

Catford Lectures 2010-2011

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Good afternoon, everyone. Could we start, please, with hymn number 170. Low he comes from heaven descending, Once for favoured sinners slain, Thousand, thousand saints attending, Swell the triumph of his train. Hallelujah, hallelujah, Jesus comes and comes to reign.

Number 170, please, verses 1 to 3.

Thousand, thousand saints attending, [00:01:05] Swell the triumph of his train.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, Jesus comes and comes to reign.

See the Saviour long expected, Now in solemn hope revealed, And his saints by man rejected, All his heavenly glories share.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, [00:02:08] See the Son of Man appear.

Loaded token of his passions, Knowing glory still he bears.

Cause of endless exultation To his ransomed worshipers.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, Christ the Lamb of God appears.

[00:03:10] In the name of the Lord Jesus, amen. Could we please also sing the last three verses of hymn number 170.

Verses 4 to 6 of hymn number 170.

Fierce by heavenly pride and spirit, Jesus, Lord, that didst become, All the glory to inherit And to take thy people home.

[00:04:02] All creation, all creation, Frozen trial ends till the come.

His first grace shall now be holy, Full of grace and majesty.

Lo, they stand at sprout and soli, Fist and nail, feet to the tree.

They in glory, they in glory, Shall their great desire see.

[00:05:08] Yea, the men that fall adore thee, High on thine exalted throne.

Saviour, take them all and glory, Claim the king and swallow no.

Come, Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus, Alleluia, come, Lord, come.

[00:06:06] Let us read together from the first book of Chronicles and chapter 1.

First book of Chronicles, chapter 1 and verse 1. Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mehalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The sons of Japheth, verse 8.

The sons of Ham, verse 10.

[00:07:08] And Cush begat Nimrod.

He began to be mighty upon the earth.

Verse 17.

The sons of Shem, verse 24.

Shem, Apaxad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Seroch, Nahor, Tira, Abram, this is Abraham.

The sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael.

These are their generations. The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth, then Kedah, and Adbel, and Mipsam.

[00:08:06] Verse 34.

And Abraham begat Isaac.

The sons of Isaac, Esau, and Israel.

The sons of Esau, Eliphaz, Reul, Jeush, and Jealam, and Korah.

Verse 43.

Now these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel. Bela, the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dinabah.

And when Bela was dead, Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, reigned in his stead. And when Jobab was dead, Husham of the land of the Temanites [00:09:04] reigned in his stead.

And when Husham was dead, Hadad, the son of Bedad, which smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead. And the name of his city was Abeth.

So far for now.

The book of Chronicles, and when I say the book, it is simply because the first and second book in the Hebrew Bible are just one book, deals with a number of kings, starting with Saul and then David and Solomon, followed by the kings of Judah after Solomon.

[00:10:04] Now you may say, why is it necessary to have these books of Chronicles as well? Because I already know about Saul from the first book of Samuel. I already know about David from first and second Samuel. And I already know about Solomon from the first book of Kings. So isn't this kind of duplication?

Well, at first sight it might look like it, but only at the very, very first sight. Just to give you one example, the history of Saul in the first book of Samuel takes around, say, more or less 15 chapters.

The history of Saul in the first book of Chronicles [00:11:03] takes a few verses, and really it doesn't deal with the life of Saul, it only deals with the death of Saul.

When you come to David, you find that the historical books of Samuel and Kings report very grave mistakes of David.

David, on the one hand, the man after God's heart. On the other hand, there was terrible failure in his life. If you think of the second book of Samuel, the murder of Uriah, adultery with Bathsheba, and these things are related in detail in Samuel. And also you find the same feature in the book of Kings. And the reason is that these books deal with the responsibility side. [00:12:03] The books of Chronicles deal with God's plan and with what God did, how he worked in grace in the lives of these kings.

You might also say that in Samuel and Kings we receive moral lessons, and in the book of Chronicles we receive typical lessons. Now what do we mean by that, typical lessons? Well, take again Saul, David, and Solomon.

Saul is a picture of the man of the flesh, natural man.

And in fact, the precursor of the true David is Antichrist, who is characterized by the number 666, which is a man's number. [00:13:04] And then you come to David and to Solomon. And the two together give a beautiful picture of Christ. David shows Christ in his rejection and how he then sets up his kingdom and takes the throne. And Solomon completes the picture by showing a reign of peace, how the kingdom is established, giving us a picture of how Christ will reign in peace and righteousness.

