

History's Key Players

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: 1 Chronicles 1-8
Preached On: Sunday, March 8, 2020

Crossroads Ministries
301 S. 8th Street
Opelika, Alabama 36801

Website: www.fbcopelika.com
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers

This morning John alluded to the fact that as we journey through the Old Testament, those of you that are guests and visitors with us may not be familiar but we as a family of faith are walking through the entirety of the Scriptures over about a period of three years, typically it's one to two chapters a day, and when we gather on Sunday morning, we look back at the previous week and sometimes it's one passage, sometimes it's an entirety of passages that which we've already read and studied together, we come and hopefully as we gather on Sunday morning we kind of tie a bow on the package of what God shared with us from his word all week long. That being said, today's gonna have to be a pretty big bow.

Turn to 1 Chronicles 1. I would daresay you've never been in church and heard a pastor say that to you. Why? Because as you enter 1 Chronicles 1, you begin a nine chapter journey of nothing but names of which most we can't even pronounce. In fact, 1 Chronicles 1-9 contains 3,000 years of history amidst hundreds of names. By the way, as we walk through these chapters of Scripture, there's two other passages in the Bible that I'm gonna allude to frequently today because we're gonna do kind of one of those flyovers. We're gonna be in Hebrews 11, in the first couple chapters of Genesis. You may want to be familiar with those. Oftentimes, though, the characters that we're gonna discuss, the stories that we will share are somewhat familiar to us.

As we begin this journey in 1 Chronicles, nine chapters, in fact, one of 10 genealogies in your Old Testament, and this is by far the longest. Allow me to address the why before we get into the what. Why is it that when the Bible says all Scripture is inspired by God, why nine chapters of names? When the Bible says that every word of God, that none of them will pass until heaven and earth pass away, why nine chapters of names? Well, the why is because it's not about us. Oftentimes we go to the Bible and say, "That doesn't speak to me. I don't even know who that person is and I can't pronounce their name. I don't know anything about them. Why is this here, God?" What you're about to see in these nine chapters of 1 Chronicles is it's not about you, it's not about me, we're about to take a journey from the creation of humanity to the redemption of humanity, and the reason these names are listed is because they are the connection, they are the connecting dots from our original rebellion to his solution and our ultimate redemption in salvation.

For the sake of time and for everybody's sanity, we are not gonna walk through hundreds of names today, but I do want to address 10 very key players in history. I want to look at 10 names, 10 individuals of which the majority you will be very familiar with, and I want us to look at their lives not just from the perspective of the endeavors that they undertook or the decisions they made, although that will be part of it, but I want us to see that in every one of these characters, there are two pathways that could have been traversed. There is the pathway that the Lord was leading in and then there's every other pathway that just kind of becomes one big broad road of destruction. We're gonna see in just a moment that their story truly is our story, it's humanity's story, and so these aren't just ancient individuals with ancient stories, these are actually a picture of our lives each and every day.

As you turn to 1 Chronicles 1, it's apropos that we begin with this name: Adam. In fact, the list of names begins with the first name that we have in Scripture all the way back to the book of Genesis 2:7 it says the Lord God reached down and he formed the man of the dust, that he initiated what you and I know as humanity. Later after the fall of humanity, his wife will receive a name, Eve, which means the mother of the living. But Adam was placed in the garden of Eden and it was there in Genesis 2:16 that the Lord laid out that there were two pathways that he could walk down. One of them was the tree of life. If he ate of the tree of life, all would be good and he would walk with the Lord in the cool of the day. But there was another one, it was the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

By the time we get to Genesis 3, humanity begins to debate among themselves, we begin to rationalize, we begin to justify that somehow, some way, God has cheated us out of some type of experience and expression. So what did we do? We talked ourselves into eating that forbidden fruit. The problem is that God said in the day that you do, you will surely die. When you get to 1 Corinthians 15 it says all of us die because we're in Adam. Romans 6 says the wages of sin is death. And there on the outside on the eastern side of the garden of Eden, humanity began the process, though very slowly in those days, of physically dying but we had already experienced a spiritual death. A chasm had been created. There was a God who was holy and his creation who was not.

What's interesting is the next name that we see. It says Seth. You say, "Seth? Why him?" Well, he's actually the fifth human that we know the name of specifically in the Bible. There's Adam, there's Eve, there's Cain, there's Abel, and there's Seth. The interesting thing about Seth being mentioned here is because we have a decision to make, they had a decision to make: do we walk down the path of God's promise or the punishment of our own personal rebellion? You see, back in Genesis 4, whom we know as Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. According to Hebrews 11, it said that Abel brought a more acceptable sacrifice. Cain did not. Cain just picked up a little bit on the wayside as he came in and kind of just threw it down at the Lord. Remember what the Lord said to him? He said, "Friend, if you don't get this together, sin lies at the door." So what did he do? Instead of offering a proper sacrifice, he goes out in the field, he kills his brother Abel, so much so that the Lord says, "His blood is crying out from the ground to me," and that very famous statement when called on the carpet, what does Cain say? "Am I my brother's keeper?"

