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1 Chronicles 1

“Belonging”

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It's important to remember that context is everything, especially when it comes to studying the Bible. Originally, Chronicles was one book, just like the books of Samuel and Kings. Chronicles appears as the last book in the Hebrew Bible.¹ This book is an epilogue of sorts, because it summarizes Jewish history. The first nine chapters provide the details of the genealogical record from Adam through David, which was the time period of the Kings. Much of what is found in 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings is also found in 1 & 2 Chronicles.

One account not found in these books is [2 Chronicles 36:15-23](#), which tells about the end of the book of 2 Kings, when we read about King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieging Jerusalem.² When the city fell, thousands of Jews were taken to Babylon, although there were a small number of Jews who were left behind. 2 Chronicles mentions something that 2 Kings does not, and that is that after the 70 years of captivity, God raised up a new world power in Persia, whose king was Cyrus. God put it on the heart of King Cyrus to allow the Jews to return to their homeland. What this tells us is that 1 & 2 Chronicles were written for the people who had been in captivity. This is important because we need to imagine what life was like for Jewish people who had lived in Babylon for 70 years. These people would have been forcibly taken to learn a foreign language, culture, lifestyle, and every other aspect of life. They would have been forced to leave everything they owned, including their home, as well as their family. And finally, unless a person was really young when their family was exiled, they would have been sure to die in Babylon.

When the invitation was given by King Cyrus to go back to Israel, you'd have to wonder why anyone would want to go to Israel. After all, the majority of the Jews had never

¹ The Bibles we use at Cornerstone Chapel (1984 NIV) have the same Old Testament as the Hebrew Bible however, not every book in our Bible is in the same order as the Hebrew Bible.

² Jerusalem fell in 586BC.

even seen Israel, and if you were 10 years old when the Jews were exiled, you would have been 80, and not likely to have a burning desire to walk 500 miles to a foreign land! For these reasons, the majority of the Israelites stayed in Babylon, which is modern-day Iraq.

It's reasonable to assume that they would have asked questions like these: 1) Who are my people? 2) Where is my homeland? 3) Who is my God and what was it like to worship in God's Temple before it was destroyed? 4) How do we worship? 5) What was life like back then? 6) What will life be like for me when I get there?

In this study we'll learn more about 1 & 2 Chronicles being written as a handbook or orientation packet to help them know more about where their people came from and where they were going, and how God has created each of us with a desire to belong.

Historical Background

1. There are some very interesting things to be learned from the genealogies recorded in this book.
 - a. After the flood, all of human history can be traced back to Noah and his three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
 - b. The descendants of Shem are the Jews.
 - c. The descendants of Ham are people from Arabia, Africa, and Asia (Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites).
 - d. The descendants of Japheth are people from Europe.
2. Many Bible scholars believe 1 & 2 Chronicles was written by Ezra, who was the leader of one of the three "returns" of the exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The Need To Belong

3. Obviously, God was more interested in teaching the people something more than the details of their family tree; he addressed a deep need in the heart of every human being: the need to belong.
4. Every person has a need to belong, because we weren't created to be isolated or alone.
5. From the very beginning of human history, God saw *"that it was not good for man to be alone,"* so God made Eve.
 - a. The animals came onto the Ark in pairs.

- b. God set up the Israelites in tribes, clans, and families.
 - c. The priests did their duties in rotations of 24.
 - d. Jesus chose 12 disciples.
 - e. [Hebrews 10:25](#) - “[Let us not forsake] the assembling of ourselves...”
 - f. [Matthew 18:20](#) - “For where two or three come together in my name there I am with them.”
6. Sometimes we can't help but be alone, and there are seasons of loneliness for all of us.
7. Sometimes we need to be alone to recharge our batteries.
8. Isolation is a game of Satan, who loves it when we are alone.
- a. The times when you are alone are probably the times when you not only tempted the most; you're also the least accountable.
 - b. Satan tempted Jesus was he was alone in the wilderness.³
 - i. Of course, Jesus was never really alone, and neither are we, even when we may feel that we are alone; God is with us and will never leave us nor forsake us.
9. Solitary confinement is punishment because we were created to belong.
10. Some people who are adopted go on what can be a life-long quest to discover whom their birth mother or biological father is, because we were created to belong.
11. Ancestry.com and digging into family history and genealogy is popular because we were created to belong.

Belonging By Faith

12. It's more important to belong by faith than it is to belong by birth.
13. The Jews took their heritage and thought that that was enough to belong to God.
- a. “I'm Jewish, so I'm good to go!”
 - b. There is no difference in this understanding than when someone says, “I'm a Methodist or a Baptist or a Catholic or I'm a Cornerstone Chapel attender.

³ [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

14. **Luke 3:7-9** - *“John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, ‘You brook of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*
15. **John 8:36-47** - *“ [Jesus said], ‘So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.’ “Abraham is our father, they answered.” ‘If you were Abraham’s children,’ said Jesus, ‘then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the things your own father does.’ “We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.” Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.’ ”*

How Can You Belong To God?

16. **Ephesians 2:8-9** - *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”*
17. Coming to God, and being received by God, means you belong to God by faith, which is the most important decision you’ll ever make!

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.

2. Share examples of things people are willing to do in an effort to belong.
3. Do you think Facebook and other forms of social media are current examples of ways people seek to belong?
4. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they've had the feeling that they "belonged."
5. How would react if you were a 75- or 80-year old person presented with the opportunity to return to the "homeland" you never knew?
6. When you first considered becoming a Christian, did you think about changes that would take place, like friendships/relationships, possible change of employment, habits, etc.?
7. Did you have some of the same reactions as Pastor Gary suggested the exiles had when it came to leaving all you had known, etc., to follow the Lord? (See introduction)
8. Read and discuss [Hebrews 10:15](#) and [Matthew 18:20](#).
 - a. What are some of the ways you've been intentional about belonging to the "Body of Christ"?
9. Read and discuss [1 Peter 5:8](#), and focus on the fact that predatory animals go after the isolated, old, sick, and lame.
10. What are some of the ways people are vulnerable and tempted to sin when they are isolated? (See #8 above)
11. Was there a time in your life when you thought you were "good to go" simply because you were a Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, etc.?
12. Allow the people in your group to share their experience about coming to faith and the feelings they had when they realized they "belonged" to God and he, in a manner of speaking, belonged to them.
13. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).