of Obed, 38 and Obed became the father of Jehu, and Jehu became the father of Azariah, 39 and Azariah became the father of Helez, and Helez became the father of Eleasah, 40 and Eleasah became the father of Sismai, and Sismai became the father of Shallum, 41 and Shallum became the father of Jekamiah, and Jekamiah became the father of Elishama.

This list includes names of people whose particular characteristic is that they died childless or without sons (verses 30,32-34). Childlessness is not new. God's providence gives or withhold children, or sometimes gives them only of the same sex. For those who desire to have children, it is a great test if the desire for children remains unfulfilled.

The need that this can bring with it cannot be understood by those who have children. Only the Lord can give His comfort therein. By His consolation they can come to accept in confidence that this is the way He wants to go with them. In this way they can serve Him in a special way. To those who love Him He will give a place and a name in His house, better than those of sons and daughters (Isa 56:5).

The marriage of Sesan's daughter to an Egyptian slave (verse 35) can only be permitted if we assume that this slave has become a Jew, a proselyte.

Verses 42-55 | Descendants of Caleb (II)

42 Now the sons of Caleb, the brother of Jerahmeel, [were] Mesha his firstborn, who was the father of Ziph; and his son was Maresah, the father of Hebron. 43 The sons of Hebron [were] Korah and Tappuah and Rekem and Shema. 44 Shema became the father of Raham, the father of Jorkeam; and Rekem became the father of Shammai. 45 The son of Shammai was Maon, and Maon [was] the father of Bethzur. 46 Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza and Gazez; and Haran became the father of Gazez. 47 The sons of Jahdai [were] Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah and Shaaph. 48 Maacah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. 49 She also bore Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbena and the father of Gibeab; and the daughter of Caleb [was] Achsah. 50 These were the sons of Caleb. The sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, [were] Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim, 51 Salma the father of Bethlehem [and] Hareph the father of Beth-gader. 52 Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim had sons: Haroeh, half of the Manahathites, 53 and the families

of Kiriath-jearim: the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites and the Mishraites; from these came the Zorathites and the Eshtaolites. 54 The sons of Salma [were] Bethlehem and the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joab and half of the Manahathites, the Zorites. 55 The families of scribes who lived at Jabez [were] the Tirathites, the Shimeathites [and] the Sucathites. Those are the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.

In this section, “the families of scribes” are noticeably (verse 55). Writing is important in the things of God. It means being busy with it and recording it and thus passing it on to the next generations. In this way, future generations can be taught the things of God.

The Kenites (verse 55b) do not originally belong to Israel. They are one of the heathen peoples of the land of Canaan (Gen 15:18-21). Here they are included in the genealogy of the tribe of Judah. It seems that over the years they have become more and more part of the tribe of Judah, may be by marriages. They are a people who, in addition to Caleb, one of the twelve spies, have also become known for the fidelity of one of their families, that of the Rechabites. Their faithfulness to the customs of their fathers is so much appreciated by the LORD, that in the book of Jeremiah He sets this lineage as an example to His unfaithful people (Jer 35:12-16).

1 Chronicles 3

Verses 1-9 | Sons of David

1 Now these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: the firstborn [was] Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second [was] Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelitess; 2 the third [was] Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur; the fourth [was] Adonijah the son of Haggith; 3 the fifth [was] Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth [was] Ithream, by his wife Eglah. 4 Six were born to him in Hebron, and there he reigned seven years and six months. And in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 5 These were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon, four, by Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel; 6 and Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, 7 Nogah, Nepheg and Japhia, 8 Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet, nine. 9 All [these were] the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar [was] their sister.

This chapter is entirely dedicated to the family of David. The starting point for his genealogy is Hebron (verse 1), where he is anointed king by all Israel (1Chr 11:3). Hebron also speaks of death: it is the cemetery of among others of Sarah (Gen 23:2,19) and Isaac (Gen 35:27). But of Hebron also Joseph went out to seek his brothers (cf. Gen 37:14). It is also a city of refuge and a priest city (Jos 21:13).

In these verses the sons are named after the places where they were born: Hebron (verses 1-4) and Jerusalem (verses 5-9; 2Sam 3:2-5; 5:13-16; 13:1). Remarkably, some sons born in Hebron are rejected, such as Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah. Only when the government is definitively established in Jerusalem, does in Solomon the man come to the fore according to God's counsels.

The place of a person's birth can be of significance for his later development. This is also important from a spiritual point of view. What education does a newly converted person receive in a local church? Is there building and life in God's presence? Or is someone getting the wrong food and being given the wrong example?

Verses 10-16 | Descendants From Solomon to Zedekiah

10 Now Solomon's son [was] Rehoboam, Abijah [was] his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, 11 Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, 12 Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, 13 Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, 14 Amon his son, Josiah his son. 15 The sons of Josiah [were] Johanan the firstborn, and the second [was] Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. 16 The sons of Jehoiakim [were] Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son.

In these verses, the descendants of David are listed from Solomon to Zedekiah, that is, as long as the kingdom existed. Zedekiah is the last king of the two tribe realm of Judah. During his reign Judah is led into exile by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon.

Verses 17-24 | Descendants of Jeconiah

17 The sons of Jeconiah, the prisoner, [were] Shealtiel his son, 18 and Malchiram, Pedaiiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama and Nedabiah. 19 The sons of Pedaiiah [were] Zerubbabel and Shimei. And the sons of Zerubbabel [were] Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith [was] their sister; 20 and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah and Jushab-hesed, five. 21 The sons of Hananiah [were] Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah, the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shecaniah. 22 The descendants of Shecaniah [were] Shemaiah, and the sons of Shemaiah: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah and Shaphat, six. 23 The sons of Neariah [were] Elioenai, Hezekiahh and Azrikam, three. 24 The sons of Elioenai [were] Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah and Anani, seven.

Here are the descendants of David listed who lived during and after the exile. God keeps David's generation alive even when He can no longer recognize His people as His people and He has given the power of reign to the nations.

The only names we know in this list are those of Sealthiel and his (grand) son Zerubbabel. Led by Zerubbabel, the son of Sealthiel, in reality the grandson, a remnant from Babylon has returned to Israel after seventy years of exile.

1 Chronicles 4

Introduction

In this chapter the names of other descendants of Judah than the descendants mentioned in 1 Chronicles 2 are given. Then follow the descendants of Simeon. The area of Simeon is in the middle of that of Judah.

Verses 1-23 | More descendants of Judah

1 The sons of Judah [were] Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur and Shobal. 2 Reaiah the son of Shobal became the father of Jahath, and Jahath became the father of Ahumai and Lahad. These [were] the families of the Zorathites. 3 These [were] the sons of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma and Idbash; and the name of their sister [was] Hazzeleponi. 4 Penuel [was] the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These [were] the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, the father of Bethlehem. 5 Ashhur, the father of Tekoa, had two wives, Helah and Naarah. 6 Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hephher, Temeni and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah. 7 The sons of Helah [were] Zereth, Izhar and Ethnan. 8 Koz became the father of Anub and Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum. 9 Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother named him Jabez saying, "Because I bore [him] with pain." 10 Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that You would bless me indeed and enlarge my border, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep [me] from harm that [it] may not pain me!" And God granted him what he requested. 11 Chelub the brother of Shuhah became the father of Mehir, who was the father of Eshton. 12 Eshton became the father of Beth-rapha and Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Ir-nahash. These are the men of Recah. 13 Now the sons of Kenaz [were] Othniel and Seraiah. And the sons of Othniel [were] Hathath and Meonothai. 14 Meonothai became the father of Ophrah, and Seraiah became the father of Joab the father of Ge-harashim, for they were craftsmen. 15 The sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh [were] Iru, Elah and Naam; and the son of Elah [was] Kenaz. 16 The sons of Jehallelel [were] Ziph and Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel. 17 The sons of Ezrah [were] Jether, Mered, Ephher and Jalon. (And these are the sons of Bithia the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took) and she conceived [and bore] Miriam, Shammai and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. 18

His Jewish wife bore Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. 19 The sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, [were] the fathers of Keilah the Garmite and Eshtemoa the Maacathite. 20 The sons of Shimon [were] Amnon and Rinnah, Benhanan and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi [were] Zoheth and Ben-zoheth. 21 The sons of Shelah the son of Judah [were] Er the father of Lecah and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of the linen workers at Beth-ashbea; 22 and Jokim, the men of Cozeba, Joash, Saraph, who ruled in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And the records are ancient. 23 These were the potters and the inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah; they lived there with the king for his work.

In this section, the name of the otherwise completely unknown Jabez stands out (verses 9-10). However, he is not unknown to God. He is mentioned because of his personal faith in God. God has blessed in the midst of His people each individual person who trusts Him.

The name “Jabez” is associated here with a verb that means “cause suffering”. The mother of Jabez recognizes in the name she gives her son, the judgment God has pronounced on the woman (Gen 3:16a). All children are born with pain. This also applies to the new birth that someone gets through conversion. Conversion and new life do not begin with joy, but with tears of repentance.

The prayer that Jabez says shows that he agrees with the name his mother gave him. Jabez is “more honorable than his brothers” because he knows what grief is and because he is a man of prayer. The acknowledgment of his natural state makes him appeal to God. He does not do so in vain. The reason of the prayer is not mentioned. It is a prayer of childlike faith, in which he addresses “the God of Israel”, the only God.

His prayer includes four points. Around these four points his entire prayer life will have taken place.

1. The first thing Jabez asks God is to “bless” him “indeed”. For us it means that we ask the Lord to teach us about our heavenly blessings. For this Paul prays in the first prayer he does for the Ephesians (Eph 1:15-23).
2. “and enlarge my border,” Then Jabez asks for expansion of its area. For us, the question of being introduced deeper into our heavenly

blessings in Christ, that we can learn more from them. For this Paul prays in the second prayer he does for the Ephesians (Eph 3:14-21). It is about the taking possession of “the inheritance of the saints in the light” and being impressed by what this inheritance is all about (Col 1:9-23).

3. “and that Your hand might be with me,” Then Jabez asks for God’s support, for nothing will succeed in his own strength. For us it means that we realize that we cannot do anything without the Lord Jesus (Jn 15:5b). Paul therefore appeals us to strengthen ourselves in the Lord and in the power of His strength (Eph 6:10). He experienced this himself (2Tim 4:17).
4. “and that You would keep [me] from harm that [it] may not pain me!” Finally, Jabez asks for protection against evil. He recognizes its presence and realizes that only God can protect him from it. For us it means that we are aware that there are evil powers that want to rob us of the enjoyment of our inheritance. To defend ourselves against these evil powers God has given us His armor (Eph 6:11-18).

In short, he prays for

1. blessing,
2. enlargement,
3. support) and
4. protection.

Jabez gets everything he asks for. God never disappoints when we ask things of Him that honor Him.

Othniel (verse 13) is the first judge of Israel in the time of the judges (Jdg 3:9-11).

A profession is also mentioned, that of “craftsmen” (verse 14). It is a call that is practiced in “Ge-harashim”, or “the Valley of craftsmen” as it also can be translated. A valley indicates that there is nothing wrong with it. This means that the profession of craftsman is practiced in humility. A good craftsman is an artist. In such a person, pride can quickly arise because of a performance delivered. It is a picture of the practice of faith life. Only if we are humble our lives will be in practice to God’s glory.

In Judah Caleb (verse 15) stands out. God remembers him with joy, as it were, all the more because Caleb is of pagan origin – he is a Kenite – but has been incorporated in Judah.

Another profession is called, “the linen workers” (verse 21). This is reminiscent of the bride’s robe in Revelation 19, which consists of “fine linen, bright [and] clean”. What this represents is directly behind it: “For the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev 19:8). We can say that the fine linen is the symbol of what people see of us. The linen workers represent believers who tell their fellow believers about what they are in Christ and how they can behave accordingly in practice. The point is that we have put on the new man and also show the features of it (Eph 4:20-24; Col 3:9-15).

It also contains names that do not evoke admiration, but shame (verse 22). They may point to a glorious past. Then they ruled over the Moabites. But at the moment the chronicler writes this down, he must mention that “the records are ancient”. Now it seems that this is no longer the case.

From a spiritual point of view, there is an important lesson to be learned here. Moab is a picture of the sinful flesh (Isa 16:6). It is usually the case that someone who has just come to repentance and faith, in his first enthusiasm, lives completely for the Lord. Unfortunately, it can happen that as he gets older, the sinful flesh gets a chance to assert itself again. The first love is left (Rev 2:4). Then life in faith is something “ancient”. Faith must be refreshed every day. If we do feed with God’s Word every day, we will be preserved for the experience of the men mentioned in verse 22.

Finally, some other professions are mentioned (verse 23; cf. verse 14). The “potters” make pots. They are empty pots or vessels that are meant to put something in it. Pots or vessels represent persons intended to serve the Lord (Acts 9:15). To be useful to the Master, they must be vessels of honor, cleansed of false doctrine (2Tim 2:21). An empty vessel can be filled with oil (2Kgs 4:1-7). In a vessel filled with oil, we see the picture of the believer filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18b). Oil is used to anoint priests and kings and occasionally prophets. Oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit (1Jn 2:20).

The potters live in “Netaim and Gederah”. In other translations these place names are translated as “plantations and gardens” (Dutch Statenvertaling) or “plantations and walls” (German Elberfelder translation) and “planta-

tions and enclosures” (English Darby translation). If it is so rendered, this verse contains a lesson for all who wish to serve as a vessel in caring for the plants in the (walled, enclosed) garden of the Lord (cp. Song 4:12). After all, the church is compared to a field where there is care for what grows on it (1Cor 3:6-9). The work in the gardens we see for example in what Paul and Apollos do. They have planted and watered in the field of God, that those planted in the house of the LORD may grow in the courts of God (Psa 92:12-13).

In order to work the garden properly, it is necessary to be in the presence of the Lord Jesus. Only those who “lived there with the king” (verse 23) are able “for his work”.

Verses 24-43 | Descendants of Simeon

24 The sons of Simeon [were] Nemuel and Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Shaul; 25 Shalum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. 26 The sons of Mishma [were] Hammuel his son, Zaccur his son, Shimei his son. 27 Now Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brothers did not have many sons, nor did all their family multiply like the sons of Judah. 28 They lived at Beersheba, Moladah and Hazar-shual, 29 at Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30 Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31 Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susim, Beth-biri and Shaaraim. These [were] their cities until the reign of David. 32 Their villages [were] Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen and Ashan, five cities; 33 and all their villages that [were] around the same cities as far as Baal. These [were] their settlements, and they have their genealogy. 34 Meshobab and Jamlech and Joshah the son of Amaziah, 35 and Joel and Jehu the son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, 36 and Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, 37 Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah; 38 these mentioned by name [were] leaders in their families; and their fathers' houses increased greatly. 39 They went to the entrance of Gedor, even to the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. 40 They found rich and good pasture, and the land was broad and quiet and peaceful; for those who lived there formerly [were] Hamites. 41 These, recorded by name, came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and attacked their tents and the Meunites who were found there, and destroyed them utterly to this day, and lived in their place, because there was pasture there for their flocks. 42 From them, from the

sons of Simeon, five hundred men went to Mount Seir, with Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi, as their leaders. 43 They destroyed the remnant of the Amalekites who escaped, and have lived there to this day.

In verses 39-43, we see that Simeon is enlarging his area. As a result of his sin Simeon is scattered among Israel (Gen 49:5-7) and remained small in number, without own territory. For the sake of faith, however, enlargement is still possible. With Simeon this happens in the days of a revival under Hezekiah (verse 41). He puts into practice what Jabez has prayed for (verse 10). No matter at what time in history, there is always room for expansion.

Some of Simeon's descendants are looking for good pasture for their herds. That is an important work, it is the work of a shepherd. A good shepherd will look for good pasture for his flock. The Lord Jesus gives the example as "the good Shepherd" (Jn 10:11), "the great Shepherd" (Heb 13:20) and "the chief Shepherd" (1Pet 5:4). All who care for the flock can only do so if He is their example and they realize that it is the flock of God and not their flock (1Pet 5:2; Acts 20:28).

1 Chronicles 5

Introduction

The three tribes, whose descendants are mentioned in this chapter, Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, live in the wilderness side of the Jordan.

Verses 1-10 | Descendants of Reuben

1 Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; so that he is not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright. 2 Though Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him [came] the leader, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph), 3 the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel [were] Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. 4 The sons of Joel [were] Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, 5 Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, 6 Beerah his son, whom Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria carried away into exile; he was leader of the Reubenites. 7 His kinsmen by their families, in the genealogy of their generations, [were] Jeiel the chief, then Zechariah 8 and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who lived in Aroer, even to Nebo and Baal-meon. 9 To the east he settled as far as the entrance of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, because their cattle had increased in the land of Gilead. 10 In the days of Saul they made war with the Hagrites, who fell by their hand, so that they occupied their tents throughout all the land east of Gilead.

Reuben lost his birthright by an act of fornication (verses 1-2; Gen 35:22; 49:3-4). That birthright went to Joseph. God's choice goes beyond the natural. But Judah gets the most important place because through him the royal line runs and from his descendants the Leader, the Lord Jesus, will be born.

Reuben has enlarged his area (verses 9-10). He was given permission to stay on the east side of the Jordan and was not compelled to live in the land (Num 32:1-5,33). He wanted to stay on the east side of the Jordan because of his many cattle. It is the side that speaks of the earthly blessings.

What Reuben does present to us the man who would like to possess more of the earthly blessings. For the Christian, it is dangerous to engage in the accumulation of earthly possessions as an end in itself. He will thereby pierce himself with many griefs (1Tim 6:9-10,17-19).

Verses 11-22 | Descendants of Gad

11 Now the sons of Gad lived opposite them in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah. 12 Joel [was] the chief and Shapham the second, then Janai and Shaphat in Bashan. 13 Their kinsmen of their fathers' households [were] Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia and Eber, seven. 14 These [were] the sons of Abihail, the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; 15 Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, [was] head of their fathers' households. 16 They lived in Gilead, in Bashan and in its towns, and in all the pasture lands of Sharon, as far as their borders. 17 All of these were enrolled in the genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel. 18 The sons of Reuben and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, [consisting] of valiant men, men who bore shield and sword and shot with bow and [were] skillful in battle, [were] 44,760, who went to war. 19 They made war against the Hagarites, Jetur, Naphish and Nodab. 20 They were helped against them, and the Hagarites and all who [were] with them were given into their hand; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He answered their prayers because they trusted in Him. 21 They took away their cattle: their 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys; and 100,000 men. 22 For many fell slain, because the war [was] of God. And they settled in their place until the exile.

Gad is a tribe where prayer plays a role (verse 20). Just like Jabez, the Gadites are also heard. In a joint war of the tribes on the east side of the Jordan against the Hagarites they cry out to God. By this they overcome, and not by their defensibility and practice in war (verse 18). This war was not waged for their own benefit, but for God, it was a “war of God” (verse 22). Although that was the case, they had to fight themselves. Their crying to God is mentioned and shows that God remembers the moments when these tribes also showed their dependence on Him.

Verses 23-26 | Descendants of the Half-Tribe of Manasseh

23 Now the sons of the half-tribe of Manasseh lived in the land; from Bashan to Baal-hermon and Senir and Mount Hermon they were numerous. 24 These were the heads of their fathers' households, even Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah and Jahdiel, mighty men of valor, famous men, heads of their fathers' households. 25 But they acted treacherously against the God of their fathers and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. 26 So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, even the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away into exile, namely the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara and to the river of Gozan, to this day.

The half-tribe of Manasseh answers the blessing of God, which has been shown by a great number of descendants, with unfaithfulness to Him. Their unfaithfulness also has consequences for the other two tribes – who certainly also did not remain faithful, but that is not mentioned here – because they are taken away together with the half-tribe of Manasseh by the king of Assyria. The deportation is mentioned several times in this chapter (verses 6,22,26).

1 Chronicles 6

Introduction

This chapter has four main topics:

1. the line of the high priests (verses 3-15,49-53),
2. the three generations of Levi (verses 16-30),
3. the singers (verses 31-48) and
4. the cities where the Levites could live (verses 54-81).

In 1 Chronicles 23-26 the service of the Levites is further arranged. Today every believer is a priest (1Pet 2:5a; Rev 5:9-10), every believer is a Levite, that is, has a task, a gift (1Cor 12:11) and all believers are also singers (Heb 13:15).

Verses 1-15 | High Priestly Lineage

1 The sons of Levi [were] Gershon, Kohath and Merari. 2 The sons of Kohath [were] Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. 3 The children of Amram [were] Aaron, Moses and Miriam. And the sons of Aaron [were] Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 4 Eleazar became the father of Phinehas, [and] Phinehas became the father of Abishua, 5 and Abishua became the father of Bukki, and Bukki became the father of Uzzi, 6 and Uzzi became the father of Zerachiah, and Zerachiah became the father of Meraioth, 7 Meraioth became the father of Amariah, and Amariah became the father of Ahitub, 8 and Ahitub became the father of Zadok, and Zadok became the father of Ahimaaz, 9 and Ahimaaz became the father of Azariah, and Azariah became the father of Johanan, 10 and Johanan became the father of Azariah (it was he who served as the priest in the house which Solomon built in Jerusalem), 11 and Azariah became the father of Amariah, and Amariah became the father of Ahitub, 12 and Ahitub became the father of Zadok, and Zadok became the father of Shallum, 13 and Shallum became the father of Hilkiah, and Hilkiah became the father of Azariah, 14 and Azariah became the father of Seraiah, and Seraiah became the father of Jehozadak; 15 and Jehozadak went [along] when the LORD carried Judah and Jerusalem away into exile by Nebuchadnezzar.

First the high priestly lineage is described. The list begins with the sons of Levi (verse 1). They are mentioned in order of their birth (Gen 46:11; Exo 6:15; Num 3:17; 26:57). After having mentioned the three sons, the list continues with Kohath (verse 2), because from his family Aaron (verse 3), the first high priest, originates.

Of the sons of Aaron the first two, Nadab and Abihu, die by the judgment of the LORD. They entered the sanctuary with strange fire, which the LORD did not command them (Lev 10:1-2). That they, although they have no successors, are mentioned here anyway, will be to warn against a willful priesthood. The line of the high priestly lineage is continued with Eleazar (verse 4).

Eli's name does not appear in this list. Eli is a high priest in the time of the book of Judges (1Samuel 1-4), but that he is via the line of Aaron's fourth son, Ithamar. It is not known how the high priesthood of the line from Eleazar to the line from Ithamar has changed. However, Ithamar does not represent the line of God.

The high priesthood according to God's thoughts runs through Zadok (verse 8). Zadok is the faithful high priest whom God would raise up (1Sam 2:35; Eze 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). Zadok and David belong together (2Sam 8:17; 15:24; 1Kgs 1:8). Together they are a picture of the Lord Jesus as King-Priest.

Jehozadak, the last mentioned high priest, is carried away into exile (verse 15). He is the father of Joshua, the high priest who returned from exile.

Verses 16-30 | Descendants of Levi

16 The sons of Levi [were] Gershom, Kohath and Merari. 17 These are the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei. 18 The sons of Kohath [were] Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. 19 The sons of Merari [were] Mahli and Mushi. And these are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' [households]. 20 Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, 21 Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeatherai his son. 22 The sons of Kohath [were] Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, 23 Elkanah his son, Ebiasaph his son and Assir his son, 24 Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziel his son and Shaul his son. 25 The sons of Elkanah [were] Amasai and

Ahimoth. 26 [As for] Elkanah, the sons of Elkanah [were] Zophai his son and Nahath his son, 27 Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. 28 The sons of Samuel [were] Joel the firstborn, and Abijah the second. 29 The sons of Merari [were] Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, 30 Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.

The importance of the genealogy of Levi can be seen after the return of a remnant from the Babylonian exile in the land of Israel in the days of Ezra. Anyone who claims the priesthood, but whose name is not found in the genealogy, is barred from the priesthood as unclean (Ezra 2:61-62).

Korah (verse 22) is the leader who revolted against Moses and was swallowed up by the earth (Num 16:32).

Verses 31-47 | The Singers

31 Now these are those whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark rested [there]. 32 They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem; and they served in their office according to their order. 33 These are those who served with their sons: From the sons of the Kohathites [were] Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, 34 the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, 35 the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, 36 the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, 37 the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, 38 the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. 39 [Heman's] brother Asaph stood at his right hand, even Asaph the son of Berechiah, the son of Shimea, 40 the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchijah, 41 the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, 42 the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, 43 the son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi. 44 On the left hand [were] their kinsmen the sons of Merari: Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, 45 the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkihah, 46 the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shemer, 47 the son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi.

There seem to be three groups of singers. The main group is formed by Heman and his sons (verse 33), with to his right as a second group Asaph and his sons (verse 39), and to his left as a third group Ethan and his sons (verse 44). Each of these three groups comes from one of the sons of Levi. Heman belongs to the Kohathites, Asaph to the Gershonites and Ethan to the Merarites.

The singers are also important for the temple service. In 1 Chronicles 25 the singers are mentioned in more detail. Also in 1 Chronicles 15-16 we meet them. In the tabernacle service, when the people are in the wilderness, there are no singers. The three main singers appear in the book of Psalms, as do the sons of Korah mentioned in verse 37.

The three sons of Levi each have a different service. Yet there is a service they have in common. Each of the sons has a family of singers (verses 33,39,44). After the song of Moses (Exo 15:1) we do not hear about singing. It is only here that we hear about it again. You can only sing when the ark – a type of the Lord Jesus – has found a resting place (verse 31). Where the Lord Jesus can live in the midst, there can be sung.

The “tent of meeting” (verse 32) is not important in the first place because the members of God’s people can meet there, but because God can meet with them there. Every singer performs his service by singing the praises of God. Thus, every service that takes place in the church may be done by singing, even if it concerns the service of admonishing (cf. Col 3:16). The Levites “they served in their office according to their order”, which for us corresponds to that all things are “done properly and in an orderly manner” (1Cor 14:40).

Heman (verse 33) is the grandson of Samuel. Heman does not walk in the way of his father (1Sam 8:2-3), but in that of his grandfather.

Verses 48-49 | Service of Levites and Priests

48 Their kinsmen the Levites were appointed for all the service of the tabernacle of the house of God. 49 But Aaron and his sons offered on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense, for all the work of the most holy place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.

In these two verses we see the distinction between the Levites and the priests. The different service of the Levites is a picture of what we find in the New Testament in the different gifts that all members of the church have (Rom 12:4-8; 1Cor 12:4,11; Eph 4:7,11). However, there is also a common service, and that is the priestly service. That service consists of singing, which is “a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Heb 13:15b). That is not left to special gifts, nor is it dependent on them.

Verses 50-53 | Descendants of Aaron

50 These are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, 51 Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son, 52 Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, 53 Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son.

These verses are a repetition of the priestly line from Aaron to Zadok and Ahimaaz (verses 4-8). This repetition confirms that the priests from the line of Zadok are the only ones among the Levitical divisions in the days of David who are authorized to make sacrifices.

At the same time, this section forms the transition to the priest cities mentioned in the section.

Verses 54-60 | The Priest Cities

54 Now these are their settlements according to their camps within their borders. To the sons of Aaron of the families of the Kohathites (for theirs was the [first] lot), 55 to them they gave Hebron in the land of Judah and its pasture lands around it; 56 but the fields of the city and its villages, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 57 To the sons of Aaron they gave the [following] cities of refuge: Hebron, Libnah also with its pasture lands, Jattir, Eshtemoa with its pasture lands, 58 Hilen with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands, 59 Ashan with its pasture lands and Beth-shemesh with its pasture lands; 60 and from the tribe of Benjamin: Geba with its pasture lands, Allemeth with its pasture lands, and Anathoth with its pasture lands. All their cities throughout their families were thirteen cities.

Among the priest cities are also the cities of refuge (verse 57). For the six cities of refuge see Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 19; Joshua 20 (Num 35:6-34; Deu 19:1-10; Jos 20:1-9).

Verses 61-81 | The Levite Cities

61 Then to the rest of the sons of Kohath [were given] by lot, from the family of the tribe, from the half-tribe, the half of Manasseh, ten cities. 62 To the sons of Gershom, according to their families, [were given] from the tribe of Issachar and from the tribe of Asher, the tribe of Naphtali, and the tribe of Manasseh, thirteen cities in Bashan. 63 To the sons of Merari [were given] by lot, according to their families, from the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad and the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. 64 So the sons of Israel gave to the Levites the cities with their pasture lands. 65 They gave by lot from the tribe of the sons of Judah, the tribe of the sons of Simeon and the tribe of the sons of Benjamin, these cities which are mentioned by name. 66 Now some of the families of the sons of Kohath had cities of their territory from the tribe of Ephraim. 67 They gave to them the [following] cities of refuge: Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim with its pasture lands, Gezer also with its pasture lands, 68 Jokmeam with its pasture lands, Beth-horon with its pasture lands, 69 Aijalon with its pasture lands and Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands; 70 and from the half-tribe of Manasseh: Aner with its pasture lands and Bileam with its pasture lands, for the rest of the family of the sons of Kohath. 71 To the sons of Gershom [were given], from the family of the half-tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan with its pasture lands and Ashtaroth with its pasture lands; 72 and from the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh with its pasture lands, Daberath with its pasture lands 73 and Ramoth with its pasture lands, Anem with its pasture lands; 74 and from the tribe of Asher: Mashal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands, 75 Hukok with its pasture lands and Rehob with its pasture lands; 76 and from the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands, Hammon with its pasture lands and Kiriathaim with its pasture lands. 77 To the rest of [the Levites], the sons of Merari, [were given], from the tribe of Zebulun: Rimmono with its pasture lands, Tabor with its pasture lands; 78 and beyond the Jordan at Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, [were given them], from the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness with its pasture lands, Jahzah with its pasture lands, 79 Kedemoth with its pasture lands and Mephaath with its pasture lands; 80 and from the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture lands, Mahanaim with its pasture lands, 81 Heshbon with its pasture lands and Jazer with its pasture lands.

The Levite cities listed here can also be found in Joshua 21 (for further explanation see the comment *Joshua Explained & Applied* 06). There are forty-eight Levite cities. They are scattered throughout the land, as Jacob foresaw about Levi in his prophetic speech to his sons (Gen 49:7).

These cities are given to the Levites by the other tribes. That does not mean that they have actually taken possession of these cities. For example, we know from Judges 1 that the tribes did not succeed in conquering all cities. This may also explain some differences that exists between the list here and in Joshua 21 (Jos 21:1-40).

1 Chronicles 7

Introduction

In this chapter we have an almost complete overview of the other tribes. Only Dan and Zebulun are missing. These tribes probably did not make any work of the sex registers. This also applies to Naftali, although he can mention a few names in any case.

Verses 1-5 | Descendants of Issaschar

1 Now the sons of Issachar [were] four: Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron. 2 The sons of Tola [were] Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam and Samuel, heads of their fathers' households. [The sons] of Tola [were] mighty men of valor in their generations; their number in the days of David was 22,600. 3 The son of Uzzi [was] Izrahiah. And the sons of Izrahiah [were] Michael, Obadiah, Joel, Isshiah; all five of them [were] chief men. 4 With them by their generations according to their fathers' households were 36,000 troops of the army for war, for they had many wives and sons. 5 Their relatives among all the families of Issachar [were] mighty men of valor, enrolled by genealogy, in all 87,000.

With three tribes it is mentioned that there are “mighty men of valor”. That is here with Issachar (verse 2), and then with Benjamin, three times (verses 7,9,11) and with Asher (verse 40). Among these mighty men, the name “Tola” stands out because in Judges we read of a certain “Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar” (Jdg 10:1), who has “judged Israel twenty-three years” (Jdg 10:2). It may be that this is the same as the Tola mentioned by the chronicler.

There is also talk of “troops of the army for war” (verse 4). That there are so many of them is because there are many women and sons. The women contribute by giving birth of children.

Verses 6-12 | Descendants of Benjamin

6 [The sons of] Benjamin [were] three: Bela and Becher and Jediel. 7 The sons of Bela were five: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth and Iri. They [were] heads of fathers' households, mighty men of valor, and were 22,034 enrolled by gene-

alogy. 8 The sons of Becher [were] Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth and Alemeth. All these [were] the sons of Becher. 9 They were enrolled by genealogy, according to their generations, heads of their fathers' households, 20,200 mighty men of valor. 10 The son of Jediael [was] Bilhan. And the sons of Bilhan [were] Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish and Ahishahar. 11 All these [were] sons of Jediael, according to the heads of their fathers' households, 17,200 mighty men of valor, who were ready to go out with the army to war. 12 Shuppmim and Huppmim [were] the sons of Ir; Hushim [was] the son of Aher.

In the next chapter, a more detailed register of Benjamin's descendants is given (1Chr 8:1-28). It is the introduction to the genealogy of the first king of Israel, Saul.

Benjamin's armed forces are formed by the heads of their fathers' households from different families (verses 7,9,11). They are "mighty men of valor" (verses 7,9,11).

Verse 13 | Descendants of Naphtali

13 The sons of Naphtali [were] Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.

Of the tribe Naphtali only the first fathers are mentioned. They are also mentioned among those who were drawn with Jacob to Joseph in Egypt (cf. Gen 46:24).

Verses 14-19 | Descendants of Manasseh

14 The sons of Manasseh [were] Asriel, whom his Aramean concubine bore; she bore Machir the father of Gilead. 15 Machir took a wife for Huppmim and Shuppmim, whose sister's name was Maacah. And the name of the second was Zelophehad, and Zelophehad had daughters. 16 Maacah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she named him Peresh; and the name of his brother [was] Sheresh, and his sons [were] Ullam and Rakem. 17 The son of Ullam [was] Bedan. These [were] the sons of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. 18 His sister Hammolecheth bore Ishhod and Abiezer and Mahlah. 19 The sons of Shemida were Ahian and Shechem and Likhi and Aniam.

Zelophehad is still more highlighted by mentioning that he has daughters (verse 15). His daughters are mentioned five times in the Scriptures (Num 26:33; 27:1-11; 36:3-12; Jos 17:3-6; 1Chr 7:15). In these mentions it is said that Zelophehad has no sons (Num 26:33a). That is precisely why the daughters ask for a property in the land. They do not want their father's name to disappear from the generations. The LORD says of them: "The daughters of Zelophehad are right" (Num 27:7). Zelophehad and his daughters teach us that God's power is perfected in weakness.

Verses 20-29 | Descendants of Ephraim

20 The sons of Ephraim [were] Shuthelah and Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, Tahath his son, 21 Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead whom the men of Gath who were born in the land killed, because they came down to take their livestock. 22 Their father Ephraim mourned many days, and his relatives came to comfort him. 23 Then he went in to his wife, and she conceived and bore a son, and he named him Beriah, because misfortune had come upon his house. 24 His daughter was Sheerah, who built lower and upper Beth-horon, also Uzzen-sheerah. 25 Rephah was his son [along] with Resheph, Telah his son, Tahan his son, 26 Ladan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, 27 Non his son and Joshua his son. 28 Their possessions and settlements [were] Bethel with its towns, and to the east Naaran, and to the west Gezer with its towns, and Shechem with its towns as far as Ayyah with its towns, 29 and along the borders of the sons of Manasseh, Beth-shean with its towns, Taanach with its towns, Megiddo with its towns, Dor with its towns. In these lived the sons of Joseph the son of Israel.

