

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

1 CHRONICLES 1-10

“Time-out” is a child discipline technique that’s often recommended by pediatric doctors and child psychologists as an alternative to *spanking*.

When a child misbehaves you isolate him for a period of time. He calms down. You calm down. The child can think about his actions. The parent can form a plan of discipline. I have no problems with “time-out”... There’s no question it’s biblical.

In fact, the Bible teaches both *spanking* and *time-out*.

2 Kings closes with the sacking of Jerusalem – and the burning of its walls and Temple. The Jews got a good *spanking*. But then God placed them in *time-out* for 70 years. The Babylonians carted them off to a foreign land. And during their *time-out* in Babylon they got to think. They cultivated a hatred for idolatry. A longing for God was rekindled in their hearts. God was preparing the Jews for a new start...

It’s been said, “Sometimes you don’t appreciate what you’ve got until it’s lost.”

That was the case with Judah before God’s judgment and their exile.

Their new start became a reality when the Babylonians fell to the Persians in 536 BC. The Persian king, Cyrus, issued a decree allowing the Jews to return home, and rebuild their Temple... But this return was tough... the city was in rubble - the land barren. The Jews who came home literally had to

start over...

One of the exiles who returned to Jerusalem was a priest named Ezra.

Ezra tried to encourage his fellow Jews by writing a *Chronicle* of their history.

He highlighted how God worked in the past - *and His plan wasn't finished*. Ezra got the Jews excited about their *future* by reminding them of their *glorious past*.

You'll notice immediately that Chronicles repeats much of the material in 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings – *but from a different slant*. For the most part 1 and 2 Chronicles ignores northern kingdom of Israel, and spotlights exclusively on Judah in the south. 1 and 2 Kings flip-flopped back and forth between the two neighbors, but Chronicles deals with Judah, and the kings of the Davidic dynasty.

1 and 2 Chronicles were penned to encourage a defeated people to start over!

And we too would do well to chronicle the wonderful ways God intervenes in our lives. Often we forget God's work – especially the little, daily miracles. We're wise to keep a chronicle – *a journal* – to remind ourselves of God's faithfulness.

1 Chronicles begins with the genealogy of the tribe of Judah.

Before a person can decide *what to do* it's helpful to decide *who they are*. The sequence is always... "Identity shapes attitude - then attitude shapes action."

Proverbs 23:7 says it this way, "For as (a man) thinks in his

heart, so is he.”

How you see yourself will determine how you live your life. If you see yourself in Christ - as a saved and sealed child of God - you'll seek to live like one. But if you see yourself in limbo, or apart from God, you'll wander away – you'll drift.

I've got an interesting picture. It's a cat looking at itself in a mirror – but the image reflected back off the mirror is that of a lion. The caption reads, “**What matters most is how you see yourself.**” That picture is not *lying!* It's true.

The symbol of the tribe of Judah was a lion.

The defeated and deflated Jews who returned to the land felt like a kitty cat - but in God's eyes they were still a lion. Ezra begins with a genealogy intended to remind God's people that lion-hearted blood still flowed through their veins.

Hey, our own personal comebacks get derailed when we feel a little kittenish— when fear causes us to shrink from a challenge. But if we're truly in Christ it's time to let the real cat out of the bag! *Hey, the lion of the tribe of Judah lives in you.*

In America the melting pot, the first 9 chapters might seem like nothing, but *a bunch of boring begots!* For some people researching their genealogical records are a fun past-time, but in our country your lineage doesn't determine much.

Not so though with the Jews - genealogies were extremely significant.

First of all, it was **your link to the land.** Joshua divided the land among families. A person's tribal identity was their title deed to where they could settle and live.

Second, in the case of the Levites, **occupation** was determined by pedigree. Only members of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests in the Temple.

Third, **the throne of Israel was determined by genealogy**. The ultimate ruler of all the Earth - the *Messiah* - is to be a descendant of David. Thus, the genealogy in 1 Chronicles is important in tracing the lineage of Jesus, and His right to rule.

1 Chronicles begins, “**Adam, Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.**” Noah’s three sons.

Verses 1-4 cover about 1500 years - from the creation to after the flood...

Remember Adam lived 930 years. Evidently, conditions before the flood allowed people to live long ages. That starts to change with Noah’s family.

Verses 5-28 trace the lineage of Noah’s 3 sons.

Verses 5-7 lists Japheth’s sons... **Gomer** fathered the Germanic tribes - **Magog**, Russia – **Madai**, the Medes and Persians - **Javan** Greece – **Tubal** the Turks.

