



OHBC MEMORY VERSE - WEEK #13

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE: I CHRONICLES 16:29

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."

Why I Chronicles 16:29?

Because it is such a succinct, yet all-inclusive call to worship for people of every generation and dispensation. In this psalm of thanksgiving (I Chron. 16:7), David exhorts us to "give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name." Have you ever really stopped to

think just how much glory that actually is? The "name" of God is representative of all that He is. It is the sum total of all His character and attributes. In light of that, just how much glory does He deserve? Certainly it is an amount that is far more than we are able to muster in and through our finite, corruptible, unredeemed bodies (Rom. 8:18-23)! To actually give to our awesome God the glory for which He deserves will, no doubt, require a glorified body! But that doesn't mean that until then, we shouldn't try! No wonder David said in Psalm 103:1, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME, bless His holy name." Giving God the glory He deserves requires ALL THAT IS WITHIN US!

In this verse, however, David gives us further insight into what it will actually take. David says that it will require that we "come before Him." That means we must make the choice to yield to Him our will and our schedule, because we deem His presence the most important priority of our lives, and the most blessed place in all the universe to be.

But David tells us that when we come before Him, there is something God wants us to bring: an offering! It is absolutely amazing how many 21st century (Laodicean – Rev. 3:14-22) believers TALK about, SING about, and even PRAY about coming into the Lord's presence, speaking great swelling words about how worthy God is of glory, yet His worthiness is not reflected through their offering. As the old saying so aptly puts it, "You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving." If you are a child of God, you have been commanded to bring an offering to the Lord each week – an offering representative of what you believe Him to be worthy, and based on how He has prospered you (I Cor. 16:2). Our gifts are to be offered because we want to give them, not because we feel that we have to (II Cor. 9:7). God loves a cheerful giver!

Next, David lets us know that giving God the glory He deserves involves worship. Worship is an overused and even misused word in 21st century Christianity. However, David gives us a key to the life through whom true worship flourishes – "the beauty of holiness." God has called us to worship (John 4:23), and has called us to holiness (I Thess. 4:7) so we can!

As we hide I Chronicles 16:29 in our hearts this week, let's all seek on a daily basis to:

1. Come into our Lord's presence;
2. Lay by in store an offering to present to Him next Sunday, based on how He prospers us this week;
3. Worship Him from the platform of a holy and surrendered life. Let's "give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name"!

DAY 61

TODAY'S READING: RUTH 1-4

OVERVIEW: Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons sojourn into Moab during a time of famine; Elimelech's death; the marriage of Naomi's two sons to Orpah and Ruth; the death of Naomi's sons; Naomi's decision to return to Bethlehem and Ruth's decision to go with her; Ruth goes to glean in the field of Boaz in Bethlehem; Boaz's kindness to Ruth; Naomi informs Ruth that Boaz can fulfill the role of kinsman-redeemer; Ruth approaches Boaz at the threshingfloor; Boaz fulfills the role of Ruth's kinsman-redeemer, taking her to wife; Ruth gives birth to Obed, King David's grandfather.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The Book of Ruth is the record of one of the greatest love stories of all time. Ruth's story is a familiar one. She was born into this world a Moabitess. The Moabites were a race of people cursed by God due to sin (Deut. 23:3).

During a time of famine (1:1), one day someone shared with Ruth the fact that the Lord had visited His people in Bethlehem, giving them bread (1:6). Upon hearing that good news, she left her father and mother and the gods of her homeland, and went to partake of the Lord's provision of bread in Bethlehem (1:15-18).

When she arrived in Bethlehem, she just "happened" (2:3) to go to work, gleaning in the harvest field of the only man on earth who would carry out for her the Old Testament provision of the kinsman redeemer (Lev. 25:23-28). His name was Boaz, a mighty man of wealth, a Jew, from the city of Bethlehem (2:1-2). Boaz take ones look at her, falls head-over-heels in love with her (2:5), and takes her out of his harvest field to be his bride (4:9-10). "And," as the old saying goes, "they lived happily ever after."

Like Ruth, we too, were born into a race of people that had been cursed by God due to sin (Rom. 5:12; 6:23a). We call it the "human" race.

But, one day, someone shared with us the fact that God had visited this planet, being born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4, 7), as the Bread of Life (John 6:35), and could feed the famine sin had left in our soul. Upon hearing that "good news" (gospel – I Cor. 15:1-4), we left our father and mother (Matt. 10:37), and the "gods" we once served in our homeland (I Thess. 1:9), and became a partaker of God's provision on our behalf.

We have now been left to work, gleaning in the harvest field (Matt. 13:38) of our Jewish Kinsman Redeemer, the mighty man of wealth (the "God-man") from the city of Bethlehem, until He calls us out of His harvest field (I Thess. 4:16) to make us His bride (Rev. 19:7; 21:9), and so shall we ever be with the Lord (I Thess. 4:17), living happily ever after (Rev. 21:4).

