

Friday, July 29, 2016

All Israel

1 Chronicles 7-9:1a

All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

1 Chronicles 9:1a

We are nearing the end of the lineages which have been used by the Chronicler to tell the metanarrative of God and His chosen people to this point. The exiles are part of the family and movement of God. As the reader moves along in the genealogies, he now comes to the genealogy of the first king of Israel. The Chronicler is building to the lineage of David—the king that has been promised the throne forever. But first is the lineage of Saul, the Benjamite. As the genealogies conclude, the statement is made that all Israel was listed in the genealogies. That is sobering to consider and I would imagine that statement alone would have impacted the readers to consider that within all that has just been listed, they have found their roots. This is what is significant about this chosen people of God. He knows them! He has determined that He will set them apart and preserve them. They all find their roots in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel). The metanarrative goes all the way back to the very first man. God has a plan for these people and even as they are in exile they can be sure that just as God has held them thus far, so He will continue to hold them in the as yet undetermined future. Hope in His unfailing faithfulness to His covenant is the constant. I love thinking that God, by His grace, has grafted me into this amazing people. It humbles me to consider this.

Dear Lord, thank You for the metanarrative of Scripture—that You God have chosen a people for Yourself. Thank You for these genealogies. I admit that I am somewhat unsure of the depth of all that I have read, but I see Your hand and Your love. Amen.

Saturday, July 30, 2016

Unfaithful

1 Chronicles 9-10

Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

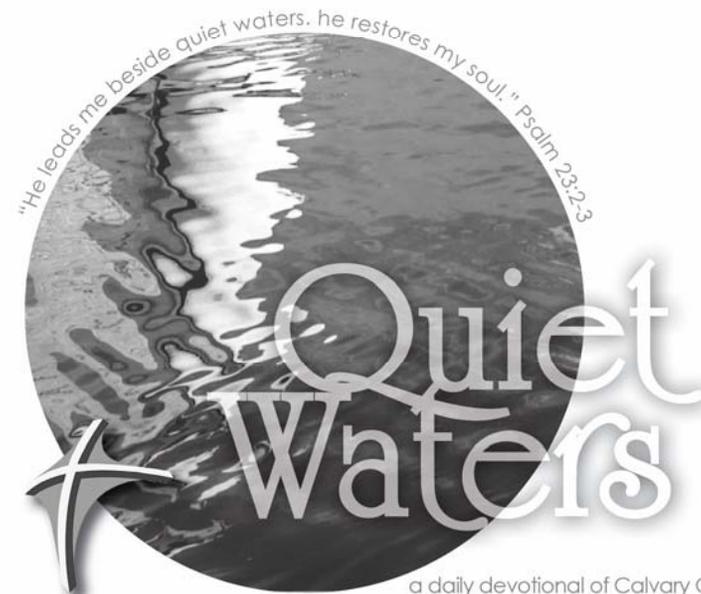
1 Chronicles 10:13-14

God is sovereign over the kings of Israel. The Chronicler makes that clear. Disloyalty will be judged. There is the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. The Chronicler wants his readers to know that as they rebuild, they must look to the example of the king who had received the covenant. Saul brings three counts of disloyalty against Saul: disobedience to the word of God, consulting a medium, and failure to inquire of God. Because of this unfaithfulness, the LORD put him to death and gave the kingdom to David, a man after God's own heart. God's sovereignty is made very clear in these verses, as is His holiness. God will not be mocked and those who say they follow Him must reveal it in absolute loyalty—especially those who lead. The postexilic nation will do well to remember these counts which brought judgment unto Saul, for they are destined to repeat these things themselves if they do not learn the lesson. It is a lesson I do well to remember myself. Where do I go for advice in the direction of my life? I reveal my faithfulness to God as I seek Him alone.

Lord, please keep me faithful to You, especially in times when I feel uncertain. Help me learn from the example of Saul how prone I am to wander from You. Amen


Pastor Chuck Cervenka

July 25- 30, 2016



a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, July 25, 2016

Released

2 Kings 24-25

In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Evil-Merodach became king of Babylon, he released Jehoiachin from prison on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month. So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table.
2 Kings 25:27,29

God's wrath is just. The sins of the kings have been great and they have led the people of God away from Him. Judgment must come. Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed. I weep as I read of the destruction of the temple, remembering the celebration of the dedication. Just as I imagined that glorious moment, I imagine this moment of devastation as the items that Solomon had constructed were taken away and as the temple was turned to rubble. God's hand of protection has been removed and Jerusalem is quite exposed. Jehoiachin is dethroned. A new king is installed by Nebuchadnezzar. Yet Jehoiachin is alive in captivity. He has been thrown into prison where he stays for thirty seven years. And then, quite unexplainably, he is released and brought around the table of the king of Babylon. Even though the sins of the kings brought the righteous judgment against Judah, yet the covenant to Israel remains. God is faithful to the promise made to David. The account of the kings ends with the absolute hope that can be found in the faithfulness and the promises of God. I have no hope apart from the grace and the promise of God. I know the judgment I am due, yet I see that through Christ I have been released into the hope of the promise of God.

