

May 24: 1 Chronicles 8-10 and John 8: 37-59

The descendants of Abraham are recorded again, but with more detail. Benjamin was the last of Jacob's sons. He had five sons that would establish large clans within the tribe.

The decree for the Israelites to return was issued by Cyrus of Persia. The decree to return also directed them to rebuild the temple. Not everyone was able to come back. Judah, because of their unfaithfulness, was exiled to Babylon. The first to return to their towns were the priests, Levites, and temple servants.

The chronicler then takes us back to when Saul was king and gives detail about his family. We also have the death of Saul and his sons recounted in chapter 10. The chronicler recounts that Saul had killed himself because he knew that the Philistines would torture him. His armor became a decoration piece in the Philistines' temple.

In John, Jesus continues defending Himself. The people continue to say that they are from their father Abraham. Jesus explains that they are not from Abraham. If they were from Abraham, then they would act like Abraham. Instead, they are of their father the Devil. The Devil was a murderer from the beginning and when he lies, he shows his true nature because he is the father of lies. This drives the people to argue that Jesus has a demon. Jesus states that He does not have a demon. He has come from the Father. He honors the Father, but the people dishonor Jesus.

Jesus promises them that whoever keeps His word will not taste death. He then reveals that He has been around since before Abraham. Jesus has been around since the beginning. The Jews could not see it, though. They look at Jesus, who is in His early thirties, and ask Him how He has seen Abraham since He is so young.

May 25: 1 Chronicles 11-13 and John 9:1-23

David is anointed as king. The people say that he is their own flesh and blood. They had been following David for quite a while since he already acted as a king. David marched up against the Jebusites and took Jerusalem. David and his warriors had several campaigns against the Philistines. While in the Valley of Rephaim, David exclaimed that he strongly desired to drink water from the well at the city gate of Bethlehem. The Three of his 30 chief men broke from their camp and fetched David the water. When it was brought to him, David poured it out to The LORD. He could not drink the water in God's sight since the men had put their lives at such a risk to retrieve it. That is why he poured it to God.

David starts the process of bringing the ark of the covenant back. This recounting of the return is abbreviated compared to 1 Kings. However, we see the same details. They are happy they have the ark, but they do not follow the rules that God established for moving the ark. They simply put it on a cart. The oxen become in steady, so Uzzah reaches out to keep the ark from falling. When he touches it, The LORD's anger is stirred up and Uzzah falls down dead. David becomes angry because of The LORD's actions here. Since they do not know exactly how to proceed,

they place the ark with Obed-Edom's family. The family is blessed by The LORD during those three months the ark is with them.

In the New Testament reading, the disciples see a man that had been born blind. They ask Him if it is the man's sin or his parents' sin that caused the man to go blind. It was common belief that physical ailments were the result of a person's sin. Jesus explains that it was not sin that caused the man to be blind. Instead, he was blind so that God's works could be displayed in him. Jesus restores the man's sight. He is ecstatic about it. The healed man is brought before the Pharisees. They do not believe that the man had been born blind, so they consult the man's parents. Jesus has worked a miracle that none of them can deny.

May 26: 1 Chronicles 14-16 and John 9: 24-41

David amasses plenty of wealth. He gains more wives. David continues seeking The LORD in the decisions he makes. He asks if God will hand the Philistines over to him, God guarantees it. When David wars against them at Baal-perazim, he is victorious. When David is about to go up against the Philistines that raided in the valley, he asks The LORD about victory again. God tells David how to approach the Philistines this time. David is obedient and again takes victory over the Philistines.

After some preparation, the ark comes to Jerusalem. This time it is carried on the two poles just as God had directed Moses. David was dressed in a fine robe and he danced in front of the ark as it was led into Jerusalem. Michal, David's wife and Saul's daughter, looked down from her window celebrating and she despised him in her heart.

David gathers the people and sings a Psalm of thanksgiving. God has been good to the people. They are secure in Jerusalem, they have the ark, things are looking good for them. Rather than prop their feet up and bask in the glory of their exploits, they worship God. I pray that we have the same mentality when it comes to the victories God has given us!