Men of the Philistine Gath kill sons of Ephraim (verse 21). These men feel themselves the boss of the land, because they are the native people. They see the Israelites as intruders and do not care about what God has determined. They take over the cattle in 'their' land and kill its owners. In the next chapter, the inhabitants of the Philistine Gath are driven out by the Benjamites (1Chr 8:13).

In the men of Gath and their actions we see a picture of our sinful flesh. This is how we were born and is therefore also called 'original sin'. At the birth of their children, parents give this power of the lusts of the flesh to their children.

If the lusts of the flesh are not kept in death, they will kill us and bring great grief upon us (verse 22). Then Beriah is born (verse 23). Beriah means ‘unfortunate’ and is associated with misfortune that had come upon his house, that is the house of Ephraim. We can ignore the “unfortunate” lusts of the flesh if we walk through the Spirit: “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Gal 5:16).

In verse 24 a woman, Sheerah, is mentioned as builder of cities. Women have a large share in the building of the kingdom of God, which consists of families. They govern families, raise the children and determine the atmosphere in the family. That the inspired chronicler mentions her may certainly be an encouragement to any woman who wants to help build the kingdom of God. Her efforts are noted by God.

Joshua, the son of Nun, here called Non (verse 27), is the man who was given by the LORD as successor of Moses to His people to bring them into the promised land.

Verses 30-40 | Descendants of Asher

30 The sons of Asher [were] Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah, and Serah their sister. 31 The sons of Beriah [were] Heber and Malchiel, who was the father of Birzaith. 32 Heber became the father of Japhlet, Shomer and Hotham, and Shua their sister. 33 The sons of Japhlet [were] Pasach, Bimhal and Ashvath. These were the sons of Japhlet. 34 The sons of Shemer [were] Ahi and Rohgah, Jehubbah and Aram. 35 The sons of his brother Helem [were] Zophah, Imna, Shelesh and Amal. 36 The sons of Zophah [were] Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri and Imrah, 37 Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran and Beera. 38 The sons of Jether [were] Jephunneh, Pispah and Ara. 39 The sons of Ulla [were] Arah, Hanniel and Rizia. 40 All these [were] the sons of Asher, heads of the fathers' houses, choice and mighty men of valor, heads of the princes. And the number of them enrolled by genealogy for service in war was 26,000 men.

The descendants of Asher are “all” referred to as “heads of the fathers’ houses, choice and mighty men of valor, heads of the princes” (verse 40). So they are not just “mighty men of valor”, as it is written of the descendants of Issachar (verse 2) and of the descendants of Benjamin (verses 7,9,11). They rise above them. They are “choice and mighty men”, they are very brave and skillful men to whom others also look up.

1 Chronicles 8

Introduction

This chapter is entirely dedicated to the descendants of Benjamin. These descendants have already been discussed in the previous chapter by the chronicler (1Chr 7:6-12). Here he does so more extensively, because he is working towards a special descendant, Saul, the predecessor of David. The ancestors and also the descendants of Saul are listed.

Verses 1-28 | Descendants of Benjamin

*1 And Benjamin became the father of Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, Aharah the third, 2 Nohah the fourth and Rapha the fifth. 3 Bela had sons: Addar, Gera, Abihud, 4 Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, 5 Gera, Shephuphan and Hiram. 6 These are the sons of Ehud: these are the heads of fathers' [households] of the inhabitants of Geba, and they carried them into exile to Manahath, 7 namely, Naaman, Ahijah and Gera—he carried them into exile; and he became the father of Uzza and Ahihud. 8 Shaharaim became the father of children in the country of Moab after he had sent away Hushim and Baara his wives. 9 By Hodesh his wife he became the father of Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, 10 Jeuz, Sachia, Mirmah. These were his sons, heads of fathers' [households]. 11 By Hushim he became the father of Abitub and Elpaal. 12 The sons of Elpaal [were] Eber, Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod, with its towns; 13 and Beriah and Shema, who were heads of fathers' [households] of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who put to flight the inhabitants of Gath; 14 and Ahio, Shashak and Jeremoth. 15 Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, 16 Michael, Ishpah and Joha [were] the sons of Beriah. 17 Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, 18 Ishmerai, Izliah and Jobab [were] the sons of Elpaal. 19 Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, 20 Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, 21 Adaiah, Beraiah and Shimrath [were] the sons of Shimei. 22 Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23 Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, 24 Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah, 25 Iphdeiah and Penuel [were] the sons of Shashak. 26 Shamshe-
rai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27 Jareshiah, Elijah and Zichri [were] the sons of Jeroham. 28 These were heads of the fathers' [households] according to their generations, chief men who lived in Jerusalem.*

In these verses it is about the heads of the family, in connection with Jerusalem (verse 28; cf. verse 32). The tribe of Benjamin is the tribe that lives closest to Jerusalem. The descendants surround the city on three sides.

Ehud (verse 6) is the man who killed Eglon, king of the Moabites, and delivered the people of the Moabites (Jdg 3:12-30).

In verse 13 we read about family heads who expelled the inhabitants of Gath. The powerful performance of these family heads contrasts with the descendants of Ephraim who are killed by the men of Gath (1Chr 7:21).

Verses 29-40 | The Lineage of Saul

29 Now in Gibeon, [Jei]el, the father of Gibeon lived, and his wife's name was Maacah; 30 and his firstborn son [was] Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, 31 Gedor, Ahio and Zecher. 32 Mikloth became the father of Shimeah. And they also lived with their relatives in Jerusalem opposite their [other] relatives. 33 Ner became the father of Kish, and Kish became the father of Saul, and Saul became the father of Jonathan, Malchi-shua, Abinadab and Eshbaal. 34 The son of Jonathan [was] Merib-baal, and Merib-baal became the father of Micah. 35 The sons of Micah [were] Pithon, Melech, Tarea and Ahaz. 36 Ahaz became the father of Jehoaddah, and Jehoaddah became the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri became the father of Moza. 37 Moza became the father of Binea; Raphah [was] his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. 38 Azel had six sons, and these [were] their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah and Hanan. All these [were] the sons of Azel. 39 The sons of Eshek his brother [were] Ulam his firstborn, Jeush the second and Eliphelet the third. 40 The sons of Ulam were mighty men of valor, archers, and had many sons and grandsons, 150 [of them]. All these [were] of the sons of Benjamin.

Here we have the genealogy of Saul. It is the bridge to the history of David.

It is again noted that the descendants of Benjamin mentioned here, that is here the ancestry of Saul, live in Jerusalem, "opposite their [other] relatives" (verse 32; cf. verse 28). Jerusalem is mentioned here as their place of residence to motivate the returnees from the Babylonian exile to go back to Jerusalem. Unfortunately, it appears that few were prepared to do so. The lot must determine who is to live there (cf. Neh 11:1-4).

Merib-baal (verse 34) is Mephibosheth. Baal' in the name Merib-baal means 'lord'. Bosheth' in the name Mephibosheth means 'shame'.

Also in the lineage of Saul is referred to "mighty men of valor" (verse 40; 1Chr 7:7,9,11). The tribe of Benjamin is characterized by combativeness, as it resounds in what Jacob noted in his prophetic speech to his sons about Benjamin (Gen 49:27).

1 Chronicles 9

Introduction

In this chapter we have some genealogies, but the emphasis is more on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the city God has chosen as His city, as it is after the exile. The highlights are the royal tribe of Judah, the priest tribe of Levi and the royal city of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 11, where we find many names from this chapter, proves how difficult it has been to get Jerusalem inhabited again. After the return there had to come order again in Israel and especially in Jerusalem. This order has to some extent been restored. The genealogies played an important role in this. For those who went to live there, it meant that they lived in the direct presence of the King and of the temple.

Verses 1-2 | Jerusalem After the Exile

1 So all Israel was enrolled by genealogies; and behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel. And Judah was carried away into exile to Babylon for their unfaithfulness. 2 Now the first who lived in their possessions in their cities [were] Israel, the priests, the Levites and the temple servants.

We can interpret verse 1 as a kind of conclusion of the previous chapters. In the first part of the verse we read about the enrollment of the whole people in genealogies. Its importance is indicated in the second part of the verse, because there this enrollment is linked to the carrying away into exile to Babylon.

Verse 1 speaks of “all Israel”, although only a remnant, most of which belongs to the two tribes, has returned to Jerusalem. It shows that God always has the whole people in mind.

“the first who lived in their possessions in their cities” are divided into four groups: Israel, i.e. the normal citizens, the priests, the Levites and the temple servants (verse 2).

Verses 3-9 | Heads of Fathers' Households

3 Some of the sons of Judah, of the sons of Benjamin and of the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh lived in Jerusalem: 4 Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, from the sons of Perez the son of Judah. 5 From the Shilonites [were] Asaiah the firstborn and his sons. 6 From the sons of Zerah [were] Jeuel and their relatives, 690 [of them]. 7 From the sons of Benjamin [were] Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah, 8 and Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah; 9 and their relatives according to their generations, 956. All these [were] heads of fathers' [households] according to their fathers' houses.

In verse 3, the two and ten tribes are mentioned. There is talk of Judah and Benjamin, the two tribes, and of Ephraim and Manasseh, which represent the ten tribes. We see the whole people of God. We too are bound to live according to the order that applies to all the people of God, which is God's kingdom as it is now on earth. This must be done according to the instructions of the Lord of that realm which He gives in His Word.

Verses 10-13 | Priests

10 From the priests [were] Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin, 11 and Azariah the son of Hilkiyah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the chief officer of the house of God; 12 and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer; 13 and their relatives, heads of their fathers' households, 1,760 very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.

There is talk of "the chief officer of the house of God" (verse 11). The priests are called "very able men for the work of the service of the house of God" (verse 13). This shows that they did the service in the house of God with the needed ability. To be a priest is one thing; to do priestly service in God's house needs a God given ability. Here is talk of priest who have grown in their service: they are very able men.

Verses 14-34 | Levites, Gatekeepers and Singers

14 *Of the Levites [were] Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; 15 and Bakbakkar, Heresh and Galal and Mattaniah the son of Mica, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph, 16 and Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites. 17 Now the gatekeepers [were] Shallum and Akkub and Talmon and Ahiman and their relatives (Shallum the chief 18 [being stationed] until now at the king's gate to the east). These [were] the gatekeepers for the camp of the sons of Levi. 19 Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his relatives of his father's house, the Korahites, [were] over the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent; and their fathers had been over the camp of the LORD, keepers of the entrance. 20 Phinehas the son of Eleazar was ruler over them previously, [and] the LORD was with him. 21 Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was gatekeeper of the entrance of the tent of meeting. 22 All these who were chosen to be gatekeepers at the thresholds were 212. These were enrolled by genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer appointed in their office of trust. 23 So they and their sons had charge of the gates of the house of the LORD, [even] the house of the tent, as guards. 24 The gatekeepers were on the four sides, to the east, west, north and south. 25 Their relatives in their villages [were] to come in every seven days from time to time [to be] with them; 26 for the four chief gatekeepers who [were] Levites, were in an office of trust, and were over the chambers and over the treasuries in the house of God. 27 They spent the night around the house of God, because the watch was committed to them; and they [were] in charge of opening [it] morning by morning. 28 Now some of them had charge of the utensils of service, for they counted them when they brought them in and when they took them out. 29 Some of them also were appointed over the furniture and over all the utensils of the sanctuary and over the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the frankincense and the spices. 30 Some of the sons of the priests prepared the mixing of the spices. 31 Mattithiah, one of the Levites, who was the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, had the responsibility over the things which were baked in pans. 32 Some of their relatives of the sons of the Kohathites [were] over the showbread to prepare it every sabbath. 33 Now these are the singers, heads of fathers' [households] of the Levites, [who lived] in the chambers [of the temple]*

*free [from other service]; for they were engaged in their work day and night.
34 These were heads of fathers' [households] of the Levites according to their
generations, chief men, who lived in Jerusalem.*

The gatekeepers (verse 17) must ensure that nothing enters God's house that does not belong there. It is the task of every believer with regard to the present temple, the church of God, to watch over it (cf. Mk 13:34). For example, it means paying attention to what is taught, what gospel is brought, how is worshiped. The standard of assessment is that "all things" are "done for edification" (1Cor 14:26b).

Although all believers have the task of ensuring that what happens in the church is in accordance with God's will, this task rests especially on the shoulders of elders or overseers. Besides the fact that the function of gatekeeper is important for the church, the vigilance of the gatekeeper is also important for our body, which is also a temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 6:19). We have to watch what enters our hearts through our eyes and ears.

"The king's gate" (verse 18; 2Kgs 16:18) is the gate through which the king goes from his palace to the temple. This gate will always have been closed and only opened when the king goes through it to the temple and from the temple back to his palace (Eze 44:2-3). Although there is no king in Israel when the remnant has returned to Israel, this gate is still honored, probably in the hope that sooner or later the scepter will return to David's house.

Can what is said of Pinehas also be said of us? "The LORD was with him" (verse 20). This can be said of him because he watched over the honor of the LORD and stood up for it at the moment His honor was at stake (Num 25:6-15).

Something is said here about Samuel that we don't read of him anywhere else (verse 22). Here it appears that he not only as a prophet spoke the Word of God to the conscience of the people, but also contributed to the service in the house of God. After all, he also grew up in the immediate vicinity of the tabernacle and became completely familiar with the service in it. It is not a forgotten aspect of his service, but the Holy Spirit has thought it good to mention it only here. It reminds us that the service in the house of God must be fully in accordance with the Word of God.

Those who serve in the house of God also spend the night close to this house (verse 27). This allows them to start their service as soon as they wake up. It is good for ministers to be close to their work, to the house of God, and to devote themselves fully to it. For us it means that we are constantly aware that we are in God's house and that our whole daily life takes place there, while it is night in the world around us.

There is diversity and unity in the service of the Levites (verses 28-32). We can learn from this that also in the church each has his or her own task to perform and that this task happens at the same time in unity with others.

The singers are never free (verse 33). They are not *with*, but *in* the chambers and constantly praise God ("day and night"), as He, Who always does good, is due. Here the temple is a picture of heaven, of what is happening there (Rev 4:8). "How blessed are those who dwell in Your house! They are ever praising You" (Psa 84:4; Heb 13:15).

Verses 35-44 | Genealogy of the Gibeonites

35 In Gibeon Jeiel the father of Gibeon lived, and his wife's name was Maacah, 36 and his firstborn son [was] Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 37 Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah and Mikloth. 38 Mikloth became the father of Shimeam. And they also lived with their relatives in Jerusalem opposite their [other] relatives. 39 Ner became the father of Kish, and Kish became the father of Saul, and Saul became the father of Jonathan, Malchi-shua, Abinadab and Eshbaal. 40 The son of Jonathan [was] Merib-baal; and Merib-baal became the father of Micah. 41 The sons of Micah [were] Pithon, Melech, Tahrea [and Ahaz]. 42 Ahaz became the father of Jarah, and Jarah became the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri became the father of Moza, 43 and Moza became the father of Binea and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. 44 Azel had six sons whose names are these: Azrikam, Bocheru and Ishmael and Sheariah and Obadiah and Hanan. These were the sons of Azel.

In verse 35, the historical part of the book begins, and it begins with again mentioning Saul's genealogy (cf. 1Chr 8:29-40). This is done to show the contrast with David. This is another illustration of the principle that the natural comes first and then the spiritual (1Cor 15:46). We find this throughout the Bible. Thus we also read that God "takes away the first in order to establish the second" (Heb 10:9b).

Saul is the king to the taste of the people, David is the king to the heart of God. We can already see a great difference in the activities of both persons at the time of their calling. Saul is searching for donkeys when he is promised the kingship (1Sam 9:3,19-20; 1Sam 10:1); David is taken from behind the sheep to be anointed king (1Sam 16:10-13). God is angry with His people when He gives Saul and even angrier when He takes him away (Hos 13:11).

The kingship itself is according to God's thoughts (Deu 17:14-20), but that is a kingship according to the wishes of His own heart. God is the King of His people. He wants to give form to it in a human being. This man is the Man of His pleasure, His only begotten Son, who became Man. It is the kingdom of God, but the government over it is laid in the hands of a Man.

1 Chronicles 10

Introduction

It is not the purpose of 1 Chronicles to present the life of Saul in detail because it contributes little to the subject of this Bible book: the house of God. The particularities of Saul's life are given in the first book of Samuel. It is presumed that the reader knows that. In the first book of Samuel the failure of man in his responsibility is presented. Then God will work on the fulfillment of His counsels by giving the kingdom to David (cf. Acts 13:21-22). The man to the heart of the people is set aside by God. Man according to the flesh must disappear to make room for the man according to God's heart.

Verses 1-6 | The Death of Saul and His Three Sons

1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 The Philistines closely pursued Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. 3 The battle became heavy against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was wounded by the archers. 4 Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and abuse me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword and fell on it. 5 When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell on his sword and died. 6 Thus Saul died with his three sons, and all [those] of his house died together.

Because the purpose of the chronicler is to describe David's life, there is only one moment in Saul's life that interests him, and that is his death. The opening words of verse 1 point to the connection with the previous history of Saul, described in the first book of Samuel.

The history of Saul's death is described in almost equal terms in 1 Samuel 31 (1Sam 31:1-6). When the Philistines fight against Israel, Saul sees his men fleeing and being killed. He sees that his end is approaching. Yet there is no crying to God. The only thing he still wants is to prevent falling alive

into the hands of the Philistines. He will have known from the life of Samson what that means (Jdg 16:21-25).

Saul calls the Philistines “uncircumcised”. But even though Saul has been circumcised externally, and thus externally a member of the people of God, he is uncircumcised in heart (Rom 2:28-29). Circumcision is a picture of the judgment of the sinful flesh, the acknowledgment that God had to judge it in Christ (Col 2:11). Saul maintains the outer separation between him as an Israelite and the Philistines, without realizing that inwardly he himself is a Philistine.

Saul asks his armor bearer to kill him, but his armor bearer is afraid to do it. Then Saul commits suicide. It is the first suicide we find in the Bible. According to Samuel’s word, Saul and his sons die in one day (1Sam 28:19). They fall by the hand of the enemies they had to fight and exterminate. Saul did not succeed because he himself had no inner relationship with God. That is why he is powerless in his fight against the Philistines, who for the same reason are supreme.

Three of Saul’s sons died with him, including Jonathan. David’s heroes have chosen David’s side when he is still rejected. Jonathan is not there. He gave everything to David, except his shoes, so to speak (cf. 1Sam 18:4). He thought he could serve David by staying with his father Saul. At the critical moment, when it is clear that David must flee, he does not follow him, but returns to the city (1Sam 20:42b).

The chronicler passes by a fourth son of Saul, Ish-bosheth, who was made king by Abner instead of his father Saul. Because Ish-bosheth was made king totally without God’s will, he does not count. That is why the chronicler says of “Saul” that he “died with his three sons, and all [those] of his house died together” (verse 6). With this the house of Saul has reached the end of its existence and the way is free to introduce David.

Verses 7-10 | The Philistines Dishonor Saul

7 When all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that they had fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and lived in them. 8 It came about the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on

Mount Gilboa. 9 So they stripped him and took his head and his armor and sent [messengers] around the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to their idols and to the people. 10 They put his armor in the house of their gods and fastened his head in the house of Dagon.

Saul did not fulfil his task of delivering the land of the Philistines. On the contrary, when he has died, the Philistines come and live in the cities abandoned by the Israelites (1Sam 31:7). And of which Saul has been afraid, that he would be mocked, does happen. When the Philistines find him and his sons, they strip him of his armor and his head.

The Philistines send Saul's head and armor around their land. They do so to bring the message of their victory to their idols and to the people. It shows the folly of their idols. Their idols do not know what happened and must be informed. Then Saul's armor is placed in the idol's house as a tribute to their god. The head of Saul may be placed in the house of their idols (1Sam 31:8-10; cf. 1Sam 17:54,57).

Verses 11-12 | Jabes Pays Tribute to Saul

11 When all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all the valiant men arose and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons and brought them to Jabesh, and they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

There are still people in Israel for whom this humiliation goes too far. The men from Jabesh are mentioned honorably. They act with the anointed of the LORD as David has respected him. They sacrifice their night's rest to pick up Saul's body and the bodies of his sons and bury them. Then they fast for seven days (1Sam 31:11-13). They understand something of the reproach that has been laid upon Israel.

Verses 13-14 | Why Saul Died

13 So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD, because of the word of the LORD which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry [of it], 14 and did not inquire of the LORD. Therefore He killed him and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.

The reasons for Saul's rejection are given:

1. Not keeping "the word of the LORD" (1Sam 13:8-14; 15:1-3,9-11,26).
The fact that he did not keep what God said means that he did not keep it in order to preserve, guard and secure it. He has not taken that word as a guideline for his actions. It shows its negative attitude towards what is good.
2. Asking counsel of a medium, to inquire the spirit of a dead person (1Sam 28:7-13), literally that he has asked an evil spirit to seek, rather than consulting the LORD. Here we see that he takes a positive attitude towards evil. Where the former is not present, there will be room for the latter.

Saul was not killed by the hand of the Philistines, nor by his own hand, but by the hand of the LORD. The time of Saul is over. God's time has come for the introduction of the man to His heart, David.

1 Chronicles 11

Introduction

The events in 1 Chronicles 11-20 take place in the period from 1003-995 BC. In that time David grows to the height of his power. All that has happened before the people come to David in Hebron is passed over tacitly. The faults and suffering of David are not mentioned. History begins by presenting what constitutes the power and glory of the kingdom of David. We can connect these histories with the future establishment of the power of Christ, the Son of David, on earth.

Verses 1-3 | David Anointed King Over Israel

1 Then all Israel gathered to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. 2 In times past, even when Saul was king, you [were] the one who led out and brought in Israel; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and you shall be prince over My people Israel.'" 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD through Samuel.

Here comes all Israel as well to make David king and not, as is described in 2 Samuel, first the two tribes and then all the tribes (2Sam 2:4; 2Sam 5:1). From now until the end of this book (1 Chronicles 11-29) it is about David. The whole people know that they are his bones and his flesh. In this we can recognize what the New Testament people of God, the church, can say to Christ in the awareness of their close union with Him. In Hebrews 2 this union unity is expressed by the Lord Jesus (Heb 2:11-14). Our union with Him is made possible because He "partook of blood and flesh" (Heb 2:14), but "without sin" (Heb 4:15).

Thought is being given to what David did for the people before, when Saul was king over them (verse 2). We see here a picture of what the Lord Jesus did in our lives in the past. He has made sure that we have not perished under the rule of Satan and the flesh, of which Saul is a picture. When Saul reigned, the true blessing came in reality from David.

David has made the people “led out and brought in”. This reminds us of the words of the Lord Jesus whom He pronounces as the good Shepherd (Jn 10:9). Therefore it is also good to see that the LORD, the God of David, wants David in the first place to be a *shepherd* for His people. Then and thereby he can also be *king*. This applies fully to the true David, the Lord Jesus (Eze 34:23-24; 37:24).

First and foremost is the care of God’s people, and then comes the reign. Be shepherd first, then become king. This is also the case in the life of the Lord Jesus. He is now the good Shepherd, while He will soon openly accept His kingship. For us it coincides. We will gladly acknowledge His dominion over our lives now because He has given His life for us as the good Shepherd and also cares for us every day as the chief Shepherd. Surely there is no one we would rather submit to than to Someone Who has given Himself so for us and who takes care of us every day, is there?

There is also much to be learned from this by all those who have a certain authority over others. We can think of the man’s attitude towards his wife and the attitude of parents towards their children. It is also important for the acknowledgment of authority in the church of God. If God has given persons a place of authority, they can only exercise that authority properly if they know for themselves what it is to serve, to be the least and to care for those entrusted to them. Such persons show the image of the Lord Jesus.

Subservience to someone who cares about you, who cares for you with love is much easier, than to someone who only wants to play the boss over you and abuses his position of authority for that. In God’s sight, authority is never separated from care and love, and that has become perfectly visible in the Lord Jesus.

After the declaration of all people, the elders come to David as the representatives of all Israel (verse 3). David makes with them “a covenant ... before the LORD”. He will have committed himself to be a good king for his people and to reign in accordance with God’s law for the king (Deu 17:14-20; cf. 1Sam 10:25). In so doing, he was aware that he was taking on a task for which God would ask him to account. He will also realize that he depends on Him to perform his task.

The reaction is that the elders anoint David king over all Israel. By this he becomes a person dedicated to the LORD, through which he can act in His Name, with His authority. It is not an own act, but “according to the word of the LORD through Samuel”. Here David is anointed for the third time in his life (Elisha is anointed once, Aaron twice and David three times):

1. The first time David was anointed in his father’s house, in humiliation and among his brothers (1Sam 16:13). We can connect this with the anointing of the Lord Jesus with the Spirit, also in the midst of His brothers, in the Jordan in humiliation (Mt 3:16).
2. The second time, immediately after Saul died, David is anointed by the two tribes (2Sam 2:4). He is not yet a king over all Israel, but only over Judah. This refers to the time when the Lord Jesus returns to earth. Then He will first come in connection with Judah, that is the remnant of the two tribes that are in the land at that moment. They will receive Him with joy as the promised Messiah.
3. The third time is described here, when he becomes king of all of Israel (verse 3). This looks forward to the time when the Lord Jesus returns and openly accepts His kingship over Israel, visible to all.

Verses 4-8 | David Captures Jerusalem

4 Then David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (that is, Jebus); and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, [were] there. 5 The inhabitants of Jebus said to David, “You shall not enter here.” Nevertheless David captured the stronghold of Zion (that is, the city of David). 6 Now David had said, “Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall be chief and commander.” Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became chief. 7 Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore it was called the city of David. 8 He built the city all around, from the Millo even to the surrounding area; and Joab repaired the rest of the city.

The first action mentioned here of David is that he goes from Hebron to Jebus to capture that city. The new king chooses this city as his new capital. The choice of this city is also of strategic importance, because Jerusalem is much more central in the land and is also situated on a mountain, which makes it difficult for enemies to capture the city. However, the first consid-

eration is not the strategic importance. David's choice of this city as a royal city is in keeping with the choice of God. It is the place He has chosen to make His Name dwell there.

David makes the capture of Jebus a matter of honor for his leaders. Joab turns out to be the man who takes up the challenge and wins and becomes the new chief and commander of David's army. Joab is mentioned here in a positive sense and not negative as in the second book of Samuel. This is about the establishment of the kingdom of David; everything is done with an eye on him, on him all attention is focused.

After this capture David takes authority over the city. He is going to live there. Therefore the city can now be called "the city of David". Such a change of authority takes place in the lives of every newly converted person. At the moment of his conversion he passes from the power of Satan to God and acknowledges the dominion of the Lord Jesus over his life. The Lord Jesus comes to dwell in the life of such a person and has access to it.

Verses 9-10 | The Heroes of David

*9 David became greater and greater, for the LORD of hosts [was] with him.
10 Now these are the heads of the mighty men whom David had, who gave him strong support in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel.*

David now dwells in Jerusalem and gains in stature (verse 9). That the LORD of hosts is with him, is evident from the list of mighty men. David gains in stature because of the great men around him, his heroes. Above all, he gains in stature, because the LORD of hosts is with him. The men of valor are led by the LORD to David. They followed him in the time of his being rejected and have become heroes. By the LORD of hosts, to which also the army of David belongs, they are mentioned as men who helped David to acquire his kingship and the conquest of the royal city.

These men owe their stature to him (verse 10). By strengthening him they strengthened themselves and their own interests. They have given "him strong support in his kingdom, together with all Israel". His prosperity is their prosperity. Through their connection with David they share in all that is His part. So it is with us in our connection with the Lord Jesus. What

we do to promote the kingdom of the Son of David will be for our profit. What makes someone great is the good he does. This greatness cannot be obtained without work and danger for one's own life. It is about the good fight of faith in the Lord Jesus.

Hereafter follows the list of the names of David's heroes (verses 11-47). That list is also in the second book of Samuel (2Sam 23:8-39). In 2 Samuel 23 this list is given at the end of David's life, while here the heroes are mentioned at the beginning of his reign. The heroes and their actions are remembered here in relation to the time when David was not yet king.

From this we can learn the lesson that we are heroes if we already live up to the reign of the Lord Jesus in our lives. He will remember and appreciate this when we are with Him later. Nothing of what is done for the Lord in the time of His rejection is forgotten by Him (cf. Lk 22:28-30).

The heroes are mentioned in connection with their actions in three areas. They have fought

1. with the enemies,
2. for the land and
3. for David.

The deeds of heroism reflect David's great heroic deed in defeating Goliath.

The LORD has made David king, but here is seen the commitment of David's followers to make him king. Their lives show what kind of people it are that have helped David to acquire the kingship. We see what spirit has inspired them and what has led them to their intense personal dedication.

We can also apply this to ourselves. Partly through our faithfulness, commitment and dedication, the way is paved for the Lord Jesus to establish His kingship here on earth. As soon as the last person has been added to the church of God, the Lord Jesus comes. As far as our responsibility is concerned, we can help to ensure that this happens quickly. Through our faithfulness, commitment, and dedication we can hasten the dawn of God's day, that is, let it begin sooner (2Pet 3:12). The day of God is the day when God will "be all in all" (1Cor 15:28) and all things will answer to Whom He is.

Verses 11 | Jashobeam

11 These [constitute] the list of the mighty men whom David had: Jashobeam, the son of a Hachmonite, the chief of the thirty; he lifted up his spear against three hundred whom he killed at one time.

The name of Jashobeam appears here for the first time. He is not mentioned in the description of David's life during his rejection. He is of those who come to David when David is in Ziklag (1Chr 12:1,6). Here we see that he is mentioned as David's main hero. His heroic act consists of killing three hundred men on a single occasion. He pierces all these enemies with his spear and radically deals with them.

There is no mention of who these enemies are. It gives us the example that we can defeat a powerful enemy who wants to overpower us or the people of God if we are attached to the Lord Jesus. For this we need to know how to deal with the spear. The spear is here an image of the Word of God. Only then we can defeat the enemy.

Verses 12-14 | Eleazar

12 After him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who [was] one of the three mighty men. 13 He was with David at Pasdammim when the Philistines were gathered together there to battle, and there was a plot of ground full of barley; and the people fled before the Philistines. 14 They took their stand in the midst of the plot and defended it, and struck down the Philistines; and the LORD saved them by a great victory.

Eleazar defends the food of the people against the enemy, the Philistines. Philistines are people who live in the promised land and claim it for themselves, without any right to it. They represent people who reside on the Christian territory and call themselves Christians, while they have no life from God. They moderate that the Christian territory belongs to them and that only they know how to behave there. They fill in being a Christian at will, thereby depriving God's people of the food of God's Word. Such people are, for example, modernistic ministers.

There is a need for heroes to defend spiritual food against these influences. Such an act of heroism can be done only by someone who has love for God's people. Here lies an important task for believers who have been giv-

en by the Lord as teachers to His church. They have to accurately handle the word of truth (2Tim 2:15), that is to say, explain each part of the truth correctly, so that the Word of God is food for the hearer's heart and he is built up by it in his faith.

Verses 15-19 | Three Heroes Fetch Water for David

15 Now three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam, while the army of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim. 16 David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines [was] then in Bethlehem. 17 David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" 18 So the three broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which [was] by the gate, and took [it] and brought [it] to David; nevertheless David would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD; 19 and he said, "Be it far from me before my God that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of these men [who went] at the risk of their lives? For at the risk of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.

The three heroes who fetch water for David are characterized by love for David. What these three men do, may seem to unbelievers an unreasonable or perhaps even a nonsensical love. The reason for this love deed is a childhood memory that David expresses. He would like someone to give him water to drink from the well of Bethlehem, where he grew up. He expresses this desire without addressing anyone directly. He does not give a command, but vents a sigh, as it were.

This sigh, this desire, is heard by these people. What they hear from David's mouth and heart is enough to make an effort that David gets what he desires. They do not act on the basis of an order, but on the basis of a wish. They don't discuss, but go. They must break through enemy lines twice. That doesn't stop them from going anyway. They accomplish their mission and bring – we can imagine, with radiant faces – the water to David. Precisely because there is no meaningful argument for their action, the only motive can be their love for David.

David appreciates their deed. It penetrates deeply into him what efforts these men have made and what dangers they have defied. Therefore he does not want to drink the water they bring to him, but pours it out as a libation. For him this water is equal to their “blood”, that is “their life”, which they have put at risk for him (verse 19). The men know the meaning of the libation. Therefore what David does is not an insult to them, but a proof of his great appreciation of their deed. The pouring out of the water is the only act that, between the mention of all the heroic deeds of his men, is mentioned of David himself.

Verses 20-21 | Abishai

20 As for Abshai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the thirty, and he swung his spear against three hundred and killed them; and he had a name as well as the thirty. 21 Of the three in the second [rank] he was the most honored and became their commander; however, he did not attain to the [first] three.

Abshai or Abishai is mentioned several times in the history of David. He is the oldest of the three sons of Zeruah, the sister of David (1Chr 2:16). The first time his name is mentioned when David asks who wants to go with him to Saul, who pursues him. This is a dangerous undertaking. Abishai then presents himself (1Sam 26:6). Abishai has always stayed with David in the time that David is pursued by Saul.

The act mentioned here is not mentioned in the description of his fates with David. It is an impressive act. Within the second group of three, he takes first place and is even the commander of the other two heroes. At the same time it is mentioned that he did not reach the height of the first three.

That may seem like a disappointment, a shadow over his fine performance. Yet that is only true if he were an ambitious man. We have no indications of this. His brother Joab is ambitious. That this of Abishai is noticed is therefore not meant to be a denigration of his heroic deed. It is about the appreciation of his deed in comparison with the deeds of others. The Lord determines the value of everything.

It may be that others have done more for the Lord than we have. We don't have to be sad about that, find it unfair or envy those others. We may know that what we have been able to do is fully appreciated by Him.

Verses 22-25 | Benaiah

22 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, mighty in deeds, struck down the two [sons of] Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion inside a pit on a snowy day. 23 He killed an Egyptian, a man of [great] stature five cubits tall. Now in the Egyptian's hand [was] a spear like a weaver's beam, but he went down to him with a club and snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. 24 These [things] Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and had a name as well as the three mighty men. 25 Behold, he was honored among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three; and David appointed him over his guard.

Benaiah performs three heroic deeds by defeating three enemies who were a threat to the people of God. Successively

1. he defeats two sons of Ariel from Moab,
2. he kills a lion in a pit at a time when there is snow, and
3. he defeats a giant of an Egyptian, whom he kills with his own weapon.

