

## I CHRONICLES

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Chronicles chapter 23 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we move into chapter 23 tonight we will see David getting his house in order, putting things in place so that after he dies there will be order. It will not be a free-for all you might say. And David deals with the religious things and the civil things and the military things as we will see. Thus, with that said, let's begin reading what David will do in I Chronicles chapter 23, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening.

### I CHRONICLES 23

#### VERSES 1-2

1. Here we see that David was "**full of days**" and to put that in our vernacular, he was old and he knew his life was coming to an end. One of the things he does, dealing with the civil issues, is he makes Solomon king. Now I don't believe that David stepped down, but keep in mind that David had other sons and he wanted them and the nation to know who he appointed as king and that was his son Solomon. You can read of a failed attempt to usurp the throne from Solomon in I Kings chapter 1 as David's son, Adonijah tried to step in and make himself the king. Thus, this was an important statement by David letting others know his wishes when he does die, that Solomon is to be the king!

2. In regards to the religious aspects, David gathered the leaders in Israel, the priests and the Levities together to help organize the building of the Temple under Solomon. And not only the building of the Temple but the things the religious leaders were to do once the Temple was built. So let's read on and see what David is doing as he prepares to hand the kingdom over to his son Solomon.

### VERSES 3-6

1. Here we see David re-establish that the Levities service began at the age of 30, according to Numbers 4:1-3, and they retired from service at the age of 50. And as they numbered them there were 38,000 Levites and they were to serve in specific areas in the Temple. We see 24,000 looking after the work of the Lord. The Temple would be a busy place and these men were to maintain the Temple, keep things in working order you might say. We see 6,000 as officers and judges and the reason for this is that the Levites were also civil servants you might say. They handled the decisions, governmental records, administrative things and-so-on. Then there were 4,000 who were gatekeepers or they were the security for the Temple. And David had a worship team made up of 4,000 people, not bad! And their focus was to praise the Lord and to minister to the people through music!

2. And then in verse 6 we see David break down the Levites into three groups, the Gershonites, the Kohathites, and the Merarites and we will see their ministry spoken of in the next several verses of this chapter. Keep in mind that during the wilderness wanderings they had specific duties to tear down and set up the Tabernacle. Now, with the permanent Temple structure, their duties changed a little.

#### VERSES 7-11

1. The Gershonites took care of the skins that covered the tabernacle and thus, the tabernacle was not going to be moved any longer and their responsibility in the Temple has changed to meet the new demands.

#### VERSES 12-13

1. Here we see the Kohathites and specifically Moses and Aaron in this section. And it is through Aaron that the priests would come from. You see, just because you were a Levite did not make you a priest; you had to be from the family of Aaron! So all priests were Levites but not all Levites were priest!

And notice the focus of their ministry. They were to sanctify the most holy things or they were to have a concern for holiness. They needed to know what was holy and what was not and to bring this before the people.

They were to burn incense before the Lord, which is a picture of intercessory prayer. It is as F. B. Meyer wrote, “The fragrant incense stealing heavenward is a beautiful emblem of intercessory prayer. Let us pray more, not for ourselves so much as for others. This is the sign of grown in grace, when our prayers are fragrant with the names of friend and foe, and mingled with the coals of the golden altar.”

They were to minister to God and that may seem very obvious, but as busy as ministry can get, you can serve the people and be too busy for ministering to God yourself!

And lastly, they were to bless the Lord, bless His name forever! And that blessing then was to be given to the people, to bless them in the name of the Lord. Remember how the Lord instructed Moses to bless the people and he said in Numbers 6:24-26, “**The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.**” It is as F. B. Meyer wrote regarding our blessing people, “It is not enough to linger in soft prayer within the veil, we must come forward to bless mankind. He who is nearest to God is closest to man.”

The Bible tells us in I Peter 2:9-10, **“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”** So then, since we are called a priesthood in that we bring people to God and we bring God to the people, we too should have a concern for holiness, knowing what is right and what is wrong. We should be in intercessory prayer for people. We should take that time of personal devotion, worship, spending time with God ourselves. And we should bring the blessings of God to the people!

#### VERSES 14-20

1. Here we have the rest of the Kohathites and their function in the Tabernacle was the care of the furniture, including the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of Showbread, the Oil Burning Lamp, and-so-on. And again, they were not going to be moving the Tabernacle any longer and thus, their responsibility in the Temple has changed to meet the new demands.