Verses 8-16 track Ham’s offspring... **Cush** apparently branched off into two families – **Nimrod** fathered the Babylonians. And **Cush** is also associated with the Ethiopia. **Mizraim** were the Egyptians. **Put** was Libya. And the **Canaanites** were the people who inhabited Israel before God gave the land to the Hebrews.

Verses 17-28 speak of the sons of Shem... **Elam** fathered the Persians - **Asshur** the Assyrians – **Arphaxad** was the ancestor of Abram and Israel.

Noah's three sons fathered the earth's three major people groups...

Japheth fathered the Caucasian peoples. **Shem** sired the Oriental groups, including the Hebrews. And the descendants of **Ham** migrated to Africa.

Verse 19 is intriguing, **“To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided...”** Scientists today hypothesize that the Earth was once one land mass. They even have a name for it - **“Pangea”**.

I believe after the global flood of Noah's day - massive run-offs and erosion and underwater explosions - caused the continents to break apart - and drift from each other. This may be what Ezra mentions here. It occurred at the time of **“Peleg”** - a name which means **“division”**. Before the flood the Earth was one super-continent.

Go home and look at a globe. Today's continents look like pieces to a puzzle that were meant to fit together. This could even explain how animals and people made it to the new world. They were here before the continents broke apart.

Do you know *the shortest verse in the Bible*? John 11:35, **“Jesus wept.”**

What's *the shortest verse in the Old Testament*? 1 Chronicles 1:25, **“Eber, Peleg, Reu...”** Notice the name **“Eber”** – this is the root of the word, **“Hebrews”** - the name that was later given to the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

1 Chronicles 1:1-29 takes us from Adam to Abraham - about 4000 years.

The rest of chapter 1 focuses on the family of Abraham. Remember his original name was “Abram”, but God changed it to “Abraham” or “father of many nations.”

Not only were the Israelites descendents of Abraham, but so were many of the nations scattered across the Middle East. Ishmael and the Arabs – the Midianites and Edomites – even Sheba and Dedan – tribes of the Arabian Peninsula were Abraham’s descendents. Queen of Sheba and Solomon were distant relatives.

Notice too, verse 44, among the kings of Edom was a man named “Jobab”. It’s possible – I think probable - this is the same man the Bible calls “Job”.

Chapter 2 begins with Abraham’s 12 great-grandsons. Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, Jacob - *whose name was changed to Israel* - begot 12 sons...

Verse 1, “These were the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.” Ezra provides us the genealogy of each tribe, and the boundaries of their territory.

Verse 3 starts to list the family of Judah.

Follow the genealogy down to verse 12 and you find a man named Jesse. He had seven sons... the youngest of which was a shepherd boy named David.

Of course, David became king of Israel – and heir to the promised Messiah.

One other of the sons of Judah gets special treatment in chapter 2...

Caleb was one of 12 spies Moses sent to scope out the land. Ten of the spies brought back gloom and doom. Victory was impossible. There were giants in the land! Only Caleb and Joshua believed in God. Their positive assessment was laced with faith. Israel could take the land if they trusted in their mighty God.

Verse 18-55 traces the genealogy of Caleb's family.

Chapter 3:1-9 lists David's immediate family. David had 7 wives, 19 sons, and 1 daughter. We're told in verse 4 he reigned 7½ years in Hebron over the tribe of Judah, and 33 years in Jerusalem over a united kingdom of all 12 tribes.

David's reign became Israel's Golden Age.

Verse 5 mentions the four sons born to David in Jerusalem by his wife, **Bathshua**, or *Bathsheba*... "**Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon...**"

It's interesting that you find nothing in Chronicles about David's adultery with Bathsheba. Not the death of the son they sired, or the moral decline it caused within David's family. Amnon's rape of Tamar, the rebellion of Absalom, and David's forced exodus from Jerusalem, even the coup attempt by Adonijah – are conspicuously missing from Ezra's account of Judah's history.

Only two of David's failures appear in Chronicles... *the mistake he makes in his initial attempt at bringing the Ark to Jerusalem - and his sin of ordering a census.*

And some people might accuse Ezra of a cover-up... but recall his purpose!

Ezra writes to encourage a terribly defeated people. The Jews didn't need to be reminded of their failures – they'd spent 70 years in exile as punishment for their sin. Ezra's readers needed *a pick-me-up!* They needed to focus on the positive.