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through BOAZ, the mighty and wealthy Jewish kinsman-redeemer from the city of Bethlehem who took a Gentile bride out of his harvest field – Ruth 2-4 (Isa. 9:6; Heb. 4:15; Luke 2:4-7; Rev. 19:7; Matt. 13:38).

DAY 62

TODAY'S READING: I SAMUEL 1-4

OVERVIEW:

God gives Samuel to Hannah; Hannah gives Samuel to God; Samuel gives himself to God; God gives Samuel to Israel; Eli misappropriates the tabernacle by permitting his sons to disobey; Eli misses God's message; Eli misuses the Ark of the Covenant; Samuel lives; Eli dies.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The Book of I Samuel begins at a time when "the word of the Lord was precious" (3:1). It was precious for the same reason platinum is such a "precious" commodity today: because it is incredibly rare! God's people were in the place He wanted them, (the Promised Land), but they hadn't actually "possessed their possession" the way God had intended. God had repeatedly warned them in Deuteronomy 8 and 9 of the danger of forgetting Him after He had brought them into the land. The warning had gone totally unheeded, however, resulting in two extremely unfortunate realities in I Samuel: 1) God's people were not bringing Him the honor, respect, fear, and glory He deserved and/or demanded; 2) God's people were not experiencing the "abundant life" He had designed for them to enjoy in the "land that flowed with milk and honey." Once again, Israel is a picture of believers who are "in Christ," but live lives beneath what God intended life in Christ to be.

Enter Samuel, the miracle child given to a mom who surrendered him to God before he was even born. He was to be the first of the prophets, the last of the judges, and the man that would usher in Israel's earthly kings. He was born into a time when God's perfect will was largely ignored. He would faithfully serve God and His people, and yet ultimately be rejected by the people. Though Israel rejected Samuel, God was clear that it was actually Him that they were rejecting (8:7). Because of their rejection of God's leadership, they sought out kings to lead them as had the other nations of the world. The kings are all ultra-imperfect pictures of Christ, whose kingdom would nonetheless be ushered in at God's perfect time.

The Book of I Samuel is fast paced and layered with historical and spiritual significance. One of the most intriguing lessons repeated throughout the Book of I Samuel is the way that God always provides a “new perfect will” for His people, even as they mess up the “perfect will” He had them working within the day before. In Chapter 1, it is out of a sticky marital situation that Samuel is born to Hannah. Hannah is one of Elkanah’s two wives who prayed that God would give her some relief from her “adversary” (the other wife with whom she could not get along). Elkanah loved Hannah, but his acceptance of what was culturally acceptable (bigamy), while not in God’s perfect will, was the backdrop for God’s “new perfect will” – Samuel. (Random note – Over 30% of live births in the U.S. are now outside of marriage altogether, which is obviously not in God’s perfect will, and yet God has a “new perfect will” for each of these souls.)

In Chapter 2, when Hannah presents back to God His present to her, she is handing Samuel over to a priest who has long departed from God’s perfect will. He is a carnal, obese (I Sam. 4:18) old man who has allowed his own sons (who are the sons of Belial!) to run the tabernacle. And, run it they did. Right into the ground! Out of this, God’s “new perfect will” emerges. And even with the loss of the Ark of the Covenant in Chapter 4 in a battle improperly fought by Israel, the “new perfect will” of God will emerge. Lamentations 3:22 & 23 says, “It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” Hallelujah for God’s unending mercies and unfailing compassions for Israel, and US!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

We see Christ in all that Samuel was meant to be – judge, priest, and prophet. John 5:30; Hebrews 7:26 and Acts 7:37.

DAY 63

TODAY’S READING: I SAMUEL 5-10 (don’t worry, it’s only 126 verses!)

OVERVIEW:

God wreaks havoc on His enemies through the Ark of the Covenant; Samuel leads Israel in reformation and worship; Israel demands an earthly king and Saul is chosen by God.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The glory has departed Israel (end of Chapter 4). Ichabod has been born at the death of his father, uncle, grandfather and mother. In one fail swoop, Samuel is ushered in as judge, priest and ruler. While God is establishing His man, He is wreaking havoc in the lives of His enemies. They have taken the Ark in battle, and have found that nothing is more uncomfortable than the presence of God in the house of the devil (II Cor. 6:14).

Samuel calls God’s people back to Him and as they respond to His Word, they are restored, and once again, are protected by God in a miraculous manner (II Chron. 7:14). In the end, however, the sins of Samuel’s spiritual father, Eli, are visited upon Samuel and his sons sin in a manner similar to Eli’s sons (Deut. 5:9), and given this excuse the children of Israel reject their God and choose to ask for an earthly king (Phil. 3:19).