There in Genesis 4, Abel lay dead. Cain is banished eastward to go into his rebellion. By the time we get to Genesis 5, though, it says they had another child. His name was Seth, as mentioned here. Interesting that it would be the second name listed in this whole line of hundreds of names because he would be the son of promise. You say, "The son of promise?" Well, what we see in Cain is the son of punishment, not only punished for his brother's death but he is cast outward by the Lord. You say, "Well, what was the promise?" You see, the promise took place back in Genesis 3. In Genesis 3, humanity had sinned, we'd eaten the forbidden fruit, and the Lord says there in verse 15 of Genesis 3, he says that there's coming a day, listen to this, where the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. One from the woman, one from humanity, in other words, one who comes from us will be the one who eventually redeems us. Abel was not a viable candidate, he was deceased. Cain was cursed, was punished. When Seth was born, when he was conceived, when he began to live, he was the person of promise. If we went down Seth's way, we would be heading down God's way because eventually the Messiah would be coming. If it was Cain's, much the opposite.

You know, as you begin to walk through these key players, I want you to fast-forward to verse 4: Noah. Well, of all the list we may know him as well as we know any of these characters. You say, "What was the pathway that God gave us through Noah?" It's not gonna sound pastoral and it's not gonna sound theological but it's accurate: you either get on the boat or you don't. I mean, it's that simple. There was no systematic theology in Genesis 6. There was no expression of great faith. In fact, Hebrews 11 calls him a preacher of righteousness, but as you discover later on, it's not because of his own, shall we say, personal righteousness that allowed him to be on the boat, it was pretty simple: the Lord came to him one day and said, "Noah, humanity's wickedness is so great, I'm gonna destroy all flesh from the earth. I need you to start building a boat. I'm gonna give 120 years to do it and it's gotta be a big one because there's gonna be a whole lot of animals and hopefully a whole lot of humans."

You know, you think about that story, there really are two paths: you're either on the boat or you're not on the boat because prior to that boat being built, what we know as the nourishment of the ground was very different than what we know today. In fact, the Bible says that the water came out of the ground to nourish it rather than raining as we, particularly now Alabama lately, are so familiar with. You either get on the boat or you don't. By the way, as an aside, I'm convinced that animals are a whole lot wiser than we are. You say, "Why is that?" Because when storms come, we get in our trucks and chase the storms, animals get under the covers because somewhere down the line they're great, great, great grandfather told them, "When you hear thunder, get on the boat." But nonetheless, we had a decision to make: you get on the boat or you don't. You do as God has instructed or you face the consequences. And you see, what we see happening here is in humanity's rebellion through Adam and Eve, Seth may be the lineage of promise because Noah would come from him, but the seed, the seed of the woman must be preserved, the seed of the woman must be the means by which the Messiah comes.

Humanity was wicked and all but, according to the Bible, eight souls were lost that day: Noah and his wife, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their three respective wives. Fifteen months after the rains began for 40 days and 40 nights, what we know as that famous ark laid rest on Mount Ararat just north of what we familiarly call today the Promised Land which leads to the next part of verse 4, it says Shem, Ham and Japheth. These are the three sons of Noah. These are the three who would have families of their own and would replenish the earth. Interesting what the Lord commanded them to do, replenish the earth, yet they rejected that. You say, "Well, how do you know they rejected it?" Because by the time you get to Genesis 9, it says that Ham goes unto his father's tent, he does something that is so wicked his brothers cover it up, and Noah is so upset he curses his own grandson because of it. Rather than going to replenish the earth, rather than going on the commission by God, they decide to stay within their own tent.

It's interesting when you look at the three sons of Noah, in fact, if I could just draw you a mental picture of a map, imagine what you and I know as the Middle East today being the center of the world and Ham and his descendants would descend to the south, Shem and his descendants would go the east, and Japheth and his descendants would go to the west. What's interesting is what the Lord said in regards to these three brothers. What did he tell Ham via Canaan, his son or grandson? That they were cursed and they would serve the brothers. Japheth said that he would dwell in the tents of Shem. Shem was the son of promise. He was the one to replenish the earth. Why? Because as you begin to walk through all these names, it would be through that son that we would ultimately get to the Messiah, and if he did not replenish, and if he did not walk in faith, and if he did not continue what the Lord had started through him, then we would reject what God was doing in our lives.