It does beg a question though, and that is, well, if this is the purpose of the book of Chronicles, why don't the books of Chronicles stop with Solomon? Why does it go on throughout the history of Judah [00:14:01] until actually the people is led into captivity?

If you bear with me, I won't give you the answer now, but a little later on.

But just let's set a little sort of mental marker. There is this open question, why does it go beyond David and Solomon? Now, there are some more characteristics of the books of Chronicles, but perhaps we can come to those as we go through the text. One thing I need to say though is that really what I told you so far about what is in the books of Chronicles started with chapter 9, because that's where you start reading about Saul, his death on Mount Gilboa and then the history of David and Solomon. Now, why do we have chapters 1 to 8? [00:15:02] And I'm sure that one or two of you were wondering while we were reading chapter 1, is there really anything in these chapters for us? And I wouldn't be surprised if one or two of you, when you came to the books of Chronicles and you started reading, you cast your eyes down the pages of the first eight chapters and went straight to chapter 9 and said, here is something where I can start reading. And if I may make a confession here, I remember that I once did that as well.

However, these first eight chapters were and are extremely important. They contain the genealogies of the people of Israel. In the first instance, they were important for the Jews, very important. For one thing, if you wanted to get an inheritance in the land, [00:16:05] you had to be able to demonstrate that you belonged to a tribe that had a right to an inheritance.

I'm sure that if you got a letter saying you have been bequeathed a million pounds, all you need to do is show that you are related to your great-great grandfather, I'm sure you would start taking a very keen interest in any document that helps you substantiate that claim. Well, these genealogies were something like that for the Jews. They were also important for the priesthood to function because the priests obviously had to be sons of Aaron. Levite service, again, you had to demonstrate that somebody came from the tribe of Levi. [00:17:02] Overall, really the whole claim of the people of Israel to the land of Canaan rests on these genealogies because they allow the Jews to trace their history back to Abraham who received that promise. But I'm conscious that I'm speaking here to a crowd of Christians, and the question you will ask is, why is it that these genealogies are presented or are thought by you to be important for Christians? They contain a host of important moral lessons that want to affect every or many aspects of our daily lives. Now let's look at the verses we read, starting with verse 1, Adam, Sheth, Enosh.

[00:18:06] Perhaps I can try and propose a little key to you, a key to the book of Chronicles.

And I would formulate this key as a question, perhaps I should say as a dilemma. And the dilemma is this. God had a plan.

This plan was clearly set out in Genesis, and it was clearly repeated and extended in Ephesians.

And all the indications were that this was never going to happen, that everything had gone off the rails, and God's plan would never be fulfilled.

Now let me try and show this. In Genesis 1 and verse 27, [00:19:08] you read that God had the following plan. He said, Genesis 1, 27, So God created man in his own image. In the image of God

created he him. Male and female created he them. And God blessed them. And God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it. And have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Now what was God's plan?

God's plan was to have a man, actually a man and a woman linked to him, having dominion over at least the whole earth.

[00:20:02] Now let's compare this with God's plan in Ephesians chapter 1.

And in Ephesians chapter 1, it says that actually, it speaks about the riches of his grace, verse 8, wherein he has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. How? Having made known unto us the mystery of his will. Now we come to the crux of the matter. What was his plan?

The mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he has purposed in himself, colon, and now it comes, God's plan, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, [00:21:03] both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, that he might gather together all things in the Christ. Christ described as the head here, having dominion, and it's actually extended now, it says over all things heaven and earth. Now this was the plan. What happened?

Man fell.

Man was chased, had to be chased from the garden of Eden. The head that was there to have dominion over everything had now become a fallen creature and it looked as though everything was lost. And as you look at the first verse of the book of Chronicles, [00:22:03] you find that this actually, this key is contained in the first word, Adam. Adam was the one who was meant to be this head and who tragically had fallen. And this is the puzzle. This is the puzzle this book seems to answer. What now?

How is God going to bring about all that blessing that he has purposed within a plan where there is one head reigning over all things?

Now we get some very important hints in this first chapter about how God is going to go about doing this. And I dare say the first hint on how he is going to solve the problem is also in verse one.

Because verse one continues to say, Adam sheth.

[00:23:05] How would you have expected the verse to continue? What was next after Adam?

There were Cain and Abel, weren't there? Now Abel, of course, was murdered, but there was still Cain. So why doesn't it go, Adam, Cain?

But it goes, Adam, Sheth.

Well, if you read as far as Genesis 4, in the end, after Abel had been killed by his brother, you find that Eve had another son and his name was Sheth. And the meaning for Sheth is as much as

appointed as a substitute.

