

# God's Message to Us in First Chronicles

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## **Introduction**

Today in our sermon series on *God's Message to Us in Every Book of the Bible*, we have come to First Chronicles.

- Like 2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles covers the reign of King David (1055 BC to 1015 BC).

Our focus in this series is on the overall message of each book in the Bible as it relates to us today.

- The whole Bible was written not only with the present generation in mind, but also with all future generations.
- Sadly, there is a great deal of ignorance about the Old Testament today, and it greatly hinders modern Christians in understanding their faith.
  - It takes time to understand the Old Testament, but the benefits are inestimable for us and for our children.

As a modern reader, you will meet with challenges in reading Chronicles right from the start.

- The first nine chapters are a list of names—what relevance can this have to you today?
  - We are going to look at that today...
- Then you meet an additional challenge if you read on to chapter 10—you will find that it is going over what you read in 2 Samuel... do you need to go over that again?
- Then when you finish that, you will run into a long section that talks about the priests and Levites and their different divisions,
- and the book finishes off with a lot of talk about plans for the erection of the temple.

What does all of this possibly have to do with the modern Christian?

- That is what we are going to consider now.
- Let's start with the genealogies.

## **I. The genealogies are tedious, but still significant and helpful for us.**

A. If you start reading your Bible from the beginning, when you get to Chronicles, you will find in the list of names a lot of the people you have been reading about...

1. You can look at it as a kind of review.

- There is no great problem with reading through this portion rather quickly, but take enough time to think about the different people.
  - See how many of them you recognise, and think about what you know of them.
  - Right at the start, there is Adam.
    - Then you will see Noah—he was the tenth generation from Adam.
  - In verse 27, you come to Abraham and it mentions his sons Isaac and Ishmael.
    - You can reflect on the promise that was made to him, and then you see Jacob and his twelve sons... and can remember their time in Egypt.
  - In chapter 2, you read about Judah—and are reminded of his wicked sons and his incest...
    - You get the idea—you read along and you recognise and remember.

- Each time you read the Bible through, you will start to recognise more and more people.
  - Don't feel like you need to take a long time with this... just go through with an alert mind and try to remember these people.
- 2. Interesting tidbits of information are given about different ones along the way.
  - These bits of information sometimes show their flaws, sometimes their faithfulness or their valour.
  - A few years ago a book was written about Jabez—a random man from the tribe of Judah who is mentioned in chapter 4:9 & 10.
    - This became a great rage for a while and got a little silly with prayer of Jabez shirts and coffee cups...
      - but his prayer really is a great prayer and it is an encouragement to see what it says about him:
        - 1 Chron 4:9-10: **Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore *him* in pain." And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep *me* from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.**
          - At the end of chapter 4, you read about Simeon and how this little tribe that seemed insignificant conquered the Amalekites, the enemies of Israel that attacked the slower people at the back of the line when Israel was going through the wilderness.
- You get the idea—just read along and pick up these things.
- 3. And besides this, seeing all of these people in a list like this helps you start to put them all together and so see how they are related to each other.
  - This helps you trace the promises that were made to the different families...
    - We were talking about Judah before—it was through Judah that Jesus the Messiah was to come—
      - and you can trace the family line all the way from Adam to David and see how the promise is developed.

TRANS> So you see how this gives you a chance to review all that has happened so far.

B. Another use of the genealogies is that it verifies that these are real people.

1. We are not just reading fables when read the Old Testament.
  - Some people will say that Adam was not an individual but a tribe of men, but when you read the genealogies, it verifies that he was an individual.
2. The story is told of the conversion of the Binumarien tribe in Papua New Guinea.
  - The missionaries who were translating the Bible for this little tribe began with the translation of Matthew—and they skipped over the genealogy at the beginning of Matthew.
  - After they came to the end of Matthew, the missionary remembered the first 17 verses and decided to complete the book.