Benaiah was a very determined man. Nor is it the case that after one victory he thought it was all right. He has a keen eye for everything that threatens God's people. Every time new danger presented itself, he dispels it by a firm and powerful action. When defeating the lion and the Egyptian, he turns to the enemy, he takes the initiative. Benaiah is a man with courage and perseverance.

From his achievements we can learn important spiritual lessons. We must remember, however, that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual [forces] of wickedness in the heavenly [places]" (Eph 6:12). The three enemies that Benaiah defeats and kills are a picture of three spiritual enemy powers that we face in our lives. We will see that Moab is a picture of the flesh in the believer, that the lion here is a picture of Satan and that the Egyptian is a picture of the world.

In the spiritual application, defeating the enemies takes place when someone comes to faith through the preaching of the gospel. Every time someone comes to faith, Satan and the world are defeated. We also see it when believers are led to live by the Spirit and thereby kill the workings of the

flesh. [For a more detailed applications of the heroic deeds of Benaiah, see Explanation & Application of 2 Samuel 23:20-23.]

Benaiah is honored, but not like the others. Yet his reward comes after years, when David's wanderings are over and David has become king over Israel. That is the time of decoration. Then David appoints him as the head of his bodyguard (verse 25). The long time that has passed before Benaiah gains this important position may be an encouragement for believers who have to wait a long time for God's public acknowledgment. Believers who see that believers who are less spiritual or even carnal minded seem to have more prosperity need not be discouraged. Once, at God's time, perhaps only after years or at the open reign of the Lord Jesus, comes God's public acknowledgment of what has been done for Him.

During the rejection of David Benaiah remained faithful to him. Without shivering, he fought enemies that were a threat to society. It did not matter to him whether they approached him or whether he had to go there himself. Where he saw danger, he acted fearlessly. We've seen that in the previous verses.

David acknowledges Benaiah's impressive record of service and makes him the head of his bodyguard. This 'promotion' must have been a great joy for Benaiah. He was already so attached to his king and now he will be even more closely involved in David's life. As the head of the bodyguard he will have to consult a lot with David. David will inform him of his whereabouts and his daily activities. David will tell him where he intends to go. On that basis Benaiah will have to investigate where dangers threaten and how they can be circumvented or rendered harmless.

We can see the next lesson here. Every victory over the flesh, the devil or the world is rewarded by the Lord Jesus with something of Himself. The power to say no to something the devil or the world offers is only found in our love for the Lord Jesus. For the Lord Jesus, this proof of our love is so important that He will tell us more about Himself. We are going to discover more and more in the Bible about how He thinks and acts, now and in the future.

At the same time he gives us the responsibility to keep what He entrusts us and not to let it take away from us. Thus Paul says to Timothy: "O Tim-

othy, guard what has been entrusted to you” (1Tim 6:20a). Then the task is that we do not engage in “empty chatter [and] the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”” (1Tim 6:20b). This is found among liberal theologians who, by appealing to the Bible, justify the most brutal sins and thus deceive countless people.

I read an example about a pastor who, appealing to “anything is lawful” (1Cor 10:23), justifies a homosexual relationship! As if that is a relationship in which God’s thoughts of love between husband and wife are also expressed. These are enemies of the worst kind. The Lord Jesus wants us to hold fast what we have – in this example, marriage as He has instituted it – until He comes (Rev 3:11).

When David has grown old, Benaiah faces a great danger that threatens his king. The danger comes from within. A son of David, Adoniah, wants to become king, while it is clear that Solomon is the rightful successor of David. This history is in 1 Kings 1. Adoniah is a handsome boy and a cunning talker. He also knows who to involve in his conspiracy and who to keep out. He knows it makes no sense to ask Benaiah to help him. It is clear to him that he cannot get him under his influence.

Does our environment also know us as someone with character? Or are we rather quick to go along with someone who has a certain ‘charisma’? Are we relying on the way someone comes across without paying attention to the content? Then ‘Adoniah’ has got hold on us. We no longer pay attention to the Lord Jesus, who we see as ‘old’ in the sense of old-fashioned. We are looking for new impulses to live our faith. How God wants it to be is no longer so important. ‘Experience’ or emotion is what it is all about. Not that experience or emotion is not important, but the ‘kick’-faith is not from God. It is not the Lord Jesus Who is central in this, but man and his feelings.

Let us think about whether we are in the right company. That is the case with Benaiah. He has good comrades in the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan. They are not invited by Adonia either. Who are our comrades, from whom do we have support when we need it? Are our friends spiritual-minded people who want to live with the Lord Jesus?

Verses 26-47 | Other Heroes

26 Now the mighty men of the armies [were] Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 27 Shammoth the Hararite, Helez the Pelonite, 28 Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, 29 Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, 30 Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, 31 Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, 32 Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, 33 Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, 34 the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shagee the Hararite, 35 Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphai the son of Ur, 36 Hephher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, 37 Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, 38 Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, 39 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armor bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah, 40 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, 41 Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, 42 Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a chief of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, 43 Hanan the son of Maacah and Joshaphat the Mithnite, 44 Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, 45 Jedaiel the son of Shimri and Joha his brother, the Tizite, 46 Eliel the Mahavite and Jeribai and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, 47 Eliel and Obed and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

God considered it important to list the names of these heroes and to preserve them. With very few exceptions we only know their names, but God knows exactly what they did for David and for Him. In this way God also keeps His registers today. There are deeds that stand out, while countless other deeds remained concealed. However, God knows how to appreciate every heroic act and to reward it in His time (cf. Mt 25:14-23; Lk 19:11-19). God rewards according to faithfulness, not according to the greatness of the deed.

We have several lists in which believers are mentioned, sometimes with mention of deeds. In the list of heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 first many names are mentioned, but at the end there are no more names, there we only read about deeds (Heb 11:1-40). See also the list of names in Romans 16, where Paul mentions believers, sometimes with, sometimes without an addition (Rom 16:1-16). This is also the case with the disciples of the Lord Jesus. Of some we know a lot, of others less, of a few only the name. But

they were with the Lord and followed Him. That He remembers and will reward.

Some names of the list are known to us. We know the first name, Asahel. He is called the brother of Joab. This makes it all the more striking that apart from this mention to make it clear which Asahel it is about, the name of the honorary Joab does not appear on the list as David's hero.

A remarkable, well-known name on the list is that of Uriah (verse 41). David killed him to own his wife, Bathsheba (2Sam 11:14-17,22-27). We should not be surprised that his name is mentioned. He has shown great loyalty to David.

1 Chronicles 12

Introduction

In the previous chapter, David's heroes have been listed who have been with him from the beginning of his wanderings. That was the time when Saul chased him like a partridge on the mountains. In this chapter we are told

1. who joined him when he was in Ziklag (verses 1-7,19-22),
2. who came to him when he was in the mountain fortresses (verses 8-18) and
3. who came to him in Hebron (verses 23-37).

Verses 1-7 | Family Members of Saul

1 Now these are the ones who came to David at Ziklag, while he was still restricted because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men who helped [him] in war. 2 They were equipped with bows, using both the right hand and the left [to sling] stones and [to shoot] arrows from the bow; [they were] Saul's kinsmen from Benjamin. 3 The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth, and Beracah and Jehu the Anathothite, 4 and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty. Then Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad the Gederathite, 5 Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, Shephatiah the Haruphite, 6 Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, Jashobeam, the Korahites, 7 and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

It is still about the time when David was the rejected and persecuted king, "while he was still restricted because of Saul". Yet there are many who come to him at that time. They are also "among the mighty men who helped [him] in war". It is striking how often in this chapter there is talk of 'help' (verses 1,17,18,19,21,22), a total of seven times.

These heroes come to David when he is at Ziklag. He is there because he thinks he someday still falls into the hands of Saul who is persecuting him restlessly to kill him (1Sam 27:1). It is not an act of faith of David, but that is not the emphasis here. It is presented here in such a way that he is in

a position where he is restricted in his freedom of movement. The word 'restricted' also has something in it of 'being banished'. David is not in the land he loves and in the inheritance that belongs to him because Saul persecutes him. We do not see here the side of David's unbelief, but the emphasis here is on the side of God's grace.

It is therefore a sign of this grace that it is precisely at this time that men come to him to help him in his struggle. They are men that David can use well, because they have their weapons with them and are also very adept at using them. They can use their weapons with either the right or left hand. That makes them surprising for the enemy, who does not know from which side the attack will come.

The first mentioned among those who come to David are those of Saul's family. This shows the work of God in the hearts of the relatives of that great adversary. In their eyes, God and the choice of His king and the knowledge of His will have more value than blood relationship and the advantage that is usually associated with it. They give their strength and ability to David instead of to Saul. Many have been with Saul, but with him they have not become heroes.

For whom do we use our gifts, our talents? As long as we were unrepentant, we used all our gifts and talents for ourselves, which is essentially for the devil. After our conversion, that changed. We can now do everything we can to fight the good fight of faith. In doing so, we must continue to ensure that we do not yet use our skills to our own credit. That danger remains in everything we do.

Verses 8-15 | Gadites

8 From the Gadites there came over to David in the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for war, who could handle shield and spear, and whose faces were like the faces of lions, and [they were] as swift as the gazelles on the mountains. 9 Ezer [was] the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, 10 Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, 11 Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, 12 Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, 13 Jeremiah the tenth, Machbannai the eleventh. 14 These of the sons of Gad were captains of the army; he who was least was equal to a hundred and the greatest to a thousand. 15 These are the ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month when it

was overflowing all its banks and they put to flight all those in the valleys, both to the east and to the west.

The next group of men who are said to come over to David are eleven Gadites. They have separated from their home area and their family in the east side of Jordan to be with David. David is then “in the stronghold in the wilderness”, where we can think of the cave of Adullam (1Sam 22:1,4,5; 24:22b), where David and his people have hidden from Saul.

David will also have been very pleased with the arrival of these men. The description shows that they have an impressive record of military service. However, it is not just a description of past activities, but they are still fully available for battle. They come in full armor at David.

Their appearance at David is like the appearance of eleven lions. The fact that they look like lions does not only say something about their courage, but also about the fear they instill. Their speed is also described visually. They are “as swift as the gazelles on the mountains”. They are not only fast in the wilderness, but also on the mountains. They know how to overcome ‘mountains’ of difficulties or great resistance with great speed.

We are dealing here with men who have an impressive power (verse 14). Each of these eleven men is worth at least as much in strength as a hundred other men, while there are also men worth a thousand other men. With eleven of these men you have a large army at your disposal.

These men have not only great strength but also impressive courage. The proof is that they crossed the Jordan during spring tide (verse 15). The roaring water has not stopped them from going through it. They have overcome insurmountable difficulties to be with him who is irresistible to them. Not only have they defied natural elements, they have also driven out enemies who found themselves in both the west and the east. It didn’t matter where those enemies were. Their courage and their strength have proven themselves in several areas.

The character of the Gadites should characterize us, believers, more. This character appears among those who are irresistibly attracted to the Lord Jesus. He who sees and loves Him is able to do great acts of faith, and can fight for Him and His kingdom. This happens in this time, the time of the church, not with carnal weapons and carnal courage, but with spiritual

weapons and with spiritual courage. It is about God's power that is accomplished in weakness and about the mind of the Lord Jesus who overcomes the greatest opposition and opponent.

Verses 16-18 | Benjamites and Judeans

16 Then some of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold to David. 17 David went out to meet them, and said to them, "If you come peacefully to me to help me, my heart shall be united with you; but if to betray me to my adversaries, since there is no wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look on [it] and decide." 18 Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was the chief of the thirty, [and he said],

*"[We] are yours, O David,
And with you, O son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
And peace to him who helps you;
Indeed, your God helps you!"*

Then David received them and made them captains of the band.

Still others come to David when he is still in the stronghold. Again it is about "sons of Benjamin" (verse 16; verses 1-2), together with descendants of "Judah". When they come to David, he goes to meet them. He is careful in their case and wants certainty about their motives. He wants to know if they come to him "peacefully", to help him, or if they want to betray him to his opponents (verse 17). In the first case, they can count on him to be one of heart with them. They then fight for the same good cause. If the latter is the case, they must know that there is no wrong in his hands and that God will then give him justice by punishing this evil.

David is not naive. Nor should we be naive when people we do not know tell us that they want to serve and worship the Lord together with us. It is our responsibility to test what motivates them. David acknowledges them as belonging to the people of God by speaking to them about "the God of our fathers", that is, their common God. These are people who belong to God's people, but of whom we must be certain that they really stand right before God.

After the testing words of David, the Spirit of God comes over Amasai. Literally it says that the Spirit clothes Himself with Amasai (cf. Jdg 6:34).

Then he pronounces things that testify of great willingness to help David, to serve in the great army. David recognizes that it is really the Spirit in Amasai Who speaks and he accepts him and his men and makes them captains over the band. Through the Spirit Amasai expresses that David is acknowledged as the rightful king. That is also what the Holy Spirit wants us to do, that we confess the dominion of the Lord Jesus in our lives.

The words Amasai speaks on behalf of all testify to their great attachment to David. Through Amasai they declare that they belong to David and that they want to be with him. They wish him peace. By connecting to him as helpers they know that they share in that peace. They also confess that God is the source of that peace, for because God helps David, that peace is present.

The testimony of Amasai is beautiful: “[We] are yours, O David, And with you, O son of Jesse!” In this we find two aspects that we can apply to our relationship to the Lord Jesus and our confession thereof. We may say to Him that we are connected *to* Him. This means that we are His, we belong to Him. The second is that we are *with* Him. This means that we follow Him on the path of humiliation.

The first aspect is linked to the name “David”. David means ‘beloved’. The Lord Jesus is the Beloved of the Father. The second aspect is connected with the way of humiliation, which is expressed in “son of Jesse”. ‘Son of Jesse’ points to the humble origins of David. Is it also our confession that we are *with* the Lord Jesus as the One Who suffered, was rejected, and was crucified?

In a striking way both aspects are expressed by Paul. He indicates our position when he says: “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom 8:16). This relates to our connection to the Lord Jesus. But this testimony of our connectedness in position is also connected with the place of rejection we take. This is immediately followed by Paul when he says: “If indeed we suffer with [Him] so that we may also be glorified with [Him]” (Rom 8:17).

Here we find two rules that are fundamental to our faith:

1. our confession, that is what we say and
2. the practice of our life as Christians, that is what we show.

When the Spirit brings us to this, we long for peace on earth, as Amasai then proclaims: "Peace, peace to you, And peace to him who helps you; Indeed, your God helps you!" (verse 18).

Peace and the desire for it occupy a large place in this history. This too is connected with the Holy Spirit, Who is a Spirit of peace. That is what every believer desires deeply. This is the peace which the Spirit, Who is on Amasai, bears witness to. If we accept to follow a rejected Lord and share in His rejection, that peace is there for us too. Then we will experience what the Lord Jesus says to His disciples: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (Jn 14:27).

At Calvary, the place of the deepest humiliation, that peace has been established. One of the great features of the Lord Jesus is His peace in all His doings. He had that peace because He trusted His God and Father completely. How we can stand in that peace, we can only learn from Him. In all circumstances we need to remain in that peace in our doings. Each one of us can work this out because the Spirit dwells in us.

After the confession of Amasai David takes him and his men up and gives them all a task. When we give ourselves completely and entrust ourselves to God, He notices it too, and He entrusts us with a task. Only in this attitude are we fit to fulfill a task for Him and He would like to use us if the Spirit can work in us in this way. We also see that David himself, and no one else, takes them up. If we translate that to the Lord Jesus, it is the same. The men who are subjected to David, become captains. It's about serving David actually.

In what Amasai says to David by the Spirit, we recognize what the believer says to and about the Lord Jesus when he is led by the Spirit. Words spoken out of love for the Lord Jesus come from and through the Spirit and that in the time of rejection. Those who believe and are guided by the Spirit choose His side. They first say that they are *of* Him and then that they want to be *with* Him.

Many Christians unfortunately only say that they are *of* the Lord Jesus and do not show that they are *with* Him. Always being in His company can sometimes cost too much. Whoever wishes peace to the Lord Jesus, wishes it also to himself and will receive it, for God is on the side of the Lord Jesus.

Verses 19-22 | Manassites

19 From Manasseh also some defected to David when he was about to go to battle with the Philistines against Saul. But they did not help them, for the lords of the Philistines after consultation sent him away, saying, "At [the cost of] our heads he may defect to his master Saul." 20 As he went to Ziklag there defected to him from Manasseh: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu and Zillethai, captains of thousands who belonged to Manasseh. 21 They helped David against the band of raiders, for they were all mighty men of valor, and were captains in the army. 22 For day by day [men] came to David to help him, until there was a great army like the army of God.

Also from Manasseh there are those who choose David's side in the time of his rejection. Seven army officers from Manasseh come to David when he lives in Ziklag. That is shortly before Saul is killed by the Philistines with whom David should go to war. In His grace God keeps David and also these men of Manasseh to fight with the Philistines. He makes sure that the city princes do not want David to go with them in their fight against Saul (1Sam 29:4). The Manassites have helped David in his battle against the Amalekites, among others, who destroyed Ziklag during his absence (1Sam 30:1-8).

Through all who come to David, his army becomes "a great army like the army of God" (verse 22). David is helped by God, Who allows warriors to come to him to give substance to this help. At the same time, David's army is an "army of God".

What we see in this whole section, we can also apply to our time. We see God's kingdom expanding. This is not done through political efforts. Gospel and politics cannot be combined in order to extend the kingdom of God. God's kingdom expands every time someone comes to repentance. At that moment someone accepts the Lord Jesus as Savior and Lord and comes into His sphere of authority and under His authority. To enter the kingdom of God, the power of faith is needed, for only faith overcomes the world (Mt 11:12; 1Jn 5:4).

Verses 23-37 | Who Come to David at Hebron

23 Now these are the numbers of the divisions equipped for war, who came to David at Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the

word of the LORD. 24 The sons of Judah who bore shield and spear [were] 6,800, equipped for war. 25 Of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor for war, 7,100. 26 Of the sons of Levi 4,600. 27 Now Jehoiada was the leader of [the house of] Aaron, and with him were 3,700, 28 also Zadok, a young man mighty of valor, and of his father's house twenty-two captains. 29 Of the sons of Benjamin, Saul's kinsmen, 3,000; for until now the greatest part of them had kept their allegiance to the house of Saul. 30 Of the sons of Ephraim 20,800, mighty men of valor, famous men in their fathers' households. 31 Of the half-tribe of Manasseh 18,000, who were designated by name to come and make David king. 32 Of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do, their chiefs [were] two hundred; and all their kinsmen [were] at their command. 33 Of Zebulun, there were 50,000 who went out in the army, who could draw up in battle formation with all kinds of weapons of war and helped [David] with an undivided heart. 34 Of Naphtali [there were] 1,000 captains, and with them 37,000 with shield and spear. 35 Of the Danites who could draw up in battle formation, [there were] 28,600. 36 Of Asher [there were] 40,000 who went out in the army to draw up in battle formation. 37 From the other side of the Jordan, of the Reubenites and the Gadites and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, [there were] 120,000 with all [kinds] of weapons of war for the battle.

In this section, people are no longer mentioned so much, but mainly the tribes and numbers. They come to David at Hebron when he is already king, to acknowledge that the kingship of Saul passed to him (verse 23), which is a confirmation of what is written in 1 Chronicles 10 (1Chr 10:14).

They are, so to speak, a second batch. Others have already left Saul at an earlier stage to join David. They come after Saul is dead and they have had to conclude that they are facing a lost cause (verse 29). We also see that there are people who accept and follow the Lord Jesus at an early age, while others do not do so until later in life, when they discover that they lead a lost life.

Details are mentioned for each tribe. There are tribes who are said to be "mighty men of valor" or "mighty men of valor for war" (verses 25,28,30). Others have "all kinds of weapons of war" (verses 33,37). Others are mentioned "who understood the times" (verse 32). All these particularities can be applied to the different characteristics that are perceptible in children of

God. Everyone has something specific, something that characterizes him or her. This also shows that they complement each other and need each other to be one.

It is striking how few fighters come from the tribes of Judah and Simeon close to Jerusalem, compared to other tribes further away (verses 24-25).

The tribe of Levi also provides warriors, as does the priestly family, the family of Aaron (verses 26-28). As an exception in the enumeration of the tribes, two names of persons are mentioned here. One name is that of "Jehoiada ... the leader of [the house of] Aaron". The other name is that of "Zadok", of whom it is also said that he is "a young man mighty of valor". A priest has the privilege of serving God in the sanctuary. However, that does not mean that he does not have to fight. A believer who worships God as a good priest in the sanctuary will certainly be a good warrior outside the sanctuary for the interests of the One he worships.

Zadok was chosen by God to stand before the king. Under Solomon he will be the high priesthood (1Chr 29:22; 1Kgs 2:35; 4:4). God has told Eli that He will have a priest walking before His anointed king (1Sam 2:35). Here king and priest are connected. It is the union we see in the true Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus Who will be Priest on His throne (Zec 6:13).

For the third time in this chapter we hear of Benjamites (verse 29; verses 2-7; verse 16). Here it appears that the majority of this tribe remains loyal to Saul. This means that the Benjamites who go to David are against the majority. They defy the hatred of their family members who may have accused them of cowardice or betrayal.

From the Issacharites we read that they "understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do" (verse 32). We need people like them who know what time it is on God's clock (cf. Est 1:13). They have learned, through perception in the world around them and from experience in dealing with the people around them, what their own duties and interests are and what those of others are. They know that they have to make David king *now*, now is the time for that.

In spiritual terms, Paul belongs to this tribe. As a real Issacharite he says to the believers, that he knows the time when they must awaken from sleep, because "knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken

from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. To this end he then says: "Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Rom 13:11-12).

Do we know the time and the spirit of the time? Do we know what we have to do to not be overwhelmed and eliminated by the enemy, but to remain subservient to the Lord? Can we serve our fellow believers with our understanding of God's thoughts about time and the spirit of the time?

Who wants to be a real Issacharite, also has to be a real Zebulunite. From the men of this tribe we read that they are prepared to "draw up in battle formation ... with an undivided heart" (verse 33). Their hearts are seized by nothing but David and the battle for him. Their hearts are "united" (Psa 86:11). They are not double-hearted. There is no other motive in their hearts but to be only for David and to confirm him in his kingship. This characteristic must be found with us in relation to the Lord Jesus.

They are drawn up "in battle formation". This indicates that they are disciplined in their army unit. They each take their own place, but in the knowledge that they are part of a whole. There is individual dedication with all, each in his or her own place, so that the whole is a 'team' focused entirely on David.

Paul can rejoice at the sight of the "order" of the believers in the church in Colossae (Col 2:5). If there is personal commitment and an orderly whole, the enemy does not get a chance to break in a local church. However, if there are divisions, or schisms, he can easily sow disunity (1Cor 1:10).

Verses 38-40 | The Kingship Celebrated

38 All these, being men of war who could draw up in battle formation, came to Hebron with a perfect heart to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one mind to make David king. 39 They were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their kinsmen had prepared for them. 40 Moreover those who were near to them, [even] as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought food on donkeys, camels, mules and on oxen, great quantities of flour cakes, fig cakes and bunches of raisins, wine, oil, oxen and sheep. There was joy indeed in Israel.

All “men of war” come “Hebron with a perfect heart” (verse 38a) and “all the rest also of Israel” – which probably means the civilian population – come “of one mind” to David to make him king “over all Israel”. This is first and foremost a look ahead to the kingdom of peace, when all will acknowledge the Lord Jesus as King of the kings and Lord of the lords. That will be a time of feast and joy (Pro 11:10a), of eating and drinking in abundance.

The great source of joy is being “with David”. In his presence, fellowship is also enjoyed with one another, of which the meal speaks, prepared for them by “their kinsmen.”. There is more than enough for everyone.

There is “joy indeed in Israel”, both among those who have shared in the rejection of David and among those who only now acknowledge him. Where Christ reigns in the hearts, there is great joy in the heart. Where all authority is given to Him, there is unity. Then there is also power. Where believers in unity acknowledge the Lord Jesus as Lord, there is an abundance of spiritual food.

1 Chronicles 13

Introduction

1 Chronicles 11-12 can be considered as an introduction to the next chapters, in which the main subjects are the ark and the temple service. In view of this, God has helped David in confirming his kingship and has brought the people to David.

In Deuteronomy we read about a place that God has chosen (Deu 12:5) and a king that God has chosen (Deu 17:14-15). When Saul was king, it was not sought for that place, and Saul himself is not God's choice, but the choice of the people (1Sam 12:13). Of David we read that God has chosen him (Psa 78:70). Only when Saul, chosen by the people to satisfy their carnal desires, is set aside can David, chosen by God, ascend the throne.

When David is in power, he goes in search of the place God has chosen for His name to dwell there. In Psalm 132 he expresses his longing for it (Psa 132:3-5). There we also read that Zion is that place (Psa 132:13-14). Zion is the mountain Moria (2Chr 3:1). On that mountain Abraham offered Isaac on the altar (Gen 22:1-14; Jam 2:21). In this event we see a picture of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus (cf. Heb 11:19). David has conquered Zion (1Chr 11:4-5). There the ark will end up, in the temple that will be built there by Solomon.

Before that time that the ark will have its final resting place, a lot has been done with the ark and the tabernacle in which the ark was. It is good to evaluate these events briefly. We can at the same time make an application to the Lord Jesus of Whom the tabernacle and the ark are a picture.

When the people have come into the land, the tabernacle is placed in Shiloh (Jos 18:1). There it is until the birth of Samuel, which is a period of hundreds of years. In this we can see in picture the time of the life of the Lord Jesus on earth.

Then the ark is taken by Hofni and Pinehas in the fight against the Philistines (1Sam 4:3-4). But God does not allow these wicked priests to abuse the symbol of His presence. "So that He abandoned the dwelling place at

Shiloh, ... And gave up His strength to captivity And His glory into the hand of the adversary" (Psa 78:60-61). He has let the ark captured by the Philistines (1Sam 4:10-11; 5:1). Here we can see a picture of the surrender of the Lord Jesus into death by God (cf. Acts 2:23).

The ark is seven months in the land of the Philistines, but then returns to the land of the LORD (1Sam 6:1-2,11-13). This can be seen as a picture of the stay of the Lord Jesus in death, who could not keep Him (Acts 2:24-28). The ark returns to Israel, but not to Shiloh, but to Abinadab's house in Kiriath-jearim (1Sam 7:1). In this we can see a picture of the risen Lord, Who is no longer seen by all the people, but only in secret by his own.

The ark stays for a long time in Kiriath-jearim, until here the thread of the history of the ark is taken up again. It starts here with the observation that there is unanimity to pick up the ark (verses 1-4), without one wondering how to do so and where to go.

It is important how the ark is transported. This leads to the first judgment on the new government, which leads to fear of God on the one hand and domestic blessing on the other (verses 12-14). Later, in 1 Chronicles 15, the ark is in the correct way brought to Jerusalem. This can be seen as a picture of the ascension of Christ. The proof of this is the quotation by Paul in Ephesians 4 of Psalm 68 in connection with the ascension (Eph 4:8-10; Psa 68:19).

Finally, the ark is brought into the house that Solomon built. Then the glory of the LORD descends into the temple and fills the temple (2Chr 5:14). This event we can bring into connection with the coming down of the Holy Spirit, through which the church is formed to the house of the living God (Acts 2:1-4; 1Tim 3:15). This happened after the Lord Jesus is glorified in heaven (Jn 7:39).

Verses 1-4 | David Wants to Bring the Ark to Jerusalem

1 Then David consulted with the captains of the thousands and the hundreds, even with every leader. 2 David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is from the LORD our God, let us send everywhere to our kinsmen who remain in all the land of Israel, also to the priests and Levites who are with them in their cities with pasture lands, that they may meet with us; 3

and let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul.” 4 Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

The first thing David’s heart goes out to when he is king is the ark. He does not seek his ease, but the symbol of the presence of God. The ark is the throne of God. God dwells thereon among His people. The ark is in the heart of David. It has always been there. God has indicated a place where He will make His Name dwell, a central place of worship. His Name is His glory. They have to find that place. By bringing the ark to that place, the royal city becomes the holy city, the center of service to God.

That also applies to us. For us, this is not about a geographical place or a visible building, but about the spiritual characteristics of the church meeting together. If our hearts are open to it, we will look for the place where the Lord Jesus dwells, where He is the center of His New Testament people, the church (Mt 18:20).

The exercise concerning the search for a dwelling place for the ark is present with only one man, David (verse 1; 1Chr 17:1). David is not managed or dictated by others, although he is confirmed by others (verse 2). His heart goes out to the ark, realizing that the ark is of the whole people. A heart that goes out to the Lord Jesus also goes out to all the people of God.

For the retrieval of the ark David consults with the captain and the leaders. Consulting others in the case of a spiritual exercise is not weakness, but wisdom (cf. 2Chr 20:21). Much of the Lord’s work cannot be properly performed without a cordial fellowship with like-minded people. It is also beautiful to see that David speaks about the people as “our ... kinsmen”. He is in truth a king “from among your brothers”, a brother with a heart that “does not rise above his brothers” (Deu 17:15,20).

What David unfortunately lacks here is consultation with the LORD. This leads to a tragic situation if they implement their plan. We can consult with each other, but if we do not involve the Lord and His Word, our plan will not be carried out to the Lord’s glory.

The people did not seek God’s dwelling place “in the days of Saul”. It’s nice to see that David encloses himself by talking about “we”. Although he did look for it himself, he makes himself one with the people here (cf.

Dan 9:5). The fact that “in the days of Saul” God’s dwelling place was not sought is a lesson for us that a member of God’s people does not ask for the Lord and His service when he lives according to the flesh.

A revival starts with a single person. We see the single person here in David, the man after God’s heart. He had already sought that place when he was still with the sheep and did not know anything about the kingship. We know that from what he says about it in Psalm 132. He searched tirelessly for that place and found it (Psa 132:4-6). When he found the ark, he found that place for the ark represents the glory of the LORD. He found it in his heart when he was still in Ephrathah as a shepherd (Psa 132:6), that is, his heart was convinced that the ark is that dwelling place.

Now he actually goes looking for it and finds the ark. He finds it in the field of Jaär, in the house of Abinadab. There the ark had been for a long time, forgotten by the people, but not by this then still young man. We can now also know where to find the Lord Jesus and see His glory. That is with the two or three who come together as a church in His Name (Mt 18:20).

Verses 5-8 | The Ark on a New Cart

5 So David assembled all Israel together, from the Shihor of Egypt even to the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. 6 David and all Israel went up to Baalah, [that is], to Kiriath-jearim, which belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, the LORD who is enthroned [above] the cherubim, where His name is called. 7 They carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. 8 David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all [their] might, even with songs and with lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals and with trumpets.

The whole people agree with David that the ark should be picked up. Is that because of their own conviction or because they see the better leader in David compared to Saul? A leader is followed, especially if he is popular (2Sam 15:13; 1Kgs 1:5; Gal 2:11-13), but on what basis? When the opponents of the Lord Jesus say of Him: “Look, the world has gone after Him” (Jn 12:19), for many of them that “gone after Him” is nothing more than curiosity.

In all David's zeal we do not read that he consults the Word of God. What did he think the poles were for (Exo 25:14; 40:20)? And were the sons of Kohath not appointed to carry the ark (Num 4:15a)? David seems to have forgotten it all. A new cart seems to him to be a suitable means of transporting the ark. David's new cart is his own invention, which seems to be copied from the Philistines (1Sam 6:11a). In the same way, by Christians to honor Christ, the methods of the (religious) world are adopted, while the precepts of God's Word are ignored.

About the transport of the ark the LORD said very simply that it must be carried (Num 4:15a). David's zeal and joy to bring the ark back does not take sufficient account of God's thoughts. He works in a Philistine manner and, like them, transports the ark on a cart. The fact that the whole parade is attended by enthusiastic people accompanied by a large music band cannot conceal the fact that the way it is done is disobedience to God's Word. Bringing the ark to Jerusalem is not wrong in itself. Neither is it wrong to do that with enthusiasm. Also the use of musical instruments is not wrong. It is only all wrong because it is done according to one's own insight, without consulting the LORD and His Word.

Often we are tempted to judge worship by our feelings, how we feel about it. But when we remember that worship is meant for God, we are referred to His Word to know how He wants He is to be worshipped (Jn 4:23-24). If we read this history, we see that it is a matter of joy, singing, all kinds of musical instruments, a new cart and cattle. What we miss is the mention of a humble heart that is aware of the holiness of God represented by the ark.

The use of a cart shows that an alternative was sought to the way God had said the ark should be transported. The ark is also 'held up' by the cart, just as it is when it is carried on the priests' shoulders. Why not then in this way, so one could argue?

But 'the transport on a cart represents in the spiritual application a way of 'carrying' which is separate from the spiritual efforts of those 'who have to carry the ark'. And these efforts and exercises are precious to God, for these efforts and exercises increase with the 'carriers' the real spiritual understanding of the Person of Christ, of whom the ark, as we know, is a picture. The use of other means prevents this from happening.

David could have been sure of God's will if he had acted according to the king's law, of which he as king should have a copy (Deu 17:18-20). That's why the punishment he gets is so severe. The Levites and all the people should also have known how God wants the ark to be transported. For the Levites regularly read the law to the whole people (Deu 31:9-13).

This is also an important lesson for us. The longing for the place where the Lord Jesus is in the midst is one thing. It is something else to put this desire into practice in a good way. While we may know exactly God's thoughts and where He dwells, we remain dependent on Him for all the steps we take. Good intentions, zeal, enthusiasm and joy are not enough. We must also act in accordance with the Scriptures, also when it comes to the center and the way of meeting. Obedience is better than the sacrifice of diligence.

Others can act according to the faith they have in a God Whom they do not know personally. We see this in the Philistines, who send the ark back on a cart. However, the people of God must be led by God's Word.

Verses 9-10 | The Death of Uzza

9 When they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, because the oxen nearly upset [it]. 10 The anger of the LORD burned against Uzza, so He struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark; and he died there before God.

When the procession comes to "the threshing floor of Chidon", what no one foresaw or even expected happens. The threshing floor is the place where the corn is gathered to separate the chaff from the corn. There is a lot of chaff in this whole parade and God is going to blow it away. The own method chosen for the transport of the ark is chaff. This method may seem more certain than the shoulders of the Levites, but that's just appearance.

We can apply this to all kinds of man-made forms of religion with the intention of protecting the honor of Christ. All these forms have proven to be no guarantee for securing that honor. Confessional writings have taken the place of the Bible and have led the people away from the Scriptures. This opens the door to thoughts about Christ and His work that are against God's thoughts and that lead the Christian to spiritual death.

Such methods must then be judged by God, no matter how well-intentioned the intentions are. Methods of the flesh do not fit with spiritual things. God must judge Uzza's well-intentioned attempt to seize the ark with his hand and thereby save it from falling. It is an unauthorized touch of the ark.