#### VERSES 21-23

1. And here we have the Merarites and they took care of the structural aspects of the tabernacle, the pillars and boards and-so-on. And thus, their responsibility in the Temple has changed to meet the new demands.

VERSES 24-26

1. Now this is interesting because we were told that the age for the Levites to begin ministry was 30 years of age and now we see David lower the age of entering the ministry to 20. Why did David do this? Because now the work was so great and he wants to give each man an opportunity to serve the Lord to the fullest. During their wilderness wanderings things were simple, and not as many workers were needed, but now that all has changed.

2. I see that happening today. As we get closer to the Lord's return, the work is great, and God is putting people in ministry without the several years of Bible College and internships. It is more of a on the job training you might say. I see that with my own life, that God is training me on a daily basis. I am an unlearned and uneducated man by the world's standards, and even by the standards of some in the church. At times I am almost embarrassed to tell people that I have no schooling, no formal Bible training. And then I remember what was said of those who followed after Jesus by those who were schooled, those who were highly educated. In Acts 4:13 we read, "**Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.**"

Do you see what the key to their ministry was? It was that they had been with Jesus and that is the key for all of our lives, for whatever ministry the Lord has us in. And folk's, there is much work to do and so we need to get started. But we must remember that we must be in His will in all that we do. We must put His Word and prayer as a priority in our life, and He will equip us. Do you believe that? I hope you do because Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**" Never forget that fact and you will do great things for the Lord!

#### VERSES 27-32

1. Here again we see that the work was too much for the priests to do by themselves and the Levites came alongside to assist in this work. Not offering the sacrifices, for that was specifically for the priests, but to help them in the work. How important that is even today as there are those that come alongside the pastor to assist in the work of the ministry because the work is too much for just one man!

### **I CHRONICLES 24**

#### VERSES 1-6

1. Keep in mind that it was the family of Aaron that was the priestly line, and from this we have 24 divisions and each of those divisions was to serve for 2 weeks. Then, at the end of their 2 week service they would return home and minister from there. Remember that the Levites were spread out in 48 cities throughout the land of Israel so that no man was more than a day's journey from one of these cities.

2. Also, keep in mind that Nadab and Abihu were struck dead by the Lord because they brought strange fire before the Lord and thus, they had no children.

#### VERSES 7-19

1. Here we see listed the names of those in the priesthood that were divided up by lot into 24 sections to serve before the Lord for those two weeks.

#### VERSES 20-30

1. Here we see the rest of the Levites being organized for service, the sons of Levi that were not from the priestly line of Aaron.

#### VERSE 31

1. Here we see that lots were cast for this service unto the Lord and it was not based upon age or importance, but how the lot fell. It is as Morgan put it, "There was a tactful mingling in the arrangement of the older and the younger men, so that in this highest and holiest national service the experience of age and the enthusiasm of youth were naturally inspiring." I like that because you have the wisdom of the older men working with the enthusiasm of the young men and all are benefiting and bringing glory to God!



## I CHRONICLES 25

### VERSES 1-4

1. Here we see David assemble the 4,000 Levitical worship people in their service unto the Lord. Now in verse 1 it speaks of these musicians prophesying and that may seem kind of strange. I think we see it that way because we put such a low value or importance upon worship, but David understood the importance and God blessed them as they did worship Him.

You see, when it speaks of them prophesying with harps and-so-on please understand what the Scriptures are saying here. When we speak of prophecy we tend to think along the lines of foretelling or speaking of future events, which they may have done through music. But the other point regarding prophecy is that it is forthtelling or just speaking forth the things of God and they were doing it through their music.

In I Corinthians 14:3 we read “**But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.**” You mean worship songs can speak forth the Words of God? They should and that is something that I think we miss many times in worship today. Worship songs tend to be about us and they truly should focus upon God for as we sing unto God these songs, God is speaking to us! Worship songs should minister to our hearts, they should build us up, they should encourage us, they should comfort us, as we focus back on the Lord and even correct us! And what a joy it is when God gives you a new song as He touches your heart, and then you share that new song with us. God can and does speak to our hearts through worship!

I like the way that Morgan put it in regards to music speaking forth the Words of God to people. He wrote, “This work of praise is thrice described by a somewhat singular, and, in this connection, arresting word, ‘prophecy.’ The use of this word here is a revelation of the true value of the service of music in the sanctuary of God.” May we not negate or downplay the importance of worship music in our lives!