- The native translator was greatly moved when he heard this genealogy and called the whole tribe together for a meeting that night and asked the missionary to read these lines.
    - More people than ever showed up.
  - The missionary read through the names and the people were deathly silent—the missionary was afraid the list might have offended some ritual taboo...
    - but when he finished, one of the people said: “Why didn’t you tell us all this before?”
    - Another said: “No-one bothers to write down the ancestors of spirit beings.”
    - Another added: “It’s only real people who record their genealogical table.”
    - “Jesus must be a real person!” someone else cried, his voice ringing with astonishment. “Jesus must have been a real man on this earth then. He’s not just white man’s magic.”
      - “Then what the mission has taught us is real!”
        - And they received the gospel, right then and there!
3. We too should be reminded as we read that Jesus is true flesh and blood. ..
- that God had a great plan in raising up a nation through whom He would come...
  - A nation to whom promises were made—great promises that were fulfilled.

TRANS> And that brings us to another point...

- C. The Bible recorded the history of this particular people (Israel) because it was through them that salvation was to come to the whole world.
1. God did not choose them because they were more righteous than other nations, but to display His grace through them.
    - The only reason they were the depository of God’s truth and the ones through whom the Saviour came was because of God’s free election.
    - They were just as bad as all the other nations that had turned to idolatry since the days of Noah when all had known the truth.
  2. God called Abraham out of idolatry.
    - He told him that he would make him a great nation, and that all the nations would be blessed through his seed.
    - That is why we have the genealogy of these people.
      - Salvation came through them.
  3. We should be filled with praise when we see God’s faithfulness not only to them but also to us in preserving the truth among them.
    - As we read through these genealogies, we should think of how these are the people through whom salvation came...
      - As we see their weakness, we see God protecting them from enemies...
      - As we see their sin, we should praise God for the way He kept on correcting them so that His truth would be maintained among them.

TRANS> So while you do not need to spend as much time reading these pages as you do something like the gospels, you still can and should read them with profit.

- But as we move on into 1 Chronicles 10, we run into repetition with 2 Samuel.
  - Is there any reason to go over this material again? Yes there is.

## II. There is repetition with 2 Samuel, but 1 Chronicles has its own focus.

A. If you compare First Chronicles with Second Samuel, you will find this.

1. In 2 Samuel, the focus is more on the political sphere.
  - a. There is the seven year struggle of bringing Israel under David's rule.
    - We are told of how it took seven years before Israel recognised him as king and we are told of the struggles he had with the house of Saul and with war between Judah and Israel.
  - b. We are also told of David's sin with Bathsheba.
    - This is not even mentioned in First Chronicles, nor is all the strife that resulted from it in David's household that led to the rebellion of Absalom and the terrible civil wars.
    - First Chronicles is not just trying to whitewash David—it shows David's sin of numbering Israel...
      - it is just that this sin was not relevant to the unique focus of First Chronicles.
2. In 1 Chronicles, the focus is more on the ecclesiastical sphere (the temple) instead of the civil or political sphere.
  - a. There is more detail about bringing the ark up to Jerusalem.
    - You have a fuller account of what happened and especially of how it was corrected—we will look at that in a moment...
      - But it was recorded because the focus is on the temple, and the ark was related to that and to the work of the Levites.
  - b. There is also more detail about the divisions of the priests and the Levites.
    - Whole chapters (23-26) are devoted to the rotations of the priests, to which families of the Levites are to assist with sacrifices, which with music related to the sacrifices, which are to serve as gatekeepers and which are to serve as treasurers... this is not found in 2 Samuel.
  - c. There is more detail about the preparations and plans for the building of the temple—
    - Chapter 28-29 speak of this.
3. Both 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles give fairly full accounts of David's military victories and the promise of Son to sit on his throne forever.
  - These are included because in both books because these are related to both the civil and the ecclesiastical spheres of Israel.

TRANS> So there is a unique focus in 1 Chronicles that is not found in 2 Samuel.

- Let's ponder the significance of this unique focus on the temple and what it means to us.

B. First, God is showing us that salvation is of the Jews.

- It is essential for us to know where true redemption comes from if we are to be saved.
1. In Judah alone, God preserved the way of reconciliation by blood sacrifice.
    - This way had been revealed to Adam, and it was known by Noah.
    - But the world always naturally drifts away from the true way of salvation.
    - You can see it in churches to this very day.

2. By maintaining this elaborate system of priests and Levites at the temple, God shows us how important His way of salvation is.
    - What I mean is, He made a very big deal of it to show the world that this was the way for sinners to be reconciled to Him...
      - by the blood of the covenant that He Himself would provide for the remission of sins.
    - And all of the Levites, these singers and instrument players and gatekeepers were appointed to give thanks to God and to assist as these sacrifices were offered.
      - As it says in 1 Chron 23:30-32, they were **to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at evening; and at every presentation of a burnt offering to the LORD on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons and on the set feasts, by number according to the ordinance governing them, regularly before the LORD; and that they should attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, the needs of the holy place, and the needs of the sons of Aaron their brethren in the work of the house of the LORD.**
    - This reminds us what a marvellous thing to have God's forgiveness—
      - to have Him promise forgiveness and to provide it so that we can be reconciled to Him.
        - This is not trivial thing—it is something to praise Him for every morning and every evening and every Lord's Day...
    - We should take great pleasure in hearing the gospel of our Lord Jesus, in giving thanks to God every day and in the assemblage every Lord's Day as Jesus has called us to do.
      - Don't be slack about this—it is a huge deal.
      - Reconciliation by the blood of the covenant is what made Israel unique, and it is through them that salvation and the revelation of salvation has come to the world.
- C. The second thing God shows us with this focus on the temple is that redemption must be done God's way.
- In 1 & 2 Kings, the focus was on doing it in the right place... at Jerusalem instead of at the high places...
  - But in 1 Chronicles, the focus is on doing sacrifice in the right way—in the way that God appointed.
    - Everyone wants salvation to be by something other than Jesus alone, but Chronicles shows us that only God's way will do.
    - People want God to reveal His salvation to more people than just Israel, and to bring people in by other ways...
      - But salvation was, as Jesus says Himself, of the Jews—all others were strangers to the covenants of promise, without God, and without hope.
1. The LORD makes it very clear that only His way is acceptable when the ark is brought up to Jerusalem...
    - This event stands forever as a testimony to all nations that you can't tamper with God's way... you can't devise your own way of salvation.

- a. Remember that the ark was the box that contained the Ten Commandments and it had the mercy seat on it where blood was poured out once a year in the holiest place by the high priest.
  - No one was allowed to go into that place except the high priest, and only once per year on the Day of Atonement.
  - God was showing that Him being reconciled to us is of major importance and that the way of reconciliation could allow for no imperfection on the part of Christ who was to come.
- b. Look with me at what happened, when the ark was brought up.
  - In First Chronicles 13, under David’s leadership, the people agreed that it would be good to bring the ark up to Jerusalem—look at 13:6:
    - **1 Chron 13:6-8: And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD, who dwells *between* the cherubim, where *His* name is proclaimed. So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. Then David and all Israel played *music* before God with all *their* might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets.**
  - This all sounds good, but it was not. Look at what happens.
    - **1 Chron 13:9-13: And when they came to Chidon’s threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. And David became angry because of the LORD’S outbreak against Uzza; therefore that place is called Perez Uzza to this day. David was afraid of God that day, saying, “How can I bring the ark of God to me?” So David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.**
- c. This is one of those accounts that disturbs us when we read it.
  - They were doing a good thing—they were worshipping—they were sincere—so why did the LORD deal so severely with them?
  - David himself eventually figures out what the problem was.
    - They were handling the most sacred thing in all the world, the thing that represents the atonement of Jesus Christ the Son of God for sinners—the one and only thing in all the world that God appointed to represent that when the nations had turned to idolatry, in a careless way.
    - No sacrifices were to be made anywhere except at the temple, and this ark was the footstool of God where atonement was to be made.
  - David recognises that they did not bring the ark up in the way that God commanded—that was why He broke out in wrath against them.
    - Look at what it says in First Chronicles 15:11-13: **And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. <sup>12</sup> He said to them, “You *are* the heads of the fathers’ *houses* of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to *the place* I have prepared for it. <sup>13</sup> For because you *did not do it* the**

**first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order.”**

- There were three things they did wrong—
  - First, that the Levites did not sanctify themselves the first time:
    - 1 Chron 15:14-15: **So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.**
  - Secondly, that they transported the ark on a cart instead of carrying it with poles as God commanded:
    - <sup>15</sup> **And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.**
  - And third, that the first time, all Israel played music. This was only be done by the Levites as part of their special service—not just anyone was to take it upon themselves to come before God, but only those that God appointed.
    - 1 Chron 15:16 shows how they was corrected: **Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy.**

➤ David learns his lesson!

2. After this, he is very careful to follow God’s plans for the temple.

- a. First, we are told that he submitted to the Lord in choosing the site for the temple...in 1 Chronicles 21.
  - This is found in Second Samuel as well—
  - 1 Chron 21:1 tells us that David was moved by Satan to number Israel...
    - Interestingly, 2 Sam 24 tells us that God moved David to do this... showing us that Satan does nothing apart from God’s sovereign decree, but that God Himself does not tempt us...
  - But it was wrong for David to number Israel, so God sends a great plague that wipes out 70,000 people (v. 14)—
    - But then God allows David to see the angel God sent to do this at the place where the temple was to be built and receives a command from the Lord to build an altar there and offer sacrifices to stop the plague.
    - In chapter 22, verse 1, David announces that this is the site for the temple.
      - God has appointed the place where it is to be built, and where the sacrifices were to be offered.
- b. Next we are told that David submitted to the Lord’s choice of Solomon to build the temple.
  - David tells his son Solomon that God has appointed him to do this great work.
    - In 1 Chron 22:7-9, he says: **“My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; <sup>s</sup> but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have**

shed much blood on the earth in My sight. 9 Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days.’ ”

- And David goes on to explain how he has gathered materials and gotten everything ready for this great work...
  - For example, in 22:14, he says: **“Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them.”**
- c. And thirdly, in making plans for the service and the building of the temple, we again see the emphasis that David did it God’s way!
  - There are whole chapters devoted to the various divisions of Levites...
    - In chapter 24, there are the priests and the Levites appointed to help them in with the offerings...
    - In chapter 25, there are those who are appointed to serve as musicians—certain men appointed to certain instruments.
    - In chapter 26, the gatekeepers and the treasurers are appointed by David.
  - And in chapter 28, we are told that all these divisions of the Levites as well as the plans for the temple and all its furnishings were given to David by God.
    - Look at 1 Chron 28:11-13: **Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; <sup>12</sup> and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; <sup>13</sup> also for the division of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD.**
    - When verse 12 says that David had all of this by the Spirit, it means that God revealed it to him by prophecy.
      - David did not come up with the plans or the divisions of the priests and Levites or the furniture of the temple... God revealed it to him.
      - The way of redemption and remission of sins is not something that man figures out—it is something that God reveals.
    - And just to make sure that nobody misses the point, look at 1 Chron 28:19: **“All this,” said David, “the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans.”**
- 3. God wanted everyone to know that all of this was *His* way of salvation.
  - a. Salvation does not come from any other quarter than from Israel—God chose them to reveal His mercy through Christ and to bring forth Christ.
    - In the meantime, the nations were doing their own sacrifices.
    - They had received the truth from Noah to start with, but because God chose Israel alone, He did not correct the nations, but let them go their own way.



- How quickly they moved away from the truth and fell into all sorts of distortions and perversions of the gospel—
  - It is evident that without God’s special restraint, Israel would have done the same thing—they were bad enough even with God’s special restraint... but He preserved His true revelation of Christ who as to come among them.
- b. It is offensive to many people that God chose only one nation for this.
  - But rather than being offended, we should see how offensive we are to God—that unless He preserves us, we will pervert even His gracious redemptive revelation.
    - It should humble us and it should make us very careful about adding anything to the gospel that has now been revealed in Christ.
    - What has happened to the great churches of Asia Minor where Paul ministered?
    - What has happened to the great churches of North Africa and of Europe and of North America?
      - We have perverted the gospel until it is lost—so distorted by sinful men that it is no longer a gospel at all.
- c. There is only one way of salvation for the whole world.
  - How we need to be sure that we continue in the word of truth, the holy scriptures that God has given us.
    - Let us pray for revival—that the way of God would be known in the churches of our land again.
    - No one can be saved without Jesus Christ.
    - No one can come to the Father but through Him.

