

## NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY OF I CHRONICLES

### PART FOUR

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER TWELVE lists more of David's elite force by name with some indication of where they came from and some of their military exploits. The first of them offered their services to him in the wilderness and group by group he accepted them. The account goes on to record larger and larger groups who pledged their loyalty to David while he was king only in Hebron. Once the decision was a national one by the whole of Israel the numbers of those committed to the new king became greater still. David's army was impressive in numbers but the real reason they were a powerful force to be reckoned with was their 'perfect heart'. The same is true of our Christian fellowships.

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER THIRTEEN gives an account of a critical moment in the consolidation of David's kingdom where he realised that he wanted God's presence at the centre of all he did. He therefore intended to bring the ark of the covenant containing the 10 commandments into his new capital, Jerusalem. It was a good intention but David forgot to check in the Law of God how the tabernacle was to be transported. One group of Levites were responsible for carrying the ark on poles which were threaded through the rings on the corners of the ark. In no way was the ark to be loaded onto a cart and certainly they were never to touch it with their hands. It is not our business to meddle with the scriptures. Neither does God need us to protect His word. David was upset when Uzza tried to stop the ark falling on the floor and God took his life to demonstrate the important truth that the word of God is to be treated with the utmost reverence. David's initial reaction was anger against God and a reluctance to pursue the plan to bring the ark into the centre of his life until he saw how greatly God blessed Obed-Edom simply because the ark was in his home.

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER FOURTEEN introduces us to a friend of David who would play a vital role in his plans as well as those of his son Solomon. Hiram, king of Tyre, was not an Israelite but he had been deeply impressed by David and his relationship with God. As always such people were welcome in the family of God. He had access in his territory to some excellent timber as well as skilled carpenters and masons who would be needed in future. We are reminded again of the consequences of the most serious area in which David did not check out his Bible. He had many wives and numerous children. The Philistines had not forgotten David's defeat of Goliath and were still out for revenge. Faced with military attack David did the right thing and asked God for His plan and consequently enjoyed victory over and over again. If only he had asked for God's plan regarding marriage!

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER FIFTEEN details the tasks of the various branches of the tribe of Levi. David had by now realised his mistake in chapter 13 in putting the ark of the covenant on an ox cart in his haste to bring it back to Jerusalem. Carrying the ark was the responsibility of the Levites alone. (Num.4:15) The Levites were divided into 6 family groups each with special jobs. 3 groups were the descendants of Levi's 3 sons, Kohath, Gershon and Merari, but 3 further groups were from two of Kohath's sons and 1 grandson. (Num.3) Anyone who would help to carry the ark had first to consecrate himself, the Old Testament equivalent of sanctifying, meaning literally, 'set apart'. We are not fit to pick up the word of God unless we are 'set apart' for God's service only. Another major responsibility of the Levites was to provide music for worship with a variety of instruments and singers. The music was to be of a high quality with both well-tuned instruments and skilful singers. Performing Christian music today should be led by those who have God-given talent and a deep love for Him. Other Levites were to be gatekeepers of the ark, letting worshippers in but keeping burglars out. David with great enthusiasm led the procession of Levites carrying the ark and providing joyful music from the home of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem. He was excited but his first wife Michal was not, a clear indication of the deep division between them.

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER SIXTEEN describes the day David had long hoped of. The ark is finally in Jerusalem where it belonged. Although David had dreamed of a magnificent temple to house the ark he has to be content with a simple tent. Nevertheless he could initiate the worship for which the ark had been designed. He began with sacrifices, as we begin to appreciate the word of God at the cross. He took the opportunity to bless the assembled people not just with words but in a practical way with food. He appointed Levites to continue the worship of God with music. David put parts of two of his Psalms, (105 and 96) into a single song which encouraged the people first in their relationship with God. They were to give thanks, call upon His name, make his deeds known, sing and speak, and so seek Him with a clear memory in their minds of His creation, His commands and His promises. He particularly focused on God's promise to Israel of the land of Canaan to which in the time of Ezra the exiles were now returning from Babylon. He reminded them of how the Lord had protected them in the past and would do so again. Everyone joined in with "Amen" – "we agree". Among the Levites who were to lead worship in the tabernacle were Obed-Edom and his large family who had had a foretaste in chapter 13 of how good life was with God's word in their home.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND STUDY ON CHAPTERS TWELVE TO SIXTEEN

1. What bound this varied group of men together so that they became such a formidable army? How can we bring about a similar commitment and unity among our Christian brothers and sisters?(chap.12)
2. Why was God so tough on Uzza? Are we likely to meet him in heaven? What is the message of this story for us today?(chap.13)
3. Is it really necessary to ask God's guidance on small details in our daily lives? What happens if we forget? What were the consequences of David failing to ask God about his many marriages?(chap.14)
4. How do the different tasks of the Levites relate to the various tasks God gives us in serving Him today? Should we be as enthusiastic as David was about music and worship? Why does God use music in our Christians lives?(chap.15)
5. How was David's song on this special occasion so appropriate? Why was it so fitting for Obed-Edom and his family to be there? What testimony might they have given to those around them?(chap.16)