For those who are not spiritual, Uzza's blocking of the ark seems logical and recommended. But what goes against the Scriptures cannot please God. "Which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God" (Lk 16:15). The glorified Christ should not be touched by strange teachings and traditions of men.

This is the first judgment during David's government, right from the start. We also see this judgment at the beginning of the priesthood and at the beginning of the church. Just as Nadab and Abihu and Ananias and Sapphira die before God (Lev 10:1-2; Acts 5:1-11), so here Uzza dies before God.

Verses 11-14 | The Ark in the House of Obed-edom

11 Then David became angry because of the LORD's outburst against Uzza; and he called that place Perez-uzza to this day. 12 David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God [home] to me?" 13 So David did not take the ark with him to the city of David, but took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. 14 Thus the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months; and the LORD blessed the family of Obed-edom with all that he had.

David does not readily agree with this judgment, but is displeased, he is angry. It is the anger of powerlessness. He feels his own powerlessness to bring the ark to Jerusalem. He also doesn't feel worthy that the ark comes to him. Perez means 'breakthrough', because what has happened is a breakthrough, an outburst of God's wrath. It is precisely in such a noble pursuit as bringing the ark to where it belongs that it is important to follow the instructions of God's Word. The LORD says: "By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy" (Lk 10:3; cf. Est 9:4-6). Then the ark gets a home with Obed-edom, that means 'servant of Edom'.

We may wonder who or what David's anger is directed at. David may not understand the reason for Uzza's death. His anger then can be called frus-

tration because the ark does not get the place he desires. Perhaps David should learn that it is not the main thing to bring the ark of God “to me”, as he says in verse 12. It is the place that the LORD has chosen and all attention must have been drawn to it. It takes some time to discover that, but then it will be all right. He understands that he should have consulted the LORD as it should have been, for then he would have discovered in God’s light what was lacking.

The house of Obed-edom is blessed, as is later done with Aquila and Priscilla when they open their house for the church and the service of the Word (Acts 18:24-28; Rom 16:3-5). Obed-edom is later rewarded for his faithfulness. He becomes a gatekeeper with a harp (1Chr 15:18,21; 16:38). He doesn’t lose anything when the ark leaves his house, but he gets more and more. This is always the case when we share what we ourselves have received with others. Obed-edom does this by not keeping the ark to himself, but by sharing it with all of Israel. What a blessing David missed just because he did not ask the LORD how He wanted everything to go. In the next chapter he restored and does so (1Chr 14:10,14).

1 Chronicles 14

Introduction

In 2 Samuel 6 after the failure of David in retrieving the ark (2Sam 6:1-11) directly the story follows that he brings the ark in the right way to Jerusalem (2Sam 6:12-19). The chronicler does not do that. Before continuing with the description of the upbringing of the ark in 1 Chronicles 15, he mentions in this chapter some events that have already taken place. It seems that he wants to encourage the remnant with this. He wants to tell them that David is dismissed by the LORD, but remains the man of His pleasure.

To this end, this chapter describes events and messages which make this clear, regardless of the chronological order. It is a chapter full of blessings that are the part of David. Just as David by his unfaithfulness is not put away by the LORD, so may the returned remnant, for whom the books of Chronicles are written, know that they also have not been dismissed by the LORD. They are a remnant blessed by the LORD.

In the fight against the Philistines in the second part of this chapter we see another aspect. There we see that David is exercised to learn to consult the LORD. The blessed results of this, the two victories, are meant to give David courage to raise the ark to Jerusalem. This will also happen in the next chapter.

Verses 1-2 | The Kingship of David Established

1 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees, masons and carpenters, to build a house for him. 2 And David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, [and] that his kingdom was highly exalted, for the sake of His people Israel.

The encouraging remarks begin with the mention of the friendship statements of Hiram, the king of Syria. These expressions of friendship consist of sending materials and people to build a house for David. In what Hiram does, we see the fulfillment of God's promises that He will bless His people by also making the nations subservient to His people (Isa 60:5; 61:6).

Such kindness is also experienced by the remnant returned from Babylonian exile (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:8).

David's reputation is gaining wide recognition. He owes this not to himself, but to the LORD. He gives him that great name. He does not do this primarily for David, the man after his heart, but "for the sake of His people Israel". Through David he blesses his people. Here we see the great love of God for His people. Something similar we hear from the mouth of the queen of Sheba about Solomon. She says that the LORD has appointed Solomon king over Israel "because the LORD loved Israel forever" (1Kgs 10:9).

In the same way, the church is the object of the love of God, a love which He proves by even giving His Son as Head above all else to the church (Eph 1:22-23). Christ is the Man according to God's heart, through whom He gives all blessings to each of His individually and to His people as a whole. We too should be a blessing to each member of the church individually and to the church as a whole. In a broader sense, we must be a blessing for all people, that is to say, we pass on the blessing we ourselves have received from the Lord. God wants us to be channels of His blessing in every respect.

Verses 3-7 | Family of David

3 Then David took more wives at Jerusalem, and David became the father of more sons and daughters. 4 These are the names of the children born [to him] in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 5 Ithar, Elishua, Elpelet, 6 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 7 Elishama, Beeliada and Eliphelet.

David takes still more women, as the kings used to do in the countries around him. It is not an endorsement of what he does, for it is not according to God's thoughts from the beginning and it also goes against the king's law (Deu 17:17a). It is mentioned here to underline the grace of God. We see that grace expressed therein, that among his children are "Nathan" and "Solomon" (verse 4). Nathan is the ancestor of Mary, and Solomon is the ancestor of Joseph. Through them run the genealogies of the Lord Jesus given in Luke 3 and Matthew 1 (Lk 3:31-32; Mt 1:6).

Verses 8-12 | David Defeats the Philistines

8 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up in search of David; and David heard of it and went out against them. 9 Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. 10 David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? And will You give them into my hand?" Then the LORD said to him, "Go up, for I will give them into your hand." 11 So they came up to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there; and David said, "God has broken through my enemies by my hand, like the breakthrough of waters." Therefore they named that place Baal-perazim. 12 They abandoned their gods there; so David gave the order and they were burned with fire.

The Philistines go up against David as soon as they hear that David is "anointed king over all Israel". That places us back in time to 1 Chronicles 11, where David is anointed king over all Israel (1Chr 11:3). This fact leads the Philistines "to go up in search of David", not to honor him like Hiram, but to kill him. The battle that the Philistines search of is intended by the LORD as an exercise for David to teach him to consult Him. He did not do this in the previous chapter when he brought up the ark. Now he gets a do-over to consult the LORD. This is the practical reason.

The spiritual reason is that there are spiritual conditions attached to what we want to do for the Lord. The first condition is that we must do what we want to do for the Lord in the way He indicates. Another condition is that in doing the Lord's will we keep 'the Philistines' as far away from us as possible. Philistines claim the same place as God's people, while they are not God's people. They are a picture of the nominal Christians, who confess that Jesus is Lord, but are essentially His enemies (Mt 7:22-23).

David inquires of *God*, of Him Who is the Almighty, if he should go up and also if God will give his enemies into his hand. The *LORD*, the God of the covenant with His people, answers both questions in the affirmative. When David goes up, he defeats the Philistines, as the LORD has said. He gives God the honor of the victory and gives the place where it happens the name that honors God as the Lord of victory. "Baal-perazim" means "Lord of the eruptions".

The name Baal-perazim reminds of the name Perez-uzza (1Chr 13:11), that is to say of the burning of the anger of the LORD against Uzza (Perazim is the plural of Perez). In Uzza, the burning of God's anger is the result of not consulting the LORD. Here the LORD's anger burns against the enemy because David has asked God and is walking in His way.

David's description of how the victory is achieved – he speaks of “a breakthrough of water” – is reminiscent of the violence of a torrential flood. Apparently David ran with his army down from the heights and ran the enemies underfoot (cf. Jdg 4:14-16).

The Philistines who were able to escape have not thought of taking their gods with them in their haste to flee. Their gods, whom they have taken with them to help them in their fight against David, have of course served them in nothing. How worthless they are is underlined when they are burned on David's orders. This is done in accordance with the commandment of God (Deu 7:5,25a).

Verses 13-17 | David Defeats the Philistines Again

13 The Philistines made yet another raid in the valley. 14 David inquired again of God, and God said to him, “You shall not go up after them; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees. 15 It shall be when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines.” 16 David did just as God had commanded him, and they struck down the army of the Philistines from Gibeon even as far as Gezer. 17 Then the fame of David went out into all the lands; and the LORD brought the fear of him on all the nations.

The Philistines have suffered a defeat, but they do not give up the battle. We must also remember that we are dealing with an indefatigable enemy who will never give in. Every defeat we inflict on him will sooner or later be followed by another attack. So also here.

Again the Philistines seek the attack against David. It will result in a second battle, which will result in more enemies being defeated and the power and fame of David being spread in all countries (verse 17a). There is also

great fear for him in all nations, a fear which the LORD places on them (verse 17b).

When the enemies threaten David again, he inquires of God again for advice. He is not lax and does not ignore the enemy. He recognizes the danger. At the same time he is not overconfident in assuming that it will be good to attack the enemy again because it was good the first time. God also answers now, but indicates that David must now follow a different tactic.

It means a new exercise for David in following the instructions of God. The exercise he gets now is bigger than the first one. He must wait for God and listen carefully if he hears Him. The sound he has to pay attention to is "the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam tree". This sound must not have been the rustling of the leaves, but the sound of Someone walking (cf. Gen 3:8a). It will be an army of God, an angelic power, facing the enemies of Israel.

Only when God sets the signal to green, David may go. He does so. The result is that the Philistines are again completely defeated. The Philistines who fled are followed far away and killed.

If we notice God's work around us, it is like "the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam tree". It should arouse us to prayer and commitment. When we hear that some believers want to pray together, it is a 'sound of God's footsteps'. A time of crisis or tragedy in our lives is also like the sound of God's footsteps. If we hear that sound, let us go more than before into the struggle of prayer.

In prayer we can fight for a blessing on the preaching of God's Word, both in the gospel and in the building up of the church. God is busy and uses us to do His work.

David goes out to defeat the enemies and does what God has commanded him to do and defeats the enemies. Doing what God says is the way that victories are achieved.

1 Chronicles 15

Verse 1 | David Pitches a Tent for the Ark

1 Now [David] built houses for himself in the city of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it.

The houses David builds for himself are possibly houses for his many wives. After all, Hiram has already taken care of a house for David (1Chr 14:1). David also provides a house where the ark can dwell. Even if the transport of the ark in 1 Chronicles 13 would have succeeded, then there would have been no room made ready for it. David does that now. As an application we can say that we may build for ourselves, but that we must ensure that there is also a place where the Lord Jesus, of Whom the ark is a picture, can be.

David pitches a tent for the ark. It is a simple house, not yet a temple. Also if we prepare a dwelling place for the Lord Jesus, it will be a simple accommodation and not a dwelling place that impresses the flesh. It is a place outside the camp (Heb 13:13), that is, a place apart from Christianity as an organized system. In such a system, access to God in the inner sanctuary is closed to believers and only possible through an official ecclesiastical representative. This is a denial of the perfect work of Christ by which every believer that access is made free (Heb 10:19-22).

Also today it is possible to come together as a church to be there with the Lord Jesus. It is about what is in that tent, the ark, just as it is now where the Lord Jesus is. In doing so, we must keep an eye on the whole people of God, even though many of God's people stay away.

David cannot bring the ark into the tabernacle because it is no longer there (Psa 78:60-61; Jer 7:12-15). In the days of Eli the tabernacle is in Shiloh. The ark is captured by the Philistines and probably they also partly or completely destroyed the tabernacle. That is a serious judgment. The little left of it has ended up in Gibeon, as is the burnt offering altar where Solomon comes to meet the LORD (2Chr 1:5-6). God has set aside the tabernacle system. That's why David himself puts up a tent for the ark.

There are three tents in the Old Testament as dwelling place for God:

1. the tent where Moses meets God (Exo 33:7-11; 34:34-35),
2. the tabernacle (Exodus 25-40) and
3. this tent at Sion.

Verses 2-15 | The Ark Is Brought to Sion

2 Then David said, "No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of God and to minister to Him forever." 3 And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place which he had prepared for it. 4 David gathered together the sons of Aaron and the Levites: 5 of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and 120 of his relatives; 6 of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and 220 of his relatives; 7 of the sons of Gershon, Joel the chief, and 130 of his relatives; 8 of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and 200 of his relatives; 9 of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and 80 of his relatives; 10 of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and 112 of his relatives. 11 Then David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab, 12 and said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers' [households] of the Levites; consecrate yourselves both you and your relatives, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to [the place] that I have prepared for it. 13 Because you did not [carry it] at the first, the LORD our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance." 14 So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. 15 The sons of the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles thereon, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

To bring the ark to Sion David now gives the right orders (verse 2). Here, as king of God's people, he takes responsibility in religious matters. On him rests the duty to lead God's people in the right way in honoring the LORD.

He acknowledges that things went wrong last time because they "did not seek Him according to the ordinance" (verse 13). The ordinance is that no one but the Levites may transport the ark and that they must do so by "carrying" it (verse 2; verse 15; Num 7:9). It is not enough that we do what

is good, because it is also important to do it in the right, the lawful way (cf. 2Tim 2:5).

David involves “all Israel” in the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem (verse 3). For us it means that all believers have a duty to give the Lord Jesus the place He deserves in the meeting. For the actual replacement of the ark David mobilizes the priests and the Levites, called by name and number (verses 4-10). David determines in every respect how and by whom the transport should take place.

Two priests are mentioned (verse 11). They come from the two lines of the remaining sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar (Lev 10:1,6). Zadok is a descendant of Aaron via Eleazar, and Abiathar is a descendant of Aaron via Ithamar. The priesthood will continue through Zadok according to God’s thoughts. We see this later during the reign of Solomon and also in the temple service in the kingdom of peace which is described in the book Ezekiel (Ezekiel 40-48).

David also speaks about the condition, the spiritual preparation for the task (verse 12). This preparation has been neglected the first time and has been the cause of God having to inflict a heavy blow on them. The condition is that those who occupy themselves with the ark must consecrate themselves. As a result, they will be kept for a second heavy blow. The positive aspect is that they will experience the joy of the LORD.

Consecration means that they separate themselves from any form of uncleanness. If we want to enjoy the blessing of the Lord’s presence, we will have to “cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2Cor 7:1).

After the priests have done what is asked of them, they go to pick up the ark (verse 14). Then the ark is carried in the manner prescribed by the LORD, which is on the shoulders of the Levites (verse 15). The shoulders of the Levites are a better means of transport than the strongest and most beautiful cart. We see in it the picture that God has entrusted the glory of the Lord Jesus to the hands of His servants, to their responsibility.

In carrying the ark on the shoulders of the Levites we can also think of the Divine power that works in His servants (Eph 3:20). Levites present the gifts of the Lord Jesus to the church and in this context perhaps especially

the teachers (Eph 4:11). The power of God's Spirit gives them the spiritual ability to uphold the glory of Christ in all its riches and to show it before the eyes of God's people.

Bringing the ark to Zion is important for three reasons:

1. It means that Zion is the place where the LORD wants His Name to dwell. That is the place we must look for. Then we find the ark. For us it means that we find the Lord Jesus in the place where He is central and the service is done in accordance with His Word, because of Him the ark is a picture.
2. The ark was led into exile and is now returning from it under the guidance of David. In Scripture we read four times about an exile:
 - a. Israel in Egypt,
 - b. the ark at the Philistines,
 - c. the two tribes in Babylonian exile and
 - d. the exile that Israel is currently in.

Each time the deliverance from exile means that the people, or a remnant, return to the country.

- a. We see that for Israel happen when the people led by Moses leave Egypt to go to the promised land.
 - b. We see it here when David brings the ark to Jerusalem.
 - c. Later we see it when a remnant from the two tribes led by Zerubabel from the Babylonian exile goes back to Israel.
 - d. We will still see it when the current exile will end with a return to the country by the arrival of the Messiah.
3. The name of Christ is uniquely linked to Zion by David bringing up the ark to that place. Zion also represents grace (Heb 12:22a). This mountain contrasts with Mount Sinai (Gal 4:25; Heb 12:18-21), the mountain which is a symbol of man under the law. From now on, the history of Israel will be dominated by Zion, although here literally by the law as well. But fundamentally God acts on the basis of grace through the ark, through David and through Zadok. These three we find combined in the Lord Jesus.

Four names are used for the ark. This can be compared with the content of the four Gospels:

1. "The ark of the LORD" (verse 12) we see in the Gospel according to Matthew. This name reminds us that God keeps His promises by letting the prophetic word come true in the King of Israel.
2. In Exodus the ark is also called 'the ark of the testimony' (Exo 25:22). We see this in the Gospel according to Mark, in which the Lord Jesus is presented as the Servant and Witness of God.
3. "The ark of the LORD's covenant" (verse 25) is seen in the Lord Jesus as the Gospel according to Luke describes Him. The Lord Jesus as the true Man, the Man according to God's thoughts, is the foundation of the new covenant as the expression of God's goodness in Christ towards man.
4. The Gospel according to John shows us "the ark of God" (verse 24). John presents the Lord Jesus as the Son of God.

These four aspects we may see when we meet at the place where He is in the midst. He is the true center of the meeting of the church where the hearts go out to Him in His great beauty.

Verses 16-22 | Singers

16 Then David spoke to the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their relatives the singers, with instruments of music, harps, lyres, loud-sounding cymbals, to raise sounds of joy. 17 So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel, and from his relatives, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and from the sons of Merari their relatives, Ethan the son of Kushaiah, 18 and with them their relatives of the second rank, Zechariah, Ben, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel, the gatekeepers. 19 So the singers, Heman, Asaph and Ethan [were appointed] to sound aloud cymbals of bronze; 20 and Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah and Benaiah, with harps [tuned] to alamoith; 21 and Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel and Azaziah, to lead with lyres tuned to the sheminith. 22 Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was [in charge of] the singing; he gave instruction in singing because he was skillful.

We see three tasks of the Levites: they carry the ark (verse 15), they perform the service of singing (verse 16) and they are guardians of the ark (verse 23).

Where the ark is, is joy. David has understood that. With this in mind, he has linked a whole new service to that place: the service of the singers. At the tabernacle we do not read about singers, they are not even mentioned in the books of Samuel and of Kings. Only here, in connection with the ark's final resting place, is this joyful service mentioned. At the place where the ark stands, singing is done.

God's people are a singing people. This also applies to the church (Eph 5:19-20; Col 3:16-17; Heb 13:15), especially when the church meets around the Lord Jesus (1Cor 14:15b; 14:26). It is a service to the Lord, in full awareness of His guidance in that service. For He starts the hymn of praise (Heb 2:12).

All believers are involved in the service of singing. Therefore, the Lord has given us the ability to sing. This is not primarily about the melody. The melody is the bearer of the words that express the feelings of the heart. A song is ideally suited to express the feelings of the whole, where each singer has his or her own feelings.

The meetings of the church are services "in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23). All external things, that are important to Israel in the Old Testament worship, have no place in the meetings of the church. That is why the building in which the believers meet does not matter. Also there are no literal animal sacrifices, there is no priest's clothing, there is no literal altar and so on.

The new invention for the transport of the ark in 1 Chronicles 13 is wrong because it is contrary to God's precept. That does not mean, however, that all the new is wrong. This is the first time that the service of singing is mentioned here in front of the ark, in front of the symbol of the presence of the LORD. Moses is used to introduce the sacrifices; David is used to introduce the song. Singing is a form of sacrifice. We are encouraged to offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving (Psa 50:14a; Hos 14:2).

In verse 17 three main singers are mentioned: Heman, Asaph and Ethan. Heman means 'faithful', Asaph means 'one who gathers', Ethan means 'constantly'. Ethan is the same as Jeduthun (1Chr 25:1), which means 'a

choir of praise'. In the sense of these names we see indications of a continuous service of praise in the meetings of the church (Heb 13:15). The praise when the church comes together, should happen in faithfulness to God's Word and will be unifying, so that there is a choir of praise to be heard.

The "relatives of the second rank" (verse 18) we perhaps may apply to young people who participate in the service. Although they are less experienced than the elderly, they can still make themselves heard. Under Moses only the Levies of thirty years and older were allowed to participate in the service of the tabernacle, but under David this is allowed from the age of twenty. This presupposes that those who – spiritually seen – are between twenty and thirty years old, form the group of 'the second rank', to grow after education and experience to the first rank. God expects in the church that young believers will also contribute to the service.

There are two types of tunes (verses 20-21). In verse 20 "to alamothe", an expression which is also in the heading of Psalm 46 ("set to Alamothe", Psa 46:1). The word is related to the word 'virgins'. Hence the idea that the tune is for soprano voices. It can also be translated with "high tuned".

In verse 21 is literally "to the sheminith". This word is derived from a word which comes from the word for 'eight' – see the headings of Psalms 6 and 12 "upon an eight-string lyre" (Psa 6:1; 12:1). The word is used to indicate music in a lower octave and can therefore also be translated with "low tuned". This also gives a contrast with verse 20: high and low.

High tuned praise and low tuned praise arises in us when we look at the Lord Jesus as the One Who "ascended far above all the heavens" after He "had descended into the lower parts of the earth" (Eph 4:8-10). The same feelings of admiration arise with us when we see how on the one hand He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even to death on the cross, and on the other hand He was highly exalted by God (Phil 2:6-11).

It says of Chenaniah that he "was [in charge of] the singing" and that he "gave instruction in singing because he was skillful" (verse 22). He knows how to sing. This has nothing to do with what today is called the 'worship leader'. In spiritual terms, every believer should be "skillful". Every believer is expected to sing praises both with his spirit and with his mind (1Cor 14:15).

It is part of “worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:23-24), meaning that worship happens in a spiritual way, with the heart, but also with understanding of the truth of God’s Word about Christ and His work. Getting into ecstasy, losing control of one’s own will, is foolish and harmful for the Christian. It is reminiscent of the work of demons (1Cor 12:1-2).

Verses 23-24 | Gatekeepers

23 Berechiah and Elkanah were gatekeepers for the ark. 24 Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah and Eliezer, the priests, blew the trumpets before the ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah also [were] gatekeepers for the ark.

Gatekeepers must guard for the honor of the ark. They stand in front of the entrance to the tent where the ark is located to ensure that no unauthorized persons enter and touch the ark. They also accompany the ark on its way to Jerusalem to ensure that no unholy hands touch the ark.

In the church every member is responsible for ensuring that nothing enters the church that affects the honor of the Lord Jesus. This concerns both the doctrine and the life of each member of the church. A special responsibility lies on the shoulders of brothers who through age and experience know God’s thoughts and function as elders in their contact with the Lord (Acts 20:28a).

Verses 25-28 | The Ark Is Brought Up

25 So [it was] David, with the elders of Israel and the captains over thousands, who went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-edom with joy. 26 Because God was helping the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. 27 Now David was clothed with a robe of fine linen with all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the leader of the singing [with] the singers. David also wore an ephod of linen. 28 Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the horn, with trumpets, with loud-sounding cymbals, with harps and lyres.

Then “the ark of the covenant of the LORD” – twice it is expressly called so (verses 25-26) – is taken from the house of Obed-edom. The name of Obed-edom is mentioned several times in this chapter (verses 18,21,24,25). The mention of his name reflects the great appreciation God has for him. His faithfulness is rewarded. He is faithful in his own house and now has a task regarding the house of God.

The ark is brought to Jerusalem by “all Israel” “with joy”, that is to say, under the expression of joy. The carrying of the ark is done by the Levites, but the whole people are involved. The fact that the ark now arrives in Jerusalem without accidents is because God helps the Levites to carry the ark. The carriers are in themselves no better than Uzza. That things are going well now is thanks to the help of God. It also applies to us that only with the help of God, the help of His Spirit, can a service be done for Him that is pleasing to Him (cf. 2Chr 18:31; Acts 26:22).

The awareness that God helps leads them to bring sacrifices. The sacrifices consist of “seven bulls and seven rams”. The number seven is the number of perfection. A bull is pre-eminently the animal for the burnt offering. The ram is pre-eminently the animal for the sacrifice of consecration.

Here we see that the bringing up of the ark (in picture) is done on the basis of the Lord’s work, which He performed perfectly (seven) to God’s glory (burnt offering), in full dedication to Him (offering of consecration). The spiritual application is that we can only prepare a place for the Lord Jesus if we have understood something of His perfect work as a burnt offering and a sacrifice of ordination.

David does not wear his royal garment on this occasion, but both a Levite garment and a priestly garment (verse 27). This evokes the thought that here we have a picture of the Lord Jesus as the One Who is King and Priest in one Person.

What is happening here before our eyes is sung in Psalm 68:

“They have seen Your procession, O God,
The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary.
The singers went on, the musicians after [them],
In the midst of the maidens beating tambourines” (Psa 68:24-25).

Verse 29 | Michal Despises David

29 It happened when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and celebrating; and she despised him in her heart.

Michal despises David because she finds it below his dignity as king to behave like this – in her eyes frenzied. Unbelief understands nothing of the joy that the believing heart experiences in the things of the Lord. It is impossible for the carnal minded believer to share in the joy experienced by the spiritual minded believer in his fellowship with the Father and the Son.

The fact that she looks “out of the window” shows her limited insight. It presents the framework of her own imagination that is determined by origin and upbringing. She shows an arrogant complacency with which she pretends to judge David and his way of doing things.

It is a sad thing when in a marriage husband and wife do not correspond spiritually or even, as here, there is a great distance between them. This is not (in the picture) a marriage between a believer and an unbeliever. This is prohibited (2Cor 6:14a). It is a marriage between two people who confess to belong to God’s people.

It is vital for marriage that husband and wife agree in the purpose of their lives and that is to live to the honor of the Lord. If one of them thinks or starts thinking differently about this, it is sad. However, it does not mean that then the other person should not live for the Lord anymore. We can learn this here from David. He remains faithful to the Lord and is committed to His honor.

1 Chronicles 16

Introduction

This chapter concludes the description of the major event of placing the ark in the royal city. This confirms the public worship of God during the reign of David. That the ark was not brought to Gibeon, where the altar stands and what is left of the tabernacle, is of great significance. It means the judgment of the whole system connected to the tabernacle.

Verses 1-3 | Offerings and Blessing

1 And they brought in the ark of God and placed it inside the tent which David had pitched for it, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. 2 When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. 3 He distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread and a portion [of meat] and a raisin cake.

When the ark is placed in the tent and has come to rest, as it were, from his wanderings, the consequence is that offerings are offered. The placing of the ark works worship, of which the burnt offering speaks, and fellowship, of which the peace offerings speaks. There is no sin offering here, it does not fit with this event.

After offering the offerings mentioned above David distributes blessings to the whole people. David is the king-priest who as a true Melchizedek distributes food (Gen 14:18). Every member, without distinction between man and woman, gets “a loaf of bread and a portion [of meat] and a raisin cake”. When it comes to the blessings which the believer has received in Christ, there is no difference between man and woman (Gal 3:28).

The ‘food package’ that David distributes represents, in picture, a rich blessing. The loaf of bread speaks of the Lord Jesus: He is the bread of life. The portion of dates [as the Dutch HSV translates] speaks of victory: dates come from the date palms, the palm tree is a symbol of victory. The raisin cake speaks of lasting joy: raisins are dried grapes and from grapes is made the wine that rejoices the heart of God and people (Jdg 9:13).

We see this lasting joy with the apostle Paul in the letter to the Philippians. Even the tears that he weep (Phil 3:18) are not able to dispel the presence of that joy that is so characteristic of that letter. This has to do with the fact that life for him is Christ, which we can connect with the ark being placed “inside the tent which David had pitched for it”. When Christ, of whom the ark is a picture, is central to our lives, lasting joy is our part and we can also pass it on. David does this in the picture of the raisin cakes and Paul does this to the believers in Philippi in his letter to them.

In the picture we can see here that the Lord Jesus is in the midst of the church when it comes together in His Name (Mt 18:20). The church is a place of worship and fellowship, with the result that every member receives spiritual nourishment.

Verses 4-7 | Praising the LORD

4 He appointed some of the Levites [as] ministers before the ark of the LORD, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel: 5 Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, [then] Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel, with musical instruments, harps, lyres; also Asaph [played] loud-sounding cymbals, 6 and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests [blew] trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God. 7 Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD.

After the ark is placed and the offerings are offered, it is arranged by David that the name of the LORD is mentioned in the presence of the ark and that He is praised. David introduces music and singing into the worship service. He establishes an order for this and commands to praise the LORD. The place of worship is now not only a place of sacrifice, but also of praise. David instructs Asaph to praise the LORD.

The words used in the following verses 8-36 for this praise are quotations from three psalms. The person who made the psalms is not mentioned. Since David quotes from these three psalms, it is likely that he wrote them. We can divide the hymn into three parts, according to the quotations from the psalms:

1. verses 8-22 are, with a single modification, Psalm 105:1-15,

2. the verses 23-33 are, except for a few initial words, whole Psalm 96 and
3. verses 34-36 are Psalm 106:1,47-48.

Psalms 105 and 106 are the last two psalms of the fourth psalm book. In the fourth psalm book the ways are sung along which God will reach His great end goal. That goal is to introduce His Son as the Son of Man into the world to establish His kingship.

Psalm 96 is also part of the fourth psalm book, which begins with Psalm 90, the prayer of Moses, the man who led the people through the wilderness. In an ascending series of psalms the establishment of the kingship of the Messiah takes place. That fits in with what we have here, the establishment of the kingship of David, in connection with the ark and with Jerusalem. It is worth pointing out that in Psalm 102 we read about the basis of God's end goal, which is the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross. In Psalms 105 and 106 we hear as a result of this the great jubilation.

The first part, verses 8-22, which consists of the first part of Psalm 105 (Psa 105:1-15), shows the *faithfulness* of God in keeping His covenant. The second part, the verses 23-33, which consists of Psalm 96 (Psa 96:1-13), is a *hymn*. The third part, verses 34-36, which consists of the opening verses and the closing verses of Psalm 106 (Psa 106:1,47-48), contains the thought of *meeting together*. In the subjects of these three parts – fidelity, hymns and meetings – we can recognize the meaning of the names of the three main singers. Heman means 'faithfulness', Jeduthun means 'choir of praise' and Asaph means 'one who gathers together'.

The content of the praise of the LORD is indicated by David and put into practice by "Asaph and his relatives". It is good to learn from the Lord Jesus how to praise God. He sings praises to the LORD – for us, the Father – in the midst of the church (Heb 2:12) and the church may agree with Him. David here is a picture of the Lord Jesus who leads God's people through the Spirit in worship.

We can make the application that it is good to learn from faithful brothers how to worship God. We do not do this by taking a course with them or just by repeating what they say, but by listening to their thanksgiving and going into it with our hearts.

Verses 8-22 | First Part (Psalm 105:1-15)

- 8 *Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples.*
- 9 *Sing to Him, sing praises to Him;
Speak of all His wonders.*
- 10 *Glory in His holy name;
Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.*
- 11 *Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face continually.*
- 12 *Remember His wonderful deeds which He has done,
His marvels and the judgments from His mouth,*
- 13 *O seed of Israel His servant,
Sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!*
- 14 *He is the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.*
- 15 *Remember His covenant forever,
The word which He commanded to a thousand generations,*
- 16 *[The covenant] which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac.*
- 17 *He also confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel as an everlasting covenant,*
- 18 *Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan,
s the portion of your inheritance."*
- 19 *When they were only a few in number,
Very few, and strangers in it,*
- 20 *And they wandered about from nation to nation,
And from [one] kingdom to another people,*
- 21 *He permitted no man to oppress them,
And He reproved kings for their sakes, [saying],*
- 22 *"Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."*

These verses are about the unchanging and unconditional promises God has made in grace to the fathers. Psalm 105 consists of two parts. In verses 1-15 it is about the great deeds of God towards the fathers. The second part

from verse 16 onwards is about God's ways with Israel and His care for them to give them the promised blessing.

In this section the activities of God's people are first sung (verses 8-13) and then the promises of God (verses 14-22). In verses 8-12, the people are called to various activities. The call is made to a people who have a special relationship with God. That relation is given in two names each with an other addition. They are "seed of Israel", to which is added "His servant" (verse 13a). "Israel", which means "prince of God", is the name that points to their special position before God. The word "servant" is associated with this. Whoever knows His special position will be pleased to serve the Lord.

They are also "sons of Jacob", to which is added "His chosen ones" (verse 13b). With "sons of Jacob" the emphasis is on the weakness of their dedication to God and the wrong ways the people have gone. That is why it is so beautiful that it is precisely behind this name that there is the addition "His chosen ones", which speaks of God having chosen them despite their weakness and wrong ways.

When we read verses 8-12, we see the activities to which the people are called as descendants of Israel and Jacob. The activities, which fit in a book like 1 Chronicles, consist of praise, call upon, make known (verse 8), singing, singing praises, speaking (verse 9), glory, be glad, seek (verses 10-11), remember (verse 12).

In all these activities the marvels of the LORD are made the object of the song and the deeds are displayed in which He reveals Himself, also in the sight of the nations (verse 8b). We should remember that for us all this is far surpassed by the marvels of the Lord Jesus at His coming in the flesh, His work on the cross, His resurrection and His glorification. What a reason to 'display' all that in adoration before God.

David points to the LORD as "our God" (verse 14), Whose judgment are in all the earth. Is it not more than justified to call for praise for Him? Additional reasons for this are given in the following verses (verses 15-18). In those verses it is about God's covenant with and His promise to Abraham (Gen 17:7,13,19), about His oath to Isaac (Gen 26:2-5,23-24), about the statute confirmed to Jacob and the everlasting covenant for Israel (Gen 28:13,15; 35:9-13). In short, it is about God's electing grace and unrepentant

promises (Rom 11:29), and all this in view of the land of Canaan as their inheritance. With so many blessings and security, the heart cannot remain unmoved and the mouth cannot remain silent.

In the last verses we have the history, but not the responsibility (verses 19-22). In these verses the past of the people is described, how weak and vulnerable it was. It shows how we too can live in the world. But then the people will be reminded how God stood up for them in the circumstances in which they seemed to be prey to hostile forces. What is said in verse 22 is found in an event in Abraham's life in which he has departed from the way of faith (Gen 20:6b-7).

Verses 23-33 | Second Part (Psalm 96:1-13)

- 23 *Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.*
- 24 *Tell of His glory among the nations,
His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.*
- 25 *For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
He also is to be feared above all gods.*
- 26 *For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.*
- 27 *Splendor and majesty are before Him,
Strength and joy are in His place.*
- 28 *Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.*
- 29 *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come before Him;
Worship the LORD in holy array.*
- 30 *Tremble before Him, all the earth;
Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved.*
- 31 *Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
And let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."*
- 32 *Let the sea roar, and all it contains;
Let the field exult, and all that is in it.*
- 33 *Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD;
For He is coming to judge the earth.*

Psalm 96, from which comes the second part of this hymn of praise, is one of the psalms that speak of the return of Christ. David calls not to sing of his own kingship, but of the kingship of the LORD. David's kingship and that of the Lord Jesus are most closely connected, for the great Son of David is the LORD of the hosts. These verses look forward to the fulfillment of the promises, when the LORD openly exercises His authority over the nations.