So what you find here, in a nutshell, is this.

There is someone who comes along, Cain, [00:24:02] naturally the first, and God chooses the second, a substitute, Sheth.

Now, we'll see this again later on, just a little indication for now. Now, the next one in the line here is Enosh. Remember that Cain means as much as acquired.

Acquired means, you know, something you have obtained in your strength with your own means. And that's exactly the principle that God sets aside. But when you come to Enosh, the name speaks of the weakness and frailty of humankind, like a fleeting breath.

And you know, it was at that time that men began to call upon the Lord. [00:25:02] Realizing their own weakness and helplessness, they started doing a very good thing, call upon the name of the Lord.

Now, you have here an uninterrupted line as far as the sons of Noah.

And then secondly, just as a rough overview, you get a second uninterrupted line, and that is from one of the sons of Noah, Shem, down to Esau and Israel, i.e. Jacob.

As drawn in these genealogies, sometimes you find that there are gaps and not all generations are mentioned. But in this first chapter, you get a sequence without any gap from Adam as far as Jacob, the start or the father of the people of Israel. [00:26:02] Now, when you come to Noah, it says here in verse 4, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Now, if you just go to Genesis 10, there is a verse there which I believe allows us to conclude who of those three was the eldest. In Genesis 10, it says in verse 21, unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, his brother, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him children were born. So Shem is described as a brother of Japheth the elder.

[00:27:07] Does that remind you of anything, of a principle?

It does appear that Japheth was the first son, but you find that the line that God uses to bring about his plan does not go through Japheth, but it goes through Shem. Now, perhaps it's time to read a verse from 1 Corinthians 15, which really tells us about this principle that I'm trying to bring out. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 45, and so it is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul. The last Adam was made a quickening spirit. [00:28:05] Do you see this contrast? First Adam and the last Adam.

Verse 46, howbeit that was not first, which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.

The Apostle Paul tells us here in very plain terms that there is a principle behind those peculiarities we are observing. The principle is that first you have the natural and then the spiritual.

Now, have you ever wondered why? I think there's a simple answer to this. The natural has to come

first because it first has to be demonstrated that that which is natural will fail. [00:29:03] And it's only after this failure has been demonstrated that the spiritual can come and that it becomes clear that God still achieves his purpose. Now, without going into any detail about the sons of Japheth, which you find from verse 5 to 7, and then the sons of Ham from verse 7 to 16, there is one name we should just mention briefly in verse 10, and that is the name of Nimrod. And you know this man from Genesis, again Genesis chapter 10. But what you read here about Nimrod is not the same thing that you read about Nimrod in Genesis chapter 10, [00:30:01] and for a good reason. Let's just look at this. In our chapter, verse 10 says, And Cush begat Nimrod, and all it says about him is this, He began to be mighty upon the earth. Now, if you just go back to Genesis 10, maybe you still have your Bible open there, Genesis chapter 10 and verse 8, you read a lot more about Nimrod. It says, He began to be mighty of the earth, and then in verse 9, He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord, at the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Akkad, and Chalni in the land of Shinia.

And out of that land went forth Ashur, and he built Nineveh, the city of Rehoboth, and so forth.

[00:31:09] Genesis 10 tells us a whole story about this man, how he was a mighty hunter. It tells us that he was a king. It tells us that he started his kingdom in Babel and so on. Chronicles doesn't say a word on that. It just says he was mighty. Now, why is that? Well, just think about what we said earlier. The topic of Chronicles is, How is God going to go about fulfilling his plan which is have the man after his heart reign over everything? Well, in order to achieve that plan, Nimrod can't contribute anything. In Genesis 10, the question is, How was the land divided after the flood? And there it is important to understand who Nimrod was and where his kingdom was and what his descendants did. [00:32:04] Here, this mighty man disappears from the scene. Why? Because he plays no role in bringing about the counsel of God. But then you come to, in verse 17, to the sons of Shem.

And again you get this uninterrupted line, starting verse 24, from Shem down to Abraham.

Do you realize how the writer of Chronicles, or should I say the Holy Spirit, is slowly but certainly making progress towards the crux of the matter? How is God going to accomplish his plan? How is he going to bless people? What you find is he always rejects the natural Cain, he takes Sheth. [00:33:07] He rejects Japheth and Ham, chooses Shem.

And now the line of Shem leads down to Abraham, and Abraham is the one who received the promise.