Ignoring all the warnings of how oppressive their choice of having an earthly king rather than God as king would be, the children of Israel are given Saul. Once again, even though Israel has chosen God’s second best plan, God makes provision to give them a king who could chose to lead them to Him.

To the echoes of “God save the king” (I Sam.10:24), Saul begins his reign.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

We see Christ in all that Samuel was meant to be – judge, priest, and prophet. John 5:30; Hebrews 7:26 and Acts 7:37.

DAY 64

TODAY’S READING: I SAMUEL 11-14

OVERVIEW:

The rise of King Saul as he obeys God; the fall of King Saul as he relies upon his own reasoning; Jonathan, Saul’s son, acts in great courage.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

With all the disobedience and rejection God has tolerated throughout Israel's history, Saul's reign is delivered with this promise and warning, "Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." I Sam. 12:24, 25.

Fourteen verses later Samuel is announcing privately to Saul what will still take years for God to deliver, "thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart." Watching Saul try to hang on to his power and position from this point on, instead of seeking God and desiring to keep a pure heart, is like watching so many followers of Christ who structure their existence upon maintaining a good front, and getting from God what they want from Him, rather than hearing and heeding and knowing the God who in turn promotes and protects. (I Sam. 7:9; Jeremiah 22:29; Joshua 23:11; James 4:10)

In the New Testament, Paul, (who's original name was Saul), makes only one mention of his name's sake saying, "And when He had removed him." How ironic that the first king of Israel is only known for having to be removed, so that God could fulfill His plan. God will always seek a man after His own heart. (I Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22)

Jonathan, King Saul's son, seems to have the heart of a lion (I Sam. 14:6), but his life is caught up in the web of his father's sin. Although he remains pure, the tangle of Saul ends his life too. There is no private sin or private life. What we do affects those around us, and most often and most severely, those we love (Numbers 32:22-24).

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

We see Christ in all that Samuel was meant to be – judge, priest, and prophet. John 5:30; Hebrews 7:26 and Acts 7:37.

DAY 65

TODAY'S READING: I SAMUEL 15-17

OVERVIEW:

Saul's disobedience costs him the kingdom; God chooses David to be king; David kills Goliath.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

These three chapters are some of the most dramatic happenings in all of scripture. Here God rejects a king, appoints another one to replace him out of obscurity, and instantaneously promotes the new king-elect in the eyes of the entire nation of Israel.

Each of these stories has been preached on numerous times because of the very clear messages that God is sending in each of them. In Chapter 15, God gives King Saul a very clear command to totally annihilate the enemy, and by all outside appearances it looks as if Saul is going to obey God. He gathers the troops, confidently prepares them and courageously leads them to battle, but out of victory, Saul snatches ultimate defeat. After the hard part is done and the battle is won and while Saul is in total control, he "reinterprets" God's command in order to do something that better suits his taste. He keeps some of the spoils of battle, and with his own desires fulfilled; he leaves forever behind the hand of God upon his life.

Ring in his ears are Samuel's words, "to obey is better than sacrifice," while we go on to read what Saul did not understand at the time. "Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death." How ironic. (Note that Romans 12 makes obedience and sacrifice one when we are "beseeched" to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.)

And the irony only intensifies by the last verse of I Samuel 16 when the only cure for King Saul's oppression from the evil spirit was the beautiful harp playing of David – the young man, who unbeknownst to Saul, was God's choice for king.

As the emphasis in the scripture forever shifts from Saul to David, it is thrilling to note what is at the heart of this shift – the heart. While Saul was a choice that was easy on the eye, David was a man after God's own heart. (16:7 – But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him (Saul): for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the

outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.) I Sam. 13:14 is where Saul is disqualified over the heart issue, and I Sam. 12: 24 has God urging Saul to keep his heart right. Obviously, God is serious about the state of our inner being, since "heart" is in the scriptures 765 times, and it seldom refers to the physical blood pumping muscle!

With the whole heart issue in mind, we launch into the story of "David and Goliath", which should be renamed, "David and His Motivations." While this history is often recounted emphasizing the fact that David desired to defend the name of God against the big, bad, evil Goliath who defied the God of Israel, his motivations seem quite different when we examine the emphasis the scripture puts on David's discussions around the campfire prior to taking on the giant. Three times David is told what will be done for the man who defeats Goliath (twice David asks). (I Sam. 17:25-30) And to make the point even stronger, David's eldest brother accuses him of having a bad heart attitude right in the middle of these discussions about the booty for killing the giant. It is clear that God is strongly endorsing the fact that rewards often naturally accompany doing right by God and we do not need to shy away from them or apologize for being motivated by them as long as we are not perverted by them from doing God's will.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through DAVID'S NAME, which means "BELOVED" – I Sam. 16:13 (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35)