After the praise of the LORD for all His great deeds and His covenant follows in verse 23 the call of Israel to all the earth to sing for Him. The people of God are overwhelmed by the great goodness that is their part. In it they want to share the nations who have been brought into contact with them. In their turn, those peoples must bring the message of the salvation that is Israel's part "from day to day", that is to say, constantly. Something like this is expected of us: "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name" (Heb 13:15). Here the singing for the LORD is done by the nations as a testimony of His wonderful deeds (verse 24).

The direct reason for this call is the incomparable and awesome greatness of the LORD above all gods because they are idols, they are nothing, while the LORD is also the Creator (verses 25-26). Everything that is before Him, what is in His presence, radiates splendor and majesty (verse 27). Perhaps we could think of angels. They have power and joy because they are in His place, the place where He is. When we think of "His place" we can also think of the ark here. All the people rejoice at the presence of the ark as the dwelling place of God.

If this is true for angels and God's earthly people, how much more so than for us who are children of God and are blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places (Eph 1:3). Do we rejoice in this too?

In the following verses we see the nations in the temple (verses 28-30). They have come to see the face of the LORD. They are called to come there with offerings and bow down before Him. Someone can only come into the presence of God by virtue of the offering of Christ and in a humble mind. The whole earth, that is to say all the nations of the earth, is called to tremble before Him. That shows their respect for Him. To those with whom this is found, He gives them unshakeable firmness.

When the whole earth has thus taken its place in relation to the almighty LORD, heaven is also involved. The heavens and the earth are called together to rejoice (verse 31). This situation is the result of the reign of the LORD. He always rules, but then it will be visible to everyone. The whole creation in all its parts, the visible and the invisible, is called to expressions of joy, because the moment has come when the LORD sits on His throne to judge the earth (verses 32-33).

This is an impressive moment, a moment of unprecedented importance. It is the great turning point in the history of mankind. Now everything will be completely different, God will reign through His Son. He has given all judgment to Him because He is the Son of Man (Jn 5:27).

Verses 34-36 | Third Part (Psa 106:1,47-48)

- 34 *O give thanks to the LORD, for [He is] good;
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.*
- 35 *Then say, "Save us, O God of our salvation,
And gather us and deliver us from the nations,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
And glory in Your praise."*
- 36 *Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
From everlasting even to everlasting.
Then all the people said, "Amen," and praised the LORD.*

The words of this third part come from Psalm 106, the final psalm of the fourth psalm book. In the first verse and the two final verses of that psalm (Psa 106:1,47-48), the hallelujah sounds, which means 'praise the LORD'. 'Hallelujah' is the word of the kingdom of peace, together with the praise of the mercy of the LORD which we find later in this chapter (verse 41).

Once again the call "give thanks the LORD" sounds (verse 34). It is the call that started this song in verse 8. The reason is that the LORD is good. He is not just for a moment, but "His lovingkindness is everlasting". The latter statement is characteristic of the millennial realm of peace.

This trust in God's goodness is the basis for the call to God to deliver them from the power of the nations of Gentiles (verse 35). They call God the "God of our salvation". Salvation is the salvation in the full sense of the

word and concerns spirit, soul and body and land. It is the deliverance from all evil powers and the receiving of all promised blessings. They ask for that salvation and deliverance to be able to praise God's holy Name and to glory in God's praise. That will find its full fulfilment in the realm of peace.

Yet they do not wait until the kingdom of peace has arrived, to only then praising God's holy Name. They do so right here, when they say: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, From everlasting even to everlasting (verse 36a).

The last words (verse 36b) are words that immediately follow this song of praise and show that all Israel is a people of singers. The whole people agree with the song of praise sung by Asaph and his relatives by adding their "amen" and praising the LORD themselves.

Verses 37-42 | The Service at the Ark

37 So he left Asaph and his relatives there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required; 38 and Obed-edom with his 68 relatives; Obed-edom, also the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah as gatekeepers. 39 [He left] Zadok the priest and his relatives the priests before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place which [was] at Gibeon, 40 to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering continually morning and evening, even according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which He commanded Israel. 41 With them [were] Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because His lovingkindness is everlasting. 42 And with them [were] Heman and Jeduthun [with] trumpets and cymbals for those who should sound aloud, and [with] instruments [for] the songs of God, and the sons of Jeduthun for the gate.

Here the thread of history with the ark and the service in connection with it (verses 1-6) is picked up again. There is a dual service. We have the service at the ark (verses 37) and the service at the altar of burnt offering (verses 39-40). We don't know how the tabernacle ended up in Gibeon. First the tabernacle was in Shiloh, in the days of Eli. It has been suggested that the Philistines destroyed Shiloh and left the tabernacle and accessories

to the Amorites who established it in Gibeon. That would later have been conquered again by the Israelites.

In any case, there is a separation between the tabernacle and the ark. In front of the ark a tent is pitched by David. He must have understood that the tabernacle has had its time and has been dismissed before God. The service that takes place takes place at the ark. With the temple, which will be built by Solomon, a whole new building will be built on a new place where the altar of burnt offering will be placed. At the same time, this means that the tabernacle service will definitely cease to exist.

The difference between the service and place of the ark and the altar of burnt offering indicates different interests and occasions. Where the ark is, there is the service according to the will of the LORD. Where the altar stands, the ark is no longer. This indicates a tradition, which may continue for a while, as a transitional period. During that transitional period God can endure that service. Before the ark, the service of the song is performed daily, as is the burnt offering, which is also brought every morning and every evening (Exo 29:38-42; 1Chr 23:30; Lk 2:37).

What we read in the last verse of this section (verse 42), we find spiritually in the church. The father's house in Luke 15 is a house of music and dance (Lk 15:25). When music is made, it must result in dance or expressions of joy. Music represents the prophetic ministry that is intended to move the hearts of the believer, whether in joy or sadness, depending on the message that the servants of the Lord bring (cf. Mt 11:16-17).

Verse 43 | Everyone Departs to His House

43 Then all the people departed each to his house, and David returned to bless his household.

Everyone goes home, David too. David says that he returns to bless his household. The question may be asked to us where we are going after a meeting around the Lord Jesus. For some that is unfortunately a return to the world, the worldly atmosphere. For others, however, the family has the same atmosphere as the meeting. There is shared what is enjoyed in the presence of Lord Jesus and He is involved in all daily things.

1 Chronicles 17

Introduction

In this chapter God speaks to David (verses 1-15) and David speaks to God (verses 16-27). God now speaks to us through His Word and we may speak to Him in prayer in response.

This chapter is the heart of 1 Chronicles and deals with the continuing importance of the person and the work of David in connection with “the ark of the covenant of the LORD” (verse 1), the full name of the ark.

This chapter is about three houses:

1. the house which David built (verse 1),
2. the house to be built for God (verses 4,11,12) and
3. the spiritual house of David, the lineage that runs to Christ (verses 16,23,27).

Verse 1 | The Desire of David

1 And it came about, when David dwelt in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, “Behold, I am dwelling in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under curtains.”

David’s life is reaching a new stage here. Earlier he went to his own house to bless it (1Chr 16:43). Now he gets spiritual exercises about God’s house. Exercises about God’s house take place in the own house, the own living environment. If there are no such exercises at home, they are not there in God’s house.

But he who only has an eye and time for his own house, has no time to care for God’s house (Hag 1:4). Whosoever is content to remain in the door of his own tent shall not go out to the tent of God (Exo 33:7-10). Those who cannot run their own house cannot take care of the church of God either (1Tim 3:5). The one cannot be seen apart from the other.

When David sits at rest in his house, he realizes the incongruity that exists between his own dwelling place and that of the ark. Also for us the question may be: can we have satisfaction in our own prosperity, our own,

often luxurious, living environment, while we have no eye for the city as a picture of the church in its daily revelation, where God dwells?

Verses 2-6 | David Is Not Allowed to Build a House for God

2 Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you." 3 It came about the same night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, 4 "Go and tell David My servant, 'Thus says the LORD, "You shall not build a house for Me to dwell in; 5 for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel to this day, but I have gone from tent to tent and from [one] dwelling place [to another]. 6 In all places where I have walked with all Israel, have I spoken a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, 'Why have you not built for Me a house of cedar?'"

From what David says in verse 1, Nathan understands what he means. Nathan doesn't say in so many words that David can build the temple, just like David himself didn't say. This intention of David as such is not wrong. Therefore the prophet encourages him. Stimulating each other to do something for the Lord is good. However, a first, humanly understandable reaction of Nathan said was not the word of the LORD. In the night that follows, Nathan is told what the LORD thinks of David's intention.

For reasons to be given later, David is not allowed to build the temple (1Chr 22:8; 28:3). Other things have to happen first. David is not allowed to build a house for the LORD, but the LORD will build a house for David. He *gives* to David, who must first become a receiver. We can't give the Lord what He needs, but that doesn't mean we can't give him anything. The Lord likes to receive from us what we want to give Him.

Nowhere do we read that the LORD, when He walked around with the people, gave the order to build a house for Him. On the contrary, He has always adapted Himself to His people. When the people of Israel were slaves, he became their Deliverer; when the people dwelt in tents, His dwelling place was also a tent; when the people had to fight, he revealed himself as the captain of the LORD's host; when it will be established in peace, God will also establish in the house of His glory.

So it is with Christ in relation to us. We are born of a woman, He also; His earthly people Israel was under the law, that He also was during his life on

earth; now that He gathers a heavenly people for Himself, He is in heaven for us; when He comes in glory, we come with Him in His glory; when He reigns, we reign with Him.

Verses 7-15 | What God Is for David

7 Now, therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader over My people Israel. 8 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a name like the name of the great ones who are in the earth. 9 I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and not be moved again; and the wicked will not waste them anymore as formerly, 10 even from the day that I commanded judges [to be] over My people Israel. And I will subdue all your enemies. Moreover, I tell you that the LORD will build a house for you. 11 When your days are fulfilled that you must go [to be] with your fathers, that I will set up [one of] your descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. 14 But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.'" 15 According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

David's sacred desire to build a house for the glory of God is the opportunity for God to tell of what He has done to David (verses 7-8) and what He will do to him (verses 9-14). Verse 9 will be fully realized in the kingdom of peace. In this verse and the following verses we see a reference to the Messiah. Verse 10 is elaborated in 1 Chronicles 18-20, as a premonition of the judgments that precede the kingdom of peace.

God does not mention a particular son, but He speaks in a general sense of one "of your sons" (verse 11). That fits in this Bible book. One "of your sons" refers to the Messiah and not Solomon as the physical son. It is about the Lord Jesus, the Son of God (Psa 2:7; Heb 1:5; 5:5; Acts 13:33), for Whom God will be a Father and Who will be His Son (verse 13; 1Chr 22:10; 28:6).

The Son will build a house for the LORD. The reign and kingship of the Son shall be “without end” (verse 12b; verse 14; Lk 1:32-33; Dan 2:44). It is also clearly said that the kingdom of the Son is the kingdom of the LORD (“My kingdom”).

As a faithful envoy, who keeps nothing from the whole counsel of God, Nathan transmits all the words of the LORD to David (verse 15). He is as faithful in this as Paul is later, who says to the elders of Ephesus: “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God” (Acts 20:27).

Verses 16-27 | The Prayer of Thanksgiving of David

16 Then David the king went in and sat before the LORD and said, “Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my house that You have brought me this far? 17 This was a small thing in Your eyes, O God; but You have spoken of Your servant’s house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the standard of a man of high degree, O LORD God. 18 What more can David still [say] to You concerning the honor [bestowed] on Your servant? For You know Your servant. 19 O LORD, for Your servant’s sake, and according to Your own heart, You have wrought all this greatness, to make known all these great things. 20 O LORD, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 21 And what one nation in the earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went to redeem for Himself [as] a people, to make You a name by great and terrible things, in driving out nations from before Your people, whom You redeemed out of Egypt? 22 For Your people Israel You made Your own people forever, and You, O LORD, became their God. 23 “Now, O LORD, let the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house be established forever, and do as You have spoken. 24 Let Your name be established and magnified forever, saying, ‘The LORD of hosts is the God of Israel, [even] a God to Israel; and the house of David Your servant is established before You.’ 25 For You, O my God, have revealed to Your servant that You will build for him a house; therefore Your servant has found [courage] to pray before You. 26 Now, O LORD, You are God, and have promised this good thing to Your servant. 27 And now it has pleased You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before You; for You, O LORD, have blessed, and it is blessed forever.”

We read, as a rarity, that someone sits before the LORD (verse 16). The more common postures are that someone throws himself before the LORD, kneels or stands up respectfully. Here with David we see that he confidentially “sat”, which means that he sits down with the LORD. It is a good example of a confidential relationship with the LORD, in which he take into account the greatest respect at the same time. He wants to speak to the LORD about what he has heard of Him and what has been promised by Him.

When David speaks, he is no longer talking about his wish that is not fulfilled. He is not sad or depressed now that the LORD does not allow him to do what he likes to do. Instead of discouragement there is great gratitude with him. He flows over with joy for what the LORD promised him concerning his descendancy, what he will give him, him and his house. We see later that he does what is in his power to collect what is necessary for the temple that not he, but his son Solomon may build.

This is an example for us. With the means that the Lord has given us, we can cooperate in a work that we would have liked to have done ourselves, but for which the Lord has appointed someone else. We come to this when we see how much we ourselves have been gifted by the Lord. This is the first thing we find with David.

In the presence of the LORD, David’s first remark about himself is “who am I?” and about his house is “what is my house?” He is deeply impressed by the grace that has been bestowed upon him and his home. That leads him to speak about his own smallness. This is the appropriate sense of received grace that should also characterize us in our dealings with the Lord.

He also shows his faith and trust. David acknowledges in his prayer of thanks what the LORD said earlier that it is about the future, about the coming of “a man of high degree”, that is the great Son of David (verse 17; verse 13). In Him, that is in Christ, a row of people in the ascending line will culminate in the distant future. David is already king and his descendancy is already chosen, but that doesn’t make him proud, for everything is the consequence of God’s blessing. He is of humble descent and has been led to great heights by God. David’s feeling is the feeling that Mary is singing about when she is told she will become the mother of the Messiah (Lk 1:46-49).

David speaks to the LORD about “David” (verse 18) and not about “king David”, for earthly glory is forgotten in the presence of the LORD. David is not speechless, but he also cannot add anything to the benefits that are being done to him. He knows that he is the object of the love and grace of the LORD. That he is, not for who he is in himself, but because it is in the heart of the LORD Himself (verse 19) to bless His servant David. He also wanted to make that known to him. These are indeed “great things”.

The Lord loves to hear from us as well, in which we value His blessings. We may say prayers expressing our needs, but it is also beautiful to tell Him our appreciation of His blessings and promises.

Then follows a confession of the uniqueness of God (verse 20). That He is a unique God, He has proved in the redemption of His people (verse 21). Directly linked to the uniqueness of God is the uniqueness of God’s people (verse 22). God and His people belong together. The people owe their uniqueness to Who God is as the unique God. God has chosen that people as His property. He has done that to make Himself through them a Name on earth. His people are His honor because He has given them His honor.

God wants we pray to Him for what He has promised (verse 23). In Luke 1 the continuation of this prayer comes as a first fulfilment: “The Lord God will give Him [i.e. the Lord Jesus] the throne of His father David” (Lk 1:32).

The content of David’s prayer is of high order. He addresses the LORD in expectation of his hearing: “Let the word ... be established forever, and do” (verse 23); “let Your name be established and magnified ... and the house of David Your servant is established” (verse 24). The promises for the future are the ground for his prayer (verse 25). God loves that His unquestionable promises are accepted by His without any restraint. If His promises are accepted as certain by a faithful heart, this will be reflected in the gratitude that is brought to Him.

Because the LORD is God and He has spoken this good (verse 26), David trusts that his prayer will be heard. He expresses the certainty of the hearing. He says that the LORD has blessed his house, and that it will therefore be blessed forever (verse 27). There is no better basis for our prayers than the promises God has given in His Word. That gives the certainty of the hearing. The time of the hearing is the matter of God.

1 Chronicles 18

Introduction

In the previous chapter we are in the sanctuary. In the chapter we have before us now, we find ourselves in the battle outside the sanctuary. When David has been with God in the sanctuary, he comes out strengthened and can gain victories over the enemies. David spreads to all sides the glory of Israel and of his reign. He is an example of the Lord Jesus in this. When the Lord Jesus comes out of the sanctuary, He will subdue and judge all His enemies and establish His kingdom on all the earth.

The contents of this chapter can also be found in 2 Samuel 8. Following the events described in this chapter, David wrote Psalm 60 (Psa 60:1-2).

The record of David's victories must have been a great encouragement for the returned exiles. They too have to deal with all kinds of opponents. They return from exile in a country that has remained untended for seventy years. David owes his victories not to himself, but to God. It is to that God that the heart of the remnant is directed above all. Whom He has been for David He is also for them. For them and for us, "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8).

Verses 1-13 | The Victories of David

1 Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines. 2 He defeated Moab, and the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute. 3 David also defeated Hadadezer king of Zobah [as far as] Hamath, as he went to establish his rule to the Euphrates River. 4 David took from him 1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers, and David hamstrung all the chariot horses, but reserved [enough] of them for 100 chariots. 5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed 22,000 men of the Arameans. 6 Then David put [garrisons] among the Arameans of Damascus; and the Arameans became servants to David, bringing tribute. And the LORD helped David wherever he went. 7 David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadadezer and brought

them to Jerusalem. 8 Also from Tibhath and from Cun, cities of Hadadezer, David took a very large amount of bronze, with which Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the bronze utensils. 9 Now when Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, 10 he sent Hadoram his son to King David to greet him and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and had defeated him; for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou. And [Hadoram brought] all kinds of articles of gold and silver and bronze. 11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD with the silver and the gold which he had carried away from all the nations: from Edom, Moab, the sons of Ammon, the Philistines, and from Amalek. 12 Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah defeated 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 13 Then he put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

David successively conquers the Philistines in the west (verse 1), the Moabites in the east (verse 2), the king of Zoba and the Arameans, or Syrians, in the north (verses 3-11) and the Edomites in the south (verses 12-13). He is successful because the LORD is with him (verses 6,13), for the LORD is always with the one who is with Him.

That does not mean that the victories are just handed over to David. He really has to fight hard for it. To wage these wars he also had a hard training school during the time he was on the run from Saul. The Lord also gives us victory, but He does so only if we are fully committed to Him.

By defeating the Philistines (verse 1) David subdues an enemy who has been a plague to Israel for many years, already from the time of the judges. They even distressed Saul so much that he committed suicide and they killed his sons (1Sam 31:1-6). The Philistines have also conquered cities of Israel and started to live there themselves (1Chr 10:7). David breaks their power. By taking Gath and its towns out of the power of the Philistines, he now conquers cities instead of the other way around. Later on the killing of some of the remaining giants is reported (1Chr 20:4-8).

David also defeats the Moabites (verse 2). Just like about defeating the Philistines, the chronicler is brief about that. He devotes only one verse to it, as well as to the defeat of the Philistines. The result is that the Moabites serve David and have to bring him tribute. In so doing David continues to

wipe exercise his power over them, thereby averting the danger that they again will develop into a dangerous power apart from him.

The moment Hadadezer, the king of Zoba, wants to establish his power, David defeats him (verse 3). He makes the enemy prisoners and he makes the means on which they have trusted powerless (verse 4). If the enemies unite to fight against David together, that unification is only like the gathering of “sheaves to the threshing floor” (verse 5; Mic 4:11-12). David doesn’t have to fight against all these realms separately, but can defeat them in one war.

The rich booty of bronze from this battle will be used for the construction of the temple (verse 8). “King David” – David twice emphatically is called *king* (verses 10-11) – sanctifies for the LORD both what he has received in gifts and what he has conquered in booty, to be used for the construction and decoration of the temple.

By defeating Hadadezer David gives reason for joy to Tou, the king of Hamath (verses 9-11). Defeating enemies has therefore a richer effect than just personal joy. Just as failure has evil consequences for others (1Chr 13:6-10), so a victory in the power of God has good effect for others. It is wise of Tou to thank David for that. It is an example for us to make sure we become friends with those of whom we see that God is with them.

The literal enemies of David and Israel represent spiritual enemies for us. Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against powers in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12). It is good to realize that in ourselves there is no strength to overcome any enemy. Just as there are various enemies of David, so the sin, using the evil powers in the heavenly realms, has many manifestations, such as jealousy and pride.

All these manifestations are enemies who want to influence our lives. The Lord wants to give us the strength to overcome those enemies. The armor of God is given to us for this (Eph 6:13-18). If we have put it on, without forgetting one part, we will remain standing.

David also puts “garrisons” in two hostile territories. He does so in Aram, or Syria (verse 6), and in Edom (verse 13). This teaches us that once an enemy has been defeated, it must be kept down. A defeated enemy must not be given the chance to get up again.

We can also see these two enemies in a different way. Syria represents an enemy who wants to take away the blessings of the land, he comes to take them from us. In practice, this means that, for example, we cannot enjoy the Lord's things through all kinds of pressure. Edom, that is Esau, is known for not being interested in the blessing of the land at all. It is the indifference to the things of God that can also bother us. Edom represents the flesh that is only interested in here-and-now (Gen 25:29-34). It must be subdued, for on the cross God "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom 8:3).

Verses 14-17 | Reign and Officials of David

14 So David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and righteousness for all his people. 15 Joab the son of Zeruah [was] over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud [was] recorder; 16 and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar [were] priests, and Shavsha [was] secretary; 17 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada [was] over the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and the sons of David [were] chiefs at the king's side.

We see in these verses that David also provides peace internally by maintaining the law. He provides a good army, because he realizes that, although all his enemies have been overcome, they continue to pose a threat. The army is not only there to maintain the peace towards the peoples around them, it is also used to maintain peace among the members of the people themselves. Also internally there must be no outbreak of revolt. God gives man power, not so that man himself becomes great as a result, but so that he may do good with it. David's reign responds to this.

If we apply this to the life of the church, the lesson is that even when there are tensions between them, the true David is ready to restore peace and rest. The Lord Jesus has an 'army', which are His gifts to the church (Eph 4:11-12). They give indications that the tensions may disappear.

An example of these tensions and how they are removed can be seen from the very beginning of the church (Acts 6:1-6). There we read that a group of believers feel disadvantaged. They believe that, compared to others, they do not get enough. If this grumble does not disappear quickly, it will have a devastating effect on the church. The 'army' of the Lord Jesus, the apostles, comes with the solution, by which the grumble stops. This solution

does not lie in the use of violence, but in meeting the complainants wherever possible.

Such a solution requires a spiritual attitude, that is to say the mind of the Lord Jesus. Each of us has a responsibility to ensure that in our own lives and in the church of God the right of God is upheld, which means obeying what He says in His Word. This cannot happen by force or violence, but by the Spirit, who works in leaders whom the Lord has given. These leaders are not officially appointed persons. There is no such thing in the Bible in relation to the church. They are servants trained and formed by the Lord in the school of life. We are warned to obey them and to be submitted to them (Heb 13:17).

1 Chronicles 19

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a separate description of David's war against the Ammonites and the Arameans, or Syrians, nations already mentioned in the previous chapter (cf. 2Sam 10:1-19).

Verses 1-5 | The Messengers of David Humiliated

1 Now it came about after this, that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon died, and his son became king in his place. 2 Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent messengers to console him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the sons of Ammon to Hanun to console him. 3 But the princes of the sons of Ammon said to Hanun, "Do you think that David is honoring your father, in that he has sent comforters to you? Have not his servants come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?" 4 So Hanun took David's servants and shaved them and cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips, and sent them away. 5 Then [certain persons] went and told David about the men. And he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said, "Stay at Jericho until your beards grow, and [then] return."

A proof of kindness of David is the reason for the war with the Ammonites is. Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, dies. David wants to console his son and successor, Hanun. This proof of kindness is misunderstood. The reaction to David's condolences (verse 4) is a straightforward declaration of war.

Hanun shows in this chapter a very different attitude to David's kindness than Mephibosheth has shown (2Sam 9:1-8). There is suspicion that David's true intentions are not of a peaceful nature. The princes of the Ammonites suggest that he tries to subdue them to himself by a feigned condolences. Hanun shows that he does not know David. What David does is seen by him as hypocrisy.

The messengers of David are being treated unjustly and sent away. For an Easterner, shaving the beard is a deep humiliation. Sending the half-naked on the street is also an unprecedented humiliation. A more deeply hurtful treatment is hardly conceivable. When David hears the humiliation, he realizes that what is done to his messengers is in fact directed against him. Yet his first reaction is not to seek retaliation for himself, but his first concern are his humiliated messengers. He lets them say they have to take time to recover.

David is an example of the Lord Jesus in this. His attention always goes first and foremost to his own suffering for Him and not to retaliation for those who cause this suffering to His own. At His time comes also the retribution.

Like Hanun there are many people in the world. If you talk to them about the love of God and the Lord Jesus, they don't want to hear anything about it. They do not allow Him to come into their lives. They see Him as an intruder, as One Who has not good intentions, but bad intention with them.

Whoever bears witness of his Lord out of love for the lost man, may come across the same treatment as the messengers of David and, what is more, the same treatment as the Lord Jesus received: "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (Jn 15:20a). By the way, it suits us to be good and compassionate neighbors and also to be grateful for all the kindness that is shown to us.

Verses 6-19 | The Ammonites and Syrians Defeated

6 When the sons of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the sons of Ammon sent 1,000 talents of silver to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, from Aram-maacah and from Zobah. 7 So they hired for themselves 32,000 chariots, and the king of Maacah and his people, who came and camped before Medeba. And the sons of Ammon gathered together from their cities and came to battle. 8 When David heard [of it], he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men. 9 The sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, and the kings who had come were by themselves in the field. 10 Now when Joab saw

that the battle was set against him in front and in the rear, he selected from all the choice men of Israel and they arrayed themselves against the Arameans. 11 But the remainder of the people he placed in the hand of Abshai his brother; and they arrayed themselves against the sons of Ammon. 12 He said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you. 13 Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight." 14 So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to the battle against the Arameans, and they fled before him. 15 When the sons of Ammon saw that the Arameans fled, they also fled before Abshai his brother and entered the city. Then Joab came to Jerusalem. 16 When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought out the Arameans who were beyond the River, with Shophach the commander of the army of Hadadezer leading them. 17 When it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan, and came upon them and drew up in formation against them. And when David drew up in battle array against the Arameans, they fought against him. 18 The Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed of the Arameans 7,000 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers, and put to death Shophach the commander of the army. 19 So when the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and served him. Thus the Arameans were not willing to help the sons of Ammon anymore.

The enemies now realize that David cannot simply let their insults pass by (verses 6-7). They strengthen themselves and join together, a part near the city and a part in the field. Then Joab is sent to battle by David (verse 8). The enemies then draw up in battle array (verse 9). Joab oversees the situation and notices that he is enclosed. That doesn't cause him to panic. As an experienced general with great military insight he determines a tactic, together with Abshai, in which they divide the forces (verses 10-12). They agree to help each other when the other gets into trouble.

Joab encourages Abshai, and himself, and encourages to be strong and show themselves courageous (verse 13). These are not things of feeling or circumstances, but a choice to be strong and courageous. He points out that it is about "our people and ... the cities of our God". The people, their people, and God's cities are at stake. That is the challenge of the fight. With

the words “may the LORD do what is good in His sight” he further puts the matter in the hands of the LORD. We see here that besides the appeal to the responsibility to be strong and to take courage (cf. 1Cor 16:13) there is also the awareness that everything depends on what the LORD does (cf. Phil 2:12-13).

The enemy allies are contested by Joab with wisdom, while we also hear from his mouth a certain faith. In this book, Joab’s actual attitude – that he ultimately puts his own interests higher than David’s – does not come to the fore. His real motives, his going after his own interest, we see more in 2 Samuel. After determining the tactics and inspiring words, Joab fights with the Syrians, who flee before him (verse 14).

His victory has a positive effect on his brother Abshai, who is fighting with the Ammonites. When the Ammonites see that their allies have been defeated and have fled, they no longer have the courage to fight on. They also flee (verse 15). Every victory we achieve weakens the enemy and often also means a victory for our fellow fighters over their enemies. After the battle Joab goes to Jerusalem, probably to report to David.

After their defeat, the Syrians regrouped and strengthened themselves with other fellow countrymen (verse 16). When David hears about it, he himself goes to war. He gathers “all Israel” and defeats the enemy. All Israel is under the authority of David and he is acknowledged by them as king. This unity is important in view of the building of the temple. For the building of the temple, in addition to the already mentioned materials, the factors of peace and safety and the unity of the people are of great importance.

After David’s punishment, the Syrians make peace with him and surrender to him. The Syrians also do no longer establish a connection with Israel’s other enemy, Ammon.

1 Chronicles 20

Verses 1-3 | David Conquers Rabbah

1 Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out [to battle], that Joab led out the army and ravaged the land of the sons of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. And Joab struck Rabbah and overthrew it. 2 David took the crown of their king from his head, and he found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there was a precious stone in it; and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount. 3 He brought out the people who [were] in it, and cut [them] with saws and with sharp instruments and with axes. And thus David did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned [to] Jerusalem.

The history of Joab's conquest of Rabbah is also described in 2 Samuel 11-12. The words of verse 1 here we also read in 2 Samuel 11 (2Sam 11:1). In the section of 2 Samuel 11:2-12:25 the sin of David is then written with Bathsheba. We find nothing about that here. From 2 Samuel 12:26 onwards it is further described what we read here in 1 Chronicles 20 from verse 2.

That has to do with God's intention with the books of Chronicles. In these books God describes the history of His people and of His own as it proceeds according to His purpose. Therefore, in the books of Chronicles the weaknesses and sins of the believers are often ignored. That fits with this book, because we see in it the fulfillment of the ways and thoughts of God in the house of His chosen king.

In the story of the conquest of Rabbah, the emphasis is on the reign of David (verses 2-3). Joab besieges Rabbah, but for the rest we see what David does. He takes the crown of the defeated enemy. This crown represents a great value. This crown is put on his head. It refers to the appearance of the Lord Jesus to accept His dominion. When that moment is there, He will appear, with "on His head many diadems" (Rev 19:12).

Verses 4-8 | Victories Over the Philistines

4 Now it came about after this, that war broke out at Gezer with the Philistines; then Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Sippai, one of the descendants of the giants, and they were subdued. 5 And there was war with the Philistines again, and Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear [was] like a weaver's beam. 6 Again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of [great] stature who had twenty-four fingers and toes, six [fingers on each hand] and six [toes on each foot]; and he also was descended from the giants. 7 When he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him. 8 These were descended from the giants in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

That this is about the majesty and splendor of David in his reign, we also see in the victories over some Philistine giants. In 2 Samuel these victories are only described in 2 Samuel 21 (2Sam 21:15-22), but here they are mentioned immediately after the victory over the Ammonites and Rabbah. The Philistine giants mentioned here are defeated by some of David's heroes. This marks the high point of David's reign.

In Scripture, giants are always connected with evil, man's revolt against God. A giant is the symbol of pride and arrogance. A giant is opposite to the small and humble, in which God is pleased and where He dwells. The giant is a picture of satanic deception, as we see in Goliath. In the giants who are the enemies of David here, we can see misleading, violent powers, living in a system of error, as the Philistines represent. It has to do with "the mystery of lawlessness" (2Thes 2:7a) which works in the time of Christianity and manifests itself ever more clearly.

Sibbecai (verse 4) is one of David's commanders (1Chr 27:11) and is mentioned in the list of David's mighty men (1Chr 11:29). The list does not mention any special act by him. One of his actions is mentioned here. He defeats the giant Sippai with the additional effect that all Philistines are subdued. To defeat that one is like to defeat all. This can also be seen in the defeat of Goliath by David (1Sam 17:51-52).

Elhanan (verse 5) is also mentioned in the list of David's mighty men (1Chr 11:26). He defeats a Philistine giant who is firstly a brother of Goliath and secondly, like Goliath, has a spear like a weaver's beam (1Sam 17:7). Elhan-

an is not impressed and defeats him. He follows the example of his king and kills Goliath's brother.

The third Philistine giant is defeated by Jonathan (verses 6-7). Jonathan means 'gift of the LORD'. The ultimate gift of God is the Lord Jesus. He will throw the beast from the book of Revelation, to which this Philistine giant refers, the dictator of the united Europe, together with his ally, the antichrist or false prophet in Israel, into hell (Rev 19:20). This giant is characterized by the number six (verse 6). That is also the number that characterizes the beast that comes out of the earth. We read from him that the number of his name is the number "of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six" (Rev 13:17-18).

The special feature of this giant is still said to be that he taunts Israel. He roars in pride against the people of God. That is a characteristic of the other beast from Revelation 13, the beast from the sea. From that beast we read that "he opens his mouth in blasphemies against ... those who dwell in heaven", that is to say against God's people.

The giants who are killed fall "by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants" (verse 8). While it is in fact some of David's mighty men who kill the giants (verses 4-7), it is also said that they fall through David's hand. Here we see behind the performance of the mighty men the great heroic deed of David. David has killed the great giant Goliath. The mighty men follow in his footsteps and do what he did. Their deeds show what David has done. In the same way, we can be more than victors over our enemies by Him Who has gained the great victory over the archenemy of God and His own.

1 Chronicles 21

Introduction

The events in this chapter take place around 975 BC. David is now sixty-eight years old. The events of the previous chapter take place around 995 BC. The twenty years in between are filled with the adultery of David, the revolt of Absalom and David's flee. The Holy Spirit passes all this by here.

In the books of Chronicles the sins of David are only mentioned when it is necessary to give us insight into the manner in which God fulfills His counsel. As mentioned before, the books of Chronicles describe the history of God's people from God's perspective and not from the perspective of man's responsibility. The latter happens in the books of Kings.

The sin of David through the census is told here, because in the atonement of that sin the place is indicated where the temple is to come. It is therefore the fulfillment of God's purpose, for which He even uses the sin of a member of His people. This fits exactly with the perspective that the chronicler, under the guidance of God's Spirit, has in mind.

Verses 1-7 | The Sin of the Census

1 Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel. 2 So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring me [word] that I may know their number." 3 Joab said, "May the LORD add to His people a hundred times as many as they are! But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why does my lord seek this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt to Israel?" 4 Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore, Joab departed and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. 5 Joab gave the number of the census of [all] the people to David. And all Israel were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword; and Judah [was] 470,000 men who drew the sword. 6 But he did not number Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab. 7 God was displeased with this thing, so He struck Israel.