This is true of any person who's truly repentant. Some pastors think it's their duty to constantly remind people of how sorry they are. Hey, we know how sorry and sinful we are. We need encouragement to get our eyes off our failures, and focus on what Jesus has done for us. *We need to see ourselves in Christ.*

Tommy and Sally were visiting grandpa and grandma's farm. As they walked around the barnyard Tommy decided to tryout his new slingshot. He whipped the slingshot over his head and let the rock fly. It struck grandma's favorite goose and killed him. He panicked. He wanted to keep it a secret so he hid it in the woodpile.

After dinner that night Grandma said, "Sally let's wash dishes." Sally turned to Tommy and whispered "Remember that duck." She turned to Grandma and said, "Tommy said he wanted to help you with the dishes." Tommy did the dishes.

Later that night Grandpa decided to go fishing and asked Tommy if he wanted to go. Susan leaned over and said, "Remember that duck." Tommy responded, "Grandpa, I'm tired. Why don't you take Sally." Sally went fishing.

Tommy couldn't stand it. He couldn't keep living this way.

The next morning he went to his grandma and confessed his dastardly deed. His grandma said, “Sweetheart, I was looking through the window when you killed the goose. Because I love you, I’ve already forgiven you. I was just waiting to see how long you’d let Sally make you her slave.”

This is the question God is asking of some of us. He’s forgiven us already. We need to accept His forgiveness, and stop letting the devil make us his slave.

Here’s the good news I take from this genealogy - the heir to David’s throne, King Solomon, God’s chosen successor – was born to the adulteress, Bathsheba.

It was God’s way of redeeming David’s sinful slide.

Yes, God hated their sin - and it was costly to David. The son conceived on that adulterous night died shortly after birth. But the glorious truth about God’s forgiveness is that it lets us pick up at the point of repentance, and start over.

This is what Ezra wants to point out to the post-exiled Jews. If you can start over after *Bathsheba*... you can start over after *Babylon*. *As a matter of fact, you can start over after anything!* Never forget our God is *the God of another chance*.

The latter half of chapter 3 is strategic because it traces the descendants of David through the sons of a man named “**Zerubbabel**” – in verse 19.

This was the leader of the Jews who returned from Babylon.

Here, Ezra makes a vital link between the descendants of David before the exile, and the Jews who returned after the exile. *The 70 years Judah spent in Babylon didn’t interfere with the lineage of David and God’s promises to him.*

Chapters 4-7 list the genealogies of all 12 tribes... and it starts with Judah.

Let's pick it up in 4:5, "Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hopher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah. The sons of Helah were Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan; and Koz (Notice somebody's cousin was named Koz - a cuz named Koz)

Koz begot Anub, Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum."

Verse 9 "Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain."

And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested." I love this... Ezra is listing of hundreds of names – name after name – and he chooses to give one man gets special mention... *and for what reason?*

What great deed did Jabez do to get singled out from the crowd? He prayed!

Hey, Jabez never built a Temple, or killed a giant, or worked a miracle, but he got extra ink – special mention in the Word of God - because he prayed. We're told Jabez "called on the God of Israel." Apparently, the deeds of his brothers were not nearly as noteworthy in God's eyes than the content of his prayer.

The name “Jabez” means “he causes pain.” Maybe his mom had an extremely tough time in the labor and delivery. When the doc asked, “What’s his name?” She thought he said, “How’s the pain?” – and she named him *Jabez*, “he causes pain”.

One of my favorite songs is by Johnny Cash, entitled, “A Boy named Sue”.

You remember the song, “Some gal would giggle and I'd get red, and some guy would laugh and I'd bust his head; I tell you, life ain't easy for a boy named Sue.” I, of all people can relate... it ain't much better for a boy named “Sandy”...

And by the way, just make sure you spell Sandy with a “Y” not an “IE”.

However Jabez got his unusual name, he did all he could to live it down. His prayer reflects his desire to be a blessing to folks, rather than a source of pain.

Verse 10 tells us how he prayed, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed...” In other words, “Lord, bless me a bunch.” “Mercy drops round me are falling, but oh, for the showers I plead.” *Did you know you could ask God to bless you?*

Sometimes we ask God to bless everyone else, but us. Jabez understood he won’t be much of a blessing to others unless he receives God’s blessing on him.

He also prays, “Enlarge my territory...” Jabez wants his life to count for God in the greatest way possible. He asks God for more influence – more responsibility.

And “that Your hand would be with me...” Jabez

understands he won't go far if he's limited to his own resources. He prays for God's strong hand to be upon him.

