

# **GOD'S STORY – OUR STORY**

## ***Characters and Character – The Chronicler's Encouragement***

May 12, 2024 (1 Chronicles 1 – 18)

**Overarching Theme:** 2024 – A Year in God's Story

### **Instructions:**

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

### **Core Point:**

**2024 can be a year of living into God's Story as we journey from Genesis to Revelation together.**

### **Reflect on this Scripture:**

1 Chronicles 17:20-25 NRSVUE

*<sup>20</sup> There is no one like you, O LORD, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. <sup>21</sup> Who is like your people Israel, one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making for yourself a name for great and awesome things, in driving out nations before your people whom you redeemed from Egypt? <sup>22</sup> And you made your people Israel to be your people forever, and you, O LORD, became their God. <sup>23</sup> And now, O LORD, as for the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, let it be established forever, and do as you have promised. <sup>24</sup> Thus your name will be established and magnified forever in the saying, 'The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, is Israel's God,' and the house of your servant David will be established in your presence. <sup>25</sup> For you, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him; therefore your servant has found it possible to pray before you.*

### **Commentary:**

The stories of David and Solomon from the past sustained the Chronicler's hope for the future and he wanted to convey this to his people. Although they had settled again in their land and had rebuilt the Temple and the walls surrounding Jerusalem by the inspiration of post-Exilic prophets and leaders, yet they were struggling socially as well as spiritually and were facing a negative condition, still

ruled by a foreign power, the Persians. Even though they returned from physical exile, they were suffering exile as a community with no experience of the restoration of the glory of the past that was promised to them by God and the line of kings from David having ended with the Exile. And yet the Chronicler wanted to remind the people that if God could bring them back from Exile against all odds, then surely God would renew the promise and restore to them what was lost. But this would require them to humble themselves, repent, and turn to God in faithful worship. They had all the resources – Jerusalem, the Temple, the Levites, and the Torah. All they now needed was renewed faithfulness and obedience to God so that the failures of the past would not be repeated but the glory of the past would be redeemed.

For this reason, an important thing that the Chronicler did in his writing is retelling God's covenant promise to David in 2 Samuel 7. The covenant that God made to Noah, his family, and all creation was further made with Abraham, his family, and all his descendants and was then further made with Moses and the Israelites established in the Promised Land. Now God furthered it with David and his dynasty and through it renewed the covenant with all the Israelites. The way that God did this, as given in 2 Samuel and repeated in 1 Chronicles with minor changes, is when David expressed to the prophet Nathan that he desired to build a house or temple for God and for the Ark of the Covenant that he had brought to Jerusalem, which was kept in a tent. The Ark of the Covenant was the sacred symbol of God's throne from the time of Moses, representing the special presence and reign of God over the Israelites. God then instructed Nathan to let David know that God never required nor desired a permanent dwelling but would still allow David's good intentions to be fulfilled and in a very special way bless it with God's presence. However, the word from God to David further was that more than him building a house for God, God would build for David a house or dynasty forever, which would be his descendants sitting on the throne of Israel and one of his descendants, a son of David, building the Temple for God. With meekness and thanksgiving David accepted this word and seeking God in prayer he humbled himself in God's presence.

The Chronicler recorded the prayer of David on this occasion, which revealed David's rare qualities of humility and sincerity. In it he was mindful of his modest background and acknowledged God's grace and not his own merit for his successes. Giving glory to God and recognizing all that God had done so generously for him and the nation of Israel, David affirmed the covenantal relationship between God and Israel. He praised God for the promise to establish his throne and to continue his dynasty and he claimed from God the fulfilling of this promise. The Chronicler's purpose in recalling this prayer of David was to exhort his people to imitate David's genuine humility and his heart that sought after God earnestly. His hope was that post-Exilic Judah would be those who not only returned to their land but also returned to their God and that God would return to them with a new King David to restore the glory of Jerusalem and the Temple.

- Adapted from The New Interpreter's Bible One Volume Commentary, pp.239-40, 246-7 and Wesley One Volume Commentary, pp.237-8, 244.

### **Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:**

1. The Chronicler found hope for the future by looking at God's faithfulness in the past. In what ways do you look for hope in times of distress and discouragement?
2. How do you make sense of troubles faced in the present and how do you reconcile it with faith in God's nature of constant faithfulness? How did the Chronicler understand the reason for the Exile of his people and the glory lost after it and how did he envision their future and the way forward?
3. How is God's sovereignty underscored in the way David addressed God in his prayer? How did he respond to the overwhelming generosity that God showed to him? Do you more often ask or thank God for things and what does that say about your rapport with God?
4. Do you think the hope of the Chronicler for another son of David to come and reign on his throne and restore the glory of Jerusalem was ever fulfilled? What did God have in mind when God further made the covenant with David of his dynasty established forever and the promise of one from his line to always reign on the throne? Did the Chronicler himself fully understand this?

### **Activity for the Life of a Disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: 1 Chronicles 17:25 NRSVUE  
*<sup>25</sup> For you, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him; therefore your servant has found it possible to pray before you.*