They began to make their way eastward according to the Scripture. The problem is when we get to chapter 11 of the book of Genesis, humanity decided again to rebel. What did they do? They gathered themselves together rather than the way the Lord told them to and they built a tower, that famous Tower of Babel. We decided that we, as that old serpent had done in Isaiah 14, we wanted to be God, we'd show God we could be God, and we were gonna tell him so. What did God do? He came, he confounded the languages and those three respective brothers and their descendants went their respective ways which leads us to the next name. Look in verse 27 of 1 Chronicles 1. By the way, let me give you a warning, we're not going through all nine chapters, I promise. It says Abram, the same is Abraham. You see, Abraham's name was originally Abram until the child of promise was born.

The Lord comes to a place called the Ur of the Chaldees, there in the direction that Shem had gone, the direction eastward where the earth was being replenished. Once again, a very pastoral theological call upon his life, "You want to go or you want to stay?" He basically called him to go to a land that he knew not of, that's what Hebrews 11 says, but here's what the Lord said to him, he said, "Even though you and your wife are beyond the childbearing age, do you believe that you can bear a child? Do you believe by looking up at the stars your descendants can be more numerous than the stars?" He said, "I believe." So what did the Lord say? He said, "Alright, your wife, your nephew and all of your

stuff, head to a land you've never seen." Imagine that journey that the Lord gave him. He'd never seen this ground. He had never seen this territory. He was on uncharted ground literally. You see, again we had this decision to make: do we do it God's way or do we do it ours? Because for every Abram there were thousands that were doing it their own way. For every Shem there were thousands doing it their own way. For every Noah there were thousands doing their own way.

Interesting when you go to the very next verse, verse 28, it says the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, and here humanity was given two paths: we either go the path of promise or the path of rebellion. We can either go the way God has instructed or the way that we want to go. You see, Abram and Sarah were greatly of age, in fact, Isaac, the child of promise, would be named "laughter" because his wife, Sarah, would laugh at the thought of somebody her age giving birth. So one day they came up with an idea, they came up with a plan, and by the way, every time in the Bible when humanity comes up with a plan, it rarely goes the right direction. They said, "There's no way we can have a child the way God told us, so how about you go into Hagar, my handmaiden, she is young, she is fertile, that'll be good." They had a child by the name of Ishmael. Notice he's listed there in verse 28. Here's the only problem: he was the son of rebellion, not the son of promise. He was not the one who the Lord said, "This is the pathway." You see, the Lord had laid it out beginning all the way back with Seth on the east side of the garden of Eden. He said, "It's gonna go through this pathway." Whether that be Noah, whether that be Shem, whether that be Abram, and now it's going to be Isaac, the one who would be called laughter, the one who his parents scoffed at the idea that at 90 years of age, a woman could give birth.

It's interesting when you look at Isaac's story, to be quite honest with you, he doesn't do a whole lot. He's really a conduit between his father Abraham and his son Jacob. Ah, but there's that story in Genesis 22 where he goes up on the mount with his dad. I'm sure you're familiar with the story, it's the taking of him and the sacrifice although the sacrifice is him. Notice what Isaac does in that story, he actually takes the wood himself. He asked Abraham, his dad, he says, "I see the wood, I see the fire, where's the sacrifice?" What does he say? Abraham says, "The Lord will provide." Do you know one of the parts about that story that really gets me and it's not because I'm the "dad of three boys," it's really because I'm a human being, is that if you read that story in Genesis 22, Abraham did not have to force him to get on that pile. He willingly did so. You say, "Why is that important?" Because in the Gospel of John, you know what Jesus told us? "Nobody takes my life lest I give it, and I will give my life as a ransom for many."

We know the famous story where the angel of the Lord comes and intercedes on behalf and the ram is provided, but you know back in Hebrews 11, it answers a very important question: why did Abraham go through with it? It said he believed that God was able to raise him from the dead. You see, this pathway that the Lord was establishing through all these lineages and all these names looked at times so bleak and dire we had to believe, "God, if you allowed one to be born, after due process and time surely you can bring one back from the dead."

Isaac had two sons of note, Esau and Jacob, but you'll notice that when it comes to history's key players, in fact, in verse 34 it says that "Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac; Esau and Israel." Now back in Genesis 25, the Lord told their mom, "There are two nations within you. The younger will serve the older," that is Jacob, but he was renamed Israel. Why was he renamed Israel? Because he was the child of promise. He was the one that came through the specific line. He would be the one, according back to Genesis 12, would be blessed versus cursed. Remember what the Lord told Abraham? He said, "Wherever you go, your lineage, those who bless you will be blessed, those who curse you will be cursed." And what do we see happening even unto this day? It's amazing how the Lord's words just come to fruition even in contemporary society. It's amazing how the Lord works through his people versus those who are not.

