

Personal Study

Week of July 7

Many of the Old Testament events recorded in First and Second Kings are paralleled in First and Second Chronicles. However, Chronicles was written after the Babylonian exile (586 BC) in order to communicate hope and encouragement to the ‘remnant’ seeking to regain their identity as God’s people. Babylon fell in 539 BC to Persia. In the first year of the reign of Cyrus of Persia—this king, as prophesied by Jeremiah—actually called for an ‘exodus’. Cyrus not only allowed the Judeans to return to their homeland, but he provided what they would need for their journey and re-establishment once there (2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4). Amazing!

The Old Testament ONE YEAR BIBLE reading for July 7 is **1 Chronicles 4:5 – 5:17**. God’s Word contains many ‘nuggets’ amidst verses such as these detailing genealogies and family records. This section links the remnant of Israel to their past and shows they still belong to God. Perhaps this is why there was a faithful man named Jabez who had the courage to pray what he did—

*There was a man named Jabez who was more honorable than any of his brothers. His mother named him Jabez because his birth had been so painful. He was the one who prayed to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and expand my territory! Please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all trouble and pain!” And God granted him his request.
1 Chronicles 4:9-10*

1. Jabez believed God’s purpose for Israel (and for himself personally) would prevail. Re-read what Jabez prayed (above) keeping in mind the Chronicler was communicating this ‘nugget’ to people returning after 70 years in exile. What is your plea to God today?

What does **Psalms 145:17-21** say about God’s answering our cries for help?

It is very sobering that the ONE YEAR BIBLE reading for July 4th – our nation’s Independence Day – recalls the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. God had repeatedly warned His people to turn from their sin and idolatry. But they refused. God is calling us as a nation, as individuals, to turn from sin. But are we? The prophet Jeremiah warns Judah of impending destruction. His entire life was committed to God’s call and he was known as the ‘weeping prophet’.

2. Read the words of Jeremiah in **Lamentations 3:1-31** (or perhaps the entire chapter). Maybe you feel like you are in a place of exile. God knows your distress. Whether it is you or someone you love who is suffering, God knows. Lift your heart to the Lord now.

The kingdoms of this world will all fall one day—fall at the feet of Jesus! Will you turn to Him today, even in your pain? “Let us test and examine our ways. Let us turn back to the LORD” (Lamentations 3:40). We can pray like Jabez. What three things would you ask the Lord for today? Be prepared to do your part too, and live into your own prayer!

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