
Day 286 - October 13

Period of Restoration (535-425 BCE)

Official Records of Israel

Readings: 1 Chronicles 1:1-54, 2:1-55, 3:10-24, 4:1-23

Reflections:

- These final two reads capture the genealogical records of the nation. Here are the basic groupings of the archival records:
 - Adam to Noah;
 - Abram, Isaac and Ishmael, Esau and his descendents, Jacob and his twelve sons that become the Tribes of Israel (with the exception of Dan and Zebulun);
 - An expanded focus is on the Tribe of Judah, the priestly line of Levi and the genealogy of Benjamin, king Saul's line.
- There are a very few family notes thrown into records:
 - "Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the Lord's sight; so the Lord put him to death."
 - "Achar, who brought trouble on Israel by violating the ban on taking devoted things."
 - These little notes remind us that every family has its stories and for some reason these get honorable or dishonorable mention in the genealogies of Israel.
- It should be noted that for the most part only men are mentioned. The occasional wife is mentioned by name, including Tamar. We will see that in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, there are four women mentioned, including Tamar. This was not the practice of Jesus day and so these women were included to make a very specific point. That is for another day's reading. 😊
- We should also note the obvious. This is one big family. It is a nation but it is nation sized family. God's case study was with a family. God's ultimate vision for humanity is for us to learn how to live as a family where everyone is equally included and valued.
- In 1 Chronicles 4 we see the prayer of Jabez. "Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, 'I gave birth to him in pain.' Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, 'Oh, that you should bless me and enlarge my territory!

Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.' And God granted his request." We see in this prayer the self-centeredness that is inherent in the case study of Israel. This prayer of Jabez is probably mentioned because it captures the overarching experience of Israel and their heart cry for their prosperity and safety. Like Jabez, they were born in pain and their name reflected that: Israel meant "struggle." They as a nation wanted to have a big territory. They wanted to be blessed. They wanted to be protected and free of pain. They wanted to have the good life. What we note is completely absent from his prayer: How can I serve others? How can I be a blessing? How can I be used by you to see others rescued from pain and suffering, even if I must endure pain to see this happen? Jabez really only cares about himself at the end of the day and yes, God does grant this request. Yet, as we have witnessed a thousand times over, having the perfect world around you will never change your heart. Jabez was focused on God as his provider, protector and savior. This part is good. Yet, it will take the revelation of Jesus to show us what it means to live other-centered lives rather than to be bound with a perpetual self-centeredness that really only cares about "me, me, me!"