“And that You would keep me from evil...” **“Lord, protect me from myself – and my own weaknesses. Don't let me succumb to evil in my attempts to do good...”**

Jabez prays, “God, bless me a bunch... expand my borders... fill me with spiritual power... protect me from evil... **that I may not cause pain!**”

And notice what Ezra adds, **“So God granted him what he requested.”**

If you're looking for a prayer to pray, look no further. The prayer of Jabez is a prayer you know God will answer – because He's answered it before.

Verse 11 picks back up with the brothers of Judah and Jabez, **“Chelub the brother of Shuhah begot Mehir, who was the father of Eshton”** and on it goes...

Here's a trivia question... **What verse in the Bible contains all every letter of the alphabet except “X”?** Answer, **1 Chronicles 4:10**. Check when you go home...

Look at verse 22, **“also Jokim, the men of Chozeba, and Joash; Saraph, who ruled in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. Now the records are ancient.”** 1 Chronicles became the national archives of the nation Israel. To us we go through these chapters - picking and gleaning and looking for a nugget here and there.

But Ezra provided Israel a vital service by documenting these genealogies.

Verse 24 begins the genealogy of “The sons of Simeon...”

Chapter 5 contains the genealogies of the three tribes that took their inheritance east of the Jordan River - verses 1-10 the tribe of Reuben - verses 11-22, tribe of Gad - verses 23-26 the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Look at what’s said of the 2½ east of the Jordan. “The sons of Reuben, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh had 44,760 valiant men, men able to bear shield and sword, to shoot with the bow, and skillful in war, who went to war.

They made war with the Hagarites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab.

And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all who were with them, for they cried out to God in the battle.

He heeded their prayer, because they put their trust in Him.

Then they took away their livestock – 50,000 of their camels, 250,000 of their sheep, and 2000 of their donkeys - also 100,000 of their men; for many fell dead, because the war was God's. And they dwelt in their place until the captivity.” If you’re a pacifist this might cause you to squirm... “the war was God’s.”

Hey, there is such a thing as a righteous war. Some military campaigns are not only necessary - they are within the will of God - a battle God wants fought.

The rest of 1 Chronicles 5 describes how Israel East – the tribes east of the Jordan fell into idolatry and were destroyed

by Tiglath-Pileser and Assyria.

Chapter 6 begins, “**The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.**” These were the three divisions of priests that made up the tribe of Levi...

And for review, do you remember each family’s responsibility? The *Kohathites* carried the Tabernacle **furniture**... *Gershon* the **fabric**... and *Merari* the **frame**...

Verse 31 begins an interesting genealogy. “**Now these are the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest. They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order.**

And these are the ones who ministered with their sons...

Of the sons of the Kohathites were Heman the singer... Then drop down to verse 39, “And his brother Asaph, who stood at his right hand....” Then move to verse 44, “Their brethren, the sons of Merari, on the left hand, were Ethan...”

These verses record the genealogy of the three priestly divisions established by David to do music in the house of God - the sons of **Heman** (You can read one of Heman’s songs in Psalm 88), the sons of **Asaph** (Asaph wrote 12 of the 150 Hebrew psalms), and the sons of **Ethan** (who was responsible for Psalm 89).

What a great job to get! These guys were paid to just hang out in the Temple and fill the place with praise! David knew

the priority of praise and worship.

Verse 49, “But Aaron and his sons offered sacrifices on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense, for all the work of the Most Holy Place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.” Aaron was Israel’s first High Priest. His sons succeeded him.

“Now these are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, Bukki his son, Uzzi his son (*he carried a machine gun*), Zerahiah his son, Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, Zadok his son, and Ahimaaz his son.” There were 12 High Priests from the Exodus to Exile – over 900 years.

Chapter 6 ends with a list of 48 Levitical cities.

The Levites were the one tribe that didn’t receive a territory. *The Lord not the land* was their inheritance. Levi lived in towns throughout the other tribes.

Notice, 1 Chronicles 6 has 81 verses. Just for fun, can you name the two other chapters in the Bible that have more verses than 1 Chronicles 6?

Psalm 119, 176 verses - Numbers 7, 89 verses

Chapter 7:1-5 lists the genealogy of Issachar - verses 6-12, Benjamin – verses 13, Naphtali – verses 14-19, West Bank Manasseh – Verses 20-29, Ephraim.

Verse 27 mentions Joshua as one of the sons of Ephraim. And verses 30-40 lists the final tribe, “The sons of Asher...”