The sin of the census is also found in 2 Samuel 24. There we read that the LORD incites David to count the people (2Sam 24:1). The chronicler says that *Satan* moves David to number. Here we have one of those contradictions that the opponents of the Bible like to use to portray the Bible as unreliable. But 1 Chronicles 21 is not a correction to a previously written account in 2 Samuel 24.

We can learn from Job here. In the book of Job Satan brings all the misery about Job. But Job does not attribute this misery to Satan, but to God. The devil acts according to his own evil nature, but is ultimately nothing but an instrument in God's hand. Paul sometimes attributes something to Satan (1Thes 2:18), knowing very well that God rules his life.

It is therefore important to realize that God's hand is present in what Satan wants to do by moving David to number. God is above all that happens on earth and not Satan. In 2 Samuel 24 it is a test of the LORD to put David to the test. David fails there in his responsibility as king. God's king must remain dependent on God alone and not rely on the power of his army of which he wants to know the number of militant men. In 1 Chronicles 21 it is Satan who wants to disturb the counsel of God and to do so by overthrowing David.

The impressive thing is that God does not allow Himself to be disturbed in the execution of His plans and that it is precisely through this sin that He achieves His goal. That never means an apology for sin. Through our failures God glorifies Himself and works out His purposes. We already see this at the fall into sin. Not that God would have wanted the fall. God abhors from sin. Yet He has a greater blessing for man than without the fall. This is the secret of God, which cannot be understood by us, but can only be worshipped by us in faith. To us God's counsel and our failure are not compatible, but to God they are.

Another question is whether it was sin to number the people. After all, in the wilderness God has numbered His people several times (Num 1:2; 26:2)? Here too, we need to look beyond the fact of the census. The censuses he has had done, he has had done in connection with the heave offering to make atonement (Exo 30:12-16). In the New Testament, in rounded numbers, numbers are also sometimes mentioned (Acts 1:15; 2:41; 4:4).

However, the number of believers in the churches 'established' by Paul is never mentioned.

There are things that are wrong in themselves. These are things that are simply sin, for example because they are clearly forbidden by God in His law. There are also things that are not sin in themselves, but are wrong because of the mind in which something is done. The latter is the case here. David wants to know how great the fighting power of his army is. He forgets that he depends on God for his strength and not on the number of militant men at his disposal. He forgets that all power rests with God alone.

David's prosperity exposes him to the temptations of the enemy. As head of Israel and conqueror of all enemies, he wishes to know the power of the people, who are his glory. With this he forgets the power of God Who gave him all this and made Israel great. He forgot on which way he won from Goliath and what he said then (1Sam 17:45-46).

The account of the sin of the census begins with the statement that Satan stands up against Israel (verse 1). Satan is concerned with the destruction of God's people. In the people there are enough leads for him to attack, but to strike the people in the most effective way he turns to David, the leader of God's people. If he can tempt the leader to sin, it will have consequences for the people.

Satan seems to be successful. David is receptive to the whisper of Satan. He instructs Joab to number Israel "from Beersheba even to Dan", which is from the extreme south to the extreme north (verse 2). Joab must therefore number the whole people. If he has done that, he must bring David the result, so David "knows their number".

Joab strongly resists this commission (verse 3). With clear arguments he tries to change David's thoughts. He acknowledges the kingship of David and reminds him that all his subjects are his servants. So why number? It seems he has a better understanding of the folly of such a census than David. His mind tells him that this matter is not according to the will of God. It will only bring calamity to the people, he says to David.

David, however, is not willing to change his mind. This time his word is too strong for Joab (verse 4a). Does David make it a prestige case? Does he not want to listen to Joab, who has shown himself to be an unreliable man

several times because he doesn't care about David? In any case, David should have listened this time, but does not do it.

Joab goes throughout all Israel and returns to Jerusalem with the result of the census (verses 4b-5). David, however, gets an incorrect number. Out of abhorrence for the command, Joab did not number two tribes. The abhorrence of Joab is justified as a fact and is underlined by what is said in verse 7 about God's displeasure with this matter. The census was evil in the eyes of God.

David brings guilt upon the people by his action. It brings God's judgment over Israel. God's wrath ignites against His people because there is also a spirit of pride in the people about the position they have obtained (2Sam 24:1). Does not the judgment of God play into the hands of Satan? In verse 1 it says that Satan stands up against Israel and now we read that God stands up against Israel in judgment.

Superficially, it may seem so. But if we look deeper, we see that this is not the case. It has to do with the complete difference in intentions that Satan has and that God has. Satan seeks the destruction of God's people and God seeks the restoration of His people. In the rest of this history we hear nothing more of Satan. He has fulfilled his role and is finished talking; he doesn't matter anymore. God has taken the matter into His hands and is working towards the goal He has set himself.

Verses 8-13 | David Confesses His Sin

8 David said to God, "I have sinned greatly, in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." 9 The LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, 10 "Go and speak to David, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "I offer you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you."'" 11 So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Take for yourself 12 either three years of famine, or three months to be swept away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes [you], or else three days of the sword of the LORD, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now, therefore, consider what answer I shall return to Him who sent me." 13 David said to Gad, "I am in great distress; please let

me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man."

As soon as the anger of God comes upon his people, David confesses his sin (verse 8; cf. 2Sam 12:13). This confession is necessary, because only because of it comes forgiveness (1Jn 1:9). David's iniquity is removed. However, the consequences of his sin are not removed (Gal 6:7). God has forgiven sin. However, because it is a public sin, it must also be publicly punished.

The LORD sends "Gad, David's seer" to him to present to him three punishments from which he may choose one. Each of the punishments, when exercised, means a considerable reduction in the number of people he wanted to number to know how strong he was. God strikes him in his arrogant desire to know his strength.

When Gad has finished speaking, he expects an answer from David to bring it "to Him who sent me". Gad must bring only the message of the LORD to David and the answer of David to the LORD. He has no influence whatsoever on the word He must speak in the name of the LORD, and he has no influence whatsoever on David's answer which he must bring to the LORD.

As the messenger of the LORD, Gad places the man whom he must address in the light of the LORD. He does nothing else and nothing more than that. This is the task of every one who is sent to others with a message from the Lord. The word of the Lord must bring the hearts into the presence of God, and the reaction to that word must be brought back to the Lord.

The three punishments which Gad present to David are

1. a natural disaster,
2. the sword, which is a punishment performed by humans or
3. pestilence, a punishment exercised by an angel.

The punishments all come from the hand of the LORD. Yet there is a difference. The hand of the LORD is seen more indirectly in the first two punishments, while in the plague His hand is more directly perceptible. There is another difference. A famine that comes over all will certainly cost victims, but the rich can survive longer anyway. The sword of the enemy will also

make casualties, but still mainly hit the soldiers. However, the plague will be able to affect every human being without regard to the person.

The duration of the disasters is

1. three *years* in the case of natural disasters,
2. a disaster of three *months* by men; and
3. a disaster of three *days* by an angel.

When Christ took our place on the cross, it was a disaster of three *hours* of darkness. He went through it because of God's judgment over our sins. This has become the basis for the *increase* of His people.

David chooses to fall into the LORD's hand, "for His mercies are very great" (verse 13; Hab 3:2). He wanted to know the number of the members of his people of war. Now he is told how many members of his people he has lost (verse 14). If God is for us, we do not need to count. If He is against us, we will see what we have lost.

Verses 14-17 | The Sword of the LORD

14 So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel; 70,000 men of Israel fell. 15 And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but as he was about to destroy [it], the LORD saw and was sorry over the calamity, and said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now relax your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 16 Then David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, covered with sackcloth, fell on their faces. 17 David said to God, "Is it not I who commanded to count the people? Indeed, I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? O LORD my God, please let Your hand be against me and my father's household, but not against Your people that they should be plagued."

David, with his words to fall in the hand of the LORD, has put his choice in the hand of the LORD (verse 13). Then the LORD gives an outbreak of the pestilence (verse 14). Pestilence is a disease, but God sends it through an angel. An angel with a message of peace already causes terror and trembling (Lk 1:12; 2:9-10), how much more an angel with a drawn sword, sent to judge (verse 16).

At the height of the plague, when seventy thousand men have already fallen, Jerusalem is reached (verse 15). When destruction begins there, God says it is enough. He is moved over that city with compassion. He “is sorry over the calamity”. When God repents of something, it is not because of something wrong that He has to return to – He does not do wrong things – but because He sees the outcome of certain developments and stops that development. In other words, God’s sorry has to do with the suffering and sorrow He must cause and what reveals His compassion about it.

At the moment when God stops the judgment, the angel stands by a threshing floor. A threshing floor speaks of judgment, but then a judgment in which the wrong, the chaff, is separated from the good, the corn. At the threshing floor it is all about the good, the corn. The place of judgment is therefore the place of blessing. We see that also here, because here will be the altar of David and later the temple of Solomon.

At the place where judgment has been stopped, the altar must be placed, on which the daily burnt offerings will form a reminder of His purpose and mercies. He is going to show mercy. Only then, in the following verses, will come the confession of David. Here God’s actions stand alone. He finds reason in Himself for this action. God stops judging because He looks ahead, ultimately to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

David sees “the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven”. He stands there “with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem”. The invisible world is opened up to the human eye here (cf. Num 22:31; Jos 5:13; Jdg 6:11). The effect of this impressive view on David and the elders is that they fall on their faces.

In this attitude David addresses the word to God, a word for the benefit of God’s people. In this he resembles the Lord Jesus, who always make intercession by God for his people (Heb 7:25). David’s responsibility is in stark contrast to that of the Lord Jesus. He knows that he is a sinner and pleads for God’s grace, that others should not bear the consequences of his sins.

Yet he is also a type of the Lord Jesus. We see this when he offers himself as a substitute for the people. He says, as it were: ‘Punish me, the true culprit, and release the innocent.’ This is in contrast to the Lord Jesus, for He is the true innocent One Who is punished for the guilty. There is also a parallel,

because the Lord Jesus becomes the guilty One, He takes the guilt on Himself and declares His people innocent.

Verses 18-25 | David Must Build an Altar

18 Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19 So David went up at the word of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the LORD. 20 Now Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons [who were] with him hid themselves. And Ornan was threshing wheat. 21 As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out from the threshing floor and prostrated himself before David with his face to the ground. 22 Then David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of [this] threshing floor, that I may build on it an altar to the LORD; for the full price you shall give it to me, that the plague may be restrained from the people." 23 Ornan said to David, "Take [it] for yourself; and let my lord the king do what is good in his sight. See, I will give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for wood and the wheat for the grain offering; I will give [it] all." 24 But King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will surely buy [it] for the full price; for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, or offer a burnt offering which costs me nothing." 25 So David gave Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site.

Gad receives from the angel of the LORD – that is from the Lord Jesus, who often appears in the Old Testament as ‘the Angel of the LORD’ – the instruction to go back to David. He must go and tell him to build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. An altar serves to bring a sacrifice on it. To bring a sacrifice David cannot go to Gibeon, because the sacrifice has to be brought quickly (cf. Num 16:47-48). Therefore God points this place out to him on the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite, to build an altar there.

David obeys “the word of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the LORD”. He goes “up”. The threshing floor is high. The altar and later the temple are built on a high place. David comes to Ornan when he is threshing wheat. The four sons of Ornan hid at the sight of the angel. When Ornan sees David, he comes down from the threshing floor and bows down respectfully before him.

David asks Ornan to give him the threshing floor and also tells him what he intends to do with it. He does not want to negotiate about the price. He wants to pay the full price, for it is about nothing less than stopping the plague that has come upon the people. Ornan wants to give David everything. If David had accepted that, it would not have been his altar and his sacrifice, but that of Ornan. That is why he wants to pay the full price.

David says it like this: “For I will not take what is yours for the LORD, or offer a burnt offering which costs me nothing” (verse 24). This beautiful word contains an important spiritual lesson for us. That lesson is that we can only offer God something of value to Him and to us if what we offer Him has cost us something. We can think of spending our time reflecting on the Word of God, reading it and discovering Who the Lord Jesus is. What we have discovered, we can offer to God in thanks and worship.

We can also think of the use of sound Bible study literature. Reading what others have written and said about a particular section is an important help in getting to know God’s thoughts. However, if we only parrot this in our thanksgiving, it is the bringing of a sacrifice that costs us nothing. It is about making what we may learn from others our own by considering the section concerned of God’s Word in our hearts and then thanking God for it in our own words.

David pays Ornan the impressive sum of 600 shekels of gold (verse 25). The height of the amount is striking when we realize that for a field in Anathoth seventeen shekels of silver (Jer 32:9) and for the grave of Abraham four hundred shekels of silver (Gen 23:15) has been paid. This makes it clear that this place is worth a huge amount to David.

Verses 26-30 | David Offers and Calls to the LORD

26 Then David built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And he called to the LORD and He answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. 27 The LORD commanded the angel, and he put his sword back in its sheath. 28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he offered sacrifice there. 29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering [were] in the high place

at Gibeon at that time. 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was terrified by the sword of the angel of the LORD.

David builds an altar on the threshing floor he just bought and brings offerings on it as the king-priest. The LORD accepts all his offerings. In response to the call to the LORD He sends fire from heaven to the altar of burnt offering (cf. Lk 9:24; Jdg 6:21; 1Kgs 18:37-38). The fire kindles the offering, and let it ascend in smoke unto the LORD. Then the LORD speaks to the angel that he can put his sword back in its sheath. The repentance of David and the offering cause that the angel's task is over.

What we see here is the beginning of a new worship service. It is a worship at the basis of a judgment brought to a halt by the burnt offering and the peace offering. These offerings speak of the Lord Jesus. The burnt offering speaks of the sacrifice of Christ as fully brought to God. The peace offering speaks of the sacrifice of Christ as a fellowship offering, through which there can be fellowship of the people with God and between the members of God's people. God has fully accepted the sacrifice of His Son, and on that basis is able to forgive sins and accept sinners as His children.

The place where the plague is stopped is Mount Moriah. This is the mountain where Abraham sacrificed Isaac (Gen 22:1-2) and where Solomon builds the temple (2Chr 3:1). This new place of worship replaces "the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering". The place where they stand at that time is the high place at Gibeon. There is still sacrificed, but from that moment on no longer by David. Fear of the sword prevented him from going there, for a sacrifice had to be made with great haste to stop the plague. That sacrifice was made on God's instruction on this new altar at Mount Moria.

1 Chronicles 22

Introduction

This chapter must have been another great encouragement for those who returned from Babylon to Israel to rebuild the altar, the temple, and the city of Jerusalem. They are the ones for whom the writer of Chronicles (Ezra?) tells his story. The chronicler tells about David's efforts to build God's house and how he encouraged Solomon to do this great work. By this the returnees be will motivated to do the work in their days with the same commitment and dedication for the LORD.

This chapter, in its spiritual sense, also means an encouragement for all who are comparable to the returnees from Babylon. Babylon means 'confusion' and is a picture of Christianity where confusion reigns. It is also possible today to leave the 'confusion' and stand on the basis of the church. For all who want to build what is God's temple today, the chronicler's account contains many spiritual lessons.

Verses 1-5 | David Prepares the Temple Building

1 Then David said, "This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel." 2 So David gave orders to gather the foreigners who were in the land of Israel, and he set stonecutters to hew out stones to build the house of God. 3 David prepared large quantities of iron to make the nails for the doors of the gates and for the clamps, and more bronze than could be weighed; 4 and timbers of cedar logs beyond number, for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought large quantities of cedar timber to David. 5 David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD shall be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all lands. [Therefore] now I will make preparation for it." So David made ample preparations before his death.

The LORD has appointed David the place of the temple and the altar (1Chr 21:15,18,26). David joins the choice of the LORD. Although no stone has yet been laid for the house, David says: "This is the house of the LORD God" (verse 1). He sees in the spirit the house before him.

The word “this” refers to the threshing floor David just bought. The foundation for the house of God is a threshing floor. The church is also built on a ‘threshing floor’. The wheat is beaten on the threshing floor to separate the chaff from the grain. It is a picture of the judgment with which the Lord Jesus was beaten, resulting in the origin of His church. The altar built in that place speaks of the Person of Christ and of the work He has accomplished as a sacrifice.

After the location of the temple has been determined, David will make preparations for the building of the temple and the service therein. Its description covers the rest of 1 Chronicles. After the turning away of the judgment on Jerusalem on the basis of the sacrifice, which the judgment has carried in place, the place where the sacrifice is brought is the basis of the temple and the temple service.

David establishes a temple service based on the sacrifice – the sacrifice is also a type of the Lord Jesus. Also today we have a temple service. For the church is “a temple” (1Cor 3:16; 2Cor 6:16). It is a spiritual temple. That spiritual temple includes a spiritual priestly service (1Pet 2:5; Rev 1:6) with spiritual sacrifices (Heb 13:15; 1Pet 2:5).

This spiritual priestly service with its spiritual sacrifices takes place especially when the church comes together to worship, that is to praise God for the gift of His Son. Based on the sacrifice, the sacrificial place becomes the center of a beautiful worship service that is established around the altar. These chapters indicate the great principles for the present service in what is now God’s temple.

The foreigners are called “to build the house of God” (verse 2). They have to hew out stones. Today every believer is originally a foreigner, but is now allowed to contribute to the building of God’s house. We read about aliens who bring “large quantities of cedar timber” to David (verse 4). Stone and wood are the basic elements for the house. Stones are a picture of believers, called “living stones” (1Pet 2:5). Wood is a picture of man as one who belongs to the earth. Later all this will be covered with gold. Thus the believing man becomes one who shows God’s glory.

It is then told that David prepares “large quantities of iron to make the nails for the doors of the gates and for the clamps” (verse 3). These materi-

als are bought from the stock of David's spoils of war. They are also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 28-29. Here we see that the first thing mentioned of the house has to do with the doors of the gates. It is therefore in the foreground that it is important to ensure that what is and what is not allowed to enter. This is vital for the service in the house.

Together with the doors of the gates, "the clamps" are called. Apart from the supervision of who may and may not enter the temple, the mutual correlation of the believers is also important. If the believers are well connected by living together for the Lord Jesus and listening to God's Word, the enemy will not have a chance to do his pernicious work among them. For example, false teachings about the Lord Jesus or God's Word, which always sow divisions, will not have a chance to penetrate.

David contrasts the youthfulness and inexperience of Solomon with the house to be built for the LORD (verse 5). David wants the house to be made "exceedingly magnificent". The reason for this is that it will be "famous and glorious throughout all lands". In what David says, the contrast is expressed between man's incompetence and inexperience and the enormous work of building the glorious house of God. From ourselves we can do nothing. "Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it" (Psa 127:1). But if the Lord cooperates, it succeeds (cf. Mk 16:20; Phil 4:13).

Despite so much that has disappeared from the splendor of the house through our unfaithfulness, it is still possible to "adorn" God's house, or to make it "glorious". The remnant that has returned from Babylon to Israel does the same (Ezra 7:27). We can "adorn" the house by a dedicated walk, by having meetings in which the Lord Jesus is glorified, by our testimony in this world, very generally by our complete submission to the Lord (cf. Tit 2:9-10). Then they build with good materials, with "gold, silver, precious stones" (1Cor 3:12a) and there is no room for the flesh. All services that do not envisage the building of the church (Eph 4:11-16) are not adornments for God's house, but combustible material (1Cor 3:12b-17).

David decides to prepare a supply with which Solomon can start building the house of God. He does this with an eye on the one hand to the youthfulness and inexperience of his son Solomon and on the other hand to the

grandeur and splendor of that house. He does not do it sparingly, but he makes “ample preparations”. Everything is arranged by David for a house that has not yet been built. Thus everything is arranged through Christ before the church as His house in glory is revealed.

The last part of David’s life is filled with stockpiling for his son Solomon to build the temple. What a wonderful goal for an old man. What a wonderful example for all old believers. Old believers may seek the interests of God’s house to the very end with all efforts and serve by young believers to support in the building of God’s house.

Verses 6-14 | Solomon Prepared for Building the Temple

6 Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. 7 David said to Solomon, “My son, I had intended to build a house to the name of the LORD my God. 8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed [so] much blood on the earth before Me. 9 Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. 10 He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.’ 11 Now, my son, the LORD be with you that you may be successful, and build the house of the LORD your God just as He has spoken concerning you. 12 Only the LORD give you discretion and understanding, and give you charge over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. 13 Then you will prosper, if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and courageous, do not fear nor be dismayed. 14 Now behold, with great pains I have prepared for the house of the LORD 100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weight, for they are in great quantity; also timber and stone I have prepared, and you may add to them.

David calls for Solomon and charges him to build a house “for the LORD God of Israel” (verse 6). Solomon is the right person for this. He also has the capacities for it. To do a work for the Lord requires a gift and a calling.

Without gift and calling, what is done will not hold out because it is not from God (cf. Ezra 4:1-3).

David testifies toward his son of the interest he has always taken in a dwelling place for God. This is also an example for old believers. If it is well, they can tell that they have always given priority to God's house in their lives. David tells Solomon that it has always been in his heart to build a house for the LORD (verse 6). He adds that the LORD told him that he could not build that house and the reason for it (verses 7-8).

At the same time he was promised that a son, who was still to be born at the time, would build the house (verse 9). The LORD also said that this man will be "a man of rest", to whom He will give rest from all His enemies around Him. Therefore, says the LORD, the name of that son shall be "Solomon". The name 'Solomon' is directly linked to peace. In that name is the word *sjalom*, which means 'peace'. In his days the LORD will "give peace and quiet to Israel". These are the appropriate conditions for the building of the temple, the dwelling place of God, where He can live in peace among His people and they can bring sacrifices to Him.

It is a privilege for Solomon to build a house as a man of rest for the name of the LORD. But that is not the only privilege. The LORD says further to David that his son will be for Him a son, and He will be for that son a Father (verse 10). This can only refer to the great Son of David, the Lord Jesus. That thought is confirmed by what the LORD says of the throne of Solomon. This will be a throne which He will "establish ... over Israel forever". That throne is the throne of the Lord Jesus and of no one else.

Here David is also a picture of Christ. From what he says here, we see that the glory of God in peace among His people is always the object of the heart of Christ. The suffering Servant of the LORD had this in mind when He went His way of suffering on earth. David and Solomon are together a picture of the Lord Jesus: David in His suffering and in the establishment of the kingdom and Solomon in His glorious and eternal reign.

It is also nice to see that David is not disappointed that he is not allowed to build the temple. There is also no jealousy with him that Solomon can do it. He does not cranky renounce all cooperation, but accepts what God

determines. With all the means God has given him, he is committed to building the temple.

As a practical application, we see that older believers can help younger believers in fulfilling their task by making available to these young believers what they themselves have gathered over the years. This makes the task more attractive and easier for young people. Young people can make grateful use of this.

David gives some conditions for doing the commissioned work and bringing it to a successful end (verses 11-13). These conditions apply to any work that is also entrusted to us:

1. The condition that the Lord is with us (verse 11). That He will be, as long as each one of us abides by what "He has spoken concerning you".
2. The condition that the work to be done does not take place on the basis of our own insights (verse 12). The Lord must give us "discretion and understanding". He must help us to put into practice what we know.
3. The condition of obedience to the word given by God to Moses (verse 13). This is a requirement for all faithfulness and any revival after deviation. The later king Josiah also goes back to Moses (2Kgs 23:25; 2Chr 35:6) and also to David (2Chr 35:4).

The words "be strong and courageous" with which David encourages Solomon are also the words with which Moses encourages Joshua (Deu 31:6; Jos 1:6,7,9).

What material David has available for the building of God's house has been collected by him "with great pain" (verse 14). This determines that the Lord Jesus can build His church through the 'great pain' of the cross. Solomon may add to this. This is reminiscent of Paul's words when he says that in his flesh he completes "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Col 1:24).

Paul's suffering is of the same character as Christ's suffering. This does not mean, of course, that he suffers to the same extent and certainly not for reconciliation. There is nothing lacking as to the atonement, which is com-

plete within itself. God acquired the church through the suffering of the Lord Jesus on the cross, through the blood of His own Son (Acts 20:28b).

The Lord Jesus revealed God in His life on earth, but not all God's eternal plans. Only when the Holy Spirit comes to earth do believers gain insight into God's plans through the apostle Paul (Acts 20:27). For Paul, witnessing this truth brings with it abundant suffering. This is not substitute suffering, it is additional suffering.

Verses 15-19 | Others Helping Solomon

15 Moreover, there are many workmen with you, stonecutters and masons of stone and carpenters, and all men who are skillful in every kind of work. 16 Of the gold, the silver and the bronze and the iron there is no limit. Arise and work, and may the LORD be with you." 17 David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon, [saying], 18 "Is not the LORD your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the LORD and before His people. 19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise, therefore, and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD."

David points out to Solomon that there is a crowd of workmen ready to help him (verse 15). As with the building of the tabernacle, there is great willingness to do something for the LORD. Also at the beginning of the church, the New Testament house of God, we see a great dedication to the things of the Lord in all who belong to the church (Acts 4-5). Today, a lot of work has to be done by very few, because everyone "runs to his own house" (Hag 1:9), while the house of God is desolate.

The workmen are now the evangelists who bring in material and the teachers who "work" this material further so that the stones get and take their right place in the house (cf. Col 1:28-29). For us, the fact that others have to help Solomon means that no one can build independently of others. Paul realizes that too (Col 4:11b).

When David has pointed to the large number of people and the countless amount of materials, he instructs his son to arise and get to work. He

may have prepared everything, but Solomon has to work with it. Added to the great task he thereby places on Solomon's shoulders, he supports him above all with pointing out to him that the LORD will be with him (verse 16b).

The leaders of the people can also help Solomon (verse 17). David commands them to do so. Just as he did with Solomon, he also points out to the leaders that the LORD is with them (verse 18). They only have to look around to see the proof. Isn't it rest on every side all around them? Now that they no longer have to wage war, they can commit themselves to building God's house.

All the inhabitants of the land are given by the LORD into the hand of David. The whole land is for the LORD and for His people. When in a local church everything is subject to the authority of the Lord Jesus, there is real peace among the believers. He who sees this, will direct himself with "heart and soul" to the service of the house of God.

When heart and soul are filled with the things that fill the heart of God, the call comes to "arise ... and build the sanctuary of the LORD God" (verse 19). The purpose of this is that in that house "the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy vessels of God" can be brought. Everything is aimed at ensuring that in that house the name of the LORD will be glorified. This happens when He dwells there between the cherubs on the ark and all the objects in the house are "holy", that is, are dedicated to Him.

1 Chronicles 23

Introduction

In the last months of his life David prepares everything for the house of God and the service therein:

1. Materials for the temple in 1 Chronicles 22.
2. Levites for the temple in 1 Chronicles 23.
3. Priests for the temple in 1 Chronicles 24.
4. Singers for the temple in 1 Chronicles 25.
5. Gatekeepers and treasurers for the temple in 1 Chronicles 26.
6. Officials in his realm in 1 Chronicles 27.
7. Plans for the building of the temple in 1 Chronicles 28.
8. Final preparations for the temple in 1 Chronicles 29.

Verse 1 | David Makes Solomon King

| *1 Now when David reached old age, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.*

David starts to completely reorganize the service of the priests and the Levites and bring it to a totally different plan. But first he appoints Solomon as king in his place. He knows that his task is over (cf. 2Tim 4:6; Gen 50:24). It is good that, when our task is over, we are handing over our service to young people who are ready for it. We see this for example with Paul and Timothy, with Moses and Joshua, with Elijah and Elisha. We do this not by some official transfer, but by encouraging a young believer to a certain task and giving our help.

The description of the transfer of the throne by David to Solomon is here different from in the first book of Kings. In the first book of Kings Solomon becomes king in reaction to those who assumed the right to the throne and David must be persuaded to make Solomon king (1Kgs 1:5-40). We don't see anything of that here. Here David makes Solomon king according to his sovereign will, according to God's counsel.

Verses 2-5 | Numbering the Levites

2 And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel with the priests and the Levites. 3 The Levites were numbered from thirty years old and upward, and their number by census of men was 38,000. 4 Of these, 24,000 were to oversee the work of the house of the LORD; and 6,000 [were] officers and judges, 5 and 4,000 [were] gatekeepers, and 4,000 [were] praising the LORD with the instruments which David made for giving praise.

After his preparations for the building of the temple, the materials he has prepared for it, David will now arrange matters related to the service in the temple. The whole order that David establishes for the house is a picture of what Christ does toward His house, the church. He starts with the census of the Levites. They serve from their thirtieth year to their fiftieth year (Num 4:1-4). The Lord Jesus began His public service when He “was about thirty years of age” (Lk 3:23).

There are those who oversee the house of the LORD. Others are officers and judges. Still others are gatekeepers. Finally there are the singers for whom he had musical instruments made (cf. Amos 6:5). What Joab did not do in the census of the people – counting the Levites (1Chr 21:6) – David does here himself. This time he counts with good motives, because now it is about service to the LORD. At the count at the beginning of the wilderness journey there are more than 22,000 Levites (Num 3:41-43), now there are 38,000.

They are all assigned their places (verses 4-5), so that every available hand can be used and every part of the work can be done, with the corresponding care. The great number is a contribution to the honor of Him in the service of Whom they stand. More than two-thirds, 24,000, must oversee the work in the house of the LORD. They assist the priests in slaughtering the sacrifices, washing, cutting and burning them, removing dirt, keeping the temple utensils clean, and keeping everything in place.

There are also 6,000 officials and judges. They see to it that in the land everything goes to the right of the LORD. They apply God’s laws to the lives of the people of every day as disputes arise. There are also 4,000 gatekeepers. They must ensure that nothing enters the temple that should not enter it. In the new Jerusalem they are not needed (Rev 21:25-27). Finally, there are 4,000 singers. They praise the LORD.

Verses 6-23 | David Divides the Levites Into Divisions

6 David divided them into divisions according to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 7 Of the Gershonites [were] Ladan and Shimei. 8 The sons of Ladan [were] Jehiel the first and Zetham and Joel, three. 9 The sons of Shimei [were] Shelomoth and Haziël and Haran, three. These were the heads of the fathers' [households] of Ladan. 10 The sons of Shimei [were] Jahath, Zina, Jeush and Beriah. These four [were] the sons of Shimei. 11 Jahath was the first and Zizah the second; but Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons, so they became a father's household, one class. 12 The sons of Kohath were four: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. 13 The sons of Amram were Aaron and Moses. And Aaron was set apart to sanctify him as most holy, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him and to bless in His name forever. 14 But [as for] Moses the man of God, his sons were named among the tribe of Levi. 15 The sons of Moses [were] Gershom and Eliezer. 16 The son of Gershom [was] Shebuel the chief. 17 The son of Eliezer was Rehabiah the chief; and Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very many. 18 The son of Izhar was Shelomith the chief. 19 The sons of Hebron [were] Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third and Jekameam the fourth. 20 The sons of Uzziel [were] Micah the first and Isshiah the second. 21 The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli [were] Eleazar and Kish. 22 Eleazar died and had no sons, but daughters only, so their brothers, the sons of Kish, took them [as wives]. 23 The sons of Mushi [were] three: Mahli, Eder and Jeremoth.

The division of the Levites into divisions in this section is to keep the overview and also that no one can evade his task. "God is not [a God] of confusion but of peace" (1Cor 14:33a). A good division of tasks promotes peace. The application for us is not a question of human organization, but of giving heed to the Holy Spirit "distributing to each one individually just as He wills" (1Cor 12:11; cf. 1Cor 12:18). There is also care if a family is small (verse 11). Then families can work together.

The description of the task of the Levites (verse 13) is much more extensive, because the task of the priests is great in content. First of all, the priest must ensure the holiness of the most holy things. This requires a constant contact with the holy God. Then he burns incense, which refers to prayers (Psa 141:2). It is his privilege to minister the LORD, which is true for his

whole life and especially in the sanctuary. For that he is a priest. A priest is directed toward God. Only then is he able “to bless in His name forever” outside the sanctuary. His ministry is a matter for his whole life; blessing in the name of the LORD is a matter done for eternity. In summary, we see that priests sanctify, sacrifice, minister and bless.

For us, it means that we must first live a holy life. This is necessary if we are to have a proper awareness of the most holy things. This leads us to bring sacrifices to God and to serve Him all our lives. This is not limited to the meetings of the church. The call is that we “continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Heb 13:15). It is even so that we present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God (Rom 12:1), while the results of the priestly service are also mentioned, because those results are brought to God (cf. Rom 15:16).

There are two aspects to our priesthood. One aspect is the holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God in the heavenly sanctuary. The other aspect is the royal priesthood, where we come out of the heavenly sanctuary with blessing for those around us (1Pet 2:5,9).

Therefore, we should not limit our priestly task to Sunday worship. Our whole life must be worship. All believers are called to this priestly service. If we don’t do such a service, the cause often lies in foreclosures that we owe to ourselves, or because of incompetence or wrong education.

Moses is called “the man of God” (verse 14; Deu 33:1; Psa 90:1). This special title does not mean that his sons are given priestly status. They are ‘ordinary’ Levites (verses 15-17).

Verses 24-32 | The Task of the Levites

24 These were the sons of Levi according to their fathers’ households, [even] the heads of the fathers’ [households] of those of them who were counted, in the number of names by their census, doing the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from twenty years old and upward. 25 For David said, “The LORD God of Israel has given rest to His people, and He dwells in Jerusalem forever. 26 Also, the Levites will no longer need to carry the tabernacle and all its utensils for its service.” 27 For by the last words of David the sons of Levi [were] numbered from twenty years old and upward. 28 For their office is to as-

sist the sons of Aaron with the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts and in the chambers and in the purifying of all holy things, even the work of the service of the house of God, 29 and with the showbread, and the fine flour for a grain offering, and unleavened wafers, or [what is baked in] the pan or what is well-mixed, and all measures of volume and size. 30 They are to stand every morning to thank and to praise the LORD, and likewise at evening, 31 and to offer all burnt offerings to the LORD, on the sabbaths, the new moons and the fixed festivals in the number [set] by the ordinance concerning them, continually before the LORD. 32 Thus they are to keep charge of the tent of meeting, and charge of the holy place, and charge of the sons of Aaron their relatives, for the service of the house of the LORD.

We see something of the special authority David has to arrange the Levite service. He subtracts another five years from the age already lowered by the LORD by five years (verse 24; Num 8:24). The reduction to 20 years is confirmed in verse 27. The reason is that there is now rest (verse 25). The Levites are no longer in wilderness conditions. The task has become easier. They no longer need to demolish and rebuild everything and no transport is needed anymore (verse 26). Therefore, the age limit can be lowered.

In the spiritual application this is about the limit of the spiritual maturation. There are circumstances that this can be reduced. Even the youngest believer can already perform a certain service in the church. Where conditions are favorable and a simple service is requested, a young believer with little spiritual exercise can perform it. When it comes to greater responsibilities, there will have to be a greater spiritual maturity. In any case, young people who perform a spiritual service should behave in such a way that no comments can be made about their youth (1Tim 4:12).

