

NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY OF I CHRONICLES

PART FIVE

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER SEVENTEEN offers some intriguing questions. David was longing to build a temple to house the ark of the covenant and shared his hope with the prophet Nathan who in turn told David it was a wonderful idea and encouraged him to go ahead. But he forgot to check his advice with God first so the Lord had to wake him up that night to let him know Nathan had misinformed David. Instead the instruction was that David would have a son through whom God would build a house which would last forever. Was this Solomon? Unfortunately Solomon began well but let his many wives turn his heart to other gods as he got older so God had to allow the kingdom to break up in the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam. However many times in the New Testament Jesus is referred to as the son of David. He would build a temple, His own body, in which all of us as Christians would live forever. (Jn.2:21; Eph.2:19-22) David was delighted with this news and thanked God for the huge privilege which was being given to him. Jesus was the one totally faithful son of David. The Jews returning from Babylon would know as they read these words that though Solomon's temple had not survived, the real fulfilment of God's promise was still in the future.

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER EIGHTEEN is a record of David's victories over the enemies of Israel, who had given them a hard time since they first set foot in the land of Canaan. One by one he overcame them in God's strength and we are promised victory in Christ over the world who seek to oppress us and rob us of God's best in our lives. (Jn.16:30) Each of the enemies David faced had consistently represented a special kind of temptation or pressure in our lives. Many of the victories brought unique rewards which remained in the future temple to remind God's people that what He could overcome once He could overcome every time they looked to Him. The Jews returning from Babylon needed to be reminded that their secret for victory had not changed. David's battles were not fought alone. The Lord gave him a great team who had been with him in hard times at the cave of Adullam, (I Sam.22) and now shared in the years of victory. Jesus' team of disciples shared in His ministry and suffering but will one day reign with Him in heaven. (Rev.4)

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER NINETEEN shows two sides of the character of David. First he shows compassion for Hanun, a man whose father had died. The father had been good to David in the days when David was an outlaw on the run from King Saul. The rest of the family are suspicious of David's motives in sending representatives to comfort Hanun. Hanun listens to his relatives and mocks those whom David sends by cutting of their beards and half of their clothes. The Ammonites realise that their insults would mean war and prepare for it not only with their own army but by hiring some mercenaries from Mesopotamia. Now David shows the other aspect of his character, that he is not push over, and prepares to take on a huge enemy force. He uses his usual tactical brilliance in the way he divides his army to meet any challenge, with overwhelming success. We can assume that David committed the insults to God before responding rather than being intimidated about the way his kindness was treated.

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER TWENTY records other victories during David's reign. First his army continued their successful assault on the nation of Ammon whose leader had rejected David's kindness in the previous chapter. Ezra mentions this as the military campaign in which for the first time David stayed home and left Joab to lead the war. He omits the account in II Sam.11 which tells

us that this was the time when with nothing better to do, though he should have been out with his men, David committed adultery with Bathsheba which would have terrible consequences in his family which continued for many years. The Ammonites were massacred and a valuable new crown landed on David's head. Also mentioned among the victories are the deaths of the four sons of Goliath who were the same size as their father. (II Sam.21:18-22) The existence of these four giants may be the reason why David went out to face Goliath with five stones in his pouch, not just one. (I Sam.17:40)

I CHRONICLES CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE tells of one major mistake in David's reign which had terrible consequences for his people. It is presumably included as a warning to the would-be bureaucrats of Ezra's time about the danger of counting heads in our supposed service of God. Joab tried to warn David but he took no notice. Reluctantly Joab did most but not all of what he was told. Counting converts in our crusades or missions is unwise because God alone knows who has truly trusted Him. Notice that it was Satan's idea to conduct the census. He knows that it is a great distraction from our calling. Statistics for the sake of our pride distract us from our priorities. True growth in Christ is immeasurable. Through the prophet Gad, David is given 3 choices regarding his punishment for his sin. He selects the shortest option presumably to get it over with as fast as possible but this costs Israel 70,000 lives. David meets the angel of the Lord at a special place which would forever be remembered in Israel's history. The threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite is identified in II Chron.3:1 as being on Mount Moriah where Abraham had expected to offer his son as a sacrifice until the Lord provided a ram in his place.

It becomes the site of the future temple and therefore the hill on which Jesus would one day be sacrificed for our sin. David's sacrifices in this very place halted the judgement of God as Jesus' future sacrifice of Himself on the cross halted judgment for us. David insists on paying Ornan for the purchase of his threshing floor in acknowledgement of the way his sin had caused this tragic day in Israel's history.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND STUDY ON CHAPTERS SEVENTEEN TO TWENTY-ONE

1. How does this story show us the danger of telling someone else what God's plan is for his or her life? How did the Lord bring a good outcome despite Nathan's mistake?(chap.17)
2. In what way does God give us victory over our enemy? Why is it important to build a strong team who will face the enemy with us? How can we go about creating such a team?(chap.18)
3. How might this story caution us about giving sympathy to those who have suffered loss? When we are badly treated for our kind intentions how should we respond? Is there any better way David might have reacted?(chap.19)
4. How is the first part of this chapter a warning about the danger of leaving victory over the enemy to someone else? What are the giants which threaten our lives? How does David's way of dealing with Goliath provide a model for later battles with giants?(chap.20)
5. How does David's mistake this time illustrate how easy it is to win great battles and then to fail badly? How do we often do the same? Why did God deal with David's sin so strongly? What can we learn from David's business dealings with Ornan?(chap.21)