And you know, that tells us really the next thing about how God fulfills his plan, how he will bless. The blessing is going to come, and it's going to come on the basis of free promise. And then it says, and the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael. Pardon me, I thought it was Ishmael and Isaac, wasn't it? It was Ishmael first. And then there was Isaac. But I don't need to explain this now, again, because by now you all understand, maybe you did before, [00:34:02] but we've reminded ourselves of the principle, that which is natural comes first, that which is spiritual comes afterwards. And so it is that not Ishmael was chosen, but Isaac was the son who was chosen.

Now, then down in verse 34, it says, Abraham begat Isaac, the sons of Isaac, Esau and Israel.

And there you have it again. Esau, the firstborn, after the flesh, naturally, but who really in his heart was a carnal man, a man after the flesh.

And then you have Jacob, actually called here Israel. [00:35:01] Now, again, the first, the natural, passes away, and the second is chosen. And it's interesting that God calls Jacob here Israel. Now, again, the theme is God's plan, God's purpose. And God's purpose was to turn Jacob into Israel and to turn him, to turn this man Israel, into a whole nation of Israel.

But before we learn about the descendants of Israel, we first learn about the descendants of Esau. And it's quite interesting what you learn about them. Here, verse 43, these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel. Now, again, you think something has gone wrong here with God's plan.

Why isn't there first someone reigning in Israel? [00:36:01] But, again, you find even with kingship, the natural comes first.

And in Edom, that is among Esau's descendants, they first had kings. But what was that sort of reign like? If you look at this, you'll notice something very interesting with this succession of kings in Edom. It says here, the first one is Bela, the son of Beor.

And then it says, and when, verse 44, when Bela was dead, Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, reigned in his stead. Now, did you notice something? You would have expected the verse to say, and when Bela was dead, Jobab, the son of Bela, became king.

And that's exactly what it doesn't say. [00:37:04] It says, the son of someone else. Now, that's not an isolated incident. If you read down the list, you find that there is not a single one amongst the kings of Edom who was succeeded by his son.

And in one case that we read about, actually, it is stated explicitly that he took the kingdom with violence.

And that is the feature of the kingdoms among the descendants of Esau. Their reign was marked by violence. And every new king who came to reign, he took the reign from the preceding king with violence.

Now, I'd like to use the remaining minutes to just make some very quick comments [00:38:01] on the next couple of chapters.

If you just look at the first verse in chapter 2, it says, these are the sons of Israel, Reuben.

Now, does that ring a bell?

Remember, we want to learn how after, now we've got from Adam as far down now as Israel, we want to learn how do we get closer to the point where there is this man chosen by God to have dominion. And the first descendant of Israel is Reuben. And what happened to Reuben, just look at chapter 5 for a moment, where his family, his descendants are given. And it says there in chapter 5, verse 1, the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel. And then you have an important sentence in brackets. It says, for he was the firstborn. [00:39:02] But for as much as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after his birthright. For Judah prevailed amongst his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler, but the birthright was Joseph's. Same principle.

Reuben was the oldest.

Reuben sinned, and his birthright was taken away, and it was eventually given to Joseph.

The ruler, though, came out of Judah. And here we have a wonderful, you might say twin picture, double picture of the Lord Jesus in Judah and Joseph. Judah is the prince, speaks of the prince, and Joseph speaks of the true firstborn one, [00:40:01] and the Lord Jesus is both. He is the prince, and he is the one whom God sets to be above all as the firstborn.

Now, that's why here in chapter 2, although Reuben is recognized as the first one born, and then the other sons of Jacob are mentioned, it then continues in verse 3, not by saying the sons of Reuben, but the sons of Judah.

And now, if you were reading this as a faithful Jew, especially, and I mention this now, although we'll come back to this perhaps later, the book of Chronicles was written very late, after the time of the captivity. And you know, that was a time when you would have thought everything is lost, Israel has no king anymore, and there is really no hope that God's plan will be fulfilled. [00:41:04] But you come to chapter 2, verse 3, and it says, and the sons of Judah. We now have come to the one of whom Jacob had said in Genesis 49, that the lawgiver, that the ruler must come out of him.

Now, but if you think the problem is solved, you need to read the next line. The next line is tragic.

Er and Onan and Shelah were the sons of Judah.

Those three were born to him of the daughter of Shua. And Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of the Lord, and he slew him. And again you find the firstborn one is set aside. [00:42:03] By the way, this is not a topic that I like so very much because I was the second in our family. It is a principle that is extremely important. It's fundamental to the concept of grace, that it is only when man has demonstrated his utter inability, that the way is open for God to act in grace. And so you see that even with Judah, naturally, you know, his first son is killed by the Lord.

