

KINGS OF ISRAEL III: 1 & 2 CHRONICLES

WEEK 2

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March 17, 2020

OUTLINE

GENEALOGIES

Weak Opening

Nitty Gritty

Theology

DAVID'S ASCENT

Introduction

Forming National Identity

Towards the Temple

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Theology

DAVID'S ASCENT

Introduction

Forming National Identity

Towards the Temple



GENEALOGIES GALORE

The first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles... are a relentless listing of names, some familiar, many not. Although the lists have provided considerable fodder for scholarly research, it is safe to say that these nine chapters constitute the least readable extended passage in the Bible. (Alter, 865)



BY DESIGN

Authors might not succeed in communicating effectively, but they almost never do something for no reason. Matthew also opens with a genealogy—even if slightly more approachable.

Why open in such an inhospitable fashion? More specifically:

1. Why genealogies at all?
2. Why are they so large?
3. Why does the book *start* with them?

BY DESIGN

Why open in such an inhospitable fashion?

1. Why genealogies at all?
 - 1.1 Coming out of an exile, the national identity of Israel would have been unsteady. The same goes for the tribal identities within Israel. The genealogies would have provided a sense of bearing.
 - 1.2 While most nations define themselves by their heritage, in Judaism, major promises from God are linked to one's ancestry.
2. Why are they so large?
 - 2.1 The author is not simply interested in reconnecting the post-exilic community to the pre-exilic community.
 - 2.2 The point of this is to connect them to the whole sweep of history both in terms of their own history (to Abraham) and beyond to see their relationship to the surrounding nations, e.g. Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites.

BY DESIGN

Why open in such an inhospitable fashion?

3. Why does the book *start* with them?
 - 3.1 Such a beginning is so extreme as to suggest that “hospitality” is not a value to the author. This points to a very narrow audience. This stretch of text could be specifically for use among the leadership (priests and royals) or even for unadorned posterity.
 - 3.2 A pressing concern in the new community was avoiding the failures of the fathers, by following foreign women into foreign religion. Such an opening makes a dramatic point regarding the importance of ancestry and origins.



OUTLINE

GENEALOGIES

Weak Opening

Nitty Gritty

Theology

DAVID'S ASCENT

Introduction

Forming National Identity

Towards the Temple

DESIGN AND SHAPE

The genealogies form an elegant palistrophe:

A	Israel out from the nations	1:1-2:2
B	Royal Tribe of Judah (+Simeon)	2:13-46
C	Tribes East of Jordan	4:24-5:24
X	Priestly Tribe of Levi	6:1-81
C'	Tribes West of Jordan	7:1-40
B'	Royal Tribe of Benjamin	8:1-9:1
A'	Israel out from the nations	9:2-34

There are a few peculiarities (Manasseh and Benjamin appear twice, Zebulun and Dan never). Any guesses why?



MISCELLANEOUS FEATURES

While ancestry is clearly the primary concern, these are not raw genealogies without interruption.

1. There is no unified format in presentation. In Genesis, Matthew and Luke, there are specific formulas followed: 'And X lived N years and became the father of Y', 'and to X was born Y', 'Y son of X', respectively.
2. Presumably, the distribution of the land is another controlling factor in the shape of this record. While not uniform, several genealogies mention former land possession. Cf. I Chron 2:22, 4:32, 5:9-11, 6:54ff, 7:28-29, 9:2, etc.
3. Among some of the genealogies, there are details concerning fighting men. The context is too thin to determine *the who* or *the when* of these men. The disparity in totals also makes this difficult (cf. 7:5, 8:40).
4. There are also periodic anecdotes: some about family details (specific wives, brothers), others more directly about spiritual obedience (I Ch 5:25f).



POINTS OF EMPHASIS

The three tribes that receive the greatest amount of attention come from Judah, Levi, and Benjamin. Why?

- ▶ These were the main tribes that lived in Southern Kingdom before the fall of Jerusalem and the exile.
- ▶ David and Saul, the only two kings, came from Judah and Benjamin respectively. Saul did not receive a permanent dynasty but was anointed by God. David and his descendant(s) receive the special promise of an eternal dynasty (see I Ch 17).
- ▶ Aaron and his sons serve as high priests (Ex 30:30; I Ch 6:49) and perform other holy priestly duties. The other Levite families play specialized functions in God's dwelling place: transportation for the mobile tabernacle; semi-priestly roles (musicians, guards, maintenance, etc.) later in the temple.



OUTLINE

GENEALOGIES

Weak Opening

Nitty Gritty

Theology

DAVID'S ASCENT

Introduction

Forming National Identity

Towards the Temple



THE SEED CONCEPT OF GENESIS

Last week, we touched on the concept of the seed and ancestry from Genesis (1:28, 9:1, 4:17-36, 5:1-32, 10:1-32, 11:10-32, 15:1-6, 17:15-22; esp. 3:15, 22:18-19).

