



Week Five Devotions

Provided by the Ministry and Program Staff of
The Presbyterian Church of Stanley

Day 29

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 1:1-1 Chronicles 9:44

The passage today is a list of names--a long list. The Word of God lists out the descendants from Adam to Abraham, from Abraham to Jacob, a genealogy of David and his descendants and a host of others. This is not the most exciting reading in all the Bible. Why have this long list of names? Why go to all the trouble to tell us that Naphtali begat Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shallum?

It is important to know where we came from and upon whose shoulders we stand. None of us is an island. We need to know our history so we can see clearly where we are going. Here buried in the list of names are two episodes. In one we see that the people of God waged war against a superior foe and they bested them because "they cried out to God in battle, and he granted their urgent plea because they trusted in him." (1 Chronicles 5:20)

In the very next chapter we see that the people of God, who were numerous, mighty and famous broke faith with God and "whored after the gods of the people of the land." They lost in battle to an inferior foe and were captured and taken into exile.

For better or worse, we are also the descendants of these people of God, prone to the same weaknesses and strengths. We must be on our guard as we learn our history and see our future unveiled.

Eric Laverentz, Senior Pastor

Day 30

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 10:1-1 Chronicles 23:32

Romans 13, informs us that authorities are chosen by God. *1 Chronicles* documents, however, that God is pleased with the authorities that are in place. Saul died a horrible death by his own hand. He was in such despair and so afraid of the Philistines conquering his army, that he felt he had no other choice than to take his own life. This, on top of other offenses he previously committed, showed huge unfaithfulness to God. He stopped believing in God's plan for his life; he lacked faith in God's ability to overcome any obstacle against any odds. He began turning to other sources for strength and insight and turned his back on God.

Each one of us is given authority and placed in leadership. Some areas of authority and leadership seem bigger than others, but each of us has it. At the very least (and, perhaps, the very most), we are given authority over our own choices. We have leadership of our *selves*, whether we know it or not. When the chips are down, when we lack hope, when it seems the odds are stacked against us, to whom or what do we turn? Do we turn to God? Do we consult the stars or rely upon a psychic (as Saul did)?

The best leaders rely upon the best Leader in both the little things and the big things. When we rely upon God, we are blessed with the fruition of His plan in our lives.

Bo Burgener, Associate Pastor for Mission and Evangelism

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Day 31

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 24:1-2 Chronicles 7:10

1 Chronicles 25:1 "David and the chiefs of the service also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals."

Music has always been an important part of worship, even in the Old Testament. In this verse we find that King David set apart musicians for Worship. There is more to prophesying than predicting the future. Prophecy also involves singing God's praises and preaching God's messages ([1Corinthians 14:1ff](#)). Prophets could be musicians, farmers ([Amos 1:1](#)), wives ([2Kings 22:14](#)) or leaders ([Deuteronomy 34:10](#)) — anyone who boldly and accurately spoke out for God and tried to bring people back to worshipping him. From a large group of musicians, David chose those who showed an unusual ability to tell about God and to encourage others in song.

In the New Testament, worship continued in the synagogues until the Christians became unwelcome there, so there was a rich musical heritage already established. The fact that music is mentioned less often in the New Testament does not mean it was less important. Paul clearly puts forth the Christian's view that things are not good or bad in and of themselves (see [Romans 14](#) and [1 Corinthians 14:7, 8, 26](#)). The point should always be to worship the Lord or help others by means of the things of this world, including music. Music was created by God and can be returned to him in praise. Does the music you play or listen to have a negative or positive impact upon your relationship with God?

Molly Jones, Associate Pastor for Discipleship

Day 32

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:11-2 Chronicles 23:15

2Chronicles 7:11 – 2Chronicles 23:15

2Ch 18:6 “But Jehoshaphat asked, ‘Is there not a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?’ The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, ‘There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad.’”