Verses 28-32 summarize the service of the Levites. What is that task? They serve the priests who in turn serve the LORD. According to Moses' ordinances, the Levites were given as a gift to the priests (Num 18:6). The Levites serve to support the priestly service.

Levite service in a New Testament sense is a service for building up the church. Their service is aimed at teaching believers to praise God more and better. The purpose of their service is that the believers will offer their lives more as sacrifices to God and offer the results of their work for God

to Him. If in a local church the believers live in a spirit of worship, this will be noticed in worship and in the practical life of the believers.

There are also Levites that go over the courts (verse 28). These are the gatekeepers. Different people are standing at the gates. They must ensure that only the right people are admitted in the courts. Another task of the Levites is “the purifying of all holy things”. A worthy sacrifice service can only take place by cleansed persons and cleansed means. Levites ensure that there are no elements in worship that disturb or harm the sacrifice service. They supervise the purity of worship.

Furthermore, they have a task with regard to “the work of the service of the house of God”. That is for us to apply to our behavior in the house of God. We need to know how we have to behave there (1Tim 3:15). For this purpose, the Lord has given His instructions in His Word.

There is extensive reference to different types of bread (verse 29). It is about “the showbread”, which is the bread on the table of the showbread, and about various forms of the “grain offering” (cf. Lev 2:1-16). There is talk of “well-mixed” and of fittings’ and of “all measures of volume and size”. All these breads speak of the Lord Jesus. The Levites make sure that the loaves are of the right composition (“well-mixed”), that the right volume is used and that the right size is also maintained.

We can apply this to our being busy with the Lord Jesus as the true grain offering and as the true bread of life. The Levites are for us the teachers who explain God’s Word to us. They show by means of God’s Word Who the Lord Jesus is as food for God. The “well-mixed” or the composition of the bread represents that we confess Christ as come into the flesh (1Jn 4:2). That is, He truly became Man – however, without participating in the sinful nature that every man has (Heb 4:15) –, but at the same time never ceases to be the eternal Son of God. They must beware not to go deeper – we must pay attention to the right ‘measure of volume’ – nor further – the right ‘measure of size’ – than what God’s Word makes clear. We should not try to enter into things that God hides from us (cf. Mt 11:27a), nor add to what God’s Word shows us.

The order in the house of God is also maintained by the Levites, which is represented in the care for the table of the showbread. They must also

ensure that the volume and size of everything is to the measure of the sanctuary. Only then can a service take place that can be accepted by God. No personal interpretation may be given in any way about the composition of, for example, a grain offering.

Again other Levites have the task of singing (verses 30-31). Every day in the morning and evening, every week, every month and every year they let their voices be heard on those days and at those occasions when bringing the burnt offering. The sacrifices at different feasts must be brought by the priests, but they are prepared by the Levites. Levite service precedes every sacrificial service. Young priests gratefully use Levites.

Finally, a summary of the tasks is given (verse 32). The tasks of the Levites are primarily connected with "the tent of meeting". This is the place where God meets His people, it is a place of fellowship between God and His people. The people there may come to God on the basis of the sacrifice, which is a picture of the Lord Jesus and His work on the cross, to worship Him for the gift of that Sacrifice.

This leads to the second task, which is their "charge of the holy place". In the sanctuary it is about approaching God rather than being together. With a view to approaching God, priests must know what is appropriate. That is what the Levites make clear to them. This also explains their third task, their "charge of the sons of Aaron their relatives, for the service of the house of the LORD". They prepare the priests, here described as "the sons of Aaron", to perform their service properly in the house of the LORD.

They do not do this as their superiors, but as "their relatives", or "their brothers. We read here that the Levites and the priests are brothers of each other. This is the only right relationship to serve other members of God's people. The New Testament believer is as much a priest as a Levite. Both aspects should be expressed in his life, to the Lord Jesus and God as a priest and to the fellow believers as Levites.

1 Chronicles 24

Verses 1-19 | Divisions of the Priests

1 Now the divisions of the descendants of Aaron [were these]: the sons of Aaron [were] Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father and had no sons. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests. 3 David, with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to their offices for their ministry. 4 Since more chief men were found from the descendants of Eleazar than the descendants of Ithamar, they divided them thus: [there were] sixteen heads of fathers' households of the descendants of Eleazar and eight of the descendants of Ithamar, according to their fathers' households. 5 Thus they were divided by lot, the one as the other; for they were officers of the sanctuary and officers of God, both from the descendants of Eleazar and the descendants of Ithamar. 6 Shemaiah, the son of Nethanel the scribe, from the Levites, recorded them in the presence of the king, the princes, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' [households] of the priests and of the Levites; one father's household taken for Eleazar and one taken for Ithamar. 7 Now the first lot came out for Jehoiarib, the second for Jedaiah, 8 the third for Harim, the fourth for Seorim, 9 the fifth for Malchijah, the sixth for Mijamin, 10 the seventh for Hakkoz, the eighth for Abijah, 11 the ninth for Jeshua, the tenth for Shecaniah, 12 the eleventh for Eliashib, the twelfth for Jakim, 13 the thirteenth for Huppah, the fourteenth for Jeshebeab, 14 the fifteenth for Bilgah, the sixteenth for Immer, 15 the seventeenth for Hezir, the eighteenth for Happizzes, 16 the nineteenth for Pethahiah, the twentieth for Jehezkel, 17 the twenty-first for Jachin, the twenty-second for Gamul, 18 the twenty-third for Delaiah, the twenty-fourth for Maaziah. 19 These were their offices for their ministry when [they] came in to the house of the LORD according to the ordinance [given] to them through Aaron their father, just as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

Here we see that the priests are divided by David, but that whoever performs the service is determined by lot. This means that God designates and determines who does service and not David (Lk 1:8-9). Because of the death of two of the four sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (Lk 10:1-2), there are two remaining lines along which the priesthood is divided.

Eleazar was appointed by God to be the high priest, but the line of Ithamar got it. After Solomon the generation of Ithamar disappears. Zadok from the line of Eleazar is the priest according to God's thoughts. Of the twenty-four divisions that David sets up, sixteen go to Eleazar and eight to the descendants of Ithamar.

Everyone is a priest of his own division. This teaches us that everyone is a worshipper in his own way, each has his own feelings. Each of the twenty-four is different. Yet we are never a single priest, we are one of the twenty-four. If we do priestly service together during worship, worship is most rewarding when we see that all brothers act as one and not each individually acts on his own, without concerning about others. It is about together "with all the saints" (Eph 3:18).

The believer who does priestly service with others is part of the whole company of priests, while still having his own place. Small communities of Christians have the advantage that every brother has the opportunity to express himself. No one will dominate either. In large meetings the danger of inactivity of the majority is obvious.

Aaron had four sons (verse 1; Exo 6:22), all four of whom went out of Egypt with the people. They all four seemed to be priests, yet there was a distinction between two who were 'spiritual' priests and the other two who were 'religious' priests. This was reflected in the way they approached God. Two of them brought strange fire to the altar that the LORD had not commanded them. He had to punish this with death (verse 2; Lev 10:1-2).

The religion of the flesh, to approach God in its own way and according to its own insight, cannot exist before God. He must judge that. Their status as priest and the fact that they are descendants of such an excellent man in Israel as Aaron, did not prevent them from being punished by God's judgment. This kind of priesthood ceases to exist because we read that they had no sons. The fleshly mind of the church in Corinth also brought with it judgment from God (1Cor 3:1; 11:27-34).

David, the king, divides together with Zadok and Ithamar, the priests – together they are a picture of the Lord Jesus as the King-Priest – the work of the priests (verse 3). Only the Lord Jesus indicates to whom priests are. These are all those who are connected with Him by faith in Him. He also indicates how and when they should perform their service.

The division of the priestly divisions is done by throwing the lot (verse 5). The throwing of the lot to know the will of the LORD is characteristic of the Old Testament. The lot is also used in dividing the land (Jos 18:8-10). In the New Testament there is one more reference to the throwing of the lot, and that is to know who the Lord designates as an apostle instead of Judas (Acts 1:26). In Acts 2 the outpouring of the Holy Spirit takes place (Acts 2:1-4). From that moment on, there is no longer any question of the lot. The Lord makes clear through the Spirit what He wants, as He has made His will known in His Word.

Shemaiah records the divisions so that it can be consulted later (verse 6). In the way in which this happens, we see, in picture, again the King-Priest: the Lord Jesus has authority and is the true High Priest. Before His face, in His presence, under His watchful eye, everything takes place. As Shemaiah records everything for later consultation, we have the Word of God in which is recorded how the service can be done 'in order', as God wills and through His Spirit will lead.

Zacharias, the father of John the baptist, belongs to the eighth priest division, that of Abiah (verse 10), for he is "of the division of Abiah" (Lk 1:5). The number eight indicates a new order of things. This is the case with the announcement of the birth of John.

Aaron (verse 19) is a type of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest. Today every priest is subject to Him.

Verses 20-31 | The Levites Help the Priests

20 Now for the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. 21 Of Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, Isshiah the first. 22 Of the Izharites, Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. 23 The sons [of Hebron]: Jeriah [the first], Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. 24 [Of] the sons of Uzziel, Micah; of the sons of Micah, Shamir. 25 The brother of Micah, Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. 26 The sons of Merari, Mahli and Mushi; the sons of Jaaziah, Beno. 27 The sons of Merari: by Jaaziah [were] Beno, Shoham, Zaccur and Ibri. 28 By Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons. 29 By Kish: the sons of Kish, Jerahmeel. 30 The sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder and Jerimoth. These [were] the sons of the Levites accord-

ing to their fathers' households. 31 These also cast lots just as their relatives the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of the fathers' [households] of the priests and of the Levites — the head of fathers' [households] as well as those of his younger brother.

Levites and priests are relatives, or brothers (verse 31), one is not above the other. It is the same for us. The service of each of us is different, but we are all subject to the King-Priest. Also the 'family head' is not above the youngest brother. Different in age is each subject to the King-Priest.

This does not mean that there should be no mutual respect in the service, nor that young people should not be subject to the elderly (1Pet 5:5a). In Christ there are no such differences, but He does give each one his own task and responsibility in the functioning of the church on earth.

Similarly, in Christ there is no difference between a man and a woman, whereas in the church when she comes together this is the case (1Cor 14:34). This difference must also be visible when praying and prophesying in public by whether or not head covering and through the hair (1Cor 11:1-16).

1 Chronicles 25

Introduction

In these chapters David organizes the service to God in the temple. He is a type of the Lord Jesus in the future. How this service will be in the millennial kingdom of peace is described in Ezekiel 40-48. David is also a type of the Lord Jesus now, how He organizes the service in the church. Also now there are priests, on the basis of His work (1Pet 2:5; Rev 1:6). The purpose of this service is to offer sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving and worship.

If we need to give a job description of the Levites and the priests, we can say the following. Levites are given to the priests as gifts to make priestly service possible and to promote and deepen it. Priests bring sacrifices.

In principle, every believer is a Levite, not only those who serve with the Word. The Lord has entrusted each one with a certain task. The great characteristic of the Levites' service is that they help the believers to become better priests or better worshippers and better servants. Every believer is a gift to every other believer. It is a service that believers do to each other for the purpose of better service to God.

The tasks of the Levites are mentioned in 1Chronieken 25-27. Seven tasks are mentioned, which does not mean that there are no more tasks:

1. Singers (1Chr 25:1-31)
2. Division of the gatekeepers (1Chr 26:1-19)
3. Keepers of the treasure (1Chr 26:20-28)
4. Officers and judges (1Chr 26:29-32)
5. Commanders of the army (1Chr 27:1-15)
6. Chief officers of the tribes (1Chr 27:16-24)
7. Other officials and counsellors (1Chr 27:25-34)

Verses 1-31 | 1. The Singers

1 Moreover, David and the commanders of the army set apart for the service [some] of the sons of Asaph and of Heman and of Jeduthun, who [were] to prophesy with lyres, harps and cymbals; and the number of those who per-

formed their service was: 2 Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah and Asharelah; the sons of Asaph [were] under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied under the direction of the king. 3 Of Jeduthun, the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shimei, Hashabiah and Mattithiah, six, under the direction of their father Jeduthun with the harp, who prophesied in giving thanks and praising the LORD. 4 Of Heman, the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, Mahazioth. 5 All these [were] the sons of Heman the king's seer to exalt him according to the words of God, for God gave fourteen sons and three daughters to Heman. 6 All these were under the direction of their father to sing in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, harps and lyres, for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman [were] under the direction of the king. 7 Their number who were trained in singing to the LORD, with their relatives, all who were skillful, [was] 288. 8 They cast lots for their duties, all alike, the small as well as the great, the teacher [as well] as the pupil. 9 Now the first lot came out for Asaph to Joseph, the second for Gedaliah, he with his relatives and sons [were] twelve; 10 the third to Zaccur, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 11 the fourth to Izri, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 12 the fifth to Nethaniah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 13 the sixth to Bukkiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 14 the seventh to Jesharelah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 15 the eighth to Jeshaiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 16 the ninth to Mattaniah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 17 the tenth to Shimei, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 18 the eleventh to Azarel, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 19 the twelfth to Hashabiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 20 for the thirteenth, Shubael, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 21 for the fourteenth, Mattithiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 22 for the fifteenth to Jeremoth, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 23 for the sixteenth to Hananiah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 24 for the seventeenth to Joshbekashah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 25 for the eighteenth to Hanani, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 26 for the nineteenth to Mallothi, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 27 for the twentieth to Eliathah, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 28 for the twenty-first to Hothir, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 29 for the twenty-second to Giddalti, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 30 for the twenty-third to Mahazioth, his sons and his relatives, twelve; 31 for the twenty-fourth to Romamti-ezer, his sons and his relatives, twelve.

In 1 Chronicles 15-16 David has already nominated and appointed the singers. Singing is missing in the tabernacle service. In the temple there must be regular singing. Every believer is a singer. We have meetings to sing. The Lord Jesus Himself sang a hymn with the disciples after the Pass-over meal. That is just before He goes to the cross (Mt 26:30).

David chooses the singers together with the commanders of the army (verse 1). This indicates that there is a connection between singing and war. An example of this we have in the history of Josaphat in 2 Chronicles 20. Josaphat receives a special encouragement from a prophet, who encourages him to go up fearlessly. Then the Levites praise the LORD with a powerful voice. Then the singers go out before the armies and the moment they sing the praises the enemy is defeated by the LORD (2Chr 20:21-22). Especially at critical moments the believer may pray and sing. When Paul and Silas are captured because of their struggle in the gospel, they sing in the prison at night (Acts 16:25a). In the song the believer raises his heart in praise to God.

For the service work of the singing, "are set apart ... [some] of the sons of Asaph and of Heman and of Jeduthun" (verse 1). Asaph is the writer of the Psalms 50 and 73-83, Heman of Psalm 88 and Jeduthun of Psalm 39 and possibly Psalm 62. Asaph means 'one who gathers', Jeduthun 'a choir of praise' and Heman 'faithful'. In these names we see what should characterize a local church that comes together to worship.

Singing to the glory of God is called prophecy three times (verses 1,2,3). We can say that this service, according to the New Testament meaning of the word 'prophecy', has an upbuilding, exhorting and comforting character (1Cor 14:3). It is also called a "service". This means that, at a time when everything is in decay, we must work to ensure that this service is also provided by us. The service of singing is a service just like preaching the gospel or another service among believers. This service of singing is focused on God.

The service of the singers is a spiritual service. As mentioned above, we read several times that singers 'prophesy' by singing, which means that their service has a spiritual effect. This shows that there is a connection between the song and prophecy. In this sense Paul also speaks about this

to the church in Ephesus: “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph 5:19a).

The aspect of “speaking to one another” occurs in different songs. We just have to pay attention to that when we sing a song. Songs in which we ‘speak to one another’ are songs in which a call is made to each other. An example of this is the song ‘Onward Christian soldiers’, in which we call upon and encourage one another to go forward in the struggle we experience as we follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus.

Someone has seen a prayer in the meaning of some of the names of the sons of Heman (verse 4). Starting with Hananiah, the sixth son of Heman, the names of the rest of his sons can be translated from Hebrew. If we examine the meaning of these names in order, a prayer arises that well describes Heman’s work as “the king’s seer” (verse 5) and as a poet:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| (6th Hananiah) | Be merciful, Yahweh, |
| (7e Hanani) | be merciful to me! |
| (8e Eliathah) | My God, You, |
| (9e Giddalti) | I have praised |
| (10e Romanti-ezer) | and exalted because of help. |
| (11th Joshbekashah) | Though sitting down desolate, |
| (12e Mallothi) | I have proclaimed |
| (13e Hothir) | highest |
| (14e Mahazioth) | visions. |

Songs must also be according to God’s Word (verse 5), they must ‘interpret’ that Word. If a song is in accordance with the Word of God, it gives strength in the service, of which the lifting of the horn speaks (exalt is literal: lift up the horn). Many songs in our time contain little from the Word of God or even have a content that contradicts it or is purely focused on the emotions, with many repeats. The connection between the Word of God, or the service of prophecy, and the song is beautifully seen in what Paul says to the Colossians: “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you,

with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms [and] hymns [and] spiritual songs" (Col 3:16).

The house of the LORD (verse 6) is a house of singing. The singers are supposed to be there and not to stay at home or to be busy with something else. This finds its application in the gathering of the church, "in the household of God, which is the church of the living God" in this time (1Tim 3:15). We are warned not to forsake "our own assembling together" (Heb 10:25).

As a father Heman is in charge of his (musical) family. He draws up his children for the singing service. It must have been a pleasure to see Heman and his children come to the temple and hear them sing. The children do not rule the service, neither at home nor in the house of God, but follow their father and do what he says. It is not in accordance with God's thoughts that there are praise services only for young people, or that they determine the service in the church.

Father Heman sets a good example, because he himself is also "under the direction of the king". Spiritually, the fathers in Christ lead the youth and little children in Christ in the praise of God. They can only do so if they themselves acknowledge the authority of Christ over their lives. They are under Godly control (cf. Jn 4:24). In the letter to the Hebrews, the sacrifices of praise are also correctly connected with those who lead and watch over souls (Heb 13:15-17).

From singing songs power emerges. Giving out a song in the meeting that is sung by the church should be the result of spiritual exercise. It happens "under the direction of the king" (verse 6), which means to us by the direction of the Lord Jesus. It needs exercise in the school of God, to be "trained" in "singing to the LORD" (verse 7), to give out a song that can be sung by all. It is about "singing to the LORD". Every believer, young and old, is involved in this (verses 7-8; 1Chr 24:31; cf. Mt 21:16).

The expression "singing to the LORD" appears three times in the Old Testament. The first time "singing to the LORD" is done by Moses and the Israelites, when the people are delivered from slavery in Egypt (Exo 15:1). The deliverance is the *reason* of this song. Here, in 1 Chronicles 25, it is mentioned for the second time. The emphasis here is on *who* can do this

service: those who are called and spiritually trained. The third time it occurs, it's about *when* to sing: when the burnt offering begins (2Chr 29:27). There is also another mention of singing "the LORD's song" (Psa 137:4). There the question is *where* to sing: not in a foreign land, but in Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 26

Verses 1-19 | 2. The Divisions of the Gatekeepers

1 For the divisions of the gatekeepers [there were] of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. 2 Meshelemiah had sons: Zechariah the firstborn, Jedaiel the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, 3 Elam the fifth, Johanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh. 4 Obed-edom had sons: Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, 5 Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh [and] Peullethai the eighth; God had indeed blessed him. 6 Also to his son Shemaiah sons were born who ruled over the house of their father, for they were mighty men of valor. 7 The sons of Shemaiah [were] Othni, Rephael, Obed and Elzabad, whose brothers, Elihu and Semachiah, were valiant men. 8 All these [were] of the sons of Obed-edom; they and their sons and their relatives [were] able men with strength for the service, 62 from Obed-edom. 9 Meshelemiah had sons and relatives, 18 valiant men. 10 Also Hosah, [one] of the sons of Merari had sons: Shimri the first (although he was not the firstborn, his father made him first), 11 Hilkiyah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth; all the sons and relatives of Hosah [were] 13. 12 To these divisions of the gatekeepers, the chief men, [were given] duties like their relatives to minister in the house of the LORD. 13 They cast lots, the small and the great alike, according to their fathers' households, for every gate. 14 The lot to the east fell to Shelemiah. Then they cast lots [for] his son Zechariah, a counselor with insight, and his lot came out to the north. 15 For Obed-edom [it fell] to the south, and to his sons went the storehouse. 16 For Shuppim and Hosah [it was] to the west, by the gate of Shallecheth, on the ascending highway. Guard corresponded to guard. 17 On the east there were six Levites, on the north four daily, on the south four daily, and at the storehouse two by two. 18 At the Parbar on the west [there were] four at the highway and two at the Parbar. 19 These were the divisions of the gatekeepers of the sons of Korah and of the sons of Merari.

After we have had the singers and their service in prophecy before us in 1 Chronicles 25, our eyes are now turned to the gatekeepers. In the New Testament we can recognize them in the overseers, they are the ones who

supervise. Like desiring earnestly the gift of prophecy (1Cor 14:1-3), the aspiring of the office of overseer is encouraged (1Tim 3:1). The gatekeeper has the “task to minister in the house of the LORD” (verse 12); the overseer has the task to supervise “how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God” (1Tim 3:15).

The leaders of the four thousand gatekeepers in total are mentioned (verses 1-11; 1Chr 23:5). The gatekeepers are at the four large gate buildings. Their big task is to see who is allowed to enter the temple and who is not. Those who are not allowed to enter they must keep outside, while all those who are allowed in must be allowed to enter.

We can apply this to receiving believers at the Lord’s Table to participate in the Lord’s Supper. Two dangers must be avoided. One danger is that of generosity, whereby anyone who wishes to do so can be received to the Supper without investigating. If an unknown person comes who claims to be a believer, this should be investigated. There must be witnesses (2Cor 13:1). It is also important to establish that such a person does not live in sin (1Cor 5:13), that he has no wrong doctrine about the Lord Jesus and His work (Gal 5:9; 2Jn 1:10) and that he does not belong to a group of Christians where public evil is not disciplined (2Tim 2:19b; 2Jn 1:11).

The other danger is a narrowness that refuses all those who do not belong to the same group of churches. Then believers are refused on other grounds than those just mentioned. The refusal of believers because of all kinds of not fundamental differences in opinion is sectarianism.

Although not everyone is a gatekeeper, all believers have the task of ensuring that the scriptural conditions for receiving or refusal are maintained. Being a gatekeeper is not an easy task.

The Galatians were not good gatekeepers. They have allowed false apostles to enter with their false teachings about the law (Gal 2:4). Like a true gatekeeper, Paul writes his letter to them, saying that he does not submit to such false brethren for one hour (Gal 2:5).

The investigation of who or what should be admitted to the temple can also be applied to our bodies. For our body is also called “a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1Cor 6:19). What do we allow to enter through eye and ear and thoughts and what do we absorb into our hearts? From the “gates”

of the heart flow “the springs of life” (Pro 4:23). That is why we must also watch over the entrances and exits of our hearts with the greatest care, and be gatekeepers for ourselves. We must condemn and remove what is not good, and allow what shapes us and makes our lives more to the glory of God.

Here we find Obed-edom (verses 4-8; verse 15). He honored and watched over the ark (1Chr 13:13-14). Here God honors and blesses him indeed (verse 5) by giving him eight sons and entrusting him and his sons with the care of a gate and the storehouse. Besides supervising the south gate, he also takes care of the food of the priests. In it we see a picture of teaching in the church (cf. Mt 24:45-47). That is a big responsibility. His grandsons (sons of his son Shemaiah) are “mighty men of valor” (verse 6) and “valiant men” (verse 7).

Of one of the sons of Hosah, Shimri, is mentioned something special: “Although he was not the firstborn, his father made him first” (verse 10). Possible causes for this may be that he has special qualities, given to him by God, with an accompanying spiritual attitude, or because his oldest brother does not care about the things of God.

Although nothing of the temple exists yet, David can arrange everything because God has already revealed His plan for the temple to him (1Chr 28:11-13). According to this plan David arranges everything. The keepers of the gates to be built are already appointed by lot, that is to say by the LORD Himself (verse 13). As a result, this designation is made without regard to the person.

Verses 20-28 | 3. The Keepers of the Treasures

20 The Levites, their relatives, had charge of the treasures of the house of God and of the treasures of the dedicated gifts. 21 The sons of Ladan, the sons of the Gershonites belonging to Ladan, [namely], the Jehielites, [were] the heads of the fathers' [households], belonging to Ladan the Gershonite. 22 The sons of Jehieli, Zetham and Joel his brother, had charge of the treasures of the house of the LORD. 23 As for the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites and the Uzzielites, 24 Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was officer over the treasures. 25 His relatives by Eliezer [were] Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiiah

his son, Joram his son, Zichri his son and Shelomoth his son. 26 This Shelomoth and his relatives had charge of all the treasures of the dedicated gifts which King David and the heads of the fathers' [households], the commanders of thousands and hundreds, and the commanders of the army, had dedicated. 27 They dedicated part of the spoil won in battles to repair the house of the LORD. 28 And all that Samuel the seer had dedicated and Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner and Joab the son of Zeruiah, everyone who had dedicated [anything, all of this] was in the care of Shelomoth and his relatives.

The treasures of the dedicated gifts come from the spoil won in the battles and from possible voluntary gifts (verses 26-28). The spoil of war are collected in rooms of the temple building and treasurers have to watch over them.

The treasures represent what we have found of God's truth regarding the church in Scripture with the help of believers who in the past have investigated God's Word. These are treasures that believers have collected over the centuries for the benefit of the building of the church, God's house now. Interpreters of God's Word in previous centuries have also used these treasures.

We owe most of our knowledge of Scripture to what has been gathered from Scripture by believers over two thousand years. Faithful believers have always been allowed to build on what previous generations have discovered in the gold mine of God's Word, and these treasures have always been supplemented and expanded, and that still happens. The treasurers take note of the treasures that have been discovered and add to them. They are treasures conquered in great battle and gathered in the hearts of believers. Every victory in faith is a contribution to the temple's treasures.

Some treasures have remained in the temple as a brilliant reminder of victory, others have been used to repair damage. Thus Paul presents Christ to the church in Colossae as the One "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3) in order to eliminate the damage caused by the influence of philosophical thinking to which the Colossians have opened themselves.

Shebuel, a descendant of Moses, is king over the treasures (verse 24). Shebuel means 'prisoner of God'. This reminds of Paul, who calls himself

“the prisoner of Christ Jesus “ (Eph 3:1) and a preacher of “the unfathomable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8). Treasures have also been entrusted to us. The great treasure is the Word of God. Its riches are inexhaustible.

Do we really see the Bible this way and guard it against attacks that are made on it out of unbelief or against disempowerment? Paul commands the young Timothy: “Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to [you]” (2Tim 1:14; 1Tim 6:20).

Verses 29-32 | 4. The Officers and the Judges

29 As for the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were [assigned] to outside duties for Israel, as officers and judges. 30 As for the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his relatives, 1,700 capable men, had charge of the affairs of Israel west of the Jordan, for all the work of the LORD and the service of the king. 31 As for the Hebronites, Jerijah the chief (these Hebronites were investigated according to their genealogies and fathers' [households], in the fortieth year of David's reign, and men of outstanding capability were found among them at Jazer of Gilead) 32 and his relatives, capable men, [were] 2,700 in number, heads of fathers' [households]. And King David made them overseers of the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of the Manassites concerning all the affairs of God and of the king.

The Levites that we have been paying attention to before this section have the house of God as their workplace. This is applicable to the meetings of the believers, where they perform their task par excellence. The fourth task, the officers and judges, is different. They do not live in Jerusalem, but work in all of Israel, even at the other side of the Jordan. The judges enlighten the king in his task.

Believers are also used to resolve lawsuits among believers. These are disputes between believers about ordinary things that can happen in everyday life (1Cor 6:4-5). In the church people are given to serve the believers. There is hardly a dispute imaginable that cannot be resolved by believers. This does not require a high intelligence, but a spiritual mind.

The spirit of the world penetrates the churches and increases the number of disagreements in all kinds of churches. The mistrust in a church can be so high that what one group says is totally incomprehensible to the other

group. Then it may be advisable to call upon the help of wise brothers from another local church. They must be able to listen calmly to both parties.

It concerns “all the work of the LORD and the service of the king” (verse 30) and “all the affairs of God and of the king” (verse 32). The latter we can understand as the affairs of the Lord Jesus. All things among the believers directly touch God and Christ. Their honor is at stake. Only when that is considered, this difficult work can be done and continued.

Both on the west side (verse 30) and on the east side (verse 32) of the Jordan it is first about God and then about the king. The things of God are the religious things like bringing the prescribed sacrifices and removing idolatry. The king’s affairs relate to political affairs, justice and the preservation of peace.

Verse 31 refers to ‘the fortieth year of David’s reign’, that is to say, we are in the last year of his reign. We see here that David remains committed to and for the service of the LORD until the last moment.

1 Chronicles 27

Verses 1-15 | 5. The Commanders of the Army

1 Now [this is] the enumeration of the sons of Israel, the heads of fathers' [households], the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and their officers who served the king in all the affairs of the divisions which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, each division [numbering] 24,000: 2 Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel had charge of the first division for the first month; and in his division [were] 24,000. 3 [He was] from the sons of Perez, [and was] chief of all the commanders of the army for the first month. 4 Dodai the Ahohite and his division had charge of the division for the second month, Mikloth [being] the chief officer; and in his division [were] 24,000. 5 The third commander of the army for the third month [was] Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, [as] chief; and in his division [were] 24,000. 6 This Benaiah [was] the mighty man of the thirty, and had charge of thirty; and over his division was Ammizabad his son. 7 The fourth for the fourth month [was] Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; and in his division [were] 24,000. 8 The fifth for the fifth month [was] the commander Shamhuth the Izrahite; and in his division [were] 24,000. 9 The sixth for the sixth month [was] Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; and in his division [were] 24,000. 10 The seventh for the seventh month [was] Helez the Pelonite of the sons of Ephraim; and in his division [were] 24,000. 11 The eighth for the eighth month [was] Sibbecai the Hushathite of the Zerahites; and in his division [were] 24,000. 12 The ninth for the ninth month [was] Abiezer the Anathothite of the Benjamites; and in his division [were] 24,000. 13 The tenth for the tenth month [was] Maharai the Netophathite of the Zerahites; and in his division [were] 24,000. 14 The eleventh for the eleventh month [was] Benaiah the Pirathonite of the sons of Ephraim; and in his division [were] 24,000. 15 The twelfth for the twelfth month [was] Heldai the Netophathite of Othniel; and in his division [were] 24,000.

The commanders of the army are not Levites. These are only those who perform the four services that we have seen before. Despite the rest that is there when David is king and has defeated his enemies, David keeps

24,000 soldiers on standby every month to ensure and maintain peace and security.

The commanders of the army mentioned here are also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 11 among the mighty men of David. They have shared with David his rejection and trial. Here they share in his glorification and reign; they are given the high function of commander of the army.

We are also rejected with the true David and as reward we will share in His glorification (2Tim 2:12a). Whoever is faithful in the spiritual battle in the small, is also faithful in the big and gets a greater responsibility. Mighty men are formed in heavy trials and can later openly go out before the Lord of the Lords. Every believer who already has a certain service in the public domain has taken his aptitude test in secret. No one gets a public service if he is not exercised in secret.

Those who are at the forefront of the battle, the commanders of the army, can say how the battle should be fought because they have been taught by the great commander, the “captain of the host of the LORD” (Jos 5:14). Young believers should pay attention to the elderly and wait for them to give the signal for battle.

Verses 16-24 | 6. The Princes of the Tribes of Israel

16 Now in charge of the tribes of Israel: chief officer for the Reubenites was Eliezer the son of Zichri; for the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maacah; 17 for Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; for Aaron, Zadok; 18 for Judah, Elihu, [one] of David's brothers; for Issachar, Omri the son of Michael; 19 for Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; for Naphtali, Jeremoth the son of Azriel; 20 for the sons of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; for the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiiah; 21 for the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; for Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner; 22 for Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These [were] the princes of the tribes of Israel. 23 But David did not count those twenty years of age and under, because the LORD had said He would multiply Israel as the stars of heaven. 24 Joab the son of Zeruiah had begun to count [them], but did not finish; and because of this, wrath came upon Israel, and the number was not included in the account of the chronicles of King David.

The princes of the twelve tribes can be applied to leaders the Lord gives in a local church. These are persons other than gatekeepers and commanders of the army. These leaders are in charge every day, when there is no talk of special situations. We might think of “gifts of ... administrations” (1Cor 12:28).

At the end there is a special mention of the census (verses 23-24). From these verses we can learn that the people of God are always larger than we can count. David did not want to know the exact number of *inhabitants*, for then he would doubt God’s promise of countless offspring (Gen 15:5; 22:17). His sin was that he wanted to know the strength of his people and therefore had counted all “who drew the sword” (1Chr 21:2,5).

Verses 25-34 | 7. Other Overseers and Counselors

25 Now Azmaveth the son of Adiel had charge of the king’s storehouses. And Jonathan the son of Uzziah had charge of the storehouses in the country, in the cities, in the villages and in the towers. 26 Ezri the son of Chelub had charge of the agricultural workers who tilled the soil. 27 Shimei the Ramathite had charge of the vineyards; and Zabdi the Shiphmite had charge of the produce of the vineyards [stored] in the wine cellars. 28 Baal-hanan the Gederite had charge of the olive and sycamore trees in the Shephelah; and Joash had charge of the stores of oil. 29 Shitrai the Sharonite had charge of the cattle which were grazing in Sharon; and Shaphat the son of Adlai had charge of the cattle in the valleys. 30 Obil the Ishmaelite had charge of the camels; and Jehdeiah the Meronothite had charge of the donkeys. 31 Jaziz the Hagrite had charge of the flocks. All these were overseers of the property which belonged to King David. 32 Also Jonathan, David’s uncle, [was] a counselor, a man of understanding, and a scribe; and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni tutored the king’s sons. 33 Ahithophel [was] counselor to the king; and Hushai the Archite [was] the king’s friend. 34 Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar succeeded Ahithophel; and Joab was the commander of the king’s army.

This section lists the blessings of the land and who were in charge of them. All these blessings are under the care of David. Of this he can feed others through his overseers. Also now there are ‘overseers’ who can distribute food to the church (Mt 24:45). Every fruit mentioned here has its own spiritual meaning, as does every animal.

Fighting is important, but it's also a hard job. The same applies to the judge and gatekeeper. It also applies to the giving of food to God's people. It is not always easy to be able to feed hungry hearts with the supplies our Lord holds. Yet that is more of a thankful work. It is more often received in gratitude.