What theological lessons follow from this ancient teaching?

- ▶ Israelites have always been assiduously devoted to careful recording, history and posterity. Biblical theology is historical theology: the living God is active in history through real people.
- ▶ God announced his plan for dealing with human sin before he announcing its curse. This is true in the immediate context of Gen, but also in that the law came *after* the promise to Abraham! (Cf. Gal 3: 15-18; Rom 4:13ff)
- ▶ Satan, our ancient adversary, the destroyer, will be permanently defeated (cf. Heb 2:14ff, Rom 16:20).
- ▶ We are the recipients of a world foundational promise from God (cf. I Peter 1:10-12)



LEVI

The distinctness of Levi begins in ignominy. Jacob curses Levi and Simeon in Gen 49:5-7 due to his slaughter of Shechem with Simeon (Gen 34): They will be scattered throughout Israel.

This tribe's curse is redeemed through an act of loyalty to God, perhaps yet more violent: executing the worshippers of the golden calf (Ex 32:25-29). The distinct response of the Levites to this call (open to all) secures for them the priestly role of transporting the Tabernacle and its furnishings (Num 1:47ff).

Deut 33:9-10—Who said of his father and his mother, 'I did not consider them'; And he did not acknowledge his brothers, Nor did he regard his own sons, For they observed Your word, And kept Your covenant. "They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob, And Your law to Israel. They shall put incense before You, And whole burnt offerings on Your altar."

The receiving the LORD's portion throughout Israel fulfills Genesis.

LEVI

The specialized place of Levi becomes even more focused around Aaron, himself a Levite. Here is a mix of explicit commission and narrative confirmation:

- ▶ Exodus 28:43—They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they enter the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister in the holy place, so that they do not incur guilt and die. It shall be a statute forever to him and to his descendants after him.
- ▶ Numbers 17—God miraculously sets aside Aaron by making his rod grow foliage and almonds.
- ▶ Numbers 25—Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, zealously mediates between God and Israel through a violent execution. (Cf. Levites and golden calf.) This secures for his descendants a perpetual priesthood, confirmed by I Chron 6:1-15.

DAVID

Like Levi and Aaron, David's place in history begins very early:

Genesis 49:10 NIV—The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

We will focus on David more as we proceed deeper into the temple material. For now, we see that this promise to Judah is going to be fulfilled somehow in David's family:

1 Chronicles 17:14 NIV—"I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever."

OUTLINE

GENEALOGIES

Weak Opening

Nitty Gritty

Theology

DAVID'S ASCENT

Introduction

Forming National Identity

Towards the Temple

NARRATIVE SELECTION

David is a central figure in Chronicles, as well as his specific place in the construction in the temple. But not every Davidic episode connects to that theme perfectly.

So much we know about David is omitted and some of what's included seems strange at best. This raises the question: why include these stories?

- ▶ National Identity—Through successful war campaigns, David plays a central leadership role; i.e. he's not just a king in name. These had the dual role unifying the nation and establishing firm boundaries on outside nations. While establishing David's godly leadership, these episodes also illustrate why he can't build the temple himself (I Ch 22:8, 28:3).
- ▶ Towards the Temple—Many episodes focus on events in David's life that lead toward the temple: capture of Jerusalem, efforts to bring the ark to the City of David, the Davidic covenant and God's House, the census that leads to identifying the temple mount, etc.



OUTLINE

GENEALOGIES

Weak Opening

Nitty Gritty

Theology

DAVID'S ASCENT

Introduction

Forming National Identity

Towards the Temple

SAUL

In I Samuel, Saul's life occupies a large portion of that book. Here, Saul's life (death?) receives 24 verses, barely over a chapter. How does the evidence of Saul undermine the claim that the Chronicler "whitewashes" the stories of the Kings.

- ▶ The only part of Saul's life described is his ignoble end. If anything is to be drawn from this, it's condemnation. (Cf. also I Chron 12:1)
- ▶ Unlike I, II Samuel, the narrator explicitly condemns Saul's behavior rather than leave the inference up to the reader: "So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD" (I Chron 10:11-14).
- ▶ I Ch 11:3, "according to the word of the LORD through Samuel" refers to something outside of Chronicles, implying familiarity with I, II Sam.

Saul and David both receive focused treatment to illuminate a bigger message. For Saul, it's to make way for David, the messianic type. Biographical details are not the point of this text.

ISRAEL UNIFYING AROUND DAVID

This section exhibits a striking break in chronology. For example, David is crowned king after Saul's death(11:3) and then suddenly Saul is mentioned again (12:1). This is another chiasm with a central prophetic statement.