So what do we see with the people of Israel? That they are blessed when they are doing it God's way, and much the opposite when they desire to look as the world. What's interesting is that Israel or Jacob would actually have what we know as the famous 12 tribes of Israel, and as you begin to walk through those 12 tribes and, yes, they're in a chronological order, you get to chapter 2 and I want you to notice that there is one tribe that is mentioned first as far as his lineage. In verse 3 it says, "And the sons of Judah." You say, "Well, why is that interesting? Why would Judah have such prominence?" Because there's a big difference between the calling of God and the convenience of man. You see, Reuben was the firstborn, he was the outspoken one, he was the one that we would presume and "assume" that God's pathway would walk through much like the sons of Jesse. Remember there were eight of them but it was the last one whom we know as David who would be chosen king, and one of the struggles that we have when it comes to the pathway that God has laid out for us is deciphering between that which he has chosen and that which is awfully convenient. Of all the 12 tribes, do you realize that Judah was the smallest? He had the least amount of resources, the least amount of ammunition, so to speak as far as getting through this thing called life. Isn't that interesting? Oftentimes the Lord does the greatest things through the least convenient means. It would be Judah, that famous tribe of Judah, that even the Messiah Jesus Christ so clearly was spoken of as coming through.

So we find ourselves from the garden of Eden through one of the sons of Adam and Eve, we get on the boat, we head east through Shem, we have a man by the name of Abram, a son by the name of Isaac, Israel comes out and then we have this tribe of Judah. If you'll make your way down in chapter 2 to verse 15, guess who shows up? David. David shows up. Now this is significant. Why? Because David is the one that the city of Bethlehem would be named after of which we know Mary and Joseph and the famous Christmas story would go for the census. David is the one who would establish the place of God in the city of Jerusalem, the city of peace. It was David who desired for the temple to be built for the presence of God to have a permanent dwelling place.

Two pathways: we can either have the throne or we can have anarchy. You know, it's interesting in 1 Samuel 16:7 it says that the kingdom that God established through David's lineage would be everlasting and forever. As you make your way throughout the Scripture, in Psalm 110:1 David himself said that one day the Lord is gonna sit on his

throne for all of eternity. Folks, it's starting to heat up now. I mean, we've had the opportunity to get on the boat or not, we've had the opportunity to go to a land that we knew not of or not, but at this point it's either A, you're with the king or you're not, you're on the throne of he who reigns or much the opposite. Again we see throughout time and throughout all these personalities there's two paths we can take: the Lord's path or our path.

There's one final name that I want to address this morning, in fact, in my Bible I need to turn a page to chapter 3. It's a name you may or may not be familiar with but really bears the burden of all nine chapters. Chapter 3, verse 17, it says, "And the sons of Jeconiah." You say, "What's so important about Jeconiah?" In the book of Jeremiah, Jeconiah is said to be so wicked that he would be reared childless and that never would a descendant of David sit on the throne again and you and I are faced with another path: do we go the natural way of man or to the supernatural way of God? I mentioned that this nine chapter selection in the Bible is the longest lineage you have in the Bible, but do you know what the last one is? It's the book of Matthew 1. Do you know what you discover in Matthew 1? You discover something different than you find in all the Old Testament. There's actually women mentioned in Matthew 1, none of the ones in the Old Testament. There's Gentiles that are mentioned, none in the Old Testament. But guess who shows up in Matthew 1? This guy, Jeconiah. Why would the one rendered childless, why would the one who the Lord said nobody will come from your seed? Can I go back full circle to Genesis 3? Remember what the Lord said? The seed of the woman. Now I'm not here to give a biology or anatomy and physiology lesson but last time I checked, that's backwards from humanity. The natural way is not that way. You see, the Lord supernaturally not only provided through the ark and through the going of Abraham and Isaac and the 12 tribes, but by the time you get to the New Testament, we discover that the Messiah Jesus Christ would not come from natural means, he would not come from the seed of a man, it would be God in flesh, the Word dwelling among us.

You see, when you turn to nine chapters in 1 Chronicles, it's just a bunch of names but really they all have a whole lot in common, they all try to do it their way and they all ended up dead. But what did Jesus say? "Come unto me and I will give you life and you will have it more abundantly." Supernaturally in his birth, supernatural in his life, supernatural in his death, and supernatural in his resurrection. You see, the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles are tedious and, shall we say, oftentimes boring. Do you know why? Because it's not about us and that's our problem. When we make it about us, it always ends up a mess. These nine chapters of names are getting us from the garden of Eden to the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus Christ would give of his life, he would shed his blood supernaturally so you and I would have the opportunity to be redeemed and restored from that which the very first name, Adam, led us to.