The enumeration of the activities of the overseers shows a wide variety of activities. In the same way there is a great variety of gifts in the church. Those who have to do the work in the field cannot take care of the herds at the same time. He neither has understanding of this. Yet there is unanimity in all this work, for everything happens for the sake of king David. No one should interfere in the work of another. Everyone must be faithful in his own service.

We can apply a lot to the church. What each one has been entrusted with remains the property of the great King, the Lord Jesus. What confusion arises when someone starts to consider the field he has to maintain as his own. This is what happens a lot in Christianity, for example when a minister speaks of 'my church' and treats it as such. Only the Lord Jesus can speak about "My church" (Mt 16:18).

"The king's storehouses" (verse 25a) represent for us the treasures in heaven that we may collect (Mt 6:20). We can think of everything we possess in Christ, because in Him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3).

There are also the "the storehouses in the country, in the cities, in the villages and in the towers" (verse 25b). Joseph and Hezekiah have storehouses (Gen 41:49,56; 2Chr 31:5,7,10). These storehouses are used to distribute what has been collected. They are everywhere, in all kinds of areas and in all kinds of places. It points to the abundance of the land, in which all share, wherever they live.

"The storehouses in the country", show the task that is done in the world. We can think of the preaching of the gospel, through which people come to conversion. "The cities" and "the villages" can be compared to large and small local churches, where people who have come to conversion are brought. "The towers" are lookouts to warn of the arrival of the enemy and provide protection from the enemy.

In “the agricultural workers” (verse 26) we can see a picture of the work of the evangelists. Just as David appoints someone over his workers, Paul indicates how to work in God’s field (1Cor 3:6-8). We also have to work with good seed, that is to say that the gospel must be preached pure, which means pure biblical.

The “charge of the vineyards” (verse 27) is reminiscent of the care of God by His servants. The Father wants His own to bear fruit for Him (Jn 15:1-2). It gives Him joy when there is fruit for Him, of which “the wine cellars” speak (Jdg 9:13).

By “the olive ... trees” (verse 28) we can think of growth in the house of God (Psa 52:8a; 92:13). This growth happens through the working of God’s Spirit, of Whom the oil is an image.

The “sycamore trees”, or fig-mulberry trees (Lk 19:6), are a picture of righteousness before God. When Adam and Eve have sinned, they make aprons of fig leaves (Gen 3:7). It is a homemade apron that cannot cover their nakedness before God. Thus, a righteousness of its own cannot exist before God. If there is no fruit, the fig tree is cursed (Mk 11:12-14). The only righteousness that God accepts is righteousness based on faith. He Himself gives that righteousness on the basis of the work of His Son.

The “stores of oil” speak of “the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Tit 3:5-6; 1Jn 2:20,27; Gal 5:22-23). The light of the Spirit is preserved for His people. Wherever it is needed unlimited use can be made of it. This oil never runs out.

The “cattle” (verse 29) serve to sacrifice to God. For us, that means spiritual sacrifice. When the prophet Hosea gives the people the words to pronounce as a confession, he says: “That we may present the fruit of our lips [literally: our lips as bulls]” (Hos 14:3). Their pronounced confession is compared to the sacrificing of bulls. This indicates the awareness that God will accept their confession as a sacrifice, with in their hearts the respect that goes with it.

That sacrifice is made in reality by the Lord Jesus. His sacrifice is great enough to forgive the greatest sin. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews quotes this verse from Hosea to encourage the believers to honor God: “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,

that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name [Literally: confess His name]" (Heb 13:15). Did we store this fruit?

"The camels (verse 30a) are burden bearers. The application to us comes in the spur: "Bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2). "The donkeys" (verse 30b) are also burden bearers, but in the application to us we see in it more the work in a local church and more of cooperation with others. "The flocks" (verse 31a) is reminiscent of the "little flock" (Lk 12:32) that depends on the Lord's care.

"All these were overseers of the property which belonged to King David" (verse 31b). It should be remembered that the Lord Jesus, in His care, gave overseers and shepherds to pasture His flock. They are given the instruction: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood". (Acts 20:28; cf. 1Pet 5:2).

Then seven men are mentioned who belong to the direct followers of David (verses 32-34). They are more fiduciaries than officials. The first one mentioned is "Jonathan, David's uncle" (verse 32a). He is a counselor, a man of understanding with a task as scribe i.e. court writer. The second person is "Jehiel, the son of Hachmoni" (verse 32b) who tutors the king's sons. He takes care of the king's sons, a task that has to do with raising and guiding.

The third is "Ahithophel counselor to the king" (verse 33a). Of him we know that, because David does not follow his advice at the revolt of Absalom, he commits suicide (2Sam 17:23). The fourth is "Husai, the Archite", which is described as "the king's friend" (verse 33b; 2Sam 15:37). He is a special fiduciary of the king (cf. 1Kgs 4:5).

After Ahithophel's death, his position is taken over by "Jehoiada the son of Benaiah" (verse 34a), the fifth on the list. The sixth is "Abiathar" (verse 34b), the priest who manages to escape the slaughter in Nob and joins David (1Sam 22:20). Finally, the text mentions the well-known "commander of the king's army" Joab (verse 34c).

"The counselor" (verses 32-33) is a person who can give advice. This should be done from a spiritual and Scriptural point of view and not from human wisdom point of view. Sometimes these advices are also recorded

in writing. The letter to the Philippians, the first and second letter to Timothy and the letter to Philemon can be considered as such 'advisory letters'.

1 Chronicles 28

Introduction

We are ready for the beautiful end of king David's life. It is also a special end. It is a farewell speech, as did Moses and Joshua and Samuel and Paul, each with their own content, fitting their circumstances. The central theme of these last two chapters of this first book of Chronicles are the plans for the building of the temple. David has prepared the building of the temple. Solomon only needs to perform. The end of David's life is linked to this grand design of the house of rest for the ark of the LORD's covenant.

In the description of David's plan for the construction of the temple, it seems that the author of the books of Chronicles is interested in presenting David as a second Moses, and Solomon as a second Joshua. There are therefore clear similarities between David and Moses. Thus, despite all that they have meant to the people of God, both of them were not allowed to complete their work. Moses is not allowed to bring the people into the land and David is not allowed to build the temple. In both cases God forbids them from completing this work.

In both cases, their work is completed by a follower appointed by God. It is clear that we can see Solomon as a second Joshua. Both are chosen privately and receive the support of the whole people; both receive that support without resistance or opposition; both are exalted by God; both bring God's people into the rest.

In addition to these similarities in circumstances, there are also striking similarities between the words said to them when performing what is commanded to them. Both are told: "Be strong and courageous" (verse 20; Deu 31:6; 1Chr 22:13), "The LORD your God is with you" (verse 20; Deu 31:6,8,23; Jos 1:5,9; 1Chr 22:11,16) and "He will not fail you nor forsake you" (verse 20; Deu 31:6,8; Jos 1:5). These similarities show Joshua and Solomon as those chosen by God to complete the great work of their predecessors.

The kingship of the LORD is a subject of prophecy. David and Solomon are both a type of Christ in His reign in the kingdom of peace. Therefore

there is *one* throne of the LORD. The LORD will reign in the kingdom of peace. Solomon sits “on the throne of the LORD” (1Chr 29:23). The kingdom of God is the exercise of God’s dominion which is placed in the hands of a man, Solomon. Solomon is only a (failing) picture of the Man Christ Jesus in whose hands God places the ultimate rule over all things. It is therefore also the kingdom of the Son of man.

This is also practically important for today. The house of God, the temple in Jerusalem, literally refers also to the kingdom of peace. In a spiritual sense the temple is a picture of the church now. The church, whatever is said of the temple, is “a permanent house”, or, literally, “a house of rest” (verse 2). The ark is a picture of the Lord Jesus. He is the center of a place of rest. Christ is the center of the spiritual life, Christ Who finds rest among His own. The ark is the footstool of God, that is to say that God also finds His rest in the ark. In Psalm 110 the earth is a resting place for the Lord Jesus. This is not the case yet, but it is in the church.

Christ is first and foremost the resting point for God. God finds rest in the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus. The sabbatical rest of God at creation (Gen 2:3) is disturbed by sin. The sabbath rest will soon come for creation, during the millennial kingdom of peace. Now and here it is about the rest of God in the Lord Jesus and the rest of the Lord Jesus in the church, in our hearts and lives.

All this, as far as we are concerned, calls on our responsibility. We must ensure that this house of rest is also there now. The Old Testament is not about our Christian position but about putting it into practice. Here we find the conditions to ensure that such a house is present.

The order for the building is given to Solomon. In these chapters there are serious exhortations from David to Solomon. That cannot apply to the Lord Jesus. Solomon is also a picture of us. The Lord Jesus must stand by us with His Spirit and power in being a place of rest for God.

David and Solomon are a type in three ways:

1. of the kingship in the kingdom of peace,
2. of the dominion in the house of God now and
3. very practical as people who give us all kinds of lessons that we ourselves have to put into practice.

Verses 1-10 | Solomon Chosen to Build the Temple

1 Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the commanders of the divisions that served the king, and the commanders of thousands, and the commanders of hundreds, and the overseers of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons, with the officials and the mighty men, even all the valiant men. 2 Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Listen to me, my brethren and my people; I [had] intended to build a permanent home for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God. So I had made preparations to build [it]. 3 But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name because you are a man of war and have shed blood.' 4 Yet, the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me from all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever. For He has chosen Judah to be a leader; and in the house of Judah, my father's house, and among the sons of my father He took pleasure in me to make [me] king over all Israel. 5 Of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons), He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. 6 He said to me, 'Your son Solomon is the one who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be a son to Me, and I will be a father to him. 7 I will establish his kingdom forever if he resolutely performs My commandments and My ordinances, as is done now.' 8 So now, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek after all the commandments of the LORD your God so that you may possess the good land and bequeath [it] to your sons after you forever. 9 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. 10 Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be courageous and act."

All the leaders of the people and all who have a task come to listen to David (verse 1; cf. 1Chr 23:1-2). Here we see a picture of how things should be in the local church. Everyone has a responsibility in it and must listen to the Lord Jesus in order to fulfil the task properly.

To make his speech David stands up (verse 2). Because he is old and weak, he will have sat down, but now he rises to his feet to speak to his people for the last time. He calls them here "my brethren". Then he begins to speak

about the intention he had in his heart to build a temple for the LORD. That intention dates from seventeen years earlier, but he has not forgotten it. His heart has been busy with it all this time.

However, God has told him that is not allowed to build the temple because he has shed blood (verse 3). David is the suffering, rejected king. He is also the warring king.

David and Solomon have been chosen by God, each for the task He has assigned them. David is aware that everything has come from God and that it is not a choice of man. He realizes the privilege that God has chosen him among the sons of his father and that out of the many sons he has himself, God has chosen Solomon (verses 4-5).

In his words we hear God express His special preference for Solomon (verse 6). Here we can see Solomon as a picture of the Lord Jesus as the object of the Father's love in connection with the kingdom (Col 1:13). We may remember that we too are objects of the Father's love, as evidenced by the fact that God has "predestined us to adoption as sons ... to Himself" (Eph 1:5). When we think about this, are we not filled with admiration for Him? It is great to know that He is our Father and that we are His sons.

In verse 7, a condition is attached to the confirmation of the kingship. Meeting that condition requires strength. Solomon must be resolute to "perform My commandments and My ordinances, as is done now". He does not have the power to do this in himself, but can obtain it from the almighty God. The sense of lack of power is needed to resort to the source of power. For us it means that we will "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2Tim 2:1) and that we will "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might" (Eph 6:10).

David points out that the power "now" is present. At that moment, that day, Solomon is strong and he keeps the commandments and ordinances of the LORD. However, this is no guarantee for the next day and days. It will have to be made true every day. There is also an encouragement for later. If there are days when we feel weak, it is good to be reminded of days when we have experienced God's power.

In verse 8 David adds some more things to the condition of obedience of the previous verse.

1. It is about “all the commandments”. This excludes arbitrariness and preference for a few commandments. The commandments of God form, so to speak, a total package.
2. They are to be “observed”. The recognition that all commandments are important can only be taken seriously if they are also obeyed.
3. But mere obeying is not enough either. It comes down to the sensibility of the heart. If there is the real desire to obey all commandments, the “seeking” of them will be present.

With regard to the awareness and enjoyment of the sonship and blessings of the heavenly land we may have, it means that we will only have that awareness and enjoyment if we obey the Lord Jesus wholeheartedly. If we wish to be in the way and commandments of God, we will remain in the possession and enjoyment of the land.

Therefore Paul first prays for the Colossians that they will come to the knowledge of the will of the Lord (Col 1:9-11). Only then does he speak of the blessings of the inheritance of the saints in which they partake and of being transferred to the kingdom of the Son of the Father’s love (Col 1:12-14).

If we live in obedience, we ourselves will be preserved in the enjoyment of our inheritance. We will also leave this good inheritance for those who come after us, which they in turn can enjoy.

Then David addresses the word to his son (verse 9). These are the words of a father to his son. The father knows God and has lived with and for Him. He wishes his son the same. This will be the wish of every father who lives with and for the Lord, for his children.

With the words “as for you, my son Solomon” David speaks to Solomon in an emphatically and insistently manner. He has important recommendations for his son. The first is: “Know the God of your father.” Knowing means having fellowship. In this way David underlines the importance of a real relationship with the living God. David tells Solomon, as it were, that the secret of his own success has been his fellowship with God and that Solomon must live in the same fellowship.

If knowing God is present, he can also serve God “with a whole heart and a willing mind”. Both heart and mind must be completely focused on God.

The reason for serving God in this way is that the LORD searches all hearts and has insight into all thought formation. He is the omniscient God.

This does not frighten, but encourages to seek Him. It is an invitation to come to Him, to seek Him, for everything we may do and what we need for it. The promise is that He will be found. Whoever seeks Him will experience that “He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Heb 11:6b).

David also points out to Solomon the serious other side. If he doesn’t seek Him, but forsakes Him, the LORD will reject him forever. Solomon has left the LORD. That does not mean that Solomon has been lost. Eternally rejected here means that Solomon on earth will no longer be the king of peace under whose reign peace and prosperity are enjoyed. His kingship is then forever over.

After his encouraging and admonishing words David points out to his son that the LORD has chosen him to build a house for a sanctuary (verse 10). That is why he encourages him to show himself strongly and to take up the work.

Verses 11-19 | The Design of the Temple and the Materials

11 Then David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch [of the temple], its buildings, its storehouses, its upper rooms, its inner rooms and the room for the mercy seat; 12 and the plan of all that he had in mind, for the courts of the house of the LORD, and for all the surrounding rooms, for the storehouses of the house of God and for the storehouses of the dedicated things; 13 also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD and for all the utensils of service in the house of the LORD; 14 for the golden [utensils], the weight of gold for all utensils for every kind of service; for the silver utensils, the weight [of silver] for all utensils for every kind of service; 15 and the weight [of gold] for the golden lampstands and their golden lamps, with the weight of each lampstand and its lamps; and [the weight of silver] for the silver lampstands, with the weight of each lampstand and its lamps according to the use of each lampstand; 16 and the gold by weight for the tables of showbread, for each table; and silver for the silver tables; 17 and the forks, the basins, and the pitchers of pure gold; and for the golden bowls with the weight for each bowl; and for the silver bowls with the

weight for each bowl; 18 and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the model of the chariot, [even] the cherubim that spread out [their wings] and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD. 19 "All [this]," [said David], "the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern."

In these verses the plans for the building of the temple are given. David gives his son "the plan" of the temple (verse 11). For the building of the tabernacle also a plan, or pattern, is given (Exo 25:9,40; 27:8). Just as the plans for the building of the tabernacle are given to Moses, so Solomon is given a description of the temple. This means that nothing is left to the imagination of Solomon himself. The plan that David gives him, does not originate from David himself. The plans for the temple have been made known to him by the Spirit ["he had in mind" is literally "the spirit with him"] (verse 12). When building the tabernacle, it is also the Spirit who gives wisdom to build.

In verse 19 it is added that the LORD also gave him the plan in writing. We see that the building also happens with the use of what is written. Word and Spirit always go together. Word and Spirit together are sufficient for the order and practical furnishing of God's house.

There is a list of all that David has gathered (verses 13-18; 1Chr 22:14-16). Of everything the right weight is given. We find the weight, in the sense of importance, of all these things in the New Testament. It concerns the principles about the church and being a church which we can understand through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and put into practice through the Word of God.

Gold and silver are weighted. The reality of the church is full of these two aspects: gold represents Divine glory and silver represents atonement.

Verses 20-21 | David Orders Solomon to Build the Temple

20 Then David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished. 21 Now behold, [there are] the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God, and every willing man of any

skill will be with you in all the work for all kinds of service. The officials also and all the people will be entirely at your command."

Verse 20 connects to verse 10. When everything has been announced and prepared, it is time to act. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, what David says to Solomon reminds us of what Moses says to Joshua (Jos 1:5-7). Moses is the great leader of the people who has led the people to a certain point, while he has had to leave the rest to Joshua. The same we see here with David and Solomon. David is in this respect a second Moses and Solomon a second Joshua.

With the powerful encouragement "act", David encourages Solomon to get to work. He made great efforts to prepare the temple building. He gave Solomon safety, a place to build the temple, materials, overseers and staff, a whole team for the temple service and also a plan for the temple. However, all this work is of no use if Solomon does not carry out the assignment.

In this day and age we recognize what David has done in the work that Christ has done and still does; in what David commands Solomon, we see the command to all believers to help build the church, the house of God now. The believers must work to ensure that the church looks as God intended, as the place where God and the Lord Jesus can find rest. Christ has done and given all that is necessary for this. The plan for the building we have in Scripture. Now it comes down to us doing it.

1 Chronicles 29

Verses 1-5 | Voluntary Gifts From David

1 Then King David said to the entire assembly, "My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is still young and inexperienced and the work is great; for the temple is not for man, but for the LORD God. 2 Now with all my ability I have provided for the house of my God the gold for the [things of] gold, and the silver for the [things of] silver, and the bronze for the [things of] bronze, the iron for the [things of] iron, and wood for the [things of] wood, onyx stones and inlaid [stones], stones of antimony and stones of various colors, and all kinds of precious stones and alabaster in abundance. 3 Moreover, in my delight in the house of my God, the treasure I have of gold and silver, I give to the house of my God, over and above all that I have already provided for the holy temple, 4 [namely], 3,000 talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and 7,000 talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the buildings; 5 of gold for the [things of] gold and of silver for the [things of] silver, that is, for all the work done by the craftsmen. Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the LORD?"

David then addresses "the entire assembly" of Israel (verse 1). He points out to them the youthfulness and inexperience of his son Solomon on the one hand and the greatness and importance of the work of building the temple on the other. The temple is a building "not for man, but for the LORD God". We too must realize our weakness and incompetence well if we compare our strengths and possibilities with the greatness of the church of the living God. It is nothing less than the house of *God*.

We know that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1Cor 6:19). Our body, like the temple in Jerusalem, is not for a man, not for ourselves, but for God. When we realize this, we also realize how weak we are to live in accordance with it. Is it our desire to take this into account in all respects?

The same applies to the church which is also the dwelling place of God in the Spirit in its entirety (Eph 2:22). This is also being built on. The building of the house of God as the church of the living God takes place today by

“evangelists, and ... pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:11). Evangelists deliver “living stones” (1Pet 2:5), while shepherds and teachers teach these stones to take their place in the house. Also education is up(building).

It is important that every builder is aware of the grandeur of the house he is helping to build. Paul puts it this way: “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as [coming] from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate [as] servants of a new covenant” (2Cor 3:5-6a). Every worker should have this mind in the house of God.

The materials that David has prepared with all his strength for the house of God (verse 2) represent something of God. In gold we see God’s glory; in silver the price paid for the atonement; the bronze is a picture of the righteousness of God shown in judgment; the iron represents God’s power (which is perfected in our weakness). David did his contribution out of love.

David mentions what he himself contributed from his own possessions (verses 3-5a). For us, we can contribute to the building of the church by working for it with the capacities and resources at our disposal. By the way, we got it exactly to use it for the building of God’s house. The question is whether we are prepared to use them for this purpose. This question is put to us: “Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the LORD?” (verse 5b).

David does everything and gives everything because he loves God’s habitation (Psa 26:8a). He calls the house of God three times “the house of my God” (verses 2-3). He loves that house, because it is the house of his God. We can compare his love for God’s house with the love Christ has for his church (Eph 5:25), which is also “the church of God” (Acts 20:28). We can also take David as an example for ourselves. If we love the church, we will give everything for our brothers and sisters, because they are loved by God (2Thes 2:13; cf. 1Jn 3:16a).

David has lost nothing of his enthusiasm for God’s house. As he used to dance before the ark (2Sam 6:14), so he is full of God’s dwelling place here. He is in this an example for the whole people. After giving the example of giving for God’s house David asks who is willing to give. We can only ask others to do something for the Lord if we do so ourselves.

The expression “to consecrate himself” is literally “to fill his hand”, an expression used in the ordination of Aaron and his sons (Exo 28:41). The words “ordain them” used there literally are “fill their hand”. Here we see that giving for the building of God’s house is on the same level as being ordained a priest. That is how high God praises giving for His house.

Verses 6-9 | Voluntary Gifts From the Rulers

6 Then the rulers of the fathers' [households], and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, with the overseers over the king's work, offered willingly; 7 and for the service for the house of God they gave 5,000 talents and 10,000 darics of gold, and 10,000 talents of silver, and 18,000 talents of brass, and 100,000 talents of iron. 8 Whoever possessed [precious] stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the LORD, in care of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9 Then the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the LORD with a whole heart, and King David also rejoiced greatly.

David’s good example and moves the hearts and hands of the heads of the families and leaders of the people (verses 6-7). They also give voluntarily. Good example does follow well and love does give. At the building of the tabernacle we see the same willingness (Exo 35:20-29).

The precious stones are given for the treasury of the temple and thus entrusted to the care of the Gershonite Jehiel (verse 8). It says of the descendants of Jehiel that they are in charge of the treasures of the temple (1Chr 26:20-22). Precious stones all have a different color. A precious stone speaks of the believer who in his own unique way reflects something of the manifold glory of Christ. The Lord Jesus gives His gifts to the church to ensure that the believers reflect that glory. Every reflection of Christ in His own is a contribution to the treasures of God’s house.

Giving by the leaders brings joy in its turn with the people (verse 9). From David we read that he rejoices “greatly”. True leaders set a good example for the commitment to God’s house to promote its building and furnishing. This commitment is ‘highly appreciated’ by the Lord Jesus. It is a joy for His heart when He sees that we are committed to the house of God, when it has priority in our lives because it has priority for God. He would

like us to work hard to ensure that everything in the church answers to Who He is and that only God's honor has a place there.

The gifts are done "for the service for the house of God" (verse 7), for "the treasury of the house of the LORD" (verse 8) and "to the LORD" (verse 9). This shows in an impressive way how in their giving both the house of the LORD and He Himself stands before the attention. It is about Him and His house.

This also applies to the church today. In all things, the Lord and His church should come first. It is to be hoped that it is also the case with us as Paul says of the church in Macedonia: "They first gave themselves to the Lord and [then] to us by the will of God" (2Cor 8:5).

Verses 10-13 | David Praises the LORD

10 So David blessed the LORD in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, "Blessed are You, O LORD God of Israel our father, forever and ever. 11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. 12 Both riches and honor [come] from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone. 13 Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name.

When David sees all this voluntarism, it brings him to a hymn of praise to the LORD. He calls him "God of Israel our father". With this he emphasizes God as the God of promises, the God Who does what He has promised, and Israel as the people He has blessed. The praise for what has been given can only be sung when we realize that everything we give is of God and comes from Him.

In his praise David does not tell God what he and the princes have given, but what God has given. He attributes to God unlimited greatness

1. in time: "forever and ever" (verse 10),
2. in space: "in the heavens and the earth" (verse 11a); and
3. in authority: 'raised as head above all things' (verse 11b).

All belongs to the LORD, He has all power, and all things come from Him.

When people are big and strong, it is through Him. It enables them to create great works. In everything He enables, His glorious Name becomes visible. Whenever and wherever that Name is visible and perceived, there can be nothing but praise to Him.

Verses 14-16 | Everything Is From and for the LORD

14 "But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from You, and from Your hand we have given You. 15 For we are sojourners before You, and tenants, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope. 16 O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided to build You a house for Your holy name, it is from Your hand, and all is Yours.

Opposite the majesty of the LORD David humbles himself. He pronounces it: "Who am I?" His life has been a chain of misery. Saul who wanted to get rid of him, his adultery with Bathsheba, his murder of Uriah, his sons' revolt against him and their rivalry among themselves. He also knows the people over whom he has been king when he says: "Who are my people?" In the light of all this, he is overwhelmed by the work of God's grace in his heart and in the heart of his people.

What we give, we may give back, overwhelmed by His blessings. The reason to the hymn of praise is the awareness of the smallness of oneself against the greatness and majesty of God, His goodness and blessings. In this case, it is not about smallness due to one's own badness. The heart of David is humble. He is only a hatch. We have nothing that we have not received (1Cor 4:7a). Everything are borrowed goods. We give it to Him because it belongs to Him.

This applies not only to our possessions, but also to our willingness to serve and worship Him. What we give and the mind in which we give, both come from Him, they are worked by Him in our hearts. There is nothing we can boast of. All glory is from Him and through Him and to Him.

It is a beautiful sight: this old saint, so used and honored by God, sees himself at the end of his life as totally null and humble. There is no glory with David for everything he has done and accomplished. How many people boast of all their achievements precisely at the end of their lives.

David compares the brevity of life with “a shadow”. We have other comparisons in God’s Word regarding the brevity of life:

1. James speaks about life as “a vapor” (Jam 4:14).
2. Peter compares life to “the flower of grass” (1Pet 1:24).
3. Job says of his days: “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle” (Job 7:6).
4. David also says that the LORD made his days “[as] handbreadths” and that “every man at his best is a mere breath” (Psa 39:5).

It is important that we realize that there is no strength in us. All strength is with God and we are totally dependent on Him. Also what we give, we can only give because He gave us first. This means that everything that is useful to God’s house must be of Divine origin. We may have good ideas for the functioning of the church, but the question is where these ideas come from.

We must therefore always apply the test of the Word of God to know whether a particular contribution or change we desire comes from God and has His approval. This will save us from introducing things that put man and his experience central, rather than the Lord Jesus and His honor.

The truth that everything we have comes from God is the basis for the teaching of stewardship. We must always and in all things remember that everything belongs to Him (Psa 24:1) and that this means that what we have is temporarily entrusted to us and that we have it to use for Him. We are His slaves (Lk 17:10).

The Lord gives us things to make us know the joy that comes from giving to Him. God Himself needs nothing (Psa 50:10-12). When we give, we do what He does, for He is the great Giver. He has given everything in that supreme gift, His Son, the Lord Jesus. God has given Him out of love for the world (Jn 3:16). Shall we not say from the bottom of our hearts: “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2Cor 9:15)?

Verses 17-19 | Prayer for the People and for Solomon

17 Since I know, O my God, that You try the heart and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these [things]; so now

with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here, make [their] offerings willingly to You. 18 O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, our fathers, preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of Your people, and direct their heart to You; 19 and give to my son Solomon a perfect heart to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies and Your statutes, and to do [them] all, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision."

David knows that with God, whom he calls "my God", it is about the heart (verse 17). From his personal relationship with God, he knows that God sees "the integrity" of his heart. He expresses to God his joy because of the voluntariness of the people. This is an important indication for us to thank the Lord especially for what He does in others. At the same time we must pray, as David does, that such a mind will always remain in the other person's heart (verse 18). It will also be necessary to pray for ourselves. It is important to pray that the heart is turned toward the Lord Jesus, as David does for the people.

It is always about the heart. David also prays for his son that the LORD will give him "a perfect heart" to do what He says (verse 19). He does not pray for his son that God will make him rich, or learned, or great. His prayer is that his heart will forever be completely devoted to the LORD.

This will be expressed in

1. obedience to God's commandments and then in
2. the performance of the task assigned to him.

Here we see an important order. First obedience is mentioned and then the works. Obedience is a mind. If the good mind is present, there can also be worked well. Let us pray this prayer of David for his son also for our children.

Verses 20-21 | All the Assembly Praises the LORD

20 Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the LORD your God." And all the assembly blessed the LORD, the God of their fathers, and bowed low and did homage to the LORD and to the king. 21 On the next day they made sacrifices to the LORD and offered burnt offerings to the LORD, 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams [and] 1,000 lambs, with their drink offerings and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel.

After David has praised the LORD, he calls upon the people to praise the LORD. That is what the people do. They kneel and bow down before Him and also before David the king. The king is the representative of the LORD. Their praise is followed by an abundance of sacrifices. The hearts of the people are so filled with God's greatness and grace that they spontaneously bring Him an abundance of sacrifices and burnt offerings with drink offerings.

If we are full of all that God has done in our lives and what He still does in His church today, we will glorify Him and make Him great. We do this by telling Him much about the Lord Jesus, for He is the Sacrifice that is represented in all these sacrifices (Heb 10:5-10). All the sacrifices of the Old Testament are meaningful to God only because they represent and point forward to the one sacrifice of His Son.

Verses 22-25 | Solomon Anointed

22 So they ate and drank that day before the LORD with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king a second time, and they anointed [him] as ruler for the LORD and Zadok as priest. 23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father; and he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. 24 All the officials, the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David pledged allegiance to King Solomon. 25 The LORD highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him royal majesty which had not been on any king before him in Israel.

On an earlier occasion the people have eaten and drunk without the LORD and connected with idolatry (Exo 32:2-7). Here they eat and drink "before the LORD", He is there. On this occasion Solomon is made king for the second time, now to take place on the throne. David has already made Solomon king earlier (1Chr 23:1) and thereby fulfilled the purpose of God, but here he rules practically over all the people.

In the same way, the Lord Jesus has already been made by God "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36), but only later will He actually accept His dominion and will every tongue confess that He is Lord (Phil 2:11).

At the same time as Solomon's anointing, Zadok is anointed as priest. Zadok is the faithful priest who God would raise up (1Sam 2:35). Solomon and Zadok together are a picture of the Lord Jesus as the King-Priest (Zec 6:13).

The throne on which Solomon sits is here called “the throne of the LORD”, which indicates the origin and authority of the throne. This distinguishes this throne from all the thrones of the peoples around Israel and also from the throne of Saul. The throne of Solomon is the throne of Him, who is “more than Solomon” (Mt 12:42). The Lord Jesus will sit on the throne of God when God’s time has come. Everything with Solomon comes from God. That indicates what God will do with the Lord Jesus.

When Solomon sits on the throne of the LORD, all Israel listens to him. All who have served David and also all the sons of king David recognize him as king. What a joy and consolation it must have been for David, that after so many misery with his sons they unite here under the reign of Solomon.

Verses 26-30 | David Dies

26 Now David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27 The period which he reigned over Israel [was] forty years; he reigned in Hebron seven years and in Jerusalem thirty-three [years]. 28 Then he died in a ripe old age, full of days, riches and honor; and his son Solomon reigned in his place. 29 Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Samuel the seer, in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet and in the chronicles of Gad the seer, 30 with all his reign, his power, and the circumstances which came on him, on Israel, and on all the kingdoms of the lands.

The chronicler concludes his description of David’s life with the words: “Now David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel” (verse 26). This review of David’s life and also the description of his death are consistent with the purpose of the books of Chronicles, which describes history as God likes to remember it, that is to say, history as it proceeds according to His purposes. David’s failure at the end of his life is also ignored here. The greatest possible fullness of life lies behind him and we see a son succeeding him. This wonderful way of saying goodbye to life is rare in the Old Testament. It is remarkable that the mention “David the son of Jesse” appears both here and at the beginning of the description of David’s reign (1Chr 10:14). The description of David’s life seems to have been wrapped up by these two mentions.

He reigned a total of forty years (verse 27), just like Saul. Solomon will also reign for forty years. The number forty is the number of trial. Saul, David, and Solomon were given the same period of trial, regardless of their character.

Everything in David's life and death speaks of God's "the faithful mercies shown to David" (Isa 55:3). They are not limited to his life and death. Paul quotes this verse to show that these proofs of grace are also seen from the dead in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 13:34). In the true Son of David and His reign all that is shown to David finds his fulfillment. David is waiting for that fulfillment, as well as all who have died in faith in God's promises.

David dies "in a ripe old age, full of days, riches and honor" (verse 28). This means that by all that God has given to Solomon (verse 25) and that which he himself has given to God's house, he has not become less and poorer. If we look at the end of David, it is hard to say what shines brighter here: the setting or rising sun.

To conclude the description of David's life, the author of the books of Chronicles indicates from which sources he drew, led by God's Spirit (verse 29). He refers to three prophets who wrote down David's life: the seer Samuel, the prophet Nathan and the seer Gad. In their histories they have written about David's kingdom and power, and about the events of him, of Israel, and of the other kingdoms (verse 30).

The mentioned writings (verse 29) have not been preserved. Samuel anointed David as king (1Sam 16:13). Nathan speaks to David on behalf of God about the building of the temple (1Chr 17:1-15; 2Sam 7:1-17) and rebukes David for his sin with Bathsheba (2Sam 12:1-12). Gad rebukes David for the census (2Sam 24:10-14; 1Chr 21:9-13).

When we think of "the circumstances which came on him" and "on Israel" (verse 30), we can think of persecution, of trial, of danger of death, of sorrow and of joy. In relation to all these circumstances David says: "My times are in Your hand" (Psa 31:15; cf. Job 24:1). "All the kingdoms of the lands" (cf. 2Chr 12:8; 17:10; 20:29) are the kingdoms with which the Israelites came into contact at the time of David.

With the death of David 1 Chronicles ends. In this Bible book almost all attention is focused on king David. In contrast to the description in 2 Samuel, the sins of this king are hardly mentioned here. David is here rather the prince who is God-fearing and is therefore richly blessed. The blessing consists of numerous military victories, which makes him the ruler of an immense realm and gives him fabulous riches.

He does not use these blessings for his own benefit, but makes them available for what he considers the highest goal for Israel: the building of the temple. He is not allowed to do this work himself, but he does do everything he can to prepare it. He gives a large part of his wealth, motivates the people to voluntarily give up a part of their abundance, and introduces Solomon, the future temple-builder, to the people.

The first book of Chronicles presents David as the one who focuses on the building of the temple and thus on the honor of God. In this sense he is the ideal prince, who does not seek his own honor, but the honor of God. In the period after the exile – the time in which the books of Chronicles were written – this description of David must have been strongly appealing. In that period there is attention for the improvement of the temple service and for a stronger focus on the LORD.

Also, the example of the wealthy king David making his riches available for the glory of God will have stimulated the desire for a new David. A few centuries later the Lord Jesus comes as a Servant, but in the future He will come as a Prince. He is as no other focused on God.

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