#### VERSES 5-6

1. There are churches today where the worship leader or the worship people tell the pastor what they are going to do and if they run long with worship, the pastor has to run short on his teaching. No way! What I want you to see here is that this was not some chaotic free for all, and everyone was doing their own thing. It was not that the worship people dictated what was going on. David was overseeing this ministry, keeping things in order and moving in the right direction. Yes, Heman was the leader, but it was David who ultimately was in charge.

That is the correct perspective to have. Now let me say this and you may agree with me or not, you may think I am wrong but I don't think scripturally I am. The buck stops with me folks. And what I mean is that every ministry must go through me because I am ultimately responsible for it. I know, you may not think that is right or fair, but when things go bad or wrong, guess who people are going to come to? You guessed right, me and not you and thus, I need to be aware of what is going on and I have the ultimate say in the matter because I am not only responsible before you but before the Lord! And just to show you I don't play favoritism, my wife has to come to me and ask me if it is okay if she does anything for the women's ministry. I have had elders ask if they can start a program and I am thankful that they understand my role here and they don't just do what they want. But there are those that are like a loose cannon out there that do their own thing and that is a hard one for me. I am less likely to agree with someone that has that heart attitude. David was in charge of the worship people and he may not have been a good singer, but he was the leader!

#### VERSES 7-31

1. Again we see here the casting of lots for the work of the worship ministry. It was left into the hands of God to divide them up for their service of two weeks a year. And once again notice the equality here, everyone was in the same basket you might say when the lot was cast, no one got an advantage and in the end, they all were blessed.

**I CHRONICLES 26****VERSES 1-19**

1. No we might not think that a gatekeeper is that important but is there any job, any service for the Lord this is too menial or small for us to do, too unimportant? Absolutely not for if the Lord has called us to do it, then it must be important! In fact, it is a privilege to serve the Lord in any capacity! You see, it is as the Psalmist said in Psalm 84:10, **“For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”** May we not forget that or lose sight of that fact!

You see, the gatekeepers were responsible in keeping out those that did not belong in the Temple area and to allow those who did belong in. They were to keep a sense of holiness and keep out the wicked you might say and thus, they were the security for the Temple.

Today the pastor is a kind of gatekeeper, keeping out those false doctrines and heretical teaching that continues to blow through the church. To keep out those who would come in and use the pulpit for their false doctrines. How do they do this? How do they know what is right and what is wrong? By comparing what is being taught to the Word of God. Some would argue that I am being too narrow minded and I should let things go. I am sorry but without the Word of God how do you know what is right and what is wrong? You don't! And if it is false and you let it in, then you are accountable before God for what you have done and you put your people at risk!

Let me share with you a couple of things to show you what I mean, how undiscerning Christians are today and the danger of letting unholy things into the church. This is from an e-mail I received from Christians United for Israel and whose National Chairman is John Hagee. This group is having a big conference this summer in Washington D. C. and they are excited and listen to why they are excited. We are told,

As you well know, Glenn Beck is one of America's most influential television and political personalities. And, in recent weeks, Glenn has emerged as a leading spokesman in defense of Israel and the Jewish people. No matter what your political leanings, there can be no denying the depth, sincerity and importance of Glenn's stand for Israel.

Glenn Beck understands the importance of standing with Israel in these perilous times. Glenn is going to join us in DC. You need to join us too!

As a television personality, Glenn is in a league of his own. As a constituent, however, Glenn is no more important than any of us. To your Senators and Congressman, any constituent who travels all the way to Washington to visit with them is a very important person indeed.

Pastor John Hagee and the leadership of Christians United for Israel are thrilled to announce that Glenn Beck will be the keynote speaker at the national Night to Honor Israel Banquet during the Washington Summit on Tuesday, July 19, 2011.

- Christians United for Israel e-mail 04/07/11

First of all Glenn Beck is not a Christian he is a Mormon and to have him speak at a Christian event is an abomination. Light and darkness do not mix and to be excited that he is speaking, well, I am excited too but not for the same reasons as you can see. But there is more. Listen to what David Barton, the founder of Wall Builders had to say in an interview. He too is working with Glenn Beck at speaking engagements and what he has to say regarding the faith of Glenn Beck is very sad. When asked about the faith of Glenn Beck David Barton said,

He was raised a Catholic and found Jesus at Alcoholic Anonymous when he screwed up his life and is now going to a Mormon church. But it doesn't say anything about his personal relationship with Jesus.