The two tribes whose genealogies are missing are Zebulun and Dan...

Chapter 8 is a more exhaustive listing of the genealogy of the tribe of Benjamin. King Saul, Israel's first king, was a Benjamite. Chapter 8 is Saul's genealogy.

Saul's father Kish, and his four sons, Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Eth-Baal are mentioned in verse 33. Eth-Baal was also called, *Ishbosheth*.

You'll remember, after Saul died, Ishbosheth ruled the northern tribes for a brief period of time before David took over and consolidated the kingdom.

Chapter 9, "So all Israel was recorded by genealogies, and indeed, they were inscribed in the book of the kings of Israel. But Judah was carried away captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness. And the first inhabitants who dwelt in their possessions in their cities were Israelites, priests, Levites, and the Nethinim."

The "Nethinim" were servants who worked in the Temple – who were not among the Levites or Priests. They were like *Adrian – a summer intern*.

Between verses 1 and 2 there's a time lapse of 70 years. Ezra skips over Judah's time in Babylon – and focuses on the first Jews to return to Judah.

Understand Judah was deported to Babylon in 3 waves, and they return in 3 waves. The *first return* was led by **Zerubbabel**. His goal was the rebuilding of the Temple. The *second return* was led by **Ezra**. Ezra the priest wanted to

rebuild the people. And the *third wave* was led by **Nehemiah** – who rebuilt the walls.

Chapter 9 describes those who came back to Judah with Zerubbabel.

Verse 3 “**Now in Jerusalem the children of Judah dwelt, and some of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh...**”

And he provides a list of names... 956 people settled in Jerusalem.

A large contingent of priests also returned...Verse 13 gives us a total and a description, “**... 1,760. They were very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.**” The Temple was still in rubble, but these pioneering priests were ready to serve. They came back to Jerusalem with their shirt-sleeves rolled up.

Verses 14-16 list the names of the Levites who returned.

Verse 17 lists the gatekeepers... and notice it says, “**Shallum was the chief.**” The gatekeepers were like ushers, and evidently Shallum was *the head usher*.

Let’s read in verse 18, “**Until then they had been gatekeepers for the camps of the children of Levi at the King's Gate on the east. Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren, from his father's house, the Korahites, were in charge of the work of the service, gatekeepers of the tabernacle.**”

Their fathers had been keepers of the entrance to the camp of the LORD.

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar had been the officer over them in time past; the LORD was with him. Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was keeper of the door of the tabernacle of meeting. All those chosen as gatekeepers were 212.

They were recorded by their genealogy, in their villages. David and Samuel the seer had appointed them to their trusted office. So they and their children were in charge of the gates of the house of the LORD, the house of the tabernacle, by assignment. The gatekeepers were assigned to the four directions: the east, west, north, and south. And their brethren in their villages had to come with them from time to time for 7 days. For in this trusted office were four chief gatekeepers; they were Levites. And they had charge over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God. And they lodged all around the house of God because they had the responsibility, and they were in charge of opening it every morning.

In 1 Chronicles 9:17-27 Ezra discusses the ministry of Temple gatekeepers.

Ushers and greeters are the modern day version of the gatekeepers. If you're an usher or greeter you play a vital role. You pave the way - prime the pump – for folks when they enter our church to worship. You're their first impression.

Gatekeepers were also trouble-shooters. They anticipated needs, and dealt with any distractions before they interfered with the flow of worshippers moving in and out of the Temple. This is also the function of our ushers and greeters...

I want you to notice six points about the gatekeepers...

First, it was **a needed position**. Thousands of worshippers

came to the temple daily. During feasts the numbers swelled to tens of thousands. And there were numerous gates. Folks came from various angles. There was much to oversee.

Second, it was **a coordinated position**. Verse 17 tells us they had a chief gatekeeper named “**Shallum**”. Verse 23 says their tasks were carried out “**by assignment**”. They had a schedule. Verse 24 indicates they were assigned a specific direction to cover – “**east, west, north, and south**” – *sanctuary, foyer, children’s ministry, and playground*. Hey, they were organized for ministry.

Third, it was **an important position**. Both verses 22 and 26 call the role a “**trusted office**”. Gatekeepers represented God. The job was a sacred trust.

Verse 21 calls the gatekeeper the “**keeper of the door**”. He had a heavy roll to play. *You got into the Temple or you were escorted out of the Temple* by the gatekeeper. The same is true at CCSM – get rowdy, heckle the pastor, create too great a disturbance – and the church ushers will show you the door.