In the New Testament reading, the healed man is becoming more of a thorn in the Pharisees' side. They ask if Jesus is a sinner. The man replies that he doesn't know whether Jesus is a sinner or not. He just knows that he was blind, but now he can see. The Pharisees complain that they do not know where he is from. The blind man proclaims that Jesus must be from God because He was able to heal him. At this, the Pharisees throw him out. They are upset that a man with lesser education would dare teach them the truth.

Jesus finds out the man has been kicked out. The man professes faith in Jesus as Messiah. Still the Pharisees will not believe.

May 27: 1 Chronicles 17-19 and John 10:1-21

David sits among all of his wealth and decides that he is going to build a house for The LORD. He consults Nathan about it and Nathan tells him to do what is in his heart. However, The LORD sends word to Nathan that David will not be the one to build Him a house. It will be David's son. God establishes His covenant with David, stating that he will always have a

descendant on the throne. God fulfills this covenant in Jesus Christ. Jesus' earthly line includes David. David gives a prayer of thanksgiving. It seems odd that he would repeat the promises God had made to him. There are three important parts to this prayer, though. David shows submission to God. He showed that his desire is whatever God desired. Another important part of this prayer is the example that we can take our thoughts to The LORD. It is never wrong to express our thoughts to Him.

Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, dies. David sends his condolences to his son. David was trying to show kindness to Hanun because his father had been so kind to David. Hanun reads it as a threat and humiliates David's men. David takes up arms against the Ammonites and has a decisive victory.

In the New Testament reading, Jesus tells the people that He is the good shepherd. There will be some that try to enter the sheep pen other than through the gate. They do not belong to Him. Just as the sheep hear the shepherd's voice and follow Him, Christ's people hear His voice and follow His direction. Jesus also explains that there are some sheep that belong to different flocks that are His as well. This gives an early indication that salvation through Christ is not just for the Israelites, but for all people. Anyone who comes to know Christ as Lord and Savior will be His. He will take away their sin and their shame. It does not matter where they come from. What matters is whether they belong to The LORD or not.

May 28: 1 Chronicles 20-22 and John 10: 22-42

The chronicler completely omits the sin that David had committed by sleeping with Bathsheba and disposing of Uriah when she became pregnant. Instead, the chronicler just says that Joab was out in the spring when the kings marched out to war. Spring was the perfect time to go to war because the ground was not too wet or muddy and the weather was not too cold or hot for the soldiers to fight.

The chronicler does give us insight into David's sin by conducting the census. Satan is not often mentioned in the Old Testament. When we see Satan mentioned in the Old Testament, he is the adversary of someone beloved by God. David falls into the sin of pride in his census. The census itself was not sinful, it was David's motive. He wanted to see how many troops he had. He wanted to see what military might he had. It was meant to give himself assurance for what a great military leader he was. It was all prideful, not focused on the goodness of God and what He has provided David. As a result, God punishes him. David chooses to be punished by The LORD rather than by the hands of men. He knows that God is much more merciful than people are.

David begins preparing for the temple to be built. He gives instruction to Solomon about its construction.

In the New Testament reading, Jesus is at the Festival of Dedication. When He was in Solomon's Colonnade in the complex, the Jews surrounded Him and asked point blank if He is the Messiah. Jesus explains that He already told them, but they did not believe. The Jews decide they want to stone Jesus again. Jesus asks them why they would stone Him for doing good

works. They justify themselves, stating that they are not stoning Him for good works, but for His blasphemy. Once again, Jesus eludes them because His time had not yet come.

May 29: 1 Chronicles 23-25 and John 11:1-17

David is old and full of days. He calls a meeting of the country's leaders, priests, and Levites. The first part of chapter 23 is directed at the Levites 30 years old or older. These men would have been of age to begin their duties as soon as the temple was built. Later, in verse 24, the age minimum age for service is lowered to 20. A total of 38,000 men were ready to work.

The text does not mention how Nadab and Abihu died. The chronicler was more focused on the fact that these men did not have descendants. Since Eleazar's descendants outnumbered his brother Ithamar by a two to one ration, it made sense that Eleazar's descendants would have more shifts than Ithamar's.