- Life Today TV, September 20, 2010

Now here's the thing. If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck and looks like a duck, then it is a duck! If he goes to a Mormon church and is being taught that Jesus is the half brother of Lucifer and not Almighty God, is he worshiping the same God as we worship? Absolutely not and yet we see, for example, these two organizations siding with Glenn Beck. And David Barton even said that on stage he had many Christian pastors with Glenn Beck, as if that makes it okay!

Here is the thing. I am a gatekeeper like I have said, but you too are gatekeepers in your own life, in your home and-so-on. What are you letting in? What kind of evil are you ignoring? You see, holiness needs to be the thing that we allow in and the gates are closed to wickedness.

May we be wise and as Paul told and warned his young apprentice and pastor Timothy that, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. . . . Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching.”** II Timothy 3:16-17, 4:2. May we be gatekeepers especially in the wicked and deceptive times we are living in!

It is as Meyer wrote, “But chiefly we are concerned with the temple of the heart. We surely need the doorkeeper there, for in the history of the inner life there is so much going and coming; such troops of thoughts pour into the shrine of the soul, and pour out. And often, in the crowd, disloyal and evil thoughts intrude, which, before we know it, introduce a sense of distance and alienation from God.” May we not forget that or lose sight of that fact!

#### VERSES 20-32

1. In these verses we see that these men were watching over the treasures of God; the gold, silver and-so-on. And again we see today that it is the pastor who is watching over the treasures of God, but they are not gold or silver. Then what are they? It is simple, the pastor is watching over flesh and blood, people! Remember what Paul told the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:27-28, **“For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”**

Do you see the huge responsibility the pastor has, to watch over the flock that God has entrusted to them, purchased by His blood? And tragically today many have a mentality of numbers more than of individuals. Jesus was not a numbers person but He cared for each individual need, and pastors should do the same, they should have that same kind of heart, a shepherd's heart.

2. And not only do we see these treasures but also see on the east side of the Jordan River the 2½ tribes had those Levites that cared for the Word of God. May we have that kind of heart, not to negate it but to cherish it as our book from the Lord to live by, to grow by!



**I CHRONICLES 27****VERSE 1**

1. Again, David is at the end of his life, we don't know how much longer he has to live, but he is putting things in order for his son Solomon who will be the next king in Israel. And we have seen David organize the spiritual part of the kingdom and the civil part of the kingdom and now he is working on the military part of the kingdom. And I think David has it in the right order, spiritual must always come first. You can have the best army, as the Babylonians did, and still be defeated because your heart is far from the Lord. David now divides all his military men into 12 groups or divisions, with each one having 24,000 men. These groups or divisions would serve for 1 month out of the year, unless of course you were in a war, and then you would be called to active duty. So the total military men that he could assemble would be 288,000! Not a bad standing army!

VERSES 2-15

1. Here we see the 12 divisions of the military troops that were spoken of in verse 1. And just to pick out a few names. In verse 6 we read of Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada and we are told of him in II Samuel 23:20-23, **“Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. And he killed an Egyptian, a spectacular man. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. He was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the first three. And David appointed him over his guard.”**

Benaiah was one of David’s mighty men and this guy seems like a tough dude! This guy went out and killed two lion-like heroes of Moab, he actually killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day, and he killed this giant Egyptian. No, I am not exaggerating.

According to I Chronicles 11:23 he stood some 7½ feet tall, just a little taller than me!

Now what does this show us about the quality, the characteristic of this mighty man of God? Benaiah is showing us that he was a man of perseverance. You see, he did not let things get in the way of stopping his mission, his walk you might say. Yes, there were these two lion-like heroes of Moab, but that did not stop him. He took them on and defeated them. Yes, there was this lion in a pit and the weather was bad, it was snowing out, but he killed the lion. And this Egyptian giant, nothing was too big to get in his way and he killed him also.

We as Christians are in a spiritual battle and Paul reminds Timothy of what being a soldier is all about, that you must stay focused, you must have single-mindedness. He wrote in II Timothy 2:3-4, **“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”**

Paul is reminding us that our focus needs to be on Jesus Christ and what He has called us to do. We are not to become focused on the various things of this world that can just entangle us and take us off the path that God has for us. We, like a soldier must be of single-mindedness, focused on the cause of Christ, what we are fighting for, the eternal destiny of those around us. You see, it is the cares of this world that many times cause us to take our focus off the battle! May we have a heart of perseverance as Benaiah did!