Actually, it's not mentioned here, but the same happened to the next son, Onan. And you find then in verse four that it gets even worse. And it says, and Tamar, his daughter-in-law, bare him Phares and Zerah.

All the sons of Judah were five. [00:43:01] And now you wonder, how is God going to continue the story? Which son of Judah is he going to take? Er is gone. Onan is gone.

Surely he's going to take the next one, which is mentioned here in verse three, which is Shelah.

But he doesn't. And if you look at verse five, you see that the story continues with Phares. And Phares was a son of Tamar.

Now you might say, that's bad enough. But does it have to mention here who Tamar was? Shall I read this again?

Or were we all sufficiently awake? And Tamar, his daughter-in-law, bare him Phares. [00:44:02] You get a glimpse here of the moral state, even within the family of Judah, that was predestinated to bring

forth the king. And you might say, at this point, at the latest, God is about to give it all up. Failure is now so evident. There is no way that the plan can be completed.

But if we think that, we would have very low thoughts of our God. And it doesn't get much better. Look at verse seven. And the sons of Cami, Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing of curse. There's no doubt that Achar is Achan, whom you know from Joshua, chapter seven.

In the family of Judah, in the family where the ruler was to come. [00:45:02] But I don't want to leave you here on this thought. Let's look at verse 13. And Jesse beget his firstborn, Eliab, and Abinadab, the second, and so on. And then it says, in verse 15, and David the seventh. Now, do you remember the story when God said to Samuel, why are you still lamenting after Saul? Go and anoint a king for me. Go to the house of Jesse and anoint a king. And Samuel obeys. He goes.

He tells Jesse, one of your sons is going to be king. And Jesse says, all right. Look at my sons. You choose him. And Eliab arrives, the first one. And he's a handsome and tall man. And Samuel thinks, that's the one. I'll go for him.

And what does God say? God says, Samuel, don't look at the exterior. Man looks at the external things, [00:46:02] but God looks at the heart. And then they go down the whole line. And every time, God says, no, it's not him. And when Samuel says to Jesse, are you sure? Are these all? Isn't there anyone else? He says, well, there's still David. But you know, David is a shepherd boy. He is looking after the sheep. You're not suggesting, are you, that David could be the man? And Samuel says, get him. And when he comes, God says, this is him. This is the man after my own heart.

And there you arrive here in chapter 2, verse 15, at this, I would say, this hope, indication of hope, that actually the line led to David. And David was the promised ruler.

Now, let's spend the last few minutes just looking very briefly at what we learn about David and his family, [00:47:03] starting in chapter 3, verse 1. It says, now, these were the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron, the firstborn Amnon. Do you remember Amnon, the firstborn of David, that should have been the successor of the king, you might have said, the one who should have brought glory to his father's house, and he really turned out to bring shame. He raped his sister.

That sort of thing, let me put it this way, there is nothing that natural man is not capable of in terms of evil things.

But, you know, there's something else to notice here. It says, in verse 1, these were the sons of David, which were born to him in Hebron. [00:48:04] Now, do you remember what Hebron was?

Let's read verse 4, and it says, these six were born unto him in Hebron, and there he reigned seven years. Now, you find that Hebron is the place where David started to reign. Incidentally, before I come back to Hebron, do you realize the difference here between Chronicles and Samuel? In Samuel, you have a long, long history of how David was chased around by Saul in the wilderness, how he went into hiding, and how he was rejected. You know how that story is rendered in Chronicles? It's rendered in about three words. There he reigned.

Chronicles is about the counsel of God, [00:49:03] and the counsel of God is that Christ should reign. And so all the rejection here is passed over, and it simply says, and there he reigned. But he started

to reign in Hebron. Now, Hebron is the place, Genesis 13, where Abraham built an altar. It was a place of communion. But it's also the place, Genesis 23, where Sarah died. And it's the place, Genesis 25, where Abraham died. And it's the place where they were buried. And it's the place where the other patriarchs were buried. And it's the place where Joseph commanded that his remains should be buried. And so you find that Hebron is not only the place of fellowship, but it's also the place of death. And then you come to Genesis 37, and you find that Joseph is sent to seek his brethren, and it says, and he was sent out of the valley of Hebron.

