

NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY OF I CHRONICLES

PART SIX

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO is a remarkable account of a wise father. David had longed to build the temple but had been told that it would not be his job but it would be done by his son Solomon. He now knew the exact location on which the temple was to be erected. He did all he could to prepare for the task and to train Solomon to do it. First He accumulated as many materials as would be needed, prepared the skilled workers and put aside the necessary funds. Then he taught Solomon what he was to do and the relation with the Lord which would be essential for him to be successful. It was vital that Solomon remained absolutely faithful to the word of God. The most important qualities he would need were strength and courage instead of fear because there would be huge opposition and potential discouragement. Finally David urged all his leaders to give Solomon all the help they could.

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE reminds us that having a plan and all the material resources to carry the plan out is great but even the best laid plan can still fail without the right team to do the job. In this chapter David takes the highly unusual step first of handing over the kingship to Solomon while he is still alive. Kings did not usually let go of the reins of power while they were still able to lead for themselves. He had a God-given confidence that Solomon was God's choice so he had nothing to fear. The team to run the temple once it was finished were the Levites. Formerly much of the work was setting up and dismantling the tabernacle to move from one place to another. That would no longer be needed so there would be a new focus for the Levites whose job would now be the daily administration of the temple, providing access and security but above all teaching those who came to the temple how to apply the word of God in their lives and their relationships.

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR is the first of four more chapters consisting largely of names. Again it is a reminder of how every person is special to God and how each one of us has a unique purpose in His plan. The first of these lists is of the descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses and the first high priest. It describes how David divided them into 24 teams so that the care and function of the tabernacle would be efficiently provided for each day. The responsibility for leading the worship of God needs to be spread widely among those who are truly committed to the Lord. It was never intended to be left to one or two overworked people.

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE continues recording the work of the Levites. It develops chapter 16 with a special emphasis on the musicians and singers. Music had always played a large part in David's own life beginning with his role as King Saul's musician when he played his harp to get the king out of his bad moods. Apparently throughout his life David was a composer as well as a singer. Half the Psalms carry his name and some unnamed ones bear the mark of his involvement. It seems likely that much of David's message to his people came in musical form. This chapter describes how the musicians prophesied with their musical instruments, how they did so under the direction of King David, and how their emphasis was on thanking and praising the Lord. There were 288 singers divided into 24 groups of 12 each linked to a particular priest-team so that there never needed to be a lack of good music. They were trained and skilful, a reminder to us that contributing to worship is not meant to be a casual, last minute event.

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX goes on to detail three more key functions of different divisions of Levites. First there was the responsibility to be the gatekeepers of the temple. In the days of the mobile tabernacle they had the major task of packing the tabernacle up, carrying it to the next location and setting it up again. This was to be done with care and respect as we are to treat the word of God today. Now that the tabernacle was to be upgraded to the temple which would not move, one of their jobs was to be gatekeepers, both welcoming believers into the presence of God and guarding the temple and the message it contained from attack and abuse. As we have already seen in chapter nine, being a gatekeeper foreshadowed our calling as Christians both to welcome others to know Jesus as their Saviour, and to defend the church from wrong teaching. Secondly the Levites were to guard the treasures of the temple which were to be spent maintaining and extending the work of caring for people's spiritual needs. Paul urged Timothy to 'Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.' (II Tim. 1:14)

The treasure he talks about is not counted in dollars but is knowledge of the grace of God now deposited by the Holy Spirit in our hearts.(Eph.2:7; 3:8; II Cor.4:7) Their third task was to be judges whose role was not to sentence God's people to punishment but to teach them the word of God and how to apply it to their particular problems, needs and conflicts.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND STUDY ON CHAPTERS TWENTY-TWO TO TWENTY-SIX

1. What were David's key messages to Solomon? How did David's plans work out and how did they fail? In what way can we prepare our children for God's plan for their lives?(chap.22)
2. How did David recognise that building the temple would affect the roles of the different groups of Levites? How and in what way did he change some of their tasks? What do those changes represent in the church of Jesus Christ today?(chap.23)
3. Why were the responsibilities of the descendants of Aaron spread so widely? What can we learn from this about sharing tasks in spiritual leadership?(chap.24)
4. How was providing music for the worship of God described in detail? How can musicians prophesy with a musical instrument? How do the principles of this chapter still apply today? How do we fall short?(chap.25)
5. What further duties of the Levites are recorded in this chapter? How are we to play these same roles today? What are the consequences of us failing to carry out these parts faithfully?(chap.26)