2. The other one I would like to look at is Asahel, the brother of Joab and we are told of him in II Samuel 2:18-23, **“Now the three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab and Abishai and Asahel. And Asahel was as fleet of foot as a wild gazelle. So Asahel pursued Abner, and in going he did not turn to the right hand or to the left from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him and said, ‘Are you Asahel?’ He answered, ‘I am.’ And Abner said to him, ‘Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and lay hold on one of the young men and take his armor for yourself.’ But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. So Abner said again to Asahel, ‘Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I face your brother Joab?’ However, he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the blunt end of the spear, so that the spear came out of his back; and he fell down there and died on the spot. So it was that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still.”**

After the death of Saul his son Ishbosheth reigned for a short time and David also reigned in Hebron over the tribe of Judah and Benjamin. And there was a war between these two kings of Israel and really, Joab, David’s commander is behind this and as Abner’s men are defeated, Abner is on the run, trying to get away and Joab, his brothers Abishai and Asahel are in hot pursuit after him. But Asahel was much faster or as we are told, **“as fleet of foot as a wild gazelle.”**

Thus, Asahel catches up to Abner and Abner tells Asahel, “Son, if you know what is good for you, then turn and fight someone else, but don’t come after me for you will be sorry if you do.” He warns Asahel to leave him alone and amazingly, Asahel is not even prepared to fight, he is unarmed. What a mistake.

And Asahel refuses to heed the warning and Abner tells him, “This is your last warning son. Don’t continue after me or you will regret it!” Abner gives Asahel fair warning but he again does not heed it. And really, there was no reason for him to go after Abner; David did not tell him to do this, but Joab, the commander encouraged this encounter and many lost their lives because of it, including Asahel!

Now we are told that Abner killed Asahel with the blunt side of his spear, which seems impossible to do. Please understand that they would sharpen the blunted end of their spear so they could stick it in the ground when they were not using it. You see, you would not want to stick the spear end, the blade into the ground because that would dull it. And keep in mind that Asahel was very fast and picture in your mind what is going on here. He is running full blast and all of a sudden Abner stops dead in his tracks, turns around, and the blunt end of Abner’s spear goes right through Asahel and kills him! What a sad situation and thus, we are told here in I Chronicles that his son, Asahel’s son, Zebadiah oversaw this division!

#### VERSES 16-24

1. Here we see a list of tribal leaders, not priests or military men, but more of administrators in the civil service aspect of the kingdom in Israel. Now we are not sure why the tribes of Asher and Gad have been excluded from this list.

2. Even though it is not recorded here in great detail, David sinned before the Lord because he took a census of his military men. You see, David's sin was trusting in his military might instead of the Lord, thus he numbered his soldiers. But that census was not completed by Joab, for before he finished, God's judgment came upon Israel.

#### VERSES 25-31

1. Here we see David organize those who would oversee various duties in the kingdom. Of this Morgan wrote, "The greatness of David as a king was manifested in the acts of peaceful administration, as surely as in his victories on the fields of battle. The tilling of the ground, and its careful cultivation; the rearing of cattle; and all the things pertaining to the welfare of his people were arranged for, under duly qualified and appointed oversight." David was a man open to God and a man who understood the importance of organization, even as he is preparing to die. And folk's, our God is a God of organization, everything is in place and there is an order to it!

2. Also, Meyer made these remarks, "Each of these different men had his distinct sphere for which he was doubtless specially qualified; and it was his duty – not to be jealous of others, nor eager to imitate them, but – to be faithful in his own province." How important it is to do the work that our King, Jesus Christ has given us to do!

VERSES 32-34

1. In verse 33 we are told of Ahithophel, and this man was David's counselor and friend until he turned against David. And when David's son Absalom rebelled against David and he makes himself the king, Ahithophel joins him. Why would he do that? Because, if you remember Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba, and it is possible that because of David's actions against his granddaughter, having an adulterous relationship with her and the murder of her husband in battle, his son-in-law Uriah, that Ahithophel had a lot of bitterness in his heart towards David. And now the time was right for a revolt and he may have felt he was giving David his just reward. But his life ended tragically as Absalom refused to hear his wise counsel, and thus, he went and committed suicide. He saw that the reign of Absalom was coming to an end, and thus he was as good as dead anyway.

2. In the chapters we have studied tonight we have seen how David organized the nation of Israel, spiritually, civically and militarily. You see, God is a God of order as I have said and not chaos. He sets things in order, and He does the same in our own life when things seem to be in utter turmoil It is as Psalm 37:23-24 tells us, "**The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.**" Let's close this evening on that note, knowing that our God is a God of order and He has an order, a plan for our life!