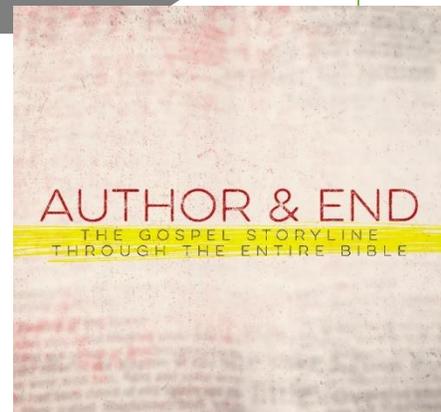


A STORY IN SEARCH OF AN ENDING

Lesson 18 - God's faithfulness in the past points to the hope of His faithfulness in the future. - 1 & 2 Chronicles

We will be looking at the story of Israel through the lens of the book of Chronicles. We are studying it now because of its place in our Bible order and its historical content; however, it is historically the final book in the Jewish scriptures. While the timeline of the book covers Israel's history up until about 538 BC. The book of Chronicles was probably written almost 200 years later. This is important as we think about who was receiving this book and why it was being written. The "chronicler" knew that God's people already had the books of Samuel and Kings. His intention is to present the broad picture of God's working in the people of Israel and persuade them to **reconsider what they thought about God's people, the kind, the temple, and God's blessing and cursing on their lives.**



THE AUDIENCE

The people receiving the book of Chronicles have already experienced the Old Testament history of the nation. **They have already seen a kingdom established, divided, and broken down. They have been exiled and now returned from exile.** Jerusalem has been restored (to an extent) and the temple has been rebuilt (to an extent), and the people have been returning and reinhabiting the land of promise. However, things are not going well.

At the peak of Israel's glory as a nation they...

- were united - had a strong king - had a temple where God's presence "dwelled"
- were at peace with others - were strong, independent, and successful

At the time Chronicles was written they...

- were divided - had no real king - had a less glorious temple with no evident presence of God
- had been sieged and broken by others - were vulnerable and lorded over by others

1. The people had begun to question their history, their promises, and their God.
2. The people thought God had finished or deserted His work in them.
3. The people seemed to have abandoned their hope of a king, kingdom, or relationship with God.

THE PURPOSE -

The author comes to offer these people what God offers to all hurting people: hope. In a unique way, he offers a hope filled view of the history that these people already knew. He was not seeking to apply lessons to their lives; he was seeking to apply hope to their hearts. He answers their doubts by addressing their history through four main themes.

1. The unity of God's people
2. The king on the throne of David
3. The worship of God in the temple
4. The immediate blessings and judgments of God

Their vision or view of their themselves and their God had become dim. They pictured a weak kingdom who served a cruel God who was judging them for the horrible failures of their ancestors. Their thoughts of God were distant and impersonal.

THE UNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

1. The book opens with long genealogies (1 Chron. 1-9).
 - a. Emphasizes the line of the king and the line of the priest.
 - We all need a king. We all need a priest.
 - b. Gives details for genealogies of all the people and tribes of Israel.

"No one is left out. No one is insignificant. All of God's people from all places matter and should be welcomed in and united."

2. The emphasis on "all Israel." - Forty-five times in the Chronicles the people are referred to this way.

THE KING ON THE THRONE OF DAVID

1. The emphasis on the house of David - David's genealogy is placed in the middle of all the others. The central role of the house of David is emphasized. (He emphasizes that they even had a leader from the line of David right in front of them: Zerubbabel.) God had not given up on the united nation of Israel.

2. The emphasis on the positives of the kings. - The Chronicles include a lot of positives of the history of their kings, especially David and Solomon. He is trying to paint the picture of the ideal king.

- a. David's sins are not emphasized or mentioned.
- b. Solomon's sins and failures are not recorded.
- c. David is presented in as a "Moses-like" leader being led by God.
- d. Many positives are given from the lives of good kings.
- e. The quick rebuke of God is mentioned about the bad kings.

- This is to show that this was God's plan. God chose the king and promised to send a coming king from the line of David, a line that had not been broken. This king had not yet come; they were waiting.

THE WORSHIP OF GOD IN THE TEMPLE

1. The emphasis on the line of Levi - God had chosen a line of priests to go to God for the people. He still planned to draw the people to Himself.

2. The emphasis on the temple - The author gives a lot of detail into the building of the original temple. He is not overemphasizing the building itself. Rather, he is drawing their hearts and minds to the importance of the worship of God. They now have a second, smaller temple. In many ways, it was a less glorious temple, but the point is God's people worshipping Him.

THE IMMEDIATE BLESSINGS AND CURSINGS OF GOD

Where Kings points to the longsuffering nature of God and delay of His judgement, Chronicles highlights the immediate and personal nature of God's judgments and blessings on His people. "While sin has lasting effects on many, you can turn to God right now and experience His spiritual blessing on your life."

THE DEEPLY "CHRISTIAN" ELEMENTS OF THESE THEMES

As we have throughout this entire study, we find the overarching themes of God and His Gospel woven into the story. These are four of the most prevalent themes in the New Testament.

1. Unity of God's people - now in the church and in heaven in the future
2. Kingship of Jesus
3. Direct worship of God through Jesus - ("We are the Temple. He is the High Priest.") God has filled His temple again.
4. The immediate blessings and judgments of God on individuals.

THE UNFINISHED STORY

The book of Chronicles is meant to encourage God's people to look back to the good things. Look back to the mighty king God gave, the good line of priests he preserved, the splendor of worship in the temple, and the greatness of a unified kingdom. In looking back, however, the author clearly points forward to better king, a better priest, a better temple, and a better kingdom. The book actually ends with an incomplete sentence (2 Chron. 36:23). Why would he do this? He is declaring, "The story is not over. We are still looking toward the ending. God is not finished yet!"

The chronicler uses story after story of God's working to lay out God's faithful, enduring love. Over and over, maybe undenounced to him, he points forward by looking back.

Do not be discouraged in a world of unfaithfulness because you have a God who is faithful.
Don't despise His words; believe them! - Romans 15: