

## The Bible in One Year Week 30: The Heart of David (Chronicles Pt. 1)

(1 Chronicles 17:1-22)

### • Why Chronicles Is NOT A Boring Book!

- My task today is to convince you that *the book of Chronicles is not a boring book!* It might be a challenge, but if we succeed, we'll be able to take a key part of this story—*the heart of David*—and find a model for *our hearts*, an example for our lives. Today, we begin the third quarter of our Bible in One Year series, so we're going *back to the Old Testament*, starting with Chronicles.
- So, *Chronicles*: have you read it? Chances are, if you started, you found it hard to finish. That's because the first *nine chapters* are one *long* genealogy. You know, "*So and So was the son of So and So...*" **9 CHAPTERS!** But I stand by what I said, *it's not a boring book!* Every time I go to study Chronicles, I think, "Wow, this is gonna be rough," but inevitably as it gets going, before I know it, I'm highlighting every other verse. *There are loads of treasure hidden in this field.*
  - Maybe you had this experience as a kid: do you remember being at those family gatherings when your older relatives were sitting around, reminiscing, and you thought, "*Man, this is boring, what does this have to do with me?*" But one day, as you're growing up, you start talking to them. You think it's going to be the same old thing, then you hear them mention something that makes you go, "*Wait, you did what?*" And all of the sudden you realize this person has lived an adventure: "*My goodness, this guy was actually a submariner in World War II! This gal lived through the Great Depression! This person has stories to tell!*" Do you know what I mean?
- That's what it's like reading Chronicles: you think it's just a dusty old book, with repetitive stories you've already heard. But after a while say, "*Hang on, this is really epic!*" Chronicles is a wise old sage, recounting the *past* to give us wisdom for the *present* and hope for the *future*. Yes, there are slow parts (like any worthy epic), but there are also *gems* of truth and *thrilling* stories.
  - Just look at David's "Mighty Men," for example. This is the stuff of legends! It could easily be from *Gladiator*, or *300*, or *Braveheart*. 1 Chronicles 11-12, "*Jashobeam, a Hakmonite, was chief of the Thirty; he raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.*" "*Benaiah son of Jehoida, a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, performed great exploits. He struck down Moab's two mightiest warriors. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. And he struck down an Egyptian who was seven feet tall. Although the Egyptian had a spear like a weaver's rod in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from [his] hand and killed him with his own spear...*" "*Some Gadites defected to David at his stronghold in the wilderness. They were brave warriors, ready for battle and able to handle the shield and spear. Their faces were the faces of lions, and they were as swift as gazelles in the mountains...the least was a match for a hundred, and the greatest for a thousand.*"
- *Wow! You've got my attention.* There is something in the heart of humanity, particularly of man: a passion, a fierceness, a warrior, which I believe is part of God's image. Too often, the church neglects it. We ask men to just show up and be nice guys who sit quietly in their pews. It's the same message from society: *you're a problem, you're a failure, you need to drive that wild heart into hiding.* But God created us for this epic story, this battle of spiritual proportions. He wants to awaken our hearts so that we can fight for our families and our communities with the mighty love of Christ. Men, do you feel anything *stirring in your hearts* with this? Ladies do you have a place in your life for this *adventure*? Or through the years have our hearts become cold, and timid, and bored? A life with God is not meant to be *any* of those things. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

### • 3 Things To Know About Chronicles

- We need to get the lay of the land. Here are three quick things to know about Chronicles:
  - **1) Chronicles is one continuous story.** Our Bibles say "1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles," but originally, this was all meant to be one story. It was only split up because they needed two scrolls to fit it!
  - **2) Chronicles was put at the end of the Hebrew Scriptures because it summarizes them.** The arrangement of the Hebrew Bible is a different order than the way we order our Bibles: the Church grouped the historical writings together, so it's 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, then 1 & 2 Chronicles. If you read them together, you get through Samuel and Kings, then Chronicles

starts to rehash some of the same history and you think it's just a repeat. But originally, it came at the *end* of the Hebrew Scriptures, because it *summarizes them*—that's why it starts with the genealogy of *Adam* all the way to post-Exile. Chronicles was written several hundred years *after* the Israelites returned from Exile. It looks back over *everything that's happened* in their history, now with generations of hindsight, in order to help God's people live *faithfully* in the present and continue to have *hope* for the future promises. It bookends the Old Testament as a story *waiting for an ending*, for the promised-fulfilment, setting the stage for Jesus and the New Testament.

- **3) Chronicles gives us character studies and examples for our lives.** It goes through the life of David, Solomon, and many of Judah's kings, showing who was faithful and who was not—and the consequences. We're meant to find examples to follow and pitfalls to avoid. It's like the old adage: we must study the past so that we don't repeat its mistakes in the present.
- **The Heart of David**
  - And that brings us to the main point: King David is one of the most important figures in this story, because he serves as the example of the *ideal king* and foreshadows *the Messiah*. Samuel highlights more of his flaws and failures, but Chronicles focuses mostly on the positives because it's trying to show us why God used him as he did in spite of his imperfections and mistakes.
  - David *is* Israel's ideal king. And, although he was very gifted, the primary reason for him being the model leader is not that he was the strongest, mightiest, wealthiest, or smartest, but because of *his heart*. David had a heart after God. He was anointed by God to lead. These are the ones God uses. The leaders, the warriors, the heroes, the disciples, the servants God looks for are those whose hearts are *fully devoted to him*.
    - Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else guard your heart because *everything you do flows from it*." Your heart, your character, is the most important thing about you. The one thing you'll take with you into eternity is not your resources, achievements, or status, *but your heart*; the kind of person you've become. What's the condition of your heart? Is it being *formed* for God?
  - A person's heart is demonstrated in their actions, in the ways they respond to various situations. Not all of us have positions of leadership, and none of us have the level of influence of King David. But we all have lives we've been given by God where we exercise influence over some area: our family, our home, our property, our job, our calling, our community. So this is relevant for everyone. Chronicles has some great stories that demonstrate *the heart of David* and I want to just hold up a few examples, because this is today's point: *The heart of David is a foreshadow of the Messiah and a model for the heart of faith*. He's a heroic example, an inspiration and invitation for us to *live life with God* in this wild world. Here are a few stories:
    - First, a little gem from the genealogy that you could easily miss. It says *a lot* about the heart of David. 1 Chronicles 3:5, in the middle of the genealogy, we get little detail that's worth a ton: "*David reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years, and these were the children born to him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon. These four were by Bathsheba daughter of Ammiel...*" Do you remember Bathsheba? That story isn't in Chronicles, but it's told in 1 Samuel 11: David's infamous failure. He stays home from battle, lusts after a woman, uses his power to coerce her to sleep with him, gets her pregnant, tries to cover it up, has her husband killed in battle, then takes her as his wife, and the baby ends up dying at birth. Do you remember the name of the prophet who confronts David about this horrendous evil? *Nathan*. Did you catch name of one of his kids born to Bathsheba? *Nathan*. Imagine you're a leader of great influence. You commit a big moral failure and cover it up. Then a man of God confronts you and calls you to repentance. It's big enough for a leader to admit it and seek *true repentance*. Now imagine that you go on to name *one of your own children* after the man who *confronted* you with your greatest failure. *The heart of David is a heart of humility*. That's one of his very greatest assets.
    - Another story, 1 Chronicles 11:15. In the early days, David was being hunted down by the incumbent, failed king Saul. In this story, he's holding out in a cave and "caught between a rock and a hard place," hiding from Saul and facing down a band of Philistines encamped in the valley below. Three of David's mighty men sneak in to visit him. He says in passing, "*If I could just have a drink from the well at the gate of Bethlehem,*" where the Philistines were.

- Then this happens: *“So the Three broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out to the Lord. ‘God forbid that I should do this!’ he said...Because they risked their lives to bring it back, David would not drink it.”* Now, maybe if you were one of those mighty men you would’ve been ticked that David dumped out this hard-fought beverage, but this is the kind of person people *want* to follow: someone who has regard for the lives of his people, who takes this precious gift of water and, instead of quenching his own thirst, pours it out as an offering for the Lord, because he values the life of his brothers more than his own. *The heart of David is a heart that is for God and for God’s people.*
- The final story, which we read today, shows all three of these traits: the heart of humility, the heart for God, and the heart for God’s people. David has achieved great success by God’s grace. He’s fully established his throne with a great palace of cedar: meanwhile, the Arc of the Covenant, which they rescued and returned to Israel, is sitting outside in a tent. He has it in his heart to build a Temple for the Lord, the God of Israel. Not for his glory, but for God’s. And in response, God gives David this great revelation that is the cornerstone of the Messianic promise and the connection between David and Jesus. God basically says, *“You want to build me a house, but I don’t need it. I’ve been moving everywhere with you guys this whole time and I don’t live in places built by human hands. Besides, your son Solomon is going to be the one to build it anyway. But I’m here to tell you that I will build you a house, an everlasting dynasty. Your throne will be forever, because my Son will sit upon it.”* And David’s response to this great revelation from God says everything about his heart. You can read it all in 1 Chronicles 17:16-27, it’s beautiful. But basically David’s response boils down to three things: *Who am I that you would choose me? Who is like the Lord? Who is like God’s people, Israel?* Again, imagine being a person like David, with all the success and power he had, yet maintaining a heart like this that continually deflects glory to God: through it all, he still knows who he is, knows who God is, and knows that his purpose in all this is simply to serve God’s people.
- **Your Heart**
  - *The heart of David is a heart of humility, a heart for God, and a heart for God’s people.* And his heart is a flawed, yet authentic reflection of the one perfectly True heart who ever lived: the heart of Jesus the Messiah. And that’s the model for our hearts, the pattern for our lives. It’s the path of life and faith. Come awake to the adventure of living for God’s Kingdom! Don’t settle for stagnation, let your heart come fully alive in him! And, by the steady journey of life’s battles and blessings, learn to live with a heart of humility, a heart for God, and a heart for God’s people. You’ll become the person you were made to be, the kind of person people *want* to follow, and you’ll reflect Christ in this world. David was weak and flawed, but God used him because of his heart. He wants to use you too. So, pray for a heart like David, a heart like Jesus. And hey, don’t be afraid to live on the *wild side* with our King. Let’s pray.