A	Tribal Elders Anoint David at Hebron	11:1-3
B	Military Support	11:4-47
C	Tribal Support at Ziklag	12:1-7
X	Tribal Support at the Stronghold (En-Gedi)	12:8-18
C'	Tribal Support at Ziklag	12:19-22
B'	Military Support	12:23-37
A'	All Tribes Anoint David at Hebron	12:38-40

1 Chronicles 12:18—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!”

DEFEAT AND SUBJUGATION OF GENTILES

Part of David's legacy, which is of particular concern to the post-exilic community is the final defeat of nearby nations, establishing the nation as holy (distinct, set apart) unto the LORD. Here is a list of peoples he defeats in this section:

- ▶ Ch 18—Philistine city of Gath, Moabites, Zobah to the Euphrates, Edomites
- ▶ Ch 19—Ammonites and Arameans
- ▶ Ch 20—Philistines and their Giants

OUTLINE

GENEALOGIES

Weak Opening

Nitty Gritty

Theology

DAVID'S ASCENT

Introduction

Forming National Identity

Towards the Temple

TAKING OF JERUSALEM

Jerusalem, has very ancient “intercessory” roots:

- ▶ Genesis 14:18—Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High
- ▶ Genesis 22:2—Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.” (Cf. II Chron 3:2)

It's doubtful that David occupied Jerusalem so that he could build the temple there. It's surrounded by valleys making it a desirable fortress. The temple location was not revealed to him until the census.

God comes back to the same spaces numerous times (cf. Ex 3:12). Yet God regularly makes it clear that he is the creator God—God of heaven, earth and seas, and all they contain—who is not confined to single place. How do we resolve this tension?

TAKING OF JERUSALEM

How do we resolve this tension?

1. God is both immanent (near, with us, present) and transcendent (different, holy, beyond)—this tension is theologically established.
2. At least one reason God *chooses* a single location is for human weakness. It helps us to have consistency, familiarity, structure.
3. A fixed dwelling place enables God to set the terms of reconciliation.
 - ▶ All examples where he occupies a specific location, there are myriad boundaries that must be respected on pain of judgment.
 - ▶ God appears at Sinai and establishes it as a dwelling place (Ex 24:16). At Sinai, God enters an elaborate *mobile* dwelling place (Tabernacle) to be transported to the promise land. God is neither limited to a single space, nor may we creatively initiate with Him (cf. Heb 8:5).
4. In John 4:21-24, Jesus notes that the arrival of the Spirit makes the physical temple irrelevant. The body of Christ as the temple (cf. John 2:19-22) is made possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

TRANSPORTING THE ARK

On the surface, we see David bringing the ark to Jerusalem, initiated in failure, completed in success. Curiously, the same expression, “we did not consult” God appears in both episodes:

- ▶ Saul *did not seek* God through the ark (I Chron 13:3).
- ▶ David *did not seek* God through his law about how to transport the ark (I Chron 15:13).

This undergirds the overall picture that God sets the terms of reconciliation. David's good intentions weren't good enough. He failed to seek God in the form of his pre-revealed Word.

TRANSPORTING THE ARK

Why do you suppose God is much less “flexible” in his response to sin here?

- ▶ There were events within a generation where people failed to treat the ark with proper respect and thousands were killed (1 Sam 5:19ff). David and Uzzah should at least have heard about such catastrophic judgments.
- ▶ David, as king, is supposed to keep a copy of the law and read it regularly (Deut 17:18ff). Although this might be how he corrected the error, it shows a degree of culpability.
- ▶ The ark plays a specialized role in the national atonement of sin. While God is the One who makes it holy, the ark sits at the center of the most holy (set apart) aspects of the Levitical cultus: inside the most holy place, approached only by the high priest, only once a year with elaborate rituals.

CENSUS

The census is a striking case of God using human sin to redirect history towards his own glory and graciousness. David does something so serious that God brings about a devastating judgment.

Nevertheless, the temple mount is identified through this ordeal.

1 Chronicles 21:18-19,26—Then the angel of the LORD ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. So David went up in obedience to the word that Gad had spoken in the name of the LORD.

David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering.

Its central function is inaugurated when David functions as a priest-intercessor (in some sense) to stop the plague.

What are some other examples of this in Scripture?

CENSUS

What are some other examples of this in Scripture?

- ▶ Joseph's enslavement—a jealous act of betrayal—eventually saved the whole family (Gen 50:20).
- ▶ Samson's marriage to the Philistine woman (clearly problematic) was initiated by God as an occasion to “confront the Philistines” (Judges 14:4).
- ▶ The Babylonians brutally conquer the Israelites, for which God holds them accountable. Yet, they are his chosen instrument for bringing judgment on his “wayward son.” (Cf. Isaiah 5:26; 47:5-7)
- ▶ The best example is the cross. Judas, Pontius Pilate, The Sanhedrin, our own sin—all placed Christ on the cross, each deserving of judgment. Yet! God used this very act of rebellion and murder to save all mankind. (Cf. Matt 26:39,42; Acts 3:15-18.)

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