[00:50:08] The true Joseph was sent to find his brethren, and he was sent out of the valley of death, of Hebron. But when you come to Joshua, you find that Hebron becomes a city of refuge. And it is the city of refuge, Joshua 21, that is given to the priests. Now put all of these together. It's a place of communion. It's the place of death. It's the place from where Joseph was sent. It's the place that is a city of refuge, and it is a place for the priests. And all of these things apply to the death of Christ. But here we learn that it was in Hebron that David started to reign. [00:51:02] You know, when we had the Bible Basics Conference here, a brother, I think it was Brother Hugh actually, spoke about the millennium. And you might have wondered, what's that to do with the death of Christ? And he explained to us that actually the death of Christ is the basis even for the glories of Christ in the millennium for his glorious reign. Well, here you have it in picture form. David first reigned in Hebron.

The death of Christ is the basis on which this plan of God will be ultimately fulfilled. But then it goes on to say in verse 5, and they were born unto him in Jerusalem, Shimea and Shobab and Nathan and Solomon.

Solomon was the one who was going to continue the royal line. [00:52:01] But Solomon was not born in Hebron. Solomon was born in Jerusalem. Now, what does that mean? Well, Jerusalem is a very important place. You know from Deuteronomy 12 that God had chosen one place. And you learn from Psalm 132 that actually Zion is described as the place that God has chosen.

And here you find that Solomon is born in Jerusalem. He is the one who is the chosen one after God's counsel to continue this royal line.

Now, from verse 10 you find Solomon's sons. And I only want to make one more comment on this because we are running seriously out of time and nobody wants to be late for tea. So just very quickly, the sons of Solomon. And you get this whole list of kings, you know, [00:53:02] from reading through Chronicles and some are mentioned in Kings. But the point I want to draw your attention to is that by the time you come to verse 16, there is already Zedekiah.

And you would have thought that with Zedekiah the story would end because that was when Judah was led into captivity. But you find that chapter 3, the story of David, doesn't end there. It goes on.

And there is also verse 18, Padiah. Then there is Zerubbabel, verse 19. There is Hananiah. There is Shekiniah, verse 22.

There is Nehariah. There is Elione, verse 23.

And Hodiah, in verse 24.

So there are several generations after Zedekiah.

[00:54:04] Now perhaps you say, well, why is that important? Well, I think it's one of the most encouraging things in this book. What God says, never is notwithstanding the captivity, notwithstanding all the failure of the people, it's not all over with my plan. Even after Zedekiah, the royal line continues. And you read through this book, and you come to the time of Queen Athaliah, and you think now it's really over. It says, and she destroyed all the royal seed. And had she succeeded, it would have been over. But it wasn't.

There was one baby that escaped. And God makes sure that this line is continued, and he will make sure that the true David will stand up, and then God's promises will be fulfilled in him. [00:55:05] Now I realize it's a very big topic. We can only give a few pointers here. But I would suggest two things that we should try and take home. One is, in a world where everything seems upside down, where everything seems to derail more and more, we can rest assured God's plan will be fulfilled.

The other point, and that's a little challenge for every one of us, is this. If your life, if my life was written down, how much of it would you find in the book of Samuel and Kings? And how much of it would you find in the book of Chronicles, if you know what I mean?

How many times in my life have I acted in the flesh? Have I done my own will?

[00:56:02] Have I done something that can only be reported, recorded under the heading of responsibility and failure? And how many times in my life was I really in God's plan, that it would be recorded as in Chronicles, saying this is what God was able to bring about in your and in my life? Could we sing hymn number 179?

Actually, I mean hymn number, I think it's 379.

Yes. 379. We bless thee, O thou great Amen. God's glorious pledge to sinful men. 379. We bless thee, O thou great Amen.

[00:57:06] God's glorious pledge to sinful men.

Confirming all his word.

Doubt, though no promises remain.

For all are ye and all are men.

Indeed, the faithful know.

How great the grace of God to bless.

By thee, O Lord, our righteousness.

[00:58:02] By thee we say again.

For to us all things thus are shown.

Through life and death and evermore.

By thee, the great Amen.

O faithful witness of our God.

Who came by water and by blood.

In need of only one.

[00:59:01] God's record does forever stand.

Of life eternal from his hand.

To all in me the sun.

Gladly his promises we hear.

For God's helmet dispels all fear.

His faithfulness it proves.

And one such grace from God is shown.

[01:00:02] To his own we add our own.

For a remnant he loves.

Secured in Christ their head on high.

The saints below may boldly cry.

Praise to our God, Amen.

To God in Christ all praise begin.

Forever more our blessing end.

[01:01:02] Amen, Amen, Amen.

Amen.