You almost have to smile at the comment of the king of Israel. It is never easy to ask for advice, especially when you don't like or agree with what you hear. The king of Israel had surrounded himself with a bunch of “yes men” that would always tell him exactly what he wanted to hear, whether it was true or not. If we are serious about following God and trying to live a life that reflects Christian values, we need to have a fellow Christian that will tell us the truth, even when it hurts. All Christians and especially those in leadership roles, need someone who will hold them accountable. If you have such a friend, count yourself blessed. Small groups and Bible studies are a great way meet such people.

Jan Zimmerman, Children's Ministries Director

Day 33

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 23:16-2 Chronicles 35:15

"People of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that he may return to you who are left, who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. ⁷ Do not be like your fathers and brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD, the God of their fathers, so that he made them an object of horror, as you see. ⁸ Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were; submit to the LORD. Come to the sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you. ⁹ If you return to the LORD, then your brothers and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will come back to this land, for the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him."

The kings within these verses were very inconsistent in the ways of following God, but Hezekiah reminds us that we can choose to turn around. We can U-turn and **start to have** a faith that we can call our own. Returning to God has its challenges, but most lie within our own pride. A college student told me this great expression "God can't guide a parked car." Maybe forgiving yourself and knowing God forgives you, will allow you to move forward on your own faith journey.

Harlan Harper, Youth Ministries Director

Day 34

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 35:16-Ezra 10:44

Ezra writes about the return of two groups of exiles from Babylon to the Promised Land. He gives God the credit for working through various rulers and circumstances to bring God's people home. As you read this book, take heart that the God of faithfulness always gives us a second chance to trust and follow the Lord. God will give us what we need to make our life count for the Lord. In Ezra 3:11-13, the people sang with praise and thanksgiving as they saw the foundation of the house of the Lord laid and finished. *He is good; his love to Israel endures forever.* The older priests and Levites wept in thanks and remembrance of the previous house of the Lord. No one could distinguish the sounds of joy and the sounds of weeping. But it blended together!

Growing older brings with it many problems...failing health, broken families, body aches, and heartaches. But adversity should never be the glue that holds us in relationship with the Lord. On the other hand, adversity should never separate us from the love of God nor from our joy in the Lord. **Is your joy in the Lord waning? Are you allowing despair about our aging and our problems to get between you and the Lord?** If your answer to either question is yes, then we would do well to say, "Get behind me, Satan!" As we move through life growing in fellowship with the Lord, our joy should become more and more full, even if our joy must sometimes be clouded by a film of physical or mental pain.

May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: Rejoice! Philipians 4:4.

Molly Jones, Associate Pastor for Discipleship

Day 35

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:1-Nehemiah 13:14

Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall of Jerusalem

When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

Nehemiah 6:16

This little book in the bible has great significance as it marks that time in history when the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt and God's law and covenant with his people are reestablished. Nehemiah went to Jerusalem in 444 B.C. where Ezra, the priest, had served the past 14 years. He came as the civil governor, with authority from the king of Persia to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and to make it once again a fortified city. By that time, the Jews had been home nearly 100 years, but they had made little progress beyond rebuilding the temple because whenever they would start work on the walls, their more powerful neighbors would intimidate them. These enemies vehemently opposed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and mobilized their armies against the Jews. But Nehemiah, with faith in God, skillfully armed and arranged his men and went straight ahead with the work, day and night. In spite of all obstacles, the wall was finished in only 52 days. Almost a century and a half after its destruction in 586 B.C., Jerusalem was once again a fortified city. Nehemiah went on to establish religious reform and dedicate the wall binding the people to walk according to God's Law.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer, patriotism, action, courage and perseverance. His first impulse in all circumstances was to pray and honor God with all his heart, soul and mind. If there are sacred walls that need rebuilding in your life, give it up to God. Earnestly seek His will and ask for the wisdom, strength and guidance to re-build in spite of enemies that may surround you. In the end God will be glorified and all will see His good works through you.

Robyn Hartfield, Music Director