

The Sin of the Census

1 Chronicles 21:1-8

Introduction

1. David commands Joab and the army to make the census.
2. Joab objects, but does so reluctantly. (9 months, 20 days)
 - a. In Israel 1,100,000 "valiant men that drew the sword."
 - b. In Judah 470,000 "valiant men that drew the sword."
(This is a tip-off that it was purely a military census.)
3. God arranges punishment by choice: Three years of famine; or "three months before thy foes"; or three days' pestilence. (The last was chosen and 70,000 of the valiant men died.)

I. DAVID'S SIN

- A. Rejects God's rule and provision for his own course of action.
- B. Comes to rely on material numbers rather than on God
(Cf. 1 Sam. 17:45,46).
- C. Nature of the census considers the people of God to be but units in a military machine.
- D. Such a census in a time of peace could mean only a plan for aggressive war. God's people were to have a home, but not to be marauders. See the punishment-- David's price was in his army-- that is where he was hit.

II. APPLICATION TO AMERICA TODAY

- A. Just as David was over-confident after his victories we need to beware of consequences of our quick success in the Persian Gulf. In America's finest hours our reliance was on the greatest of *right*, rather than on *might*.
- B. On what is America relying today? God or armaments? Are we counting on our "rightness" or our 'right weapons.' Luke 12:21

III. APPLICATION TO THE CHURCH IN THE PAST

- A. The church had great power in the days of numerical weakness-- eleven men against the world! (Acts 2)
- B. Lost out when she proudly counted emperors and armies in her ranks. Darkest days when she had armies and great political power. (Exodus 23:2)

IV. APPLICATION TO THE CHURCH TODAY

- A. As in first century and restoration movement, we had no power in numbers but depended on the power of the Word-- we know it, believe it, teach it. (Hebrews 4:12)
- B. Do we rely on numbers, wealth, buildings, etc, or on the WORD of God; knowing it, believing it, & teaching it?



Walking Thru The Bible

1 & 2 CHRONICLES

INTRODUCTION

In the Hebrew Bible these two books formed a single work but the Greek translation (The Septuagint, or LXX) divided it into two books because of their length and the limitation of the length of the scrolls onto which they were copied.

AUTHOR & DATE: Jewish tradition attributes the authorship of Chronicles to Ezra saying that wrote of the history of Judah down "unto his time." The Bible doesn't tell us who wrote Chronicles, but from 1 Chronicles 3:19-21 and 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 it is evident the books could not have been written before Ezra's time. Therefore, conservative scholarship dates the Chronicles in the latter half of the fifth century B.C., probably between 450-425.

OVERVIEW: In one quick span, from Adam to Nehemiah, the Chronicles give us the main genealogies of the Israelite nation, and the main events of the Davidic kingdom down to the Babylonian exile. They cover practically the same ground as Second Samuel and the two books of Kings. However, they are not a mere repetition of those books. The first books give us history from the viewpoint of the *prophets*, while Chronicles give us history from the viewpoint of the *priests*. The former books look more intently at the political side of things, the Chronicles from God's view. For example, the revival under Hezekiah is given *three verses* in Kings, and *three chapters* in Chronicles.

Six of the nine chapters telling of Solomon's time are devoted to **Temple** matters. A.T. Pierson observed:

While much contained in the Books of Kings is repeated or restated in the Chronicles, much is omitted because it is foreign to the author's purpose. But whatever bears on the *temple*, its preservation and restoration, the purity of its worship, the regularity and orderliness of its services; whatever makes idolatrous rites or relics hateful, or lifts God to his true throne in the hearts of the people, is here emphasized.

OUTLINE of FIRST CHRONICLES

- I. Genealogical Material (chapters 1 - 9)
- II. The Rule of David (chapters 10 - 29)
 - A. The conquests of David ch. 10-21
 - B. Preparations for the Lord's Temple ch. 22-29

LESSONS from FIRST CHRONICLES

1. We see the tragic picture of what a man's unfaithful to God can do to himself and his family (Saul) --10:13-14.
2. We see that a man's noble idea can be overruled by God for His purpose (when David wanted to build God a Temple) -- 17:1ff.
3. We see the importance of preparation -- 22:2ff (v.5).
4. Like David was concerned for the Ark of God, so we should always be concerned for the church of our Lord and its welfare -- 17:1ff.
5. We see that we must honor even what we may think are the most insignificant laws of God (cf. ignoring the simple rule about the Levites carrying the ark on their shoulders cost Uzza his life)-- 1 Chronicles 13:7-10; 15:2.
6. May we ever worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness, 1 Chronicles 16:29 (see margin notes).
7. No man sins without affecting those around him adversely, 1 Chronicles 21:7, 14.
8. We should not try to make our sacrifices "cheap" before the Lord -- 1 Chronicles 21:22-25.
9. We are only stewards of what God gives to us -- 29:14.
10. Let us never forget that our days on the earth are as a shadow and that there is no abiding -- 29:15.
11. Every parent should pray for his children as did David for Solomon, ***"give ... my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies and thy statutes and to do all these things...." 29:19.***

OUTLINE of SECOND CHRONICLES

- I. Solomon's forty years' reign ch. 1 - 9)
- II. The division of the kingdom ch. 10
- III. History of Judah to the Captivity ch. 11-36:16
(With cycles of declines, apostasies and reforms)
 - A. Reform under Jehoshaphat (25 yrs) ch. 17-20
 - B. Reform under Joash (40 yrs) ch. 25-28
 - C. Reform under Hezekiah (29 yrs) ch. 29-32
 - D. Reform under Josiah (31 yrs) ch. 34-35
- IV. The Captivity (ch. 36:17-23)

SOME LESSONS from SECOND CHRONICLES

1. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God -- 1:9-10 (James 1:5)
2. The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands -- 2:6 (Acts 7:48)
3. In building the temple, Solomon had a divinely given pattern to go by. In building the Lord's church we have a divine pattern in the New Testament --28:11-12,19 (Heb 8:5).
4. In Solomon's day, Jerusalem in Palestine was God's chosen city, today His Church is his heavenly Jerusalem -- (Heb. 12:22).
5. God faithfully kept His promises to David and will keep His promises to us today (Heb. 13:5)
6. If God's people will humble themselves and pray and seek His face and turn from their wicked ways, God will hear their prayer and forgive their sins-- 2 Chronicles 7:14.
7. Rehoboam was not the last young fool in a seat of power --
8. "Fight ye not against the LORD... for ye shall not prosper" -- 2 Chronicles 13:12.
9. "The LORD is with you while you are with him..." -- 15:2
10. "The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth ... -- 16:9. (In this we see God's omniscience and omnipresence.)
11. We need public leaders who would encourage the public reading of the Word of God as did Jehoshaphat -- 17:6-9
12. Just as Uzziah was punished for ignoring God's laws regarding worship so will men today -- 26:16-21.
13. God can give a nation victory or defeat without the use of modern armaments -- 32:20-22.
14. Give the Lord 10,000 young men who seek the Lord in their teens like Josiah and it will change the world enormously -- 34:3.
15. How strange that the word of God can be lost in His temple, but it is evident all about us today -- 2 Chron. 34:14
16. Nothing will reform and purify a people like the reading and study of God's word -- 34:29-32.
17. When the people mock and despise God's messengers, they leave God no recourse but judgment -- 36:15-16.
18. What God foretold by His prophets came true, not a word of it failed -- 36:21.
19. God breaks down sinful nations, but He also raises up those who repent -- 36:22-23.
20. Nations are judged in time, individuals will be judged in eternity.

Think how much poorer we would be if we did not have the Chronicles to tell us about God's work with His chosen people.