



Unlocking the Bible (19)



Look at it another way: events from a different perspective:

Lessons from the book 1 Chronicles

In the last issue we summarised the main lessons from 2 Kings, a book which concluded the rather limp history of God's distinctive people in the period after David from Solomon to the captivity. It was a history characterised by disappointingly weak leadership after the exiting beginning provided by David. It is, to say the least, lack lustre.

The books of Chronicles repeat that account, but from a different perspective. They go back to the beginning with Abraham the founder of the nation and focus particularly on the roles of David, Solomon and the kings who followed. But, these books present the story in a different way: The two books of Chronicles are concerned with history as God sees it, recording events as they represent the fulfilling of God's purpose.

1 Chronicles, the first of the two books, is in three sections.

It begins with genealogies tracing back the origin of the nation, and especially the twelve tribes - the "children of Israel" with a special emphasis on the Levites, the tribe dedicated to undertake the service of God. So, right from the beginning, it is emphasised that any history worth recording is the story of the people of God and the fulfilment of His purposes.

It is into this situation that David is introduced. No mention of the context of his being chosen, simply the fact of his being there, the work that he did, and the support that he enjoyed.

What he did do was to defeat the many enemies that threatened the very existence of the nation, regained territory and, above all, brought the Ark back to Jerusalem, so that God, and the worship of Him, was once again at the heart of national life. His aspirations went further than that to wanting to build a permanent house for God – the Temple.

Although forbidden from doing that himself, he is shown as pouring out his energies in preparation for, and commitment to, it as a project. Part of that preparation was in gathering materials and securing the site, and also in delegating responsibilities and ensuring that the functional aspects were in ready place. Thus there are lists of priestly and military responsibilities and allocations. That detail is followed by involving the people in contributing freely of their goods to accomplish that purpose and keeping everything in focus through prayer.

What does 1 Chronicles tell us? What is our role in the context of God's purpose? Could it be that it is praying that "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*"? It is to work within that understanding and seek to achieve its fulfilment in leadership, encouragement, and inspiration. It is what we should be about. But it is also about incorporating others into that project and keeping everything in divine focus. That is precisely where Solomon missed the way, as we shall see in 2 Chronicles.