Fourth, it was **an honored position**. Verse 19 says the gatekeepers were part of a heritage. They followed in their father’s footsteps. Being a gatekeeper was like going to the same college as your dad and granddad - you were part of a legacy.

These guys grew up looking forward to the privilege of being a gatekeeper.

Fifth, it's **a responsible position**. Verse 26 says “**they had charge**” – which means they were given authority to make decisions. Verse 27 tells us it was their duty to open up every morning. The city started on their cue.

Notice too, “**they lodged all around the house of God because they had the responsibility**”. The obligation the gatekeepers felt toward their ministry was so strong they moved so they could live near-by the Temple just to be available.

Sixth, it was **a spiritual position**. Verse 20 mentions Phineas, the first leader of this order, and here's what is said of him, “**the LORD was with him.**” Guys, to be a good gatekeeper you need to be empowered by the Lord. You need the joy, and discernment, and patience, and love. Gatekeepers need the Spirit of God.

Hey, those of you who usher and greet at Calvary Chapel have joined the ranks of the ancient gatekeepers. Be sure to live up to their high standards.

I'll never forget the event that upped-the-ante forever on what it means to be an usher at Calvary Chapel. When John Kalmer was asked to usher he took it as a great honor – so much so, that when John died suddenly and unexpectedly, his wife, Mary Lou, chose to bury his body in his usher's shirt. Our ushers served as John's pallbearers. From that day until now being a gatekeeper at CCSM is like being a Marine, or a Navy Seal. Those usher shirts are a badge of respect.

I get the impression that's the way it was among the Temple gatekeepers.

Verse 28, “Now some of them were in charge of the serving vessels, for they brought them in and took them out by count.” They handled communion trays.

“Some of (the gatekeepers) were appointed over the furnishings and over all the implements of the sanctuary (They moved chairs around - and brought the big ladder into the sanctuary whenever a stage light blew a bulb.), and over the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the incense and the spices. And some of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices.” In other words, it was the gatekeeper’s job to change out the deodorizers in the restrooms – *the spices*.

“Mattithiah of the Levites, the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, had the trusted office over the things that were baked in the pans.” In our church it’s not the Levites – it’s the Lisa-ites that are in charge of “*things baked in the pans*.”

Verse 32 “And some of their brethren of the sons of the Kohathites were in charge of preparing the showbread for every Sabbath.

These are the singers, heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites, who lodged in the chambers, and were free from other duties; for they were employed in that work day and night.” What a great situation. Musicians were on the payroll to do nothing but sing and praise the Lord. The Temple was always filled with praise.

The rest of chapter 9 - verses 35-44 - once more recounts Saul’s family tree.

The death of Israel's first king is the topic of chapter 10...

“Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons.

And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was wounded by the archers. Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and abuse me."

He was afraid the long time nemesis would torture him as they did Samson. He wants his armorbearer – his personal bodyguard – to go ahead and kill him.

“But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid.” By this point Saul was a pathetic figure, but he was still king. “Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died. So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together.”

2 Samuel 1 indicates Saul's suicide attempt may've failed. His death was hastened by an Amalekite who happened to be near him at the time.

“And when all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that they had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; then the Philistines came and dwelt in them.” It was a low point for the nation Israel.

“So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to

strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. And they stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news in the temple of their idols and among the people.

Then they put his armor in the temple of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.” They mocked the king of Israel and his God.

1 Samuel 31 tells us the Philistines nailed his body to the wall at Bet Shan.

Verse 11 “And when all Jabesh Gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons; and they brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted 7 days.” Out of respect for a king of Israel they invaded Bet Shan, and took back Saul’s body, so they could give it a decent burial.

Verse 13 “So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.”

Notice it wasn’t the Philistines that killed Saul. It was his own disobedience.

Saul died at the hand of God. His death was punishment for his unfaithfulness to the Lord. Rather than seek God for

guidance, Saul consulted with a witch.

It reminds me of a line by comedian Dennis Miller. He said, “And believe me, you do not want to get a thumbs-down from the person who created thumbs...”

If Saul were here he would echo that sentiment.

It’s interesting that once Ezra gets done with his genealogies – he begins his chronicles of the history of Judah – not with Saul’s life, but with Saul’s death.

In reality, Saul’s end was Israel’s beginning.

Israel became great – not under the reign of Saul, but under the reign of his successor – *a man after God’s own heart...*

“David the son of Jesse.”