David and the officers of the army set aside musicians for the temple. Worship was a big part of their lives. Music was important in conducting worship. They set aside men that can play that lyre, harp, and cymbals.

In John, Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha has died. The sisters send for Jesus. When Jesus receives word, He tells His disciples that they must go to Bethany. The disciples push back. They know that it is getting more and more dangerous for Jesus. They do not want to go to Bethany since they know they are closer to the group of people that are looking to kill Him. Jesus tells them that Lazarus is sick. They beg that He allow Lazarus to sleep so that he might feel better. Jesus then explains that Lazarus is dead. He is glad that they were not there so that they may believe. Thomas, the one who will be later known as the "Doubting Thomas", makes a great proclamation of faith. He looks at the other disciples and says, "Let's go that we may die with Him." Thomas is willing to follow Jesus to the death. Why isn't he known for this great statement?

May 30: 1 Chronicles 26-27 and John 11: 18-46

The Levitical gatekeepers are listed. This list is limited to the two Levitical tribes of Kohath and Merari. The Asaph mentioned in this list is different than the musician Asaph that belonged to the clan of Gershon. The chronicler makes the point to emphasize how important the gatekeepers are. Without them in place, the ministry of the temple cannot happen. Today there is a lot that goes into a Sunday morning service. There are a lot of people that put a lot of time into making the worship service happen. If it were not for their dedication and hard work, our normal worship service would be very different (and not in a good way).

The text also gives a little detail into the secular officials of David's kingdom. This is not as important to the chronicler as the official duties in the temple. The most important category in this list are those of the soldiers. There are roughly 24,000 soldiers in each of the 12 divisions. The divisions were one duty for one month each during times of peace. There were more soldiers than what are accounted for here. However, they are not named because we are reminded of God's wrath against the Israelites for holding a census of the soldiers.

In John, many of the Jews had come to Bethany to mourn for Lazarus. As soon as Martha hears Jesus is coming, she runs to greet Him and says that if He had been there, her brother would still be alive. She also knows that whatever He asks from God will be given to Him. Jesus explains that Lazarus will walk again. Martha thinks He is talking about the resurrection. Jesus is speaking in the immediate. He goes to the tomb and commands the stone to be rolled away. Martha protests! Her brother has been in the tomb for four days now, so the decomposition process would have begun and there would be a terrible stink. They removed the stone and Jesus told Lazarus to get up. Lazarus walks out of the tomb, still bound by his burial linens. Many of the Jews came to believe in Jesus after seeing this. Others went and reported what they saw to the Pharisees.

May 31: 1 Chronicles 28-29 and John 11: 47-57

David gathers the people. He explains that he had it in his heart to build a temple for God, but God does not want him to do it. Instead, it will be Solomon. He charges Solomon to be single minded in his devotion to God. He exhorts Solomon to be strong. Building the temple would make a revision to Israel's history. For hundreds of years, sacrifices had been made anywhere in the country under the direction of different priests. Now, the Israelites will be shifting back to the way that God originally wanted the sacrifices conducted. This will be hard for the people to adjust to.

Contributions are taken for the temple. Not everyone can give the same amount. Some give a lot, some give a little. Everyone gives something, though. David then prays a prayer. In this prayer he gives more truths about following God. It is impossible to give God anything because God already owns everything. God also knows who is giving willingly out of devotion to Him and who is giving just to be seen by others. The key is having a heart that seeks to please God, not men. Solomon becomes king and we read a summary of David's life. With that, we close out 1 Chronicles.

In John, the Pharisees are beside themselves with the news of Lazarus's resuscitation. There were many that witnessed this miracle, so it will be hard for them to deny it. They assemble the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was comprised of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees and Sadducees did not get along most of the time. They unite to defeat their common enemy. Neither party likes Jesus and they want to get rid of Him.

The Passover is coming soon. Jesus, an obedient Jew, will make His pilgrimage to observe the Passover in Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin know this, so they give orders that if anyone sees Him or know where He is at, they should report Jesus' whereabouts so they can arrest Him.