### III. Oh brothers and sisters, let us have a heart like David for the precious gospel of grace!

- The temple was God’s footstool and showed how He is reconciled to sinners.
- A. David’s passionate desire to build a house for God is an example to us of love for the spread of the gospel.
  1. See how he describes his strong desire in 1 Chron 28:2:
    - 1 Chron 28:2: **Then King David rose to his feet and said, “Hear me, my brethren and my people: I *had* it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it.”**
    - He wanted God’s gracious way of reconciliation to be clearly shown to His people—He wanted them to see God reconciled by the blood of the covenant.
  2. See how delighted he is when the ark is brought up... how he leads Israel in praise to God at that time... he is so delighted to have God’s mercy through sacrifice revealed clearly in this way.
    - In 16:7-13, it says: **On that day David first delivered *this psalm* into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the LORD: <sup>8</sup> Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! <sup>9</sup> Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works! <sup>10</sup> Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD! <sup>11</sup> Seek the LORD and His**

**strength; seek His face evermore! <sup>12</sup> Remember His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth, <sup>13</sup> O seed of Israel His servant, you children of Jacob, His chosen ones!”**

3. And see again how David prays for the building of the temple—equivalent to us praying for the gospel to be proclaimed...
  - His prayer is in 1 Chron 29:16-19: **“O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own. <sup>17</sup> I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these *things*; and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You. <sup>18</sup> O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You. <sup>19</sup> And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all *these things*, and to build the temple for which I have made provision.”**
  - Then David leads the people to join in his joy in verse 20: **Then David said to all the assembly, “Now bless the LORD your God.” So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.”**

TRANS> Further to this...

B. We see that even though David was not given the honour of actually building the house, he still exerted himself with the greatest of exertions to prepare for its building.

1. We see him in First Chronicles
  - a. on the battlefield, labouring to conquer the land that Israel might have rest and build the house for God.
  - b. We see him going to great lengths to provide materials and to organise everything according to God’s directives.
  - c. He realised that Israel has been given the special privilege of revealing the true way of God’s salvation by which the world would be reconciled.
2. Do you have such a love for the Lord and His way of salvation to be known?
  - Do you yearn for the LORD and His saving mercy to be known by your church, by your people? by your children? by your countrymen? by the nations of the world?
    - Oh, I hope you do.
  - It is a sad thing to see so much indifference to the gospel.
    - It is a sad thing to see this in our own hearts and in the hearts of others who profess Christ.
    - The gospel is worthy of way more devotion than we give to it!

TRANS> David is exemplary...

C. But all the more do we see the zeal of our dear Lord Jesus Christ to establish an eternal house for God.

1. He came from heaven to give His life on the cross for our sins.
  - What a kind, gracious, loving Saviour He is!
  - And all of this for sinners—even while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

2. In Jesus, we have the blood of the covenant that reconciles the world to God through faith.
  - Nothing else will do
  - God has made it clear that salvation is of the Jews—it was with them that He preserved the true way of peace, and it was from them that Christ came according to the flesh.
    - What a Saviour He is!
3. David's eagerness in 1 Chronicles is all the more special when we realise that it shows us the eagerness of Christ to do what must be done that God might dwell with us and us with Him!
  - And to know that the heart of Christ is a reflection also of His heavenly Father's heart.
  - He yearns to establish in us a house of His name—a house with Christ the crucified, risen Saviour at the centre of it all...
    - at the altar as the perfect sacrifice to take away our sins.
  - As the ever living one who gives us the Holy Spirit and promises us life in God's house forever and ever.