Dear God, remind me often that Your grace alone has allowed me hope. Your covenants are true and You are faithful. I am undeserving of Your grace. I am grateful. Amen

Tuesday, July 26, 2016

Abraham

1 Chronicles 1-2

And Abram (that is, Abraham).

1 Chronicles 1:27

The Chronicler goes back to the beginning to remind those returning from exile of the faithfulness of God. The setting of the Chronicles is against a world in turmoil. Persians, Greeks, and Egyptians all vying for power and control. As the exiles return it is in a time of unrest. Soon enough Alexander the Great will come into power and the Hellenistic mindset will change the way many people see the world. It is hard to imagine that a group of people have been able to maintain their religion in a period of extended exile. The temple as the center of worship is gone and with it all of the items that were used in worshiping God. The potential for crisis is real. It would not be unthinkable for the Hebrew God to disappear into oblivion. But what of the promises? What is the difference between the God of the Jews and all the rest of the gods of that time? The difference is that the God of the Jews *is* the one true God and He has made promises that He will keep because He is able to keep them. He is the living God and He has chosen a people for Himself. The message is renewed to the returned exiles. They are a chosen people with a promise from the living God. One of the ways that reveals itself is in the name of Abraham—the father of many nations. I owe a large debt to the Jewish people for carefully maintaining the account of our loving, living God while worshiping. It would be easy to allow my mind to wander as I read the lineages, but instead I enter into the account, remembering the faithfulness of God.

Dear God, thank You for the lineages that reveal Your plan and Your faithfulness. Thank You as well for the chronicler who carefully recorded these words. Amen.

Wednesday, July 27, 2016

God of Israel

1 Chronicles 3-4

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.
1 Chronicles 4:10

The context of this account in Chronicles does not allow us to interpret the prayer offered by Jabez as a model for individual prosperity. The focus of the text is on God and His plan for a people. As such, the Chronicler is calling his readers to understand that Jabez, in his pain, called to the God of Israel. The God of Israel granted His request. The focus of this narrative is not prosperity, it is once again the faithfulness and power of God. The God of Israel is God. Jabez calls out from his pain. His name means pain and even as God grants the request, his name remains Jabez. The message for the exiles is that as they move out they can be confident that if they acknowledge and call on the name of the God of Israel corporately that He will expand their territory. They must remember from the past (which the genealogies are making clear) that self-reliance will lead to destruction. Any look toward a future of hope comes through reliance on the God of Israel. He has revealed that time and again. These truths are mine as well. It is this God of Israel that I serve and love. It is because He has set me free, but also because He has brought me into His family. As I come to the God of Israel with my brothers and sisters in the Lord, Jews and Gentiles, I pray that He would expand our territory, realizing that our territory is actually His kingdom.

Dear God, You alone are God. Help Your children remember You. You have shown Yourself to be faithful and true. Expand our territory please. Amen.

Thursday, July 28, 2016

Levi

1 Chronicles 5-6

The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

1 Chronicles 6:1 (16)

The Chronicler moves on to give the genealogies of Levi. This is a large section and in giving the names and the roles of the descendants of Levi, the Chronicler reinforces the importance of the priesthood. As the temple is rebuilt it is important to remember the lineage of the priesthood and the truth that Aaron and his descendants were to be the ones who presented the offerings on the altar and it is they who were involved with all that was done in the Most Holy Place, making atonement for Israel. The other Levites were assigned to the duties of the tabernacle, the house of God. Also listed are the temple musicians David had put in charge from the line of Levi. It is made clear that they ministered in the tabernacle prior to the construction of the temple. All of this is a carefully recorded reminder for the returned exiles as to the order of things as God has determined. It is good for the Chronicler to reinforce the priesthood and the roles to be filled. Once again I am reminded of the importance of having these things preserved for us. It had to be encouraging for the readers to know that it was clearly remembered and recorded. It encourages me as well to consider all that God did to preserve truth even in the midst of the exile.

Dear God, thank You that You are a God who speaks and Who moves among His people. Thank You for preserving each of these names for us to see that real people were involved in serving You. Help me to see that these truths preserved allow me to know You even today and Your work in Your people. Amen